

Book Reviews

Eileen Welsome. *Cold War Secrets: A Vanished Professor, a Suspected Killer, and Hoover's FBI*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2021. 229 pp., plus index and illustrations.

On March 15, 1969, Dr. Thomas Riha, Associate Professor of Russian History in the newly created Slavic Studies Department at University of Colorado, vanished and has never been seen again. Riha, born in Czechoslovakia, had moved to the United States after World War Two, studied at Berkeley, Columbia and Harvard, and spoke five languages, including, of course, Russian. (Colleagues will recognize the names of some of his professors or colleagues, such as Richard Pipes, William McNeill, Loren Graham, and Richard Wortman.) He was an exchange student at Moscow University in 1958. In the 1950s, as the Cold War was heating up, Riha had been approached by both Soviet and American intelligence agencies – the FBI interviewed him more than once and kept an active dossier on him - but it is unclear whether he ever worked for either. In fact, there is a great deal about Riha, his life, and associates that is uncertain – including his relationship with an American woman who went by the name “Galya,” who may have murdered him. Within weeks of Riha’s disappearance, Galya was selling his house, his car, and receiving repayment from Riha’s estate for a supposed loan.

No one seems to know for sure when Galya and Riha met and began their friendship/relationship. Galya stated they met in Washington, DC, but she was a habitual liar and scam artist, so her word on this cannot be trusted. Raised in St. Louis, Galya had a troubled childhood that included physical and verbal abuse, and abandonment by her father. Her first marriage took place when she was only sixteen and was soon followed by the birth of a daughter. It is also during this period that Galya first got in trouble with the law. Her marriage ended after only three years and to make ends meet, she forged her husband’s signature on a check. This would be the first of a long list of crimes involving lies, embezzlement, and forgery for monetary gain. Eventually, she would murder as well.

The mystery surrounding Riha’s disappearance is magnified by the death of several of his acquaintances roughly around the same time. In June 1969, Gustav Ingwersen, a friend of Galya’s in Boulder, died of what was initially determined to be a heart attack. A more careful examination revealed the cause of death to be cyanide poisoning. Galya was included in Ingwersen’s will though she had only recently become his friend. Even more suspicious, when Ingwersen’s family

cleaned out his house they found Riha's wedding band. Police then searched the house for Riha's body but found nothing. Months later, Barbara Egbert also died of cyanide poisoning. She had, in fact, introduced Galya to Ingwersen and the two women had become closer after his death. In mid-September, almost six months after Riha vanished, Egbert was found dead of an apparent suicide. Her will mentioned loans to Galya. Egbert's family and friends could not believe that she would take her own life, but Galya indicated to police that her friend had had many problems. Handwriting analysis would eventually determine that many of the checks and similar documents that granted Galya various sums were forged by the same hand.

Finally, the story of the vanishing professor is made more complicated and confusing by the misleading information provided by local law enforcement and national intelligence agencies. Both the FBI and the CIA claimed to have no knowledge of Thomas Riha, creating a significant obstacle for those who were attempting to find him. The author has since found heavily redacted records that these agencies had significant dossiers on Riha and knew about his disappearance shortly after it occurred, but had no intention of pursuing the case themselves or aiding anyone else. In fact, it was in part information from the FBI or CIA that led Boulder officials to state that Riha was not really missing, but in a safe location known to his attorney.

Eileen Welsome's *Cold War Secrets: A Vanished Professor, a Suspected Killer, and Hoover's FBI* relays a bizarre but true story that is full of mysteries and missing information, scams and suspicious deaths, all within the framework of the growth of America's intelligence agencies. Through persistent and dedicated research, Welsome is able to persuasively establish that Galya was definitely an FBI informant and Riha was, at the very least, being monitored by both the FBI and the CIA. She also argues that the attempts of various individuals in local law enforcement and the Denver FBI office to locate Riha or explain his absence led to J. Edgar Hoover's decision, as head of the FBI, to sever relations with the CIA, thus creating a rift between the nation's two leading intelligence agencies.

