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Compatriot Games: Explaining the 'Diaspora Linkage' in Russia's Military Withdrawal from the Baltic States

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SHORTLY AFTER THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE USSR, President Boris El'tsin took the Soviet military troops in the Baltic states under Russian jurisdiction.[1] The ensuing withdrawal of these forces—the last soldier left Lithuania in August 1993, and Estonia and Latvia one year later[2]—was subject to a series of turbulent negotiation rounds. In the process, the Russian side repeatedly linked the military presence to the well-being of ethnic Russians and other 'compatriots' in the three states.[3]

Not only the nationalist opposition in Russia, but also representatives of the Ministry of Defence (MO), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID), and President El'tsin himself, on various occasions explicitly made this linkage: it was stated that the military withdrawal would not be completed if the Baltic states did not pass legislation safeguarding the rights of Russia's 'compatriots' on their territory. In early 1992 there was a total of some 120 000 troops in the three Baltic states.[4] Russian threats of not withdrawing received considerable attention in the West, not least among scholars seeking to identify trends in Russian foreign policies. The Russian linkage implied a threat to maintain the means of coercive power to make the newly independent states comply with Russia's will. As such, the linkage was deemed unacceptable by Western powers and the UN General Assembly, and was spoken of by Baltic leaders as evidence of a deep-seated Russian will for expansion and domination.

The case of the military withdrawal from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is particularly illuminating with regard to post-Soviet Russia's efforts to come to terms with the break-up of the USSR. Essentially, this case has both an ethnic dimension—who are the Russians?—and a geopolitical dimension—where does the expanse of the new Russian state, and its ambitions, end? Along these two dimensions, different interpretations of Russia's policies during the withdrawal have been launched. The most pessimistic have spoken of an increased ethnification of Russian policies (associating the state to a greater degree with the ethnic Russian majority), and also of a 'neo-imperialist' drive to control the other former Soviet republics, and disregard for their independence.

In particular, a perceived 'neo-imperialism' on Russia's part was seen as a dangerous sign, in scholarly analyses based on developments in the first two or three years after the break-up of the USSR.[5] Illustratively, Porter and Saivetz concluded

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that 'you can take the republics away from Russia, but you can't get Russia out of the republics'. Among the means Russia had employed to 'retain a measure or hegemony' in the FSU was 'outright military blackmail, such as the threats to keep troops stationed in the Baltic states'.[6] In a different study, Smith spoke of a 'Pax Russica', and described the diaspora linkage in the Baltic as 'potentially ominous'. The Russian minorities were likely to remain there, and could thus give Russia 'a permanent excuse to express concern about the status of these communities, and demand that Russian forces protect them'.[7] Brzezinski spoke of a Russian 'imperial impulse', and summarised his policy analysis in his telling article title 'The Premature Partnership'.[8]

Other analysts have been less inclined to look at Russian foreign policy as coherent, and the 'diaspora linkage' in the Baltic as part of an overall, aggressive policy. Rather, they have pointed to a diversity in Russian policy. 'Within Russia as of mid-1994, it's an open question whether the country has a foreign policy', wrote Griffiths.[9] Indeed, Russia's then foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, has been widely quoted as complaining that 'the armed forces have a foreign policy of their own'.[10] More directly, official Russia's concern for its 'compatriots' has been explained not only by a genuine sense of oneness, but also by a feeling of indirect national humiliation, and by a concern that a large influx of migrants to the Russian Federation would place an additional burden on an economy under severe stress. As for specific functions of the linkage, analysts have pointed to President Eltsin's need to battle against the political opposition on the home front; the actual economic costs of the withdrawal, and the toll the process took on the state structures, above all the military itself.

Concern about the military presence in the Baltic seemed reasonable at the time; after all, Russia was by 1992 already involved militarily in several armed conflicts in former Soviet republics. Not only was the military the tool of coercive power; in addition to this, it was seen as having its own agenda. In this context, it was typically perceived as a bastion of conservative Soviet modes of thinking, and an instigator of neo-imperialist policies in the 'near abroad'. Again, for the military as for official Russia as a whole, it may be useful to distinguish between different layers or different actors. Even at the time, it seemed clear that local commanders were playing very independently in such conflicts as those in Transdniestria, Abkhazia and Tajikistan. In the opinion of Pavel Baev, the threat of disintegration of the Russian forces in the FSU was in fact the major reason why the diaspora issue became so important in state policy from 1992 onwards. The MO discovered that its forces were directly involved in several local conflicts, and saw the risk that these troops would fall completely out of Moscow's control. 'While preventing disintegration of the army was the main incentive for these interventions, the issue of "Russians abroad" became the main justification', Baev said. Thus, the MO discovered the sensitivity of the issue and started to play on it—first in Moldova, and later in the Baltic states.[11]

