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# The Russian Sonderweg: A Course of Endless Exclusion

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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

University College  
Liberal Arts

The Russian Sonderweg:  
A Course of Endless Exclusion

by

Joan L. Rohlfing

A thesis presented to the  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences  
of Washington University in  
partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the  
degree of Master of Liberal Arts

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## **The Russian Sonderweg: A Course of Endless Exclusion**

When the Iron Curtain fell and the Cold War ended in 1991, Europeans had an historic opportunity to integrate the continent along auspices that provided inclusion for all Eastern Bloc countries within a new political model that did not reject Westphalian norms of national sovereignty. However, this did not happen because twenty-first-century geopolitical gaming by the U.S. and Russia paradoxically resurrected Cold War divides that could have faded over time and led to a new rapprochement between these two great, world-leading polities. Instead, we have a new Cold War brewing between Russia and the U.S., with Vladimir Putin cast in the role of villain. While some will argue that the present contentious relationship between Russia and the U.S. is the legacy of competing early twentieth-century economic and political ideologies that ultimately led to the first Cold War, this is not the fact. The current contentious relationship between Russia and the U.S. has its origins in the fifteenth century when Russia began down a political and cultural path that would ultimately lead to the historic schism between East and West, the Cold War of the twentieth century, and the looming geopolitical Cold War of the twenty-first century, as well as a path that has perpetually excluded Russia from Western civilization. This study will employ a thematic and diachronic methodology to investigate Russia's special path or *Sonderweg* that led to its past political and social discord with the West and its perpetual exclusion from Western civilization. It is this *Sonderweg* which is once again leading to a new geopolitical Cold War with the United States. While most extant studies focus on this problem from an International Relations point of view, they neglect the bigger picture of history and culture in a diachronic context. It is only through our understanding of the historical context that we can ensure history does not repeat itself, thus allowing Russia and the U.S. to mend their current troubling relationship – a relationship with far reaching, global implications.

## I. Introduction

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, all strata of Russian society have struggled to define a cohesive post-Soviet Russian identity. The Russian Federation, with all of its multi-ethnic peoples, still does not have clear and substantiated answers to questions about who Russia is as a nation, as a people, as a society, and where Russia is going. In her 2001 book titled *Inventing the Nation: Russia*, Russian scholar Vera Tolz identifies five distinct Russian national identities that have emerged among Russian intellectuals since the collapse of the Soviet Union:

1. The Union Identity – a multi-ethnic nation comprised of the peoples and areas of the former Soviet Union
2. The Eastern Slav Identity – an ethnically and culturally distinct nation comprised of Slavic peoples with a common past and heritage
3. The Russian Language Identity – a nation comprised of Russian-speakers, regardless of ethnicity or heritage
4. The Russian Racial Identity – a nation comprised of ethnic Russians based on genetic heritage
5. The Russian Civic Identity – a nation comprised of citizens of the Russian Federation<sup>1</sup>

In this respect, not much has changed in the decade since Tolz published her book. The two main points of contention that continue to plague the Russian people as they strive to construct a Russian identity are: 1) upon what foundation should the Russian identity and nation be built – union, culture, language, ethnicity, or citizenship; and 2) who gets to answer the first question, thus controlling not only the course of construction and dissemination of the Russian identity both domestically and internationally, but also the destiny of the Russian nation – state authorities and the ruling party, scholars, the intellectual elite, or the youth. The wide range of

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<sup>1</sup> Vera Tolz, *Inventing the Nation: Russia*, (London: Hodder Education, 2001) 237-238.

opinions on these two topics is evidenced by the volume of scholarly articles that have been written on the topics since the beginning of the twenty-first century. And, while the origin of Russia's current struggle to construct a collective national identity has roots much deeper than these two areas of scholarly debate, a couple of examples provide a hint into the history of the Russian *Sonderweg* that has led Russia to its current state of ambiguity, as well as its current contentious relationship with the United States.

Regarding the foundation upon which the Russian identity should be built, in their January 2012 article published in *Russian Education and Society*, V. A. Avksentev and B. V. Aksiumov claimed that:

The Russian identity in post-Soviet conditions is ambiguous, and a new identity is still not formed. Data from the southern regions show that religion and ethnicity are more powerful sources of identity than being a citizen of Russia.<sup>2</sup>

Both being doctors of the philosophical sciences in Russia, Avksentev and Aksiumov based their claim on a 2009 study conducted in one of the most problematic areas of Russia – the North Caucasus. The areas targeted for the study were selected because they represent the center of the southern region of Russia, and the group targeted was young college students. Of the 1,407 people surveyed, 39.3 percent were “peoples of the Caucasus,” 48.9 percent were “ethnic Russians,” and 11.8 percent were “other peoples.” In addition, the participants were also stratified by religious orientation to be 56.7 percent of peoples of the Christian culture, 40.5 percent of the Muslim culture, and 2.8 percent considered other. Overall, 98.3 percent of study participants were classified as “peoples of Russia,” with 1.7 percent being considered foreigners.<sup>3</sup> The study found the strongest affirmative responses to the questions on the

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<sup>2</sup> Avksentev and Aksiumov, 71.

<sup>3</sup> Avksentev and Aksiumov, 73-74.

importance of one's national (ethnic) and religious affiliations. In response to the importance of national affiliation, the peoples of the Caucasus answered 71.6 percent with "very important" and 21.9 percent with "important," the group considered to be other peoples answered 57.9 percent and 27.7 percent respectively, and ethnic Russians answered 43 percent and 32.8 percent respectively. When the numbers were stratified by religious orientation, the peoples of Muslim culture answered 70.3 percent with "very important" and 22 percent with "important," the peoples of Christian culture answered with 46.6 percent and 31.3 percent respectively, and all others answered with 36.1 percent and 47.2 percent respectively. And, in response to the importance of religious identity, the peoples of the Caucasus answered 67.4 percent with "very important" and 23.5 percent with "important," the group considered to be other peoples answered 52.2 percent and 24.2 percent respectively, and ethnic Russians answered 30.1 and 34.2 percent respectively. Based on these findings, Avksentev and Aksiumov arrived at their conclusion on the significance of religion and ethnicity in Russian self-identity. However, based on the responses to other questions, one can clearly see that the study also provides illuminating insight into the unique mindset of all the peoples of Russia.

In this same 2009 study conducted in the North Caucasus, there was one question that asked about the civilization status of Russia. Of the five possible answers, the peoples of the Caucasus answered 52.4 percent with "Russia is neither West nor East and it has its own path of development," ethnic Russians answered 64.6 percent with the same response, as did 50.3 percent of all others. When the responses were stratified by religious orientation, the peoples of Christian culture answered 62.4 percent with this same response, the peoples of Muslim culture answered with 52.6 percent, and all others answered with 51.4 percent. In contrast, when given the statement "Russia is a European country and a part of Western civilization," only 21.8



percent of the peoples of the Caucasus agreed, 15.5 percent of ethnic Russians agreed, and 18.9 percent of all others agreed. The numbers in agreement with this statement were also on the lower end when stratified by religious orientation, with 15.8 percent for peoples of Christian culture in agreement, 21.7 percent for peoples of Muslim culture, and 21.6 percent for all others.<sup>4</sup> These statistics are critically important and should not be glossed over simply because they are not the focus of Avksentev's and Aksiumov's argument. They speak directly to the significance of the Russian *Sonderweg* because they sharply articulate the fact that, regardless of ethnicity or religious orientation, the various peoples of Russia see the Russian civilization as being unique and distinctly separate from the West and the East.

Regarding how the Russian identity gets constructed and disseminated, both domestically and internationally, and the impact this will have on the fate of the Russian nation, Galina Zvereva claimed in her January 2011 article published in the *Russian Social Science Review* that:

. . . during the discursive production and distribution of [the] “pan-Russian identity” the state authorities, while relying on the experience of Soviet propaganda, make active use of organizational techniques that characterize contemporary corporate culture. This circumstance affects the meanings of the concepts being promoted and the reality being constructed in distinctive ways.<sup>5</sup>

In the article, Zvereva recounted the lengthy efforts (often with mixed results) undertaken by Russian state authorities and the ruling party to construct and officially disseminate the concept of the Russian nation. As can be seen in state documents from the early post-Soviet era, like the 1996 text titled “The Concept of the State Nationalities Policy of the RF,” initial attempts at building the new Russian identity focused on the significant role played by ethnic Russians as

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<sup>4</sup> Avksentev and Aksiumov, 84.

<sup>5</sup> Galina Zvereva, “What Will ‘We’ Be Called Now?,” 5.

the patriarchal and unifying element of the “multinational people of Russia.” An examination of the transformative history of another state document, a federal bill titled “On the Foundations of the State Nationalities Policy of the RF,” highlights the continual shift through the early 2000s in state policy and mind set regarding nation building. The initial bill from 2003 recognized ethnic Russians, the Russian language, and the Russian culture as the critical underlying elements for the Russian Federation. Overall, within this early document the concepts of “national self-identification” and “national affiliation” were purely ethnic based and not civic, political, or civilizational. In addition, it provided Russian citizens with the right to national autonomy based on their chosen national affiliation.<sup>6</sup> The bill went through lengthy revisions and in early 2006 was presented to the State Duma with a completely different concept of the “Russian nation.” In this version, a new civic oriented concept defined the Russian nation as the “historical and sociopolitical community of the multinational people of Russia, who share a historical destiny and work creatively together to strengthen the unified state.” Zvereva pointed out the goal of this language was to define a “state nation” – a nation belonging to the state. It is also important to note that this version of the bill retained the language outlining the special status of and critical “state-forming” role played by ethnic Russians. Further revisions in late 2006 removed the term “state-forming” when referring to ethnic Russians and declared the “Russian nation is a general civic community, consolidated on the basis of a unified state.” However, this version of the bill was highly criticized by numerous state and federal political figures and the bill was ultimately abandoned in 2007.<sup>7</sup> Upon examination of these documents, Zvereva arrived at her conclusion that the techniques used by state authorities in their attempt to create and disseminate a “pan-Russian identity” had significant impacts on the peoples of Russia and the construction of

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<sup>6</sup> Zvereva, 5-7.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 8.

the Russian nation. However, Zvereva's further examination of a new political/public movement in 2008 brought to light that Russian state authorities and United Russia (the ruling party) saw it as their responsibility to define a Russian identity, and thus a Russian nation, that would be palatable and receivable by all the peoples of the Russian Federation.

In her examination of the All-Russian Union of Public Associations, referred to as "Russian Nation," Zvereva provides that this new movement included "prominent state-political and public figures and leaders of all the largest federal national-cultural public associations." The goal of the group was to "strengthen and disseminate in society the idea of a political and civic nation in Russia" as it was articulated by Vladimir Putin in a February 2004 speech.<sup>8</sup> In discussing the official components of this "Russian nation" construct, Zvereva pointed out that a critical component to the cohesiveness of this ideology was a unifying narrative of a collective pan-Russian identity consisting of "shared aims and basic expressions with common meanings." Of the historical landmarks emphasized in the official narrative, two are of specific interest: the reign of Tsar Ivan III and the Time of Troubles.<sup>9</sup> Not only were these events pivotal moments in Russian history, they were also pivotal moments in the course of the Russian *Sonderweg*. The first event, the reign of Tsar Ivan III (1462-1505), represents Russia's final and complete independence from the disintegrating Golden Horde, and perhaps more importantly, it represents the beginning of the formation of the great and vast Russian Empire, symbolized by the conquest of Novgorod. The second event, the Time of Troubles (1598-1613), represents the significance of the unifying actions taken by the Russian people to defend the Muscovite Empire from European invaders and imposters to the Russian throne. These events are significant in the course of the Russian *Sonderweg* because they mark Russia's efforts at these points in history to

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<sup>8</sup> Zvereva, 16-17.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 21-22.

separate itself from the East and the West. However, while Russia's position vis-à-vis the East remained one of superiority from the fifteenth century onward, it is Russia's historical "on again/off again" love affair with the West, along with this relationship's incompatibility with the Russian *Sonderweg*, that have resulted in Russia's perpetual exclusion from Western civilization and its current contentious relationship with the United States.

