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FORMER SOVIET UNION

Sergei Medvedev

The meaning of security has visibly changed in today’s world. Alongside, and in some cases replacing, traditional security concerns (essentially military and strategic issues), new threats to the integrity of states and the welfare of their citizens now present themselves. These new concerns include environmental degradation, resource scarcity, demographic risks and large-scale uncontrolled migration, social strife, violence and insurrection, organized crime and drug trafficking, transnational terrorism, and a number of others. While traditional security used to deal primarily with armed conflict, the “new security” agenda is more ambiguous and diffuse in its causes and effects.

Although many of the new security threats can be considered global phenomena, some regions are more affected than others. In this sense, one of the most challenged areas is the former Soviet Union (FSU). Two reasons stand out for this. The first is the legacy of the Soviet system and in particular seventy years of often reckless experimentation with nature and society (Kagansky 1995a, 1995b; Kordonsky 1995; Medvedev 1995b, 1997a; Paperny 1996). This laid the basis of many nontraditional security challenges in the post-Soviet era. The second reason is the structural weakness of the states and societies that succeeded the Soviet Union to effectively address the new security threats.

Taken together, these two factors have created an explosive “Molotov cocktail,” turning the new security agenda in the FSU into a subject of particular concern for the international community. This chapter will examine each of the principal new security challenges facing the FSU
in greater detail, specifically: environmental degradation, resource scarcity, population dynamics and migration, civil violence and insurrection, terrorism, and organized crime as well as a number of less significant concerns. Before turning to these issues, it is useful to begin with a general overview of the social and political framework for security debates in the FSU as well as a brief description of their principal characteristics and limitations.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FRAMEWORKS OF SECURITY DEBATES

While many of the new security challenges that have emerged following the end of the cold war and the collapse of the bipolar order are global in scope, the breakup of the Soviet Union and loss of political control has undoubtedly aggravated their impact across the Eurasian landmass. A new highly volatile situation has taken shape in all the states of the FSU that is not at all conducive to addressing the new security agenda. Several reasons account for this.

The first is the lack of social responsibility. The post-Soviet epoch has been characterized variously as an “irresponsible society,” a “risk society,” and a “crisis society” (Lapin and Beliayeva 1994). Some sociologists even use terms like “anticivilization” (or “archaization” [Yerasov 1996, 60]) and “antisystem” (Makhnach 1994, 1). In coming to grips with the new reality of post-Communism and the market, the political horizon of this crisis society is short-term and preoccupied with day-to-day problems. And even if these daily concerns involve such matters as organized crime or uncontrolled migration, the crisis society is more likely to respond in an ad hoc and reactive fashion than with a long-term strategic perspective. The reality of the post-Communism transitional period is that there is little societal or political space for the new security agenda to be consistently and effectively addressed. As Klaus Segbers observes, there is “little domestic use for most of the international and trendy topics.” He concludes that

the main operational modes for almost all FSU-actors are выживание and адаптация (survival and adaptation), not design and influence. Beyond these immediate concerns, there is also a widespread lack of intention to organise politics as such, and to do something constructive
at the nation-state level. So most post-Soviet elites act in a given context according to certain (but shifting) rules with the aim to position themselves in a fluid situation; they have no primary interest to build or shape a new world order or to resolve Balkan or demographic or ecological crises. (Segbers 1995, 18–19)

Second, compounding the inattention to vital issues is the weakness of governmental mechanisms to address them. Despite oversized bureaucratic apparatuses and much political activity, all FSU states are in a sense politically inoperative (Medvedev 1995a, 106–110). Absent are effective mechanisms of decision making and implementation (Segbers 1995, 18). This reflects a larger structural problem (De Spiegeleir 1995, 62–65), in which many states in the FSU have come to serve the interests of pressure groups rather than the collective good of their citizenry. It does not help matters, moreover, that there are severe budgetary pressures resulting in limited funds for programs like environmental protection, migration control, or social welfare. For example, in 1995, Russia’s Federal Migration Service received only 608 billion rubles out of the 1.46 trillion it was allocated in the state budget (Dmitriev 1996, 57).

Third, civil society in all FSU countries is inherently weak. By definition a civil society did not exist in the USSR, since society and state were a single entity. As a result, a civil society remains very underdeveloped. There are very few societal organizations, or networks, through which a dialogue on vital problems facing the entire society can be conducted. (The only exceptions are environmental organizations, a point to be discussed below.) In general, individuals identify themselves with certain localities, rather than with society, while family-type private links prevail over civic ones. The nongovernmental (NGO) sector is virtually non-existent. With such low levels of public participation, there is little or no upward pressure on politicians to address many of the new security issues.

Fourth is an inability to define meaningful national interests in FSU states. An authoritative panel of political analysts, convened at the Moscow-based Institute of the World Economy and International Relations to discuss Russia’s national interests and security agenda in 1996, found it virtually impossible to formulate Russia’s national and security interests at a level other than political declarations (“Konseptsiya natsional’nykh interesov” 1996). According to one of the participants, the formation of national interests takes place in two spheres: the state and
the civil society (Krasin 1996, 81), and since both are essentially weak, security issues are marginalized or confined to mere political rhetoric.

Fifth is the lack of internal FSU cooperation and coordination. With the drive to assert national statehood still strong, national political elites often view any kind of interstate organization within the FSU as an infringement on their independence and a threat to their sovereignty (this is especially true in the Baltic States, Ukraine, and Turkmenistan). There is also a widespread distrust of Russia as a territorially and politically dominant nation. Thus, from the very outset the interstate mechanisms established under the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) never became very effective (Medvedev 1993a); about 75 percent of decisions are not implemented. Regional initiatives or bilateral treaties hold better hopes for addressing nontraditional security issues, but still the level of interstate cooperation is dramatically below what is needed to meet the demands of the new security agenda.

The sixth reason is the lack of reliable statistics in FSU states. The collection of reliable statistics that is necessary for an informal debate about many of the new security challenges is almost impossible in the FSU. The reasons are manifold, ranging from people’s traditional distrust of interviewers as agents of the state to unwillingness to provide information on sensitive topics such as income, ethnic background, occupation, and victimization.

In summary, the post-Soviet framework is not conducive to addressing the new security agenda. Despite their differences, all FSU states share a common Soviet legacy. Each has inherited a heavily damaged natural and social environment that either causes or exacerbates a host of new security challenges like pollution, resource scarcity, ethnic and societal tensions, and organized crime. Each also suffers from the same post-Soviet weaknesses that prevent them from articulating their interests with respect to these challenges, and from developing societal and administrative structures to tackle them. Despite a clear and present danger, society remains frozen in the face of a menace.

POST-SOVIE T DISCUSSIONS
ABOUT THE MEANING OF SECURITY

Security debates in the FSU by and large remain the domain of professional security experts, with the wider public largely excluded. As a
consequence, thinking on security is still dominated by traditional concepts and notions familiar to state bureaucracies and academic communities: military issues, arms control, conflict management, peacekeeping, etc. An instructive example is provided by the current Russian debate on enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which for the last three years has largely monopolized questions of "security" in the public consciousness and mass media. Other albeit less prominent issues include the debates on the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START-2 and START-3), the division of strategic assets between Russia and Ukraine, in particular the Black Sea Fleet, the deployment of the Russian troops and bases in the "near abroad," and guarding the southern border of the CIS against a possible "Islamic" offensive. These issues have preoccupied post-Soviet political elites not only because they are often seen as more pressing but also because they yield political dividends in a much shorter time than nontraditional security concerns.

