A Precarious Peace

Domestic Politics in the Making of Russian Foreign Policy

Throughout the history of the modern world, domestic regime change—be it democratization, autocratization, decolonization, decommunization, federal dissolution, coups, or revolutions—has often triggered international conflict and war. When a regime changes, decaying institutions from the ancien régime compete with new rules of the game to shape political competition in ambiguous ways. This uncertain context provides opportunities for political actors, both new and old, to pursue new strategies for achieving their objectives, including belligerent policies against both domestic and international foes. In desperation, losers from regime change may resort to violence to maintain their former privileges. Such internal conflicts become international wars when these interest groups who benefited from the old order call upon their allies to intervene on their behalf or strike out against their enemies as a means to shore up their domestic legitimacy. In the name of democracy, independence, the revolution, or the nation, the beneficiaries of regime change also can resort to violence against both domestic and international opponents to secure their new gains.

The protracted regime transformation under way in Russia seems like a probable precipitant of international conflict. Over the last decade, old political institutions have collapsed while new democratic institutions have yet to be consolidated. Concurrently, political figures, organizations, and interest groups that benefited from the old Soviet order have incurred heavy losses in the new Russian polity. The new, ambiguous institutional context also has allowed militant, imperialist political entrepreneurs to assume salient roles in Russian politics. Reflecting on Russia’s ongoing regime change, Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder have hypothesized that “states like contemporary Russia that make the biggest leap in democratization—from total autocracy to extensive

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mass democracy—are about twice as likely to fight wars in the decade after democratization as are states that remain autocracies.”

And yet, Russia has not erupted into civil war or fought an international war in the last decade. Of course, its transition from communism has been punctuated with outbursts of violent conflict, including a military showdown between the Soviet and Russian governments in August 1991, a bloody battle between the legislative and executive branches of government in October 1993, and the tragic war in Chechnya begun in December 1994. When compared to regime changes in other great powers over the last two hundred years, however, Russia’s dramatic regime change has been relatively peaceful and has not triggered a major international conflict. Why not?

The answer has to do with the ideas and interests of the winners in Russia’s regime transition. While the unconsolidated institutions of Russia’s new polity have provided a context that old interest groups or new militants might have exploited to pursue belligerent policies both at home and abroad, these potential war-prone political forces have not assumed power in Russia to date. Instead, political leaders, political organizations, and economic groups that have had both normative and material interests in international cooperation rather than international conflict have prevailed. Though challenged at several critical junctures, Russian liberals—defined here most minimally as those committed to markets, free trade, individual rights, and democracy—have defeated their illiberal opponents during most of Russia’s volatile regime transition. Their victories, in turn, have ensured that Russia has pursued peaceful, integrationist policies with all democratic states (as well as with most other non-democratic states) rather than belligerent strategies.

In underscoring the importance of liberal victories in Russian politics, this argument suggests that Russia’s relatively peaceful behavior in the international system has not been the consequence of the normative and institutional constraints outlined in the democratic peace thesis. Rather, the absence of

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2. Liberalism is a sweeping concept with hundreds of different meanings in various geographic and historical contexts. In this article, this minimalist definition has been adopted in order to narrow the focus of inquiry. On Russian liberalism, see the journal, Otkryta, a monthly publication devoted to explaining Russian liberalism; Yury Krasheninnikov, ed., Liberalizm v Rossii: Sbornik Statei (Moscow: “Znak,” 1993); and Boris Yeltsin, “Bydem vmeset!” Rossiiskaya Gazeta, July 1–7, 1996, p. 2.

3. Some of the most important statements on this debate, including a reprint of Michael Doyle’s seminal essay, “Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs,” can be found in Brown, Lynn-Jones, and Miller, Debating the Democratic Peace. In addition to the articles in this volume, see also John
international conflict involving Russia has been much more contingent, resulting primarily from particular outcomes of domestic political battles. So far, Russian political leaders and economic groups with an interest in peace have stayed in power, but their past victories were not inevitable and their future hold on power is not certain. Different outcomes in the future, be it the electoral victory of a nationalist leader or the political resurgence of a more belligerent interest group like the army, could undermine Russia’s current amiable but precarious disposition toward other liberal states.

To develop this set of arguments about the domestic determinants of Russian foreign policy, this article proceeds as follows. The next section outlines the causal relationship between domestic regime change and international conflict, giving particular attention to the belligerent capacity of democratizing states. The third section provides an overview of Russia’s transition from communist rule, focusing first on the belated emergence of democratic institutions and then on the changing balance of power between winners and losers in Russia’s economic revolution. The fourth section discusses how the institutions, ideas, and interest groups created during Russia’s revolution have influenced Russian foreign policy. In particular, Russian policy regarding the West and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is discussed. Though not a foreign policy issue, the interplay among institutions, interest groups, and domestic politics in the decision to invade and withdraw from Chechnya is also addressed as an example of Russia’s potential as both a belligerent power and a peaceful democracy. The final section summarizes the theoretical and policy implications of Russia’s peaceful regime transition.

**Domestic Regime Change and International War**

Domestic instability frequently causes international instability. The breakdown of democratic regimes in Spain and Germany earlier in this century precipitated internationalized wars, one of localized destruction and one of world destruction.4 From the United States two hundred years ago to India, Algeria,

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and Vietnam just decades ago, decolonization recurrently has resulted in domestic conflict and international war. Similarly, moves to dismantle communist regimes, be it in Hungary in 1956 or the former Yugoslavia at the end of the 1980s, have produced internationalized conflict. Revolutions may represent a kind of regime change most prone to war, as social revolutions in strategic countries such as France, Russia, China, and Iran often have produced interstate wars. The causal arrow also points in the opposite direction, as interstate wars have precipitated domestic regime changes in warring states.

Domestic regime change and international war have been so intertwined historically that the analytic distinction between international security and domestic security should be called into question. In the premodern world, regime transitions from small mercantile states to large military states represented one of the main causes of interstate war. In the modern world, the scale of international strife that followed regime changes in France in the eighteenth century, or Russia, Germany, and Italy in the twentieth century, suggests that alterations in the internal balance of power of a given state may be one of the most important causes of international war.

In the late twentieth century, the belligerent propensities of democratizing states have received special attention, given that so many countries of the world are now undergoing democratic transitions. Consolidated democracies rarely fight one another. However, the peaceful benefits of interaction among democratic states result only in equilibrium, while the process of getting to this equilibrium may produce the opposite effect. As Mansfield and Snyder have argued, “Countries do not become democracies overnight. More typically, they

8. This hypothesis about the importance of domestic politics for understanding the causes of international war seriously challenges realist explanations of war in the same way that “democratic peace” hypotheses challenge realist explanations of peace.
9. See Mansfield and Snyder, “Democratization and the Danger of War.” In this important article, the authors implicitly treat “democratization” and “democratic breakdown” as two periods of one regime change, but this kind of categorization can only be made after the fact, as transitions to democracies do not always break down. Making the distinction between these two regime changes leaves open the theoretical possibility that those factors that lead to democratization may not be the same factors that lead to democratic breakdown. In this article, I have chosen a more expansive label—“regime change”—both because it avoids the debate about whether Russia should be considered a democratizing state, and because the causal variables identified by Mansfield and Snyder in analyzing democratizing states also can be found in other kinds of regime changes.
go through a rocky transitional period, where democratic control over foreign policy is partial, where mass politics mixes in a volatile way with authoritarian elite politics, and where democratization suffers reversals. In this transitional phase of democratization, countries become more aggressive and war-prone, not less, and they do fight wars with democratic states.\textsuperscript{10} Like the democratic peace debate, the correlation between regime change and war may be more obvious than the causal relationship between the two.\textsuperscript{11} The absence or under-development of some features of consolidated democracies offers part of the explanation for why democratizing states are more prone to war. First and foremost, the imperfect institutions of new democracies create a permissive context for elites to pursue policies that do not necessarily reflect the preferences of the majority. In a state with new and weak democratic institutions, "there is no reason to expect that mass politics will produce the same impact on foreign policy as it does in mature democracies."\textsuperscript{12} On the contrary, Mansfield and Snyder suggest the opposite—a more belligerent foreign policy.

