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## Damage Limitation or Crisis? Russia and the Outside World

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timony “challenged much of the accepted strategic wisdom regarding the role of the strategic air offensive in warfare, the proper use of atomic weapons, the capabilities of the B-36 as an intercontinental bomber, and the usefulness of carrier aviation. Clearly, the nature of the Navy’s ‘revolt’ served to establish doubt in the minds of some members of the [congressional] committee about the efficacy of the policies that . . . Johnson was pursuing in the name of economy and unification.” The committee’s report was released in March 1950, and “among the most important conclusions was the view that intercontinental strategic bombing was not synonymous with air power—that U.S. air power consisted of Air Force, Navy, and Marine air power, and, of these, strategic bombing constituted but one aspect.” By late 1950, Johnson had been sacked and carriers had played a crucial role in stemming the initial North Korean invasion. The first of the big *Forrestal* carriers was authorized in March 1951.

The period addressed by this book offers some fascinating parallels with the present. The same potent brew exists today. The role of airpower (manned and unmanned) is once again a central focus during a time of decreasing budgets and potentially bitter roles-and-missions debates. Once again unproven technologies suggest new ways of doing business that could radically alter how the military is organized and how future combat operations are conducted. And once again there are those who claim that the military threatens to go beyond its proper bounds into areas rightfully the domain of civilian leaders. Recently, academics have suggested that current civilian-military relations are increasingly poor,

with more than a hint that the military no longer knows its place. This case study offers some timely thoughts on the inherent tensions between “revolt” and providing sound professional military advice to the civilian leadership on matters of profound national concern.

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Blackwill, Robert D., and Sergei A. Karaganov, eds. *Damage Limitation or Crisis? Russia and the Outside World* (CSIA Studies in International Security #5) Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s (US), 1994. 330pp. \$18.50

This volume constitutes another addition to the scholarly debate over the future direction of Russia’s foreign policy and what, if anything, the United States and its allies can do to influence it in directions congenial to their interests.

Prominent academicians from Russia and several other countries, including the United States, China, Germany, and Japan, analyze these issues thematically, assessing the prospects for democracy in Russia and delineating Russia’s national interests; and regionally, by examining Russia’s policy toward the “near abroad” (i.e., the other successor states of the Soviet Union) and respectively Eastern Europe, Western Europe, China and Japan, and the United States. Given Russia’s current diminished role in world affairs, one might justify the omission of Russian foreign policy toward Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia. Less explicably, however, given the subject of its inquiry, the volume devotes no chapter to the overall status of Russia’s armed forces or

the military doctrine under which they operate. Also diminishing its utility is the lack of an index and bibliography; however, the essays by Robert D. Blackwill and Steven E. Miller, in particular, do include many useful bibliographical entries in their footnotes, for the interested reader.

This work offers little solace to those inside and outside Russia who hoped that a post-communist Russia would construct a "strategic partnership" with the United States to promote international peace and stability. Summarizing the conclusions of his colleagues, Blackwill states categorically that partnership between Russia and the United States is an "empty slogan" and that it "will not be easy" for these two countries even to follow his prescription to pursue policies of "damage limitation designed for narrow cooperation when possible, and seek to forestall crisis in Russia's relations with the outside world." Even more depressing, his coeditor Sergei Karaganov, Deputy Director of the Institute of Europe at the Russian Academy of Sciences, reports that Blackwill's "largely realistic and gloomy conclusions" are actually "less pessimistic" than those held by his Russian colleagues.

The essayists identify four "powerful and negative domestic trends in Russia" that largely account for their bleak prognostications: a deteriorating economic situation with limited prospects for market-based economic reform; a "discouraging" political situation in which the "period of democratic breakthroughs," which continued until early 1993, is over; rampant crime and corruption; and "strong" anti-Western feeling among both elites and masses. Together, these trends "will feed nationalist and

chauvinistic forces already gaining ground in the country," who will pursue policies that the West "will often not like."

Paradoxically, from this volume a good case can be made that a generally pro-Western foreign policy—if not an actual "strategic partnership"—is in the national interest of Russia. First, as Sergei Karaganov argues, the strategic interests of Russia and the West "converge much more than they conflict" on many issues, including arms control and nuclear proliferation, effectuating a balance of power to contain the "emerging Chinese leviathan," and the long-term integration of the Russian economy into the world capitalist system. Second, as several of the essayists point out, the West itself poses no direct threat to the security of Russia; any threat comes principally from the economic and political chaos found within itself and the "near abroad"—chaos that Western financial aid and private investment could mitigate. Third, Steven E. Miller identifies the close links among economic, military, and overall world power and cogently concludes that "clearly Russia should pursue those external policies that are most likely to facilitate economic progress and success and avoid policies that may impede economic development"—a prescription for a generally benevolent Russian foreign policy toward the West.

Whither Russia? Will the gloomy prognostications of this volume be realized, or will Russian elites apprehend and act upon the substantive coalescence of interests that on many issues they share with the West? Students of this subject will await with keenest interest history's answer to this query.

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