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The ambivalence of the relationship between Russia and the West creates difficult problems and some observers treat the ambivalence and the problems as new phenomena. There is an apparent, if irregular, cycle of Russian receptivity to and isolation from Western ideas and technology that began half a millennium ago. Today's problems are no less difficult but they aren't new.

DÉTENTE THEN AND NOW

by

Steven Ross

Russia has always fascinated and frightened the West. Americans today are puzzled by the meaning of the term détente and apprehensive about what the policy of détente implies about Russia's relations with the West.

Détente has been called everything from an effort to transform the Soviet Union into a *status quo* power by involving Moscow in a web of treaties and understandings, to attempts to add a modicum of order and restraint to a basically anarchic threat situation, to a move by Washington to accommodate itself to being the world's number two power.[1] Russian motives are subject to an equally wide variety of interpretations. Some believe that the Soviet Union is basically a cautious, prudent power interested in reducing the risks of nuclear war and accepting the existence of a permanent rivalry with the West that does not preclude areas of cooperation. Others argue that Moscow is using détente as a tactic designed to obtain Western technology and lull the West into a state of complacency before resuming an aggressive posture.[2] The word détente has in fact caused such problems in the public mind that during the 1976 election campaign one Presidential candidate dropped the term from his rhetoric, substituting instead the rather inelegant phrase "peace through strength."

Inability to comprehend the meaning of Russian policy is not, however, new. Nor is it a response to the 1917 revolution or the cold war. A mixture of fear, admiration, loathing and hope has been a part of the Western view of Russia ever since the 16th century. Russian attitudes towards the West have been equally ambivalent. Russian rulers have frequently borrowed technology from the West. Periodically, they have also adopted elements of Western culture. On other occasions, they have tried to isolate Russia from the influence of Western culture. Russian popular response to Westernization of any sort has varied from friendly to

hostile, and Western reactions to the cycles of openness and isolation have been marked by a wide variety of conflicting opinions.

Russian Rulers and the West. Kievian Russia enjoyed extensive economic and political contact with Western Europe, whose monarchs looked upon Kiev as a full-fledged European state. Mongol conquest in the 13th century isolated Russia from the outside world for more than two centuries. After casting off the Tartar yoke, the rulers of Moscow gradually built a web of relationships with Europe. Muscovite tsars sought alliances with the Poles against the Mongols and turned to the Swedes, Danes, Dutch, and English to check the Poles. By the early 17th century, Russia, though not yet a European power, was an important player in Eastern Europe's political system.

In order to compete effectively with European rivals, Russian rulers began to adopt European technology. In the 1470s, Ivan III employed Italian craftsmen to build the Kremlin's fortifications. Italians also designed many of Moscow's churches, took over the coinage of money, and introduced vodka and venereal disease to Russia.[3] In 1550, Ivan IV established a Musketeer Corps, armed and organized on Western lines, and recruited foreign officers to train it. He also hired German and Italian experts to cast cannon for his forces.[4]

During the late 16th and first half of the 17th century, Russia waged a long bitter conflict with Poland. To counter initial Polish military superiority, Moscow again turned to the West. Dutch and Swedish officers helped organize and train Russian regiments, and Western mercenaries served in the ranks. By the 1660s, the Russian Army was about one fourth foreign. Dutch experts in 1632 built a modern arms factory at Tula and in 1647 supplied the Russians with their first official drillbook.[5]

Until the end of the 17th century, borrowing from the West had been sporadic and *ad hoc*. Peter the Great, however, placed the Westernization of Russia's military and administrative system at the forefront of state policy. As a youth, Peter spent much time with the foreign community of Moscow, raised two Western style regiments from among his own courtiers and generally concluded that Westernization was the key to transforming Russia into a major European power.[6]

As tsar, one of Peter's first acts was to visit Western Europe, where in the course of his travels, he engaged hundreds of artisans and craftsmen to bring their skills to Russia. Peter also abolished the mixture of old and new regiments and created a standing army based on conscription and equipped with Western weapons. Hundreds of Westerners trained the Russian forces, and the proportion of Western mercenaries in the officer corps grew to about a third. By 1725, Russia had a European-style army numbering 210,000 regulars backed by 100,000 irregular troops. Russia also possessed a modern navy of 24,000 men.[7]