This opposite effect is allowed by weak institutions, but is caused by a second critical variable: the belligerent preferences of social groups that stand to lose in the process of democratization or regime transformation more generally. In all regime changes, the incumbent groups from the ancien régime forfeit some degree of power and wealth while new groups gain new rights and privileges. When threatened, groups from the ancien régime may seek to maintain or regain power through extraordinary means, including war. Likewise, winners from the regime change may resort to force to protect their new powers and privileges. In turn, internal wars—especially in strategic countries—can become international wars as the ruling groups from the ancien régime usually have allies in other states who come to their aid.\textsuperscript{13} Victors in regime change as well as defenders of the status quo also are apt to pursue foreign wars to distract attention from domestic problems.

Belligerent foreign policies, however, also can result from a more indirect causal pattern. During the process of regime transition, the political space opens, new groups become strategic actors, and the boundaries of permissive

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., p. 301.
\textsuperscript{11} Even the correlation is debatable. Mansfield and Snyder provide statistical data showing the correlation between democratization and war. Oneal and Russett question this correlation in "The Classical Liberals Were Right."
\textsuperscript{12} Mansfield and Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," p. 318.
ideologies expand. In this fluid context, belligerent foreign policies can serve as a focal point for new coalitions that otherwise would not be formed. Weimar Germany is the paradigmatic case. Regarding contemporary Russia, Mansfield and Snyder write that “foreign policy is likewise providing the glue for an emerging ‘red-brown’ coalition of nationalists and neo-communists.” More generally, regime change creates an uncertain political context in which “bad leaders” can come to the fore, and bad leaders “are usually the catalysts that turn potentially volatile situations into open warfare.”

These arguments suggest that Russian democratization is prone to produce international conflict, given that many of these destabilizing factors are present. First, Russia’s protracted and confrontational transition from authoritarian rule has produced weak democratic institutions. While Russia’s polity may qualify as an electoral democracy—a system in which elections constitute the only viable and legitimate means for obtaining political power—this system still lacks many of the central features of a consolidated, liberal democracy. Second, Russia’s regime change has created many losers who might stand to gain from provoking domestic conflict or international war as a means of recapturing their previously held power and wealth. In fact, the potential for domestic and international strife should be greater in Russia than other cases of democratization, as Russia’s transition to democracy has been accompanied by a simultaneous transition to a market economy. The breakdown of the old state and the simultaneous emergence of new political and economic institutions in Russia constitute the defining features of a social revolution, a kind of regime change that often has precipitated international conflict in the past. Third, Russia’s regime change has created a political space for new belligerent ideologies and ideologues, ranging from imperialists such as Vladimir


Yet Russia’s protracted transition to democracy has not produced the belligerent foreign policies presaged by Mansfield and Snyder. While fragile democratic institutions have offered a permissive context for elites to dominate the foreign policy process within Russia, so far liberal groups with an interest in peace—and especially new economic elites created through Russia’s transition to a market economy—have prevailed over illiberal groups more prone to war.

Radical political and economic change in Russia has produced leaders, political forces, and economic interest groups that have identified with and benefited from liberal ideas. Early in the transition, these political groups appropriated liberal ideas as an ideology of opposition to overthrow the Soviet system. Later, some of these groups developed material incentives to promote liberal ideas, including first and foremost markets at home and integration with the Western community of capitalist democracies. Throughout Russia’s decade of regime change, no consensus emerged behind these liberal ideas. Rather, politics were polarized between advocates of change and defenders of the old Soviet system. At every critical political juncture thus far, however, liberal forces have succeeded in defeating illiberal forces. As these liberal groups have had both ideational and material motivations for avoiding war, especially with liberal democracies in the West, Russia’s regime change has not led to belligerent international behavior.

To understand how these liberal groups have prevailed over more belligerent political forces in an imperfect institutional context that has fostered rather than impeded conflict, the following section traces the belated emergence of Russia’s democratic institutions as well as the winners and losers in Russia’s regime transformation.

\section*{Russia’s Transition from Communism}

Russia’s transition from communist rule has not been smooth.\footnote{20. This following section is an extremely brief summary of Russia’s transition. For elaboration on this author’s interpretation of the Russian transition in comparative perspective, see Michael McFaul, \textit{Post-Communist Politics: Prospects for Democracy in Russia and Eastern Europe} (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1993); and McFaul, “Russia’s Rough Ride,” in}
Gorbachev ended in armed conflict during an attempted coup d'état in August 1991. In 1987 Gorbachev introduced a series of liberalizing policies, including most dramatically, elections to the Soviet Congress of People’s Deputies in 1989 followed by elections to soviets at the republic, oblast, and local level in 1990. Initially, this set of policy innovations stimulated public support for Gorbachev and his reforms. By 1990, however, new political organizations emerged with societal support that aimed to dismantle rather than reform the Soviet system. In the Russian Republic, opposition leader Boris Yeltsin and a coalition of anticommunist groups called “Democratic Russia” turned against Gorbachev when the Soviet leader refused to back their demands for Russian sovereignty and market capitalism. Though the Yeltsin and Gorbachev camps did make episodic progress in crafting new political and economic institutions through negotiations (such as the “500-Day Plan” on economic reform and the “9 + 1 Accord” on federal relations), extremists from both sides derailed these attempted pacts. In August 1991 this stalemate turned violent when conservatives in the Soviet government attempted to usurp sovereign authority, but Yeltsin and his allies resisted and won.

The second attempt at democratization in Russia also ended in armed conflict. In the euphoric weeks immediately after the failed August 1991 putsch, Yeltsin and his team oversaw the peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union, prevented the complete disintegration of the Russian Federation, and launched partial market reforms without precipitating civil war—all amazing achievements. At the same time, Yeltsin did little to spell out a new set of rules to regulate political competition within the newly independent Russia. He did not push for ratification of a new constitution, he refrained from calling for a postcommunist “founding election,” he refused to create his own political

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party, and he did not dismantle many Soviet-era governmental institutions.25 At the time, Yeltsin and his new government saw economic reform, not political reform, as their overriding priority.

This series of “nondecisions” about Russian political institutions fueled ambiguity, stalemate, and conflict both between the federal and subnational units of the state, and more consequentially, between President Yeltsin and the Russian Congress of People’s Deputies. In the first two years of Russian independence (1991–93), no consensus emerged on the kind of economy, the type of governmental system, or even the boundaries of the state.26 With no rules in place to govern political competition, stalemate precipitated military confrontation between Yeltsin and the Congress in October 1993. In a replay of August 1991, this standoff between two opposing groups, each claiming to be the sovereign authority over Russia, ended only after Yeltsin and his troops defeated his enemies in Congress. Twice in two years, democratization had produced armed domestic conflict in Russia.

