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INTEGRATION AND DISINTEGRATION  
IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL AND GLOBAL SECURITY

P. Terrence Hopmann, Stephen D. Shenfield,  
and Dominique Arel

Final Report of a Research Project Coordinated by the  
Program on Global Security  
Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies  
Brown University

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## CONTENTS

Abbreviations .....	v
Preface .....	vii
Introduction .....	1
Chapter 1: Threat Perceptions .....	13
Chapter 2: Alternative Scenarios for 2006 .....	33
Chapter 3: Policy Recommendations .....	49
Notes .....	65
About the Authors .....	69
About the Organization .....	70



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## ABBREVIATIONS

CFE	Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
UN	United Nations



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## PREFACE

The project “Integration and Disintegration in the Former Soviet Union: Implications for Regional and Global Security” has been coordinated by the Program on Global Security at the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies at Brown University in the United States. The researchers at Brown worked closely with partners in each of the five post-Soviet countries included in this study. The project began in 1994 and will be completed in early 1998. It was supported by generous grants from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and by the Watson Institute at Brown University. At Brown, the staff involved in this project include: P. Terrence Hopmann, director, Program on Global Security and professor of political science—principal investigator; Stephen D. Shenfield, assistant professor (research) of International Relations—research coordinator; Dominique Arel, assistant professor (research) of International Relations—senior research scholar; Hilda Eitzen, postdoctoral fellow; Mark Garri-son, director emeritus of the Center for Foreign Policy Development and senior fellow; Arkady Yanishevsky, graduate research assistant and translator of the Russian edition of this report; Jennifer Patterson, undergraduate research assistant; Lauren Pearl, undergraduate research assistant; and Leslie Baxter, project coordinator.

The help and advice provided throughout the course of the project by Senior Fellow Jan Kalicki, acting in his private capacity, is gratefully acknowledged.

The project partners from the five newly independent states are: Oumirserik Kasenov, director, Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies, Almaty, since 1997, vice rector, Kainar University and director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Almaty; George Khutsishvili, director, International Center on Conflict and Negotiation, Tbilisi, Georgia; Leonid Kistersky, principal researcher, National Institute of Strategic Studies, Kiev, since 1996, director, Institute for International Business Development, Kiev, Ukraine; Vyachaslau Paznyak, director, International Institute of Policy Studies, Minsk, Belarus; and Andrei Zagorsky,

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director, Center for International Studies, and vice rector, Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Moscow, Russia.

The document that follows was completed in August 1997 and represents the final report of this research project. The principal authors of this report are Professors Hopmann, Shenfield, and Arel. The report is based primarily on the detailed accounts of conferences and individual meetings organized jointly by the Brown University team and their partners in each of the five countries, consisting of leading specialists on security from the five countries representing a wide range of views. Additional meetings among the project partners from the five countries and the Brown University team were held in North America in March 1997. Although this report could not possibly have been prepared without the close collaboration of the research partners from the newly independent states, responsibility for the contents of this report rests solely with the authors at Brown University, who have tried to reflect the full range of views expressed in each country. They are responsible for all errors of omission, commission, and interpretation, and nothing in this report should be construed as reflecting the personal views of any of the partners from the former Soviet states.

P. Terrence Hopmann, Stephen D. Shenfield, Dominique Arel,  
Providence, Rhode Island, USA  
August 1997.



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## INTRODUCTION

### Project Rationale and Goals

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, cross-pressures toward integration and disintegration have influenced relations among the 15 newly independent states that appeared on the territory formerly occupied by the Soviet Union. Centrifugal tendencies continue to be manifest as some of these states try to achieve even greater independence from one another. Distinct regions within many of these states have also sought varying degrees of sovereignty and independence.<sup>1</sup> These trends are countered in part by centripetal tendencies. The costs of independence within this previously highly integrated region have become increasingly apparent, especially for the economies of the newly independent states.

However, the continuum from integration to disintegration does not constitute the only significant dimension of post-Soviet processes. Equally crucial are the cross-pressures toward cooperation or coercion. Closer integration or more rapid disintegration may each be promoted by either cooperative or coercive means. Tensions arising between the integrative and disintegrative forces may be resolved by threats and even force or by peaceful negotiations and mutual accommodation.

This report presents the major conclusions of a research project that has investigated these competing tendencies within the former Soviet region since 1994.<sup>2</sup> The project has examined alternative patterns of development in order to identify possible factors promoting one or the other long-term trend. It has studied the implications of these competing tendencies for security in the former Soviet region, for its immediate neighbors, and for the rest of the world.

The project has been coordinated by a research team from the Program on Global Security, based at Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies in the United States, and research partners in five post-Soviet countries: Russia, Ukraine,

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Belarus, Georgia, and Kazakhstan. A major feature of the research has been a series of conferences in which security specialists from each of these countries were brought together to respond to a common set of questions about future prospects for security in their region. Information from these conferences has been supplemented by published sources that offer insight into the perceptions of the countries' policy elites. Thus the study presents an assessment of the perceptions and beliefs about regional security held by specialists representing a wide range of political views in five post-Soviet countries. Its major contribution is to compare the different views of experts in each of the five countries, and to examine the implications of their different perceptions and preferences for the evolution of relations in the region over the next decade.

The research team based at Brown University organized and coordinated the project. Along with their partners in each of the five countries, they developed the common set of questions asked of security specialists throughout the region and presented a comparative analysis of the responses by experts in the five countries. While the editors of this report at Brown University have summarized and compared the findings of experts from the five countries, they have not asserted their own independent analysis and views in this report. Rather they have tried to reflect as accurately as possible the wide range of views expressed by security specialists from within the region itself.<sup>3</sup>

The primary technique used in this research was to explore with specialists in each country the possible development of relations among the countries of the former Soviet Union over the next ten years up to the year 2006. This time frame was selected because it encouraged the experts to consider fairly long-term trends and not just imminent developments, while discouraging them from engaging in abstract speculation about the distant future. Security analysts from government, research institutes, universities, political formations, and the mass media in each of the five countries were asked to react to four scenarios for the year 2006 in terms of their relative likelihood of materializing, their relative desirability or undesirability, and policies that might alter

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current trends and lead toward more favorable outcomes ten years in the future.

The five countries were selected to represent the major subregions and trends in the former Soviet Union. Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus represent the predominantly Slavic states. Kazakhstan is the one Central Asian country included in the project; its long border with the Russian Federation and the presence of a very substantial Russian ethnic minority within its boundaries make its trajectory of great importance to the overall project. Georgia was included from among the three newly independent states in the Southern Caucasus<sup>4</sup> as an important country on which almost all of the trends investigated in this project have been manifest in one way or another. Only the Baltic states were excluded from our study, as their path toward independence has been far less ambiguous than that found in all other post-Soviet states.

The four scenarios we present here are highly abstract and hypothetical, designed to serve as pure models that represent clearly distinct, and thus probably extreme, possibilities. They were intended to highlight crucial issues and to stimulate discussion. We recognize that the real future will probably be much more complex and ambiguous than any single scenario and undoubtedly will incorporate some features from several or all of the scenarios. Each scenario thus represents a fairly “pure” form of how events might develop over the next decade, and each may be viewed as defining one of the four corners of a box, itself constituting a conceptual space within which relations might evolve over time. Although the scenarios may seem overly abstract and simplified, they at least define the outer range of possible outcomes. Reality, we assume, may move through the space delimited by these four corners over the next ten years. The trajectories may change direction or even backtrack on themselves. But the trends that begin to emerge over the next ten years should give some indication of the overall direction in which relations are evolving within the post-Soviet region.

In analyzing the results across the five countries, we do not assume that a uniform pattern of relations will appear throughout

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the region. On the contrary, the relationships between any two states within the region, say for example, between Russia and Belarus compared to Russia and Ukraine, may be moving in quite different directions. This is one of the reasons that our project has explored the same scenarios in all five states, so that we can recognize important differences in relations between different pairs of states within this region. We further recognize that many different variations of these four scenarios could develop, including combinations of two or more scenarios or unique possibilities not included in our initial framework. For example, one region of a country might be integrated, either forcefully or voluntarily, with Russia, at the same time as other regions of that country become even more independent. The fluidity in the region is a central focus of this project, and we do not expect to be able to depict such a dynamic situation accurately with a set of static models of the future. We merely want to suggest that some of the most important events that are likely to occur in this region over the next ten years are likely to reflect the influence of the two dimensions underlying our four scenarios.

The four scenarios represent combinations of trends on two dimensions: 1) integration and disintegration, and 2) cooperation and coercion. When these two dimensions are depicted as intersecting with one another, as shown in Figure 1.1 they form four cells of a box reflecting combinations of the two continua: 1) coercive integration (specifically under Russian domination), 2) cooperative integration, 3) conflictual (or unregulated) disintegration, and 4) cooperative disintegration (or independence).<sup>5</sup> Thus each scenario reflects the combined influence of two classic dimensions of interstate relations.

The first dimension for the analysis of relations within the post-Soviet region ranges from integration to further independence and disintegration. That is, we may witness centripetal tendencies in which states that became independent in late 1991 begin to move back together in even closer relationships up to, and possibly including, merging their sovereignty. On the other hand, centrifugal tendencies may appear in which the individual states

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become even more independent of one another, and/or disintegrative tendencies may be strengthened within them, causing them to break apart and form more autonomous subnational regions or even new independent states.

The second essential dimension considers the means by which relations will be conducted between states within this region. At one end of this continuum, pressure might be employed, including even military coercion, but more likely various measures of influence or blackmail. In this case, relations among the states in the region, and perhaps even within them, might be characterized by intensified conflict. At the other end of this continuum is the possibility that the relations could be characterized by cooperative interactions, agreed upon voluntarily and brought about through peaceful means such as negotiation, mutual adjustment, and accommodation rather than coercion.

When these two dimensions are combined, they produce four quite different scenarios depicted schematically in Figure 1.1 The following pages describe briefly the defining features of each of the four scenarios.

### **Scenario 1: Integration Under Russian Domination**

In this scenario, the prevailing tendency is toward integration around Russia, and Russia uses whatever means are necessary including various forms of pressure to achieve this end.

Therefore, the integration process is likely to be dominated by unilateral Russian actions, and Russia is likely to apply pressure to secure the compliance of other post-Soviet states with its demands. Pressure in this respect may include direct military coercion, but it is more likely to take the form of open or concealed influence that exploits economic or other levers (e.g., energy supply, manipulation of ethnic, linguistic, or other internal divisions within states).

In this kind of integration, Russia would preserve its full autonomy. The other states may or may not remain formally independent, but they would partially or totally lose the substance

Figure 1.1: The Four Scenarios

<p align="center"><b>Scenario 1: Integration Under Russian Domination</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Scenario 2: Cooperative Integration</b></p>
<p>The prevailing tendency is integration.</p> <p>The process of integration is dominated by Russia, which uses pressure to secure the compliance of other states.</p> <p>Russia preserves full sovereignty, but other states partly or wholly lose the substance of real sovereignty.</p> <p>Multilateral institutions either are unimportant or are dominated by Russia.</p>	<p>The prevailing tendency is integration.</p> <p>The process of integration is jointly controlled by all participating states, acting in voluntary cooperation.</p> <p>Participating states partly preserve and partly “share” their sovereignty (as in the European Union).</p> <p>Multilateral institutions are important and are not dominated by any single state.</p>
<p align="center"><b>Scenario 3: Unregulated Disintegraion</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Scenario 4: Cooperative Independence</b></p>
<p>The prevailing tendency is disintegration.</p> <p>Disintegration is unregulated and disorderly, and may give rise to conflicts.</p> <p>Post-Soviet states may be able to preserve full sovereignty or may break apart themselves.</p> <p>Multilateral institutions are ineffective or non-existent.</p>	<p>The prevailing tendency is disintegration.</p> <p>Disintegration is regulated, orderly and peaceful, with mutual accommodation.</p> <p>Post-Soviet states preserve full sovereignty, but regions may become autonomous or separate by mutual consent.</p> <p>Multilateral institutions are unimportant or nonexistent; bilateral diplomacy predominates.</p>

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of de facto sovereignty. The extent to which this occurs could vary from one state to another. For example, one state (such as Ukraine) might remain relatively independent and act as Russia's "strategic partner," while others might be reduced to the status of dependent vassals. At a minimum, infrastructure, economic, and political linkages that were broken in 1991 would be restored. In its most extreme form, a single sovereign state might reemerge in much or all of the post-Soviet region.

It is also conceivable that the combination of internal and external pressures may lead to the breakup of some states (e.g., Kazakhstan or Ukraine) and the subsequent incorporation of parts of them into Russia.

Multilateral institutions in the post-Soviet region, such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) or its successors, may or may not play an important role in implementing integration in this scenario, but any institutions that do play such a role will be largely dominated by Russia.

## **Scenario 2: Cooperative Integration**

In this scenario, as in scenario 1, the prevailing tendency is integration, but in this scenario this is accomplished primarily through cooperative rather than coercive means.

Therefore, to the extent that states integrate within the post-Soviet region, in this scenario they will do so voluntarily, in forms and under conditions determined and negotiated by all participating states. A spirit of reciprocity and mutual adjustment will prevail in interstate relations within the region, and cooperative means will be used to resolve divisive tensions and conflicts *within* each of the post-Soviet states.