Peter also modernized Russia's administrative system. He directed a German advisor to study the Swedish Government's structure and copied it by organizing government departments into nine administrative colleges capped by a Governing Senate. Hired Germans and Swedish war prisoners provided most of the original personnel.[8] Peter introduced Western dress and manners at court, sent hundreds of young men to study abroad, and established technical schools at home. He also built a new city—St. Petersburg—on the Neva estuary. The tsar then transferred his capitol from Moscow to his new Western style window on the West, an action symbolizing the state's new orientation.[9]

Peter borrowed from the West in order to strengthen the Russian state, especially its military power. He was not

interested in Europe's culture or ideals and was even reputed to have told a confidant, "We need Europe for a few decades and then we must turn our back on it."[10] Nevertheless, he did Europeanize his armed forces, civil service, and upper nobility and raised Russia into the ranks of the great powers.

His successors were not active reformers, but they perpetuated most of his innovations. An aristocratic faction attempted to move the seat of government back to Moscow but was finally defeated. St. Petersburg remained the capitol; foreign specialists continued to serve the government, and Russia participated actively in Europe's power politics. European culture began to influence the Russian upper classes. Tsarina Anna's regime was permeated with German styles and manners while French language and literature predominated during Elizabeth's reign. Moreover, a series of marriage alliances between members of the Romanov dynasty and numerous European royal families made the rulers of Russia progressively more European, at least biologically.

Catherine the Great, a German princess, came to power in 1762 via a *coup d'etat* against her husband and made a concerted effort to present herself to the rest of Europe as a leader of the Enlightenment. She carried on an extensive correspondence with many of France's leading philosophers and won lavish praise from them. Voltaire, for example, described her as "an Empress who does good from Kamchatka to Africa."[11] He even justified Russian aggression against Poland and the Ottoman Empire as triumphs of reason over priestcraft and superstition and expressed the hope that the Russian flag would one day fly over Constantinople.[12] Catherine encouraged the expansion of the publishing industry which turned out translations of the works of the philosophes, and in 1767, the Empress summoned a Legislative Commission to reform and codify Russia's laws in the best manner of enlightened despotism.

Catherine, of course, never contemplated a reduction of her aristocratic powers nor did she seek to improve the lot of the serfs, and in 1785 actually increased aristocratic control over the peasantry.[13] Catherine may have indeed believed in many of the advanced notions of her day, but she never allowed philosophers to influence her foreign or domestic policy.

The French Revolution frightened the tsarina, and she quickly dropped all pretense of being a liberal reformer. Catherine banned the works of Voltaire and other philosophes, forbade Russian reformers to publish their views, and exiled Radishchev, a perceptive social critic, who had described the evils of serfdom, to Siberia. Masons and religious dissenters often found themselves charged with heresy or treason.[14] After 1789, Catherine discovered that Western thought was no longer helpful or amusing, and she turned against it.

Paul I continued the policy of isolating Russia from subversive ideas. He instituted strict censorship and even excluded French music and clothing from his realm.[15] He continued to use foreign technology and employ Westerners in his army and civil service but rejected the French ideals of liberty and social change.

Alexander I, a mystic with a strong streak of Machiavellianism, flirted with Western thought and simultaneously became a champion of reaction. He fought Napoleon in the name of liberty while seizing territory from neighboring states, and he even tried to place one of his satellite allies on the French throne.[16] At his court, he allowed liberals to work on constitutional projects but also expanded the power of the secret police, purged professors, burned books, and outlawed all Masonic and other secret societies.[17] For all his dabbling with constitutions and mystic

religious cults, Alexander never allowed Western thought to influence state policy.

Nicholas put an end to the ambiguities of the previous regime and instituted a reign of harsh reaction. Like other tsars, Nicholas was willing to import Western technology and was responsible for building Russia's first railways. He also fostered technical education and began to introduce modern, Western-designed weapons into his army. On the other hand, censorship, secret police, and persecution of religious and national minorities characterized Nicholas' domestic policy, and the official slogan, "Autocracy, Orthodoxy, and Nationality," summarized the basic outlook of the government.[18] Nicholas was the apogee of autocracy and at home and abroad he was the leader of the forces of reaction.