Security debates in the FSU are also frequently manipulated and distorted for political and ideological reasons. The discussion of security issues, including nontraditional ones, often becomes a means to promote ideas of nationalism, anti-Western sentiments in Russia (e.g., claiming that Russia becomes a "dumping site" or a "resource colony" of the West), or anti-Russian sentiments in other FSU states (conversely claiming that the "big brother" exhausts their national resources or imposes nuclear power plants on them), or a bargaining chip in relations between government and the opposition. For example, in Russia, for the second consecutive term the parliamentary Committee on Security is controlled by the communist opposition (Chairman Viktor Ilyukhin), and its pronouncements on such issues as organized crime, terrorism, and ecology are frequently more about scoring political points than finding a solution to the problem.

In this highly politicized environment, only those aspects of the new security agenda which offer short-term political dividends are put forward, although the actual importance of these challenges might be somewhat secondary. Recent examples of issues that have gained prominence in this fashion include information security, economic security, and even spiritual security.

Finally, security debates are typically initiated by the state and, as a rule, stay within state structures. In the Russian language, "bezopasnost" (security) is still largely considered "delo gosudarevo" (Czar's business), and
therefore something in which ordinary citizens should not meddle. Not surprisingly, law enforcement and security agencies monopolize the debate on security. This can be readily seen in Russia, where federal security agencies continue to dominate the security debate. These include the Security Council (SB), the Ministry of the Interior (MVD), the Federal Security Service (FSB, a heir to the KGB), and the Federal Agency of Governmental Communications and Information (FAPSI). In addition, there are many research institutes closely connected to them, or financed by them: the Academic Board within the Security Council, the Expert Council within the Government of the Russian Federation, the FSB Academy, the Research Institute of Security Issues, and some others (Pirimov 1995; Lazarev 1995; Leskov 1995; Semyonov 1995; Samarin 1995).

A considerable input to the debate is made by the RAU Corporation, a powerful analytical unit which, like its quasi-namesake the RAND Corporation in the United States, has a strong influence in federal bodies of the legislative and the executive branches. It is closely linked to the federal security services and largely financed by Inkombank, a bank known for its patriotic character. RAU’s periodical Obozrevatel’—Observer, the annual White Book of Russia’s Security Services (Belaya kniga 1995, 1996), and a number of other publications (Natsional’naya doktrina Rossi [Russia’s national doctrine] 1994; Kontseptsiya natsional’noi bezopasnosti [National security concept] 1995) give a systematic treatment of traditional security issues, and often cover the new security agenda. However, it is hard to call them objective and nonpartisan: All their publications have the clear backing of state agencies, security services, and especially the patriotic faction of Russia’s ruling elite.

The involvement of the academic community in security debates is rather limited, although the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAN) has set up a Center for Social Studies of Security (Serebryannikov 1995). Of dozens of research institutes in the RAN network, only the Institute of Scientific Information on Social Sciences (INION) has shown particular interest in the new security agenda by notably organizing a series of seminars on global security issues in late 1994 and early 1995 (Parkhalina 1995).

Other academic institutes are typically involved in the new security debate on an ad hoc basis. For instance, the Institute of Europe of the
Russian Academy of Sciences studied some aspects of the new security agenda (transnational terrorism, environmental protection, migration issues) in the late 1980s and early 1990s as part of a wider concept of the "Common European Home," promoted by the USSR leadership at that time. But since this pan-European project fell into oblivion, the institute abandoned most of these studies.

Despite the generally conservative, politically charged, and state-dominated nature of post-Soviet security debates, there is nevertheless a growing public awareness of the scope of nontraditional problems across the FSU. The official statements of government authorities also increasingly acknowledge these problems. The Russian Security Council, for example, in November 1993 approved a new national security and military doctrine that reflected a definite shift toward nontraditional security concerns. It viewed the following factors as major challenges to domestic stability: the creation of illegal armed groups; organized crime; corruption; smuggling; the illicit proliferation of weapons, munitions, explosives, and other means used for subversion and terrorist acts on the territory of Russia; drug trafficking; attacks on the facilities of nuclear, chemical, and biological industries and other facilities; and attacks on arsenals, arms depots, and arms enterprises with the aim of capturing weapons ("Basic Provisions" 1994, 15–17). Some "new factors" that threaten the security of the individual, the society, and the nation were also mentioned by the Russian Minister of the Interior Anatoly Kulikov in 1995 during his comments on security challenges facing Russia in the 1990s.

In this sense, the post-Soviet debate on nontraditional security is beginning to take shape and thus lends itself to analysis. The following sections will examine the most important of the new security challenges as identified by government authorities, security experts, public opinion, and in some cases NGOs. It is important to note, however, that it is not always clear whether these challenges are thought to be "security" threats or just newly emerging national problems. At the very least, however, even when the term "security" is not explicitly stated, the nature of the concern is more or less the same, namely, the threat to the integrity of the state (including its institutional survival) and the welfare of the population (including its physical survival). This can be described as a "quasi-security," or "pre-security," awareness, something that experts and officials within and between regions share in common.
NEW SECURITY CHALLENGES

Environmental Degradation

Ecological problems rank high on the post-Soviet agenda and have been described by numerous observers as security threats (Belous 1993; Moiseev 1995; Belaya kniga 1996, 56–57, 164–167; Minin 1996, 5; Klyuev 1996; Pisarev, 1996). Three major types of post-Soviet environmental threats can be identified.

The first is the high probability of massive industrial and technological accidents that damage the environment (see table 1). This problem derives from the continued use of old equipment and outmoded technologies as well as social strains (wage arrears, unemployment) and psychological stress among workers (Mozgovaya 1990; Minin 1996). In the last decade, the entire area of the FSU has been plagued by a series of industrial disasters, starting with the Chernobyl catastrophe in 1986, the consequences of which are still being felt (“Chernobyl 10 Years Later” 1996). In 1996 alone, industrial accidents caused approximately US$200 million worth of damage in Russia (Dybsky 1996). Of particular concern is the condition of the huge Soviet oil and gas pipeline infrastructure, the total length of which amounts to almost half a million kilometers (Weissenburger 1996). Russian official data reports that there are on average ten accidents per every 10,000 kilometers each year (Minin 1996, 5), all of which pollute the air, land, and water and sometimes entail loss of human life. Pipelines have also become a frequent object of terrorist attacks, especially in the North Caucasus and the Transcaucasia (Chechnya, Daghestan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia).

The second major risk derives from the processing and disposal of radioactive and toxic materials, including chemical weapons (Belous 1993; Moszhorin 1993). The risk of radioactive contamination is highest at uranium enrichment and nuclear weapons storage facilities (the Urals, the Krasnoyarsk Territory), atomic research institutions (located in many big cities, including Moscow), and nuclear test sites (Semipalatinsk in Kazakhstan and the Novaya Zemlya islands in the Arctic Ocean), as well as at military and naval bases (e.g., in the Kola Peninsula near Norway [Bogle 1996]). Many experts also believe that the national security of the CIS states is endangered by the increased “import” of industrial and toxic waste from the West, especially given that their disposal facilities are already overloaded (Belaya kniga 1996, 56).
The third major risk concerns the pollution from various forms of economic activity, although this is not such a pressing concern due to the recent slump in industrial production in all post-Soviet states. However, analysts believe that if and when the FSU economies pick up, the rate of industrial pollution will outpace economic technologies growth, since in most enterprises environmentally friendly technologies are still lacking (Klyuev 1996, 76). With respect to this particular risk, the most heavily affected areas of the FSU territory are cities, especially since many of them were established by centralized planning as “mill towns” linked to particular industries (e.g., cities with a population over 100,000 people in East Ukraine, the Urals, South Siberia, and on the Volga).