In many instances where this kind of integration occurs, participating states would retain their formal independence, while they might voluntarily delegate part of their sovereignty to common multilateral institutions within the region. No single state would dominate these institutions, however. All states would be formally equal, even though these states would inevitably possess

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different degrees of influence within the institutions. As in the European Union in Western Europe, sovereignty would be to some extent “shared” or “pooled.”

In some variants, the integration may be due largely to the inability or unwillingness by a smaller state to “go it alone,” but may involve a substantial loss of sovereignty or even complete (though voluntary) absorption of one state by another, more powerful state.

Security is viewed as indivisible for the entire region, and no subregion feels secure unless all feel secure. Thus “common security” prevails over purely national or subregional security.

### **Scenario 3: Unregulated Disintegration**

In scenario 3, the prevailing tendency is disintegration, with states and subregions staking out greater independence for themselves. However, this takes place in the midst of extensive disorder and tension. States may find that absorption by a weak but expansionist Russia can be avoided only by active resistance and assertion of their independence in spite of Russian efforts to reestablish dominance, and in this scenario they are successful in achieving and maintaining their independence by whatever means are necessary.

The price for maintaining such clear independence, however, includes the risk that the disintegration will proceed in an unregulated, confused, and even chaotic fashion. This may give rise to disputes or even armed conflict at many levels—between ethnic or other groups, between states, among subnational regions within each state, and involving regions that cut across state boundaries. Each state, group, or subnational or transnational region may seek to realize its own interests without regard for the common security interests of the region as a whole. International relations within the region would be characterized primarily by a condition of anarchy.

If this process of disintegration extends to include the further breakup of existing states, the post-Soviet states would no longer



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be able to preserve their territorial integrity or to consolidate themselves as viable and stable states. At the extreme, civil wars may break out throughout the region.

Multilateral institutions such as the CIS may persist under this scenario, but their weakness would be indicated by their inability to resolve the frequent conflicts or to halt the disintegrative tendencies. These tendencies, in turn, are likely to make it impossible for such institutions to function effectively.

#### **Scenario 4: Cooperative Independence**

In this scenario, as in scenario 3, the prevailing tendency is disintegration. However, in this case, the further disintegration within the post-Soviet region comes about through voluntary action, mutual accommodation, and in a peaceful and orderly fashion.

In contrast to scenario 3, all post-Soviet states would be able to preserve and even strengthen their independence. They would also be able to consolidate internally as viable, stable, and relatively self-sufficient states. Similarly, some subnational regions might willingly be granted a great degree of autonomy within the existing states.

In this scenario, the states would cooperate with one another, but unlike in scenario 2, they would resist making a significant sacrifice of their sovereignty as a condition of cooperation. Their relations with one another as well as with other states outside the region would be conducted mainly through bilateral diplomacy. Cooperative measures on issues such as promoting trade or avoiding environmental hazards might be agreed upon through negotiation, seeking to realize mutual benefits without sacrificing fundamental national interests or sovereignty.

If multilateral institutions continue to exist within the current CIS region, they would fulfill largely symbolic, consultative, and/or coordinating functions. They would act only on the basis of mutual accommodation or even consensus to achieve common goals. They would likely be limited in their effectiveness in

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achieving mutual goals such as providing for a common defense against external threats, integrating economic activity, and resolving environmental problems; insofar as these issues are successfully dealt with, this will most likely be accomplished through bilateral agreements.

### **The Research Process and This Report**

Conferences were held in each of the five countries, and leading security specialists from the public and private sector were invited to participate. These meetings took place in Moscow, Kiev, and Almaty in June 1996; in Tbilisi in October 1996; and in Minsk in June 1997.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the Brown University team met privately with many specialists during their trips to each of the countries, and specialists from each of the five countries were invited to make presentations at Brown University. Participants were given in advance a description of the four scenarios as presented above. In all cases, the security experts were asked the same five questions:

- 1) What in general do you believe to be the most serious threats to the security of your country between now and the year 2006?
- 2) Which of the four scenarios do you believe to be most *likely* in the light of current trends within the post-Soviet region?
- 3) Among the scenarios you consider to be possible, which one do you *prefer*?
- 4) How might developments be influenced in the direction of the scenario you prefer? What kinds of policies might make your *preferred* future *more likely*?
- 5) Who might be in the best position to influence these trends? Your own government? Governments of other states within the post-Soviet region? Outside governments, such as those in Western Europe or the United States? Regional or global multilateral institutions?

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The following chapters report the results of the project's investigations in these five countries. Points of consensus are identified as well as the diversity of opinions held in each country. Some of the contradictions and tensions are noted that appear to be present and to be molding the dominant regional trends. Mutually incompatible preferences and policies emerging in different countries may exacerbate tensions and create security dilemmas, whereas converging tendencies may enhance the prospects for regional cooperation in an effort to solve the many problems that have appeared in this region since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

The remainder of this report is divided into three chapters. The first chapter discusses the various "threats," both internal and external, that are perceived to jeopardize the security of each of the five countries as reflected in the experts' responses to the first question above. Threats are defined here broadly to include not only traditional military threats, but the risk of external political domination, economic and social chaos, ethnopolitical conflict, environmental degradation, dangerous demographic trends, and criminality. The second chapter on "scenarios" reflects the specialists' responses to the second, third, and fourth questions noted above, namely where they perceive likely future trends to be heading, where they would prefer to go, and what needs to be changed to avoid the undesirable and to achieve the more desirable scenarios. This chapter will consider how the dominant scenarios differ across each of the five countries and some of the possible contradictions and tensions that may result from those differences. Third, the concluding chapter on "policies" reflects both the suggestions offered by the specialists in each of the five countries and the conclusions also reached by the research group at Brown University about how the West might promote more favorable trends in relations among the former Soviet states over the next ten years. In addition to exploring possible ways in which Western governments and international institutions might be helpful in this region, it also suggests the limits of outside influence on events in the region and indicates how some Western attempts

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to influence the course of events might have unintended or undesirable consequences.

This report does not claim to present a comprehensive analysis of all issues affecting security relations within the region of the former Soviet Union. But the project on which it reports did stimulate interesting thinking among specialists from within the region itself. They were required to project their analysis further into the future than is generally done. Since they responded to a common set of scenarios and questions, the predictions, preferences, and policy recommendations of the specialists from five countries may be compared systematically. This report thus reflects prevailing views within the post-Soviet region itself about some of the most serious challenges to national and regional security that are likely to arise over the next decade. It also poses challenges to policymakers in Western governments and international institutions about how *their* policies can promote a positive evolution within this region in the interests of *common security*. It proposes building upon the historic opportunity presented by the end of the Cold War to create a more secure world, less prone to both direct and indirect violence, in the twenty-first century.

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## CHAPTER 1

### THREAT PERCEPTIONS

One of the principal questions explored in this study was the perceptions of threats to the security of each of the five former Soviet republics until the year 2006. Security specialists in each country were asked to identify both internal and external threats to their security. In addition, they were asked to think not only about traditional military-political threats but also about threats from economic, political, ethnic, and environmental problems as well. This section summarizes the major findings based on the response of security specialists to this question.

#### Threat Perceptions in Five Former Soviet Republics

##### *Russia*

There is a consensus among Russian experts that the country does not face major external threats to its security at the moment, although many worry that such threats could emerge in the middle- to long-run, most probably from the south and from China. The viability of several of the CIS states is a widely shared concern. A combination of economic stress, ethnic nationalism, and, in certain cases, Islamic fundamentalism could exacerbate disintegrative processes within these states, to the point of breaking them apart. The general instability that could ensue, causing the flow of refugees and unfettered arms and drugs trafficking, would compel Russia to intervene, a delicate task that it may not be able to handle. In light of their experience in Tajikistan and Chechnya, experts worry that Russia, partly for domestic reasons, may exaggerate these threats and resort to heavy-handed military means in an attempt to assert control. This would have the countereffect of worsening the chaotic situation and engulf Russia in a quagmire. Russian experts fear both the potentially growing instability at their borders and the inability of their political and military leaders to deal with it adequately.

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In the “far abroad,”<sup>7</sup> China is generally seen as the greatest long-term threat in the eyes of Russian experts. This threat could take the form of increasing political, and perhaps, military pressure on Kazakhstan. Alternatively, it could take the form of serious demographic pressure on the Far Eastern regions of Russia: many Russians believe that there are already millions of illegal Chinese immigrants in border Russian provinces. Islamic fundamentalism is also cited as a long term threat in Central Asia, the Northern Caucasus, and the Volga region of the Russian Federation. Some experts, however, note that Islamic fundamentalism is compatible only with Iranian culture and not with Turkic culture, thereby limiting the terrain on which it might take root. It could spread to Tajikistan and parts of Uzbekistan, but hardly anywhere else. Nonetheless, Islamic fundamentalism could break up states, and this disintegrative potential could spread to neighboring states without them importing the ideology. This would spell trouble for Russian security. The long-running war in Tajikistan and the possible victory of the Taliban in Afghanistan are most often cited in that respect.

Russian experts see few immediate threats stemming from the West. Although the majority of Russian specialists disapprove of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) expansion, most do not foresee that this change in the European security architecture constitutes a threat to Russia’s security, as long as three conditions are met: 1) nuclear weapons should not be deployed in former Warsaw Pact countries; 2) Russia should remain genuinely involved in bilateral consultative bodies with the Western alliance; and 3) former Soviet republics, including the Baltic states, must not be invited to join NATO separately. Moreover, many experts concur that any dominance exercised by an external power over a former Soviet republic (e.g., Iran over Turkmenistan, Romania over Moldova, Turkey over Azerbaijan, or the European Union or NATO over Ukraine), would be viewed as a direct threat to Russian security, even if it were not effected by military means.

The most serious and immediate internal threat that preoccupies Russian security specialists is that Russia will fail to achieve

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economic growth. This could endanger its status as a great power and its ability to achieve its interests in the “near abroad.” It also could contribute to chaos and further disintegration within the Russian Federation.

Another threat, of a mixed internal-external nature, has been pointed out by Belarusians and appears to be shared by some Russian experts as well: the danger of “political infection” that a hasty unification with Belarus could produce. The neo-Soviet model of one-man rule in an unreformed command-administrative economic system, conceived by President Lukashenko in Belarus, could be exported to Russia. The addition of Lukashenko cronies in executive bodies in Russia and of a more conservative Belarusian electorate could tip the balance of domestic political forces in Russia against reforms. In the long run, this might further weaken Russia on the world stage.

### *Ukraine*

Ukrainian experts also consider the sorry state of their economy to be the greatest threat to the security of their country. The threat is no longer depicted in alarmist tones as an impending economic collapse, as it often was in 1992-93, when Ukraine was reeling under the shock of hyperinflation. The emphasis now is rather on the danger of a long-term inability by Ukraine to integrate fully into Europe. Most Ukrainian security elites believe that Ukraine, unlike Russia, has historically belonged to “Europe.” Therefore, its foreign policy should gradually be oriented toward rejoining the West. However, countries must satisfy minimal economic, as well as political and legal, criteria in order to be invited to join European structures. A failure to achieve significant economic growth would undermine this most fundamental interest.

There are two alternative conceptions of Ukraine’s vocation on the European continent: 1) Neocommunists contend that a “Soviet” community must be recreated among CIS states, a view that is strongly represented in the Ukrainian parliament; and 2) “Eurasianists” hold that Ukraine has historically shared a “community of fate”

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with Russia and must seek integration with Europe only in tandem with Russia. The first view has no currency among Ukrainian security experts, and the second view, although appropriated by President Kuchma during his electoral campaign in 1994, is held only by a minority of specialists in Kiev. Instead, Ukraine has maintained a policy of “passive engagement” toward the CIS from the beginning. The view that its interests might be better served if it were to engage in true multilateral bargaining with Russia, in common with other CIS states, is decidedly rejected by the majority of experts. The preferred strategy remains direct bilateral negotiations where each party has formally equal status.

Specialists are divided on the potential saliency of the “eastern” problem. The fact that the predominantly Russian-speaking eastern provinces, particularly the Donbass and Crimea, are oriented toward Russia means that they could develop strong autonomist, or even secessionist movements in the future. Some believe that eastern elites subconsciously favor Ukrainian independence and would come out as Ukrainian patriots in the event of a Russia-induced crisis. Others argue that an increase of Russian pressure, for instance in the case of a deterioration of Russian relations with NATO or of a political victory by the nationalist-communist wing in Russia, could, on the contrary, dangerously polarize the country. A senior government official thinks that decisionmakers in fact do not know how eastern Ukrainians would react in such a crisis. There is general agreement, however, that economic growth would promote national unity, especially since the ailing smokestack industries in the east need foreign investment from outside the CIS region.

Several participants identify Islamic fundamentalism, or the Muslim factor per se, as a potential long-term internal threat to Ukraine’s security. The birthrate of Crimean Tatars far exceeds that of Crimean Russians and Ukrainians, and many descendants of exiled Tatars may relocate to the peninsula in the future. The threat would originate from the political demands of these fast-growing Crimean Tatars and their links with Muslim states in the region, particularly Turkey. In the official and nationalist press,



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the Crimean Tatars have virtually always been favorably presented as allies in Ukrainian disputes with the Crimean authorities and the only truly indigenous people of the peninsula. Many experts believe, however, that this tactical alliance is not likely to last into the future.