The Crimean War revealed the inadequacy of the Russian state and its inability to cope with the technical superiority of the West. Consequently, Alexander II ushered in another period of rapid modernization based on Western models. Serfs were freed, intellectual repression slightly curtailed, and foreign entrepreneurs encouraged to invest in Russian railroad construction and industrial development.[19] Reforms created demands for further change, and in the second half of his reign, the tsar reimposed restrictive measures against subversive ideas.[20]

Alexander II's assassination and the accession of Alexander III opened another cycle of repression. Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Russification became the government's guiding slogans. Officials frankly stated that Western notions such as freedom of speech and representative government were evil myths and that mystery and authority formed the proper philosophic foundations of the Russian state.[21]

Official obscurantism notwithstanding, the tsar was quite willing to turn to the West for diplomatic and financial assistance. Alexander concluded an alliance with the French Republic in the 1890s thereby linking Europe's most reactionary and radical regimes. Alexander also encouraged foreign capital, and the French invested heavily in the Russian economy. French engineering firms built much of Russia's expanding rail net, and French investors bought billions of francs worth of government bonds. By 1914, the French held ten billion francs in government paper plus two billion in shares of private firms. The rapid growth of Russian heavy industry in the late 19th and early 20th century owed much to Western investment.[22]

Nicholas II, the last Romanov tsar, continued the familiar policy of seeking the benefits of Western technology without suffering any of its consequences. Although he had to make concessions to growing demands for internal reform, he remained a convinced autocrat and resisted those demands as best he could. He never came to terms with the need for change and presided ineffectually as Russia staggered from war to revolution to the extinction of the dynasty.

The Romanov heraldic eagle had two heads; one looking West, the other East. It symbolized one aspect of the regime—a willingness to use Western technology and culture combined with a desire to maintain the traditional Russian political and social system. Some tsars had a sincere admiration for Western life, but no Romanov ruler ever seriously considered allowing Western culture to undermine the foundations of the Russian state.

In this respect, the Bolshevik regime was little different from its predecessors. Lenin and his followers believed in a Western ideology and during the first months of the revolution assumed that events in Russia were the start of a global movement. The failure of Communist revolutions in the West, civil war, and foreign intervention quickly

dashed the messianic hopes of the Bolsheviks. Moreover, the Soviets soon found themselves almost completely cut off from normal contacts with the rest of the world. The transfer of the capitol back to Moscow, though done for practical military and political reasons, was symptomatic of Soviet Russia's isolation.

After winning the Civil War, the Bolsheviks turned their attentions to the problems of economic recovery and national security. In dealing with both issues, Lenin showed himself quite willing to avail himself of Western resources. From 1921 to 1923, the American Relief Administration, led by Herbert Hoover, helped alleviate a disastrous famine in southeastern Russia.[23] The Soviets also tried to attract Western money and competence and concluded a number of agreements with German firms. Moreover, in 1922, the Soviet Union and Germany signed the Rapallo Treaty which included provisions for extensive German assistance to the Red Army.[24] In cultural affairs, Lenin allowed much freedom of expression in artistic forms. The content of a play, film, or novel was, of course, subject to control, but the method of presentation of acceptable themes was left to individuals, many of whom used the most advanced Western forms and techniques.

Stalin sought absolute control over all aspects of Russian life while simultaneously transforming the Soviet Union into an industrial giant. To achieve these goals, Stalin used the tsarist policy of domestic repression coupled with borrowing Western technology. He made the Soviet state the focal point of the Communist movement, proclaiming the doctrine of Socialism in One Country and reducing the Comintern to an apparatus of the state. He made himself the focal point of the state by systematically eliminating all real or potential rivals. He even reduced the artistic, scientific, and intellectual communities to a state of silence or sycophancy. As in the days of Nicholas I and Alexander III, censorship, secret police terror, and rigorous control of intellectual pursuits became standard governmental procedures.

Having insulated Russia against the possible influx of subversive ideas from the West, Stalin had no compunction about turning to his ideological foes for technical assistance. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, over 20,000 foreign experts worked in the Soviet Union. American engineers helped build the Dnieprostroy hydroelectric generator and the steel mill at Magnitogorsk. The Ford and Austin Companies built the large automobile factory at Nizhni Novgorod, and Americans designed and directed the construction of the giant Stalingrad tractor factory.[25] In 1930, the Soviets published a book in the United States emphasizing the commercial opportunities available in Russia and inviting large-scale American investment.[26] During World War II, Stalin received over $10 billion worth of military equipment and raw materials. Lend-lease shipments included over 427,000 trucks, 12,000 planes, 9,500 tanks, four and a half million tons of food, a million tons of steel, 22 million rounds of ammunition, and two million tires.[27] Wartime contacts, however, did nothing to reduce Stalin's self-imposed isolation from the West and after 1945 Russia remained a closed society, impervious to outside influences.

