

# Project Update

## International Security in the Post-Soviet Space

When Robert Legvold (Columbia University) first proposed that the Academy sponsor a project on security in the countries of the former Soviet Union in early 2000, he believed that the major powers were overlooking the importance of this region and its role in world affairs. Since then, with Legvold's guidance, the Academy has produced a series of four volumes that provide insight into patterns in the post-Soviet space that have received too little scholarly attention.

"Because the woes of this part of the world have not yet produced major dramas or large explosions," Legvold wrote in 2000, "the tendency is to assume that events will remain under control." Since then, events in the region have dramatically confirmed its strategic importance to the United States and the world.

According to Legvold, "each of the challenges featured in these books... from the economics of national security to the primal threats to statehood itself, underscores how bound together these states remain, and how imperative it is for the United States and other major powers to adopt policy frameworks transcending single states and single issues."

The project's focus has been the overarching economic and security concerns that tied the disintegrating space of the former Soviet Union together. Most studies of the post-Soviet region tend to focus on isolated issues, such as Caspian Sea oil and gas, "loose nukes," or the election crisis in Ukraine. Although the former Soviet republics are in many ways drifting apart, the security outlook for the region depends on

the interactions between them. Bound together by oil pipelines and energy grids, by interdependent markets and defense industries, and by porous borders, the strategic interests of states in this region frequently overlap and conflict.

During the project's first year, Legvold and an international group of scholars met to produce a collection of essays that considered how each of the major powers approached security challenges in Central Asia. The final draft of *Thinking Strategically: The Major Powers, Kazakhstan, and the Central Asian Nexus* was submitted on September 1, 2001. Ten days later, perceptions of the region had wholly changed.

September 11 altered the prominence of Central Asia in international security discussions, and in many ways bore out Legvold's initial call for scholarly analysis of the international security implications of instability in the countries of the post-Soviet space. Global events transformed the volume from a discussion of the need for strategic thinking in a region whose importance had yet to be recognized to a timely analysis of the issues that rapidly developing security strategies should address.

The volume succeeded in directing attention to the need for active international involvement and coordinated planning to promote stability in the region.

As Oslo-based Russian military expert Pavel Baev stated in a recent review, the book conveys the overall picture of "Kazakhstan becoming the center of the increasingly interconnected Inner Asia, where the balance of oppor-



Robert Legvold (Columbia University)

tunities and risks is now extremely precarious."

From the strategic interactions of major powers in Central Asia, Legvold turned his focus to the question of how economic instability in Russia affects the countries of the post-Soviet region. Ukraine and Belarus, both vulnerable to changes in the Russian economy but each with a unique security outlook, were the central subjects of the second volume in the series, *Swords and Sustainance: The Economics of Security in Belarus and Ukraine*.

With co-editor Celeste Wallander, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Legvold assembled experts from Ukraine, Great Britain, and the United States to consider Russian economic reform and its impact on the defense trends of Ukraine and Belarus.

Contributor Hrihoriy Perepelitsa of the National Institute for Strategic Studies of Ukraine focused on the dominance of the defense sector in Ukraine and Belarus and the dependence of these countries on the Russian economy. This

dependence has strongly influenced the security policies of both countries. While Belarus looks to strengthen its ties to the Russian military to encourage the defense production that keeps its economy afloat, Ukraine has sought to create an independent defense capacity and to become an autonomous player in the international arms market.

Since the late 1990s, Ukraine has expressed interest in joining NATO, which Russia continues to view with anxiety. The NATO-Ukraine relationship has steadily deepened, with NATO inviting an "intensified dialogue" on Ukraine's goal of joining the organization.

The move for independence from Russia within Ukraine has been highly visible in recent months. In November 2004, the peaceful protests of the "Orange Revolution" came to a head as the state-sponsored media proclaimed the Moscow-backed candidate to be the victor, while Ukrainians and foreign monitors claimed massive fraud. The hotly contested

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race focused primarily on the pursuit of Western-style reforms and the development of close ties with Europe.