Ironically, the tragic events of October 1993 opened another window of opportunity for designing new democratic institutions. This time, Yeltsin seized the opportunity. In his September 1993 decree dissolving the Congress of People’s Deputies (the event that precipitated the October military conflict), Yeltsin also called for immediate elections for a new parliament and a referendum to adopt a new constitution. Since its ratification in December 1993, the new constitution has helped decrease uncertainty about the political rules of the game. Although the new parliament, the Duma, has been dominated by forces opposed to Yeltsin, the relationship between the two has survived new elections for parliament in 1993 and 1995, a 1995 vote of no confidence in the government, a presidential election in 1996, and the legislative approval of the prime minister soon thereafter.

In 1995 this interim parliament was replaced by a new group of parliamentarians, elected according to schedule, under law, and in a free and fair process in which 65 percent of the electorate participated. Russia then held elections for the presidency in the summer of 1996. Despite calls from Russian businessmen and some of Yeltsin’s own aides to postpone the elections, they went

ahead—on time, under law, and were considered relatively free and fair by national and international monitors. The 1996 presidential election was followed in the fall by over fifty gubernatorial elections also considered to be competitive, free, and fair (especially as incumbents lost in roughly half of these races). Since 1993, then, elections rather than street demonstrations or military might have become the means to gaining power in Russia.

ELECTORAL VERSUS LIBERAL DEMOCRACIES

The adoption of a new constitution and this sequence of elections may mark the end of Russia’s troubled transition to democracy, as this current Russian polity appears to meet Joseph Schumpeter’s minimalist definition of a democracy: “the institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote.” The end of transition, however, marks only the beginning of consolidation. The confrontational and protracted process by which the constitution and electoral practices were adopted, in fact, has left many legacies that have impeded the emergence of other features of a liberal democracy.

First, the Russian constitution grants too many powers to the president. Liberal democracies diffuse power through a series of checks and balances between different branches and levels of government. Russia’s 1993 constitution does the opposite, concentrating power in a superpresidential office.

Second, Russia has neither a truly independent constitutional court at the national level of government nor a developed rule of law at the local level. Russia’s first Constitutional Court relinquished its authority as arbitrator between the president and the parliament when the chairman of the court sided with the parliament during the October 1993 crisis. For a year thereafter, the court ceased to function and convened again only after Yeltsin had expanded the number of justices to dilute the voice of his opponents. At lower levels, courts are revamping slowly to protect property rights, govern bankruptcy

27. For details, including a discussion of electoral irregularities, see Michael McFaul, Russia’s 1996 Presidential Election: The End of Polarized Politics (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1997).
procedures, enforce contracts, and ensure competition. The rule of law also has become weaker regarding criminal and civil matters, as Russia’s impotent state cannot provide basic security to its citizens.

Third, Russia’s party system remains underdeveloped and fragmented. Russia has too many ineffective parties and too few that are effective. The 1995 parliamentary vote may have induced consolidation, as only four of the forty-three parties on the ballot crossed the 5 percent threshold. Yet all of these parliamentary parties have uncertain futures and poor records of representation. Vladimir Zhirinovsky’s Liberal Democratic Party of Russia has created an extensive network of regional offices and local organizers, but still acts more like a cultist movement than a political party. Our Home Is Russia, the political group founded by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, is endowed with significant financial resources, government support, and modest regional organization, but easily could follow the fate of earlier parties of power in Russia and disintegrate if the real power in the Russian polity—the president and the interests behind him—withdraw support. Grigory Yavlinsky’s Yabloko party, the one reformist party not connected to the government that won parliamentary seats in both 1993 and 1995, most closely resembles a protoparty, complete with a parliamentary faction, grassroots regional organizations, and internal democratic procedures. However, Yabloko’s small faction in the parliament and near lack of penetration of government bodies outside of Moscow and St. Petersburg will assign this nascent party a marginal role in Russian politics in the near future. Only the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) looks like a real national party with a well-defined social base that will outlive its current leaders. Strikingly, however, the Communist Party has not demonstrated a proclivity for legislating on behalf of its constituents as the Duma’s largest faction. Since losing the presidential election in the summer of 1996, the CPRF has grown increasingly cooperative with the government, a move that has fueled internal party discord.

Fourth, and in part as a consequence of this weak party system, civil society in Russia has become marginal and apolitical since the peak of national activity just prior to the collapse of communism. The ability of civic groups to articulate

and lobby for their interests vis-à-vis the state in Russia's postcommunist era has been impeded by structural changes in the economy and society, delayed development of pluralist institutions—especially the weakness of representative institutions—and the commensurate ascendency of executive power. Russia's economic revolution hit hardest against the Soviet-era emergent civil society. Postcommunist grassroots organizations have no financial resources, because the middle class—the financier of most civic groups in the West—has been slow to emerge in Russia.

Fifth, Russia's independent press is losing its critical edge. Once the beacon of democratic pluralism in Russia, the press has been neutralized or marginalized as an independent force, as Russia's capitalist oligarchies have purchased most of these media outlets. Competition between Russian national television networks effectively ended during Russia's presidential elections, when Vladimir Gusinsky's NTV (channel four) joined forces with ORT (channel one) and RTR (channel two) to back Yeltsin.32 Newspapers also have been gobbled up by a small group of financial houses and oil and gas companies, which are discussed below. Regional newspapers still remain independent from Moscow, but are tied closely to local governments.

In sum, elections have become the only game in town, and the general parameters of the 1993 constitution have not been transgressed, but Russia's polity still lacks many of the attributes of a consolidated liberal democracy. Pluralist institutions of interest intermediation are weak; mass-based interest groups are marginal; and institutions that could help redress this imbalance—such as a strong parliament, an effective party system, or an independent judiciary—do not exist. This institutional matrix in Russia closely resembles the kind of transitional regimes that are prone to domestic conflict and the international belligerent behavior described in the previous section.

WINNERS AND LOSERS IN RUSSIA'S ECONOMIC REVOLUTION
In addition to undermining Russia's partially consolidated democratic institutions, Russia's regime change also has undercut the old Soviet elite who have threatened violence and war as a means to stay in power. At the same time, domestic change in Russia, and especially the reorganization of its economic institutions, has created new interest groups and new organizations that have sought to avoid international conflict. While the balance of power between

32. While Gusinsky's NTV spearheaded the criticism of the Yeltsin government during the Chechen war, this same network has evolved into a most loyal, pro-Yeltsin media outlet since the 1996 vote. Similarly, Gusinsky's newspaper, Segodnya, lost almost all of its founding reporters and editors once the paper adopted its pro-government line.
these groups of winners and losers has been ambiguous throughout most of the last decade, the new leaders and their supporters have triumphed in political struggles over the old elites and their supporters at critical stages in Russia’s transition. Their success in turn has led to a more peaceful Russian foreign policy. This section traces the evolution of these winning and losing interest groups and organizations in Russia’s transition.

Russia is not simply undergoing a transition to democracy in which the rules of the game regarding political competition have been redefined; rather, it is midstream in a social revolution in which both political and economic institutions have been and continue to be transformed. Just as the kind and mode of transition left its mark on the type of political institutions to emerge, the kind of economic reform policies adopted by Yeltsin’s government since 1992 has interacted with the old organization of the Soviet economy to produce a particular kind of capitalism, a particular kind of capitalists, and a particular kind of losers from capitalism.

