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An Overview of Russian Foreign Policy

Forging a New Foreign Policy Concept for Russia

Russia's entry into the new millennium was accompanied by qualitative changes in both domestic and foreign policy. After the stormy events of the early 1990s, the gradual process of consolidating society around a strengthened democratic government took hold as people began to recognize this as a requirement if the ongoing political and socioeconomic transformation of the country was to be successful. The formation of a new Duma after the December 1999 parliamentary elections, and Vladimir Putin's election as president of Russia in 2000, laid the groundwork for an extended period of political stability, which has allowed us to undertake the development of a long-term strategic development plan for the nation.

Russia's foreign policy course is an integral part of this strategic plan. President Putin himself has emphasized that "foreign policy is both an indicator and a determining factor for the condition of internal state affairs. Here we should have no illusions. The competence, skill, and effectiveness with

which we use our diplomatic resources determines not only the prestige of our country in the eyes of the world, but also the political and economic situation inside Russia itself."[1]

Until recently, the view prevalent in our academic and mainstream press was that post-Soviet Russia had not yet fully charted its national course for development. It was often said that Russia needed a "new identity," that the country needed to establish a national "idea" or "mission." Without such a foundation, many found it impossible to conceive of an integrated, long-range foreign policy doctrine. The notion that our foreign policy is still "in the process of being formulated" consistently crops up in scholarly works published in recent years, both in Russia and abroad, and has even found its way into university textbooks describing contemporary international relations. However, there is now every reason to assert that the formative period of Russian foreign policy is essentially complete. The primary principles guiding the course of Russia's foreign policy, grounded in a clear understanding of the country's national interests, have been fully worked out.

Of course, no country's foreign policy begins with a blank slate. Despite the far-reaching transformation Russia experienced at the end of the twentieth century, the very fact that a state takes part in a global system of international relations presupposes the existence, for that state, of a defined set of underlying foreign policy goals that defines its place and its long-term interests in the international order. These conditions, of course, reflect the prevailing political forces at a particular instant in its history. They also, as a rule, spring from the objective characteristics of a country's particular historical, economic, cultural, and geopolitical development. These factors, in total, make up a kind of national foreign policy "constant," which is little affected by either domestic or international developments. In the history of diplomacy, the quality of continuity in foreign policy has been generally described by the saying "there are no permanent allies, only permanent interests." This continuity (even if it cannot be precisely measured) is characteristic not only of countries that are politically stable, but of all countries, including those, like Russia, that are in transition toward economic and sociopolitical modernization.

Contemporary Russia entered the global arena (following the breakup of the Soviet Union) possessing a tremendous amount of historical expe-

rience in international relations and a broad network of multilateral and bilateral relationships. Russia's foreign ties were based on the continuity provided by Imperial Russian and Soviet diplomacy. At the same time, however, it proved necessary to reformulate (and then to implement) positions taken by the government on a number of issues related to foreign policy, in order to reflect more adequately the characteristics of our nation's current stage of development and its position in the world.

On what basis, however, can we assert that today this process is largely completed? Above all else, the fact that a foreign policy doctrine, which Russian diplomacy was for so long accused of lacking, now exists—and it is not only on paper, but is actively guiding the day-to-day activities of the government. Russia's new Foreign Policy Concept, approved by the president on June 28, 2000, embodies this governing ideology (see appendix).[2] The Concept resulted from extensive analysis provided by politicians, civil servants, prominent social figures, diplomats, and academics of what the role and place of our nation in the world should be, especially at this particular point in the process of trying to realize our long-term national interests in the global arena.

That the new Foreign Policy Concept should appear at this time is no accident, of course. Its drafting was an integral part of the overall government strategy for national development and was closely wrapped up with the strategy's other components—the economy, state building, federal relations, social welfare, defense, and security. At the beginning of 2000, Russia adopted its National Security Concept, a primary document analyzing external threats to the interests of the Russian Federation.[3] Russia's Military Doctrine further develops the National Security Concept's positions on constructing defense. The Foreign Policy Concept does the same for specific areas of the government's foreign policy activity.

An important characteristic of the new Foreign Policy Concept is that it does not spell out rhetorical goals; instead, its aims are realistic and attainable. Nor does it completely reorient Russia's foreign policy course. The document primarily reflects tried and true principles and priorities that—and this is especially important—have been supported by the Federal Assembly and by popular opinion. In a word, this Concept is a working document, based on past experience and poised to go forward into the future. It provides Russian foreign policy with transparency and

needed predictability. It gives the world community a clear road map to Russia's current actions and future steps in world affairs.

Defining this road map was no simple task. The effort was occasionally painful and was accomplished in several stages. In keeping with the adage that foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy, the process by which the new Russia became an entity in world politics reflected the depth and breadth of the internal changes our nation underwent in the final decade of the twentieth century.

The first of these stages was the period of Soviet *perestroika*, from 1985 to 1991. Two key events during this period helped shape Russia's new international role: the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The second stage—from 1991 to approximately the mid-1990s—was the formative period in Russian foreign policy. This formative period proceeded concurrently with the establishment of a new socioeconomic order in Russia, attended by a full range of drastic, dramatic changes in the fabric of Russian life and in the very worldview of Russians. Not surprisingly, this formative period was distinguished by a fierce political struggle over the most basic issues of development, a struggle that directly affected our foreign policy.

In December 1991, Russia entered the global arena with a new appearance. Right from the start, Russia's foreign policy activity was carried out in a fundamentally new environment, one that differed from that of the Soviet period. This new legal and sociopolitical environment was characterized by

—radical change in the mechanism by which foreign policy was created; after the democratization of politics and society, the process was increasingly influenced by parliament, by the media, and by public opinion;

—less coordination in the development of international relations, which burgeoned as a result of Russia's increased openness to the outside world;

—swift and sometimes inappropriate moves by Russian regions and "subjects of the Federation"[4] to establish direct relations, bypassing the central government, with contiguous cross-border areas or with local authorities abroad;

—an abrupt transition to "openness" in information concerning foreign policy, coupled with the complete dismantling of the Soviet appara-

tus for engaging in foreign policy propaganda and the management of Russia's image abroad;

—the privatization of whole sectors concerning foreign relations that formerly were under strict governmental control, especially in relation to trade and economic cooperation, international investing, scientific and cultural exchanges, and so on.

This early formative period in Russia's foreign policy reflects the stormy and primordial process of establishing a democracy and market economy, with the attendant contradictions and costs.