In the minds of many, the most important external threat to Ukrainian security, by far, is the possibility that Russian policy might harden toward the “near abroad” and evolve in a “nationalist” or “ne imperialist” direction. This could be caused by a change of political leadership in Moscow (many participants thought that the coming to power of General Lebed, in June 1996, was signaling such a change) and/or by a worsening of Russian-NATO relations. Many Ukrainians are deeply convinced that Russians have not yet outgrown their “big brother” syndrome of seeing the Ukrainians as “little brothers” who cannot seriously expect to live separately from the Russians. Even after Russia officially recognized the inviolability of Ukrainian borders in the Russian-Ukrainian Bilateral Treaty of May 1997, the concern that Russia is not reconciled to Ukrainian independence lingers. As one expert put it, Russia remains convinced that it can dominate Ukraine economically and politically. It is precisely this kind of thinking that most Ukrainian specialists find threatening, even though it is not likely to have military overtones.

### *Belarus*

In Belarus, more than in any other country in this project, specialists are deeply divided over the nature of security threats likely to face the country in the next decade. Those close to the governmental position emphasize the threat of becoming a front-line state in a newly divided Europe and the unfair diplomatic isolation of Belarus. Those critical of the government argue that the greatest threat lies in the illegitimate and autocratic regime of President Lukashenko and Russia’s declared ambitions to annex Belarus.

Experts close to the governmental position agree that the military consequences of NATO expansion are unclear and that

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the NATO-Russia agreement before the Madrid conference of July 1997 could very well prevent the dispute from escalating. Yet they point out that, due to Belarus's experience during World War II as a battlefield between the armies of two major powers, it is psychologically very difficult for public opinion to adjust to a situation in which Belarus will once more find itself bordering a rival military bloc. This is particularly true since the bordering state, Poland, is perceived by some as harboring irredentist claims upon Belarusian territory. Some experts are not very optimistic about the prospects for a nonconflictual NATO-Russia relationship. Even generally more optimistic "opposition" experts agree that a scenario of worsening NATO-Russia relations would be extremely threatening to the security of Belarus. Memories of World War II notwithstanding, these experts fear less the outbreak of warfare between the two blocs than a political and military reintegration of Belarus by a Russia that feels besieged on all sides.

Specialists who are critical of the government are dismayed by what they portray as the "coup d'état" or the "state of emergency" that President Lukashenko has imposed since his election on a populist platform. By asserting his control over most of the media, and by pushing through a referendum on a new constitution in November 1996, which emasculated parliament and muzzled an incipient independent judiciary, Lukashenko in effect became the only real player in Belarusian politics, with very few checks on his power. Since he is openly nostalgic for the Soviet era and has ceaselessly demanded a "union" with Russia, supporters of the opposition think that the greatest threat to the security of Belarus originates from their own president, who may be willing to sacrifice the independence of Belarus to advance his own career. Many believe that his greatest ambition is to become president of a united Russia-Belarus and that this possibility may not be as far-fetched as it might at first seem. Even though many of these experts acknowledge that the numerous "integrationist" agreements between Belarus and Russia of the past few years have not been implemented, they express anxiety about what an unchecked pro-Russian president might do in the future.

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Most experts in both camps are worried about the threat of a growing international isolation of Belarus, in the wake of the decision by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe and the Western powers not to recognize the validity of the November 1996 referendum. Progovernmental experts, however, believe that the West is guilty of “double standards” in linking issues of democracy and human rights with security commitments toward Belarus. The decision by the U.S. Congress to cancel a portion of the Nunn-Lugar aid earmarked for the destruction of nuclear silos in Belarus, on the grounds of human rights violations, was cited as a clear example of double standards. Western powers do not hesitate to provide political and economic support to authoritarian regimes elsewhere in the world when they deem that it is in their security interests to do so. According to this argument, the application of this standard solely to Belarus is both unfair and detrimental to Belarus’s security.

As in the other states, experts agree that continuing economic decline threatens to make Belarus a weak state, dependent on its neighbor, but few envisage an actual collapse of the economic system. Those close to the government tend to see economic integration with Russia as a panacea for stabilization and growth, while those in the opposition camp believe that there can be no real integration without real economic reforms, which are not happening in Belarus. To the latter, talk of integration is largely a chimera created by the government to delude public opinion into believing that economic recovery is just around the corner.

### *Georgia*

In contrast to the other four states, the de facto separation of territories, namely Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the Russian military presence, are the central preoccupation of virtually all Georgian security specialists.<sup>8</sup> Most consider that Russia abetted the Abkhazians in their secessionist bid in 1992-1993, and has not played a constructive role in attempting to resolve the

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conflict.<sup>9</sup> Georgian refugees have not been allowed to return and the Russian “peacekeeping” forces deployed in Abkhazia are merely protecting the status quo.

The secessionist issue continues to have great emotional resonance in Georgian society. Even though some experts have a sober approach to the problem and believe that Georgia would survive the loss of these territories, they point out that the public perceives that the threat of secessionism endangers the ethnic identity of the Georgian people. This perception contrasts with the popular reaction to the severe economic crisis that has confronted Georgia since independence. People are highly preoccupied by both problems. However, they think that the secessionist threat can only be addressed collectively by governmental policies, whereas they believe that the economic problem is best addressed by individuals and firms and that the government has little capability to overcome this crisis on its own.

Georgian experts are ambivalent in their assessment of Russia’s role in the region. In the short term, some claim that Russia should withdraw its troops, forcing the secessionist parties and the central Georgian government to negotiate directly, instead of hoping that a third party might resolve their problem for them. Others, however, argue that a sudden withdrawal of Russian troops would in fact increase the risk of a renewed outbreak of violent conflict. In the long run, some want Russia to disengage itself from the region, while others argue that a growth in Islamic assertiveness among Georgia’s neighbors, particularly from Turkey, might constitute a threat to Georgia’s security. These threats would compel Georgia to seek even closer military relations with Russia, as it had in the past. Georgian experts, however, agree that Georgia is at a disadvantage when facing Russia one-to-one. Western support is therefore sought to counterbalance what would otherwise be an inherently asymmetrical bilateral relationship with Russia.

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## *Kazakhstan*

Specialists from Kazakhstan generally have a rather sanguine view of external threats to their security. While some worry about Russian manipulation of internal issues, and others express concerns about possible demographic threats from China, the most serious issue appears to be concern about a “domino effect” of destabilizing conflicts in the region. These conflicts could arise from the spread of Islamist movements from the South (especially Taliban influence in Afghanistan infiltrating into Central Asia) or ethnic or clan disputes, as in Tajikistan.

Interestingly, experts in other CIS countries sometimes view external threats to Kazakhstan as potentially more ominous than do native specialists. Russian experts on Central Asia, for example, express considerable concern about a long-term external threat to Kazakhstan from China, caused either by China’s growing assertiveness as a regional power, or by its possible disintegration. In the latter case, the status of Xinjiang province that borders Kazakhstan on the east and is heavily populated by Uighurs and Kazakhs, may become a contentious matter between Kazakhstan and China.

Similarly, internal threats are often depicted as more ominous by outside specialists than by those within Kazakhstan, especially the threat of the internal disintegration of the country. Most Kazakhstani specialists do not believe that the predominantly Slavic northern provinces are likely to cause problems to the stability of the state in the foreseeable future.<sup>10</sup> They argue that the language question was solved in 1994 when a new constitution granted the Russian language a status almost equal to that of Kazakh. Demographic trends are changing the ethnic composition of the north, especially due to the migration of rural Kazakhs into previously overwhelmingly Russian cities, and trade patterns are being reoriented away from Russia. The suggestion that Kazakhstan has a “northern Russian region” was denied by an official from the Security Council, who said that there are only separate provinces, and no “region,” with non-Kazakh majorities.

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Another expert argued that any threat that may arise would result from external manipulation by Russia, but experts generally do not believe that Russia has interfered in this sensitive matter since independence. One controversial argument about regionalism in Kazakhstan suggests that economic differentiation among regions, and the arrival in power of a new post-Soviet generation of leaders who represent regional rather than national interests, will contribute to the internal division of the state along regional rather than ethnic lines.

On the southern and eastern borders, there are a few issues that worry specialists. This includes disagreements over the formal delimitation of borders (the same applies to the Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan border), environmental threats due to the fallout from Chinese nuclear tests at nearby Lop Nor, and a demographic threat of unregulated immigration of populations from China (mostly Uighurs and Kazakhs) into Kazakhstan. There is little sense, however, that China will pose a serious military threat to Kazakhstan in the foreseeable future.

As elsewhere, many experts argue that the state of the economy, and particularly the low level of foreign investment, constitute the major threat to the security of Kazakhstan. They refrain, however, from elaborating on the consequences of this threat if the economy continues to decline. Some note that the signing of pipeline agreements with Russia and other post-Soviet states, as well as with Russian and Western oil companies, might reverse these economic trends and contribute to rapid economic recovery in the country, depending on how oil revenues are distributed internally. Others fear that these new agreements might just provide additional opportunities for various Russian interests to manipulate Kazakhstani policy, due to the country's heavy dependence on pipelines traversing Russia.

Kazakhstan also faces serious ecological problems. The Aral Sea has long been dying, destroying fishing and the livelihood and health of the local population; the Caspian Sea risks overflowing and flooding valuable agricultural lands in addition to being highly polluted; and severe pollution also threatens Lake Balkhash,

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a large water body north of Almaty. Soil pollution is also acute due to the residue of decades of Soviet nuclear testing at Semipalatinsk. The metallurgical industry is a source of massive air pollution. These several ecological problems enormously complicate the economic recovery of the country.

With regard to any external threats to Kazakhstan originating from within the CIS, the sense that Russia aims at dominating Kazakhstan, although present, is less palpable than in the other states. One specialist noted, however, that Kazakhstan has no choice but to follow Russian dictates, and he harbored no illusions that anyone would come to its assistance if it tried to defy Russia and was subjected to political and economic pressure or military intervention.

### Comparative Analysis

There is a remarkable degree of convergence in the way specialists from the five states perceive and prioritize security threats:

(1) *External threats are considered less significant or less likely than internal threats.* In the short- and middle-term, the threat of external aggression from Russia or from states outside the perimeter of the former Soviet Union is assigned a low probability. This is not to say that specialists from the new states have a benign view of Russia's present or likely future policies in the region. On the contrary, the fear of Russian domination figures prominently in their perceptions. Yet this image of domination is rarely expressed in direct military terms, except in Georgia, nor is it seen as a policy that has already been implemented. Specialists are more concerned by the Russian potential to manipulate internal divisions and apply economic pressure. As for Russia itself, despite all the opposition to the enlargement of NATO, few believe that the expansion poses a direct military threat to Russia. Many are increasingly worried about potential threats coming from Islamic fundamentalism in the south and China in the east, but these are viewed as long-term potential problems rather than immediate concerns.

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(2) *The most pressing internal threat is the continuing decline of the domestic economy, but its consequences for the security of the state are rarely spelled out.* The danger of a social “collapse,” “explosion,” or “catastrophe” caused by a further deterioration of the economy was raised everywhere by a few specialists. The majority, however, do not believe that the state of the economy, however worrisome, portends such dire consequences. Perhaps, after years of macro-economic stabilization, specialists generally sense that a threshold of minimal socioeconomic stability has been crossed. This is true even for the economically least reformed state of the project, Belarus, where expert assessment of the economic situation is somewhat contradictory, some painting a dark portrait of the future, others pointing to an economic upswing under Lukashenko. The same applies to Georgia, which of the five states had the most devastated economy in the early years of independence, but which has been recovering in the past few years.

What appears to unsettle security specialists most is that economic decline, or a persistently weak economy, might make their country incapable of competing with external influences. For Russia, this touches directly upon its ability to remain a great power in world politics, and to project its power in what it considers to be its natural sphere of influence, mostly in the “near abroad.”<sup>11</sup> For the newly independent states, the underlying threat is economic isolation, which would force them to deal one-on-one with Russia from the weak position of dependent states. This situation would be made even worse if the relative economic gap between them and Russia increases in Russia’s favor. An inability to diversify foreign trade, to penetrate foreign markets, to integrate into international economic institutions, and to attract sufficient foreign investment that would give the Western countries a real stake in preserving their independence vis-à-vis Russia, would make these states increasingly vulnerable to Russian pressure.

Although the general public in many countries seems to favor integration of the CIS states as a solution to their economic problems, most security specialists (with the partial exception of



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those in Belarus) appear to be more concerned, in practice, with the integration of their domestic economies into the world economy. Where they disagree is to what extent this world integration should take place in concert with, in rivalry with, or independently of other CIS states. The neocommunist discourse of recreating the Soviet system of planning and production was only heard in Belarus,<sup>12</sup> accompanied by the claim that this has to be done in union with Russia. However, most experts, even in Belarus, believe that the integration of an unreformed economy with a reforming economy is not feasible, either in theory or in practice.