But it is this intersection between the story of Thomas Riha and the evolution of the FBI that proves to be the greatest problem with this book. The book tries to do too much and in the process the clarity of the story and the flow of the narrative becomes murky and frustrating. It is, essentially, two books in one. Welsome is an award-winning investigative journalist who received the Pulitzer Prize in 1994, so her research skills are strong. But writing articles is a different exercise from sustaining the same narrative over the length of a book, and here Welsome struggles. Consequently, though the story she tells is fascinating, with twists and turns that are worthy of a best-selling novel, one wishes that an editor had helped her tell the tale in a way that is easier to follow, with fewer unnecessary asides. (Not every person named in the text needs their own page or two of back story.) Still, the book is worth reading and readers will be fascinated by the details of this officially unsolved true crime.

Serhii Plokyh, *Nuclear Folly: A History of the Cuban Missile Crisis*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2021, xviii, 444 pp. Index. \$35, Hardcover.

By 2022, Americans too young to have lived through the era of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the most perilous passage during the Cold War, require a scholar of extraordinary knowledge and skills to explain why the Soviet Union and the United States engaged in an “eyeball-to-eyeball” confrontation during the critical “Thirteen Days” in October 1962. Plokyh is that scholar and *Nuclear Folly* is the book they should read.

Based on a mastery of the latest American and Soviet sources, particularly the newly-released KGB files, *Nuclear Folly* takes a fresh look at a key juncture in the history of the Cold War, shedding light on the strategic balance, the secret back-channel diplomacy between the superpowers, Moscow-Havana communications as well as domestic US politics.

Plokyh’s discussion of Soviet decision making during the Cuban missile standoff is highly revealing. He highlights the central role of Nikita Khrushchev in the Soviet nuclear brinkmanship. It was Khrushchev who made the decision to install missiles in Cuba to achieve his dual purposes of protecting Cuba and overcoming American superiority in nuclear missiles. He placed missiles in Cuba because he considered President Kennedy as aggressive, not passive. The Kremlin boss behaved as much from an emotional impulse to save the Cuban revolution as from any calculated determination to redress a strategic balance upset by Washington’s belated acknowledgement that there was no missile gap. Within the Soviet leadership only Anastas Mikoyan opposed Khrushchev’s decision, but Mikoyan remained in the minority. “One-man rule gave Khrushchev enormous latitude to be quick, decisive, and flexible in crisis situations, but it also gave him opportunities to create crises as well” (p. 60).

In reflecting on the lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Plokyh blames both Nikita Khrushchev and John Kennedy for their mistakes and misjudgments that led to the crisis. He also gives them credit for remaining cool-headed at critical junctures to avoid a nuclear shootout: “they did not step into the traps so masterfully created by themselves because they did not believe they could win a nuclear war, nor were they prepared to pay a price for such a victory” (p. 359). Furthermore, Plokyh praises them for launching the era of nuclear arms control. With the conclusion of the partial nuclear test-ban treaty in 1963, they “saved the world a second time by drastically limiting radioactive fallout” (p. 359).

Plokyh has a good ear for anecdote and a sensible eye for the detail that illuminates the landscape. His descriptions of the living conditions on board the Soviet ships transporting missiles to Cuba are fascinating. To avoid American detection, for most of the long journey to Cuba Soviet officers and enlisted men had to be confined to bunks between decks, suffering from immobility and high temperatures beneath decks scorched by the burning sun. KGB agents travelling with them and monitoring their conduct discovered that many of them went to Cuba unwillingly. The KGB intercepted a letter by an officer to his wife, in which he criticized the Soviet government and questioned its policies.

According to Ploky, Khrushchev's decision to withdraw missile from Cuba created confusion and worsened the already low morale among the Soviet soldiers, who had first been instructed to build the launch sites and then to dismantle them. They departed Cuba without the expected appreciation and gratitude from the local population. In providing a detailed and vivid treatment of the frustration and hardship of the Soviet military personnel on the ground in Cuba, Ploky adds a previously-overlooked and much-needed human dimension to the Cuban missile saga from the Soviet side.

In sum, Ploky's zestfully granular history of the Cuban Missile Crisis provides a new and original approach to a subject that most historians (myself included) believed to be very well-trod ground. He displays a sharp observational wit and a knack for a turn of phrase. The book is balanced and nuanced. It is enjoyable to read.