What, in retrospect, can we say about the relative significance of the different factors that have been presented as explanations for Russia's 'diaspora linkage'? This is the question this article aims to answer. Emphasis, notably, is on the linkage as it was made by the representatives of the Russian *military*. While the alternative explanations are partly on different levels and as such do not directly exclude each

other, I believe that an examination of the *sequence* of events, and the *issue emphasis* in statements from military leaders, will lead us to quite firm conclusions to the effect that Russia's 'linkage' is better explained by developments within the military, and on the Russian domestic political scene, than simply by a Russian concern for the diaspora. That being so, the analysis will have a bearing both on perceptions of 'neo-imperialism' in Russian policies and of a greater identification of the new Russian state with Russian ethnicity, in Russian policies in the first years after the break-up of the USSR. Empirically, the conclusions reached will be of relevance also for interpretations of Russia's policies towards newly independent states such as Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan.

Structurally, the article is introduced by an outline of trends in the foreign policies of the Russian President and Foreign Ministry (MID), and their role in linking the diaspora's status to the withdrawal. Thereafter, in the main section, the military's role is analysed. First, the article examines the issue from the side of Defence Minister, Pavel Grachev, the Ministry of Defence (MO) and the General Staff. Thereafter, the side of the local commanders and troops in the Baltic is considered.

The El'tsin regime: foreign policy and the diaspora issue

During the 'democratic euphoria' of 1991–92 Russia's declaratory foreign policy was characterised by a remarkable benevolence towards the surrounding world, be it the United States, Japan—or the former Soviet republics. Certainly, Russia's actual military involvement in several FSU states does not merit such a description. But on the whole, the policies of the MID under Kozyrev, and El'tsin personally, do. This is the period during which the 'Atlanticism' of Kozyrev was a prime target of a strong nationalist opposition. At no time was the divergence over policy between the MO and the MID greater than it was at this time; the parallel pursuit of assertive military policies made for a confusing overall picture. That being said, signals from the MID also pointed in different directions. The ministry at an early stage made the civic rights of the diaspora an issue. And from late 1992 onwards both El'tsin and Kozyrev initiated a broader shift in declaratory policy towards the FSU, bringing them more in line with the nationalist opposition. The Russians in the other FSU states were now increasingly defined as an integral part of the Russian nation.[12] Indeed, the diaspora was a central dimension of the foreign policy consensus that developed as the El'tsin regime shifted to a more assertive foreign policy.[13]

However, defining who the 'Russians' or 'compatriots' were was not a straightforward task. It became common to refer to a figure of 25 million Russians left outside the Russian Federation. This was a figure calculated on basis of the last Soviet census, conducted in 1989, and referred to so-called 'passport nationality'. This is not a measure of citizens' self-denomination but an official classification of the population according to a set of ethnic categories.[14] In actual fact, it was difficult on the Russian side to avoid making ethnic Russians the focus of Russia's policies towards the Baltic states. However, it was probably also the case that many of those living in these states, who were neither ethnic Russian nor ethnic Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian, had come to identify with Russian culture and language. While they were relatively few compared with the ethnic Russians, incorporating them into Russia's

case strengthened (and widened) that case—both by making the numbers larger and by making the issue appear more universal and less ethnic. In order to inculcate these categories, several terms were put to use. Compatriots (*sootechestvenniki*) probably became the one most frequently used. It was not entirely unproblematic, however, as it strictly speaking referred only to individuals holding Russian *citizenship*. The oxymoron *etnicheskie rossiyane* (simultaneously ethnic and non-ethnic) was another term that became frequently used. Here, we have a combination where the first word refers to ethnicity while the second encompasses all citizens of the Russian Federation. On the Russian side, this combination had a very specific meaning: it described citizens of all peoples who have Russia as their homeland—ethnic Russians, Tatars, Bashkirs, Ingush etc. It did *not*, however, include, for example, russified Ukrainians, or Belarusians, who did not hold Russian citizenship. It seems quite clear that in the case of the Baltic states Moscow would have liked to count these in, since they made up a larger part of the non-*russkie* minorities than, for instance, the Tatars, but this term alone did not allow that. A term that did was *russkoyazychnye*—Russian speakers. This was probably the term including the largest number of subjects.[15] When non-Russian russophones are counted, the number of 'Russians' has been estimated to rise to almost 40% in the case of Estonia, and 50% in the case of Latvia.[16]