As can be seen through this brief examination of recent efforts to define a post-Soviet Russian identity, the origin of Russia's current struggles has roots deep in history and is heavily influenced by the Russian *Sonderweg*. It is only through our understanding of the historical context of this inescapable path that we can fully understand and appreciate how Russia and the U.S. have once again found themselves approaching an historic precipice. For centuries Russia struggled to define its place in the world vis-à-vis the West. Beginning in the fifteenth century with its liberation from the Golden Horde, continuing with Moscow's claim as the Third Rome in the sixteenth century and the great Russian Westernization in the seventeenth century, and then culminating in the Russian Age of Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, historic forces within Muscovy, and later Great Russia, were slowly but steadily moving the Russian Empire toward formal initiation into Western civilization. But in the nineteenth century, the rise of two competing intellectual movements, the Westernizers and the Slavophiles, created a schism within Russian society that for all intents and purposes ended its westward movement. The Westernizers wanted to shed Russia of its backwardness and redress Russian political and social culture along Western ideologies. The Slavophiles embraced Russia's uniqueness and idealized its patriarchal traditions, its Orthodox Christianity, and its traditional peasant communal lifestyle. They staunchly rejected the idea that Russia was or must be a part of Western civilization. It is also worth remembering that Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* argues that Russia can

never be a part of Western civilization, yet countries such as Poland and the Czech Republic can because they received their Christianity and formal culture from Rome. Huntington is not alone in making this assertion; Richard Pipes and Zbigniew Brzezinski have each advanced their own variations on this construct. These ideas should not be easily dismissed, for these individuals have exercised clout and influence over the conduct of U.S. foreign policy vis-à-vis Russia over the last fifty years. Indeed, their ideas represent the keystone for the conduct of American foreign policy since 1989.

This study will begin with an investigation of the rise of Muscovy in the fifteenth century when its grand princes began to assert their political claims to gather up the Eastern Slavs under their dominion. Moscow's rise led to innumerable wars with the West, a dynamic aptly described by historian M. T. Poe in his book, *The Russian Moment in World History*. This is the period where the animus between East and West began, Byzantine antecedents excluded. It will conclude with current events that continue to perpetuate the legacy of political discord between Russia and the West, with a focus on the rising contentions between Russia and the United States vis-à-vis Iran, Syria, and the 2012 U.S. Presidential election – events that will no doubt have profound implications for the world as they influence Russia's continuing *Sonderweg* of endless exclusion.

## II. 1453 – Byzantium Comes to Russia

On Tuesday, May 29, 1453, after forty-eight days of unprecedented siege, Byzantium, otherwise known in the Christian world as Constantinople, fell to Sultan Mehmet II and his Ottoman Turks.<sup>10</sup> The last vestige of the great Roman Empire, the once grand and opulent Eastern Roman Empire, along with its financially and culturally rich capital of Constantinople, and the seat of Orthodox Christianity were now gone. For centuries Byzantine and Russian scholars have debated the significance of this event and the Byzantine influence of the Russian historical path. Some argue that Russia was directly and heavily influenced by Byzantium in the areas of religion, trade, culture, and commerce. Others argue that this influence was indirect at best and that Russia was influenced more by Western agents. While convincing arguments exist on both ends of this spectrum, in the end the point is moot because the fact remains that this singular event is profoundly significant in the history of Russia and its special path, for it is this event that marks the beginning of the Russian *Sonderweg* that leads to its course of endless exclusion from Western civilization.

Russia received its Christianity and cultural patronage from Byzantium beginning in the tenth century with the marriage of Prince Vladimir the Great to a Byzantine princess and through his conversion to Orthodox Christianity in 988 A.D. Over the centuries, Russia absorbed Byzantine influences through religion, culture, the arts, trade, and economics. The most important significance of these influences is the fact that they were distinctly non-Western. In the fifth century, the Eastern Roman Empire and its culture continued to thrive after the fall of Rome in 476 A.D. Byzantium did not experience a Dark Ages; nor did it experience an Italian Renaissance. While Western Europe struggled to survive the intellectual, cultural, and economic darkness after the Fall of Rome, the arts, high culture, academia, and commerce flourished in the

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<sup>10</sup> John Julius Norwich, *A Short History of Byzantium* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1999), 378-381.

East and specifically in Byzantium. However, in 1439 at the Council of Florence, in an effort to secure military and other aid from the West to fend off repeated attacks by the Turks, the Byzantine Emperor and the Patriarch of the Orthodox Christian Church in Constantinople agreed to reunification with the Roman Catholic Church. Muscovy viewed this as heresy on the part of the Byzantines and abandonment of the one true Christian faith. Thus, for Muscovy, the Orthodox leadership and the Rus' people, Byzantium's destruction by the Turks in 1453 was its punishment from God for this abandonment to the Western heretics. Furthermore, Muscovy and the Orthodox leadership now viewed Muscovy's own position as that of sole inheritor and protector of the one true Christian faith. Simultaneously, from a Western perspective, Byzantium had long been viewed as the "other" by which the West judged its own actions and the actions of the "other." Thus, with Byzantium's destruction in 1453, the West looked for a new "other" by which to judge itself and found it in Russia. As a result, beginning in the fifteenth-century, after the destruction of the Byzantine Empire at the hands of the Ottoman Turks, Russia's view of the West and the West's view of Russia as each other's "other" began to form. It is the synergy created by these opposing dynamics that launched Russia on its *Sonderweg* of exclusion from Western civilization.

In his 1971 book titled *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500 – 1453*, the late Russian historian Dimitri Obolensky described the significance of Byzantium's influence and impact on the religion, culture, and societies of Eastern Europe, including that of the Rus'. As a result of this influence, Obolensky provided that after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 the "Muscovite ideologues" began to contrast the heresy of the Greeks at the 1439 Council of Florence and Muscovy's unyielding fidelity to Orthodox Christianity. The conclusion drawn by these intellectual thinkers was that Muscovy is "the only remaining independent Orthodox state

in the world” and the “guardian of the true faith.” In further support of this position, Obolensky provided the contents of a letter sent to the grand prince of Moscow by the Russian monk Philotheus who wrote:

Know ye, most pious tsar, that all the empires (tsardoms) of the Orthodox Christian religion have come together into your tsardom: thou art the only tsar of the Christians in the whole world . . . All the Christian tsardoms have been gathered into thy tsardom. After this we wait the Kingdom (tsardom) of which there shall be no end . . . Two Romes have fallen, but the third stands, and a fourth there will not be.<sup>11</sup>

Philotheus’ letter and Muscovy’s position on becoming the guardian of the one true faith became the foundation for Russia’s continued belief that it was different and separate from the West.

While Obolensky does state that any “direct continuity between Byzantine and post-medieval Russian political ideas and institutions finds little support in the history of Muscovy during the century and a half that followed the fall of Constantinople,” this argument does not mitigate the significance and lasting impact that this singular event had on the Russian mindset.<sup>12</sup> With this profound event, Russia separated itself from the legacy of the Eastern Roman Empire and Byzantium, which Russia saw as being in collusion with the heretical West. Thus, from this point on, the historical path upon which Russia was set and its mistrust of the West continued to shape Russia’s relationship with the West, as well as the West’s relationship with Russia.

Obolensky is not the only historian recognizing the influence of the fall of Constantinople on Russia. The late great Byzantine scholar, Deno John Geanakoplos, discussed the topic in his 1984 book titled *Byzantium: Church, Society, and Civilization Seen through Contemporary Eyes*.

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<sup>11</sup> Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500-1453* (New York, NY: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 363. Note: It is at this same time that the theory of “Moscow, The Third Rome” is proposed, which will be discussed later in this paper.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 364.



As a primer, Geanakoplos provides the foundation for the ecclesiastical relationship between the Rus' and the Byzantines was constructed “[a]fter years of commercial and military contact with Byzantium,” when “the Viking rulers of Kiev, together with their Slavic subjects, converted to Orthodoxy in 989.” According to Geanakoplos, it was from this point on that “Constantinople controlled this newly established church, and Byzantine influence soon became paramount in the development of Kieven Orthodox culture.”<sup>13</sup> Specifically addressing the 1439 Council of Florence, Geanakoplos argues it was the “catalyst which moved the Russians to an open break from Byzantine ecclesiastical control.” He further states that the Rus' used this event to name its own metropolitan of Kiev, and as a result, the Rus “began to proclaim that now their church alone remained the bastion of pure Orthodoxy, the Greek church having become apostate through religious union with heretical Rome.”<sup>14</sup> Based on these statements, Geanakoplos' position supports the argument that it was this event that triggered Russia's separation from the Greeks and ultimately from a heretical West.

In contrast to Obolensky and Geanakoplos, Francis J. Thomson, professor emeritus of Slavic studies at the University of Antwerp, argues that the degree of Byzantium's influence on Russia was less than previously claimed. In his 1999 book titled *The Reception of Byzantine Culture in Mediaeval Russia*, Thomson examines the extant body of Byzantine texts translated into Slavonic and their impact on Early Russian literature in an effort to assess the degree of assimilation by Russia of Byzantine culture.<sup>15</sup> Addressing the topic of the fall of Constantinople, Thomson provides that as the individual Russian principalities were assimilated by Moscow, Muscovy emerged as the “sole Orthodox state” by the late fifteenth century and began to “view

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<sup>13</sup> Deno John Geanakoplos, *Byzantium: Church, Society, and Civilization Seen through Contemporary Eyes* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 6.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 353.

<sup>15</sup> Francis J. Thomson, *The Reception of Byzantine Culture in Mediaeval Russia* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 1999), 3.

itself as the successor to Byzantium.”<sup>16</sup> However, Thomson points out that, counter to any Byzantine ecclesiastical influence or Muscovy’s assumption of Byzantium’s role, the marriage in 1472 of Ivan III to Sophia Palaeologina, a Byzantine princess, marked the beginning of Russia’s Western secular influence. Zoe, as she was called, came to Moscow from Rome, where she had been living for many years, “and in her wake came Western doctors, architects, engineers and gunsmiths, but no scholars.”<sup>17</sup> Thomson is addressing the medieval Russian perception of Classical Antiquity, as derived from Byzantine influence. While this statement clearly conveys Thomson’s belief in the significance of Western influence on Russian culture in the mid to late fifteenth century, it must be remembered that at this time, especially after the 1439 Council of Florence, Russia viewed the Byzantines as untrustworthy agents of the heretical West. To Russia, Byzantium and the West were synonymous. This position is further supported by Dr. Christian Raffensperger, Professor of Medieval and Russian studies at Wittenburg University in Ohio. In his 2012 monograph titled *Reimagining Europe: Kievan Rus’ in the Mediaeval World*, Dr. Raffensperger presents the concept of the “Byzantine Ideal” in opposition to Obolensky’s “Byzantine Commonwealth.” According to Raffensperger, in order to establish their legitimacy, medieval rulers attempted to tie themselves to the Roman legacy and they did this through Byzantium – the last vestige of the Roman Empire. He further argues that the term “Byzantium” was first used in the sixteenth century by German historians and that the medieval world knew this city simply as Rome.<sup>18</sup> As stated by Raffensperger, “The Roman Empire fell at Rome, but continued in Constantinople until 1453,” and “for many medieval people, the empire based in

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<sup>16</sup> Thompson, VII 306.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., VII 307.

<sup>18</sup> Christian Raffensperger, *Reimagining Europe: Kievan Rus’ in the Medieval World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 10-11.

Constantinople was always . . . the Roman Empire.”<sup>19</sup> Raffensperger also states that “it is essential to remember that for the purposes of medieval peoples, Byzantium continued the majesty of Rome and the idea of empire that it symbolized.”<sup>20</sup> Thus, Byzantium and the West were synonymous for medieval peoples. This mindset solidified in Russia with the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and set Russia upon its special path throughout history that continues to lead to its exclusion from Western civilization.

Byzantium’s influence on Russia goes without question, as can be seen through these works from just a few historians and scholars. As Francis J. Thomson so eloquently stated it, “That the reception of Byzantine culture forms the foundation of East Slav civilization is a truism and the relevance of a study of the nature of that reception requires no argumentation.”<sup>21</sup> Whether it is argued that this influence was directly received from Byzantium to Russia or indirectly from Byzantium through Western agents to Russia is irrelevant. As the last vestige of the great Roman Empire, Byzantium exercised significant influence over the many peoples and kingdoms of Eastern and Western Europe. Russia was not immune to this influence. From the time of its conversion to Christianity in the tenth century, Russia’s path through history was impacted in one way or another by Byzantine influence. This did not change when Byzantium fell to the Ottoman Turks in May 1453. Russia viewed the fall of Byzantium as God’s divine punishment for the Byzantine concession to a heretical West at the 1439 Council of Florence and as a result viewed its own position as that of sole inheritor and protector of the one true Christian faith – Orthodoxy. As a result, the destruction of the Byzantine Empire in 1453 was a pivotal event in the history of Russia and its special path. It was this event that marked the beginning of the Russian *Sonderweg* that has led to its course of endless exclusion from Western civilization.