The collapse of the Soviet political system occurred so suddenly and forcefully that at the time neither the leadership nor the Russian people had—and could not possibly have had—a full understanding of either what direction their country's development would take or what its foreign policy priorities would be. Russia's first president, Boris Yeltsin, addressed this directly and candidly in a 1992 speech before the Supreme Soviet:

> Russia's difficult transitional state does not allow us yet to discern its new or permanent character, nor does it allow us to obtain clear answers to the questions "What are we turning away from? What do we wish to save?" and "Which elements do we wish to resurrect and which do we wish to create anew?"[5]

The national consciousness was seized by the euphoria of change. To many it seemed that we had only to sharply alter our political orientation and the majority of our domestic and foreign affairs issues would resolve themselves. For example, our economic strategy was predicated on the belief that abrupt price liberalization and the institution of free market mechanisms would, by themselves, create a favorable dynamic for development. In foreign policy, we thus expected that a radical shift away from confrontation in favor of rapprochement with the West would automatically change the West's relationship to Russia and mobilize concentrated political support and economic aid for us. These unrealistic expectations clearly left their mark on the first draft of the Foreign Policy Concept, prepared in 1993.[6]

At the time, there really was substantial basis for such high hopes. The international climate had improved significantly during the late 1980s

and early 1990s. The democratic changes in our country and the dramatic events of August 1991 in Moscow had evoked an enormous outpouring of sympathy for Russia and support of its leadership from across the globe. The majority of Russian popular opinion welcomed our rapprochement toward former adversaries and expected concrete returns for the country's new direction.

However, in actuality, everything turned out to be much more complicated. Ideological and domestic policy conflicts were exacerbated by seriously deteriorating socioeconomic conditions. Foreign policy was one of those areas where debates about which path Russia's development should take, and what Russia's relations with the West should be like, rose to the fore and were most pronounced. As in the nineteenth century, our relationship with the "West" (both as a defined bloc in international relations and as the embodiment of a particular model of socioeconomic and political development) had come to signify a particular ideological orientation.[7] On one side was displayed bellicose hostility toward Western civilization; on the other, an equally passionate desire to join the ranks of the West as quickly as possible, even if to the detriment of Russia's real interests.

In this regard, it is telling that Russia decided in the early 1990s to throw in its lot with accelerated integration into the Euro-Atlantic structure. Unrealistic goals were set forth; for example, to establish an "alliance" relationship with the West for which neither our country nor the West was prepared. Indeed, each side understood the concept in a completely different way. Many in the United States and Western Europe bought into the scenario that they had "beaten" Russia in the cold war and did not see a newly democratic Russia as an equal ally. At best, Russia was given the role of junior partner. Any manifestations of independence or attempts to defend its position were perceived as recidivism of Soviet "imperialist" politics. The move by the United States and NATO to expand the alliance right up to Russia's borders, in blatant disregard for Russia's national interests, was a clear wake-up call.

However, the period of an overt, idealistic pro-Western orientation in Russian foreign policy was relatively short-lived and superficial. Russian diplomacy quickly learned from it the appropriate lessons. This education was hastened by actual events: the creation of Russian foreign policy was being accomplished not in theoretical debates but "on the job," as

Russia strove to find solutions to real-life, complex international problems that bore directly on the country's national interests. After the collapse of the Societ Union it was necessary to "reorganize" the geopolitical space that remained and to create political mechanisms for regulating the conflicts that sprang up on the outer borders of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). It was necessary to defend the rights of Russians who now found themselves outside Russia's borders, and to lay a new political foundation for relations with Central and Eastern European countries. In general, Russia had to fine-tune the ways in which it dealt with the entire rest of the world. These painstaking efforts—largely unseen by the public—are what dictated the logic of our foreign policy formation. These piecemeal efforts yielded the first conceptual conclusions that later were crystallized into established principles and a style for the Russian government's international activities.

These efforts did, however, have a significant result, in that Russia undertook its unprecedented, complicated, and painful internal transformation in a largely favorable and uncritical international environment. The Russian government had managed to avoid chaos along its borders with its new neighbors, to maintain national security at a level allowing for sharp cutbacks in military spending, and to mobilize broad international support for Russian reforms in both word and deed.

The very essence of the foreign policy problems faced by Russia disposed our country to evaluate international conditions realistically and take a pragmatic, rather than an ideological, approach to formulating aims and goals. The extremely contradictory international situation strengthened Russia's conviction that our only reliable foreign policy reference point was the consistent protection of our national interests. Only on this basis could we adequately respond to contemporary threats and challenges, consciously formulate positions on international issues, and forge purposeful relationships with other nations.

Foreign policy debates during in the 1990s often raised the (well-founded) question: what, specifically, were Russia's national interests? Indeed, Russia's specific course of action in the international arena directly depended on the answer to this question.

One legacy bequeathed by Soviet foreign policy was a "superpower mentality," which induced post-Soviet Russia to participate in any and all significant international developments, often incurring a greater

domestic cost than the country could bear. This approach was unacceptable, given Russia's enormous burden of unresolved domestic problems. Common sense dictated that, for the time being, foreign policy should first and foremost "serve" the vital interests of domestic development. This meant providing reliable national security; creating the best possible conditions for sustained economic growth; increasing the standard of living; strengthening the country's unity, integrity, and constitutional order; and defending the rights of citizens and compatriots abroad.

From all of this, another conclusion was reached: the need for an "economical" and focused approach, rejecting gratuitous or superfluous diplomatic efforts in favor of an active, multivectored foreign policy that took advantage of anything that might produce real returns for domestic development. Yevgeny Primakov, Russia's minister of foreign affairs from 1996 to 1998, remarked,

> . . . in the absence of any active foreign policy, it is difficult if not impossible for Russia to effect any fundamental domestic transformations or preserve its territorial integrity. Russia is far from indifferent about the manner and capacity in which she enters the world economy: as a mistreated appendage useful as a source of raw materials, or as an equal participant. In many ways, this also relates to the function of foreign policy.[8]

In other words, the need to focus on solving domestic problems in the context of foreign policy in no way signifies xenophobia or a retreat into isolationism. On the contrary, rational diplomacy on issues of vital importance to Russia and the world community can, in some cases, make up for a lack of economic, military, and other domestic resources.

Concrete foreign policy experience has also brought clarity to the issue of what was the best line to take in relations with the leading countries of the West. Today, not only among politicians and diplomats but in Russian society in general, there is a clear understanding that unjustified concessions to the detriment of our national interests, on one hand, and slipping into confrontation with the United States, Europe, and Japan, on the other, are both unacceptable extremes. Foreign policy aimed at consistent and, where necessary, strict defense of national interests in no way contradicts the goal of increasing Russia's participation both in the com-

munity of democratic nations and in the global economy. In particular, this has been borne out by the experience of Russia's consistent efforts to integrate into the activities of the G-8. Within this authoritative forum, Russia actively participated in discussions with the leading industrially developed powers on issues of key importance for both regional and global security and stability. No matter how complicated the problems that Russia faces in its relationship with the more developed countries, Russian diplomacy should strive for constructive cooperation and joint exploration of mutually satisfactory solutions. It is in Russia's interests to widen its circle of friends and partners in the world, as this can only strengthen the Russian state.