Since Stalin's death, Soviet leaders have permitted renewed, if limited, cultural contacts with the West. The United States and the Soviet Union signed a cultural exchange agreement in 1958 and since then there have been mutual visits of scholars, dance troupes, students, chess players, and athletic teams. The flow of Western tourists to the U.S.S.R. has also grown rapidly in the last two decades. More recently, the Soviets have resumed the policy of seeking Western goods and services and

Russians now purchase Western grain and encourage American and European firms to build plants in the U.S.S.R.

Ironically, increased Soviet economic and cultural contact with the West has produced a renewed tightening of internal constraints. After 1953, there were appearances of a thaw in Russian cultural life. Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin at the Twentieth Party Congress seemed to imply a forthcoming relaxation of cultural controls. There was in fact the appearance of innovative work in the arts, music and literature, but as contacts with the West expanded, the government moved to silence critics, dissidents, and those who wished to experiment with new, unapproved forms. Thus, as in the past, increased contact with the outside world seems to have led the regime to impose strict domestic controls to avoid contamination from foreign cultures.

The Popular Reaction to the West. During the cycles of receptivity to and isolation from Western ideas and technology, the Russians have been ambivalent about their relationship with the West. Some have regarded contact with the West as a necessity for reasons of state. Others have greeted Western ideas as a positive progressive factor in Russian development while others have regarded all things Western, material and spiritual alike, as fundamentally dangerous to the unique nature of Russian life.

During the 16th century, the Russian people looked at outside innovations with suspicion and hostility. In 1565, for example, a mob destroyed and burned Russia's first printing press.[28] In the early decades of the 17th century, the Russian people reacted violently to Polish interference in their affairs. Polish political intervention did not at first produce a massive hostile reaction, but when it became obvious that the Poles intended to bring their religion and culture to Muscovy, the Russians felt that their traditional way of life was in danger. A popular uprising, led by a Romanov patriarch and a Moscow merchant, drove the Poles from Russia and placed the Romanov dynasty on the throne.

In the 1650s, the Patriarch Nikon introduced a number of changes into the ritual of the Orthodox Church. These reforms were based on a careful study of Byzantine texts, but many people regarded any change of traditional forms as dangerous and heretical. Fundamentalist Old Believers branded Nikon as the Antichrist and resisted the reforms with armed force, self-immolation and even self-castration.[29]

During the late 17th and 18th centuries, the court and aristocracy became more and more Westernized, and the lot of the serfs became more burdensome. There were frequent peasant disturbances, and some of them became serious uprisings. Many of the larger rebellions were led by individuals claiming to be a "true tsar." The pretenders promised to destroy the political and administrative system of Westernizing heretics and return to the former Russian way of life which presumably included the abolition of serfdom.[30] Thus, peasant unrest rejected change and innovation, seeking instead a return to a traditional golden age.

Russian thought is, of course, tremendously rich and varied, but one persistent issue is a dispute concerning the nature and destiny of Russia and its vocation in the world. Two broad schools have emerged, one accepting the reforms of Peter the Great and asserting that the future of Russia depended upon continuing along the Western path; the other believing in a unique culture springing out of ancient Muscovite social and religious traditions and rejecting Europeanization.

The Western-Slavophile debate took concrete form during the reigns of Alexander I and Nicholas I. Speransky and La Harpe advocated continued liberalization of Russian society and