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<sup>19</sup> Raffensperger, 12.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>21</sup> Thomson, 1.

### III. Lord Novgorod the Great, the Rise of Muscovy, and Moscow the Third Rome

Russia's ability to assert its claim as the sole protector of Orthodox Christianity and to stand in opposition to the Western heretics did not occur as a result of Byzantium's fall to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. Instead, it was the culmination of centuries of struggles, invasions, assimilations, and conquests of and by the Rus' peoples beginning in the eighth century. In addition, it was its continual struggles to consolidate and assimilate the Russian principalities that led Muscovy to take decisive actions in the sixteenth century that helped solidify Russia's special path through history and its continual exclusion from Western civilization. The history and evolutionary struggles of the Rus' peoples are well documented academically, as well as through the architecture and literature of the time. Knowledge of this complex history provides important insight to understanding Russia's ability in 1453 to assert its claim as the sole protector of the one true Christian faith, how close Russia came to becoming a member of Western civilization, how intra-dynastic competition destroyed the best chance of that happening, and how tyranny and brutality became the *modus operandi* of the Russian tsarist regime. From this history, one can clearly comprehend how the East vs. West dynamic of the last millennia has evolved into the Russia vs. the United States dynamic of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

In their 1996 book titled *The Emergence of Rus: 750-1200*, historians Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard provide a well documented account of the foundation of the Rus' peoples in the eighth century, their connection to the Slavic peoples, the rise of the Rurikid dynasty and Kiev as its center of power, increasing intra-dynasty conflicts and battles, the evolution of several prosperous and semi-autonomous city-states, and the ultimate subjugation of the Rus' by the Mongols in the thirteenth century. As stated by Franklin and Shepard, there was a "synthetic identity based on . . . the kinship of the Rus', the language of the Slavs, and the faith of the

‘Greeks’” that defined the Rus’ peoples. And, it was because of this unique synthesis that the “Rus elite distinguished insiders from outsiders, who they were from who they were not, ‘us’ from ‘them’.”<sup>22</sup> Ultimately, it was this “us vs. them” mentality beginning in the twelfth century that drove the Rus’ to assert themselves first internally through intra-dynastic conflicts and challenges, and then over the next three centuries on a larger scale externally through interactions with Western Europe and Eastern lands. The medieval city of Novgorod (aka Lord Novgorod the Great) is a good example of this intra-dynastic “us vs. them” dynamic. By the first quarter of the twelfth century, Novgorod had established itself as the premier provider of furs to a very demanding and quickly expanding Western European fur market. Located in the north-west of the Kievan Rus’ realm (far north of Kiev), Novgorod was not hindered by large, densely populated settlements or by a close proximity to the principal princely seat of the Kievan Rus’. During this time, the development of specialized craftsmen, as well as a sharp rise in locally sustainable and cheaply produced trade commodities (blades, axes, and spears), occurred in Novgorod.<sup>23</sup> This combination of commercial success and dynastic isolation led to a productive and profitable relationship with Western Europe. In turn, Western European influence bred a strong sense of independence in the Novgorodian people. As a result, in 1136, Novgorod decided to rid itself of its disliked prince, Vsevolod Mstislavich – the nephew of the prince of Kiev. In May 1136, Vsevolod and his family were arrested and held prisoner for over two months while Novgorodian officials negotiated with the Rus’ dynasty for a replacement prince, a practice that continued in Novgorod for the next several years.<sup>24</sup> With this action and continued practice, the people of Novgorod acknowledged and asserted what they saw as their right to

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<sup>22</sup> Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard, *The Emergence of Rus: 750-1200* (New York, NY: Longman Publishing, 1996), 371.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 331-332.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 343.

control their political, religious, and economic future. Furthermore, with its commercial, social, and legal ties to the West, Novgorod was poised to become a full fledged member of Western Europe, with the potential to bring the rest of Russia with it.

From the twelfth to early thirteenth centuries, Novgorodian independence, success, wealth, and expertise also manifested themselves in a revival of masonry construction in the form of many churches, fortifications, and other buildings. But more importantly, many of the churches constructed were done so without the patronage of the reigning prince or bishop, but instead by Novgorodian elites and merchants.<sup>25</sup> The prerogative of religious patronage taken by these two groups is important because it clearly demonstrates Novgorod was on a path comparable to the Western European path that led to the Renaissance. Novgorod appeared to be heading full speed toward inclusion in Western civilization. In addition to its aggressive building efforts, Novgorod's strong sense of independence is also evidenced through Novgorodian literature of the time. In an entry in the *Novgorodian Chronicle* from 1169, the intra-dynastic conflicts are reflected when the writer recounts Novgorod's war with Suzdal. The writer records that "[t]here were only four hundred men of Novgorod against seven thousand soldiers from Suzdal, . . . and the Suzdalians suffered thirteen hundred casualties, while Novgorod lost only fifteen men." The writer goes on to say that "Novgorod retreated, but then returned and collected tribute . . . also from the peasants of Suzdal. And all returned home in good health."<sup>26</sup> In another entry from 1156 concerning the election of political and church officials, the writer records that "[t]he Novgorodians expelled Sudilo, the *posadnik* [mayor] of the city . . . [a]nd they gave the position . . . to Yakun Miroslavovich." The writer goes on to say, "In the same year the whole

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<sup>25</sup> Janet Martin, *Medieval Russia: 980-1584*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 91.

<sup>26</sup> Serge A. Zenkovsky, ed., *Medieval Russians: Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, Rev. ed. (New York, NY: Dutton, 1974), 80.

populace of the city gathered and decided to elect as bishop a holy man, Arkady, who was chosen by God.”<sup>27</sup> From these passages, one can see that the people of Novgorod took their role in selecting church leaders, and thus as the keepers on Orthodox Christianity, very seriously. This belief further evolved to one of privilege in the fifteenth century and is reflected in ideological writings of the period. The best example of this is *The Tale of the White Cowl*, written toward the end of the fifteenth century by Novgorod Archbishop Genady. The tale provides that in the early fourth century Emperor Constantine gave Pope Sylvester (in Rome) a gift of a white cowl, the symbol of Christ’s radiant resurrection and of the primacy of spiritual power over secular power, after which the Emperor left the city Rome to established the Eastern Roman capital of Constantinople, leaving Rome under the Pope’s rule. However, the Western Church soon falls prey to what the Eastern Church calls “Latin heresies.” According to the tale, through God’s divine hand, the Pope is forced to send the white cowl to the Patriarch of Constantinople, who is further instructed through a divine vision to send it to the Archbishop of Novgorod. The Patriarch of Constantinople schemes to find a way to keep the white cowl, but through another divine vision he is informed that the Eastern Church will also fall to heresy and he has no choice but to obey God’s command to send the cowl to the Archbishop of Novgorod. Having been shown the fate of Constantinople and fearing to further defy God’s command, the Patriarch sent the white cowl to the Archbishop of Novgorod, who had also been informed of its coming through a divine vision. The tale ends by stating that “multitudes arrived from many cities and kingdoms to look upon, as if it were a miracle, the archbishop in the While Cowl.”<sup>28</sup> This remained a strong legitimizing tale for Novgorod for quite some time and strengthened its belief that it was different from the other Russian principalities, as was evident in its independence, as

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<sup>27</sup> Zenkovsky, 79.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 323-332.

well as its commercial and social associations with Western Europe.

While Novgorod and its territories were enjoying their independence in the thirteenth century, other Russian principalities were falling to Mongol invasion. The Republic of Novgorod maintained its semi-autonomous position by negotiating an agreement with the Mongols whereby it officially recognized the Mongols as its overlord, to whom it agreed to pay a substantial annual tribute.<sup>29</sup> However, even under the Mongol yoke, one Russian principality, Muscovy, rose to significance beginning in the fourteenth century. It is this principality that played a key role in shaping the Russian *Sonderweg* when in the fifteenth century, after repeated attempts, it permanently defeated the Republic of Novgorod, critically damaging Russia's chances of becoming part of Western civilization.

Muscovy and its capital city of Moscow adapted well to their Mongol overlords and used them as an advantage to challenge the other Russian principalities. In the early fourteenth century, some sixty years after their initial invasion and subjugation of the Russian lands, the Mongols had mellowed in their attitude toward the Russian principalities and provided support for the claims of primacy by the Russian grand princes. They left the majority of the administrative duties (e.g. enforcement of law and order and tax collection) to the local princes. This gave the princes significant administrative authority and instilled in them a strong sense of self-control. And, while the princes knew that backing by the Eastern Orthodox Church and control of territory were critical to increasing their power within the Russian princely hierarchy, they also knew that the ultimate goal was to receive the Mongol khan's patent of support for a prince's claim to the title of Grand Prince of Vladimir – the principal seat at the top of the hierarchy. As a result, between 1301 and 1304 Muscovy battled other Russian principalities to

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<sup>29</sup> Henrik Birnbaum, *Lord Novgorod the Great: Essays in the History and Culture of a Medieval City-State* (Columbus, OH: Slavic Publishers, Inc., 1981), 46-47.



gain official favor from the khan and for control of more land, ultimately expanding the Muscovy principality to three times its original size.<sup>30</sup> Over the next thirty-five years, Muscovy's sole competitor for the khan's support was the prince of Tver. However, after the death of Prince Alexander of Tver in 1331, Ivan I of Moscow (aka Ivan "Moneybag") became the sole Grand Prince of Vladimir. In addition, Ivan was a cunning and ruthless tax collector, and for this reason he convinced the Mongol khan that he could be trusted to effectively administer Tartar policy within Russia. Therefore, in 1339 the Mongol Khan Uzbek gave Ivan his seal of approval on his will, which provided for Ivan's son Simeon as the line of succession to the title of Grand Prince of Vladimir. From 1331 on, the title of Grand Prince of Vladimir was almost exclusively held by princes of Moscow.<sup>31</sup> This is significant for Muscovy and the princes of Moscow. Over the next fifty years, their confidence increased to the point that they begin to assert themselves against their Mongol overlords. In the fall of 1380, Grand Prince Dimitri battled the Mongol warlord Mamai and soundly defeated his army. While this did not completely free Muscovy from the Mongol yoke, it did send a critical message to the Mongols and the other Russian principalities that the princes of Moscow were not afraid to battle any foe when left with no other choice.<sup>32</sup>

Over the next century, the grand princes of Muscovy led a campaign to consolidate the Russian principalities to the north and east, as well as to centralize their control in Moscow. From 1471 – 1478, during the reign of Grand Prince Ivan III, Moscow focused on the defeat and annexation of the Republic of Novgorod. This is significant in the Russian *Sonderweg* because Novgorod had close ties to the West through commercial and legal agreements, as well as social interactions. Thus, with the final defeat of Novgorod in 1478, the best chance in that moment in

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<sup>30</sup> Robert O. Crummey, *The Formation of Muscovy: 1304-1613* (New York, NY: Longman Inc., 1987), 31-35.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

history of Russia becoming part of Western civilization was extinguished. Instead, Ivan III extended Muscovy's control over the republic's northern territories as far north as the Arctic Ocean and Ural mountains. In all, he added over three million acres of populated agricultural lands to his realm, including a vast amount of ecclesiastical property.<sup>33</sup> More importantly, the annexation placed the resources of those lands directly under Ivan's control. All internal or external parties, especially Western European parties (e.g. Lithuania), wanting access to those resources now had to deal directly with an anti-West Moscow, instead of the pro-West Novgorod. Furthermore, by 1480 the Mongol Empire had fractured from ongoing internal conflicts. In what would be his last attempt to gain control of the former Golden Horde's successors, Khan Ahmed, along with his Lithuanian ally, launched a campaign to invade Muscovy. Ivan III, along with his Crimean Khanate ally, mustered an army in response and met Ahmed on the banks of Ugra river in the fall of 1480. In what can be described militarily as a non-event, but one with profound historical significance, Ivan held his ground through the winter as Ahmed waited for his Lithuanian reinforcements, which never came. Knowing he could not defeat Ivan's army and left with no other option, the khan retreated into the Steppe. Muscovy was finally free of its Tartar overlords.<sup>34</sup> And, with his ongoing campaign of the "gathering of the Russian lands," by the end of his reign in 1505, Ivan III had become not only the Grand Prince of Moscow, but also the Grand Prince of all Rus, and the foundation of the Russian nation-state was laid. From this point on, all domestic and foreign policy was dictated by Moscow. It is also from this point on that Russia's view of the West and view of itself vis-à-vis the West, as well as the West's view of Russia, play a significant role in the development of Russia's special *Sonderweg* through history and foreshadow the present-day contentions between Russia and the U.S. These views are best

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<sup>33</sup> Crummey, 89-91.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 98-99.

evidenced through the early European ethnographies of Russia and through Russian chronicles and tales.