The health of the economy is also perceived as a critical factor in preventing, or exacerbating, centrifugal tendencies within some states. In Georgia, trying to come to grips with territories that have de facto seceded (that is, Abkhazia and South Ossetia), many believe that a growing Georgian economy would make the hard-pressed secessionists more amenable to compromise. In Ukraine, polls repeatedly have shown that the predominantly Russophone population in the east and south massively support “integration” with Russia and a solid plurality even support a “union” with Russia. In this context, many experts believe that economic growth would weaken the tendency for these regions to want to pull closer to Russia and would thereby enhance national unity. In any event, most Ukrainian experts do not expect these tendencies to develop into a serious threat for the security of Ukraine, at least not for the foreseeable future. Kazakhstan, like Ukraine, has a predominantly Russophone population concentrated in provinces bordering Russia. Kazakhstani specialists similarly tend to deny that there is any potential secessionist threat in the north. Some believe, however, that continued economic decline could fragment the state into several units, albeit not merely along ethnic lines. According to this controversial view, a similar fate could be in store for neighboring Central Asian states as well.

(3) *Security specialists are more prone to perceive the likelihood of territorial disintegration in states other than their own.* Even though the threat of ethnonationalism within the Russian Federation was raised by a few, on the whole Russian specialists do not appear to

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be too concerned about a potential internal threat to the integrity of their territory. Tellingly, the war in Chechnya was rarely mentioned as foreshadowing a broader disintegrative trend.<sup>13</sup> Russian experts *do* worry about growing separatist tendencies in the newly independent states, although more in the middle than in the short term. This view is rarely echoed among security specialists in these new states, where the perspective of a disintegrating Russian Federation is more often considered a plausible scenario. In Ukraine, for instance, hardly anyone mentioned the problem of Crimea, the peninsula primarily inhabited by ethnic Russians where secessionist and irredentist feelings still run very high.<sup>14</sup> In Kazakhstan, the saliency of a northern Russophone problem is dismissed, although some experts acknowledge that tensions remain. In Georgia, the reality of breakaway territories can hardly be denied, but it is popularly believed that these secessions are artificial, in that they were the product of external manipulation by Russia. In the same vein, most analysts in Ukraine and Kazakhstan take the view that any escalation in centrifugal tendencies is likely to be caused primarily by Russian meddling. Pro-Russian Belarus is the exception, since its main minority, the Poles, are more likely to gravitate toward Poland than toward Russia.

(4) *The main external threat is perceived to be internal to the CIS: for Russia, it emanates from the CIS; for the newly independent states, from Russia itself.* Most experts would probably place this “external CIS threat” as second on a scale of the most serious security threats, after the internal economic threats. However, more attention is actually devoted to the former than to the latter. In the view of Russian experts, there are two serious potential threats that can originate from the CIS: (a) the threat of territorial disintegration of one or several of these states; and (b) the threat of domination of CIS countries by outside powers, such as China establishing hegemony over Kazakhstan.

Russian specialists who are indifferent to, or critical of, their countries’ attempts to “integrate” the “near abroad” tend to focus on the first threat. They fear that an inexorable disintegration

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might endanger Russian security by creating flows of refugees and spreading violence. This would leave Russia with little choice but to intervene, a policy that is likely to be misunderstood and provoke overly hostile counteractions by the West. Most worrisome to these experts is the threat of an overreaction by the Russian military, i.e., the possibility that a Russian intervention would turn excessively violent, as in Chechnya, and destabilize the domestic political situation in Russia.

Specialists belonging to the “integrationist” school of thought believe, on the contrary, that Russia needs to develop a more assertive policy toward the “near abroad.” They put far greater emphasis on the threat of external domination, which would challenge Russia’s self-defined sphere of influence. Such a development, most Russian experts agree, could not be tolerated by the Russian government.

In the newly independent states, the threat of Russian domination is a recurrent preoccupation, although more pronounced in Georgia and Ukraine than in Kazakhstan and Belarus. Most specialists from these states do not yet believe that Russia has forsaken its “imperial ambitions.” This is perceived as endangering, in the middle to long run, the effective, if not formal, independence of the new states. The issue is most sensitive in Georgia, due to the presence of Russian “peacekeeping” troops in Abkhazia and Russian military bases elsewhere in the republic. In Kazakhstan, the concept of “imperialism” is often interlaced with that of “colonialism.” In Belarus, the imagery of “imperialism,” pervasive among the opposition, is not used in progovernmental circles, yet the strong official reaction to Russia’s proposal that Belarus become simply a province of Russia suggests that these circles are also wary of Russia’s intentions.

Beneath Russia’s perceived geopolitical interests in the various regions of the “near abroad” lies a psychological problem: specialists from the new states involved in the project tend to believe that Russians, both at the elite and at the mass level, are not reconciled to the reality that they are now independent states rather than Soviet republics. Formal bilateral treaties notwithstanding,

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Russia does not really recognize that these states have the right to exist. In the case of Ukraine and Belarus, the problem reaches to the level of national identity (in the ethnic sense): since most Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians share a common religious heritage and speak languages that belong to the East Slavic family, many Russians believe that this cultural closeness presupposes a common state. Most Ukrainian and many Belarusian specialists appear to believe that this view still prevails in Russia. While distrusting Russia's underlying motives, there is nonetheless a recognition among specialists in the new states, although less so in Georgia, that Russian policy toward the CIS states has been moderate under Yeltsin. The prospects of a harsher, more nationalistic Russian foreign policy, are not discounted, however.

The fear of Russian domination, on the other hand, is tempered by a certain ambivalence displayed by specialists of the newly independent states toward Russia. Cultural affinities undoubtedly account for a great part of this ambivalence. The great majority of urban dwellers in Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan—whether of the titular nationality or not—speak Russian as a first language. As for the much less linguistically Russified Georgians, they nonetheless share a common Orthodox heritage in a region where Islam has a strong presence. Nationalists in each state strongly contest any historic “closeness” between their people and Russia, seeing the pervasiveness of Russian culture and language more as a consequence of historic Russian imperialism than as the fruit of a shared culture and values. Security specialists, however, realize that a general sense of “community of fate” prevails, especially among urban populations, and must be taken into account in the formulation and presentation of their policies vis-à-vis Russia. A vague feeling of nostalgia for the social stability and political predictability of the Soviet past also pervades the Russified populations of the new states. Only in Belarus, however, has it been incorporated into the official discourse of the state.

Geopolitical considerations are also at the root of this ambivalence, particularly in the southern states of Kazakhstan and Georgia. Russia may be feared for its desire to reassert control, but

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regional powers may become, in the long run, even more threatening, prompting these states to draw closer to Russia in an effort to create a balance of power. For all its resentment of Russian heavy-handed military intervention in the early years of independence, over the course of its long history Georgia has had difficult relations with Turkey and Iran. There has been a rise in economic cooperation between Georgia and Turkey lately, particularly over the activation of a pipeline from Azerbaijan that would pass through Georgia. Georgian specialists, however, still reckon that the cleavage between Islam and Christianity may worsen foreign relations between the two countries in the future. In the short term, on the other hand, Russia's inability to play a constructive role in Georgia calls into question its usefulness as an ally in the region.

In Kazakhstan, the continuing rise of China's power is obviously a critical foreign policy factor. A consensus among Russian security experts is that the growing assertiveness of China will force Kazakhstan to seek closer ties with Russia. A different interpretation, offered by a Russian Sinologist, is that China is headed for disintegration in the post-Deng era and the instability that will ensue at the China-Kazakhstan border will compel Kazakhstan to request Russian assistance. Specialists from Kazakhstan mentioned China only in the context of the current sensitive issue of the delimitation of borders, yet it remains an open question whether they share the long-term view of their Russian colleagues that China's ambitions in the region may eventually constitute a threat overshadowing their fear of Russian domination.<sup>15</sup> In the case of Belarus, the threat of NATO expansion is presented by the government as another crucial reason for Russia and Belarus to seek a "union," although many experts do not share the view that the Russia-Belarus union was in any way stimulated by events in the West.

Except for Belarus, most specialists from the new states do not perceive any immediate threat from beyond the former Soviet border. This no doubt is an important reason for the lack of cohesion and the essentially declarative nature of the CIS since its inception. Specialists are concerned, to different degrees, about

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China, Turkey, or Islamic fundamentalism—the latter being the external threat most commonly perceived in the new states—but these long-term potential threats tend not to be assigned priority.

The weakness of the CIS also stems from Ukraine's consistent policy of refusing to become a full-fledged member. This prevents the formation of a common front of non-Russian states within the institutional structure of the CIS aimed at counterbalancing Russian influence. An active and united opposition to Russian domination within the CIS is deemed desirable by other states, such as Georgia, but risky by Ukraine, which sees any active engagement in the CIS as leading to a loss of its sovereignty.

(5) *There is less agreement among specialists on the relationship between democracy and security.* There are security specialists—in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia in particular—for whom authoritarianism is actually a better guarantor of stability or, as one expert put it, of “governability.” Others are deeply convinced that only a strengthening of civil society and of democratic debate can ensure long-term stability, both internally and externally. This leads to a wide divergence of views as to whether threats to democracy can constitute threats to security as well. In Belarus, the view that a leader, unchecked in his powers, could jettison the country's independence to satisfy his personal ambitions is held by many, whereas others argue that human rights essentially have little to do with security. In Georgia, it is widely agreed that progress toward democracy has been made, to the benefit of Georgia's security, though uncertainty remains as to whether there has yet been enough progress.

(6) *Finally, environmental threats are generally not perceived to be major security threats in all five countries.* While environmental groups in all five countries have been highly critical of the ecological legacy of the Soviet period, most security specialists do not view this as a high priority issue in their domain. The issue was raised a few times. For example, in Georgia it was noted that an Armenian nuclear power station is built on an earthquake fault line and thus could do considerable damage throughout the Southern Caucasus. In Belarus and Ukraine, the consequences of the Chernobyl

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disaster are noted, and many fear a recurrence of a similar tragedy. In Kazakhstan, widespread pollution of lands and bodies of water is noted. But for the most part, environmental issues occupied a marginal place in the views of security specialists participating in the project.





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## CHAPTER 2

### ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS FOR 2006

To stimulate and structure discussion, specialists in the five countries covered by the project were presented with the following four scenarios for the period to the year 2006:

Scenario 1—Integration under Russian Domination

Scenario 2—Cooperative Integration

Scenario 3—Unregulated Disintegration

Scenario 4—Cooperative Independence

This section summarizes the views expressed by specialists in each country concerning the likelihood and desirability of these scenarios.

#### Preferred and Likely Scenarios as Viewed from Five Countries

##### *Russia*

It is in Russia that we find the widest variety of views concerning both likely and desirable futures. All scenarios except unregulated disintegration (Scenario 3) are favored by some Russian specialists. A broad range of developmental patterns and outcomes are put forward.

Many Russian specialists argue that the post-Soviet region has been, is, and will continue to be characterized by a mix of elements of all four scenarios. There is a persistent dynamic tension between the forces of integration and disintegration, and between the forces of coercion and cooperation, that gives rise to cyclical fluctuations.

Of those specialists willing to identify a dominant long-term trend, a majority consider that trend to be unregulated disintegration (Scenario 3). The disintegrative process began well before the breakup of the USSR and, in spite of all talk and agreements

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concerning integration, has continued unabated ever since. Russia may periodically seek to halt disintegration by resort to attempts at coercive integration, but in view of Russia's limited capacities these attempts will inevitably fail. Moreover, the process of disintegration will in this event actually be accelerated by the strong counterreaction on the part of other post-Soviet states, by the effects of Russia's manipulation of internal divisions in these states, and by the destabilization of Russia itself.

A significant minority of Russian specialists, however, disputes this pessimistic prognosis.

First, there are some specialists, in official circles and elsewhere, who consider the more or less voluntary integration of much if not all of the post-Soviet region—i.e., Scenario 2 or a mixture of Scenario 1 and Scenario 2—at least moderately likely.<sup>16</sup> While recognizing the formidable difficulties that the process of integration faces and the possibility that it may be disrupted by destabilizing developments, they nevertheless argue that the post-Soviet states are impelled toward integration by their practical needs, by their limited ability to penetrate and successfully compete in world (i.e., extraregional) markets and by external challenges such as NATO expansion. Their peoples are also naturally drawn together into a “community of fate” by cultural affinity and shared historical experience.

These advocates of integration do recognize that each post-Soviet state has its own characteristics that may either facilitate or impede its response to centripetal pressures, so that some states—by far the most important of which is Ukraine—will take longer than others to start moving toward integration. Their hope is that the countries integrating first will demonstrate to the laggards the advantages to be derived from integration, thereby inducing them to join in the process at a later stage—a concept referred to as “multispeed integration.”

Second, there are other specialists who perceive a fairly rapid transition of most of the post-Soviet region to Scenario 4, cooperative independence. They point out that the Russian economy is too weak and backward to serve as the engine of regional

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integration, in the way that the German economy fueled West European integration. The newly independent states—especially those of them rich in oil, gas, and other valuable natural resources, such as Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Turkmenistan—are intent upon building strong ties with countries outside the region. The process of their reorientation away from Russia and the CIS, in economics, culture, and even infrastructure, is already much more advanced than many yet realize. As for Russia, it is on the whole gradually overcoming its imperial past and successfully adapting itself to the new reality.

Many Russian specialists emphasize the need for a differentiated approach to assessing the probable future of the post-Soviet region. Quite different scenarios are likely in different parts of the region. Thus voluntary integration (Scenario 2) may proceed in the “core” countries of the region (which may or may not include Ukraine), while some of the countries along the periphery consolidate their independence (Scenario 4) and others descend into chronic chaos (Scenario 3).

