

## Naval War College Review

---

Volume 56  
Number 4 *Autumn*

Article 20

---

2003

# Nations in Transit 2001–2002: Civil Society, Democracy and Markets in East Central Europe and the Newly Independent States

Patrick Lueb

Adrian Karatnycky

A. Motyl

A. Schnetzer

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

---

### Recommended Citation

Lueb, Patrick; Karatnycky, Adrian; Motyl, A.; and Schnetzer, A. (2003) "Nations in Transit 2001–2002: Civil Society, Democracy and Markets in East Central Europe and the Newly Independent States," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 56 : No. 4 , Article 20.  
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol56/iss4/20>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu](mailto:repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu).

presumed familiarity with much of the subject matter that makes this work a more appropriate developmental read for the interested professional—for whom it is a must.

If there is a weakness to the book, it is that the terms “brown-,” “green-,” and “blue-water” are not properly associated with their respective naval equivalents of “inland waterways,” “coastal defense,” and “power-projection” fleets until the last quarter of the book, and even then the distinguishing features are not defined but implied. To complicate matters, there is the earlier fleeting introduction of an additional “marginal seas” naval warfare environment that is never again mentioned. The distinctions are important, especially when the authors conclude that the physical configuration of these various environments—their geography—will continue to present challenges to navies and naval operations. Optimistically, they also conclude that far from rendering navies obsolete in the modern battle space, technological improvements and force structure developments derived from a sound understanding of geographical considerations will ensure their continued relevance.

A greater disappointment for a book on geography is the selection of maps. They are barely adequate even for the basic overview they are intended to provide—a number of important place names mentioned cannot be found. More to the point, especially considering the key factor of “distance,” the choice of the common Mercator projection, with all its inherent north-south distortions, is unfortunate. In many cases the scale is not given, and in the littorals the bottom depth contours are

not identified. Conic projections could have illustrated many points far more effectively.

That said, this book deserves to be read by naval professionals. Its conclusion that geography will continue to have much the same influence it always has had on navies would be startling only if it were otherwise. However, in arriving at that conclusion, Lindberg and Todd provide many useful reminders that navies do not exist just to impact one another but are part of a larger spatial context of global dimensions.

RICHARD H. GIMBLETT  
*Research Fellow, Dalhousie University  
 Centre for Foreign Policy Studies*



Karatnycky, Adrian, A. Motyl, and A. Schnetzer, eds. *Nations in Transit 2001–2002: Civil Society, Democracy and Markets in East Central Europe and the Newly Independent States*. Somerset, N.J.: Transaction, 2002. 445pp. \$39.95

*Nations in Transit 2001–2002* is a comprehensive fact book that examines the trends of liberalization in East Central Europe and the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. The editors claim the book is unique, as the “only . . . comparative study of post-Communist political and economic transition in Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia.” This sixth edition covers the period from November 2000 through December 2001; however, the reader will frequently find information from the 1990s.

The book covers twenty-seven nations, attempting to assess each by its level of democratization, rule of law, and economic liberalization. Each of these broad categories contains elements that

provide a structure for the analysis of each nation; this analysis is conducted by one principal author, who in many cases is a native of the country in question.

The political process element in the democratization category has an explanation of the major political parties, their leadership, political agendas, and majorities in the government. Democratization also discusses civil society, focusing primarily on the functioning of nongovernmental organizations. Independent media are also covered, containing information on names, affiliation, content, and audience. This element also includes data on Internet accessibility. The final elements in the democratization category are governance and public administration. These cover the executive-branch workings of the nation, including information on political parties, national and sub-national governments, and elections.

The rule-of-law category has two elements. The first is a constitutional, legislative, and judicial framework that details constitutional and judicial issues, to include the court system and human rights. The second is corruption, addressing both the amount of corruption and initiatives to correct this problem. Economic liberalization and social indicators are the last category, which includes economic issues, both domestic and international, tax reform, and employment issues.

The book does have one potential flaw. The authors and editors have included a rating system grading each element on a scale of one to seven, with one being the maximum score. The grades of each

element are averaged and recorded to two decimal places to obtain a rating for the category. The movement of each nation along the scales is then tracked, and nations are compared with one another. In the description of this rating methodology, the reader may believe that there is a scientific basis for this scheme. In carefully reading the text, however, one finds that this basis is not fully explained. In fact, lacking any specific information, the conclusion one reaches is that this scale is subjective in nature, which detracts from the editors' claim of a comparative assessment of these nations. If there is no true objective measure, providing an example of a nation that rates a one in a particular element might mean more. That way, the reader has some basis to understand more clearly what a rating of 4.25 in, for example, independent media means.

Overall, this single weakness does not diminish the worth of *Nations in Transit 2001–2002*. The great value of this book is that it provides extensive knowledge and current, as well as historical, data on a variety of political, social, and economic issues in East Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. Even with all this data, the text is easy to read. This is accomplished with the incorporation of information from the 1990s, which provides a critical strength of this work; the reader need not be an expert on East Central Europe or the newly independent states to use it.

PATRICK LUEB

*Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy  
Naval War College*