In his 2000 book titled “*A People Born to Slavery*” *Russia in Early Modern European Ethnography, 1476-1748*, Marshall Poe provides accounts and observations by Europeans of the rulers, people, and lands of Muscovy and later Russia. In the introduction, Poe quotes George F. Kennan on his personal twentieth century observations of the Soviet Union and its people. Kennan, “America’s foremost Russia expert, author of the policy of ‘containment,’ and former ambassador to the Soviet Union” stated that Soviet behavior was motivated not only by Marxist ideology but also by inherent age-old Russian habits. According to Kennan, as quoted by Poe, from the early days of Muscovy, “many things were noted by foreign observers that seem now, in retrospect, to have had a certain prophetic tinge and to have presaged the conflict of our time,” and these observations revealed that “traits were indeed becoming visible in old Muscovy that were destined to play an important part in the psychological composition of Soviet power.”<sup>35</sup> Among the traits to which Kennan was referring were Russia’s messianic view of its role in history, its intolerance for foreign ways and values, its desire to isolate the Russian people from outside contacts, its inability to comprehend ongoing peaceful and equal relationships between states and governments, and a tendency to see conflict as the norm and peace as temporary and abnormal.<sup>36</sup> These traits that Kennan referred to are revealed in the ethnographies supplied in Poe’s book. Intolerance for foreign ways and a desire to isolate its people from outside contact were two very strong traits. While Ivan III worked to consolidate the various Russian principalities into Muscovy, he realized that diplomatic and commercial relations with European powers were required to legitimize his claim both domestically and internationally as the Grand

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<sup>35</sup> Marshall T. Poe, “*A People Born to Slavery*” *Russia in Early Modern European Ethnography, 1476-1748* (New York, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 1-2.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

Prince of Moscow and all the Rus. As a result, European envoys and traders began traveling to Muscovy in the second half of the fifteenth century. In the sixteenth century, under the rule of Ivan's heirs, for the first time several of these envoys documented their experiences and observations. Through these documented accounts, the conflicts between Moscow's attempts to be a Western European commercial contender and its need to limit the exposure of its people to Western ways become clear. Muscovites were very suspicious of European envoys and the court in Moscow viewed them all as potential spies. As a result, upon arriving at the Russian border, envoys were required to state their business to the local official and wait there while the information was relayed to the tsar and instructions were sent back to the local official. Often the wait extended to long periods of time. Once approved to proceed to the interior of the country, envoys were provided with escorts who provided the provisions and guidance required to make it to Moscow. During the journey, contact and conversation with locals was prohibited and envoys were sequestered away from towns and villages. Upon arrival in Moscow, envoys were held in segregated and highly guarded apartments, causing many to complain of being treated like criminals. They were allowed to leave only for official functions and were required to have a guard with them at all times.<sup>37</sup> These early ethnographers also commented on the unrestricted authority of the tsar and were disturbed at how this authority was used to mistreat the tsar's nobility. Most disturbing to foreigners was to see Russian nobles and clergy subjected to the same corporal punishment as common people for simple infractions. One envoy in the late sixteenth century observed and documented that "for mild offenses [boyars and clergy] are stripped to the waste, led out to the street, and beaten with the knout." And even more surprisingly, Russian nobles receiving this type of degrading and physically abusive treatment seemed to welcome it. One envoy states that "[e]ven when beaten to the point of death they will

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<sup>37</sup> Poe, 41-45.

sometimes say that the prince has done them a favor by chastising them.” In this respect, the Russian nobles and officials viewed themselves as the tsar’s slaves and acted accordingly.<sup>38</sup> Based on their observations, these ethnographers developed the concept that the Muscovite (and later Russian) government was a government based on tyranny. In an attempt to explain why Muscovites accepted this government of tyranny, some envoys speculated they lived in perpetual fear, others believed the treatment was accepted due to the love they felt for their tsar, and still others believed the tsar’s subjects to be “natural slaves . . . fit for servitude” to a despotic power.<sup>39</sup> This trait of absolute subservience to the person of the tsar, as opposed to a country or nation, is one of the traits Kennan was referring to that played a critical role in the power and control the Soviet regime held over the Soviet people in the twentieth century. It is also this trait, along with the Muscovite messianic view of its role in history and Muscovy’s inability to comprehend ongoing peaceful relationships for other principalities, nations, and governments that ultimately has led to Russia’s present day position that it stands in perpetual opposition to the West and the United State. In the late fifteenth century the theory of Moscow as the New Jerusalem and Ivan III as the new Moses evolved. In his conquest of the Republic of Novgorod, Ivan was seen to have brought severe punishment and defeat to the Novgorodians for their willingness to abandon Orthodoxy for Roman Catholicism. Thus, Ivan’s defeat of Novgorod was viewed as him saving the Novgorodians from a sinful life of idolatry and heresy.<sup>40</sup> In the first quarter of the sixteenth century, this view evolved into the theory of Moscow the Third Rome. Written at a time when the tsar was expropriating land from the Orthodox Church, a letter from monk Filofei to Tsar Vasily III implores the tsar to rule wisely and to not take that

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<sup>38</sup> Poe, 68-70.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 166-167.

<sup>40</sup> Janet Martin, *Medieval Russia: 980-1584*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 288.

which was given to God. In an attempt to convey God's wisdom, Filofei informs the tsar that:

The Apollinarian heresy caused the downfall of the old Rome. The Turks used their axes to shatter the doors of all churches of the Second Rome, the city of Constantinople. Now [in Moscow], the new Third Rome, the Holy Ecumenical Apostolic Church of your sovereign state shines brighter than the sun in the universal Orthodox Christian faith throughout the world. Pious Tsar! Let [people of] your state know that all states of the Orthodox faith have now merged into one, your state. You are the only true Christian ruler under the sky!<sup>41</sup>

The letter goes on to state that “[t]wo Romes have fallen. The third stands [firm]. And there will not be a fourth. No one will replace your Christian tsardom . . .”<sup>42</sup> The message in this letter is without question. Muscovy was the last remaining true Christian realm, the Eastern Orthodox Church was the last true church, and the Tsar of All the Russia's was God's emissary on earth.

After the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, Muscovy's (and later Russia's) ability to assert its claim as the sole protector of Orthodox Christianity and to stand in perpetual opposition to the West came about as the culmination of struggles, invasions, assimilations, and conquests of and by the Rus' peoples. Through Novgorod's independence, wealth, and secular authority, Muscovy's subsequent defect of Novgorod and rise to power through the “gathering of the Russian lands,” and the legitimizing myth of Moscow the Third Rome, the Russian *Sonderweg* was firmly ensconced by the first half of the sixteenth century. The Russian tsarist regime and Eastern Orthodox Church viewed the nations of the West as being heretical and viewed Russia as the only legitimate heir to the Great Roman Empire, as well as the sole protector of the one true faith – Orthodox Christianity. Except for the westernizing efforts

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<sup>41</sup> Basil Dmytryshyn, ed., *Medieval Russia: A Source Book, 850-1700*, 4th ed. (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1999), 259-260.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

of Peter the Great in the seventeenth century and Catherine the Great in the eighteenth century, Russia's historically unique path of separation and exclusion has evolved into the current-day contentious relationship between Russia and the United States.

#### **IV. Westernizers and Slavophiles**

Changes in Russian political, intellectual, social, and economic thought emerged in the seventeenth century, which held great potential to divert Russia from its isolationist path and propel it into the upper echelons of Western civilization. However, strong internal opposing forces fought relentlessly to quash this Western movement and put Russia back on its unique path of endless exclusion. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Europe experienced tremendous advances in state and local government administration, the development of a bourgeois middle class, advances in military and civilian technologies, more fiscally efficient governmental economic methodologies, and international trade with the credit instruments needed to support its success. During this time, Russia had well established commercial relationships with Europe. However, Russia did not experience any of the benefits from these European advances as all of its resources were focused on defense against external aggressors and continual upkeep of the court, government administration, and the Russian privileged classes, including the Orthodox clergy. Simultaneously, Russia took no actions to advance the economic and intellectual positions and propositions of its people. As a result, many within the newly evolving Russian intelligentsia viewed Russia as being backward and lagging far behind the West. To correct this, these men took decisive actions to bring Western influence and advances to Russia. Emperor Peter the Great was the greatest champion of the Russian western movement in the seventeenth century, followed closely in enthusiasm by Empress Catherine the Great in the eighteenth century. However, this western movement met strong opposition by the Eastern, Greek, and Byzantine influences that had dominated Russian life since the conversion of Vladimir the Great to Christianity in 988 A.D. As a result, the Russian intelligentsia split into two opposing groups that later in the eighteenth century came



to be known as the Slavophiles and the Westernizers.<sup>43</sup> Ultimately, regardless of the Western advances made in Russia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the Slavophiles were successful in their fight to derail the Westernizer's efforts and right Russia on its unique path to endless exclusion.

By the late eighteenth century, the Westernizing reforms implemented by Peter the Great earlier in the century began to bear fruit. In 1697 Peter undertook his Grand Embassy to Europe, traveling incognito to avoid the distractions that would come from knowledge of the presence of the Russian Tsar. He had several goals for his trip, one of which was to ascertain the extent to which Russia was different and lagging behind the countries of the West. He was the first Russian tsar to travel outside of Muscovite lands in a time of peace.<sup>44</sup> As a result of the knowledge gained by Peter and his entourage, he proceeded to transform the young Muscovite nation-state into a vast Russian Empire. He provided his empire with a common Russian alphabet and language, from which Russian literature was born.<sup>45</sup> He implemented the Julian calendar on January 1, 1700, bringing Russia out of its ancient past into the enlightened present. Furthermore, he implemented a table of ranks that allowed commoners to advance to the status of hereditary nobility through service to the state. In foreign affairs, Peter built a formidable navy much to the chagrin of Britain. More importantly, he elevated Russia to a world power on par with France, Spain, and Britain.<sup>46</sup> In the last half of the eighteenth century, Catherine the Great took up the banner of westernization with her own reforms. She had many examples of successful institutions within Central Europe from which to take her lead. Her efforts focused on the reorganization of local administration with the establishment of local and estate (class) level

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<sup>43</sup> V. O. Kliuchevsky, *A Course in Russian History: The Seventeenth Century*, trans. Natalie Duddington (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1968), 277-279.

<sup>44</sup> Lindsey Hughes, *Peter the Great: A Biography* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 40-41.

<sup>45</sup> Vera Tolz, *Inventing the Nation: Russia* (London, England: Hodder Education, 2001), 46-47.

<sup>46</sup> Hughes, 59, 139, 165-166.

courts, as well as boards of social welfare responsible for the establishment of well kept hospitals, almshouses, and workhouses. Her reforms further provided for local medical services, including the requirement for a physician, surgeon, medical assistants, and an apothecary in each province and district. Catherine's education reforms also provided new foundling homes and schools for children throughout the empire, especially young girls, regardless of their social class.<sup>47</sup>

At the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, Westernizers within the Russian intelligentsia worked diligently to continue the western advancements initiated by Peter and Catherine. They believed Russia's path to modernity lay in the adoption of European models of government, as well as administrative, social, and educational institutions. Perhaps the most important member of the Westernizers was Petr Iakovlevich Chaadaev. In 1836 the first of his Philosophical Letters was published, which lit the fire of the Westernizer-Slavophile debate that continues to hold significant implications for the current contentious relationship between Russia and the U.S. Upon the publication of this letter, Alexander Herzen (a contemporary of Chaadaev's and fellow Westernizers) declared it had the "effect of a pistol shot in the dead of the night."<sup>48</sup> In this letter, Chaadaev gave his critical examination of the Russian civilization when he said:

It is one of the most deplorable traits of our peculiar civilization that we are still discovering truths which other peoples, even some much less advanced than we, have taken for granted. The reason is that we have never marched with the other peoples. We do not belong to any of the great families of the human race; we are neither of the West nor of the East, and we have not the traditions of either. Placed, as it were, outside of

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<sup>47</sup> Isabel De Madariaga, *Catherine the Great: A Short History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 67-68, 70, 77-78, 105-107.