It is also commonly held that differentiation needs to be by issue area as well as by subregion. Some argue that shared interests may lead to integration in the economic sphere, but that the post-Soviet states are loathe to sacrifice any of their sovereignty in the political-military sphere. However, it may be necessary to go further and examine specific issues separately. For example, although states may reject proposals for far-reaching military integration, they may be willing to contemplate the joint protection of “external” borders (i.e., borders corresponding to the old Soviet borders).

The majority of Russian specialists, whether or not they consider cooperative integration likely, regard Scenario 2 as the most desirable of the four. It is often stressed, especially by government officials, that Russia does not seek to dominate the region by force, but rather to attract its post-Soviet neighbors into a voluntary community of integrated states based on shared heritage and common interests. Thus they prefer the term “integration” to “reintegration,” which may be understood as implying

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some kind of restoration of the Soviet Union.<sup>17</sup> They appeal to the West to understand correctly their intentions and not to obstruct their efforts, which are aimed at enhancing international, as well as regional, security.

The degree of Russian support for Scenario 1 is very difficult to assess. Most of the specialists who participated in this project consider coercive integration not only undesirable but also infeasible. Russia currently lacks the political, economic, and military resources necessary to implement this scenario, so that attempts to do so would fail, with dangerous and counterproductive consequences. However, a few specialists do more or less openly allude to the expediency of using Russia's coercive power in the interests of integration. Many others express concern at the influence of other specialists who advocate a coercive strategy. Moreover, Russian specialists often fail to draw a clear distinction between coercive and voluntary integration.<sup>18</sup>

Cooperative independence (Scenario 4) is the first preference of a significant minority of Russian specialists. More importantly, it constitutes an acceptable alternative to many of those who ideally prefer cooperative integration (Scenario 2) but are skeptical regarding its feasibility. Some experts argue that Scenario 4 is a necessary prerequisite to the eventual construction of Scenario 2, because only states that have consolidated their sovereignty are able to carry out a genuine program of cooperative integration. In the meantime, since Scenarios 1 and 2 are impracticable, and Scenario 3 is undesirable, only Scenario 4 is both acceptable and realistic.

### *Ukraine*

Ukraine has, since it became independent, consistently pursued a policy of affirming its full sovereignty. Its participation in CIS institutions remains very limited. It does not, for instance, take part in the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly. Ukrainian elites are nonetheless divided, mainly along regional lines, with eastern elites much more inclined toward close cooperation with Russia

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and the CIS. Thus it was widely expected that the election of Leonid Kuchma as president would shift Ukrainian policy in the direction of integration. However, any change of orientation that has occurred has been marginal at most.

Ukrainian specialists, like their Russian colleagues, have varied views on the likely and desirable future of the post-Soviet region. Most envisage the successive or simultaneous occurrence of several different scenarios over the next 10 years.

Like some Russian specialists, many Ukrainian experts fear that Russia may attempt to integrate at least the Slavic areas of the post-Soviet region by coercive means. They too believe that any such attempt would fail and that its main effect, taking the post-Soviet region as a whole, would be to accelerate the process of unregulated disintegration (Scenario 3). Regarding the likely consequences of this situation for Ukraine, there is a division of opinion. Some specialists are confident that Ukraine has sufficient strength to resist both Russian coercion and the forces of disintegration, and consolidate itself as an independent state. Pressure from Russia would only accelerate the reorientation of Ukraine toward the West. Thus, for Ukraine, they envisage a future of cooperative independence (Scenario 4), even if other post-Soviet subregions face a descent into chaos. Other specialists fear that Ukraine would be seriously destabilized by disintegration to its north and east (for example, as a result of uncontrollable migration across its borders) and may itself break up along the East-West axis.

A significant minority of Ukrainian specialists regards cooperative integration (Scenario 2) as the most desirable. Provided that Russia pursues a democratic course, they think it possible for Ukraine to integrate with Russia on the basis of shared cultural heritage and common economic interests. An example is provided by scientific cooperation within the framework of the CIS Economic Union, a field in which Kiev, and not Moscow, has taken the leading role. These specialists argue that an attempt to make Ukraine an independent state completely separate from Russia (Scenario 4) would unleash centrifugal tendencies in eastern

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Ukraine and Crimea, leading to the chaos of Scenario 3. An attempt by Russia to integrate Ukraine by coercive means (Scenario 1) would lead to the same result.<sup>19</sup>

A majority of Ukrainian specialists does not regard cooperative integration as so desirable and strongly doubts its feasibility. Even if Ukraine were to exert its best efforts to bring about integration on an equal cooperative basis, they argue, the inevitable outcome would be integration under Russian domination. Ukraine's experience over the past three centuries shows that close relations with Russia always entail subjugation, economic exploitation, and cultural assimilation. The most desirable, as well as feasible, future for these specialists is cooperative independence (Scenario 4), in which Ukraine fully preserves its sovereignty while minimizing, or avoiding altogether, involvement with the CIS. It will then be free to develop its natural links with the countries of Eastern, Central, and Western Europe. Some think that the development of links with these countries can and should be combined with cooperative and equal bilateral relations with Russia and other post-Soviet states. Others hold that Ukraine should reorient itself to the West even at the risk of tension with Russia.

A few Ukrainian specialists view cooperative independence (Scenario 4) as a necessary goal in the near term, but envisage a transition to cooperative integration (Scenario 2) once independence has been consolidated.

### *Belarus*

Of the four newly independent states covered by this study, Belarus is characterized by the strongest elite support for the idea of the voluntary integration of post-Soviet states. It is also the state that has advanced the furthest toward integration in institutional terms. Having signed in March 1996 the quadrilateral agreement for integration with Russia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, Belarus proceeded in April 1996 to establish a confederal union with Russia called the "Commonwealth of Sovereign Republics,"

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bolstered in May 1997 by the adoption of the Russia-Belarus Union Charter.

It is useful to divide Belarusian specialists into three groups. Some espouse the official position of the Lukashenko regime. Others have views typical of the Belarusian Popular Front and other organizations of the nationalist opposition. Finally, there are independent specialists who express a variety of critical views that cannot be categorized so easily politically but that may, in the field of foreign policy, be described as “centrist” in relation to the first two groups. However, on domestic policy issues these specialists align themselves with the nationalists in opposing the regime.

The defenders of the official position argue that what is occurring is the voluntary integration of Belarus with Russia based on the shared history and culture of their “fraternal” peoples. Integration is considered essential for the economic survival of Belarus, but it is emphasized that it will have numerous beneficial consequences for both sides. It is denied that integration will put Belarus’s sovereignty in jeopardy.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, bilateral integration is held to be fully compatible with integration within a broader CIS framework, as its success will attract the participation of other post-Soviet states. Thus it is believed that there are good prospects of achieving the most desirable scenario, i.e., Scenario 2.

The representatives of the nationalist opposition, by contrast, regard the prospect of integration with Russia as a mortal threat to the sovereignty of Belarus. They question whether integration is advantageous for Belarus even from the economic point of view, pointing to the unfavorable balance of trade between Russia and Belarus, the world prices that Belarus still has to pay for oil and raw materials imported from Russia, and the higher prices Belarusians now pay for grain imported from Ukraine and Hungary. Nationalists also cast doubt on whether integration can be considered a genuinely voluntary choice of the Belarusian people, referring to the undemocratic character of the Lukashenko regime and the contradictory, unstable and manipulated character of public

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opinion. Thus, they perceive current developments in terms of Scenario 1 rather than Scenario 2.

Moreover, nationalist critics commonly predict that Belarus's loss of sovereignty, far from catalyzing a broader process of integration in the post-Soviet region, will evoke fear in other newly independent states, which will react by building alliances directed against Russia. The union with Belarus is a destabilizing event, strengthening imperialist and communist forces in Russia and thereby undermining Russia's ability to play a positive role in post-Soviet development. It may even contribute to the breakup of the Russian Federation. Eventually, under the impact of a radicalized younger generation, Belarus will regain its independence. Thus, Scenario 1 is expected not to last very long, but to give way either to Scenario 3 or else to Scenario 4, the most desirable of the four scenarios for the nationalists.

The centrist critics tend to share many of the views expressed by the nationalists concerning the costs and risks of the specific form of integration pursued by the Lukashenko regime. At the same time, they stress that they are, unlike the nationalists, not opposed to a genuine rapprochement or integration of the post-Soviet states that meets the needs of all the countries concerned. In that sense, they resemble the defenders of the official position in regarding Scenario 2 as the most desirable. They also fear that the policy of integration as pursued by the present regime may fail, especially in the continued absence of market economic reform in Belarus. Alternatively, it may exact an intolerably high price on Belarus, in which case the "Ukrainianization" of the country's foreign policy cannot be excluded.

Unlike either the supporters of the government or the nationalist opposition, the independent specialists are inclined to doubt whether integration is really occurring. They point out that the agreements between Russia and Belarus are devoid of substantive content, that Belarus is receiving no aid from Russia and in fact finds itself increasingly isolated. From this point of view, "integration" is no more than a cynical ploy, aimed at extracting subsidies from Russia (though failing to do so) and at exploiting utopian



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popular longings for the unity, stability, and security of the Soviet era and especially of the Brezhnev period.<sup>21</sup> It is probable that such misuse of the slogan of “integration” soon will become evident to the public, thereby discrediting the idea of genuine integration. Thus the most likely longer-term outcome is the consolidation of sovereignty (Scenario 4).

### *Georgia*

For Georgia, much more so than for any of the other newly independent states covered by this study, both unregulated disintegration (Scenario 3) and integration under coercive pressure from Russia (Scenario 1) are not merely possible future dangers but realities that already have been experienced. The views taken by Georgian specialists of likely and desirable futures are naturally colored by this experience.

Georgian specialists expect the domination of their country by Russia to continue in the immediate future, although real integration with Russia is limited to the military sphere, including Russian bases, peacekeepers, and border troops. However, many of them think it quite possible that in the medium term Russia will decide to withdraw from Georgia, and perhaps from the Caucasus as a whole. Divergent views are expressed concerning whether this would permit the consolidation of independent statehood and subregional stability (Scenario 4) or, on the contrary, lead to renewed conflict and continued disintegration (Scenario 3). In any case, unregulated disintegration (Scenario 3) is considered by most Georgian specialists to be the dominant near-term trend in the post-Soviet region as a whole and in the Caucasus in particular.

Concerning the most desirable future, there is an almost complete consensus among Georgian specialists in favor of cooperative independence (Scenario 4). National independence appears to be a fundamental and unquestioned value in Georgia; the hypothetical alternative of cooperative integration is generally regarded as neither realistic nor even particularly attractive. However, some specialists speculate that national independence

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for Georgia might be compatible with, or even facilitated by, the development of other scenarios elsewhere in the post-Soviet region. One specialist, for instance, hypothesized that were Russia to disintegrate, that might “give Georgia its chance.” Another suggested that were Russia to absorb Ukraine, it might then be satisfied and leave Georgia alone. Yet others believe that Georgia may be able to consolidate its independence with the help of a strategic alliance with Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and other post-Soviet states likewise determined to resist domination by Russia.

### *Kazakhstan*

President Nursultan Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan has persistently advocated the necessity of cooperative integration for the post-Soviet states, most notably in his proposal of June 1994 for a Eurasian Union. Kazakhstan participates actively in the institutions of the CIS, and of the quadrilateral grouping with Russia, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan.

Most Kazakhstani specialists think that, at least in the near future, some kind of cooperative integration (Scenario 2) within the post-Soviet region is both necessary and feasible. They favor efforts to restore broken economic and infrastructure links, and seek to collaborate with other post-Soviet states through multilateral CIS institutions, such as the Inter-State Economic Committee and the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly. They are, however, determined to set clear limits on the depth of integration to ensure that the sovereignty of Kazakhstan is fully preserved. As one senior analyst at the parliament explained, binding CIS legislation and supra-state bodies with executive powers should be avoided, and matters of citizenship and of the state budget should remain within the sole jurisdiction of each state. Moreover, when specific controversial issues, such as the exploitation of Caspian Sea oil,<sup>22</sup> were discussed, more stress tended to be placed on the separate pursuit of state interests and less on interstate cooperation than when the scenarios were discussed in abstract terms. The arrangement preferred by most Kazakhstani specialists might therefore

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best be identified as one intermediate between Scenario 2 and Scenario 4.

Another characteristic of the Kazakhstani understanding of integration is the concept of “quiltwork” integration, with many overlapping regional and subregional groupings serving different purposes. It is considered equally important for Kazakhstan to participate in the CIS as a whole, in the Tashkent Collective Security Pact, in the quadrilateral customs union with Russia, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan, in the Central Asian Union with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and in the Economic Cooperation Organization with Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the other Central Asian states. Nor should integration impede contacts with the West, such as cooperation with NATO in the Partnership for Peace, or the expansion of bilateral ties with neighbors such as China.