The increasingly nationalist character of statements by El'tsin and Kozyrev should be seen above all as an adjustment made to match what appeared to be the general political and public mood, and the pressure from opposition politicians. A flow chart could be drawn that would show convincingly a correspondence between hard-line statements and initiatives by El'tsin and the MID, on the one hand, and points in time when the regime was particularly hard challenged by the opposition, on the other. While chronicling the domestic politics of post-Soviet Russia is not the intention in this article, we may remind ourselves of some important issues and events in the period 1992–94. As we will see in a moment, what may be described as a 'breakthrough' for the policy of linking the diaspora issue to the withdrawal of forces was made by El'tsin personally in October 1992. That was the month when leaders of 'the irreconcilable opposition', as they called themselves, joined forces in a major new organisation, the National Salvation Front (FNS). An attempt by El'tsin to ban the organisation was over turned by the Constitutional Court, and the presidency at this time appeared seriously weakened. Speculation that a coup was underway seemed quite plausible; indeed, one possible plotter appeared to be El'tsin's own vice-president, former air force colonel Aleksandr Rutskoi. Within months of his election together with El'tsin in June 1991, Rutskoi was playing an increasingly independent role as a figurehead of the 'patriotic' forces. In the opposition, many of the political leaders were even more radical in their anti-Baltic rhetoric. Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the 'buffoon' candidate who came third in the 1991 election, had become the incarnation of Russian supremacism and longing for empire. The events of October 1993—the violent showdown in which El'tsin defeated Rutskoi and the Supreme Soviet—did not signify the end of radical nationalism in Russia. On the contrary, the Duma election two months later launched the erratic Zhirinovsky into high politics. Particularly ominous were the reports that the military voted for his LDPR in even greater numbers than the population at large.[17]

El'tsin and the MID make the linkage: phases of Russian foreign policy

From the first time a halt to the withdrawal of forces was announced by the Kremlin, and linked to the diaspora issue, many commentators would relate El'tsin's action to domestic political circumstances. Influencing the President's room for manoeuvre on the withdrawal, however, was not only the political opposition: the armed forces naturally also had their own stakes in this issue. And whereas in retrospect El'tsin does not appear to have been particularly sensitive to the concerns of the military, it was necessary at the time for him to give the impression that he was. This was a period when the struggle for power in Moscow was very real, and military support was crucial.

While later events have confirmed that El'tsin was never to any real degree inspired by nationalism in an ethnic sense, it was he who first made the withdrawal-diaspora linkage into a distinct, high-profile policy. On 20 October 1992 the MO issued a statement saying that a temporary pause in the withdrawal had been effectuated, due to the difficulties in providing housing for the soldiers. However, nine days later, President El'tsin himself not only confirmed a halt to the withdrawal by decree but also explicitly linked the action with the Baltic state's treatment of minorities. No longer referring to the housing issue, the President said he was 'profoundly concerned over numerous infringements of the rights of Russian speakers', and that the pull-out would be suspended until treaties had been signed between Russia and the Baltic states regulating the withdrawal and guaranteeing 'measures of social protection' for the servicemen and their families.[18] The President soon followed up on the diaspora rights issue. A week later he turned to the United Nations. In a letter to the UN General Secretary, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, El'tsin asked the organisation to 'take all measures' to end 'human rights violations' in the Baltic states. This was an appeal that had been formulated by the MID, on the basis of an order from El'tsin.[19] While repeating Russia's intention of withdrawing, El'tsin in effect repeated the linkage by stating that further development of Russian-Baltic relations would 'largely depend on the situation of the Russian-speaking population'.[20]

Even shortly after El'tsin had passed his decree, some Russian media outlets speculated that the diaspora linkage was a tactical step on the President's part, by which he responded to Russian servicemen's threat to resist any withdrawal—an initiative that will be explored in detail later—in a way that simultaneously paid off on several other issues. By matching the earthly question of housing with the noble one of human rights, commented *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, El'tsin gained on three fronts: he pleased the military lobby, he took from the 'red-whites' a serious propaganda weapon, and he pleased his own bureaucrats by punishing the Balts for problems such as smuggling.[21] *Nezavisimaya gazeta* made the point that El'tsin had just disbanded the organising committee of the National Salvation Front. In such a context, it was easy to conjecture that he would try to appear as a tough statesman 'who upholds the interests of power far more effectively than the bombastic "frontists" '.[22]