<sup>48</sup> Marc Raeff, *Russian Intellectual History: an Anthology* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1966), 159.

time, we have not been touched by the universal education of the human race.<sup>49</sup>

Chaadaev further declared that the essence of European physiology that evolved from the ideas of “duty, justice, right, and order,” which he refers to as the “syllogism of the West” and results in the movement of the human mind, was completely lacking in Russian society.<sup>50</sup> With this letter, Chaadaev provides a clear description of the Russian *Sonderweg* that had, to that point in time, stunted Russia’s evolution and restricted its inclusion in Western civilization. Alexander Herzen also recognized the damage inflicted on the Russian intellect by Russia’s unique path through history. As an ardent advocate of individual liberty, in his 1847-1850 collection of political essays titled *From the Other Shore* (published in English in 1956), Herzen declared:

The masses want to stay the hand which impudently snatches from them the bread which they have earned [ . . . ] They are indifferent to individual freedom, liberty of speech; the masses love authority. They are still blinded by the arrogant glitter of power, they are offended by those who stand alone. By equality they understand equal oppression [ . . . ] they want a social government to rule for their benefit, and not, like the present one, against it. But to govern themselves doesn’t enter their heads.<sup>51</sup>

In what an outsider might have viewed as a character of complacency, Herzen argued was a Russian intellect that had been “blinded” by its deliberately chosen unique path through history. And as a result, the concepts of individual liberty and self-government – concepts that were becoming the mainstay of Western civilization – were incomprehensible to the Russian intellect.

Unfortunately, with all the intellect and varying liberal ideologies possessed by the Westernizers, conflicts between the ideologies of the older, more right-wing members and the

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<sup>49</sup> Raeff, 162.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>51</sup> Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, ed. Henry Hardy and Aileen Kelly (New York, NY: Penguin Classics, 2008), 100.

younger, more radically left members created cracks in the foundation of the movement that could not be healed. In Nikolay Dobrolyubov and the other young radicals harshly criticized the older conservative liberals, like Ivan Turgenev, for their lack of conviction and impotency in effecting real change for the Russian people. In 1860, when Turgenev's novel *On the Eve* was published in the radical journal *Contemporary*, Dobrolyubov, the journal's editor, provided his review and harsh criticisms of Russian conservative liberals and their inescapable connection to their history and the Russian tsardom. In describing Dobrolyubov's feelings toward this group of inept intellectuals, Isaiah Berlin states that Dobrolyubov was of the mindset that:

There must be no waste of energy on piecemeal denunciations, on the rescue of individuals from cruelty or injustice [like Herzen and Ogarev safely proclaim from London]. This is mere liberal fiddling, escape from the radical task. There is nothing common between 'us' and 'them'. 'They', and Turgenev with them, seek reform, accommodation. 'We' want destruction, revolution, new foundations of life; nothing else will destroy the reign of darkness.<sup>52</sup>

Yes, it was the "us vs. them" mentality that began in the twelfth century and drove the Rus' to intra-dynastic conflicts and challenges that once again in the nineteenth century drove Russian Westernizers to the internal conflicts that created the cracks in the movement's foundation, which ultimately allowed the Slavophiles to derail the movement and right Russia on its unique path of endless exclusion.

The seventeenth century reforms of Peter the Great were built on a foundation of autocracy and serfdom, institutions that were quickly disappearing in European countries by the end of the eighteenth century – countries that Russia looked to as model Western polities. At a time when Russia was on the cusp of becoming a full member of Western civilization, these two

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<sup>52</sup> Berlin, 313-314.

institutions succinctly represented that which was profoundly different between Russia and the West. As a result, men within the newly forming Russian intelligentsia began to question whether following Western models was beneficial or harmful to Russia. These men who felt Russia should embrace its old traditions and culture, which lay at the heart of its unique path through history, were referred to as Slavophiles. They glorified the commune, peasant life, and Russia's innocent backwardness. They also viewed Orthodoxy as the heart and soul of the Russian people. Their beliefs are best exemplified in the nineteenth-century motto "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality." Their argument for the rejection of Western ideologies was that they were founded on "logical analysis, individual particularism, [and] the atomization of society." The Slavophiles saw these traits not as virtues but as destructive vices, completely devoid of spirituality, and which ultimately lead to the complete collapse of a society or culture.<sup>53</sup> Among the Slavophiles, perhaps the most literary and the leading spokesman for the movement was Ivan Vasilevich Kireevski. In his 1852 article for the periodical *Moscow Collection*, written in the form of a letter to Count E. E. Komarovskii, Kireevski outlined the nature of European culture and its relation to Russian culture, addressing the problem with basing a society's ideologies upon philosophy, which is spiritually devoid. In the letter, Kireevski states the original belief was that the difference between European and Russian culture was just a matter of temporal evolution; not a difference in kind or nature. However, in the second half of the nineteenth century, many within Western societies had become disillusioned and dissatisfied with lives they felt were empty and completely lacking in a higher meaning and purpose.<sup>54</sup> For Kireevski and the other Slavophiles, the Russian civilization was not lacking these vital components. It was the one true civilization from which Europe had been diverted by

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<sup>53</sup> Raeff, 174.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 176-177.

cold philosophy. And, in true Slavophile manner, in his letter Kireevski outlines the three historical circumstances that allowed European civilization to be diverted from the true path upon which the Russian civilization had remained. The first circumstance was the split from the Universal Church (the Orthodox Church) and the creation of the Roman Catholic Church, the second was a civilization built solely on an ancient Roman pagan foundation with no ancient Greek influence, and the third was the creation of nation-states through conquest as opposed to through organic means.<sup>55</sup> In other words, with this statement Kireevski indirectly emphasized the three elements of Russian civilization that Slavophiles viewed as being original, universal, and truly unique in the nineteenth century – Orthodoxy (the one true Christian faith), Autocracy (by divine grace), and Nationality (grown organically). However, while Kireevski may have been satisfied with providing the history of why Russian and European civilizations were different, other Slavophiles, like Aleksei Khomiakov were more concerned about the future direction and purpose of the Russian civilization. It is true that like Kireevski, Khomiakov and the other Slavophiles like him felt that it was critical for Russia to shun Western ideologies and embrace its unique traditional communal and peasant lifestyle. However, more importantly, Khomiakov and his followers believed that through Russian institutions like the commune and ideologies founded upon the Orthodox faith and conciliarity, Russia would fulfill its higher purpose, which was to save Western civilization from the destructive path upon which it had been set by its cold, individualistic, and Godless institutions and ideologies. Khomiakov declared this sentiment in his 1849 essay addressing Wilhelm van Humboldt's discourse on the destiny of the human race. In commenting on how neither Roman Catholicism nor Protestantism could provide the cure for all that ailed Western civilization, and that a cure could only come from a truly spiritual foundation, Khomiakov argued that:

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<sup>55</sup> Raeff, 181-183.

That is Orthodoxy. Any other concept of Christianity is henceforth impossible.

Orthodoxy is represented by the East, and mainly the Slavic countries, headed by our Russia, which long ago, with God's blessing, embraced pure Christianity and became a strong vessel thereof, perhaps because of that *communal principle* [my italics] which has ever been its mainstay and without which it cannot live. Russia has passed through great trials, defending its social and traditional principles in long and bloody struggles . . . and having first secured these principles for itself, it must now be their exponent before the whole world. This is its mission, its future destiny.<sup>56</sup>

Khomiakov reiterated his belief in the concluding sentence of the essay when he stated that “[h]istory calls upon Russia to take the lead in universal enlightenment; it gives Russia this right because of the comprehensiveness and completeness of Russian principles . . .”<sup>57</sup> Such was the belief of the Slavophiles at the end of the nineteenth century that the mission and method to save Western civilization from self-destruction was the sole right and responsibility of Russia through the dissemination within the West of traditional Russian Orthodoxy and communal institutions and ideologies. However, of a more immediate and domestic concern, this belief clearly emphasized the inefficacy and fallacy of the entire Russian Westernizing movement, regardless of the ideologies of its older right-wing or its younger radical left-wing, as well as the need for Russia to return to its traditional roots so it could avoid its own destruction. Thus, this ideology, along with the internal “us vs. them” conflicts within the Westernizers' movement, allowed the Slavophiles to successfully derail the Westernizing efforts of the late eighteenth century. It was also this ideology that in the twentieth century led to the Russian Revolution and the Cold War. Of a more contemporary concern, it is this long held view of “us vs. them” and the belief that

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<sup>56</sup> Raeff, 215.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 229.

Russia stands apart from and is inherently separate from the West that perpetuates its endless exclusion from Western civilization and continues to feed the flame of the current contentious relationship between Russia and the U.S.



## V. The Congress of Berlin, World War & Revolution, and the Cold War

In the last quarter of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, while the ongoing internal “us vs. them” battle strengthened Russia’s unique path through history, the external “us vs. them” battle that waged in its foreign affairs also successfully accomplished the same result. During this time there were several key events that had profound, long term implications for Russia’s separatist, anti-West position and for the West’s anti-Russia (anti-Soviet) position that dominated the world over the next seventy years and that culminated in perhaps the most unexpected and shocking event of the twentieth century. These are the defining, historic events of the late modern era that politically formalized Russia’s *Sonderweg* and fueled (and continues to fuel) the contentious relationship between Russia and the U.S. They were the Congress of Berlin, World War I, the Russian Revolution, World War II, the Cold War, and their culminating event of the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late twentieth century.

Organized by the Great Powers to address the wars resulting from the nationalistic revolts and uprisings of Bulgaria, Serbia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina against the Ottoman Empire in 1875-1878, and the resulting Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878, the 1878 Congress of Berlin resulted in the Treaty of Berlin – an anti-Russian (anti-Slavic) treaty that redrew the boundaries of the Balkan Peninsula and attempted to restore stability (so the Western powers thought) to the region.<sup>58</sup> One important goal of the treaty was to curtail Russia’s intervention and advances in the region, as the Western powers had developed serious concerns about Russia’s interventionist and expansionist policies that had evolved in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. Twenty-two years earlier, the Treaty of Paris of 1856, which settled the Crimean War between Russia and the alliance of the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain, France, and Sardinia, was a tremendous

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<sup>58</sup> Constantin Theodor Dumba, “Why Austria Is a War with Russia,” *The North American Review* 200, no. 706 (Sep., 1914): 347, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25108247>>.

setback for Russia. Besides losing territory and influence, Russia lost the right to its claim as the sole protector of Christians within the Ottoman Empire – a right it had obtained in the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji, which settled the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774. This was devastating and extremely degrading for Russia because since the Council of Florence in 1439 and the subsequent fall of Constantinople in 1453 it had believed and operated internationally as the one and only true Christian State responsible for the safety and welfare of all true Christians everywhere. In compensation to Russia, the Treaty of 1856 required the Ottoman Empire to provide religious freedom and equality for Christians within the Empire. However, due to internal turmoil within the Ottoman Empire, this did not occur. The result was numerous revolts and uprisings in 1875-1878 by the Orthodox Christians in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and Serbia against their Ottoman oppressors. In defense of their fellow Slavs and Orthodox Christians, Russia went against the Treaty of 1856 and declared war on the Ottoman Empire in 1877. Therefore, with a goal of curtailing Russia's interventionist policy, logic would have dictated that in 1878 the Treaty of Berlin should have provided for harsh sanctions and penalties to any signatory that violated the terms of the agreement. However, England and Austria-Hungary at the time were also concerned with their own agendas in the realm of intervention and expansion. Therefore, instead of penalties for intervention, the treaty provided the means by which any nation or group of nations could intervene in the internal affairs of any other sovereign nation based on religious grounds.<sup>59</sup> The treaty's consequences for Russia and the West manifested from the very beginning with the implementation of the provision that required the transfer of administrative control and occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the dual

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<sup>59</sup> "The Congress of Berlin and Its Consequence," *The North American Review* 127, no. 265 (Nov. – Dec., 1878): 394, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25100692>>.

monarchy of Austria-Hungary.<sup>60</sup> While it has been argued that this provision directly led to the event believed to have sparked World War I, which was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife by a Bosnian Serb, it is important to also understand that this provision was a critical geopolitical game changer between Russia and the West from this point on throughout the entire twentieth century. Among the many consequences, the Balkan Wars (1912 and 1913) resulted from this provision, and as previously mentioned, the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in 1914. But more importantly, because of this provision and its consequences, Russia lost its foot-hold in the Balkans. Not only lost was the dream of uniting the Balkan Slavs and bringing them under a Russian hegemony, but after World War II the countries that made up the former Kingdom of Yugoslavia were reconstituted into a U.S. backed, anti-Russia, anti-Soviet buffer state in the form of the Republic of Yugoslavia.<sup>61</sup>

Russia had long held designs on uniting all the Slavic peoples in the Balkans and part of the plan included the creation of a Greater Serbia that would encompass all the territories inhabited by Serbs outside of Serbia proper, including Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the Western powers feared that a larger, stronger Serbia, backed by an alliance with Russia, along with a Greater Bulgaria that was proposed by the earlier treaty between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, would result in dangerous political and economical consequences for the West. The Treaty of Berlin was meant to mitigate the threat from Russia and undermine the pan-Slavic movement in the Balkans. The required administrative control and occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary guaranteed a strong foot-hold in the Balkans for the Western powers. In response, Russia intensified its efforts to gain its own foot-hold in the region through

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<sup>60</sup> Dumba, 347.