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Cynthia L. Haven, with an afterword by Valentina Polukhina, *The Man Who Brought Brodsky into English: Conversations with George L. Kline*, Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2021, 203pp. \$19.95, Paper.

While visiting Warsaw in 1964, the Bryn Mawr Professor of Philosophy George L. Kline asked a Polish friend what news he had about recent writing in Russia. The friend showed him a faint typescript entitled "The Great Elegy for John Donne" written in 1963 by the young Leningrad poet Joseph Brodsky. Kline knew something about Brodsky as a person, having read the transcript of his 1964 trial as a "social parasite" that *The New Leader* had published earlier in the year, but he was not familiar with Brodsky's poetry. Although he did not have time to copy the poem or even read it thoroughly, he recognized instantly that it was the work of a major poet. Upon returning home he acquired a copy of the poem and immediately began to translate it. Thus began a fundamental transformation in his intellectual life that would profoundly affect not only upon himself but Brodsky and the rest of us in ways that no one could have foreseen on that day. What those changes were and how they played themselves out over the next thirty years is at the heart of Cynthia Haven's fascinating book.

It is a story that involves Brodsky and Kline, but also Cynthia Haven herself, who studied with Brodsky at the University of Michigan in the 1970s. When she first read his poetry then, it was in the Penguin edition of Kline's translations published in 1973. Much later, while editing a volume of interviews with Brodsky in 2002, she got to know Kline and benefited from his advice. She also realized that he was not only a rich source of information about Brodsky's life and work but someone whose translations had played a crucial role in making Brodsky's verse accessible to English-language readers in the years immediately following his immigration to the United States in 1972. She promised herself

that at some point she would “gather his memories” of the poet. Other writing commitments delayed the start of this project, but in January of 2013, when Kline was already 92, she began to interview him regularly by telephone and Skype, eventually accumulating hundreds of pages of interview materials and research notes. Unfortunately, Kline died in October of 2014, before she was able to finish the book. Fortunately for us, she pressed on to complete remarkable portraits not only of Kline and Brodsky, but of the literary and cultural era that they shared. Her portrait of Kline captures not only his keen intelligence and erudition but his extraordinary kindness and generosity of spirit. It is even more striking given the fact that she never met him face to face.

Haven’s book is structured as a set of conversations with Kline. Her questions allow Kline to recall the details of his initial encounters with Brodsky’s work and later of his earliest meetings with Brodsky in Russia during the late 1960s. Kline was in his late 40s at the time, while Brodsky was in his middle 20s. Time was short, since visits were brief, a few hours at best, and one could never be sure if or when would meet again. Communication was thus both intense and memorable. The two men got to know one another, obviously, but from the very outset their meetings focused upon reviewing drafts of Kline’s translations. They spoke mostly Russian, but discussions of translation inevitably involved English, which Brodsky by this time knew to some degree. In the late 1960s Kline began to publish his translations in a variety of Western journals. Haven’s interviews make it clear that discovering Brodsky’s poetry was a genuine turning point in Kline’s intellectual and personal life. He had other commitments, certainly, both as a professor at Bryn Mawr and to his family. But translating Brodsky and making the English-speaking world aware of his work became a real mission for him, one that transcended the friendship and personal admiration that he felt for Brodsky.

The possibility that Brodsky might be forced to emigrate, while real, seemed remote for most of the 1960s. In 1972, it became a reality. Given the success with which he ultimately adapted himself to life in the West, it is important to recall that emigration was a major cultural adjustment, even for him. Thanks to the efforts of Carl and Ellendea Proffer at the University of Michigan, he immediately had a teaching job that gave him an income, colleagues, and a home. George Kline was terribly important not only as a translator, but as a friend and someone he knew and could trust. Kline’s translations provided him with a ready base of excellent English-language versions of his poems that allowed him to do readings on college campuses around the country immediately. Within a little more than a year, his translations would appear in a Penguin paperback with an introduction by W. H. Auden that would serve as an entrance ticket to a broader English-language public. Now able to visit one another for closer collaboration on translations, Kline worked intensely with Brodsky to increase the numbers of these available translations.