Concern over these environmental risks provides one of the few areas where civil society participates in the new security debate. From the 1980s, especially the second half of the decade, environmental discourse became an early focal point for a revival of national consciousness. This occurred, for example, in Russia with the movement for the rescue of Lake Baikal and in Lithuania and Ukraine with the popular movements for the closure of the Ignalina and Khmelnitsky nuclear power stations, respectively. Later, during the perestroika years, “eco-nationalism” was instrumental in a number of national and civil movements getting public attention, seats in parliaments, and in some cases coming to power (Dawson 1996). By 1992, there were 818 environmental organizations in the FSU, from local action groups to established parties like the Green Party and the “Cedar” movement in Russia (Kofanova and Krotov 1992).

Thereafter, as political stability returned and public mobilization decreased in most of the FSU, environmental activism became more specialized and professional, and less a mass movement (Ekologicheskoye dvizheniye 1996); but its legacy has remained. There is now greater awareness of environmental issues in most post-Soviet nations, although it is a far cry from an ecological consciousness.

Largely as a reaction to the public’s involvement, post-Soviet states have become engaged in the debate and have initiated programs to meet the environmental challenge. A Commission for Environmental Security has been set up within the Russian Security Council, and part of its effort has been the development of a 1994 presidential decree enacting a strategy of sustainable development for Russia (“Ukaz Prezidenta” 1994, 94). However, state efforts are largely constrained by the inherent difficulties of the transition period mentioned above (Pryde 1996).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Security Issue</th>
<th>Main Areas of Concern</th>
<th>Degree of Emergency</th>
<th>Public Awareness, Informed Debate, Academic Research</th>
<th>State Policy and/or Civil Action</th>
<th>Geographic Parameters of Threat</th>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental degradation</td>
<td>Industrial and technological accidents, esp. oil and gas pipelines: Siberia, Urals, Central Russia. Chernobyl consequences: Ukraine, Byelorussia. Radioactive contamination: Urals, South Siberia, Kazakhstan.</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
<td>High public awareness and civil engagement, esp. “ecological nationalism” of the late 1980s. But little general ecological consciousness and in-depth research.</td>
<td>States attempt involvement (Russia: state strategy of sustainable development), but there are limited resources and a lack of economic mechanisms. A number of grass-root ecological organizations.</td>
<td>Global. The FSU states as both exporters and importers of ecological security. First attempts at international cooperation, but mostly seeking benefits from the developed countries.</td>
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<td>Transnational organized crime</td>
<td>Corruption and merger of political institutions with criminal structures, esp. in Russia. “Criminal regimes”: Transdniestria, Crimea, etc. Proliferation of arms: North Caucasus, Estonia. Racketeering, illicit trade (also trade in low-grade radioactive material), control over post-Soviet economies. Production and trafficking of drugs: Central Asia, North Caucasus, Ukraine, Moscow, St. Petersburg.</td>
<td>Extreme</td>
<td>High public awareness, nationwide debates, much academic research. High on the political agenda.</td>
<td>Governmental programs and law enforcement activities insufficient due to criminalized nature of regimes themselves. Public activity paralyzed by fear and rule of the criminal “law.”</td>
<td>Global. Post-Soviet mafias spreading to East and Central Europe and the U.S. Drug trade became part of the global market; deals with Colombian, Asian, Italian, etc., drug mafias.</td>
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<td>Resource scarcity</td>
<td>Degradation of land resources in Russia. Desertiﬁcation and shrinking of water reserves in South Russia, Kazakhstan, Central Asia “Asian Sahara.” Shortage of energy resources and overdependence of CIS states on Russia. Food security insufﬁcient for stable economic development.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Limited awareness; greater emphasis on energy resources due to direct impact on the population (electricity cutoffs, etc.). Energy and food issues politically charged. Some research on desertiﬁcation.</td>
<td>Some civil action with respect to water reserves (Aral Sea, Lake Baikal). Other issues lack consistent civil action.</td>
<td>Regional. International cooperation on desertiﬁcation in Central Asia. Possible international tensions in oil issues: Caspian sea shelf, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Iraq, Libya.</td>
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<td>Category</td>
<td>Subcategory</td>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Region</td>
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<td>Population dynamics</td>
<td>Qualitative and quantitative depopulation in all western FSU states, and</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High public awareness, esp. in areas hit by civil strife and those accommodating refugees. Debate is strongly politically and nationally charged. Considerable academic research, permanent sociological monitoring, esp. in Russia.</td>
<td>Regional. Most migrants are likely to stay within the CIS area, moving into Russia, which will act as a migration buffer for Western Europe. A greater conflict potential in the Far East where demographic pressures from China fuel instability.</td>
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<td>and migration</td>
<td>esp. in the Russian Far East, Siberia, and rural areas. Large-scale unregulated migration: Russia, Central Asia (esp. Tajikistan), Moldova, and the Caucasus. Influx of refugees and illegal aliens from the “far abroad,” esp. the Chinese in the Russian Far East. Issues of diaspora, double citizenship, and statelessness. Massive emigration of the FSU professional elite.</td>
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<td>Issues of depopulation hardly possible to address due to budgetary strains. Law and policy on migration in the making; practices evolve as reaction to crises. A better legal and institutional framework in Russia, but the state lacks funds for migration and social programs.</td>
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<td>Transnational terrorism</td>
<td>Ethnic terrorism and terrorist militias in the Caucasus and Central Asia.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>A relatively high awareness after terrorist attacks in Moscow, but little academic research. Debates influenced by security services that try to expand their influence in the public sphere.</td>
<td>Regional. International connections of terrorism in Central Asia and the Caucasus (esp. Chechnya): Pakistan, Middle East, the Persian Gulf. But post-Soviet terrorism hardly constitutes a global threat.</td>
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<td>Criminal terrorism in most FSU states, esp. in Russia and Ukraine.</td>
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<td>States virtually incapable of addressing inner causes of terrorism (e.g., Russia’s failure in Chechnya). No response to political terrorism because of its anonymity.</td>
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<td>Political terrorism on the rise in Russia.</td>
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<td>A relatively high awareness after terrorist attacks in Moscow, but little academic research. Debates influenced by security services that try to expand their influence in the public sphere.</td>
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<td>Civil violence and</td>
<td>Ethnic strife (Central Asia, the Caucasus, Moldova). Social strife in all post-Soviet states. Political extremism as a marginal threat.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High public awareness but hardly an informed debate. Much research on ethnic conflict, less on social strife.</td>
<td>Internal. A period of ethnic violence has peaked, while societal pressures are kept in check by a flexible social structure and paternalist practices. Possible explosions likely to stay within the state confines.</td>
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<td>insurrection</td>
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<td>It is impossible to consistently address these problems in the conditions of “irresponsible societies” and weak states. Authorities resort to policies of social maneuver. Lack of NGOs, except antifascist organizations.</td>
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Although the most immediate security risk is considered to be the threat to the welfare of the population from contaminated water, air, and food, some commentators have noted the potential for social and political unrest. A number of authors point to the political vulnerability of states that cause environmental degradation (Moiseev 1995; Pisarev 1995, 1996).

The international aspects of environmental security are also widely discussed. A controversial topic here is whether post-Soviet states are “exporters” or “importers” of ecological problems. Some authors dispute the widespread perception that Russia is the world’s No. 1 source of contamination; according to some, its record seems to be quite “average” (Klyuev 1996, 77). In fact, with Russia possessing the world’s greatest biological resources (1,710 million hectares, or 47 percent of national territory), some experts assert that Russia, along with Canada, China, Brazil, Australia, and other “providers” of global biological resources, should claim compensation from the principal “consumers,” namely, the United States, Western Europe, and Japan, using mechanisms of the United Nations (Minin 1996, 5).