Partial liberalization of prices and trade in 1992 provided the first major stimulant for reorganization of post-Soviet economic interest groups.\textsuperscript{33} This liberalization proved especially beneficial to the oil and gas sector, and Gazprom in particular. Protected by Prime Minister Chernomyrdin, the former chairman of the corporation, Gazprom has managed to preserve its monopolistic control over the transport and distribution system of all of Russia’s natural gas, making it Russia’s most profitable corporation. Though not unified in a single company like Gazprom, each of Russia’s dozen major oil companies rank in the top twenty of the most lucrative companies in the new Russian economy. Other natural monopolies such as electricity, communications, transportation (both air and rail), and precious metal extractors also have fared well in the new market order and have emerged as the core of blue-chip companies on Russia’s stock exchange.

Inflation and ruble devaluation followed from liberalization and provided opportunities for new financial actors to amass huge fortunes.\textsuperscript{34} New banks

\textsuperscript{33} For a more detailed analysis of the reorganization of interest groups in post-Soviet Russia, see Vladimir Lepekhin, “Gruppa Interesov v Sovremennoi Rossi” (Interest groups in contemporary Russia), in Sergei Markov, ed., Politika i Obshchestvo Perekhodnogo Perioda (Politics and society in a transitional period) (Moscow: Moscow Carnegie Center, 1997).

such as Russian National Credit, Menatep, Inkombank, and Oneksimbank used their close ties to the Russian national government to finance state transfers, while Most Bank under Vladimir Gusinsky emerged as the Moscow city government's central depository. Banks and ministries from the Soviet era such as Agroprombank, Promstroibank, and Zhilsotsbank or Gosnab (Tokobank), and Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations (Alpha Bank) also splintered from the state to become private financial entities.\(^{35}\) Partial liberalization of Russian internal and external trade also created new opportunities for importers and distributors like Boris Berezovsky, head of Logovaz, who made his fortune selling domestic and foreign cars.

After liberalization, privatization constituted the next major set of state policies that kindled the formation and reformation of economic interest groups in Russia. The first round of privatization of large enterprises (1992–94) had a mixed effect on the reorganization of Russia's economic society. Because insiders won majority control in roughly three-quarters of all enterprises privatized, the first round generally ratified the property rights claims of old economic interest groups, including first and foremost the enterprise directors.\(^{36}\) Although economically inefficient, this insider privatization served a critical political role in co-opting major economic elites from the Soviet era that otherwise may have resisted market reforms altogether.\(^{37}\)

The second, cash phase of privatization begun in July 1994, however, created new opportunities for the same small but aggressive group of financiers created by partial liberalization. Using their close contacts with the Russian executive branch (which by 1994 controlled economic policy), several banks offered loans to the government in return for shares in some of Russia's most valuable enterprises. Oneksimbank and its umbrella industrial organization, Interros Group, fared the best in this new privatization phase, acquiring controlling interests in Norilsk Nickel, the largest nickel exporter in the world; two giant oil companies, Surgeneftgas and Sidanko; and Svyazinvest, Russia's largest telecommunications company.\(^{38}\) Menatep also did well in the loans-for-shares fire sale, when its industrial arm, Rosprom, acquired control of roughly

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35. For a complete list of Russia's largest banks, see Profil', No. 3 (January 1997), p. 34.
37. Maxim Boycko, Andrei Shleifer, and Robert Vishny, Privatizing Russia (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996). In this sense, privatization served in many ways as the "golden parachute" recommended by Mansfield and Snyder as a way to neutralize elites threatened by the transition. See Mansfield and Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," p. 332.
38. Oneksimbank's acquired its stake in Svyazinvest in 1997 under a more competitive process than the other purchases, but the deal was still fraught with controversy and accusation about government collusion.
80 percent of Yukos oil company—considered the second largest company in Russia after Gazprom—as well as important positions in several mineral companies. Logovaz obtained major stakes in Sibneft oil company, Aeroflot, and ORT (Russia's largest television network), while Alpha Bank acquired a strategic position in Tyumen Oil as well as control of several cement and trading companies.

Bank acquisition of resource extraction enterprises marked a new phase in the organization of Russia's economic society, as a very small handful of actors acquired phenomenal proportions of Russia's productive assets. These banks in turn formed financial-industrial groups—a corporate structure in which a large financial institution with close ties to the state anchors an array of trading companies and industrial enterprises. By the end of 1996, Boris Berezovsky of Logovaz and now deputy secretary of the Security Council boasted that he and six other people controlled 50 percent of Russia's gross national product. This kind of merger and acquisition also fused Russia's new financial actors with the Soviet Union's old profit centers. Although age, culture, and competition divide the older oil and gas barons and the younger banker tycoons, their small number and a mutual interest in maintaining their lock on Russia's economy provide the context and incentives for cooperation.

Other economic actors are dwarfed by both the wealth and political organization of bankers, oil and gas exporters, and owners of other extractive industries. After privatization, enterprise directors of formerly state-owned enterprises, once a relatively unified lobby, fractured into several sectoral and regional industrial organizations. Civic Union, the electoral bloc most firmly identified with this economic group, garnered only 1.9 percent of the popular vote in 1993. The less successful enterprises of the military-industrial complex have formed alliances with opposition parties such as the CPRF and the Congress of Russian Communities (KRO) and have created lobbies such as the Union of Manufacturers and the League of Defense Enterprises, but none of these groups has been very effective over the last four years. To date, these economic losers also have been political losers.

41. Small groups with large stakes are likely to be the most well organized interest groups. See Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Action (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971).
Small businesses and start-up companies have been hurt the most by the kind of capitalism emerging in Russia. Whereas Poland, a country with a less than a fourth the population of Russia, boasts more than 2 million private enterprises excluding agriculture, Russia has less than 1 million. The combination of exorbitant taxes, inflation, the lack of liberalization at the local level, the mafia, and the consolidation of these large financial groups occupying monopoly control over many markets has created a very unfriendly environment for the small businessperson. As a political force, therefore, this group has played only a marginal role.

Labor is also disoriented and disorganized. Old Soviet trade unions have been slow to reorganize to meet the new challenges of capitalism. The Federation of Independent Free Trade Unions (FNPR), a consortium of sectorally based unions claiming over 50 million members, still identifies with the interests of directors rather than workers in most industries. The Independent Union of Miners, the coalition of strike committees that brought the Soviet government to its knees in 1991, gradually has lost its mobilization potential by consistently siding with the Yeltsin government over the last five years. Wildcat strikes have increased throughout 1996 and 1997, raising some speculation that Russian labor finally has started to remobilize, but the lack of national organization suggests that these strikes will remain isolated instances. Labor, a major short-term loser in Russia's transition, also has failed to act collectively since the collapse of communism.

Pensioners have been the biggest economic losers of Russia's transition to the market. While a substantial segment of Russia's voting population, this group has consistently backed a political loser, the CPRF, throughout the postcommunist period, giving this economic interest group little if any voice in Russian politics.

Finally, Russia's military forces have made sporadic attempts to form their own political organizations as a way to protect their fast-declining privileges in the new Russian state. In the 1995 elections, hundreds of military personnel ran for parliament and several electoral parties and blocs were headed by military officers. In the 1996 presidential election, General Aleksandr Lebed placed third with almost 15 percent of the vote and remains a contender in the next presidential election. The following year, General Lev Rokhlin, the Russian commander in the Chechen war, openly called for the creation of a new

political organization dedicated to serving the interests of the military. Despite this activity, however, the Russian military has not succeeded yet in acquiring real political influence within the Russian state. Military budgets have continued to decline, and the concerns of the military have been ignored.

The creation of a market economy has threatened the interests of several social groups from the Soviet system. Formerly privileged political actors and economic groups from the Soviet ancien régime have resorted to force twice to defend their interests, first in August 1991 and again in October 1993. In these two battles and in other more peaceful political struggles, however, those threatened by political and economic change lost, while new groups that stood to gain from change won. These winners in turn have dominated state policymaking, including foreign policymaking, the focus of the next section.