El'tsin is on record making several statements suited to frighten Russia's neighbours in the period that followed. In June 1993, notably, he surprised his supporters in the West and the FSU by going to great lengths in arguing for a special role for Russia as the regional defender of peace and order in the FSU. El'tsin pointed to the

US bases internationally as a model for Russian military policy, and called for the international community to approve of such a policy. While stating that the withdrawal of Russian forces from the FSU continued, El'tsin abandoned the subtleties for the cases of the Baltic problem republics: 'We will not accept any provocations on the part of Latvia and Estonia', he said.[23] Later that month he accused Estonia of pursuing 'ethnic cleansing similar to apartheid' through its new Law on Aliens, and threatened that appropriate measures would be taken 'to protect the honour, dignity and legitimate rights of our compatriots, including servicemen, retired army officers, workers at the munitions plants and their families'.[24]

By this time, Russian rhetoric over the diaspora issue primarily referred to Estonia and Latvia, and much less to Lithuania. And, of course, the Russian forces were only two months from leaving Lithuania altogether. This minority issue had never been as acute in Lithuania, which had a much smaller percentage of ethnic Russians in its population—9.4% according to the 1989 census. In November 1989 Lithuania had adopted legislation that gave automatic citizenship to all who were permanent residents by the time of the adoption of that law. That being so, this republic now became referred to by Russia an example for the other two Baltic states. Given that Russia left Lithuania one year earlier than Estonia and Latvia, and given that minority rights was not such an acute issue there, it might seem reasonable to assume that there was a causal relationship here—that Russian concerns about the diaspora *did* influence military policies. However, this is not as obvious as it might seem. Firstly, several military factors may be identified that contribute towards explaining the earlier withdrawal: the HQ of the North-Western Group of Forces was located in Riga (Latvia), and the Baltic Fleet had bases in Tallinn (Estonia) and Liepaja (Latvia), apart from its HQ in Kaliningrad and the bases in Kronshtadt and Baltiisk, but no base in Lithuania. While by mid-1992 Lithuania had more Russian troops (43 000) than Latvia (40 000) and Estonia (23 000),[25] it is reasonable to expect a process such as this withdrawal to take place in a manner whereby the headquarters are maintained longer than less important bases. Furthermore, for historical reasons, Latvia and Estonia both had a proportionally larger number of military pensioners, an issue that complicated questions of residence in these two states and was of particular concern to the military.[26] Finally, as the Baltic states became independent, Kaliningrad had been left as an enclave outside Russia proper. Consequently, it became acutely important to Russia to maintain relations with Lithuania that allowed transit/supply of troops, equipment and fuel.

Second, we can approach this issue from a different angle, by detailing the processes that shaped the linkage policy. These appear to have solid explanatory power, and yet little to do with the diaspora issue itself. This becomes particularly clear when we look at the phases of Russian foreign policy as represented by Kozyrev. If we return to the image of a flow chart of domestic politics, and look at the MID and Kozyrev specifically, these phases become particularly evident. Between early 1992 and the summer of 1994 Kozyrev's statements on the Baltic shifted between toughness and benevolence, largely coinciding in time with decisive events on the political home front. From early 1992 until early October 1993 Kozyrev's line was basically the tough one, indicated, for example, by his accusations against especially Estonia and Latvia of 'apartheid' and 'ethnic cleansing' against

minorities.[27] However, immediately after the violent showdown between El'tsin and his opponents, which peaked on 4 October 1993, the tone of Kozyrev and other MID representatives appeared to change quite dramatically. Interestingly, this is the same moment that Defence Minister Pavel Grachev seemed to become several steps tougher in *his* rhetoric. However, Kozyrev's new softness lasted not much more than two months. By mid-December Zhirinovsky's election win, it seems, caused yet another turn-about; one that lasted through August 1994, when Latvia and Estonia saw the last Russian soldier leave.