More specifically, some experts claim that Russia is environmentally threatened from China (industrial pollution on the Chinese side of its border with Russia is six times higher than in Russia) and the Far East in general, where a less developed and environmentally vulnerable part of Russia borders countries with the highest rates of economic growth (Klyuev 1996, 76). To the West, the states of the FSU are exposed and predominantly westerly winds make them importers of air pollution from Germany, Poland, and Great Britain (Klyuev 1996, 77). The basic idea underlying these “import-export” debates about pollution is that environmental issues are a potential source of interstate conflict (Pisarev 1996, 23–31; Gordon 1996).

Resource Scarcity

The problems associated with resource scarcity in the FSU, like environmental degradation, stem from the resource-intensive character of the Soviet economic model (Belousov 1995). In the late Soviet and entire post-Soviet period, however, resources (used here in the broad sense to include administrative and bureaucratic, information, infrastructural, human, as well as natural resources) have become the main object of political struggle. In fact, the entire chain of events from 1986 to 1996 can be interpreted as a struggle among local, ethnic, sectoral, and other
groups for the control of resources (Medvedev 1997b). Natural resources have become the basis for political claims, separatism, and independent statehood (oil in Chechnya and autonomous okrugs [districts] in the north of the Tyumen oblast [region], gold and diamonds in Yakutia-Sakha, gas in Turkmenistan, aluminum in Tajikistan, fertile land in Russia’s black earth belt); and in this context, their exploitation has become even more relentless than during the Soviet period, with immediate political goals prevailing over long-term strategies of utilization and conservation.

Given the political importance of resources, they have become a security concern (Korsun 1994, 91; Moiseev 1995; Pirumov 1995; Serebryan-nikov 1995), with the result that associated debates are heavily politicized and influenced by interest groups. Unlike questions of environmental security, public involvement is minimal. Discussions reveal three major security concerns pertaining to resources in the FSU.

The first is the degradation of land resources that affects all post-Soviet states (Davydova and Borov 1996). For example, of Russia’s 222 million hectares of arable land, 135 million have become flooded, salted, or eroded by water and wind through faulty irrigation, overgrazing, and overcultivation (Pirumov 1995, 65). Scarcity of land resources is particularly pressing in Central Asia, where rapid population growth has exacerbated the problem. In Uzbekistan, for example, while the area of irrigated land has increased by 70 percent over the past 35 years, its population has grown by 170 percent (Gomez 1995, 41). However, by far the greatest threat of this kind is desertification, affecting an enormous area in Southern Russia, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia. The expansion and merging of the old and new deserts in this region over the next decade may actually lead to the formation of what has been called an “Asian Sahara.” The belt of deserts and semideserts starting at the eastern outskirts of Europe—the lower Volga and the northern foothills of the Caucasus—will envelop virtually all of Kazakhstan and Central Asia, possibly spreading as far as central China (Wolfson 1994, 75).

A connected problem is the shrinking of water reserves in the area. The most dramatic issue is the drying up of the Aral Sea caused by the Soviet practice of withdrawing water that flowed into it from the Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers to irrigate land for increased cotton production. Once the fourth largest lake by area in the world, it has shrunk to about half its original size since the 1960s, and could eventually recede to a residual brine lake. Toxic elements from the exposed Aral seabed are
carried away by wind as far as the Arctic coast of Russia (Gomez 1995, 41). Other regions threatened by desertification are North Siberia and the Far East of Russia. Here, polar deserts are overtaking the Siberian tundra, while the tundra is replacing the Siberian taiga—the second largest territorial source of oxygen after the Amazon rain forest.

Discussions on land resources and desertification involve mostly participants from Central Asia and particularly from Kazakhstan, where desertification threatens 60 percent of the territory. In October 1994, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan signed the United Nations Convention on Desertification. Central Asian governments also set up the regional Interstate Council on the Aral Sea with a permanent secretariat in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, which is overseeing several joint projects on irrigation facilities.

The second area of concern is the security of energy resources. In the USSR, the extensive development of the energy sector came with scant regard to its opportunity costs: economic, environmental, and social. As a result, the FSU economies are overdependent on unrealistically priced energy supplies that strong interest groups (consumers, coal miners, etc.) wish to maintain. Most of the region’s inhabitants live in big cities with metro systems and multistory apartment blocs, where it is hard to maintain a tolerable existence when electric power is cut for several hours each day (Rutland 1996a, 5). It is well understood that access to energy is linked with social and political stability, and is thus a vital element of national security (Korsun 1994; Pappe 1995, 477; Kolosov, Krindach, and Turovskii 1995, 505).

Energy concerns vary among the FSU states. On the one hand, there is Russia, a major producer and exporter of all kinds of energy resources in the CIS (90 percent of its oil and gas and 60 percent of its coal [“Ekonomika stran SNG” 1996, 2]). However, the energy infrastructure laid during the Soviet period is deteriorating fast, energy output is contracting (by about 3 percent in each sector in 1995 [Rutland 1996b, 11]), and there is a drop in investment in new infrastructure and the exploration of new sources (Gray 1996; Gumpel 1996, 46). The security challenge facing Russia derives not from a scarcity of energy resources but from the challenge of reforming management practices and modernizing the infrastructure so it can maintain the level of oil and gas output without which Russia will slip into the ranks of the “developing world” (Rutland 1996b, 6).

On the other hand, the problem facing the other CIS states (with the
exception of gas-rich Turkmenistan) is that they are now overdependent on energy supplies from Russia. The total CIS energy debt to Russia for gas, oil, and electricity is over US$10 billion; in particular, Belarus and Ukraine are saddled with energy bills to Russia that they simply cannot pay (Rutland 1996a, 5). As a partial settlement of their debt, Russia has acquired shares in the CIS energy corporations, pipelines, and electric grids. This kind of policy is seen by political elites in the FSU as Russian energy imperialism threatening their security and sovereignty (Laponche 1996, 305).

Added to these concerns are recent international disputes over the development of new resources involving Russia, other CIS states, the West, and Arab countries (Iraq, Libya, the Gulf states). Examples include the development of the Caspian basin, the Tengiz oil fields in Kazakhstan, and plans of Russia’s oil companies to take a major stake in Iraqi oil (Pappe 1995, 474). At the same time, however, there have been examples of international cooperation, as shown by the FSU states’ participation in the European Energy Charter (International Energy Conference 1993; Axelrod 1996).

The third area of concern is food security. This topic is quite popular, as a result of the actions of agrarian lobbies formed during the Soviet period when hyper-centralization and state subsidies turned them into major pressure groups. For Russia, the main concern has been a considerable decline in grain yields, and an even greater fall in livestock numbers. With over 50 percent of Russia’s foodstuffs now imported, some security analysts have concluded that the level of food dependency on foreign supplies is such that the West might exploit it “to the detriment of Russia’s interests” (Serebryannikov 1995, 389).

In general, the food situation in most of the FSU in the 1990s resembles that of most medium-developed nations in the Third World (Middle East, North Africa, Southeast Asia) (Khromov 1995, 306). The principal problem, however, is not access to adequate supplies so much as it is the limited buying power of consumers (Conway and Barber 1990, 60). Basic survival, therefore, is not an issue; the principal concern of national food security in the FSU is sustaining food supplies that guarantee stable economic development and social and political stability (Khromov 1995, 408).

Population Dynamics and Migration

Probably the most serious demographic challenge identified by analysts is the depopulation of most post-Soviet states. Experts define this condition
as the loss of capacity to reproduce the qualitative standards and quantitative levels of the population due to a critical decline in the quality of life; a worsening of the physical, psychological, and genetic health of the population; a decline in morality and protection of the individual and society; and a degradation of the cultural, educational, and professional standards of the population (Lazarev 1995, 84; Demin et al. 1993; Brui 1993; Gorzev and Gromov 1996; Bodrova 1995).