Notably, this approach is endorsed by Russian academic experts. A report prepared by the Russian Independent Institute of Social and Nationalities Problems emphasizes that Russian foreign policy

> has become more balanced toward the West and the East; foreign policy began to correspond more with the country's national interests. Russian experts do not agree with the point of view, especially prevalent among a segment of Western analysts, which states that Russian foreign policy is increasingly confrontational toward the West. The majority of them believe that Russia's foreign policy course, despite the changes it has undergone, remains appropriately balanced and is not excessively strict toward the West.[9]

Posing the problem in this way is the key to understanding another eternal question, being asked more and more often: is Russia a Western or an Eastern power? Experience has demonstrated the futility of trying to juxtapose different supposed geographical delineations of Russian foreign policy. The unique geopolitical position of our country—not to mention the realities of world politics and economics—dictate the necessity for Russia to cultivate cooperation equally with nations to our West, East, North, and South. This was well understood by prominent Russian thinkers of the past. Developing a long-range concept for Russia's industrial development at the end of the nineteenth century, the great Russian scientist Dmitri Mendeleev (1834–1907) stated that national interests demanded the development of trade and economic relations with neighbors to the West and the East. He had no doubt that "all Russia's politics

would sooner or later be guided by this circumstance."[10] Indeed, many of our historians have asserted that in the cultural scheme of things, Russia functions as a bridge between the two great Western and Asian civilizations. Having incorporated the traditions and values of East and West, Asia and Europe, Russian civilization is a unique phenomenon.[11]

Thus, over time, fundamental principles were established, and these have become the basis for the updated Foreign Policy Concept. Its contents were stipulated not only by the country's domestic goals and interests, but also by the need to determine Russia's position in the face of new global challenges and to decide what system of international relations best meets the country's interests.

In the Concept, the problem of how economics and foreign policy are interrelated is addressed anew. In the transition to a market economy, priority has been given to goals including strengthening the Russian economy and rebuilding those specialized areas geared to the international economy; facilitating full membership and participation in international economic organizations; helping Russian entrepreneurs enter foreign markets; attracting foreign investment; and solving the issue of our foreign debt. Russian diplomacy has become actively engaged in seeking ways to minimize the negative effects of globalization on our country and to create in Russia the conditions necessary for sustained economic growth and economic security.

The most important principle of the new Foreign Policy Concept is that one of the primary measures of the effectiveness of Russian foreign policy will be the degree to which the rights and interests of Russian citizens—no matter where they are or where they live—are protected. The significance of the "human dimension" in Russian diplomacy has sharply increased. First and foremost, this means ensuring the rights of millions of Russian citizens living outside Russia in countries belonging to the former Soviet Union.[12]

Also of critical significance has been the complete overhaul of the process by which foreign policy is crafted. The democratization of society, coupled with the creation of a law-based government, has had a significant impact on the way policy is determined. Specifically, it was necessary to delineate what role would be played by the parliament in

making foreign policy decisions, to spell out the interrelationship of the legislative and executive branches, and to apportion authority between the president, government, and regional authorities for conducting foreign affairs. Thus, domestic political reform has had a considerable effect on our approach to foreign policy issues.

It was also necessary to revisit the way information about foreign policy is conveyed to the public. Over the past ten years, the mass media's influence on the formation of public opinion has grown rapidly, with extremely varied consequences. Thus, the Russian foreign policy establishment has found it necessary to develop a new style and new ways of interacting with the media. It has had to learn to work in an environment characterized both by transparency and by pluralism.

Finally, the new reality apparent in Russia, as well as changing world conditions, have made renovation of the diplomatic service unavoidable. In this regard, a key goal will be to ensure stability and continuity from one generation of Russian diplomats to the next by adequately training and preparing new diplomatic cadres to meet the international relations demands of today and the future.

The enormity of these issues illustrates the number and complexity of the stages through which Russian foreign policy has had to go in the last decade of the twentieth century.

Continuity in Russian Foreign Policy

Continuity is a critical component in any state's foreign policy and diplomacy. It has both great theoretical and great practical importance. It is difficult to imagine any serious evaluation of the state's role and place in international affairs—or evaluation of its political culture and style, and methods of diplomatic practice—without taking into account elements of continuity.

Continuity is generally understood as "a connection between phenomena in the developmental process in nature, society, and cognition whereby the new replaces the old but preserves some of its elements." In society, continuity denotes the transfer and incorporation of social and cultural values from one generation to the next, achieved in its totality by

following traditions.[13] With regard to foreign policy and diplomacy, continuity can be defined as the sum of those internal and external factors that (1) have long-lasting effects on the formation of foreign policy and on the style and methods of a given state's diplomacy, and (2) retain in some form or other their significance in a constantly shifting domestic and international landscape.

It is natural that continuity in foreign policy becomes a hot topic during periods of revolutionary change and radical reform. Elements of continuity often run counter to the new features that arise in foreign policy after abrupt sociopolitical shifts. In reality, however, this juxtaposition is completely conditional. No state can recreate its foreign policy from scratch simply because of particular domestic political changes, even if such change is profound. Foreign policy objectively reflects the characteristics of how a country—its culture, economy, geopolitical situation—have historically developed, and therefore is a complex alloy, comprising elements of both continuity and renewal, which defies expression in an exact formula. It is common that what appears to be a fundamentally new direction for foreign policy actually turns out to be yet another variation of a traditional policy repackaged in a form more in line with the spirit of the times.

In practice, continuity of foreign policy is an important factor in the stability of international relations. In a narrow sense, continuity is defined as the degree to which a state remains true to its international obligations. In a wider sense, it indicates a state's ability to act as a predictable and responsible member of the world community. Also, in a democracy, foreign policy continuity presupposes sufficiently broad public agreement inside the country as to the basic course and direction of policy. In and of itself, this consensus is a measure of a certain level of development and maturity of a state's political system.

Issues of continuity for foreign policy and diplomacy are especially critical for Russia, which for centuries has played an important role in European and world affairs. Twice during the twentieth century, Russia underwent profound internal transformations that, in turn, had profound effects upon its foreign policy.