In February 1992 Estonia introduced legislation that enabled the 1938 citizenship law to become effective again. As a consequence, citizenship became limited to those who were citizens of the inter-war republic and their descendants, and the criteria for naturalisation became difficult to fulfil for most Russians. In March, at the conference of the ten Baltic Sea states' foreign ministers, Kozyrev alleged that all three Baltic states were violating international laws in relation to ethnic minorities.[28] In May a Russian delegation addressed the Council of Europe, expressing its concern over 'increasing discrimination' against minorities in the Baltic states;[29] one month earlier, conditions for Russian speakers in the Baltic seemed to worsen as Latvia passed a new, stringent language law. And by August Kozyrev listed amendments to Baltic legislation over the rights of ethnic minorities among a number of demands that had to be met for Russia to withdraw its forces.[30] This was, in effect, an early instance of Russia linking withdrawal to the diaspora issue. However, the linkage was not yet being systematically promoted by the MID. For instance, diaspora issues were not mentioned among the demands the Russian MID presented at a meeting with the Baltic foreign ministers in August 1992.[31] Again, at the 47th UN General Assembly in September 1992, Kozyrev stated that Russia was 'particularly concerned about the discrimination against Russians, Ukrainians, Jews and people of other non-indigenous nationalities ... Specifically—in Estonia and Latvia'.[32]

While Kozyrev during 1992 and much of 1993 appeared as hawkish as any one in Russia's government, this image changed sharply by mid-October 1993. One year after El'tsin's 'linkage' decree, and only two weeks after the events by the Moscow River, the MID clearly wanted to keep its distance from the MO and Grachev. In a report from a visit by Grachev to Helsinki, *Izvestiya* quoted the minister as saying: 'If the discrimination against the Russian-speaking population in Estonia and Latvia continues, the Russian forces will remain on the territory of those two countries for as long as it takes to solve this given question'. Grachev was also reported as having drawn a 'sharp distinction' between Lithuania, on the one hand, and Estonia and Latvia on the other. In the former, all problems related to the social protection of the Russian speakers had been solved, and precisely for that reason no problems had arisen over the military withdrawal.[33] When the newspaper set out to clarify whether the withdrawal-diaspora linkage in fact was official Russian policy, signals were extremely mixed. The government contained two answers; the MO said 'yes', the MID said 'no'. What the Kremlin thought was still not clear. Rather, it seemed convenient for the Kremlin every now and then to have the military frighten Riga and Tallinn, and then have the diplomats calm them down.[34] Following Zhirinovskiy's success in the December 1993 Duma elections, Kozyrev again intensified his hardline rhetoric. In January 1994 he made Estonians and Latvians uneasy when he reasoned

that Russian troops should remain posted in the former republics in order to avoid creating a 'vacuum' that might be filled by 'unfriendly forces' and to protect Russian speakers. He also said one of the main strategic tasks was to maintain 'our military presence' throughout the region, and he pointed to the policy of promoting dual citizenship as a 'key element' here.[35] 'We should not leave regions that for centuries have been spheres of Russian interests. We should not be frightened of these words', Kozyrev told an MID conference.[36]

After a long series of negotiation rounds, on 30 April 1994 Latvia and Russia eventually reached an agreement on the troop withdrawal, setting the deadline for its completion at 31 August 1994. For the military pensioners, this agreement meant that Latvia guaranteed their social welfare, and their right to permanent residence. Pensions would be paid by the Russian Federation. Estonia at this point still insisted that permanent residence and social guarantees would be given only to Russian officers born before 1930.[37] Not until 27 July 1994 did Russia and Estonia reach a similar agreement. Presidents Meri and El'tsin signed a treaty setting a deadline of 31 August 1994 too, as well as deciding on a number of other aspects of the withdrawal.[38] The respective treaties signified that some 22 000 military pensioners, and their families, could remain in Latvia,[39] while this was the case for some 10 000 officers and their families in Estonia.[40]

The military and the withdrawal-diaspora linkage

In the political turmoil that followed the dissolution of the USSR the Russian military clearly put its mark on developments throughout the FSU. By 1992 the army was involved in armed conflicts in Transdniestria and Abkhazia, and found itself under tension in Crimea, Tajikistan and over Nagorno-Karabakh. A policy of Russian 'peacekeeping' was taking shape. Throughout these conflicts a general characteristic of the Russian involvement was one of biased intervention. Frequently, local commanders were operating at their own personal discretion. Still, signals from Moscow also seemed approving. For instance, the obvious support for the Soviet restorationists in Transdniestria on the part of General Aleksandr Lebed was not rebuked.