government. They represented the Westernizers at court. At the same time, Nicholas Karamzin, a widely traveled aristocrat and court historian, argued that foreign innovation was the source of Russia's difficulties. Russia, he said, should remain true to her traditions of Orthodoxy and Autocracy. Michael Zagoskin, one of the most widely read writers of his day, asserted that Moscow rather than St. Petersburg represented the true essence of Russia, and Michael Magnitsky called upon Russia to separate herself entirely from European influences.[31] In 1836, Peter Chaadaev, an aristocrat who had traveled widely in Western Europe as a soldier and later as a member of the tsar's entourage, published eight philosophical letters about Russian historical development that defined the terms of the debate over Russia's destiny. He claimed that Russia's past was essentially Asiatic and passive. Russia had no genuine culture, only pale distorted imitations of other civilizations. The very absence of a vigorous Russian culture, however, held great promise for the future. Chaadaev believed that by adopting the best aspects of European culture Russia could lead the way to a spiritual Christianity that would save both Russia and the West.[32] Despite his pro-Western proclivities, Chaadaev clarified the point that both Slavophiles and Westerners saw Russia's past as unique and her ultimate destiny as having universal messianic implications.

The Slavophile-Western debate continued throughout the 19th century. The Pan-Slav movement of the 1870s preached an aggressive nationalism. Centered in Moscow, Pan-Slav activists proclaimed the existence of a violent, irreconcilable conflict between the Slavic world and the West.[33] Dostoyevsky, though not a chauvinist, sought the means of salvation through the unique characteristics of "the Russian soil, the Russian Saviour and the Russian God."[34] Constantine Leont'ev, for aesthetic reasons, denounced bourgeois culture and called for a return to Byzantine rules and discipline. In contrast to reactionary aesthetics, Tolstoy, drawing on the traditions of Russian religious life and a belief in the unique characteristics of the peasants, became a Christian anarchist seeking to lead the peasantry along the path of moral perfection.[35]

Among the Westernizers, Turgenev denounced serfdom and advocated gradual liberalizing reforms of the Russian political system. Restive students in the 1860s accepted Turgenev's label, Nihilist. The Nihilists rejected Russia's past and present and advocated a new social order based on science and reason. The Cadet Party of the early 20th century embodied the hopes of the Russian middle class for orderly progress towards a constitutional, parliamentary regime.

Even revolutionary groups fell into a Slavophile and Western school. The Decembrist revolt of 1825 was the first revolutionary effort that did not seek a return to the past but rather looked to the future and saw violence as a vehicle of progress. Most of the Decembrists were aristocratic Guards officers who wanted to impose a Western style constitution on Russia. One faction, however, desired a social revolution as well. This small group saw in the peasantry and their traditions the basis of a more just social order derived from Russian rather than European sources.[36]

In the following decades, such revolutionaries as Herzen, Belinski, and Chernyshevski called for the violent overthrow of the autocracy and the substitution of a democratic system.[37] Jacobinism was in theory to lead to democracy which in turn would produce social as well as political change. Herzen, after 1848, became disillusioned with middle-class democracy, and from his place of exile in London, he concluded that the Russian peasant commune was inherently democratic

and socialist. The peasantry with its unique Russian characteristics could, therefore, be the pioneer of social revolution.[38]

The 1870s witnessed the Populist (*Narodnik*) Movement wherein thousands of students went out to the country in an effort to convert the peasants to agrarian socialism. The peasants simply could not understand the students and either ignored them or turned them over to the authorities. Survivors of the *Narodnik* movement then formed a secret society, Land and Liberty, dedicated to preparing a mass peasant uprising. Land and Liberty soon split into two factions. Black Partition favored propaganda efforts among the peasants to prepare them for the coming upheaval while the People's Will stood for terrorism directed against the forces of autocracy.[39]

The People's Will had a brief but sensational career culminating in the assassination of Alexander II in 1881. The police then destroyed the group, but survivors formed new populist groups. The 1890s saw the foundation of the People's Right, the Northern Union, the Socialist Agrarian League, and the Union of Socialist Revolutionaries. In 1902, representatives from populist groups inside Russia met in Switzerland with populist exiles and formed a single group, the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Like its predecessors, the Socialist Revolutionaries looked to the peasantry as the key to unleashing revolution. By 1917, the Socialist Revolutionary Party was the largest in Russia and in elections held at the end of the year outpolled the Bolsheviks 21 million to 9 million.[40]

The Marxist Social Democrats evolved from the Populist Movement. Several members of the Black Partition went into exile in the 1880s and in 1883 created the first Marxist faction. Other Marxist groups developed in urban Russia, and in 1898, a number of small cliques merged to form the Russian Social Democratic Party.[41] Russian Marxists, like their colleagues elsewhere, adhered to the theories of dialectical materialism. Despite conflicts within their ranks, the Russian Social Democrats assumed that their country was evolving along the same lines as the rest of the Western world and that events in Russia would unfold much as they were destined to do in England, Germany, and America.