According to a recently published work on the history of nineteenth-century Russian foreign policy,

> the modern methodology for studying foreign policy takes a complex approach encompassing a wide range of events and phenomena. This is because a country's foreign policy and state mechanism function within the framework of two socioeconomic and political systems: intrastate, where foreign policy originates, and interstate, where it is carried out. Therefore, foreign policy analysis must take into account the political and socioeconomic aspects of national policy, the sociopolitical system of a country as well as its geography and demography, its industrial and military resources, cultural level, national consciousness, the political mentality of the ruling circles and of the populace, the particulars of its history, its traditional relationships with the rest of the world, and so on and so forth.[14]

It is easy to see that most of the factors cited above as influencing a state's foreign policy are long term and often continue to operate even through periods of far-reaching national and international change. Taken together, these factors also determine the continuity of a state's foreign policy and diplomacy.

Twentieth-century Russian history yields many examples of how, during periods of radical revolutionary change and during the most profound internal sociopolitical transformation, foreign policy and diplomacy have continued to embody the nation's basic goals and national interests. It is telling that despite an apparently complete ideological split with the diplomatic traditions of the Russian Empire, Soviet approaches did not negate this continuity. In particular, noted Soviet historian and foreign policy expert Boris Shtein wrote (in a foreword to the memoirs of tsarist diplomat Yu. Ya. Solov'ev) that "not everything about Russian diplomacy from the end of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth centuries should be crossed out. Many of the goals and objectives sought by Russian diplomacy retained their significance despite the overthrow of the tsarist regime. These goals belonged not to tsarist Russia, but to Russia as a nation and to the Russian people."[15]

Of course, Western analysts saw Soviet foreign policy, especially during its final decades, as historically continuous. George Kennan, one of the founders of American Sovietology, wrote that "the history of Russian

statesmanship and diplomacy, including that of the Soviet period, has been marked by some rather striking elements of continuity."[16] Kennan attributed the foreign policy peculiarities of the Soviet period to an "ideological superstructure" that was "superimposed" in 1917 onto the essentially unchanged foreign policy legacy of previous eras.[17] Like many other American historians, Kennan identified this legacy with negative traits of Russian "imperial" policy, such as a tendency toward territorial expansion, claims of "ideological exclusivity," deep mistrust toward the West and foreigners in general, and so forth. Thus, American Sovietologists see continuity in a negative light.

Undoubtedly, assessments like these are one source of the stereotypes about Russia and its foreign policy that are deeply embedded in the Western psyche. These stereotypes continue today to help perpetuate mistrust and even hostility toward modern Russia in certain circles in the West, especially in the United States.

This underscores the critical need to understand the experience of Russian foreign policy and diplomacy in their modern context. It is even more important because the processes of establishing a new Russian state and building a new national consciousness make active reference to Russian history and tradition. Russian society looks to its own history to provide the vital reference points it needs to fill the political and psychological vacuum left by the fall of the old system. This is where Russia looks to form a new value system—a system that must be founded on firm historical ground to remain stable. To paraphrase Alexander Herzen (1812–70), Russian society is "sizing up the modern day by more fully understanding the past; discovering the meaning of the future by more deeply delving into what has passed; and striding ahead by looking back."

What is the overall conceptual framework for understanding continuity in modern Russian foreign policy with regard to the Soviet and pre-Soviet periods? In what areas of history is full knowledge and understanding most useful to ensure Russia's foreign policy interests and improve its diplomatic service today?

The complexity of the answers to these questions lies in the fact that current Russian foreign policy cannot be described either as a direct continuation of Soviet foreign policy or as an automatic restoration of the foreign policy pursued by the tsars and the Provisional Government that

was interrupted in 1917. This is because the "Russian Federation" that entered the global arena in December 1991 was a state qualitatively different from all of its predecessors. Its modern political system had no analogue in Russian history, and both its territorial configuration and its immediate geopolitical environment were markedly different. In these respects, Russia was a completely new state and therefore needed to develop a new way of looking at its foreign policy goals and priorities. It needed to take into account changed domestic and international realities. Forging a new approach, however, could not be accomplished overnight. The new state needed time to develop and inculcate a new set of foreign policy priorities in the national, political, and popular consciousness.

Although in some respects a "new" state, the Russian Federation that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union also came equipped with centuries of international experience, it had an existing infrastructure for bilateral and multilateral relations, and was the heir to a rich legacy provided by the professional Russian and Soviet schools of diplomacy. However, inheriting and assimilating this experience was not, and could not have been, automatic. The formation of a new Russian foreign policy was a creative process right from the start. Objectively, the process became a complex synthesis of the Soviet legacy, resurrected Imperial Russian diplomatic traditions, and completely new approaches dictated by the fundamental changes that had occurred in Russia and the world.

Because the Soviet Union had not made its exit into history as the result of a military defeat or violent social revolution, Russian foreign policy was intertwined with both wholly new elements and elements continuous with the past. Russia had broken with Soviet ideology yet purposefully retained all that was positive in Soviet foreign policy and that continued to meet Russian national interests. Unlike the Revolution of 1917, which severed centuries of foreign policy tradition and physically liquidated Imperial Russia's diplomatic service, the new democratic state preserved intact much of the Soviet apparatus, both in terms of agencies and of personnel.

This approach was in complete accordance with the stance adopted in 1991, which conceived of the Russian Federation as the continuation of and rightful successor to the USSR. It is telling that Russian diplomacy's first practical efforts were aimed at ensuring that this concept gained

international acceptance. The first step in this direction was the December 24, 1991, message from the president of the Russian Federation to the secretary-general of the UN regarding the continuation of the Soviet Union's UN membership by the Russian Federation. The message also requested that responsibility for all the USSR's rights and obligations according to the UN Charter be transferred to the Russian Federation.[18] A note from the Russian Foreign Ministry dated January 13, 1992, states that the Russian Federation "continues to ensure the rights and fulfill the obligations of international agreements signed by the USSR."[19] International acceptance of this was of enormous practical importance to Russia at that particular time, in that it gave Russia a permanent seat in the UN Security Council and helped solve many complicated issues of rightful succession with regard to relations with former Soviet republics.

Nevertheless, the new Russia could not see itself as heir to the USSR in the aspects of a foreign policy that had been dictated by "class struggle" on the international arena and that had led to conflict with the United States and other Western countries. Not only had this opposition resulted in the flare-up of acute international crises like the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, which led the world to the brink of nuclear war; it had also fueled the arms race and drained the Soviet economy. In the end, this was also one of the primary reasons for the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc.

It would, however, be a mistake to say that the foreign policy experience of the Soviet period was driven solely by confrontational ideology. Being the incarnation of the Russian state at the time, the Soviet Union built its foreign policy in terms of the way it understood its national interests. This was demonstrated by Soviet diplomatic efforts aimed at averting the threat of global nuclear conflict, regulating international crises, and facilitating peaceful coexistence and cooperation between countries with opposing sociopolitical systems. Historic achievements in this vein included the creation of the United Nations, the signing of the Helsinki Accord, and the development of a complex system of Soviet-American and international treaties and agreements on arms control and disarmament.