In Russia, for example, average life expectancy shrank from 72 years in 1987 to 64 in 1994, and could drop to as low as 58 years by 2000 (Demograficheskii yezhегодник 1996, 83). Some Western studies predict that if present trends continue, the Russian population could drop to 126.7 million in 2020, from 148.2 million today (Morvant 1995, 40). Most important, statistics record a decrease in the average period of healthy life, and losses in the number of employable citizens (Demin et al. 1993; Demograficheskii yezhегодник 1996, 85).

Analyzing these trends, experts in Russia see a host of long-term consequences for national security: a decline in the number of employable people that will put a bigger strain on the budget and may prevent future economic growth; a demographic imbalance among various ethnic groups that could fuel ethnic separatism in monoethnic regions (Belaya kniga 1996, 58); and problems with recruitment in the Russian army in fifteen to twenty years’ time.

Another demographic-related security threat identified by the FSU experts and policymakers is large-scale unregulated migration. The breakup of the USSR has dramatically increased the movement of people, often across international borders and sometimes under duress. The reasons for these movements include armed conflicts, human rights violations (including ethnic cleansing), economic underdevelopment, environmental disasters, and general failures of governance, as well as individual perceptions of insecurity and fear of future discrimination (Helton 1996, 52).

Post-Soviet migration has involved millions of people and constitutes the largest population displacement since World War II (CIS Conference 1996). In the FSU, seventy million people live outside their country of ethnic origin. For example, twenty-five million Russians live outside the Russian Federation, and over twenty-six million non-Russians live in Russia (Kolstoe 1995; Zevelev 1996, 266; Tishkov 1996, 15; Rossiya i ee soedini 1996). While only a small percentage of them are likely to be displaced at any particular time, some three million refugees and migrants (mainly
Russians or Russian-speaking people) reportedly have already relocated to the Russian Federation (Draft Report 1995). Other areas of concern include Central Asia, Moldova, and the Caucasus. Georgia alone is reported to have nearly three hundred thousand refugees and internally displaced persons, while Azerbaijan has estimated that 1.6 million people were displaced by the nine-year conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. The toll of the civil war in Tajikistan includes over one million displaced persons (Andrichenko and Belousova 1995, 47; Tishkov 1996; Helton 1996, 53–54).

Another aspect of post-Soviet migration is a massive influx of refugees and illegal aliens from the “far abroad”: Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Iran, Vietnam, India, Angola, Zaire, etc., mostly seeking transit to the West, but sometimes also willing to stay in the FSU. Due to their illegal status, there are no exact figures; in Russia alone, estimates range between five hundred thousand to above one million (Belaya kniga 1996, 61). This group of people is often reported to be involved in criminal activities or the “gray economy,” arousing resentment among the population and the concern of the authorities (62–63).

A special case is the mass influx of the Chinese people in the Transbaikal area and the Russian Far East. Millions of Chinese have crossed the border, and hundreds of thousands have remained there after the expiry date of their visa to visit Russia. “Chinatowns” have emerged as a consequence with high levels of illegal trade and organized crime (Kirkow 1995, 330). This problem is a concern for local authorities as well as Moscow (Shakhrai 1994, 4). Experts point out that with only eight million people living on the vast Russian territory from Lake Baikal to the Pacific, compared to three hundred million people in the bordering provinces of China (where there is a relatively high rate of unemployment), demographic pressures in this subregion are extremely high (Kirkow 1995).

A related concern largely cited by politicians is the question of double citizenship and statelessness. In particular, Estonia and Latvia, trying to rejuvenate indigenous Baltic cultures suppressed by deportation, emigration, and planned population transfers during the Soviet era, have implemented citizenship laws that are viewed by most Russian and some international observers as discriminatory against ethnic Russians. As a result of these laws, significant proportions of the population, mainly those who are not ethnically Estonian or Latvian, are stateless, and politicians
and analysts from almost all sides of the Russian political spectrum cite this as a security threat to Russia (Rudensky 1994; Suskолов 1994; Teague 1994; Rossiya i ee sostedi 1996). In fact, this issue largely adds to tension between Russia, Estonia, and Latvia. In Central Asia, too, most states are reluctant to grant dual citizenship to nonethnic groups, a situation which might in time lead to serious international tension (Shingirei 1995, 118).

Finally, experts in all post-Soviet states cite a massive emigration to the West of their professional elite—academics, engineers, doctors, artists—as a long-term threat to national security (Shkolnikov 1994, 1995; Voinova 1995, 62). Apart from the obvious loss for the national economies, the “brain drain” also has social implications, in that it prevents the formation of a middle class in post-Soviet states that could provide support for reforms and promote social and political stability.

The international impact of post-Soviet migration seems to be less pressing than in the early 1990s, when many in Western Europe feared a massive inflow of refugees from the FSU. It has become clear that most migrants primarily moved to the Russian Federation, thereby staying within the CIS area. While Western Europe will remain vulnerable to migration and refugee emergencies, Russia is likely to remain a buffer for the West. A far greater conflict potential, however, is emerging within the CIS. If no mechanisms are developed to assimilate Russian diasporas in the Baltic and some Central Asian states, international tensions are likely to increase. Likewise, demographic pressures in the Far East might in time lead to a major geopolitical conflict.

_Civil Violence and Insurrection_

Given that ethnic clashes between 1989 and 1991 greatly contributed to the collapse of the USSR, the possibility of further civil violence in the FSU has long been viewed as a security concern (Sultanov 1992; Medvedev 1993b, 47–50). Indeed, in the initial period, ethnic conflict manifested itself in three distinct ways.

The first was riots and pogroms. They include the pogroms of Miskheti Turks in Ferghana, Uzbekistan, in 1989; of Uzbeks in Osh, Kyrgyzstan; of Armenians in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in 1990; and a number of others. These were mostly triggered by demographic and economic problems—principally high unemployment (Sultanov 1992). Most risky is the situation in large cities with multinational populations, particularly in poor districts.
The second was conflicts between native and non-native ethnic groups on territories that have obtained full or partial independence. These conflicts, which focused mainly on the rights of non-native (mostly Russian-speaking) citizens (Teague 1994; Zelevsky 1996; Tishkov 1996), have taken place in the Baltic States, Moldova, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, as well as in ethnic republics within the Russian Federation (e.g., in Tuva). Though present in Ukraine, such tensions are currently considered to be dormant (Sultanov 1992).

The third was conflict as a delayed consequence of the Stalinist deportations of 1937–1941. Such conflicts appear in places where certain nations were forced to settle (as with the previously noted pogroms of Meskheti Turks in Ferghana), as well as on their return to their native land (Crimean Tartars coming back to Crimea in Ukraine).

Now that the danger of violent ethnic self-determination in the FSU seems to be declining, the focus of concern has shifted to the increasing social tensions within post-Soviet society. The very logic of the post-Communist transformations has divided society into those who can adapt to rapid change and those who cannot—ultimately, between the winners and losers (Stepanov 1994, 43; Staroverov 1995, 20). The growing gap in incomes has been identified as the highest social risk. In Russia, a rich minority (8 percent) has incomes over 30 times higher than the rest of the population (Bogatiye i bedniye 1993; Varoli 1996, 7). Areas hit most by social tensions are first of all those heavily dependent on the state budget: In Russia, these are the Far North and especially the Far East (Koshkareva 1996), and the decaying towns and villages in the non-black-earth belt; in eastern Ukraine, these are the industrial regions (Kettle 1996).

