RUSSIAN NATIONALISTS' WORLDVIEW

Russian nationalist and Communist circles have been critical of El'tsin's foreign policy for years. They find his course subservient towards the United States and the West. Moreover, the newspaper Zavtra, the chief spokesman for nationalist sources, did not hesitate to call El'tsin's government "the occupying regime." In this study, our objective is to examine the nationalist-Communist reading of Russia's policy in different parts of the world and, what alternatives, if any, this coalition proposes. It needs to be mentioned that Zavtra's views in this study may often serve as representing the position of both the nationalist and Communist elements in modern Russia. It is no surprise that Communists are included in this group. They, like the nationalists, strongly oppose the current government. The Communists, like the nationalists, accuse the government of failing to stand up for Russian national interests. According to noted specialist on the Russian far right Walter Laqueur "One should not underrate the strong Communist elements in the new Russian right." Zavtra publishes articles written by both nationalists, such as writers and poets as the late Vladimir Soloukhin, Stanislav Kuniaev and this newspaper's Deputy Editor-in-Chief Vladimir Bondarenko, and Communists, including sociologist Sergei Kara-Murza, actor Iuri Nazarov and Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper Sovetskaia Rossiia Valentin Chikin. Sometimes, openly odious chauvinists like General Viktor Filatov or writer Ivan Shevtsov express their opinions in this newspaper. In other cases, more respectable authors such as movie producer Stanislav Govorukhin, journalist Iuri Shekochikhin or playwright Viktor Rozov publish their pieces in Zavtra. In the context of current political affairs, Russian history, and attitudes toward the Soviet past and so on, there may be found a panoply of different interpretations in the contents of this publication. As far as foreign policy is concerned, the overwhelming majority of contributors agree on certain points which will be discussed below.

The Image of the United States

Russian nationalists demonstrate contempt and openly hostile attitudes toward the United States. In dealing with America, they focus on a number

of issues concerning Washington's domestic and external political courses, American society's spiritual and moral values. They speak out against what they perceive as American domination of Russia and attempts to project American values on Russia. Russian nationalists blame Washington for their country's economic, social and political woes. In a typical description of the United States, Akif Bagemskii wrote that Clinton may sleep well only in the case that Russia fails both in developing democracy and achieving prosperity. He asks "why do the Americans need a rival?" It is the world who feeds the Americans, not the Americans who feed the world. The journalist emphasizes that the Americans, who make up only 5 percent of the world's population, consume nearly 50 percent of world resources. What if the Russians desire to live as prosperously as the Americans do?2

Vladimir Bondarenko, Zavtra's Editor-in-Chief, travelled throughout the US and covered this subject extensively. During the 1996 presidential elections Bondarenko was in the US. He was asked which of the two leading candidates he would prefer to see win. Bondarenko responded that he prefers neither of them, "since for Russia both are worse."3 According to Bondarenko, after the elections in America the attitude toward Russia became harsher. The US ruling circles brainwash the American people in connection with spy scandals related to Russia. "They make a monster and a leader of world crime out of Russia. Our democrats and El'tsin supporters do not realize that American mass media calls El'tsin's regime a criminal dictatorship."4 Bondarenko claims that in reality, the United States turns out to be the main terrorist which supports thugs in Chechnia, Afghanistan and Bosnia. Afterwards, these hoodlums equipped with US assistance depart for Algeria, Turkey and Germany. There they murder Europeans. Bondarenko wonders how the US can benefit from such actions. He asked American political scientists whether there is any logical rationale for US support of the Islamic fundamentalist movement. Bondarenko also noted that, based on his conversations with hundreds of Americans, he came to the conclusion that they care about their own civil and human rights and totally disregard it if other peoples' human rights are violated. As examples, Bondarenko compares American support of Turkmenbash's feudal, totalitarian regime and Washington's relentless pressure on Belarus; the United States' endorsement and cultivation of the Islamic movement Taliban in Afghanistan and American indiscriminate condemnation of Bosnian Serbs. At this point, it would be appropriate to question Bondarenko's logic. Earlier, he questioned whether there is any benefit to the US in its help to funda-

4. Ibid.