<sup>61</sup> Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 24-25.

support of Serbian nationalism. At first it offered scholarships for Serbian students to attend Russian universities and provided education and training for Serbian military officers at Russian military schools. However, after the assassination of Serbian King Alexander and his wife in 1903, Russian propaganda and influence in Serbia took on a much greater authoritative tone. Russian agitation increased, resulting in a subsequent increase of Serbian actions to unite Balkan Slavs in Macedonia. After the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary in 1908, Serbian actions (by means of Russian agitation) intensified against the dual monarchy, which were nothing less than revolutionary in nature. Russia's violent opposition to the Austro-Hungarian government also became more direct. The Russian press launched a series of verbal attacks on Austria-Hungary, and it was eventually determined by an Austrian court that a member of the Russian Duma had led a group of agitators in treasonous efforts to motivate anti-Austrian sentiments among those who Russia referred to as its "lost children."<sup>62</sup>

The ultimate outcome of the Treaty of Berlin was a settlement completely pro-Western and anti-Russian in nature. The resulting resentment by Russia for the West and the distrust by the West for Russia continued to grow through the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and ultimately helped create the Cold War. However, of a more immediate nature, the treaty's alienation of Russia by the Western powers also intensified the conflicts within the Russian intelligentsia between the Westernizers and the Slavophiles, which culminated in the Russian Revolution of October 1917.

Long before Russia's entry into World War I, it found itself contemplating a difficult question. Russia believed that Germany had long held aspirations to acquire the Russian Empire, dismantle it, and assimilate the pieces into the German Empire. For this reason, war with Germany was viewed as inevitable. The question for Russia was should it undertake its

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<sup>62</sup> Dumba, 348-350.

unavoidable war with Germany on its own and at an unknown time or honor its alliances in the Balkans and take on Germany with the help of England and France. For Russia, the decision was not difficult; it would fight its inevitable war as part of the larger conflict between Germany and the Western democracies.<sup>63</sup> However, Russia's decision and subsequent actions in World War I after the Bolshevik revolution of October 1917 and afterward under its new Soviet regime through the end of World War II only hastened to widen the political and ideological gap between Russia and the West. This further strengthened Russia's special path of separation and isolation.

World War I was a pivotal event in Russian history. Russia's entry into the war and the chain of events that followed ultimately solidified the separatist and isolationist path it had been on since the fifteenth century. In addition, these events and their consequences succinctly represent the irreversible damage that can be inflicted internationally and domestically by the never ending battle of "us vs. them." On the domestic front, in 1914 there were but a few Russian bureaucrats who understood the destructive consequences for Russia should it enter the war in its current state of internal political turmoil. In February 1914, a former director of the police department accurately informed Tsar Nicholas II that if Russia entered the war and it went poorly "a social revolution in its most extreme form will be unavoidable in Russia."<sup>64</sup> At the time, the late nineteenth century intellectual debates and differences between the Westernizers and Slavophiles had evolved into an all out struggle against the tsarist regime. Under Nicholas II, the regime continued to rule Russia according to the traditional philosophy of patrimony, where all of Russia, including its people, belonged to the tsar and it was his sole responsibility to decide what was best for the welfare of his people. The intelligentsia was still split but now

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<sup>63</sup> Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1990), 196.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

along the lines of liberals and radicals, both calling for drastic political, economical, and social changes. However, regardless on Russia's mounting internal problems, it chose to aide its Balkan allies when Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia in July 1914. Russia's quick action at the end of July to mobilize its troops in support of Serbia led Germany to declare war on Russia and Russia immediately reciprocated. Within days the entire European theatre was at war. As a result, Russia's internal problems began to escalate at an even faster pace. While Russia may have been able to handle a short war, it was neither politically nor economically prepared to handle a protracted war that would take years to resolve. Furthermore, Russia's military reserve system had left it ill prepared for the trained personnel needed for a long, drawn-out war. By 1916, the only resources Russia had left to field its army were peasants who held no sense of nationality. They did not view themselves as Russians but as members of their local province, which was not at war. As a result of this complete lack of nationalism, during the war Russia experienced an extraordinarily large number of soldiers that either surrendered or deserted.<sup>65</sup> Economically, by the fall of 1916 strikingly high inflation and constant food and fuel shortages in the cities had produced wide spread hunger, mounting dissatisfaction, and discontent among the urban population. Factory workers resorted to strikes, and resentment of the peasants was rapidly rising among the urban population because it felt the peasants were hoarding food stuffs and profiting from the outrageously high prices. As a result, what was previously a purely economical problem in the cities transformed into a dangerous and volatile political problem as dissent continued to grow and take on a more revolutionary tone directed not only at local authorities but also toward Tsar Nicholas and his wife. Discontent with Nicholas' leadership and overwhelming concern with the current volatile situation in the cities also reached the generals and upper levels of the bureaucracy. Virtually all parties within Russia, including the

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<sup>65</sup> Pipes, 200-203.

monarchists, found common cause against Nicholas and Alexandra.<sup>66</sup> Ultimately, this internal battle of “us vs. them” led to the February 1917 revolution, the establishment of the provisional government, and the March abdication of Tsar Nicholas II. At this point, Russia had the opportunity to diverge from its special path and choose a new path for the future. The “us vs. them” battle had been settled, and a new provisional government had been established. However, just as one “them” had been defeated, another “them” took its place. This new internal “us vs. them” battle culminated in the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 and resulted in the defeat of the provisional government and the establishment of the new communist nation of the Soviet Union. Russia’s internal battles were over for a while (except for the civil war that followed), but the new Soviet Union and its anti-West government provided the ideology and will for a protracted external “us vs. them” battle that lasted for the next seventy years.

The Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917 created much concern for the West. The U.S. had entered the war in spring 1917 with a declaration of war against Germany. After the October revolution, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson and the Allies were concerned about the new communist regime and its anti-capitalist ideology. However, more immediately, they were extremely concerned with keeping Russia in the war, and President Wilson used the only tool available to deal with a problematic ally during a time of war: diplomacy. Wilson praised the new Soviet regime for its desire for peace and declared that the U.S. would help the Russian people achieve it. In addition, in his Fourteen Points address to Congress in January 1918, point six provided Russia with a post-war settlement that allowed it national sovereignty and self-determination. However, Wilson’s efforts failed, and in March 1918 Russia signed a separate peace agreement with Germany in the form of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, thus ending Russia’s involvement in World War I. Peace came at a very high price for Russia as it conceded to

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<sup>66</sup> Pipes, 242-246.

Germany over one million square miles of territory and one-third of its population. The fall out was also extremely devastating for the Allies. By exiting the war, Russia gave Germany the ability to move forty German divisions from the Eastern to the Western Front. By May 1918, the Allies had been pushed back to only fifty miles from Paris.<sup>67</sup> The U.S. and the West saw Russia's actions as nothing less than betrayal of its allies, as well as capitulation and collusion with the enemy, all for the sake of its own agenda. Thus, in the end, Russia's external battle of "us vs. them" turned out to be a battle with its allies, and Russia chose "us" instead of "them." This decision irreversibly damaged Russia's relationship with the U.S. and the West as they would no longer trust Russia and its actions. However, Russia's external battle of "us vs. them" with the U.S. and its Western Allies was not over.

Russia's actions in World War II turned allies into enemies and provided fuel for the Cold War that raged until the end of the twentieth century. And once again, Russia's relentless need to define "us" vs. "them" guaranteed it would remain on its separatist and isolationist path for the duration of the war and long afterward. In August 1939, the Soviet Union and Germany signed a nonaggression pact that provided for ten years of non-aggression against each other and neutrality should either one become involved in a war with another country.<sup>68</sup> This action shocked the U.S. and the West, as the Soviet Union (Russia) had committed the same act of betrayal that it had in World War I, except this time it did it before the war started. The Soviet Union further shocked the U.S. and the West when later the same year it invaded Finland, securing its surrender in March 1940, and its subsequent hostile takeover of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.<sup>69</sup> However, these acts of betrayal by the Soviet Union were merely a prelude to what

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<sup>67</sup> Howard Jones, *Crucible of Power: A History of American Foreign Relations from 1897* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), 93, 95.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.



would come after the end of the war. The two winning allies of World War II (the Soviet Union in Europe and the U.S. in Japan) represented polarized ideologies in politics, economics, and culture. The agreements for the new post-war world order dangerously divided the world into these two spheres of influence. The betrayal felt by the U.S. for Russia that had been evolving since the World War I had exploded into full blown distrust and suspicion of the Soviet Union. This was exacerbated by the Soviet Union's anti-capitalist, anti-free election, pro-totalitarian ideologies. Russia's fear of an atomically armed U.S. exploded into full blown distrust and suspicion of the U.S. and the West. This was exacerbated by the U.S. establishment of the North American Treaty Organization in 1949, which the Soviet Union viewed as an organization aimed at the destruction of the Soviet Union. Eventually the Soviet Union countered NATO with the Warsaw Pact in 1955. The Cold War of the twentieth century was in full force. However, the Soviet Union's relentless need to engage in an external "us vs. them" battle with the U.S. manifested in another destructive manner.

The "non-war" between the Soviet Union and the U.S. was fought by proxy communist and democratic (more accurately stated as non-communist) nations around the world. Among the resulting conflicts were the resumption of the Chinese Civil War (1946-1950), the Korean War (1950-1953), and a coup d'état in Iran (1953).<sup>70</sup> These wars and conflicts, initiated and/or supported by these two powerful foes, resulted in countless deaths and destruction for the countries and peoples involved. Ironically, with the proliferation of nuclear weapons by both adversaries during the Cold War, the only thing that kept the Soviet Union and the U.S. from directly engaging each other in hostilities was the concept of mutually assured destruction by each other's massive nuclear arsenal.<sup>71</sup> It was only this horrifying knowledge of complete

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<sup>70</sup> Jones, 278-283, 283-289, 307.