Experts initially feared a host of problems stemming from these tensions: anarchy and chaos, the fragmentation of the state, including the destruction of social infrastructure, an irreversible decline in public health, and the spread of violence and crime (Serebryannikov 1995, 389). However, none of the alarmist scenarios have so far been realized; no major outbreaks of tension in the FSU have been registered to date. This is partially explained by several factors: post-Soviet paternalistic practices, subsidies to loss-making enterprises, and a flexible social structure that has alleviated tensions through private and communal links (families, friends, personal contacts in local bodies of the authority, illegal or semi-legal activities, secondary employment, and selling and consuming home-grown produce) (Gordon 1994).
Likewise, social strains have not so far resulted in a significant upsurge of political extremism in post-Soviet states (Pribylovsky 1995, 6; Orttung 1995, 4). There is certainly little threat of a fascist takeover in any of the CIS states. However, this risk has been identified and cannot be dismissed and may even be increasing (Belin 1995, 10). Some of the radical nationalist, extremist, and fascist groups have armed and militarized formations that have attempted to merge with trade union, commercial, financial, and criminal organizations (Kryshtanovskaya 1995, 594–595). This prompted a presidential decree in Russia, in March 1995, stating that these groups pose a threat to constitutional order and the integrity of the state. In Ukraine, a radical nationalist organization, UNA-UNSO, which had had a considerable influence in Galitía (West Ukraine) and has engaged in many armed conflicts inside the FSU, was also considered a national security threat and banned by the Ukrainian authorities in 1995.

Summing up, post-Soviet states are now in an uncertain period in which the threat of civil violence is clear to see but which has become something possible to live with. This condition of a permanent social crisis need not lead to outright disintegration of the state, but it is nevertheless a source of political instability and a burden on the budget while allowing the armed forces and interior troops to take on a greater role as guarantors of domestic stability.

Terrorism

Terrorism is not new to the FSU states. Its history in this area dates back to at least the mid-nineteenth century, when nationalist, anti-imperialist, and revolutionary groups of individuals conducted acts of violence. According to Felix Gross, the theory of individual or “tactical” terrorism developed, perhaps even originated, in Russia (1972, 33). Elements of the state in the USSR also launched campaigns of terror and violence against the populace in general as well as against specific groups and movements (Ulrich 1996, 21).

After the breakup of the USSR, the region entered a phase of rapid growth in terrorist activities. In fact, the FSU area is on the way to becoming one of the world leaders in the number of violent acts involving the use of arms, explosives, and incendiaries; kidnappings and hostage taking; as well as attempts of nuclear blackmail and the threat of chemical and biological weapons use (Belaya kniga 1996, 124–125).
In Russia, terrorism was identified as a threat to the integrity of the state and political stability in the early 1990s, following a series of terrorist acts in the North Caucasus (including plane and bus hijackings and bombings in Chechnya, Daghestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and North Ossetia) that preceded the Chechen war of independence from Russia, and a number of political assassinations of members of parliament and famous journalists in 1994–1995 (Dmitry Kholodov, Vlad Listiev). On the wave of public outrage, political terrorism was identified as a criminal offense in the Russian criminal code in 1995 (Belaya kniga 1996, 133). Awareness of this threat became even higher after various terrorist acts in the course of the Chechen war that included taking hundreds of people hostage in hospitals in Budyonnovsk in 1995 and in Kizlyar in 1996 (in each case, dozens of civilians were killed during the hostage rescue operations).

The scope of terrorist acts in Ukraine and other western FSU states is somewhat smaller, although there have been a number of political assassinations, especially in the highly criminalized republic of Crimea. Terrorism plays a prominent role in some Transcaucasian (especially Georgia) and Central Asian (Tajikistan) states, where it is closely connected with ongoing or latent strife between various ethnic and regional clans.

In analyzing types of post-Soviet terrorism, Yuri Golik (1995) has observed five distinct types: ethnic, religious, police terror and terrorist militias, criminal, and political.

Ethnic terrorism has been evident especially in the North Caucasus, the Transcaucasia, and Central Asia. As mentioned above, it is closely connected to the struggle among rival ethnic factions and clans for supremacy, although so far it has not taken the organized and permanent forms of Northern Irish, Sikh, Basque, or Tamil terrorism.

Religious terrorism exists in Ukraine and Russia. In Ukraine, the doomsday cult White Brotherhood clashed with the police in 1993, and analogous cults have developed in Russia (for example, Maria Devi Christ). In the midst of social disintegration and cultural and moral decay, people are easily lured into totalitarian sects like the Russian branch of Aum Shinrikyō, which had about fifty thousand followers in 1994 and a powerful lobby in Moscow. By late 1996, there were six thousand sects in Russia involving 1.5 million young people (Pisarenko 1997, 11).

Police terror and terrorist militias are spreading. In ways reminiscent
of Franco’s Spain or the former “death squads” of Argentina and other Latin American countries (Golik 1995), this kind of terrorism has emerged in several Transcaucasian states (“Mkhedriani” units in Georgia before 1994) and Central Asia (the special police force of Colonel Khudoiberdyev in today’s Tajikistan).

Criminal terrorism has quickly evolved from Chicago-style gangster wars in the early 1990s to selective and professional contract killings, kidnappings, and bombings in the middle of the decade. In fact, it is becoming more difficult to distinguish between criminal and political terrorism, since all FSU states are to various extents criminalized, and any major criminal act (like an explosion at the memorial service held by Afghan war veterans at Kotlyakovskoye cemetery in Moscow in November 1996, killing 13 and injuring 70) has strong political overtones (Vetrov 1996).

Political terrorism has become familiar in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Tajikistan since the start of their civil wars, but until recently was somewhat new to Russia (Schmidt 1995, 65; Douglass 1996). The year 1996 was a turning point when several people were killed and dozens wounded in explosions on public transport in Moscow, while hundreds narrowly escaped death in a series of failed bomb attacks on railway stations. Analysts stress a specific national feature of these acts of political terrorism in that nobody has ever claimed responsibility (Vetrov 1996). The anonymity of Russian terrorism is largely due to the “Byzantine” nature of contemporary Russian politics in which so much revolves around private deals and hidden power plays. Terrorist acts in this context play the role of enciphered messages to “those who will understand,” while at the same time serving the more general purpose of political and public destabilization.

The public debates on post-Soviet terrorism have featured the prominent involvement of the security services, which in large part have exploited them to expand their activities and improve their public standing that was largely undermined by “de-KGBization” in the early 1990s. Opposition leaders, too, when courting support often point to the authorities’ incapacity to curb the growing wave of violence. Most experts, however, who have studied the core causes of terrorism stress structural changes during the transition period, which has produced sharp economic and social differentiation as well as the spread of violence as a popular lifestyle (Sultanov 1992; Medvedev 1993b).
Some forms of terrorism in the FSU have had international consequences. For instance, Chechen-related terrorism has already spread beyond the FSU confines. In January 1996, a Turkish ferry was seized en route from Trabzon to Sochi in the Black Sea by hijackers who supported the Chechen cause. During the course of the war, Dzhokhar Dudayev, then the Chechen president, threatened to carry out terrorist acts against “the West” in retaliation for its support of the Russian government. Terrorist bombings aimed at leaders of the criminal underworld have also taken place in Berlin, London, and Paris.

On top of this, parties in ethnic wars in the FSU (in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhaziya, Transdniestria, Tajikistan, Chechnya, etc.) have reportedly used the services of international terrorist groups from Europe and the Middle East. Some analysts also speculate that Central Asia and the Northern Caucasus could provide a base for terrorists from the Middle East (Ulrich 1996, 21), or even replace the Middle East as the main source of state-sponsored international terrorism (Perry 1996).

Organized Crime

Organized crime has been identified as one of the main features of post-Soviet life and a principal challenge to the security of all FSU states. The current transition to a quasi-market environment has allowed criminal groups to enrich themselves and in turn use their wealth to buy political influence in the democratic process (Ulrich 1996, 19). In this sense, organized crime has become embedded within society, the economy, and the state.