As contributors to *Swords and Sustenance* emphasize, and as the involvement of Russia, NATO, the E.U. and U.S. demonstrates, complex economic and security choices are not for Ukraine and Belarus to face alone. The book underscores one lesson for policymakers in particular. Despite the “large and unresolved challenge” of creating economic and national security in these countries, the authors see “a moment of opportunity, if leadership in all three quarters – Russia, the West, and the two countries themselves – will seize it.” A complex situation is not the same as a hopeless situation, and the volume points these actors toward policies that could lead to a more secure future for all.

Although the security issues at play in the many small, recently independent nations of the post-Soviet region are engaging and complex in and of themselves, an extensive study of security in the post-Soviet region cannot ignore the central role that Russia continues to play. The Russian military has not maintained the immense reach and influence that the Soviet military once held, but it still plays a significant role in directing defense concerns in Eurasia, while Russia’s nuclear capabilities remain globally relevant. The third volume published by the project, *The Russian Military: Power and Policy*, edited by Steven E. Miller (Harvard University) and Dmitri Trenin (Carnegie Moscow Center), enlisted both Russian and non-Russian experts to consider the Russian approach to defense and the condition of the Russian military.

The contributors to the volume began with the simple fact that Russia inherited only a fragment of the Soviet military – a large fragment, but a fragment nonetheless. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian leaders have failed to reshape this military into a force that meets their needs or to develop a defense posture that realistically assesses their new global position.

*The Russian Military* includes a mix of insiders and expert “outsiders” from Alexei Arbatov, former Duma member, and Vitaly Shlykov, advisor to one of Russia’s largest engineering and weapons-production companies, to journalist Aleksandr Golts and research fellow Roy Allison of Oxford’s Centre for International Studies. Each tackled a key feature of Russia’s military and security policy, shedding light on the complex issues that have stymied reform. They include the role of the defense sector in the Russian economy; discontent among both officers and recruits in the military; a continued focus on facing global opponents, such as NATO, instead of addressing the concerns of such regions as Chechnya; and the use of the Soviet nuclear arsenal as a security crutch. All contributors argued for the necessity of swift reform.

The significance of the Russian military to security in the post-Soviet region may be apparent, but the important role of military dynamics in the smaller countries and subregions is often far less recognized. The final study in the project focuses on military dynamics and security challenges in the Georgia and Caucasus region.

Georgia is an apt choice. In November 2003, protests over the manipulation of legislative elections led to the ousting of the sitting president. The largely peace-

ful overthrow, called the “Rose Revolution,” indicated Georgia’s promising steps toward becoming a more democratic nation. It also underscores a basic fact: Georgia, like many countries in the region, continues to struggle with the development of viable political and economic systems in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In addition to building state capacity, Georgia must also negotiate separatist movements within its borders, its relationship with its immediate neighbors, and Russia’s moves to disrupt power balances in the region. The new government under President Mikheil Saakashvili faces complex security problems.

Bruno Coppeters of Vrije Universiteit Brussel joined Legvold in co-editing the volume *Statehood and Security: Georgia after the Rose Revolution* (forthcoming, 2005). Reviewing events in Georgia with the contributors, it became clear to Legvold and Coppeters that security in Georgia must begin with the development of a sound state structure. Only then can a national security policy be defined.

The essays in *Statehood and Security* reveal the breadth of threats that Georgia faces. The Rose Revolution may have pointed Georgia in the direction of a more stable government, but a history of corruption in the state and military, warring national identities, and the agitations of breakaway Abkhazia and South Ossetia constitute significant roadblocks. Outside of Georgia, troubled relations with Russia and the instability of other countries in the South Caucasus create regional turmoil. On an international scale, oil and gas pipelines and the war on terrorism make the region politically important to the United States and other coun-

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### Thinking Strategically

The Major Powers, Kazakhstan, and the Central Asian Nexus

Robert Legvold, editor

### Swords and Sustenance

The Economics of Security in Belarus and Ukraine

Robert Legvold and Celeste A. Wallander, editors

### The Russian Military

Power and Policy

Steven E. Miller and Dmitri Trenin, editors

### Statehood and Security

Georgia after the Rose Revolution

Bruno Coppeters and Robert Legvold, editors

## Academy's UBASE Project Featured in IMF Quarterly

An article by Fellows Joel E. Cohen (Rockefeller and Columbia Universities) and David E. Bloom (Harvard University) is the lead feature in the upcoming issue of the International Monetary Fund's magazine, *Finance and Development*. Cohen and Bloom are co-directors of the Academy's Project on Universal Basic and Secondary Education (UBASE). The issue, which has a special focus on education, appears in June 2005.