Whereas most Kazakhstani specialists favor a limited kind of cooperative integration in the near term, there is somewhat less consensus among them concerning longer-term preferences and expectations. Some, especially military officers and communists, feel that the shared values and experience of the post-Soviet states make close cooperation desirable as well as necessary for the foreseeable future. For others, the ideally preferred future is rather cooperative independence (Scenario 4), and cooperative integration (Scenario 2) is needed only for the duration of the transition to fully consolidated independence. Eventually Kazakhstan will loosen its ties to Russia and the CIS, but first it must sufficiently diversify its economic, infrastructure, and security linkages with extraregional powers and multilateral institutions. For this purpose, great hopes are placed in the construction of new transportation arteries avoiding Russia.<sup>23</sup> It is doubtful, however, that the transition can be completed within the next 10 years.

Kazakhstani specialists do not believe that coercive integration (Scenario 1) will occur. Although Russia might attempt to impose this scenario, it lacks the resources and willpower to succeed.

Finally, a few Kazakhstani specialists hold that the resumption of unregulated disintegration (Scenario 3) is probable. The disintegrative processes that began in 1991 are not yet complete,

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and conflicts elsewhere in the post-Soviet region could have a strong impact on Kazakhstan. One specialist even envisaged the breakup of Kazakhstan into four parts: a northern area closely linked to Russia; a largely self-sufficient area in the south; the western area, with a new economy based on oil exports; and a residual area in the center, consisting mostly of desert. The great majority of specialists, however, firmly denies the possibility of any such development, although many privately acknowledge the existence of serious tensions between the predominantly Russian-speaking areas in the north and east and the predominantly ethnic Kazakh areas of the country.

### **A Cross-Country Comparison of Scenarios**

#### *Areas of Convergence*

Common to many specialists in all the countries is a critical, complex, and differentiated approach to the application of the four scenarios. Few find any one scenario in its pure form an adequate representation of a multifaceted and shifting reality. Distinctions are typically drawn between the immediate and the longer-term future, between different parts of the post-Soviet region, and between different issues and issue areas, such as economic, military, etc. Discussion with specialists also makes evident the need to introduce intermediate scenarios that combine features of two of the original scenarios. In particular, there is need for a scenario between Scenario 1 and Scenario 2, for integration involving elements of both voluntary cooperation and coercion, and for a scenario between Scenario 2 and Scenario 4, for cooperative integration that is constrained in such a way as to preserve the full sovereignty of participating states.

Turning to the attitudes of the specialists toward the specific scenarios, there is a fairly high degree of consensus regarding Scenarios 1 and 3, while much greater controversy surrounds Scenarios 2 and 4. Most specialists in all the countries agree that Scenario 1 is both infeasible and undesirable and that Scenario 3

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is undesirable but likely. They do not agree over either the feasibility or the desirability of Scenarios 2 and 4, although both are seldom viewed as particularly repugnant.

Specialists do not exclude the possibility that one or more attempts will be made by Russia to implement coercive integration (Scenario 1), but they believe that in view of Russia's current weakness such attempts will be unsuccessful and indeed counter-productive. Only a handful of Russian specialists consider this scenario in any way desirable, although many others do not distinguish clearly between Scenario 1 and Scenario 2, and it is widely assumed that Russia will be the most influential member of any integrated entity.

Unregulated disintegration (Scenario 3) is also regarded as highly undesirable by all but a handful of specialists. Most specialists regard it as the most undesirable of all the four scenarios. At the same time, in the light of their assessments of past and present trends within the post-Soviet region, the majority of specialists considers this scenario to be likely. The Kazakhstani specialists, most, but not all, of whom publicly deny the possibility of the disintegration of their country, constitute an apparent exception to this generalization. Systematic surveys of expert opinion in Kazakhstan, however, reveal that internal divisions are widely regarded as being among the most serious threats to national security.

### *Areas of Divergence*

The main division lies between those countries where many specialists regard cooperative integration (Scenario 2) as desirable, feasible, and at least moderately likely—i.e., Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan—and those countries in which this view is less prominent or completely absent, and the preferred scenario is the coexistence of fully sovereign and independent states (Scenario 4)—i.e., Ukraine and Georgia.

Nevertheless, there does exist an important middle ground between the two extreme positions concerning Scenarios 2 and 4.

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Many specialists regard both these scenarios as acceptable, even though they ideally prefer one of them over the other. There are also many, especially in Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, who seek to pursue a compromise variant that would reconcile integration with sovereignty.

There are many more specialists who grant the desirability in principle of Scenario 2 than who consider it likely or feasible. Even those who place the greatest emphasis on the experience, problems, and interests that the Soviet successor states share with one another do not downplay the subjective and objective obstacles facing the architects of integration. Most specialists recognize that the political and economic conditions that facilitated voluntary integration in postwar Western Europe do not prevail in the post-Soviet region. It is often argued, especially in Ukraine, that an attempt to implement Scenario 2 would, in practice, lead to Scenario 1—an argument that implies that cooperative integration would be desirable were it only feasible.

However, all Georgian, most Ukrainian, and some Belarusian specialists treat national sovereignty as an unquestioned basic value that integration of any kind would jeopardize. Their preference, and that of a substantial minority of their Russian colleagues, is clearly in favor of cooperative independence (Scenario 4). (Kazakhstani specialists also regard sovereignty as a fundamental value, but do not think that integration, suitably constrained, jeopardizes it.) There are, in addition, a number of Russian and Ukrainian specialists who regard the consolidation of fully independent successor states as the essential priority in the short term, while leaving open the possibility of some kind of voluntary integration of the post-Soviet region at a later stage.

Assessments of the feasibility of Scenario 4 vary and—as with Scenario 2—do not always correspond to judgments concerning its desirability. Although many Ukrainian specialists express confidence that independent statehood can and will be successfully consolidated, at least in their own country if not in other parts of the post-Soviet region, Georgian specialists are much less sure

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that their aspirations to genuine sovereignty will be realized in the foreseeable future.

*Implications: A Self-Defeating Dynamic*

There would appear to be ample scope for mutual accommodation between the supporters of different scenarios. A viable compromise would ensure that integration, where it occurs, is fully voluntary and preserves the sovereignty of each participating country to the degree chosen by its people. Thus one post-Soviet state—say, Belarus—may choose a tight confederal form of integration with Russia in accordance with Scenario 2; another state—Kazakhstan—may choose a somewhat looser form of integration between Scenario 2 and Scenario 4; and yet others—Ukraine, Georgia—may prefer to avoid integration altogether and consolidate completely independent statehood in accordance with Scenario 4. To a large extent, events have, in fact, been developing in this fashion.

The main problem with this solution is that it presupposes that Russia consistently accepts certain constraints. First, all elements of coercion must be excluded from Russia's pursuit of integration. Second, Russia must reconcile itself to the possibility that, for all its sincere efforts, some post-Soviet states will continue to reject even a cooperative version of integration—and, most painfully, to the possibility that one of these states will be Ukraine.

Unfortunately, these assumptions do not seem very realistic. There can be little doubt that coercive integration (Scenario 1) has influential supporters in Russia, even though few proponents of this view participated in this project. Many Russian specialists fail to distinguish clearly between coercive and voluntary integration (Scenarios 1 and 2). Moreover, it remains a common Russian attitude that integration is of limited value as long as it does not include Ukraine. While professing patience, many Russian advocates of integration nonetheless expect that eventually Ukraine will decide in favor of integration.

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The perception in the other post-Soviet states—sometimes exaggerated but hardly baseless—that Russia’s integration policy contains substantial elements of coercion only strengthens determination to consolidate fully independent statehood. Any inclination to explore the option of mutually advantageous cooperative integration is suppressed by the fear of Russian domination. Thus, the prospects for Scenario 2 are progressively undermined. As a result, the situation tends to evolve into an open confrontation between a Russia pursuing Scenario 1 and other post-Soviet states pursuing Scenario 4. As many participants in this project cogently argued, the most likely outcome of such a confrontation is neither Scenario 1 (for which Russia is too weak) nor Scenario 4 (for which the other states are too weak), but Scenario 3, unregulated disintegration.

We have here an example of the classical game of “chicken” as depicted by game theorists,<sup>24</sup> in which the simultaneous attempt by each party to achieve the outcome that it considers optimal leads to an outcome that each considers the worst possible. It can only be hoped that the self-defeating dynamic will be overcome by a sufficiently widespread understanding of the nature of the dilemma.



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## CHAPTER 3

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Overview

The security specialists who participated in this research were asked to make policy recommendations based on their analysis of any gap that might exist between their preferred future scenarios and their predicted scenarios. That is, they were asked to comment on what actions taken by their own government, other governments within and outside of the CIS, and regional and global institutions would increase the likelihood that the future would avoid those scenarios they found most abhorrent and would approximate their preferred scenarios.

This question was often a very difficult one for these specialists for several reasons. First, the heavy pressure of fast-moving and difficult decisions has occupied so much of their attention over the past decade that they have had little time to think much about long-term policy for the next decade. Second, independent policy analysis is still a relatively new phenomenon in most post-Soviet countries, and most participants have had little experience in making recommendations, especially for governments and institutions outside their own borders. Third, some of the nuances of policy analysis are also often lacking. Identifying and distinguishing between those factors that can be manipulated by policymakers and that can therefore produce change and those which are more or less beyond the control of policymakers is something with which most have had little prior experience. It is one thing to identify an outcome that one finds distasteful and quite something else to suggest what kinds of policy changes now might move the outcomes in a more favorable direction five or ten years from now. This requires asking a set of fundamental, but relatively new, questions: what kinds of changes can be made, by whom, and with what consequences?

Given the relative novelty of this approach and most specialists' lack of experience with it, the policy recommendations at

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times may seem general, vague, and unfocused. Nonetheless, several general and important policy conclusions emerged from this study, as well as several more specific recommendations addressed to particular countries or institutions. These are presented in this concluding section.

### **General Policy Dilemmas**

Perhaps the most widespread policy discussions focused on general warnings about unfolding events that ought to be avoided before they constitute vicious cycles.

The first of these, alluded to at the end of the previous section on scenarios, is the cross-pressure between independence and integration under Russian domination. On the whole, most policy analysts believe that some form of integration within the CIS region is desirable, usually so long as it is based on common interests, is voluntarily instituted, and does not detract significantly from national sovereignty. Yet some Russian specialists would like to see their government play a more active role in promoting integration, especially with the core group of Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. They believe that Russia alone can provide leadership and serve as the locomotive of integration.

At the same time, these Russian efforts are frequently perceived in the other countries as an effort to promote Russian hegemony throughout the former Soviet region. This stimulates their specialists to favor policies that will impede integration in all forms, and enhance cooperation among themselves, greater independence, and an expansion of relations outside the former Soviet Union. These policies are frequently perceived by Russian proponents of integration as anti-Russian, and this may prompt them to favor more coercive measures to achieve their desired goal of integration. This in turn may encourage the other newly independent states to pursue more radical independent policies and to resist Russian pressure with all means available. The danger that many foresee is that this could produce a vicious cycle that would promote further chaos and conflict in the post-Soviet region, the

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one outcome which almost all specialists most desperately seek to avoid.

A similar vicious cycle could also emerge when the role of the West is introduced into this situation. Russian specialists frequently perceive Western assistance to the other newly independent states as aimed at the disruption of Russia's ties with these countries and the exclusion of Russia from its natural sphere of influence. They fear that Russia may find itself isolated or even encircled by a hostile, Western-backed coalition. To avert this potential danger, some Russian specialists may wish to exert stronger pressure to accelerate integration, while others may seek to sow divisions within and among the newly independent states. Yet this may be perceived in the West as a new form of Russian imperialism, an attempt to recreate the former Soviet Union. Russian experts in particular emphasize that too often the West tends to base its policies on myths about Russia's past rather than current realities. Yet if these perceptions underlie Western policy analysis, they could stimulate the West to take up more anti-Russian policies, to enlarge NATO more rapidly so as to include as many new members as possible, and to oppose all forms of integration within the CIS. In other words, Russian fears could generate a self-fulfilling prophecy. The result of this vicious cycle might even turn into a new Cold War between Russia and the West.

Almost all analysts agree that it is essential to head off both of these interrelated vicious cycles. This leads to several more specific recommendations.

First, there is widespread support for the principle that Russian leaders and political elites must reconcile themselves to the reality that the Soviet Union no longer exists and cannot be restored in any form similar to its previous existence. Some nostalgia for the past will inevitably remain, but this ought not to interfere with a more realistic policy orientation by Russia toward the other newly independent states. This means that Russia must realize that the newly independent states will inevitably be pursuing ties with other states and regions outside the former

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Soviet Union, and efforts to block this will only be counterproductive. On the other hand, some integration is inevitable and even desirable. The economic and infrastructure linkages from the Soviet period cannot be ignored altogether. Furthermore, many goods produced within the region are not likely to find markets anywhere except in other post-Soviet states, so significant economic integration is likely to be beneficial to all parties.

However, to avoid setting off either of the vicious cycles noted above, Russian leaders must be cautious not to use coercion in their efforts to promote integration, nor should they promote integration as a tool to reduce or eliminate the effective sovereignty of other newly independent states. They must not view bilateral linkages among the newly independent states, new ties with countries outside the region, or aid from countries and organizations in the West as inherently inimical to Russian security interests. On the contrary, they should recognize and support the principle that the growth of stable, prosperous, and independent neighbors will, over the long term, also promote Russian security.