The Bolshevik triumph seemed to mark another victory for the Westernizers. Russia was, after 1917, led by men who adhered to a Western philosophy and believed that Russia was to lead the forces of revolution to the ultimate Marxist victory. Stalin's rise to power marked a decided shift of emphasis towards Russian particularism. While never abandoning Marxist universalism, Stalin emphasized Russian problems and Russian solutions. Even in cultural affairs, Soviet intellectuals began to focus their attentions on the glories of the Russian past, even turning Ivan the Terrible into a hero.

Since 1953, opposition writers have emerged, but even they fall into a Slavophile and Western camp. Pasternak tried to find religious significance in the revolution and implied that the revolution may well be a stage in the emergence of a new culture springing from the Russian soul. Solzhenitsyn has called upon Russia to abandon Western ideas and technology and return to a religious, agrarian way of life. By way of contrast, Sakharov and Medvedev advocate Western style civil liberties in the Soviet Union and hope to push Russia towards a Western style democratic system. Thus, the debate on the nature of Russia and its relationship to the West is not over. The Russians have been and still are hesitant and ambivalent about the effect of contact with Western culture.

The Western Reaction. Western observers have been equally hesitant and

ambivalent about contacts with Russia. Westerners have been unable to decide whether Russia was a European or an Asian state. Nor have they established a consensus concerning the motives that lay behind Russia's reactions to and dealings with the West.

The earliest visitors to Muscovy all agreed that Russia was very different from Europe. The Russian climate, religion, social mores and political system appeared exotic, strange, and unique.[42] Some travelers felt that the Muscovite regime was an oriental tyranny,[43] but such views did not prevent visitors from journeying to Russia to trade with or serve the tsars in the hope of financial reward. Nor did Western powers see any dangers in concluding diplomatic and military agreements with the Russians.

The notion that Russia presented a threat to the peace and security of Europe developed during the era of Peter the Great. His policy of Westernization coupled with his successful conflict with Sweden convinced some that Peter was pursuing sinister ambitions. A number of commentators, of course, argued that all Peter wanted was to transform Russia into a European power.[44] Those threatened by Russian advances, however, painted a bleak picture of Russian goals and intentions. In 1707, the British Ambassador to Prussia informed London that he agreed with Berlin's view that to help the Russians modernize their armed forces would pose a danger to all of Europe.[45]

A number of Peter's enemies, meanwhile, began to circulate a rumor, backed by forged documents, that the tsar had a concrete, systematic plan for conquest. Émigrés fleeing Russian expansion often took service with Western governments and carried stories of a Russian conspiracy with them. After Peter's death, émigrés and other anti-Russian elements transformed the tsar's plot into a Testament in which Peter laid out for his successors a detailed plan for the conquest of the West.[46]

There were several versions, all forged, of Peter's will. One Testament had 14 points; among the more important propositions was the statement that as Russia's basic goal was constant aggrandizement, Russian rulers should maintain the state on a permanent war footing. Future tsars should bring foreign specialists to Russia and develop commercial ties with the West in order to strengthen the Russian economy. Tsars should also use ideology to lay claim to universal sovereignty thereby strengthening the policy of territorial expansion. By the use of clever diplomacy, Russia should keep the rest of Europe divided and when everything was ready launch a final assault on the weakened West beginning with naval offensives in the Baltic and Black Seas.[47]

During the rest of the 18th century, copies of the Testament appeared first in France and then in other courts. Powers at odds with Russia often used the will to justify their hostility. Others with more balanced views were also suspicious of Russia, arguing that despite a veneer of Western civilization, Russia remained an Asiatic despotism.[48]

On the other hand, 18th-century Russia had its defenders. An English visitor stated that Peter sought only internal progress, and later another Englishman wrote that Catherine governed with rectitude and enlightenment.[49] The French philosophes regarded Catherine as a paragon of enlightened virtue, and even the Americans became pro-Russian when Catherine turned down a British request to hire Russians to fight in the Revolutionary War. Early in the 19th century, Madame de Stael was among those who believed that Alexander I desired only to brighten and ameliorate the lot of his people.[50]