Implications for Russian Foreign Policy

The polity to emerge in Russia over the last decade exhibits one of the key factors that Mansfield and Snyder suggest fosters belligerent foreign policy behavior in democratizing states—weak democratic institutions. The second cause of belligerent behavior in democratizing states—resistance from social groups that stand to lose from democratization—also has featured prominently in the Russian case. But in Russia, this combination has not ignited belligerent international behavior. Why not?

Most important, the political and economic winners in Russia’s transition are the very groups that would not benefit from war. As winners, they have actively pursued foreign policies that avoid international conflict, because they are the political and economic actors in Russia that stand to gain the most from peaceful foreign policies. In contrast, those in Russia who may have stood to gain from more belligerent foreign policies—be they radical communists, extreme nationalists, segments of the armed forces, or parts of the military industrial complex—have persistently lost in political struggles for state control.

At first, the winners in Russia’s regime change pursued pacific policies as a consequence of their ideology. Over time, these normative commitments to international cooperation by political leaders were supplemented by the tangible interests in peace of the new economic groups. Russian foreign policy regarding both the West and the CIS states demonstrates the influence of these ideas and interests.
PEACE THROUGH IDEAS

In the quest to destroy Soviet communism, Boris Yeltsin, Democratic Russia, and their allies turned to liberal ideas to construct their ideology of opposition. Ideas about democracy, the market, self-determination, and integration with the Western capitalist system crystallized during the peak of polarized confrontation in 1990–91 as concepts most clearly antithetical to the Soviet ancien régime.

Consequently, when Yeltsin assumed control of the newly independent Russian state in December 1991, he and his government were guided by this set of liberal ideas, ideas that included in foreign policy matters a distinctly pro-Western and peaceful foreign policy.\(^4^4\) Initially, these ideas had everything to do with the domestic revolutionary struggle of the previous two years and virtually nothing to do with Russian national interests abroad or interests of economic groups, civic organizations, or the electorate at home. Regarding Russia’s external relations, two critical decisions were made at this juncture: the decision to dissolve the Soviet Union and pursue radical economic reform independently in Russia, and the decision to seek Western assistance in this reform process. State building and economic reform policy quickly replaced arms control and European security as the main issues of East-West relations. Belligerent foreign actions, even within the former Soviet Union, were antithetical to these new foreign policy objectives.

This initial outcome was not inevitable. On the contrary, a more belligerent foreign policy could have resulted at this stage in Russia’s democratization if either one of two different conditions had obtained.\(^4^5\) First, what if the Emergency Committee that initiated the restoration putsch in August 1991 had succeeded? This group held very anti-Western views, promoted illiberal ideologies, and was comprised of several people close to the big transition losers like the military and the military-industrial complex. Had they prevailed, civil war might have ensued and interstate war would have been more likely.

Second, what if Boris Yeltsin and Russia’s victorious revolutionaries had adopted a different ideology of opposition? That Russia’s revolutionary ideology of opposition became pro-democratic, promarket, and by association pro-


\(^4^5\) On the importance of counterfactuals for understanding rare or single events, see Philip Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, eds., Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).
Western was not inevitable.46 In fact, many alternative ideologies of opposition were articulated and discussed during this transitional period. Already by 1988, nationalist organizations such as pamyat (memory) groups and Otchestvo (Fatherland) had cultivated an anti-Western (that is, anticapitalism and anticommunism, as communism for them was considered a Western, cosmopolitan, Jewish ideology), pro-imperial ideology that was radically different from the approach of the liberal and pro-Western Democratic Russia.47 Even within Democratic Russia, several prominent leaders advocated nationalist ideologies, not liberal ones.48 Likewise, many socialist and social-democratic organizations that were both anticapitalist and anti-Soviet flourished in the early days of Gorbachev's liberalization.49 In several respects, the alliance between Russia's liberals in Democratic Russia and the Communist-boss-turned-populist, Boris Yeltsin, was an accident of history forged by common enemies, the Soviet communist system, and later Mikhail Gorbachev.50 Had Yeltsin risen to power buoyed by a different ideology or backed by a different set of allies, Russian democratization might have produced a more belligerent foreign policy.

Yeltsin's identification with liberal ideas was not totally random, nor was it entirely determined by internal alliance politics, as the balance of ideologies within the international system also shaped ideational choices Yeltsin and his allies made. Because Western capitalist democracies were prosperous and opposed communism, Yeltsin and Russia's democratic movement looked to Western countries as allies in their common struggle against the Soviet system.51 Besides democracy and capitalism, there were no other attractive models

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46. On ideas as focal points that provide unique solutions to multi-equilibria phenomena, see Geoffrey Garrett and Barry Weingast, "Ideas, Interests, and Institutions: Constructing the European Community's Internal Market," in Goldstein and Keohane, Ideas and Foreign Policy, pp. 173–206.
48. McFaul and Markov, The Troubled Birth of Russian Democracy, chapters 4 and 5. The Democratic Party of Russia (head by Nikolai Travkin), the Russian Christian Democratic Movement (Viktor Aksiuchits), and the Constitutional Democratic Party of Russia (Mikhail Astafev) left Democratic Russia when the organization decided to endorse the dissolution of the Soviet Union.
50. Author's interviews with Democratic Russia founders Vladimir Bokser, Viktor Dmitriev, Lev Ponomarev, and Gleb Yakunin (summer 1995). At the time, Democratic Russia leaders debated the alliance with Boris Yeltsin, as some claimed he was a communist while others thought he was a nationalist. In 1992, Democratic Russia co-founder Yury Afanasiev quit the organization, claiming that it identified too closely with the antidemocratic Yeltsin. Russian liberals divided again over their support for Yeltsin during the October 1993 events and the Chechen war.
51. This analysis echoes the arguments on transnational relations and epistemic communities with the caveat that my argument incorporates the structure of the international system as a determining factor for understanding which ideas travel and which ideas do not. For elaboration, see
or ideologies in the international system with which Russian revolutionaries could identify.

PEACE THROUGH INTERESTS
Eventually, this normative impetus for pursuing liberal, integrationist foreign policies faded, because Russian expectations concerning Western assistance were not and could not be met, while euphoria for the markets, democracy, and the Western way faded. Even by the end Russia’s first year of independence, foreign policy appeared to be drifting back to more anti-Western, illiberal patterns of the Soviet period. Support for maintaining a liberal policy orientation was reinvigorated, however, when emergent economic interest groups with tangible interests in peaceful relations with other states, and especially peaceful relations with Western democracies, began to assert their influence in foreign policy matters. Groups with economic interests—Gazprom, oil companies, mineral exporters, and the bankers—began to replace individuals and groups with political ideas as the main societal forces influencing foreign policy outcomes. The salience of these interests are demonstrated most clearly in the two most important issues of Russian foreign policy today: integration with the West and relations with states in the CIS.

INTEGRATION WITH THE WEST. Russia’s handful of very profitable corporations and their political allies have provided sustained momentum for continued integration with the West. Russian exporters desire access to Western markets, importers need Western goods, and Russian bankers want partnerships with Western capital. Russian capitalists have used their influence over the Russian state to ensure that the terms of trade remain favorable to local actors. These kinds of activities, however, should not be interpreted as ideo-


52. Some believe this trend has continued. See, for instance, Uri Ra’anan and Kate Martin, Russia: A Return to Imperialism? (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996).