Indeed, some of the most enduring legacies in the international system today were forged during the Second World War. As a result, the experience of the international role played by the Soviet Union during this period holds lasting significance, even for Russia's foreign policy today. The foundations of the postwar order first took shape during the wartime meetings of the heads of state of the anti-Hitler coalition. Conceptually, this new world order was designed not only to ensure global peace and international security, but also to facilitate continued cooperation between the member-states of the wartime alliance. Working together, the allies struck a compromise on the disposition of postwar Germany. Democratic resolutions were found for settlement with former German allies, with whom peaceful treaties were signed (with the exception of the treaty between the USSR and Japan).

A special place in the postwar world order belonged to the formation of the United Nations. Before the eyes of the United Nations' founding fathers was the lamentable experience of the League of Nations, created after World War I. The League of Nations was unable to ward off the aggressive acts of Germany, Italy, and Japan during the 1930s and unable to halt the unfolding of World War II. The League of Nations was unable to solve disarmament issues. However, it was during the 1930s that the idea of collective security was developed. Although never put into practice, as a concept, collective security was aimed at strengthening peace and stability and greatly influenced the development of international relations. The experience of trying to achieve collective security in Europe was put to active use by the Allied powers in their fight against fascism.

Soviet diplomacy not only helped make victory over the Axis powers possible, but also made an important contribution to postwar efforts to draft permanent and final settlements in Europe and the world. Soviet diplomacy also figured significantly in the formation of the United Nations, whose charter essentially became the primary legal basis for modern international relations. A key principle of the UN is that it has, from the start, been oriented toward the future. The ideas and principles contained in the UN Charter bear witness to the far-reaching vision of the organization's founders, who created it as a universal body to serve as the backbone for international relations. Today, amidst globalization and

the gradual trend toward a more multipolar world system, it is difficult to find an organization that better meets the demands of the times. It is no accident that those who seek to impose a "one-size-fits-all" model of world order focus their primary efforts on weakening the UN's role and excluding it from the process of solving today's critical issues.

History has carried out a just verdict against the cold war and its extremely negative effect on international relations in the postwar period. More than once during these years did the threat of nuclear disaster hang over the world. At the same time, even at the most dramatic and difficult periods, the great powers—primarily the USSR and the United States—successfully managed to reach mutually acceptable compromises in order to avoid a fatal confrontation. Numerous local crises notwithstanding, the cold war did not escalate into a "hot" global conflict. This outcome was helped not only by the will and wisdom of individual world leaders of the time, but also by the specific mechanisms that existed to support international stability and that were inherent to the bipolar world order of the postwar decades.

It was also during the cold war that the prerequisites for a multipolar system of international relations were put into place. Despite the obvious preeminence of the USSR and the United States, other influential factors also coalesced and had an effect. One such factor was the Non-Aligned Movement. The fall of colonialism drew into the sphere of active international politics dozens of African and Asian countries, which gradually cultivated their input into growing international cooperation. They advanced many initiatives that, in large measure, facilitated the democratization of international relations. The inclusion of Asian, African, and Latin American countries as equal members in the political big leagues was one of the most remarkable developments of the postwar world. In its relations with these countries, Russia today relies in large measure on the goodwill and mutual sympathy created during the years in which the USSR supported their quests for political independence and economic self-sufficiency. Russian diplomacy actively uses this reservoir of goodwill in the interests of ensuring global security and the stability of democratic development throughout the world.

The most important outcome of the postwar period was the creation of a complex system of international treaties and agreements on disar-

mament. This is when the key Soviet-American agreements were signed that laid the foundation for strategic stability and for the subsequent limitation and reduction of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. To this day, these agreements remain an indispensable aspect of international security. Against the background of today's intense struggle to determine the fundamental basis of the future world order, the merits of the development and promotion by Soviet diplomacy of numerous major multilateral agreements and treaties on arms control clearly stands out. Among these, the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Convention on Chemical Weapons will undoubtedly retain their enduring significance for ensuring peace.

Although the bipolar world in which all these agreements and treaties were negotiated and signed has gone forever, the world community has yet to create any new, more effective means of ensuring world peace and stability. It is no accident, therefore, that the fight to preserve the 1972 ABM Treaty grew into such a major issue in international politics.

The postwar experience retains its full relevance for current issues of European security. It was in Europe during the late 1960s and early 1970s that it yielded positive developments like the relaxation of international tension and the related pan-European process that produced the Helsinki Final Act. The experience in compromise during the negotiations on European détente is clearly not only of historical significance; it also serves the goals and objectives of today. It also brilliantly illustrates how effective solutions are possible only by addressing mutual interests and seeking mutually acceptable compromise.

The issue of human rights was central from the 1960s through the 1980s. During this period, the Soviet Union joined the European process to gradually become more involved in the issue and was a signatory to international understandings on various human rights questions. The fact that Soviet foreign policy and diplomacy had addressed human rights certainly helped during the subsequent radical democratic reforms in Russia.

Despite this important legacy, the simplified nihilistic view of Soviet foreign policy and diplomacy is foreign to today's Russian diplomacy. Recent evaluation of Soviet foreign policy has begun to take an increasingly cold and scientific approach, based on painstaking analysis of both

positive and negative experience, carefully sifting through this legacy in order to preserve the best traditions of national diplomacy. One of the most striking examples of this approach was a 1999 Moscow academic conference coinciding with the ninetieth anniversary of former Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko's birth.[20]

Such is not the case with the assimilation of the Russian foreign policy and diplomacy legacy from the period before 1917. Here, the challenge was to resurrect and interpret the significance of individuals and events that were either relegated to oblivion or undeservedly slandered or discredited during the Soviet period. The numerous scientific conferences, discussions, and publications devoted to such topics as the 450th anniversary of the *Posolsky Prikaz* (the Muscovite Foreign Office), the 200th anniversary of the birth of Prince Aleksandr Gorchakov (1798–1883), and the life and work of great Russian diplomats and scholars like Fyodor Fyodorovich Martens (1845–1909) and Pavel Nikolayevich Miliukov (1859–1943) have been important in this regard. Today, plans are under way for an entire schedule of events and activities dedicated to the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Russian Foreign Ministry, which will be commemorated in 2002.