Suspicion of Russia also persisted. In the late 1830s the Marquis de Custine visited Russia and wrote a book that

painted a dark picture of the Romanov regime. Custine claimed that Russia was an Asiatic power, a nation of regimented Tartars, bent on conquest.[51] Siberia, he noted, "begins at the Vistula."[52] Custine went on to say that Russia used Western technology to strengthen the regime but ignored Western culture and remained an Asiatic tyranny.[53]

The Marquis also raised the issue of Russian intentions. He pointed out that the Romanovs had a universalistic ideology, the doctrine of the Third Rome that in effect claimed that the tsar was the proper head of all Christendom. Optimists in the West tended to emphasize Russia's internal problems and believed that ideology was used primarily for internal consumption. It was a technique of domestic politics designed to maintain order and discipline at home.[54] Pessimists, including Custine himself, assumed that the Russians meant what they said. The tsars wanted "to rule the world by conquest; they mean to seize by armed force the countries accessible to them and thence oppress the rest of the world by terror."[55] The Russian state was to Custine a barbaric thing barely disguised under a revolting magnificence, ruled with Asiatic ferocity and dedicated to perpetual conquest. Europe, the Marquis warned, had to be continually on guard against a constant threat.[56]

Lord Palmerston also claimed that Russian policy was to push forward as far and as fast as possible, stopping only when others offered resistance. The tsars would then halt, try to lull their foes into a complacent state and resume their aggression.[57]

Karl Marx agreed with those who believed that Russia was permanently at war with the West. As a correspondent for the *New York Tribune* in the 1850s, Marx informed his American readers that Russia was a semi-Asiatic nation that was, ever since the days of the Kievian rulers, perpetually at war with the rest of Europe. Russian ideology, he claimed, called for a war to the knife against Western civilization. Russia, therefore, posed a vast, constant menace that could be countered only by constant vigilance.[58]

Twentieth century observers of the Russian scene have been and still are equally divided in their views of the nature and motives of the Russian state. The advent of Bolshevism served only to deepen the confusion. Many, of course, accepted the premise that Lenin and his followers were leading a worldwide revolutionary conspiracy, seeking nothing less than the destruction of Western civilization. Others, however, felt that Soviet Russia could be tamed by normalizing diplomatic and commercial relations with Moscow. Thus, Red scares alternated with periods of normal relations during the interwar period.

Within the non-Communist intellectual community, many turned to Russia out of despair of Western values. The bourgeois world had failed to solve its political and economic problems, and people saw in the Soviet experiment the road to salvation. Some joined the Communist Party. Others sympathized with the Soviet Union and consciously overlooked its shortcomings. The depression, the rise of fascism and the growing prospects of another major war convinced countless individuals that Stalinist Russia despite its faults, which were, perhaps, temporary growing pains, was the West's best hope.

Many, of course, became disillusioned. Some joined with Trotsky and his followers in denouncing the Moscow regime as betrayers of the revolution and the hopes of mankind. Others took up new political fads. Still others rejoined the bourgeois camp to seek their fortunes as repentant sinners and professional anti-Communists. Many simply returned to their former beliefs and interests. Thus, opinions on Soviet Russia ranged from the view that the Bolsheviks were the culmination of

Western ideals to the notion that Stalin had completely perverted them.

World War II, not surprisingly, witnessed the growth of friendly feelings in the Allied camp towards the Soviet Union, but after 1945, suspicions again emerged. On 22 February 1946, George Kennan, the Chargé in Moscow, sent his famous "long telegram" to Washington. In it, he said that Stalin believed that in the long run there could be "no permanent peaceful coexistence."[59] Moreover, the Kremlin's neurotic view of world affairs was based on a traditional Russian sense of inferiority to the West. Russian rulers have always feared direct contact with the West because it would tend to reveal their shortcomings to their own subjects. Russians, therefore, learned to seek security by waging a long, patient, deadly struggle for the destruction of their rivals. Marxist dogma has simply bolstered traditional Russian fears and hostilities, and the Western powers could expect in the years to come constant Soviet efforts to undermine them.[60]

Kennan reiterated his position in another telegram sent on 20 March. He asserted that the Soviets believed that the outside world was menacing, that suspicion was inherent in the Soviet system and that the West could do nothing to mitigate Soviet suspicions. The United States could disarm completely and turn the government over to American Communists, and Moscow would still suspect a trap.[61]

Kennan's efforts were merely the tip of the iceberg. The advent of the cold war witnessed a revival of hostile interpretations of Soviet motives and intentions that at times reached the point of hysteria. Soviet military might coupled with efforts at internal subversion was widely regarded as placing the West in a situation of imminent mortal peril. The works of Marx and Custine were reissued with prefaces that assured the public that nothing had changed in Russian designs against Western civilization.