53. Vitaly Portnikov, "’Doktrina Burbulisa’ ili ’Doktrina Kozyreva’?" [The ‘Burbulis doctrine’ or the ‘Kozyrev doctrine’?], Nezavisimaya Gazeta, October 10, 1994, p. 3; and Andrei Kozyrev, Preobrazhenie [Transformation] (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniye, 1995).

54. As capital is Russia’s poorest factor, Russian financiers have been most aggressive in seeking protection from Western competitors. On this logic, see Ronald Rogowski, Commerce and Coalitions (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989).
logically motivated or normatively anti-Western, but rather a reflection of the foreign policy interests of Russia's capitalist class.

Russia's new economic oligarchies also want Western financial institutions to remain engaged in Russia's economic reform process, so that they do not have to pay for it alone. A billion dollars in transfers from the International Monetary Fund to help close the budget deficit is a billion dollars that Gazprom does not have to pay in taxes. A multimillion-dollar World Bank investment in restructuring the Russian coal industry also represents costs avoided by domestic capitalists. Even the smaller investments in institutional reforms provided by such international actors as the U.S. Agency for International Development and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development represent projects that benefit local capitalists paid for by foreign governments. It would be irrational to reject such free money.

This set of economic groups has a rather limited scope of foreign policy interests. Above all, they seek to maintain access to Western capital and markets. When security issues such as opposition to NATO expansion threaten these access interests, the coalition of liberals within the Russian government and their allies in Russia's economic society have cooperated to sustain engagement. Regarding other foreign policy issues that are not seen to have a direct relationship to these economic interests, however, this same coalition either has neglected the problem altogether or has allowed other foreign policy entrepreneurs to assume center stage. For instance, Russian oil companies and bankers have demonstrated little interest in arms control issues, allowing other interest groups to dominate the debate on issues such as START II or CFE negotiations. Similarly, this engagement coalition has ceded arms trade promotion to the Ministry of Atomic Energy and individual enterprises of the military-industrial complex.55 When Western diplomats have attempted to link these peripheral issues with engagement, such as in the case of Russian sales of nuclear reactor materials to Iran or in the case of START II ratification, their strategy has failed.

Maintaining this policy of engagement and integration with the West has been challenged by countervailing forces both domestically and internationally. Internally, Russia's rocky transition to the market and democracy has stimulated the rise of illiberal nationalist and communist political groups that have deplore this Western integrationist strategy. Especially after electoral victories by neo-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky in 1993 and the CPRF in

55. Yakov Pappe, "Otraslevye lobbii v pravitel'stve Rossii" [Sectoral lobbies in the Russian government], Pro et Contra, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Fall 1996), pp. 61-78.
1995, many analysts foreshadowed the possibility of change in Russian foreign policy as a consequence of these ascendant ideologies.\(^56\)

Yeltsin did make some adjustments in foreign policy to appease anti-Western domestic forces. Perhaps most important, Yeltsin replaced his pro-Western foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, with Evgeny Primakov, a seasoned Soviet bureaucrat known for his anti-Western and pro-Eastern stances. Primakov’s appointment aroused new attention toward Russia’s relations with Iraq, Iran, China, and non-Western states more generally. In all of these relations, however, economic interests—be it the sale of nuclear reactors, oil, or airplanes—have been the primary focus. Although occasional rhetorical flares from the Foreign Ministry regarding a Russia-China alliance or a new Russian leadership role in the developing world may have rekindled nostalgic memories of past superpower greatness, these statements have had little influence on the principal objectives of Russian foreign policy.

Russia’s peaceful, westward foreign policy orientation, however, has faced challenges not only from communists and nationalists at home but also from liberals abroad in the form of NATO expansion. No political actor of importance in Russia today, including even unabashed pro-Western liberals such as First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais, has supported NATO expansion. Yet despite the black-and-white nature of this foreign policy issue within Russia, Russian liberals and economic interest groups that benefit from Western integration have not allowed NATO expansion to derail Russian relations with the West.\(^57\)

RUSSIAN RELATIONS WITH STATES IN THE CIS. Just as Russia’s liberal coalition has maintained momentum for Western integration for the sake of economic interests, they have also slowed and amended ideologically driven calls for Soviet reunification. Regarding economic integration, all political and economic actors agree that further economic integration between former republics of the Soviet Union is in Russia’s interests. Whether representing Lukhoil in the Caspian Sea oil deliberations, pressuring CIS states to join the Interstate Economic Committee—a supranational institution dominated by Russia which is created to regulate economic activity between the former republics—or pressuring Ukraine to pay Gazprom for gas shipments, the Russian state has


\(^{57}\) Sergey Rogov, Russia and NATO’s Enlargement: The Search for a Compromise at the Helsinki Summit (Alexandria, Va.: Center for Naval Analysis, May 1997).
promoted actively the interests of Russian economic actors in the former Soviet Union.  

Political integration, however, has been more problematic, because consensus on the re-creation of a new union does not exist. The dynamic of the Russia-Belarus union has illustrated most vividly these tensions. Communist and nationalist political forces have called for complete political and economic union with Belarus ever since Alexander Lukashenko was elected president of Belarus in 1994. Polls indicate that a majority of Russian citizens also support the idea. Nonetheless, liberals within the Russian government and the powerful economic interest groups that stand behind them have delayed full integration. Beginning in April 1996, Belarus and Russia signed several charters containing flowery language about the necessity of a new Slavic union, but the critical steps of issuing a common currency or incorporating Belarusian territory into the Russian Federation (or some new entity) have not been taken. Russian liberals do not reject reunification in principle as long as it is done in an economically rational way. To date, these forces have prevailed.

Regarding relations both with the West and with states in the CIS, the combination of weak democratic institutions and Yeltsin’s political success have allowed a small, well-organized coalition of economic interest groups to occupy a central role in the making of Russian foreign policy. The combination of superpresidentialism, a fragmented party system, and impotent countervailing forces representing pluralist interest means that these economic lobbies can dominate policymaking in Russia, including foreign policy. That economic groups with an interest in peace enjoy a privileged place in policymaking instead of illiberal groups with an interest in war has been made possible by a second factor— Yeltsin’s winning ways. Had Yeltsin been defeated in the standoff with the Congress of People’s Deputies in 1993, a different set of elite interest groups would have taken advantage of the same permissive institutional context and dominated the state in the cause of a different agenda.


Likewise, had Boris Yeltsin lost the 1996 presidential election, Russian foreign policy would have followed a very different course.

CHECHNYA: THE FAILURE AND THEN TRIUMPH OF RUSSIAN DEMOCRACY

Although not explicitly a foreign war, and a war waged against a nondemocratic regime (a kind of enemy that consolidated democracies also fight), the Russian invasion of Chechnya in December 1994 nonetheless demonstrated the belligerent capacity of Russia’s democratizing state. Understanding the interplay among political coalitions, economic interests, and institutions that produced the decision to intervene and the decision to withdraw may shed light on Russia’s future potential as a belligerent state on the international level.

The institutional context that shaped policymaking in postcommunist Russia has been centralized, insulated from pluralist pressures, and relatively devoid of checks and balances within the state, providing propitious conditions for small, well-organized interest groups to dominate. While liberal groups have taken advantage of this institutional matrix for most of Russia’s post-Soviet history, illiberal groups organized to exploit this same context soon after the 1993 parliamentary elections. One group, labeled the “party of war” by the Russian liberal press after the invasion of Chechnya, was comprised of several key Kremlin officials within or closely affiliated with the security ministries. They included Defense Minister Pavel Grachev, First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Sokovets, Deputy Prime Minister Nikolai Yegorov, Security Council Chief Oleg Lobov, and Aleksandr Korzhakov, Yeltsin’s personal bodyguard at the time.  