A particular role in developing the Foreign Policy Concept, for example, was played by the discussions surrounding the jubilee celebrations for Aleksandr Gorchakov. Gorchakov is inseparably linked with the most brilliant pages in the history of Russian diplomacy. He directed Russian diplomacy during a period of broad liberating reforms in the second half of the nineteenth century.[21] These reforms began after Russia had been weakened by the Crimean War and was in danger of becoming a second-rate state, relegated to the background of the "Concert" of Europe. In a memorable note to Emperor Alexander II, Gorchakov characterized the task of foreign policy in this way:

> Our policies should pursue a double goal. First, to keep Russia safe from becoming involved in any kind of external complications that could divert some of our effort away from our own internal development. Second, we must make every effort during this time to ensure that no changes—either territorial or in the balance of power and influence—occur in Europe that might seriously dam-

> age our interests or political situation. . . . If we attain these two goals, we can hope that Russia will recover from its losses, become stronger, and replenish its resources, to regain its position, authority, influence, and destiny among the great powers. . . . Russia will be able to attain this only by developing its internal strengths, which in this day and age are the only true sources of a state's political might.[22]

Despite all the differences between Russia's circumstances in the middle of the nineteenth century and those of today, our country faces two complex foreign policy challenges that were familiar to Gorchakov: creating the most favorable conditions possible for internal reform while—and this is the other side of the same coin—not allowing the country's international position to be weakened.

A significant social and cultural event for Russia, the Gorchakov jubilee made it possible not only to pay deserved tribute to a great Russian civil servant and diplomat, but also to assimilate into practice his legacy, which resonates surprisingly well with the foreign policy challenges faced by Russia today. Gorchakov's basic principles—pragmatic evaluation of international processes, using national interests as a foundation, and the defense of national interests even in the most difficult conditions—are of enduring significance for Russia today, in a completely different historical era. Therefore, it is logical that the outcome of the events commemorating Gorchakov has become an integral part of the new world vision and role that Russia is developing in world affairs.

Comprehensive analysis of Gorchakov's legacy played a certain role in the development of the reworked Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation. The essence of the new Concept has something in common with these words of Gorchakov:

> . . . No matter in what area—Europe or the East—we seek to make suppositions, we reach the same conclusion: for our own security and for the sake of our might abroad . . . in the interests of peace and overall balance, Russia's first and foremost duty is to its own successful transformation, on which the future of Russia and all Slavic peoples depends. This is the fundamental basis of our policy.[23]

This approach to our primary foreign policy goals is a long-standing tradition in Russian diplomacy. Russian diplomacy's potential has been most often called upon in times of difficulty, such as at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the "Time of Troubles," when political uncertainty and foreign intervention significantly weakened Russia's international status.[24] Nevertheless, Russia quickly regained its international authority, participating as a guarantor of the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, which established general principles of international relations that have lasted for centuries, most notably the concept of state sovereignty.

Later—especially during the periods of serious crisis following our 1905 defeat by Japan in the Russo-Japanese War and after the first Russian Revolution of 1905–07—Russian foreign minister Aleksandr Izvolsky (1856–1919) and his successor, Sergei Sazonov (1861–1927), considered it their main goal to ensure the lasting peace and stability needed to carry out the reforms proposed by Prime Minister Petr Stolypin.[25] Sazonov wrote:

> Russia, shaken by disaster in the Far East and by the outbreak of a revolution at home that was difficult to put down, urgently needed peace making and careful legislative work—the only thing that would lead the nation toward the political and economic reform that had been poised to take root.[26]

There is a certain logic in the fact that during periods such as these, Russian diplomacy not only facilitated the creation of foreign conditions favorable for the reform of government and society; it also, on an intragovernmental level, tended to work in favor of patriotic, liberal, and moderate reformist forces. In particular, Aleksandr Gorchakov played a prominent role in effecting a gradual transition away from the old feudal understanding of diplomacy as a personal service to an autocratic monarch and toward the concept of diplomacy for the purpose of attaining national interests. Gorchakov, in his dispatches, was the first to use the phrase "the Sovereign and Russia." "Before me," he wrote, "Europe had for us only the concept of 'Emperor.' Count Nesselrode once even reproached me for using the expression. 'We only know the Tsar,' said my predecessor. 'We have nothing to do with Russia.'"[27]

Gorchakov also proudly reminisced about his role in Alexander II's decision to rehabilitate the surviving Decembrists,[28] restore their ranks and titles, and allow them to return from exile.[29] He is also known for supporting other liberal initiatives during reform periods in the second half of the nineteenth century.

During the Stolypin reforms, members of the Russian foreign policy establishment were among the most consistent supporters of progressive constitutional transformation. One of them in particular, Izvolsky, has been described by modern historians as

> a new breed of statesman for a modern era. He was a dynamic and pragmatic politician of broad, yet quite moderate, political views. Gorchakov was not locked into the framework of international politics. He established a working partnership with legislative bodies, with the press, and with representatives from political parties, finance, and industry to bring tsarism out of its deep domestic and foreign policy crisis, to broaden the class basis of its foreign policy, and to strengthen Russia's standing as an international power.[30]

S. D. Sazonov continued this approach to domestic policy. When making reports to Nicholas II, Sazonov wrote in his memoirs that "in discussing foreign policy issues, I would constantly come up against Russia's domestic situation, which was becoming increasingly volatile under the influence of revolutionary propaganda."[31] According to his colleagues, Sazonov frequently held a decisive position in counterbalance to those within the regime who leaned toward all manner of retrograde and Black Hundred elements.[32]

"Enlightened patriotism" has characterized the political culture of Russian diplomacy throughout history. The Russian diplomatic service has always taken an impartial, professional, and realistic approach to any evaluation of the domestic situation, tending to view domestic events in relation to Russia's national interests. Russian diplomacy has thus been free of any kind of extremism or adventurism, and has been based in common sense and a desire for what is best for Russia.

It would appear that the task of modern Russian diplomacy, and of all those involved in Russia's international activities, is to gradually

overcome the great shift in psychology and values that came after 1917. Serious analysis and assimilation of our diplomatic history will allow us to regain continuity in our national development and in our foreign policy. Our solution to this problem will essentially form the "national idea" that is so badly needed by the politically aware and nationally involved portion of Russian society and that would serve as a stable basis for national consensus on fundamental foreign policy issues.

In particular, it is important to restore continuity in the accurate social perception of the active foreign policy that Russia traditionally had and which for centuries not only ensured that our country played a leadership role in world politics, but also guaranteed our national security. At all stages in history, indigenous Russian diplomacy was the main key to attaining national interests. Invariably, Russian diplomacy focused on maintaining the state's integrity and cultivating its foreign policy opportunities.