At the same time, the West must be cautious about interpreting Russian efforts to promote integration within the CIS as an inherently neoimperialist effort by Russian leaders to exert hegemony over former Soviet territory. In particular, the West must distinguish clearly between coercive attempts by Russia's leaders to use integration as a guise to dominate other countries, which the West should oppose, and other more cooperative efforts to integrate, toward which the West should adopt a more sanguine attitude. In fact, many experts argue that the West should aid integration within the CIS region, as the United States did in Western Europe through the Marshall Plan after World War II. Integration based on common historical and cultural ties, comparative economic advantage, existing infrastructure, and other common interests is not only natural, but in fact serves the long-term security interests of Western Europe, North America, and indeed the entire world.

There is also one broad paradox that emerges with regard to priorities for Western aid to the entire region. Many policy elites

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in the newly independent states believe that the West, especially the United States, has favored Russia in its assistance priorities, even though many Russian specialists perceive the situation to be the exact reverse. In reality, Western policy has shifted away from its heavily Russocentric focus in the early post Cold War years. Whereas Russian experts are worried about this shift and many would like to see it halted, their counterparts in the other newly independent states often argue that this shift is too little, too late. They frequently assert that the West is still too readily putting “all of its eggs in Yeltsin’s basket,” which many consider to be at best a risky gamble. Not surprisingly, many favor higher levels of Western direct aid to and investment in their countries to strengthen their independence; some even favor closer military cooperation with the West, especially with NATO. By shoring up the viability of Russia’s neighbors, they argue, they can best consolidate their independence, and at the same time serve Western interests by assuring that Russia cannot recreate a new superpower, once again capable of challenging Western interests on a global scale.

At the same time, most of these policy elites in the newly independent states surrounding Russia readily acknowledge that their security over the next decade depends, more than anything else, on the success of democratization and economic reform in Russia itself. Most of them believe that a democratic Russia with a thriving economy will not present major threats to their security and, in fact, will be an attractive partner with which to cooperate on economic, environmental, and other matters of common concern. On the other hand, the failure of democracy to take root in Russia and further economic distress are likely to strengthen nationalist and neoimperialist forces in Russia that almost certainly will become a threat to their security.

Many policymakers are uncomfortable, therefore, with the hard choices implied by this paradox, given their recognition that even Western Europe and the United States have limited resources to assist them in their efforts to democratize and reform their economies. Is it more important to assure stability in Russia so that it will no longer be a real threat to their security? Or is it more

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important to assure the viability of the newly independent states to resist whatever pressure Russia may apply if, in the future, it pursues a more aggressive policy in the “near abroad?” While many policy analysts in the newly independent states would like to have it both ways, they also find it difficult to express a clear preference when forced to choose in a world in which scarce resources may make it difficult or impossible to realize both goals simultaneously.

### **Specific Policy Recommendations**

#### *For the CIS States*

There is a widespread consensus within all five countries that the ability of their own governments to cope with the many demands of the post-independence transition will, more than anything else, affect their security interests for better or worse over the next decade. In most countries, there is widespread support for moving ahead with political and especially economic reforms, so that a turnabout in the domestic situation will soon become discernible to their public. Without such a clear commitment, public disillusionment could lead to political instability, which may cause many different economic policies to be pursued sporadically, resulting in further chaos and economic deterioration. Under these conditions, internal unity may become harder to preserve, and conflicts with secessionist regions may prove difficult to resolve. In several countries, domestic efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and the foundations for civil society were stressed; some experts note the importance of trying to construct multiethnic polities that respect the rights of minorities, rather than ethnocratic states dominated by a single ethnic group.

Views about CIS policies vary from country to country, but there is a frequent emphasis on the role that its institutions can play in policy coordination within the region. Russian specialists argue that Russia should welcome and encourage integration with states like Belarus that desire to integrate cooperatively, but at the same

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time Russia should be cautious not to appear to be assuming too much of a dominant role in these integrative arrangements. Belarusian specialists close to the Lukashenko government insist that the Russia-Belarus union can be a model for cooperative integration within the CIS, which should be emulated by other CIS member states. For them, the CIS should be the major institution through which they develop foreign and economic policy over the next decade.

In the view of some experts in all five countries, the CIS may provide a number of useful and desperately needed functions. The CIS may develop model legislation on issues such as interethnic relations or foreign investment laws, so that each country will not have to construct its own legislation from scratch. It may promote economic exchange, taking into account comparative advantage within the region. It may work out agreements on customs regulations and other aspects of interregional trade. It may aid in scientific and technical cooperation that had been disrupted by the break up of the Soviet Union. Yet most do not want the CIS to infringe upon national sovereignty, although they differ somewhat about where they draw the line when integration really begins to bite into sovereignty: in Georgia and Ukraine that line is drawn rather narrowly; in Kazakhstan it is drawn somewhat more liberally; and in Belarus a substantial degree of integration is thought to be possible without excessively restricting sovereignty. Several specialists, especially in Ukraine and Georgia, are particularly resistant to many of the military agreements made within the context of the CIS.

Most experts also emphasize that, however important some integration within the CIS might be, this does not alter the importance of establishing as many economic and political linkages as possible in all directions. Only through the diversification of their foreign policy orientations do they believe that they can avoid seeing the CIS, however valuable it may be, become dominated by Russia. Some experts suggest that to avoid the appearance of Russian domination, it is important that other states take the initiative in promoting integration, perhaps along the

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lines of the 1994 proposal by President Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan to create a Eurasian Union.

One issue of considerable difference emerged, regarding the policy of using Russian forces to patrol the external borders of the former Soviet Union. Although many Russian analysts are not enthusiastic about this policy, most think it is necessary to continue it, especially in places like Tajikistan, Armenia, and Georgia. They see numerous threats to their security lurking beyond those borders, not only political-military threats but also criminality and drug trafficking, and they fear that the local border forces simply do not have the capability to protect Russia's interests in those regions. Therefore, Russia has no choice but to continue to patrol some of the most vulnerable "external" borders. On the other hand, at least in Georgia, there is a great deal of criticism of this policy by security specialists who believe that it undermines Georgian sovereignty. Ukraine has refused to accept any Russian border patrols on its external borders, and for that matter so has Belarus, though that policy might change in the aftermath of the union agreement in 1997.

### *General Western Policy Orientations*

There is a great deal of concern that Western policy, if not pursued carefully, could exacerbate problems within the former Soviet Union and produce the opposite effects from those intended. Almost everyone agrees that more economic assistance, and especially more foreign investment from the West, is very desirable. Russians naturally tend to feel that they should be the principal recipient of such aid, because of the strategic importance of their country and the necessity of assuring a smooth transition to democracy and a market economy in the successor state to the former superpower. Policy specialists in the other newly independent states tend to believe that much aid to Russia is either wasted or, in a worst case scenario, might even contribute to Russia's ability to coerce them in the future. They, therefore, argue that aid should be concentrated where it can be expected to do the most



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good, namely shoring up the independence of those countries that are orienting their policies firmly in a westerly direction, such as Ukraine.

Many experts throughout the region caution Western policymakers not to overplay their hand in the region or to get involved in situations where they could exercise little positive influence. This applies particularly to relations among the CIS countries, where especially Russians and Belarusians emphasize that the West should not even appear to be doing anything to split these countries apart or to encourage a split between Russia and Ukraine, for example. In particular, according to many Russian specialists, the West should not adopt a hostile stance toward Russian involvement in its natural sphere of influence in the “near abroad.” Of course, experts in countries like Georgia tend to emphasize just the opposite, namely that the West ought to counter Russian moves, especially in the military domain, to exert hegemony over the “near abroad.” For example, Georgian specialists are critical of the revisions of the flank agreement in the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), which permitted increases in the quantity of heavy military armaments that Russia could deploy on its southern flank, near the border with Turkey, i.e., throughout most of the Caucasus region.

#### *NATO, Peacekeeping, and European Security Institutions*

Not surprisingly, the issue of NATO enlargement is widely debated throughout the region. Most specialists are quite supportive of both the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) within NATO and the Partnership for Peace, and most feel that these agreements have contributed to stability in the region. What is more controversial, however, is the extension of full NATO membership to former Warsaw Pact countries. In general, this move is supported only in Georgia, while it meets with mixed responses in Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, and it is frequently opposed altogether in Belarus.

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In Russia, the entry of a few Central European countries is not perceived as endangering its security directly as long as these countries remain free of nuclear weapons, foreign troops, and foreign military bases, and as long as enlargement takes place in close consultation with Russia, taking into account vital Russian security interests. More threatening, however, is that the first step of expansion taken in 1997 is just the beginning of a long-term process that eventually will lead to the inclusion of other post-Soviet countries, but probably not Russia, within the foreseeable future. The possibility of being encircled by NATO on the West, and potentially hostile Islamic countries along with China on the South, is of concern to Russian experts. They, therefore, oppose any hasty continuation of the policy of enlarging NATO. Even many liberal Russian analysts, who in no way fear a military threat from NATO, express concern about the possible effects of enlargement on Russian internal politics, because it is an issue that can be exploited readily by the most nationalistic and xenophobic of their politicians.

In Ukraine, the concern is different. NATO creates little or no fear in the minds of virtually all specialists in Ukraine as a direct military threat to their security. What they do fear, however, is being left as a buffer between NATO to the west and a more unified CIS (without their participation) to the east. Many analysts fear that Russia will respond to NATO enlargement by trying to strengthen the 1992 Tashkent Collective Security Treaty on military cooperation within the CIS, to which Ukraine does not subscribe. Mirroring NATO, this could eventually convert the Tashkent group of CIS countries into something approximating the Warsaw Pact. In such a scenario, Ukraine might find itself as the sole buffer between two hostile alliances, something it does not in the least relish. Not only would this put the country in an uncomfortable international position, but it might also reinforce internal differences within Ukraine as well. In short, while Ukrainians generally do not fear NATO expansion per se, they do worry about its effects on Russia, which will in turn have repercussions for their own security situation. Therefore, they urge NATO to proceed slowly and cautiously before enlarging further.

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Finally, in Kazakhstan, NATO expansion is believed to have few direct implications for the country's own security due to the geographic distance, but it is opposed largely because of the fear of its probable impact on Russian domestic politics. If NATO enlargement contributes to a more xenophobic and imperialistic Russian foreign policy, as many fear, then Kazakhstani security interests will be significantly affected.

Most specialists, including those in Russia, would prefer that responsibility for overseeing peacekeeping within the CIS region be undertaken by a multilateral institution with wider responsibilities than just the CIS, such as the OSCE or the United Nations. They insist that Russia and the CIS had no burning desire to undertake missions such as those in Georgia—in Abkhazia and South Ossetia—but that no other institution was willing to take on the task within the borders of the former Soviet Union. Insofar as these operations are carried out by the CIS, they also would prefer to see a wider range of countries playing more than their current token role.<sup>25</sup> However, most experts also acknowledge that other newly independent states lack both the resources and the political will to support peacekeeping without Western assistance, so that widespread participation generally will require the political and financial support of Western countries or institutions. Therefore, many specialists acknowledge that there may be no realistic alternative to the continuation of unilateral Russian peacekeeping throughout the CIS region. However, Russians would generally prefer to see the burden shared more widely, and the other newly independent states would prefer a situation in which the presence of Russian troops outside of Russia no longer can be used to influence the security of the countries in which they are stationed.

Indeed, there is widespread support for increasing the security role in this region of global and regional multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and the OSCE. The official Russian position that the OSCE and not NATO should be the cornerstone of the European security architecture is widely endorsed by specialists in most other countries as well. Both the United Nations

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and the OSCE are seen as preferable to NATO as a foundation for European security for two reasons: 1) Russia and the other newly independent states are all members, and thus have a say in the policies of these institutions, unlike NATO; and 2) The OSCE and the UN are viewed as transcending Cold War divisions, whereas NATO is still generally perceived as a legacy of the Cold War.

A NATO that provides military forces under the auspices of an institution such as the OSCE, as it has in Bosnia-Herzegovina, is viewed as much less threatening than a NATO that retains many of the central collective defense provisions based on Article 5. But the specialists insist that political authority ought to reside with truly pan-European institutions. The common Western argument to the effect that the OSCE is too weak to perform such a function because it is paralyzed by its “consensus” rule is generally dismissed by Russian experts. First, they note that the Russian proposal to strengthen OSCE seeks to prevent any state from vetoing OSCE action by creating a kind of security council modeled on the UN system within the OSCE, in which only a select set of major states would have an absolute veto. They also point out that NATO too operates on the basis of unanimity with regard to most important decisions, so that the effective difference is that within the OSCE consensus also requires the support of Russia. And this is precisely the advantage that the OSCE offers, namely that Russian interests must be taken into account. In this regard, the only real difference is that NATO excludes one or more critical parties whose cooperation is necessary to make Europe secure. For that very reason, Russian specialists, as well as many from other newly independent states, believe that it cannot really serve as a European “collective security” organization. Whatever NATO leaders may claim, its critics, especially those from Russia, contend that the Western alliance in effect continues to serve as a collective defense organization, except that after the end of the Cold War it is allegedly defending Western Europe against a nonexistent enemy.