If there is a drama in Haven’s book, it the gradual diminishing of Brodsky’s exclusive dependence upon Kline for translations. In collaborating on translations, Brodsky would become increasingly assertive as his own mastery of English grew, something that occasionally led to tension in disagreements over word or stylistic

choices. Also, other translators inevitably appeared, as Kline had both anticipated and welcomed in principle. (He never asserted “ownership” over Brodsky translations, arguing that there was room for competing translations). Many of these translations were done by established poets who did not know Russian themselves, but worked from literal translations, sometimes in collaboration with Brodsky himself. Finally, for better or worse, Brodsky was increasingly drawn to translate his own poems. Tensions developed, but the friendship between the two men remained strong, ended only by Brodsky’s death. It’s worth noting that Brodsky admired Kline greatly for his role as a navigator and bombardier who flew fifty combat missions in B-24s out of Italy in World War II, for which he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Haven’s book concludes with materials that will be useful to scholars interested in Brodsky’s poems and Kline’s translations. These include Kline’s extraordinary translations of Brodsky’s poems “Elegy for John Donne,” “Nunc Dimittis,” “The Butterfly,” and “Odysseus to Telemachus”; a bibliography of Kline’s published translations of Brodsky’s poems; and a chronology of Kline’s life and career. In an insightful afterword, Valentina Polukhina places Brodsky’s poetry, Kline’s translations, and the complexity of the relationship between living poets and their translators in a broader historical context.

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Serhii Plokyh, *Forgotten Bastards of the Eastern Front: American Airmen Behind the Soviet Lines and the Collapse of the Grand Alliance*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. 360pp., plus index and illustrations.

Serhii Plokyh’s *Forgotten Bastards of the Eastern Front: American Airmen Behind Soviet Lines and the Collapse of the Grand Alliance*, illuminates the previously unexplored depths of Operation Frantic and the initiative to use bases in Soviet territory to attack previously unreachable targets in Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe. Rather than present a narrative of the events surrounding the establishment on the airbases, the book conducts a virtual 360 performance evaluation of the Soviet-American relationship of the Grand Alliance. It examines perceptions from the US and Soviet military personnel, their associates, and their political/diplomatic representatives through Roosevelt, Truman, and Stalin. What makes this research most unique is its heavy reliance on a variety of State Security archives that thankfully are still available in Ukraine. Through surveillance reports of the SMERSH and other related organizations, Plokyh can link the seemingly mundane interactions, views, and actions of the Americans to the increasing discomfort caused by their presence. Actions by Soviet minders amplified negativity that further added to American distaste for their hosts. These reports capture inherent Soviet angst and the evolution of bilateral paranoia and distrust versus Roosevelt’s hope of enhanced U.S.-Soviet ties. Plokyh demonstrates

how, despite Roosevelt's enthusiasm for this project at Tehran, unseen fault lines destroyed the new edifice before its construction.

Mary Glantz's *FDR and the Soviet Union: the President's Battles Over Foreign Policy* examines tensions in the US Embassy in Moscow and the national security bureaucracy in Washington. Plokhy takes the story further, exploring fissures emerging at the ground level, where Soviet and American personnel should have been most united. He postulates their relationship was "doomed from within by conflict between Soviet and American political traditions and cultures, and it began to fall apart during rather than after World War II."¹ Initially, the establishment of the base at Poltava and its two sister installations was greeted with optimism by the newly arrived American personnel. Soon, however, this trust was tested by a German air-raid that resulted in the most significant loss of US aircraft on the ground since Pearl Harbor. Recriminations against the Soviets were severe and immediate. Denials of US requests to launch American fighters to protect the fields, combined with Soviet failure to launch an effective defense sorely tested nascent trust. Soviet anti-aircraft and early warning coordination were utterly ineffective, and subsequent requests to provide by the US to supply night fighter coverage went unanswered.