While several of these officials had been in Yeltsin’s government from the beginning, the influence of this hawkish coalition grew while the influence of liberals and liberal interest groups declined throughout 1994.

In the 1993 parliamentary election, Russia’s Choice, the leading liberal electoral bloc at the time, as well as other smaller liberal parties fared miserably at the same time that Zhirinovsky’s neo-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party captured almost a quarter of the popular vote. These election results appar-

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60. On the formation of this coalition, see Maksim Sokolov, “Razberis’, kto prav, kto vinovat, da oboikh i nakazhdì” [Figure it out, who is right, who is guilty, both and everyone], Kommersant’ Daily, December 8, 1994; and Aleksandr Minkin, “Advokat shefa KGB Kriuchkova zashchishchaet Prezidenta Yeltsina” [The lawyer of KGB chief Kryuchkov defends President Yeltsin], Moskovskii Komsomolets, January 14, 1995, pp. 1–2.

ently demonstrated to Yeltsin’s Kremlin of advisers that Yeltsin had to change his liberal image, rhetoric, and allies in order to win the next presidential election. A second consequence of the December 1993 elections, and a contributing factor to Yeltsin’s new political orientation, was a deepening division between Yeltsin and his immediate circle of advisers on the one hand and reformist political leaders and organizations on the other. Liberals Yegor Gaidar and Boris Fyodorov resigned from Yeltsin’s government, leaving two members of the original 1991 reform team—Anatoly Chubais and Andrei Kozyrev—in the government. The actual decision to invade Chechnya was made without consulting Russia’s liberal forces.

Russia’s biggest economic lobbies also played almost no role in this decision. Vladimir Gusinsky, the head of Most Bank and owner of NTV television network, opposed the invasion and supported NTV’s honest coverage of the war. For doing so, Gusinsky received repeated threats from Korzhakov, compelling the financier to live in London for most of that year. Fearing economic losses generated from close state relations, other Russian bankers remained loyal to the president, but privately criticized the war. Instead, political actors close to Russia’s security forces and the military-industrial complex—that is, the losers of Russia’s transition—dominated this decision-making process. For this group of politicians and the interests groups behind them, a military


63. Emil’ Pain and Arkady Popov, “Vlast’ i obschestvo na barrikadaakh” [State and society at the barricades], Izvestiya, February 10, 1995, p. 4. In interviews with the author during the summer of 1995, liberal presidential advisers Giorgy Satarov, Mark Urnov, and Leonid Smirnyagin claimed to play a marginal role in these deliberations. Similar accounts of the liberals’ marginalization can be found in Yegor Gaidar, Dni Porazhenii i Podad [Days of defeat and victory] (Moscow: Vagritus, 1996), chapter 13; and David Remnick, Resurrection: The Struggle for Russia (New York: Random House, 1997), chapter 9.

64. The strategic pipeline that passes through Chechnya meant that the war had real economic consequences for Russian business groups, and the peace settlement also created new economic opportunities for Russian economic elites. However, the evidence in the public domain so far does not suggest a direct economic motivation for initiating the war. See Payin and Popov, “Chechnya,” p. 25.

65. This impression comes from several conversations in the fall of 1994 and spring of 1995 with Oleg Boyko, president of Russian National Credit, Russia’s second largest bank at the time. During this period, Boyko also headed a consortium of Russia’s largest capitalists called the “Big Eight.” See “Bolshei Ves’merke vybory ne nuzhny” [The big eight does not need elections], Kommersant’ Daily, March 14, 1995, p. 3.
victory in Chechnya might have reaffirmed their importance to the Russian state.66

Chechnya, however, was a disaster for this war coalition. On the eve of attack, Defense Minister Grachev predicted that the military action would be over within hours. After two years, during which 100,000 Russian citizens lost their lives, Russian soldiers went home in defeat.67

While Russia’s weak democratic institutions played little role in shaping the decision to intervene, elections played a critical role in prompting the decision to withdraw. Several months before the 1996 presidential vote, Yeltsin campaign’s chief pollster, Aleksandr Olson, had determined that peace in Chechnya was a necessary (although by no means sufficient) condition for electoral success.68 During the first three months of 1996, however, Yeltsin’s campaign was run by Soskovets and the “party of war,” which had no interest in ending the war (and little interest in having the election).69 At the beginning of the year, their control of the campaign and the Kremlin was complete as Yeltsin had fired three pivotal liberals from his government in January—First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais, Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, and Presidential Chief of Staff Sergei Filatov. This liberal purge coupled with a miserable early campaign performance by the Soskovets team eventually prompted Russia’s business leaders to intervene.70 They urged Yeltsin to appoint Chubais head of the campaign and remove the “party of war” from the government. Yeltsin heeded this first piece of advice in March 1996, when he reorganized his reelection effort and placed Chubais and his liberal allies in charge. Weeks later, in compliance with Chubais’s new liberal electoral strategy, Yeltsin announced a cease-fire in Chechnya, signed a peace accord with Chechen resistance leaders, and then personally visited Chechnya to underscore the

66. Gaidar, Dni Porazhenii i Poded, p. 329. These motivations are precisely one of the causes of war outlined in Mansfield and Snyder, “Democratization and the Danger of War.”
68. Author’s interview with Aleksandr Olson, chief pollster for the Yeltsin campaign, and president of the Foundation for Public Opinion (December 13, 1996). The data showing the positive electoral results of ending the war are printed in Fond, “Obshchestvennoe mnienie,” “Klyuchevye problemy predvyboroi kampanii v zerkale obshchestvennogo mneniya,” Rezultaty sotsiologicheskikh issledovani, No. 29 (May 10, 1996), pp. 4–5.
importance of the peace treaty. Yeltsin acted on the second piece of advice in June between rounds of the presidential election when he removed from office every senior member of the “party of war.”

After his electoral victory, Yeltsin appointed General Alexandr Lebed to negotiate a formal peace settlement with Chechnya, because Lebed placed a strong third in the first round of the presidential election as an antiwar candidate. Although Lebed eventually clashed with Yeltsin and was removed from office, he successfully completed his negotiations with the Chechens on August 31, 1996, buoyed by his electoral mandate of 11 million voters to end the war.

Russia’s war with Chechnya most likely would not have occurred if Russia had been a consolidated democracy. From the very beginning, roughly two-thirds of all Russians opposed the war, a figure that grew steadily over the next two years. Had their interests been represented in the state through the usual pluralist institutions found in stable, liberal democracies, the decision to attack may not have been made. At the same time, Russia’s war with Chechnya would not have ended in 1996 without the presidential election. While Russia’s polity may have lacked the components of a liberal democracy necessary to prevent the war, the one robust rule of Russia’s electoral democracy did create the incentives to end the war.

Conclusions

Russia’s peaceful foreign policy has not resulted from the institutional or normative constraints essential to the “Democratic Peace” thesis. On the contrary, Russia’s volatile, protracted, and incomplete transition to democracy has created the contextual factors and political groups that have produced belligerent foreign policies in other countries undergoing regime change. In Russia, these factors contributed to the war in Chechnya. Aside from Chechnya, however, this same institutional context has also allowed pacific interests to dominate Russian foreign policy for most of Russia’s first years of independence. Unlike their counterparts in democratizing states in the early part of this century, liberal politicians and economic groups interested in peace have

72. This drama is detailed in Remnick, Resurrection, chapter 11.
73. Lebed campaign slogans included “I know war, and I know that war must be stopped,” as well as “The weak carry out wars. The strong do not allow wars to happen.”
won and then maintained political power in Russia. Had others won or other ideologies prevailed, Russian foreign policy might have followed a very different trajectory.