Many experts would also like to see these multilateral organizations become more active as mediators to try to resolve internal

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conflicts, as the OSCE has done in Chechnya and mountainous Karabakh. A more active OSCE mediating role in South Ossetia or a more proactive UN role in Abkhazia, for example, would be welcomed by most Georgian experts who believe that the settlement of these conflicts is a prerequisite to moving ahead with almost all other aspects of reform and development in their country. Only in Belarus is the OSCE role viewed with suspicion by some specialists close to the government, who believe that it too often intervenes in a country's internal affairs by becoming preoccupied with alleged human rights violations rather than trying to settle conflicts.

Some specialists also would like to see other, smaller regional security organizations created. For example, experts in Ukraine and Georgia express interest in a Black Sea cooperative security organization, and some specialists from the nationalist opposition in Belarus favor the creation of a band of neutral countries extending from the Baltic states in the north through Ukraine and perhaps Moldova to the Black Sea in the south.<sup>26</sup>

### *Western Economic and Technical Assistance*

When it comes to economic assistance, there is not surprisingly a call for increases in Western aid for the economic transition in all five countries, again with the partial exception of Belarus. Most analysts, however, emphasize that direct grants of aid are not the most helpful form of assistance, in part because they too often end up in the wrong hands. Far more important is an increase in foreign investment. Here, too, it is acknowledged that their governments desperately need to reform the legal environment for private sector capital before it will start arriving in large quantities. Often the most effective incentive for reform of the legal and business environment comes when potential western investors indicate to their interlocutors in the governments of the newly independent states that they would be willing to invest in the region *if* certain reforms were instituted. These assurances may give governments an incentive to reform if they can be persuaded

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that their new policies will in fact lead to an increased flow of foreign direct investment. Western investment is valued not only for its intrinsic economic benefits, but also because, as one Kazakhstani specialist noted, it gives the West some interests to defend if Kazakhstan is threatened either internally or externally; similar arguments were advanced in Ukraine and Georgia as well.

Because of the many constraints on foreign economic assistance, however, many specialists emphasize that the most important forms of aid can come through training and education, either through support for educational institutions in the newly independent states or through greater opportunities for students and young scholars to go to the West for training. Ukrainian experts emphasize the importance of technical assistance delivered directly to the private sector to avoid official corruption. In Ukraine and Georgia, at least, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the World Bank are perceived to have generally played a positive role in stimulating reform, and their efforts to reduce official corruption are applauded. At the same time, the strict criteria applied by these institutions for loans and grants are often criticized. Some specialists argue that officials of these institutions do not sufficiently understand the economic, and especially the political, obstacles to the rapid reform of a centralized economy such as the one that had existed in the Soviet Union. Whereas these criteria may make abstract economic sense, they are too often insensitive to the hardships produced by these economic policies, which undermine public support for the reform process itself.

The one partial exception, where economic aid is not believed to be helpful by some, is Belarus. Some opposition specialists and nationalist political leaders urge the West to boycott the Lukashenko regime, so that their own population will realize dramatically the harm that their president has done to their country, both at home and abroad. These analysts fear that almost any aid and investment will simply strengthen the president's grip on power, and that this can be changed only by a concerted political and economic effort to isolate the regime. They also urge the West to provide open

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support to those leaders of parliament and other governmental institutions who lost their positions as a consequence of the 1996 constitutional referendum, which they regard as illegitimate. Similarly, they urge direct support for independent media and nongovernmental organizations, since the very existence of these institutions is threatened by the government; if they survive at all, it will only be due to direct Western involvement.

*Western Policies to Promote Democratization*

There is some debate within the region about the relative priority of economic versus political reform, and the degree to which they reinforce one another. In Belarus, specialists who support the government generally believe that democratization must be subordinated to the urgent need for economic development, and there is considerable skepticism about the possibility of economic development taking place on a democratic basis in poor, transitional countries. In Kazakhstan, as well, the first priority rests with economic development, and whatever democratization takes place must not, in the view of security specialists close to the government, undermine the stability brought to the country by the leadership of President Nazarbaev. As one specialist remarked: "In Kazakhstan we want a little democracy, but not too much!"

By contrast, in Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia there is a more widespread belief that economic reform and democratization can reinforce one another and are best pursued in tandem. There is considerable frustration at the difficulty of persuading public opinion to tolerate the clear costs of economic reform, with the result that governments committed to reform may be brought down by the very democratic processes that they sought to establish. Nonetheless, most specialists in these countries hope that Western institutions will continue to support policies that balance the requirements of economic reform with the promotion of democratic practices.

Security specialists throughout the region also emphasize the important role that civil society can play in the transition process,

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not only to ensure greater political stability at home, but also to reduce the risk that political extremists may come to dominate foreign policy. Therefore, they stress that Western aid should focus on support for nongovernmental organizations, independent news media, and independent research institutes throughout the region. NATO's Partnership for Peace is widely accredited with playing a positive role in demonstrating the important principle of civilian control over the military as a foundation of a democratic society.

Democracy, however, must not be equated with elections or other procedural formalities alone. Democracy can only become institutionalized when there is a fundamental change in public attitudes about the relationship between the people and their government. The nostalgia for the personal security that the Soviet system provided for most of the population will not disappear quickly from the mentality of the citizens of all former Soviet countries. The West must thus show patience and understanding, especially when transitional democratic processes may produce outcomes that are disturbing to many in the West. But over the long run, most specialists believe that the strengthening of democracy in their own countries will increase the likelihood that they will be able to cooperate peacefully to resolve disputes within their own countries, with one another, and with the rest of the world.



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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>These two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, and the distinction is often blurred. Furthermore, the usage generally employed in Soviet times, and which still prevails in the region, is different from the usual definition found in the Western legal tradition. In this report, we use the distinction most familiar to our respondents in the former Soviet region. Independence refers to a condition in which a state is recognized as an autonomous entity in international relations. Sovereignty, on the other hand, is not necessarily absolute, but may be shared or partially relinquished to another entity; one may thus refer to various gradations of sovereignty. Each of these terms also may be used to identify both *de jure* and *de facto* status. On the one hand, a territorially based entity may be recognized *de jure* as sovereign and/or as an independent state by other states in the international community (and typically admitted into membership in major international organizations such as the UN), and, on the other hand, this formal recognition may be absent but an entity may *de facto* have a high degree of autonomy from outside control and have authority (or “sovereignty”) over a wide range of issues on a specific territory.

<sup>2</sup>This research project has been supported throughout by grants from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and from the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies at Brown University.

<sup>3</sup>A partial exception may be found in the chapter on policies dealing with recommendations for Western governments and institutions. Often specialists within the former Soviet republics were reluctant to make specific policy recommendations to governments other than their own. Therefore, the coordinators in the United States have attempted to draw implications from the analysis presented in the project conferences, and from meetings with representatives of Western governments and international organizations in each of the countries, in drawing up policy recommendations.

<sup>4</sup>This term is used instead of the more widely used, but Russo-centric, reference to the Transcaucasus.

<sup>5</sup>It is important to emphasize that our use of the word disintegration to describe one end of this continuum does not imply, as sometimes suggested by the word, that disintegrative processes must be chaotic or even conflictual. We use the term in a much more neutral sense to refer to any effort of states or regions to pull away from one another (centrifugal tendencies), and this result may thus be achieved by cooperative as well

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as by coercive means. To make this clear, we have named the fourth scenario “cooperative independence” rather than “cooperative disintegration.”

<sup>6</sup>Reports on each of the individual national conferences may be obtained by contacting the project coordinators at the Watson Institute at the telephone numbers provided inside the cover of this report.

<sup>7</sup>Referring to territories outside the perimeter of the former Soviet Union, i.e., the rest of the world minus the former Soviet republics (“near abroad”).

<sup>8</sup>No Abkhazians attended the conference in Tbilisi. There were, however, two representatives from South Ossetia.

<sup>9</sup>As this report went to press, in late Summer 1997, face-to-face negotiations between the Georgian government and Abkhazia, mediated by Russia, were finally under way.

<sup>10</sup>Approximately one-third of the population of Kazakhstan is of Slavic, mostly Russian, ethnic background and is increasingly concentrated in the half-dozen northern provinces bordering the Russian Federation. No Slavic specialist from the north attended the conference in Almaty.

<sup>11</sup>This claim was asserted more authoritatively in a famous decree by President Yeltsin, “On the Consolidation of the Strategic Course of the Relations Between the Russian Federation and the CIS Member-States,” issued on September 14, 1995.

<sup>12</sup>This “Soviet” view is advocated by leftist parties of the opposition in Russia and Ukraine, but is rarely expressed by security specialists.

<sup>13</sup>There are specialists from the regions, on the other hand, who believe that the central government is really concerned about disintegrative trends and is trying to crack down on regional autonomies. See, for instance, Ildus G. Ilishev, “Tightening the Federation: Will Russia’s Autonomies Disappear?” *Analysis of Current Events* 9, no. 7 (July 1997): 6-8.

<sup>14</sup>According to a representative survey conducted by the Kiev International Institute of Sociology in March 1997, 65 percent of Crimean respondents believe that “Ukraine and Russia should unite in one state,” compared to 26 percent throughout Ukraine.

<sup>15</sup>At the conference in Almaty, the ambivalence of specialists was also expressed by a decidedly more Russian-oriented stance among the participants from the military, compared to their civilian colleagues.

<sup>16</sup>For a recent optimistic presentation of the potential for integration, see the article by Aman Tuleyev, Russia’s former Minister for Cooperation with the CIS Countries, “What Integration is For,” *Russian Executive and*

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*Legislative Newsletter* 56, no. 4 (1997). Also rather optimistic is the assessment of the prospects for integration prepared by a group of Russian experts, publicists, parliamentarians, and industrialists first published in *Nezavisimaya gazeta* [*Independent Newspaper*] and made available in English by the Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government: "Will the Union be Reborn? The Future of the Post-Soviet Region—A Statement by the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy" (Cambridge, Mass: June 1997). Somewhat more cautious analyses of the progress of integration are periodically published by the Center for International Studies at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, directed by Andrei Zagorsky.

<sup>17</sup>This is a point commonly made by supporters of integration "on a new basis" in other countries also.

<sup>18</sup>The explicit advocacy of the use of coercive means does find occasional expression even in the mainstream Russian press. For example, in the March 26, 1997, issue of *Nezavisimaya gazeta* [*Independent Newspaper*] there appeared a long, anonymous article entitled "The CIS: Beginning or End of History?" This article set out a detailed strategy for the coercive use of economic and military power to preserve and strengthen Russia's control in its "near abroad." It was later revealed that the authors of this article were Andranik Migranyan, a member of the Presidential Council, and Konstantin Zatulin, director of the Institute for CIS Studies.

<sup>19</sup>There is a gap between elite and public opinion in Ukraine regarding integration. Although only a minority of specialists favor integration, a majority of the public does so, with the strongest support coming from the eastern provinces. Thus, a SOCIS-Gallup survey conducted shortly after the agreement in April 1996 to create a Russian-Belarusian "Commonwealth" revealed that 48 percent of the Ukrainian population were positively disposed toward the agreement and only 19 percent negatively. See Aleksandr Stegnii, "The Russian-Belarusian 'Anschluss' in the Eyes of the Population of Ukraine" [in Russian], *Zerkalo Nedeli* [*Weekly Mirror*], June 22, 1996.

<sup>20</sup>The confusing terminology used by President Lukashenko and his supporters may sometimes give the impression that the regime seeks the complete absorption of Belarus by Russia, but close study of official statements shows that this is not really so. However, even supporters of integration are willing to admit in private conversations that a high degree of effective domination by Russia within the Russia-Belarus Union is inevitable.

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<sup>21</sup>For a persuasive exposition of these ideas, see Svetlana Naumova, “‘Integration’ as a Social Utopia of Post-Soviet Political Consciousness,” *Vector: Belarusian Journal of International Politics*, no. 1 (1997): 12-14.

<sup>22</sup>The Russian Foreign Ministry advocates the joint exploitation of Caspian Sea resources by the five littoral states: Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Iran. Kazakhstan and other post-Soviet littoral states tend to favor the demarcation of the sea’s shelf into separate sectors under the exclusive jurisdiction of each state.

<sup>23</sup>See, for instance, Oumirserik Kasenov, “On the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge,” *Kazakhstan and the World Community*, no. 2 (1996): 50-58.

<sup>24</sup>Chicken was a game occasionally played by American teenagers in the 1950’s. Two drivers would send their cars toward one another on a single-lane road. The driver who continued on a straight line, while the other swerved to avoid a collision, was branded a “hero” by his peers, whereas the one who swerved, was called “chicken” (coward). As represented by game theorists, the first preference for both drivers is to go straight when the other swerves; the second preference is when both swerve simultaneously so that the status of being a coward is mitigated by the fact that both drivers behaved that way. The third preference is to swerve while the other goes straight and to be branded as a chicken; and the least favorable outcome for both is when both continue straight ahead into an inevitable collision in which both drivers are certainly killed. The “paradox” of the game is that, when both parties remain irrevocably committed to their first preference and refuse to swerve, the inevitable outcome is the least favorable result in which both are killed. This may frequently happen even though there is a jointly preferred outcome in which both swerve to avoid an accident and each receives the second best result.

<sup>25</sup>This view may not be shared by many senior Russian military officers.

<sup>26</sup>They had also favored the inclusion of Poland in this arrangement, but acknowledge that this is impossible after it joins NATO, a step that they regret, because it makes this coalition of neutral states extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea more difficult to create.

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