Life on the ground for American personnel was equally disappointing. Soviet facilities failed to meet even the most basic western sanitary standards, and perhaps most important to American GIs, their love-lives were even more tumultuous. Local officials and secret police threatened, harassed, arrested, and, of course, enlisted spies among the local women who dated Americans. American GIs and their Soviet dates received harassment in public, and their sweethearts were called prostitutes. For service members, then, as today, few things impact the psyche than an intrusion into ones' intimate life. Plokhy writes: "Americans were incensed by the efforts of the Soviet secret police to curtail personal relationships with their Soviet counterparts and by the campaign of harassment against women who dated Americans."²

Tensions only heightened as the Soviets liberated prisoners of war (POWs) in Eastern Europe. American personnel were treated almost as poorly as their Soviet counterparts. Those who surrendered and finished the war in camps were regarded by Stalin as "traitors" and treated with disregard, cruelty even death. For Americans, the view was exactly the opposite. POWs were heroes, deserving of special care and expeditious repatriation. Soviet treatment and failure to aid these former POWs' return were received with absolute bitterness from the tarmacs at Poltava up to the White House.

The more the Soviets pushed back German forces, the less relevant Poltava became. However, when the Polish Home Army rebelled against the Germans occupying Warsaw in advance of the arrival of Soviet troops, Stalin denied desperately needed ammunition and supplies. Officials vehemently denied American and British requests to drop supplies despite repeated and impassioned

1. Serhii Plokhy, *Bastards of the Eastern Front* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), iv.

2. *Ibid.*, 289.

requests. At Yalta, Poland was a particularly sensitive point, but for “Averell Harriman, Stalin’s refusal to allow the use of Poltava-area air bases to help Polish insurgents early in the uprising constituted a turning point in his relations with the Soviets. It was the last straw for the American ambassador, just as it was for many American officers at the bases, convincing them they could not do business with their Soviet hosts.”³

After Roosevelt’s death, relations on the ground at Poltava deteriorated to the point that both sides prepared for the potential of armed conflict at the base. Similarly, Truman’s “White House was looking more like a change in nature of Soviet-American relations.”⁴ In the end, according to Plohky:

“The face-to-face encounter with their Soviet allies had made a strong impression on the Americans at the base, though for many of them, it was not transformative in the way envisioned by their commanders or welcome to their Soviet hosts. Having come to Ukraine with high expectations and great sympathy toward the Soviets, they were leaving utterly disillusioned, and more often than not, even openly hostile to the regime.”⁵

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James W. Peterson, *Russian-American Relations in the Post-Cold War World*. Manchester University Press, 2017. 200pp. Index and illustrations.

Ever since US-Russia relations have plunged into the deepest crisis after the end of the Cold War, experts on both sides of the Atlantic have been turning to the preceding period of post-bipolar development. They are invariably interested in answers to the questions of why the two countries cannot find recipes for stability in their relations, and which one of them and when made the fateful mistakes.⁶

As the two states travel the road from the end of the Cold War to another spiral of tensions, embarking on the gradual process of transforming this period’s history from an object of political and ideological manipulations to a subject of scholarly reflection accords particular importance to summative works that offer comprehensive and balanced interpretations of the US’s relations with post-Soviet Russia. The collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War as well as the legacy of the 1990s and the 2000s, continue to prompt debates among scholars and experts. They become part of the public discourse and are used as

3. Ibid., 147.

4. Ibid., 229.

5. Ibid., 231

6. The following books offer most balanced assessments concerning the matter: Robert Legvold, *Return to Cold War* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016); Samuel Charap, Timothy Colton, *Everyone Loses: The Ukraine Crisis and the Ruinous Contest for Post-Soviet Eurasia* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Angela Stent, *The Limits of Partnership: U.S.-Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton University Press, 2014).

substantiations of foreign policy decisions and as means of handling domestic problems in both states.

This is why books such as the one written by James Peterson, Professor Emeritus in Political Science, are of special interest. This book for students is addressed not only to undergraduates and graduates, but also to politicians and experts. Having been published in 2017, at the start of Donald Trump's presidency and before the final collapse into the abyss of confrontation that reached its nadir in ambassadors being revoked from both Washington and Moscow, the book is more balanced in its assessments.