Until the Russian political system develops the array of liberal institutions and norms that constrain leaders more completely from fighting wars with other democracies, several changes in the status quo could precipitate increased domestic conflict or a more aggressive foreign policy in the short and medium term.

First, the coalition of interest groups behind Yeltsin that has benefited from peace could break down. Since 1991 this coalition already has endured numerous splits and challenges. Even the consortium of economic interest groups and liberal politicians that converged during the 1996 presidential campaign began to unravel soon thereafter. In March 1997 Yeltsin announced a major reorganization of his government, which divided the old liberal alliance. Yeltsin kept Chernomyrdin as prime minister, but appointed Chubais and liberal Boris Nemtsov as first deputy prime ministers. Soon after taking office, Nemtsov pledged to seek greater government control and regulation over Gazprom, a policy move that Gazprom head Rem Vakhirev labeled anti-Russian.74 Ironically, communist leaders in the Duma rallied to Gazprom’s cause. In addition, political divides between Russian bankers also have widened over battles to obtain the last gems of Russian privatization. An open split between Chernomyrdin on the one hand and Chubais and Nemtsov on the other, a divide pitting oil and gas against the bankers, or open political struggle between bankers could have grave implications for the liberal alliance that has sustained a pro-Western, nonbelligerent Russian foreign policy. For instance, losers in these latest struggles could seek revenge against the current government by backing illiberal politicians in the next presidential election or the next political crisis.

Second, those political actors who have lost persistently in the postcommunist period might eventually win. Although Russia’s economic transformation has produced a handful of big economic winners, it has also produced a majority of losers who have not yet realized benefits from the market—a situation that provides fertile electoral ground for protest candidates. A communist president placed in the same institutional context enjoyed by President Yeltsin today could radically alter Russian foreign policy. More likely in Rus-

sia's current electoral context might be the ascension to power of an illiberal nationalist. The Russian political landscape now boasts several potential presidential candidates with unproven liberal credentials.

Third, in analyzing the conditions specified by the democratic peace argument, this article has focused on the likelihood of war between Russia and democratic states. It must be remembered, however, that democratizing Russia is located in a neighborhood dominated by authoritarian and quasi-authoritarian regimes as well as very weak and unstable states. With neighbors including China, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, the probabilities that Russia may be drawn into an interstate conflict with a nondemocratic state remain high.

The potential for breakdown in the liberal coalition that has dominated the postcommunist Russian state, the possibility of election of a new president with illiberal views, or the probability of war with nondemocratic states on Russia's borders all represent causes of future wars. A decade since Gorbachev launched liberalization in the Soviet Union and six years since Russia became an independent state, it remains striking how little interstate war has resulted from Russia's revolution. Although lacking many of the institutions of a liberal democracy and threatened by interest groups that have lost enormously in the democratization and marketization processes, Russia has displayed little of the belligerent activity that we expect to see from states undergoing radical political and economic transformations.

IMPLICATIONS FOR WESTERN THEORY AND PRACTICE
Although Russia is a critical case, one deviant case does not disprove a theory or obviate a correlation between domestic regime change and war. That the tremendous and volatile transformation of both the polity and economy in Russia has not produced international conflict, however, does raise questions about the assumed causal mechanisms linking internal change to international conflict.

75. Despite disappointments with democratic and market reforms, a majority of Russian citizens still value norms associated with democratic regimes and still reject ideas associated authoritarian regimes. See T.I. Kutkovets and I. M. Klyamkin, Russkie Idei [Russian ideas] (Moscow: January–February, 1997); Igor Klyamkin and Boris Kapustin, "Liberal'nye Tsennosti v SoznaniI Rossiyan" [Liberal values in the mentality of Russians] (Moscow: Fond "Obshchestvennoe Mnienie," 1995); and United States Information Agency, "Political Continuous Overshadow Yeltsin Comeback in Russian Election," Opinion Analysis, No. M-169(ENGLISH), July 19, 1996, p. 1. These attitudes, however, do not guarantee that nationalist leaders will not come to power, as protest elections can propel to office opposition candidates that may not necessarily reflect the interests of their voters.
76. For elaboration, see McFaul, Russia's 1996 Presidential Election, chapter 7.
The Russian case demonstrates that weak and partial democratic institutions along with interest groups that lose from transition may be necessary conditions for producing belligerent foreign policies in democratizing states, but they are not sufficient conditions. In addition, leaders and groups with an interest in international conflict must come to power. Future studies of the relationship between democratization and war must bring individuals, their ideas, and their interests as well as the contingencies of domestic politics more centrally into their analyses.

The Russian case also suggests that the international system of the late twentieth century may offer a different set of constraints and incentives for politicians engaged in promoting or obstructing regime change than were present in earlier eras. In contrast to many revolutionary ideologies of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, the ideology that has guided Russia’s contemporary revolutionaries does not threaten or seek to change the other great powers in the international system, as they are already liberal democracies. \(^{77}\) While revolutionary ideas in eighteenth-century France and Bolshevism and Nazism in this century were antisystemic challenges to the international system, Russian liberalism is a pro-systemic ideology that advocates integration into the existing international community of states, not its demise. At the same time, losers from Russia’s regime change had no international allies to call to their aid. \(^{78}\)

Liberalism, however, has not triumphed everywhere—not even in all of Europe. It has the potential to fail in Russia as well. Only six years since the Soviet collapse, Russia’s revolution has by no means ended. \(^{79}\) While Russian...

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77. Liberalism, however, does threaten nondemocratic leaders and interest groups in other parts of the world and therefore could serve as a precipitant for domestic conflict and international war in these regions. Or this hegemonic pull of the core liberal states may play a similar pacifying role regarding other regime changes. Distinguishing between the conditions in which liberalism facilitates peaceful transitions and the conditions in which liberalism exacerbates conflict during transitions is a rich and unexplored research agenda.

78. For instance, democratizers in eighteenth-century France challenged the existing international system of states, and thereby provoked foreign powers to back their opponents. Likewise, democratization in Italy and Greece in the nineteenth century or Hungary, Czechoslovakia, or Angola in the twentieth century prompted international conflict because local authoritarian leaders could call upon international allies to help them quell challengers. In contrast, antidemocratic groups in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and then Russia had no international allies.

79. In comparative perspective, six years marks only a midpoint for major revolutions. In Russia in 1923 (six years after the Bolshevik Revolution), Marxism-Leninism appeared to be in remission; Stalin did not come to power until several years later. In France in 1795, the Jacobin dictatorship had crumbled, Thermidor looked to be the future, and Napoleon was still a field commander. Both Russia in 1923 and France in 1795 were considered weak states incapable of threatening the great powers. See Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1938).
leaders are still committed to developing a market economy and a democratic polity, and to joining rather than threatening the community of democratic states, it is in the vital national interests of the United States and the West in general to ensure that this policy trajectory continues. Continued engagement of Russia’s liberals, sustained promotion of Russian liberal market and democratic institutions, and gradual integration of Russia into both the world capitalist system and the international community of democratic states are the policies that will prevent Russia’s democratization from turning belligerent. Containment, isolation, and neglect of liberal institutional development within Russia are the kinds of policies that will help transform Russia’s revolution into a security threat to democratic states in the West and especially to democratizing states closer to Russia.