The comprehensive nature of this threat and its visibility has led to a high degree of public awareness and widespread debate involving criminologists, social scientists, law enforcement agencies, and all major politicians (Prestupnost’ 1993; Osnovnye tendingisi 1993; Ovchinsky 1993; Regional’nye razlichija 1993; Podlesskikh and Tereshok 1994; Gurov 1995; Kryshtanovskaya 1995; Belya kniga 1996, 113–123). In fact, many political careers have been made on the issue of fighting crime, such as Aleksandr Lebed’, who ran his campaign for the presidency under the slogan of “Law and Order” (Lebed’ 1995), as did another opposition leader, Stanislav Govorukhin, a member of Russia’s parliament (Govorukhin 1994).

While criminal structures have always played a large role in Russia and the USSR, organized crime has clearly benefited from the economic liberalization, social differentiation, and advent of a more popular
lifestyle (Sundiev 1995, 615–617; Medvedev 1997b). The unprecedented growth of organized crime in the last five years has resulted in the entire territory of the FSU, from capital cities to provincial towns, becoming covered by criminal networks. In Russia, there are reportedly over six thousand criminal groups and about one hundred fifty criminal societies (Kryshtanovskaya 1995, 596), while in Ukraine it is estimated that there are four hundred criminal groups (Pleines 1996, 11). Many areas have a specific criminal specialization: drug production and trafficking in Central Asia and Black Sea ports; illegal export and import of strategic materials, objects of art, and arms trade in Estonia; bank frauds in Chechnya and Russia’s major cities; bootlegging in Ukraine and North Caucasus; train robbery in North Caucasus and Transcaucasia; vehicle theft and smuggling in Chechnya; and various forms of street crime in the decaying regions like the Far East of Russia and East Ukraine (Girnius 1994; Pleines 1996; Kangas 1996, 32; Markus 1996, 14).

In general, organized crime represents a threat to public order and the welfare of the citizens through the operation of protection rackets, illegal debt collection schemes, contract killings and kidnappings, smuggling (including drugs, low-grade radioactive material, and nuclear technologies), financial stings, car theft rings, bootlegging, and prostitution, to name the more prominent (Kryshtanovskaya 1995, 600–601). Besides these “traditional” criminal activities, post-Soviet organized crime has also deeply penetrated the legal economy through investment and miscellaneous commercial structures and enterprises, such as banks, gas stations, and car-repair shops as well as precious metals firms in all FSU states. Today in Russia organized crime is estimated to control over forty thousand economic enterprises including four hundred banks and one thousand five hundred state-sector firms. This situation undermines public confidence in market reforms and prolongs the current economic and social crisis that represents perhaps the most serious challenge to the FSU (Ovchinsky, Eminov, and Yablokov 1996; Handelman 1994).

It is, however, the power to corrupt that is generally acknowledged by almost all national governments and/or parliaments as the principal security risk posed by organized crime. In principle, any decision maker at any level of the state hierarchy can be bought (Kordonsky 1995, 160). According to the Russian Ministry of the Interior, organized crime groups spend up to 50 percent of their income in bribing state officials (Belaya kniga 1996, 113). As a consequence, there is a danger that the
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political institutions of the FSU states will become so penetrated by criminal structures as to become virtually indistinguishable from them. This development threatens not only democracy and market reforms but also leads to a virtual collapse of state authority, as occurred in Tajikistan.

Another identified security risk from organized crime is the proliferation of arms in private hands. The FSU has turned into one of the largest illegal arms markets in the world as a result of theft from the army arsenals, homemade production in Russia, and smuggling from abroad (Belaya kniga 1996, 117). The greater availability of weapons (including automatic weapons, but also heavy arms, even tanks and rocket launchers) not only risks fueling existing conflicts but also increases the danger that other forms of civil strife turn into armed conflict (Sterling 1994).

Finally, another major security threat posed by organized crime is the spread of illicit drugs throughout the FSU. What was once a hermetically sealed territory has now became part of the global traffic in opiates, cocaine, synthetic drugs, and cannabis resin, as well as chemical precursor agents necessary for producing drugs (Bezanis and Fuller 1996, 5). Indeed, Soviet successor states have been swiftly integrated into the world drug market. Thriving local drug mafias now operate alongside those from Colombia, Italy, Turkey, and Asia. The FSU has become a major transit area for Southwest Asian heroin and cocaine from Latin America to reach the West, as well as a place to launder drug money. Moreover, the Russian Federation, the Transcaucasia, and Central Asia are rapidly maturing as producer and consumer countries, with a growing number of syndicates also involving army structures and security agencies.

The main area of concern is Central Asia, part of the so-called Golden Crescent (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan) that may have recently surpassed the Golden Triangle in Southeast Asia as the world’s primary supplier of opiates. A key factor in that shift was the fateful Soviet involvement in Afghanistan, which made poppy cultivation essential to the survival of Afghan peasants. Today, it is even more important in war-torn Afghanistan. With the traditional trafficking routes via Turkey and the Balkans disrupted as a result of drug-control programs by Iran and Pakistan and the war in the former Yugoslavia, the burgeoning Afghan production has begun to seep into Central Asia, as well as Azerbaijan and Armenia. Other important transit points include Ukrainian Black Sea ports, Moscow and St. Petersburg, and the Baltic States (Bezanis 1996).

It is now generally accepted that the threat posed by post-Soviet
organized crime extends beyond the FSU (Galeotti 1993; Sterling 1994; Freemantle 1995; Gurov 1995; Ovchinsky, Eminov, and Yablokov 1996). According to former CIA Director John Deutch, criminals from the FSU were operating in about thirty countries in 1994, rising to fifty by 1996 (Diamond 1996, 10). The trade in weapons, drugs, and prostitution, as well as racketeering and money-laundering, are the main international activities of post-Soviet organized crime (Kryshtanovskaya 1995, 612). The countries most affected are Poland, Germany, the United States, France, and Great Britain (the latter two being major points of criminal investment in real estate), and to a lesser degree Austria. For money-laundering schemes, criminals use Switzerland and Sweden, as well as offshore companies in places like Cyprus. These developments may have a long-term effect on relations with these countries and their respective migration policies. They also advance a negative image of post-Soviet states in the world and encourage their international isolation.

Other Concerns

An additional nontraditional security concern that has been actively promoted by the authorities for political and ideological reasons, particularly in Russia, is information security (Rubanov 1994; Vinogradov 1995; Skvortsov 1995; Kurilo and Streltsov 1995; Belaya kniga 1996, 53–56, 167–176). In defining this threat, most authors refer to use of mass media for the purposes of social and political destabilization (Lazarev 1995, 86). In response, there have been numerous hearings on information security and the Internet in the Russian State Duma, while an Interdepartmental Commission of the Security Council on Information Security has approved the Concept of Information Security of the Russian Federation (Chereshkin and Virkovsky 1994), which sets up special regional bodies in charge of information security (Kurilo and Streltsov 1995, 42–44). In general, the focus on information security has offered an easy political and ideological explanation for many of the problems plaguing the FSU states. Nevertheless, the issue is not without substance: Post-Soviet states do have to face the challenge of modernizing their telecommunications systems and adapting their antiquated infrastructure to the needs of the information society. In most cases, however, the discussion has fallen prey to populism.

The same is true of another hot issue on the post-Soviet agenda,
namely, economic security (Faminskiy 1995; Obolenskiy 1995; Shishkov 1995; Belaya kniga 1996, 42–50). The main issues of concern are the protection of domestic producers, capital flight, and external indebtedness (for instance, the flight of capital from Russia alone is estimated between US$20 billion and US$50 billion each year [Faminskiy 1995, 457]). Yet as a rule discussants end up contesting the expediency and costs of economic reforms, while also questioning whether reforms serve the interests of the West (Belaya kniga 1995, 44).