The article, entitled "Cultivating Minds," draws heavily on research completed as part of the UBASE project and sets the framework for the issue. Cohen and Bloom present a summary of progress on achieving universal education to date. They examine rationales for continuing to work toward the goal of universal access to primary and sec-

ondary education and emphasize the need to focus on the quality of education that is provided. They also provide an estimate of the cost and the ability of the world to finance this work, as well as a summary of obstacles – political, cultural, informational, and organizational – that stand in the way of achieving universal coverage.

The UBASE project has shown that providing education to all children is not overwhelmingly costly, though the necessary tools may not yet be in hand. Crude estimates of the cost of achieving universal primary and secondary education fall between \$34 and \$69 billion additional per year. As Cohen and Bloom write, "This is a huge amount of money, but certainly not beyond the ability of the world to fund." ■

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tries of the West. *Statehood and Security* demonstrates that Georgia's problems need to be taken seriously by the great powers.

Eurasia has not exploded since the beginning of the project on International Security in the Post-Soviet Space, but the signs of discontent are visible. Georgia's Rose Revolution and Ukraine's Orange Revolution may be examples of more democratic processes emerging in the area. Other events, such as the Beslan school siege of September 2004, which occurred in the Russian internal republic of North Ossetia, and the ongoing election struggles in Kyrgyzstan, are less encouraging.

Speaking of the post-Soviet region in December 2004, Legvold said, "The area itself – given its location, given its resources, given developments within that part of the world – is going to have enormous significance for what happens in international politics now and into the future." Robert Legvold's work at the Academy brings attention to this region at a critical point in time.

The project on International Security in the Post-Soviet Space was funded by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. Each of the volumes produced by the project is available in both English and Russian editions. ■

## U.S. Space Program Assessed

On March 4, 2005, the American Academy sponsored a workshop on the interaction of military, civil, and scientific interests in space. Experts from the United States, Canada, Britain, France, Germany, and China considered the ways in which military plans for space impinge on, or are advanced by, commercial and scientific activity. Participants identified the civilian space operations that might be undermined by increased military usage of space and discussed the development of appropriate legal principles to protect both civilian uses of space and international security.

Neal Lane and George Abbey (both of Rice University) presented their forthcoming paper, "United States Space Policy: Challenges and Opportunities." The paper describes the ways in which national security provisions governing the production of satellites and satellite technology have curtailed the growth of the U.S. commercial space industry and limited possibilities for international cooperation.

Lane and Abbey describe four barriers to a healthy U.S. space program. These barriers include: the strict regulation of satellite exports as munitions under the

State Department rules; a projected shortfall in the American science and engineering workforce; unrealistic plans for NASA's future space missions that neglect the important role of science; and faltering international cooperation on existing and planned space missions. As Lane and Abbey write, "U.S. space policy presents a paradoxical picture of high ambition and diminishing commitment." Their study offers recommendations for redirecting policy to ensure the future success of the U.S. space program.

Lane and Abbey's work will appear as part of a series of papers emerging from the Academy's Reconsidering the Rules of Space project. The Academy recently published "The Physics of Space Security," a reference manual that presents technical facts for a general audience about space operations. Also forthcoming are papers that offer international perspectives on U.S. space plans.

The project is directed by John Steinbruner (University of Maryland) of the Academy's Committee on International Security Studies and supported by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. ■



Theresa Hitchens (Center for Defense Information), Neal Lane (Rice University), Joanne Gabrynowicz (University of Mississippi), George Abbey (Rice University)