<sup>71</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 128-130.

destruction of all life that brought the Soviet Union and the U.S. back from the brink of nuclear war during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. However, they came very close. On October 22, 1962, President Kennedy addressed the American people to inform them of the grave situation of Soviet missiles in Cuba aimed at the U.S. Two days later on October 24<sup>th</sup>, the almost two hundred ships sent to the Caribbean by the U.S. formed a blockade, seven thousand additional marines were sent to Guantanamo Bay, and the U.S. launched hundreds of B-52s armed with nuclear bombs. Two Soviet ships, along with a submarine, were headed for the blockade. Fortunately, the ships stopped just short of the blockade.<sup>72</sup> While these two superpowers realized they could not risk nuclear war by direct hostilities between each other, as the Cuban Missile Crisis subsided, the Soviet Union continued its external battle of “us vs. them” with the U.S. through alternant means. Primarily, the U.S. battled the Soviet Union through a proxy war with Vietnam in 1955-1975. In turn, the Soviet Union battled the U.S. through a proxy war with Afghanistan in 1979-1989. These conflicts, hostilities, and wars of the twentieth century only further strengthened Russia’s external battles of “us vs. them” and guaranteed Russia’s continued anti-U.S.–anti-West trek and its special path of isolation and exclusion from Western civilization. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia had a rare opportunity to alter its historic *Sonderweg*, mend its contentious relationship with the U.S., and finally become a member of Western civilization.

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<sup>72</sup> Jones, 359-361.

## VI. The Legacy Effect in 21st Century Russian-U.S. Relations

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s and the arrival of a bright, new century, Russia has an historic opportunity to change (reset) its special path into the twenty-first century. Russia, together with the U.S. (and the West), can fill the unwritten pages of twenty-first-century history with countless stories of friendship, cooperation, acceptance, trust, mutual aid and protection for less fortunate peoples, and the creation of a new global civilization founded on respect and inclusion, regardless of individual differences. In essence, in the twenty-first century Russia and the U.S. have the unprecedented opportunity to leave the past behind and to create a new era in history that in some small way might act as a counter to the death, despair and destruction caused by their past cold and combative relationship. In the twenty-first century, the legacy of Russia's separatist and anti-other *Sonderweg* has affected considerable inertia on the Russian people and government. Mutual trust, cooperation with outsiders, and openness are virtually unknown concepts to Russia throughout its historical path. Russia will need to drastically change how it views itself and the outside world if it wants to become a partner in and a positive influence on the new global community. However, this will not be easy. Russia is currently in the throes of a post-Soviet identity crisis that has been ongoing for over twenty years, and there is no indication it will soon end. One critical issue for Russia in creating its new identity is directly related to its historical need to distinguish its "us" vs. the other's "them." For not only does a people's identity define who they are, but it also defines who they are not. Without both components being fully defined, a clear identity cannot be formed. Samuel P. Huntington, in his 1996 book titled *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, provides a most accurate quote that best sums up the need to define both sides of a people's identity:

There can be no true friends without true enemies. Unless we hate what we are not, we cannot love what we are. These are the old truths we are painfully rediscovering after a century and more of sentimental cant. Those who deny them deny their family, their heritage, their culture, their birthright, their very selves! They will not lightly be forgiven.<sup>73</sup>

In the past, Russia's definition of who it was not was formed by all those things it identified with the U.S. and the West: capitalism, materialism, excess, decadence, and selfish individualism. Thus far in the twenty-first century, Russia has not successfully created a new definition of who it is not. As a result, it continues to compare itself to what it has always known in the past as "them" – the U.S. and the West – in order to define who it is not. Domestically, this creates a problem for the Russia people in that they cannot successfully define who they are without simultaneously defining who they are not. Internationally, this creates a problem for Russia and the U.S. as it does not provide a path forward upon which to travel to mend their strained relationship. These challenges are the result of the Russian *Sonderweg* legacy effect and are evidenced in recent popular and scholarly articles, as well as troubling current events involving these two world-leading polities.

In the arena of foreign policy, in a 2001 *Washington Quarterly* article, the then Russian Federation Minister of Foreign Affairs, Igor Ivanov, commented on Russia's task of redefining its foreign policy. While he stated that the Russian Federation had broken with the Soviet Union's foreign policy ideology, he admitted the truth in Russian President Vladimir Putin's declaration that the foreign policy of any state bears the "imprint of continuity determined by the country's

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<sup>73</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 1996), 20.

geopolitics, history, and culture.”<sup>74</sup> Twelve years later, one area where this continuity is proliferating the old Russian “us vs. them” mentality is in Russia’s foreign policy regarding the Middle East and Asia and how it relates to U.S. foreign policy in the same regions.

In the Middle East, one ongoing area of dangerous contention between Russia and the U.S. is Iran and its nuclear program. For the last ten years, Russia and the U.S. have been on opposite sides regarding Iran’s controversial nuclear program. The U.S. is staunchly against a nuclear Iran while Russia has supported Iran’s efforts for decades, including providing nuclear experts and other resources needed to advance the program. Furthermore, with Iran’s public threats to attack Israel if it launches a preemptive attack on Iranian targets, tensions in the region continue to mount. U.N. led sanctions have had little but no real success at deterring Iran from continuing its work on uranium enrichment. In a 2012 public interview, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated time was running out for the sanctions to produce tangible results. As a result, the U.S. has been working diligently over the last year to head off any chance of an Israeli preemptive strike. However, as recent as April 6, 2013, nuclear talks between Iran and the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council (United States, Russia, China, United Kingdom, France) plus Germany broke down and were halted. The goal of the talks was to reach an agreement on how to reduce fears that Iran’s nuclear program would be used to create weapons of mass destruction. Iran has always denied allegations of having nuclear weapons aspirations and claims the U.N. Security Council’s demands that it stop work on its plutonium production reactor and that it discontinue its uranium enrichment efforts are illegal.

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<sup>74</sup> Igor Ivanov, “The New Russian Identity: Innovation and Continuity in Russian Foreign Policy,” *Washington Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (June 1, 2001), 7, American Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies, EBSCOhost <<http://libproxy.wustl.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sbh&AN=28651&site=ehost-live&scope=site>>.

Furthermore, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov stated his government “considers that it’s necessary to recognize all rights of Iran, including enrichment.”<sup>75</sup> To add to the tension, in a press interview discussing the focus of the talks, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry stated that the nuclear talks with Iran are not unlimited and cannot become an instrument for delay that in the end would make the situation more dangerous. Therefore, there is a finite amount of time for the talks.<sup>76</sup> However, the P5 nations are split on how to proceed. Russia and China have opposed economic sanctions in the past and will likely do the same for any newly proposed sanctions. In anticipation of Russia’s and China’s position, the U.S. and Europe have indicated they are willing to undertake new sanctions without the backing of the United Nations. Subsequently, in a sign of defiance against the West, three days after the talks were halted, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced an expansion in Iran’s uranium production and proclaimed other atomic energy advances.<sup>77</sup> Without an agreement that is acceptable to all parties, especially Israel, the tension will continue to grow and could lead to war in the Middle East. The scale of such a war is frightening to consider. However, there is a situation of a more immediate nature that Russia and the U.S. must address: North Korea.

Aggressive moves by North Korea, a new player in the nuclear weapons arena, have resulted in increased tensions in Asia and the Korean Peninsula between Russia and the U.S. If Russia and the U.S. do not work together to defuse this volatile situation, escalating tension in the region could lead to war, with the possibility of it becoming nuclear. While Russia and the U.S. agree on the fundamental goal of keeping North Korea from becoming a nuclear power,

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<sup>75</sup> George Jahn, “Iran Nuclear Talks Have Failed, Says EU Foreign Policy Chief,” *The Huffington Post*, April 6, 2013, <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/06/iran-nuclear-talks-have-failed-eu\\_n\\_3028274.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/06/iran-nuclear-talks-have-failed-eu_n_3028274.html)> .

<sup>76</sup> John Kerry, “‘Finite’ Time For Iran Nuclear Talks – Kerry,” Video, *The Huffington Post*, <[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/06/iran-nuclear-talks-have-failed-eu\\_n\\_3028274.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/06/iran-nuclear-talks-have-failed-eu_n_3028274.html)>.

<sup>77</sup> David M. Herszenhorn and Rick Gladstone, “After Talks End, Iran Announces an Expansion of Nuclear Fuel Production,” *The New York Times*, April 9, 2013, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/10/world/middleeast/iran-expands-nuclear-fuel-production-after-talks.html>> .

they disagree on the approach to accomplishing this goal. This disagreement could lead to escalated tensions between the two world-leading nations that have the collective ability to contain the situation. In recent weeks, North Korea has been threatening nuclear attacks against South Korea and the U.S. following U.N. sanctions imposed as a result of its third nuclear test explosion in February 2013. In a recent interview, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated Russia agrees with the U.S. on its position on North Korea but warned the U.S. against any military maneuvers near the Korean Peninsula in an attempt to intimidate North Korea.<sup>78</sup> However, in spite of Lavrov's warning, on April 12, 2013 in Seoul, South Korea, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry warned North Korea that it would be a "huge mistake" to conduct a test launch of a medium-range missile and that the U.S. would not allow it to become a nuclear power. He further made it clear that the U.S. would defend its allies in the region and that the North Korean leader should understand what the outcome would be from such a conflict.<sup>79</sup> If North Korea attacks South Korea and possibly the U.S., the U.S. will be forced to retaliate, which will put tremendous downward pressure on Russia to react because of the immediate proximity to the North Korean eastern border of the Russian province Primorsky Krai and its capital city of Vladivostok. Thus, escalation of any conflict in the region could result not only in war on the Korean Peninsula but possibly a war fought directly between the U.S. and Russia. One would think these two great powers would not resort to direct war after avoiding it in the twentieth century. However, it is not impossibility for the "reset" of the Russia-U.S. relationship in the twenty-first century has thus far failed to fulfill the lofty expectations of politicians and statesmen.

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<sup>78</sup> "Russia agrees with US on N. Korea, but warns against military drills." RT.com, April 10, 2013, <<http://rt.com/politics/russia-military-korea-us-636/>>.

<sup>79</sup> Arshad Mohammed and Jack Kim, "U.S. tells North Korea new missile launch would be 'huge mistake,'" Reuters.com, April 12, 2013, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/04/12/us-korea-north-idUSBRE93408020130412>>.

The legacy of distrust between Russia and the U.S. was front and center in 2012 in Russia's U.S. foreign policy. Their already strained relationship experienced some very real and potentially dangerous challenges in 2012. As a result, the "reset" of Russian-U.S. relations has stalled and even experienced setbacks. The main point of contention is the U.S. Aegis Missile Defense System planned for deployment in Eastern Europe and Turkey. The U.S. claims the system is being deployed in defense only of missile launches by fanatical governments or rouge factions. Russia argues that the U.S. has aimed its "defense" missiles at Russian targets with the intent to use them offensively. To ease its concerns, Russia has requested to actively participate in the U.S. project and for the U.S. to sign an agreement stating it would not use the AMD system against Russia in any capacity, which to both requests the U.S. has refused. At a press conference in Brussels in April 2012, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated Russia needs an agreement that is legally binding and not just political promises and vague clauses in previously signed Russia-NATO agreements. Invoking the words of former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, Lavrov stated that while words are important, "trust but verify" was prudent action for Russia in this situation.<sup>80</sup> This statement came less than a month after 2012 U.S. Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney told CNN's Wolf Blitzer that Russia was "without question, our number one geopolitical foe. They - they fight every cause for the world's worst actors."<sup>81</sup> Romney's comment was in response to an unintentionally overheard comment President Obama made to Russian President Dmitri Medvedev about having more flexibility on controversial issues, like the Aegis AMD issue, after he was re-elected in the fall of 2012. From these exchanges, it is clear that the high hopes of a Russia-U.S. relationship "reset" are fading.

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<sup>80</sup> "Russia and AMD: Words not enough," RT.com, April 19, 2012, < <http://rt.com/politics/nato-lavrov-nuclear-defense-460/>>.

<sup>81</sup> Mitt Romney, interview by Wolf Blitzer, The Situation Room with Wolf Blitzer, CNN, March 26, 2012, <<http://cnnpressroom.blogs.cnn.com/2012/03/26/romney-russia-is-our-number-one-geopolitical-foe/>>.



In fact, recently President Obama's nominee for the NATO supreme allied commander said the "reset" was now on hold and predicted that Russia would be the "primary actor of regional concern" through the end of the current decade. His comments are based on growing tensions between Russia and the U.S. on various issues, including Russia's war with Georgia in 2008, the two-year-old Syrian civil war, and 2012 U.S. legislation against Russians committing human rights violations. In response, Russia passed similar legislation and also banned U.S. couples from adopting Russian orphans.<sup>82</sup> From these and other issues that have arisen in the early stages of the twenty-first century, there is no argument that Russia-U.S. relations are continuing down the path of distrust and perpetual opposition. If twenty-first-century Russia continues on its historical *Sonderweg* of separation from and opposition to "them" and the U.S. and Russia do not take positive actions to right the direction of their deteriorating relationship, the historic opportunity to fill the unwritten pages of twenty-first-century history with stories of cooperation and friendship will be lost. But more importantly, if they do not resolve their differences and work together to ensure the safety and security of the free world, the consequences for mankind are grave.