A clearly structured text based on the author's own conceptual framework centers around the principal landmarks in bilateral interactions in the post-bipolar world: the end of the Cold War, the Balkan Wars of the 1990s, NATO's eastward expansion, war on global terrorism, the US decision to invade Iraq in 2003, Russia's move to invade Georgia in 2008, the American Missile Shield project, the Arab Spring of 2011 and the Middle Eastern crisis, American and Russian "pivot to the East" connected with China's ascendance and with the changing balance of power in Asia. Following the latest Russia-NATO talks in January 2022, the discussion of new Eastern European states acceding to the alliance becomes particularly relevant.⁷

Peterson emphasizes the unwillingness of US experts, state and public figures to account for the success of Vladimir Putin's policy of advancing the idea of national greatness in post-Soviet Russia that correlates with the status of the USSR throughout the Cold War. As Peterson justly notes, a major factor in the erosion of bilateral relations is Russia's failure to understand the motives behind the US's invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and the US's failure to understand the motives behind Russia's wars with Chechnya and the Georgia-Ossetia war in August 2008. This total incomprehension and distortion of the other state's motives stood in the way of the convergence process and was fully manifested during the Syrian Civil War (pp. 10-11).

The book's theoretical and methodological framework rests on the analysis of five world order models that center on the balance of power, bipolarity, unipolarity, multi-polarity, and continuous chaos, including five international relations theories such as Systems Theory, Legacy Theory, Critical Junctures Theory, Realist Theory, and Revised Realist Theory. Peterson uses them to explain the logic and dynamics of the US-Russia relations between the end of the Cold War and 2014.

Using the format of Soviet-American relations during the Cold War as his starting point, he is looking for its traces in the US relations with post-Soviet Russia. In his opinion, the balance of power conceived by the framers of the Yalta-Potsdam system manifests in Vladimir Putin's intent to dispute American leadership and implement an equal partnership or in the initial stage of Barack Obama's "reset" policy. Today's multi-polar international relations system is evolving a bipolar trend in Russia-US relations. I believe, however, that it is

7. About this see in details, Mary Sarotte, *Not One Inch America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate* (Yale University Press, 2022).

necessary to qualify that in this new iteration, we are talking regional bipolarity, while global bipolarity is manifested to a greater degree in US-China relations.

Peterson states that multi-polarity began to emerge within the capitalist and socialist camps back in the 1960s-1970s. The countries in each group as well as the non-alignment movement challenged the dominance of the USSR and the US. The polycentric trend subsisted to the end of the Cold War due to the strengthening standings of China and Japan. Simultaneously, however, because of the USSR weakening, the unipolar model was activated in Soviet-American relations. It was reflected in the US reveling in its triumphalism following the collapse of the Soviet Union as America was moving from leadership to hegemony.

One cannot dispute Peterson's observations on this matter as well as on two others. First, the transition from World War II to the Cold War is difficult to fit into any current models, just like it is difficult to do so with the transition from the Cold War to the post-bipolar world of the 1990s. Second, no single model could offer a comprehensive description of the dynamics of Soviet-American relations from 1946 to 1991. The same holds true for the post-bipolar world. Then, however, legitimate questions arise: how appropriate and productive is the use of the term "the New Cold War" for today's Russia-US relations? Does such a generalization afford experts and politicians some real knowledge concerning the relations' development prospects or does it, on the contrary, cloud the meaning of the current events and get in the way of their comprehensive interpretation?

Peterson justly states that when the system of relations between the US and post-Soviet Russia has gone through another cycle of hopes and disappointments (which was not the first and will not be the last) it has not become set in stone. The logic and dynamics of these relations was impacted by the Cold War legacy that manifested, for instance, in active manipulations of the "Russian threat" in the US and the "American threat" in Russia (Legacy Theory). Both countries, however, repeatedly demonstrated their desire to overcome this legacy. In its turn, Peterson's use of the Theory of Critical Junctures allows him to draw the reader's attention to the interconnectedness between changing domestic development tracks and the US-Russia relations, as it happened, for instance, when the power was transferred from Boris Yeltsin to Vladimir Putin in Russia or from the Republican and neoconservative George W. Bush Administration to the Democratic and neoliberal Barack Obama Administration in the US.

