

REVIEWS

Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in Russian National Identity*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 5th edition, 2019.

This monograph offers a comprehensive overview of Russian foreign policy from the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev to the current era of Vladimir Putin (1985–2019). It focuses primarily, yet not exclusively on the relations between Russia and the West, especially the relationship of Moscow with Washington. The author identifies three different schools of thought that struggle for supremacy in Russian foreign policy: Westernizers, Statists, and Civilizationists. While these three schools claim to serve Russian national interest, their approach differs widely: Westernizers strive to modernize the country and seek close, amicable relations with the United States and Europe; Statists see Russia as a threatened state that needs to sustain its great power status *coûte que coûte* while Civilizationists claim that Russia has a distinct Eurasian culture that puts it in constant conflict with the West. Tsygankov argues that these schools have existed since the times of Peter I—also during Soviet times—and continue to be influential today. In contrast to the mainstream in Russian history he does not see the trajectory of Russia as determined by the elite's efforts to modernize the country using a strong and authoritarian state.

The starting point of his historical narrative is Mikhail Gorbachev's tenure. The author does not make an effort to explain the specific problems posed by the Cold War. Rather, he interprets Gorbachev as a shift from statist policies under Leonid Brezhnev to the Westernizing school that gained upper hand from 1985 onwards. While Tsygankov gives Gorbachev credit for ending the costly confrontation with the West and making Europe more secure, he laments his "loss of control" and ultimately his "capitulation to the West." Thus, despite his achievements for international peace Gorbachev and his policies are seen as a failure because they did not serve the interests of the USSR as a great power.

Without further discussion, the author assumes a continuity of statehood and policy from the USSR to post-communist Russia. While there are good reasons for this view—perhaps most of all the persistence of foreign policy elites—it would have been interesting to discuss how the collapse of the USSR altered Moscow's possibilities. The political system had changed fundamentally. The CPSU and Marxist ideology no longer dictated policy and the end of the outer Soviet empire in Eastern Europe created a new geopolitical situation. The author's focus on the relations between Moscow and the United States, however, seems to have prevented a discussion about the playing field that emerged after 1991. According to the author, the main shift is not the loss of the Soviet realm of influence but a further radicalization of the Western school in Russian diplomacy during the early tenure of Boris Yeltsin. Andrei Kozyrev, the new foreign minister, is described as a radical westernizer who favored not only the integration of post-communist Russia in international institutions, but the country's integration into the West by adopting a liberal system and democratic values. Kozyrev tried to use the collapse of the USSR to reinvent Russia as a western nation. From the beginning of his tenure, his policies faced strong opposition from the Russian establishment. Similar to Gorbachev, Kozyrev is described by the author as a failure and his policies as naive and flawed.

In early 1996 Yeltsin replaced Kozyrev with Yevgeny Primakov, a statist and an expert on the Middle East with a background in the secret services. Primakov ended Moscow's decade-long flirtation with the West and began to re-establish Russia as a sovereign power in its own right. Despite the economic weakness and internal turmoil of the 1990s Primakov no longer wished to integrate the country with the West. Rather, his intention was to balance Western power and to restrict the hegemony of the United States in the unipolar post-Cold War system. Under Primakov several new fields of conflict between Russia and the West emerged: the Balkans, NATO expansion, and Western promotion of democracy were prominent among them. Primakov tried to strengthen Russia's position in the post-Soviet space. Despite deepening rifts, especially over the role of NATO in Europe,

Primakov tried to maintain a stable working relationship with the West. The NATO campaign against Serbia in 1999, however, marked the end of his pragmatic relationship with the United States.

After Vladimir Putin's rise to power the new president has become the dominant figure in Russian foreign policy. During his first term, Putin sought pragmatic cooperation with the West as well as Russian domination in the "near abroad," i.e. the post-Soviet states. Tsygankov portrays Russia in the new millennium as constantly reacting to challenges posed by the West, especially the United States. This is a problematic take as for most Western countries Russia was initially a peripheral problem. It says more about Russian perception of the West than about the realities of the past decades. The anti-Western stance first publicly outlined by Putin in his Munich speech of February 2007 is labelled by Tsygankov as a period of new "assertiveness" in foreign policy—a euphemism for the neo-imperial and anti-liberal turn taken by Russia. While Dmitry Medvedev (2008–2012) briefly returned to a policy of cooperation with the West to foster economic modernization, Putin radicalized his approach upon his return to power in 2012, culminating in the annexation of Crimea, the subsequent invasion of Ukraine, and the campaign in Syria. The author continues to describe Russia's "assertiveness" as a reaction to the West and downplays the role of military force after 2014. In my view, the one-sided narrative of the chapters on Putin may disqualify the monograph as a textbook for schools and colleges.

Overall, the weaknesses outweigh the strengths of Tsygankov's interpretation. The author is often close to the official position of the Russian foreign office and disconnected from scholarship. Methodologically, the book carries many assumptions that may be challenged, e.g. it often points to the popularity of Putin's policies citing polls without questioning how polling in a closed society functions and what this data may actually tell us. Overall, Tsygankov's methodology underestimates the role of ad hoc decisions so typical for Russia and of individual actors that have shaped these past decades. The book has surprisingly little to say about such towering figures as Gorbachev, Primakov, or even Putin.

Important countries that influenced Russian foreign relations after communism like the United Kingdom, Germany, or Israel are hardly mentioned. Many crucial developments are not systematically discussed; these include the role of the secret services and of active measures, the use of military force and frozen conflicts, the politics of history, the concept of “sovereignty” for the Russian elite and, perhaps most crucially, the connection between internal repression and aggressive foreign policy under Putin as well as in the USSR.

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Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War: The Sino–Soviet Competition for the Third World*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2019.

You could say that I was born into the Sino–Soviet split. My grandfather Agey Gatov spent almost two decades in war-torn China, first as an adviser to the Kuomintang and later the Communist Party; by the mid-1950s he had established himself as one of the key experts on the internal divisions within the CPC (he personally knew not only all the “marshals of the Revolution” but almost the entire Beijing leadership). Growing up in my Sinologist grandfather’s household, I learned about Mao, Deng, Wan Min, Gao Gan, and Chzhou Enlai not from obscure Soviet mass propaganda but from people who knew them personally and—were literally on the frontline of the “Shadow Cold War.”

Whilst reading Prof. Friedman’s book, I could not escape these childhood recollections: it is not just the familiarity of the plot and narrative arc, but also some very particular ideological emphases that we tend to overlook today. The sudden resurgence of words such as “revisionists,” “maoists,” “pseudo-revolutionaries,” “opportunists” somehow takes one back into the strange world of the 1960s–1970s.