In the years after Stalin's death, more benign views of Soviet policy resurfaced. Some argued that American and Russian societies were in fact becoming more alike and that this convergence would encourage both peaceful coexistence and a more stable world order. A number of historians blamed the United States for the coming of the cold war and claimed that Stalin was actually a prudent cautious leader concerned with Russian state security, not world revolution. One revisionist historian stated flatly that a totalitarian domestic system did not necessarily produce an aggressive foreign policy.[62] Today, the debate over Russian intentions still persists. Some believe that Russia is a prudent power willing to coexist with the West while others adhere to the view of Russia as unrelentingly hostile.

There is, of course, a tendency among intellectuals, especially those professionally interested in current events, to regard the immediate as permanent and the temporary as universal. They tend to regard any shift of Soviet or American policy as a strategic change of direction rather than a tactical adjustment. The current debate over the meanings and implications of détente bears these characteristics. People on all sides of the issue speak and write as if this were the first time the problem has come to the West's attention and as if

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Professor Ross is a member of the Strategy Department, Naval War College. He received his Ph.D. in History from Princeton University and has taught at the Universities of Nebraska and Texas. In addition to military history, his special interests, on which he has written extensively, are Napoleon and the French Revolution.

any conclusion will decide the fate of the world for decades to come. Thus, it may be of some cold comfort to realize that the whole range of problems associated with relations between Russia and the West has existed for centuries. Russia has been an enigma to the West ever since the 16th century, and our predecessors were as far from reaching firm conclusions as we are today.

NOTES

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2. See for example H. Sonnenfeldt, "Russia, Ameriea and Détente," in *Foreign Affairs*, January 1978, pp. 275-294; J.D. Baker, Jr., "Détente: Myth and Reality," in *Military Review*, December 1977, pp. 41-50.
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4. Richard Hellie, *Enserfment and Military Change in Muscovy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 161.
5. Billington, pp. 110-112.
6. See Vasili Klychevsky, *Peter the Great* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1959).
7. Hellie, p. 232 and Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime* (New York: Scribner, 1974), p. 120.
8. Michael T. Florinsky, *Russia: A History and an Interpretation* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), pp. 177-178.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 184 and Pipes, pp. 126-127.
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12. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
13. See Robert R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), v. I.
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15. *Ibid.*, p. 263.
16. Franklin D. Scott, "Bernadotte and the Throne of France, 1814," in *Journal of Modern History*, December 1933, pp. 465-478.
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19. See Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Decline of Imperial Russia 1855-1914* (New York: Praeger, 1952), chap. II.
20. Bergamini, p. 343.
21. Pavel Miliukov, et al., *History of Russia: Vol. III, Reforms, Reactions, Revolution, (1855-1932)* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1969), pp. 135-145.
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23. Anatole G. Mazour, *Russia, Tsarist and Communist* (Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand, 1962), pp. 621, 22.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 641-642 and Edward H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923* (New York: Macmillan, 1953), v. III, pp. 366-367.
25. Miliukov, pp. 403-405.
26. Saul G. Bron, *Soviet Economic Development and American Business* (New York: Liveright, 1930).
27. Alexander Werth, *Russia at War 1941-1945* (New York: Dutton, 1964), pp. 625-626; Gordon Wright, *The Ordeal of Total War, 1939-1945* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 265.
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30. See Paul Avrich, *Russian Rebels, 1600-1800* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972).

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32. *Ibid.*, pp. 315-316; Nikolai Berdyaev, *The Russian Idea* (London: G. Bles, 1947), pp. 34-37.
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34. *Ibid.*, p. 418.
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40. *Ibid.*, pp. 154-157; Pipes, p. 274; Bertram D. Wolfe, *Three Who Made a Revolution* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), pp. 108-109.
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47. *Ibid.*, p. 678.
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