Interpreting Russia-US relations through the lens of the Realist Theory, Peterson shows that the two countries appealed to both offensive and defensive tactics in pursuing their national interests. For example, the US launched the war in Iraq in 2003 on very flimsy grounds, just like Russia did in annexing Crimea. At the same time, the US intervention in Afghanistan was a manifestation of defensive tactics, while Russia used defensive tactics in response to the Missile Shield project conceived by the Washington administration. The problem here is that the very determination of what short-term and long-term national interests actually are frequently remains debatable for the other party and prompts domestic debates as well.

Finally, by using the Revised Realist Theory, Peterson focuses on global developments (be that pandemics, international terrorism, environmental

problems, or redistribution of global energy resources) that directly influence states' actions and that need to be analyzed through the application of interdisciplinary approaches.

Peterson offers a periodization of Russian and American foreign political patterns that correlates with his theoretical insights and will be useful for both students and faculty. He distinguishes several periods in Russia's foreign policy. The first one is Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika (1985-1991) characterized by a new foreign policy concept based on the realist theory and driven by desire to protect Russia's economic interests amid increasing challenges posed by the polycentric world. The second period coincides with Boris Yeltsin's presidency (1991-2000); it is marked by his desire to appease the West and engage in a close interaction with it, which, in turn, results in the US leaning toward hegemony and unipolarity. The third period includes Vladimir Putin's first presidential tenure (2000-2008); his policy was aimed at stepping up Russia's international stance and regaining its former glory following the foreign political passivity of Yeltsin's presidential tenure. The Legacy Theory and the balance of power model explain the logic of Russia's foreign policy at the time. Finally, the fourth period spans Dmitry Medvedev's presidency and Vladimir Putin's second presidential tenure. This is the period of ramping up the glory policy manifested in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine in 2014. It is important to note that Peterson's model clearly lacks the domestic political factor, that is, the evolution of Putin's regime itself with its characteristic applied anti-Americanism, his desire to use the American *Other* to handle domestic political tasks and consolidate the national idea.

Peterson also distinguishes four periods in American foreign political patterns. From 1985 to 1993 is the period when the US was far more active than the USSR/Russia. The unipolar model is the perfect fit for explaining the politics and policies of George H.W. Bush, while the Systems Theory helps account for new actors' influence in the international process. The William "Bill" Clinton Administration (1993-2001) that faced challenges in the Balkans is best explained through application of the multilateralism-based model. The Realist Theory serves to clarify American policy that intended to protect its national interests amid increasing inter-civilizational contradictions. In Peterson's opinion, the presidency of George W. Bush (2001-2009) that saw 9/11 and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is best interpreted through the application of the model of chaos. And then, for interpreting Obama's presidency (2009-2017) rife with critical pivots and facing increasing global challenges, Peterson proposes a theoretical framework that combines the theory of Critical Junctures and Revised Realist Theory.

Of particular interest for students and faculty on the one hand, and for experts and politicians on the other is the table that presents the frequency of principal theories and models manifesting in Russia-US relations over the 25 years that elapsed since the end of the Cold War. This table makes for a better understanding of stability recipes (pp. 159-161). Peterson's analysis brings him to the conclusion that the two countries' relations should be constructed through using the balance of power, should be interpreted by applying multi-polarity (as it reflects the realities of the post-bipolar world) and the realist approach that accounts for the national

interests of the other party. The task, therefore, is abandoning the negative impact of the consequences of the Cold War and making use of the workable models of the US-Russian relations and of the constructive approaches to their stabilization. So far, this task has not been handled.

What this solid political science book lacks is a social constructivist approach to the study of bilateral relations that would allow Peterson to expand his explanatory scheme, including through applying the Legacy Theory. It is not solely the matter of the impact that political regime development traditions have had during Putin's presidency, as Peterson writes on p. 26, it is also the matter of a long-term trend of Russia using the American *Other* and the US using the Russian *Other* to shape their national identities. Causes of the new spiral of tensions should be sought in the clash between the two countries' systems of values, interests, and ambitions. Their conflicting national identities, their desire to use the counterpart as a scapegoat for their own failures make finding a common denominator for divergent interests a more difficult task. It is, however, important to remember that these identities are not static and monolithic, while the dominant American and Russian exceptionalism concepts do leave space for pragmatic interactions and do not in themselves make a conflict inevitable.

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