This, indeed, is the continuous legacy of more than 1,000 years of Russian history. Since ancient Rus', one of the consistent motivations of the country's foreign policy that has helped shape Russian diplomatic culture has been the urge to engage in the wide range of international relations and to resist the isolation of the Russian nation. This urge was the primary force responsible for creating, developing, and fine-tuning our national diplomatic service. The princes of Rus' married into the royal houses of Europe and Georgia and engaged in commerce and diplomacy from Central Asia to Britain. The Mongol Yoke isolated Russia from Europe but opened up new points of contact in Asia. In the mid-sixteenth century, Russia was presented with new opportunities for rejoining the mainstream of European life. The Holy Roman Empire sent ambassadors to Moscow, while Russian diplomats were frequent visitors to Europe. We continued to have substantive interaction with the East, and Russia turned into an influential power with an active foreign policy.[33] These factors made the creation of a highly organized diplomatic service imperative, and in 1549 the *Posolsky Prikaz* (Foreign Office, literally the Office of Embassies) was established. Its first head was Ivan Mikhailovich Viskovaty, who contributed significantly to the foundation of Russian diplomacy.

During this period, the Office of Embassies began to act as the coordinating center for Russian foreign policy. One of its first directors was Afanasiy Ordin-Nashchokin (1605–81)—considered "the Russian Richelieu" by his contemporaries—who described the office as "the eye of all Great Russia." Ordin-Nashchokin maintained that any progress Russia made abroad would be fleeting unless it was supported by growth and development at home.[34]

A qualitative divide in Russian diplomacy came during the era of Peter the Great (reigned 1682–1725); Russia emerged as a major European power once it had gained permanent access to the Baltic. During his 1697–99 Grand Embassy to Europe, Peter introduced the summit meeting into Russian diplomatic practice, personally negotiating and signing several major treaties.[35]

Peter the Great's innovative approach to foreign policy led to the radical restructuring of diplomatic agencies along collegial lines and stressed the need for professionally trained diplomats. Since that time, Russian diplomacy, under the leadership and direction of the Russian head of state, has organized its work in a collegial fashion. This remains a distinctive characteristic even to this day. The Office of Embassies, which lasted more than 170 years, was transformed in 1720 into the College of Foreign Affairs (*Kollegiya inostrannykh del*). The efforts of the college and of the network of permanent diplomatic missions Peter the Great had established abroad were aimed at preserving the "general quiet in Europe."

Russia's might and influence continued to grow under the reign of Catherine II (reigned 1762–96). Catherine took an energetic and active interest in foreign policy. She was aided by a series of talented advisers and diplomats, including Grigory Potemkin (1739–91), Nikita Panin (1718–83), and Aleksandr Andreevich Bezborodko (1747–99). A crowning achievement of Russian diplomacy was the signing of the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji in 1774, which ended the Russo-Turkish War.[36]

In matters of war and peace, Russian diplomacy was sometimes significantly ahead of its time. For example, in 1804, at the height of the Napoleonic Wars, Alexander I proclaimed that great powers should, in the future, agree to recognize the integrity of each other's borders. After

Napoleon's defeat in 1815, Russia proposed a "one-time, proportional disarmament of European powers." Essentially, this was the first general disarmament initiative in history.

This is Russia's great proclivity then, surfacing everywhere throughout the history of its foreign policy and forming one of the key elements of its continuity: taking the initiative in creating a system of international relations at all stages of its evolution. After Napoleon's defeat, Russia was one of the main participants in creating the new European order (the Concert of Europe, as well as the Holy Alliance). This precedent was imitated after World War II, in attempting to create a European system based on a balance—however delicate—between the primary European powers and the alliances they had formed.

The fact that Russia traditionally lagged behind its leading partners economically stimulated diplomats to seek additional tools for bringing peace and stability to the European continent. One of the most striking examples of this policy was Russia's role in assembling the first Hague Conference of 1899. Its primary goal, according to the note distributed by Foreign Minister M. N. Muraviev, was to "preserve universal peace and reduce as much as possible the weapons that threaten mankind."[37] Although the concert of world powers at the time was unprepared to make actual reductions in weapons or military expenditures, the Hague Conference was essential in creating the conceptual foundation for an international process that would only become fully significant during the second half of the twentieth century, when the urgency of finding a framework for arms control and disarmament was acknowledged by the international community. At The Hague, the European powers for the first time acknowledged—in principle—their desire to reduce military expenditures, and thus opened the way to broad international discussions on disarmament. Another important result of the Hague Conference was the Convention on Laws and Customs of War on Land, which laid the foundation for one of the most dynamically developing areas of modern international law in recent years.

The soul of the Hague Conference was Russia's delegate, Fyodor Martens, a diplomat and authority on international law.[38] Martens's name and legacy have only recently been restored and properly recognized by Russian diplomatic and scholarly communities. In particular,

Martens is remembered for his theory of governing international relations. One modern study of his life and work notes:

> He supposed that progressive development of humankind would only lead to increasingly intense communication between states and thus to improved and more stable international governance. International governance was, in his eyes, a real way to eliminate military conflict. If we follow Martens's ideas, then permanent peace on Earth should be attainable through the gradual efforts of international law—to create law and order in the world community commensurate with the achievements of human civilization—and the gradual development of international government—which makes lasting peaceful cooperation between nations possible. According to Martens, this is a slow and complicated process, but the only path that will give the world permanent peace.[39]

It is impossible not to see the relevance of these ideas in today's globalized environment and with our transition from a bipolar to multipolar world order. It is impossible not to see the relevance, when we feel a sharp need for reliable institutions to manage global processes and provide strategic stability in the broadest meaning of the word. And this is yet another indication of how important it is, from a practical standpoint, to restore the historic legacy of Russian diplomacy.

Another valuable tradition of Russian diplomacy is its pragmatism—a sober and realistic view of Russia's place and role in international relations, unencumbered by any ideological prejudices or stereotypes. This can be seen, more specifically, in the relationship of prominent Russian diplomats to the age-old arguments and discussions regarding Russia's geopolitical position and the role of Russian civilization as an intermediary between Europe and Asia. Russian diplomacy never gave credence to the artificial juxtaposition of East and West as two supposedly contradictory vectors for Russian foreign policy. Undoubtedly, beginning with Peter the Great, Russia's diplomacy was oriented first and foremost toward Europe. It was through Europe that Russia was destined to find her place as a world power and acquire the cultural and social riches already produced by Western Europe at the time. Peter's insistence on having a "window to Europe" turned out to be one of the most visionary

and productive ideas in the history of Russian foreign policy. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, especially after the destruction of Napoleon, Russia had become an equal—even the leading—power in Europe's concert.

The development of an active European policy was also a great help in realizing Russia's far-reaching interests in the East. In particular, Aleksandr Gorchakov did not limit his activity to Europe, but vigorously pursued the establishment of ties with the "second tier" states at that time, such as China, Japan, the United States, and Brazil. Gorchakov was a proponent of a "multivectored" foreign policy, which has become one of the fundamental elements in Russia's foreign policy concept today.