Russia's same need to distinguish "us" vs. "them" in the foreign arena is also hindering the development of a new post-Soviet identity in the domestic arena. In a 2005 article for *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal Of Post-Soviet Democratization*, Vladimir Zvonovksy, the president of the Samara Social Research Institute, argues that Russian public opinion of and attitudes toward the U.S. and the West are extensions of general public attitudes toward the nearest authority. In addition, Zvonovksy goes on to state that Russian authorities are well aware of this phenomenon based on data that show a more positive attitude toward the U.S. by Russian

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<sup>82</sup> Phil Stewart, "U.S.-Russia 'reset' stalled, nominee for NATO commander says," Reuters.com, April 11, 2013, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/04/11/us-usa-russia-nato-idUSBRE93A0TJ20130411>>.

“westernizing” elites and a more negative attitude toward the U.S. by the masses.<sup>83</sup> Based on the data and his research, Zvonovksy’s conclusion is that the Russian public (as opposed to the Russian elite) views its own government as a part of a global government divided into horizontal lines of different social statuses. And, it is this mass public view of the Russian government and divided social statuses that are hindering the development of a new post-Soviet identity.<sup>84</sup> The result is a complete disconnect between the different social statuses, including the government, of what should be used as the foundation of the new post-Soviet identity. It has been argued that at present there are two distinct Russias:

. . . one seeking freedom and prosperity, the other focused on patriotism and populism. In the first, people can travel abroad, buy and sell their homes and keep money securely in banks. In the other Russia, President Vladimir Putin stifles dissent, alleges NATO missile defense threats, and seeks to ensure former Soviet neighbors in an unequal Eurasian union.<sup>85</sup>

Unfortunately, the dramatic difference between these two Russias is reviving Soviet era feelings of mistrust and betrayal of the Russian people by the Russian government. Open dissent and protests by a younger generation wanting more personal freedoms and transparency in government have led to mass arrests, as well as new and harsher legislation against protesters. In October of 2012, members of a female punk rock band were found guilty and sent to two years in prison for the crime of “hooliganism motivated by religious hatred” for protesting against Russian President Vladimir Putin on the altar inside a Russian Orthodox Christian church.

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<sup>83</sup> Vladimir Zvonovksy, “The New Russian Identity and the United States,” *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal Of Post-Soviet Democratization* 13, no. 1 (2005), 109, *American Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies*, EBSCOhost <<http://libproxy.wustl.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sbh&AN=28651&site=ehost-live&scope=site>>.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>85</sup> Denis Corboy, William Courtney and Kenneth Yalowitz, “Dealing With Two Russias,” *The New York Times*, January 24, 2013, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/25/opinion/dealing-with-two-russias.html>>.

President Putin supported the court's decision and stated it is the state's responsibility to protect the rights and feelings of the faithful.<sup>86</sup> In an attempt to crack down on what is viewed as anti-religious sentiment, recently the Russian legislature passed a new bill that provides for huge fines and prison time for anyone found guilty of "public humiliation of religious rites or other insults to believers' feelings."<sup>87</sup> Russian President Putin's comments and the actions of the Russian legislature are clearly representative of a more conservative and authoritarian type government ("us") that appears to be reviving the Soviet ideology of repression and oppression of anyone with different views from the state ("them"). Actions like these only work to hinder the establishment of a new Russian identity. Russia must alter its current domestic policy course if it hopes to establish a viable and healthy post-Soviet identity.

Thus far in the twenty-first century, the legacy effect of Russia's separatist and anti-other *Sonderweg* has resulted in either stagnation or loss of forward momentum by the Russian Federation as it tries to construct a new post-Soviet international and domestic identity. Russia's historical need to distinguish its "us" vs. the other's "them" is resulting in dangerous mistrust of the U.S. and Western polities in foreign affairs, as well as destructive mistrust among the Russian government and people. If it feels compelled to make the "us" vs. "them" comparison in order to establish its new identity, Russia must find a new "them" model that does not alienate it from the West and its own people. This is the only way Russia will be able to successfully affect a positive influence on the new global community. Otherwise, Russia will continue on its present *Sonderweg* that continues to exclude it from Western civilization, and the realization of a new and dangerous geopolitical Cold War looms ever closer.

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<sup>86</sup> Nastassia Astrasheuskaya, "Russia's jailed punk rock band members sent to prison camps," Reuters.com, October 22, 2012, <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/22/entertainment-us-russia-pussyriot-prison-idUSBRE89L0JU20121022>>.

<sup>87</sup> "Russia moves to introduce jail sentences for insulting believers' feelings," RT.com, April 09, 2013, <<http://rt.com/politics/sentences-feelings-believers-insulting-557/>>.

## VII. Conclusion

For many, the end of the Cold War brought (if only briefly) utopian ideals of a U.S.-Russian alliance that would provide vital protection against extremist governments and rogue factions hell bent on the destruction of the free world. However, much to the disappointment and critical concern of those holding out this hope, U.S. and Russian relations since the end of the Cold War have only led to the dawning of a new geopolitical Cold War in the twenty-first century. And just like the Cold War of the twentieth-century, this new Cold War has its origins in Russia's special *Sonderweg* through history. From their emergence in the eighth century, the Rus' people and their descendents have struggled to define who they are and who they are not. The same still holds true over thirteen hundred years later, for since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia and the Russian people have struggled to define a cohesive post-Soviet identity. Under the Soviet regime, a Soviet identity was clear, politically correct, safe, and conveniently provided by the Soviet apparatus. A Soviet citizen was a hard working proletariat who always put the welfare, success, and survival of the Soviet Union ahead of any and all selfish, vain, and conceited personal goals. Communism was the one true political ideology that preserved mankind and society, and which stood in defiant opposition to the heretical West with its greedy capitalism and individualism that only destroyed mankind and society. However, the failure of communism to produce the promised utopian proletariat society has resulted in the complete disintegration of the Soviet (and now Russian) identity, leaving the Russian Federation, with all of its multi-ethnic peoples, frustrated and unclear about who Russia is as a nation, as a people, and as a society. Thus, the ongoing struggle in the twenty-first century to define who Russia is has come down to the five identities documented by Russian scholar Vera Tolz:

1. The Union Identity – a multi-ethnic nation comprised of the peoples and areas of the former Soviet Union
2. The Eastern Slav Identity – an ethnically and culturally distinct nation comprised of Slavic peoples with a common past and heritage
3. The Russian Language Identity – a nation comprised of Russian-speakers, regardless of ethnicity or heritage
4. The Russian Racial Identity – a nation comprised of ethnic Russians based on genetic heritage
5. The Russian Civic Identity – a nation comprised of citizens of the Russian Federation<sup>88</sup>

However, these five models only address the question of who Russia is but does not answer the question of who Russia is not. As previously discussed, Samuel P. Huntington makes a compelling argument that a people's identity must answer both questions. Thus, just as a coin is not whole or complete without both sides, any post-Soviet identity will not be whole or complete by simply answering the question of who Russia is. The opposite question of who Russia is not must also be answered. This is evidenced by Russian history, for throughout their history, the Rus' people have always distinguished who they were from who they were not, their "us" from the other's "them."<sup>89</sup> They will have to do the same in the twenty-first century. In order to successfully define their post-Soviet identity, the Russian Federation and Russian people must answer both sides to the question: who they are as well as who they are not. However, there are several domestic and international challenges that must be overcome to arrive at viable answers to these critically important questions.

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<sup>88</sup> Tolz, 237-238.

<sup>89</sup> Franklin and Shepard, 371.

In the domestic arena, Russian citizens, especially the younger generations, see the new post-Soviet era as an opportunity for democracy, increased personal freedoms, and liberty. They want the right to question their government, to protest when they feel strongly for or against an issue, and they want a say in answering the question of who Russia is. However, regarding the question of who Russia is, as was evidenced in the 2009 North Caucasus study discussed previously in Section I, when provided five possible answers for the civilization status of Russia, those surveyed overwhelmingly answered “Russia is neither West nor East and it has its own path of development.” In addition, when given the statement “Russia is a European country and a part of Western civilization,” those surveyed overwhelmingly disagreed.<sup>90</sup> There are those outside of Russia who agree with this sentiment. According to Samuel P. Huntington, Russia is not part of Western civilization but is instead part of the “Orthodox” civilization which is:

. . . centered in Russia and separate from Western Christendom as a result of its Byzantine parentage, distinct religion, 200 years of Tatar rule, bureaucratic despotism, and limited exposure to the Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, and other central Western experiences.<sup>91</sup>

This viewpoint presents a challenge for the definition of who the Russian people are because it implies that Russia and its people are singularly unique, with no other peoples in which they share commonalities. Following this thought process through to its conclusion, this view of Russia and its people places them completely outside the new global community. In the twenty-first century, peoples from all around the world are working together to find common ground instead of focusing on those things that set them apart. The exceptions to this inclusive sentiment are extremist governments and rogue factions who seek to destroy freedom and liberty.

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<sup>90</sup> Avksentev and Aksiumov, 84.

<sup>91</sup> Huntington, 45-46.

Thus, it would be extremely beneficial for Russia and the Russian people to find some very positive and strong attributes to define who they are that are shared among other members of the new global community. Otherwise, in the twenty-first century Russia will continue on its historic *Sonderweg* of perpetual exclusion from not only Western civilization but also the new global community.

In both the domestic and international arenas, Russia and its people must clearly define who they are not. However, Russia must work with its people and the other world powers, including the U.S., to answer this critically important question. As a collective, they will have to undertake this task with great care, for in the past the answer to who Russia was not most often led to tremendous bloodshed and death. In the fifteenth century the answer to this question resulted in the murders of Rus' princes and their families by Ivan III in his agenda of the "gathering of the Russian lands." In the sixteenth century it was the reign of terror by Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible) and his deadly personal guard unit the Oprichniki. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw the brutal suppression by Peter the Great and Catherine the Great of various uprisings by peasants and other disenfranchised peoples. In the twentieth century it was Stalin's purges and proxy wars with the U.S. fought in the Middle East and Asia. Perhaps it is not so ironic that in the twenty-first century the struggle to define who Russia is not has resulted in virtually the same conflicts in the same regions of the world: Korea, Iran, and other areas of the Middle East.

After the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Russia and the U.S. had an historic opportunity to mend its contentious relationship in a manner that would allow for the integration of the European continent, inclusive of all Eastern Bloc countries, within a political model that did not reject the concept of national sovereignty. However, this did not

happen because continuation in the twenty-first century of geopolitical gaming by the U.S. and Russia has reopened Cold War divides that should have healed over time and led to a new rapprochement between these two great polities. Instead, we have a new Cold War brewing between Russia and the U.S., but it is not grounded in political and economic ideologies orchestrated by two superpowers. This new Cold War is defined by cultural, ethnicity, religion, and civilization identities. It began with the numerous Balkan wars after the collapse of the Soviet Union and it spread to Eastern Europe, and then the North and South Caucasus through the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century. More recent events fueling the new Cold War are the Arab Spring, the Iranian nuclear crisis, and North Korea's aggressive stance against the U.S. and South Korea. Unlike the previous Cold War, where the Soviet Union and the U.S. acquired client states without regard to the desires of those states or the short and long term implications for the impacted peoples, in this new Cold War, Russia and the U.S. find themselves being forced to decide if they will abstain from the conflict or if they will choose to intervene, and if so, with which side they will align themselves. Unfortunately, because Russia has not been able to find a viable "other" by which to define the "them" to its "us," Russia continues to use the U.S. in this equation. As a result, in the twenty-first century it appears that Russia and the U.S. are more often than not on opposite sides of some potentially dangerous situations around the globe. If Russia and the U.S. do not work together to find common ground on these critical global issues, the potentially dangerous results are unthinkable. Perhaps it would be prudent for them both to study their mutual history to ensure history does not repeat itself. However, only the history of the twenty-first century will reveal whether Russia and the U.S. were able to put their past behind them, thus ending Russia's *Sonderweg* of endless exclusion from Western civilization and the new global community.



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