In a number of FSU states, the notion of economic security essentially involves their resource and trade dependence on Russia and in general on ex-Soviet networks. Faced with harsh transition pains, many post-Communist ruling elites find it publicly expedient to evoke the notion of “economic security” and external economic threats. Partly influenced by these nationalistic-charged debates, intra-CIS trade has dramatically declined. In 1990–1994, the share of the FSU states in Ukraine’s foreign trade went down from 82 to 64 percent, in Belarus from 83 to 70 percent, in Kazakhstan from 90 to 79 percent, in Uzbekistan from 86 to 59 percent, and in Azerbaijan from 84 to 56 percent (World Bank 1994, 97–98, 145–146, 289–290, 673–674, 721–722; Shishkov 1995, 485–486).

Finally, concerns have also been raised about spiritual security (Sobolev 1997). As the new independent states and regions have rediscovered their religious identities, “spiritual threats” (from other confessions or nontraditional cults) and the issue of “spiritual integrity” (domination of one confession and ideology) have become part of the nation-building process. In Russia, the close ties between the Orthodox Church and the state have provided important legitimization to the new regime. An institute of army chaplains is also being reintroduced along with religious education in police academies, while some officials in the Ministry of the Interior propose religious censorship in publishing and the press.

CONCLUSION

When evaluating the overall risk posed by new security challenges in the FSU, one should distinguish between three levels of analysis: the intrastate, interstate (within the CIS or FSU), and wider international or global level.

At the intrastate level, nontraditional security threats and a growing
incapacity of the new regimes to tackle them weaken public confidence in democratic government and facilitate retrenchment toward authoritarian rule (Ulrich 1996, 19). Samuel Huntington warned in 1991 that there is always a risk that new democracies may slip under the control of authoritarian or semiauthoritarian rulers who offer simplistic solutions to all kinds of new security challenges that typically accompany rapid socioeconomic change (290–291). In this sense, many of the nontraditional security challenges threaten the state development of democratic practices and a coherent market economy (Ulrich 1996, 20).

However, even if the post-Soviet regimes stay within a democratic framework, they will remain essentially weak, and their capacity to deal with nontraditional security threats will be limited by the self-centered interests of domestic pressure groups, the lack of public involvement, and corruption. Issues like environmental degradation, migration, organized crime and drugs, and deteriorating social conditions will become increasingly important items on the post-Soviet agenda, fueling instability and political unrest and diverting a growing share of resources from economic reforms.

At the interstate level within the FSU, the new security risks have a dual effect. On the one hand, they create a variety of potential sources of conflict (e.g., over refugees, minorities, and citizenship rights; energy dependencies; transnational terrorist and criminal activity; and cross-border pollution) and preclude the emergence of mechanisms of cooperation that could facilitate the integration of FSU states into the world community. Mishandling these challenges runs the risk of the FSU being defined and effectively quarantined as a “problem area” in world affairs.

On the other hand, because these problems are common to virtually all the FSU states, they are often compelled to seek cooperative solutions that help alleviate their political differences. A good example is the Central Asian Interstate Council on the Aral Sea, or the Russian-Estonian intergovernmental commission for handling minority issues.

Finally, at the international level, nontraditional security threats in the FSU will remain a source of tension in the global system; although, perhaps, their capacity to provoke major international conflicts was somewhat overestimated in the early 1990s, when the whole post-Soviet area was seen as a kind of “geopolitical black hole,” pulling in neighboring
regions. Rather than exploding “outward,” the post-Soviet “Molotov cocktail” has if anything produced an inward-oriented implosion that has affected every level of society. The protracted crisis that resulted has in many respects become institutionalized. The post-Soviet states have in effect developed “crisis regimes” and a special kind of “crisis politics” (Mitrofanov 1996).

The policy recommendations for addressing these new security threats can likewise be divided along domestic, interstate, and international lines. On the home front, the main task is to widen the public debate beyond the narrow discourse of the professional and state-oriented institutions so as to effectively engage the civil society. This is essential since in contrast to traditional military and strategic security concerns, the nature of new security threats is more “democratic” in its societal effect. This irony can be addressed at the local and even the grass-roots level, contributing in the process to the creation of a true civil society. The new security challenges, therefore, can thus be seen not only as a threat but also as an opportunity to remake post-Soviet societies.

At the FSU level, greater cooperation is clearly required, including establishing mechanisms within the CIS framework, as well as subregional arrangements (e.g., in Western CIS, Central Asia, or in the Russian Far East) and bilateral agreements. In many respects, the challenges posed by nonmilitary security threats hold a better hope for cooperation among the FSU states than traditional security concerns, which so far have failed to produce multilateral mechanisms.

At the international level, aid and, most importantly, cooperation are key. These should be devised broadly, using the potential and experience of the existing institutional mechanisms, like the Group of Seven (now G-8) that organized a summit on nuclear security in Moscow in 1996. Another instance is the work of the intergovernmental Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission that addressed a number of new security issues (technological safety, environmental security, etc.) under the patronage of the vice president of the United States and the prime minister of Russia in 1993–1997. Other potential institutional partners are the European Union, NATO, and the OSCE. Cooperation with each would help heal the political division of Europe and prevent the isolation of FSU states. Addressing new security threats in the FSU and other post-Communist states of Eastern and Central Europe would in effect help
transform the entire system of European institutions to make them more inclusive.*

While devised in a broad context, international aid and cooperation should at the same time be aimed at engaging local communities, select NGOs, action groups, and other bodies rather than governments and perhaps avoid central government authorities altogether. Post-Soviet states have an ambiguous experience with highly publicized Western aid packages (e.g., US$17 billion to Russia in 1992 and US$43 billion in 1993) that were directed mostly at governments but of which a small fraction was actually disbursed. So a centrally directed and politically charged approach may not be the best approach. Aid (including technical assistance) will be most efficient when linked to specific projects at the grassroots level (e.g., a local environmental program, a refugee camp, an asylum, or a drug rehabilitation center). Once again, this will help promote the formation of a true civil society in the FSU.

Finally, this discussion of nontraditional security risks in the FSU reveals gaps in the current analysis and the need for broader research cooperation. In particular, scholars in the area make very limited use of the new post–cold war concepts of “weak states,” “the problem of ungovernability,” “low-intensity conflict,” “operations other than war,” or “gray-area phenomena” (Raufer 1991; Manwaring 1993; MacDonald 1993; Ward 1995). In general, there has been very little interaction between post-Soviet studies and research on nontraditional security both in the FSU and in the West. The above approaches have been applied to examine the political and socioeconomic situation in Latin America or Southeast Asia or transnational threats to the United States, but few efforts have been made to systematically apply these concepts to the emerging situation in the FSU (Ulrich 1996, 64).

For their part, scholars in the FSU also have something to share: their unique insights and expertise on disintegrating states. A number of original concepts have been developed over the last decade primarily in

* A recent proposal by three leading security experts from the United States, Germany, and Russia calls for creating a Steering Group (including representatives of the “political G-8,” a representative from East Central Europe, and a representative of the EU) that would address issues of nontraditional security. Decisions by this group could include revival of the European Energy Charter; reaching general compromise on prospecting and transporting Caspian oil; development of a common strategy in the field of telecommunications; devising a common strategy to fight terrorism and drug trafficking; and a number of other issues (Allison, Kaiser, and Karaganov, 1996).
Russia and Ukraine dealing with indigenous actors: regions, sectors, elites, and pressure groups (e.g., the concept of the "administrative market" by Vitaly Naishul and Simon Kordonsky [Kordonsky 1995], or phenomenology of the Soviet space by Vladimir Kagansky [1995]). Post-Soviet research employs levels and units of analysis other than nation-states (De Spiegeleire 1995), and this approach could be integrated into Western studies in nontraditional security. A new analytical framework is needed that would unite Western and post-Soviet research contexts. In this sense, the FSU presents a host of nontraditional security threats, but also a variety of intellectual and discursive challenges.

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