The traditional European orientation of Russia's diplomacy, however, is important for another reason in the contemporary arena. Russia's deep involvement in Europe's politics, together with its close economic, cultural, and historic ties to Western Europe—developed extensively during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—have never hindered Russian diplomacy in vigorously, even harshly, protecting the country's national interests. Thus, the second half of the nineteenth century was a period of very close cultural exchange between Russia and Western Europe—the same time period in which Russia often stood alone against a powerful coalition of European powers. History fully refutes the idea that an independent Russian foreign policy must unavoidably be accompanied by confrontation with the West or by withdrawal into isolation. The experience of Russian diplomacy in recent years demonstrates the gradual formation of a style of mutual relations that combines the firm defense of national interests with an equally consistent search for mutually acceptable solutions through dialogue and cooperation with the West.

The concept of continuity in foreign policy has not only positive but negative historical contexts as well. In particular, we must examine the "imperial" nature of Russian foreign policy that was prevalent during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and that, in a unique interpretation, continued to leave its mark during the Soviet period. It is obvious that the realities of Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States today demand a deep and comprehensive overhaul of this historical experience, especially with regard to Russia's closest neighbors. In par-

ticular, the issue of bilateral ties between Russia and Central and Eastern European states is important. Relations with some of these countries continue to suffer because of our complex, contradictory, and sometimes tragic history. It is the task of modern diplomacy—without glossing over or refuting these negative moments of the past—to work patiently and consistently toward overcoming them and starting anew.

The situation that unfolded in Central Europe after the end of the cold war demonstrates the explosive potential hidden behind mutual historic animosity and international conflicts. One of the proofs of this is the tragedy in the Balkans. The most important thing we can glean from these events is that modern Europe must not be held hostage by its history. Of course, we cannot ignore or hush up past mistakes, omissions, and difficulties. But they should serve as lessons or warnings, and not be used as a means and argument for continuing to support hostility and to complicate bilateral relations.

This is the approach taken by Russian diplomacy toward its relations with several states, most notably Poland. Nevertheless, such political relationships must not be one sided. The healing of historic injuries in bilateral relations demands mutual effort, mutual tact, and respect for national sentiments.

Special consideration is deserved for the historic aspects of ties with former Soviet republics. Here, there is a complex web of ties that bound together Russia and these republics, and both positive and negative experience have accumulated in our historical relationships, connected with the manner in which each of these countries became part of the Russian Empire, and later, of the Soviet Union. In the current transitional stage of relations with the CIS, it is not easy to overcome at once all the difficulties and complexities connected with the combination of natural tendencies toward increased national consciousness on the part of the other new republics and the negative manifestations of nationalism. This objectively complicates the process of jointly crafting long-range priorities and specific directions for cooperation in the realm of foreign policy. We must be prepared for the fact that this process will be arduous and that we will have to take into account not only current factors related to the economy, politics, and culture, but also issues arising out of history.

Issues of continuity should be examined separately in diplomacy, used as a tool of foreign policy. Diplomacy is by definition one of the most "international" aspects of human activity. Unlike foreign policy, which is the prerogative of one nation alone, the birth and development of diplomacy have always been inseparably linked to the establishment of international relations. Despite the diversity of national diplomatic schools and traditions, the general historic tendency in the world has been, and will be, for diplomacy to seek to unify the organizational and technical aspects of the activity of foreign policy in order to attain its primary goal: facilitating mutual understanding between states and harmonizing their shared interests. A colorful example of how diplomacy brings this about are the resolutions adopted at the 1815 Congress of Vienna, which not only defined the system of international relations for Europe, but also regulated its operations. As one of the most active participants of European politics at the time, Russia's diplomatic service developed in close interaction with the diplomatic agencies of the other leading European powers. Indeed, the question of continuity in diplomacy, and of its organization, tools, and methods, cannot be examined in the narrow context of a single nation. It can only be seriously studied within the context of how international relations unfold at the global level.

The fate of Russian diplomacy in the twentieth century, however, emerged dramatically, even tragically, and reflects the zigzags taken by the Russian state throughout the last century. In particular, Russia's diplomatic service has been marked by two difficult defining moments.

The revolution of 1917 created an abrupt break in Russia's diplomatic tradition. The foreign policy establishment—the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the diplomatic corps, and so on—was practically the only government institution from tsarist Russia of which almost none of the employees stayed on to work for the Bolsheviks. For its part, the Soviet government reacted to perceived "sabotage" in the diplomatic corps by firing all Russian ambassadors and envoys abroad "without pension and without the right to be hired for any government post."[40] It was only several years after the revolution, after career diplomat G. V. Chicherin (1872–1936)[41] was appointed to head the People's Commissariat of

Foreign Affairs (NKID), and after the USSR received formal, de jure diplomatic recognition, that the Soviet school of diplomacy gradually began to take shape. However, even in the ensuing years this process was not smooth or consistent. Stalinist repression in the 1930s dealt an enormous blow to the foreign policy apparatus, because for all intents and purposes an entire generation of Soviet diplomats was liquidated. For those who survived this period, there was a time when wind blew through the empty corridors of the NKID. Nonetheless, the foreign policy service was able in a relatively short period of time to replenish its ranks and restore considerable creativity into Soviet diplomacy, using it to protect the Soviet Union's national interests.

Russia's foreign policy service today objectively continues the best traditions of Soviet diplomacy, but with a broader mission: to restore the historic continuity of a Russian national foreign policy and diplomacy. Not only is this in obligation to the previous generations of Russian diplomats who devoted their talents in service to the interests of our homeland, but it is also in order to use their legacy to shape Russia's modern foreign policy. The diplomatic service is continually incorporating new areas of international relations devoted to solving the widening range of global issues. However, a truly professional and effective foreign policy service is only possible if it rests firmly on history, tradition, and national and cultural values. Respect for the past is what binds the historic process together as a whole. It is also what preserves and magnifies the best traditions of Russian diplomacy. Looking at history allows us to glean lessons for today and tomorrow, to compare old and newly acquired experience, and to correlate with past experience the new and challenging tasks faced by foreign policy in today's ever-changing world.

This is why the cultivation of a sensitive approach to our historic legacy should be obligatory in the education and training of the new generation of Russian diplomats. It is important to inculcate in them the ability to perceive the modern world's development within a broad historic perspective and in relation to the future goals and aspirations of their own country. This is the reference point that will plot a sure course for Russia in international affairs through the current critical period of change, both in our country and in the world community.

Breakfast meeting with Henry Kissinger at the Russian Embassy in Washington, May 20, 2001.