Conservatism within the post-Soviet Russian armed forces was above all the property of senior officers. Naturally, it was also from the higher ranks that the military's input into policy formation came. A particularly significant indication to this effect is the process leading up to the adoption of a military doctrine for the Russian Federation. In May 1992 a draft military doctrine was made public that defined as one possible source of 'military danger' the violation of the rights and interests of Russian citizens and of people in former Soviet republics who 'identify themselves, ethnically or culturally, with Russia'.[41] It took until October 1993 for a doctrine to be approved by El'tsin. That happened only a few days after his opponents in the Supreme Soviet and his own vice-president had been defeated with military might, and El'tsin's approval now was widely seen as a payback to the military for their support. As for issues of nationality, however, the new doctrine differed from the 1992 draft. Rather than referring to ethnicity, this one pointed to danger or threats stemming from the suppression of the 'rights, freedoms and lawful interests of Russian citizens in foreign states'.[42] While this was certainly a narrower ambition

than that of the earlier draft, doubts remained as to whether Russia would limit its policies to defending its own citizens. This was, of course, also a period in which Russia was pressing other former Soviet republics to agree to dual citizenship, and Russia itself had implemented a policy of offering all former Soviet citizens Russian citizenship.[43]

Defence Minister Grachev—positions and motives

Pavel Grachev, a El'tsin loyalist since he sided with the President in the 1991 August coup, was appointed Defence Minister in May 1992. Almost from the start, he came across as highly assertive towards the Baltic states. On a visit to Great Britain in July 1992, for instance, Grachev said Russia had 'no intention of withdrawing [the troops in the Baltic states] and leaving them in an open field'. And he added that Russia 'has some strategic interests in the Baltic region'.[44] However, what in retrospect is notable about that appearance, and in fact most others that Grachev made in 1992–94 commenting on the military withdrawal, was that he did *not* make the linkage to the civic rights of 'compatriots'. From 1992 onwards Grachev is on record making increasingly frequent references to the diaspora, but his actual explicit linkages are relatively few in number. In the statement quoted above Grachev pointed to the difficulties of finding housing for the servicemen, and also to military fears of leaving Russia without proper defences in the Baltic region.[45] From this writer's material, it appears that Grachev personally is on record linking the withdrawal to the diaspora issue no earlier than autumn 1993.

Indeed, when the MO announced the suspension of the withdrawal, Grachev explicitly pointed out that the terms of the withdrawal would not be reconsidered, and that the troops would still leave the Baltic states before the end of 1994. He repeated, however, that Russia would not station the forces 'in a bare field'.[46] Similarly, a spokesman for the General Staff said that withdrawal had not been stopped altogether. 'The units and formations that are guaranteed the proper conditions in their new locations are pulling out strictly according to schedule'.[47] And when Deputy Minister of Defence Boris Gromov traveled to the Baltic states to visit the North-Western Group of Forces (NWGF) only a few days after El'tsin's decree, it seemed clear that he maintained his focus on the military logistics. Moreover, it seemed that he would not confirm that the withdrawal had in fact been halted.[48] Even more strikingly, only a couple of weeks before El'tsin's suspension decree, Gromov reasoned that precisely because the Baltic authorities had brought the Russian speakers, and in particular the Russian servicemen, to 'the verge of despair', it was 'hardly wise' to insist on delaying Russian troops' withdrawal from Lithuania.[49]

In March 1993 Grachev, on a visit to the NATO HQ in Brussels, again announced a halt to the withdrawal of the forces in the Baltic. He explained the halt by pointing to the 'absence of inter-state agreements' between Russia and the Baltic countries over the procedure, order, conditions and time for the withdrawal, and also measures for the social protection of servicemen and their families. The process could once more be speeded up, the minister explained, with more cooperation from the Baltic states and their European neighbours in building accommodation. Grachev was not reported to have made any linkage to the diaspora at this time; when meeting other

defence ministers, he emphasised the needs of the military personnel.[50] Notably, according to *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, it appeared at this time that the MID had not been informed about Grachev's initiative, which sparked sharp reactions from Latvia's and Estonia's ministers of defence, as well as from several NATO ministers. MID people reminded the newspaper's journalist that the halt that El'tsin had announced in October had not been carried out, and predicted that this time the pull-out really would be halted.[51]

It was only after the withdrawal from Lithuania had been completed that the Russian defence minister began to systematically link the diaspora with the military withdrawal. Of course, this was also a period when conflict was peaking on the home front, with Grachev siding with El'tsin in the conflict with the Supreme Soviet and the Vice-President. An early mention of a linkage on the part of Grachev appeared in a September 1993 article in the Latvian daily *Diena*. There it was reported that Grachev had told his British colleague Malcolm Rifkind that the withdrawal from Estonia and Latvia depended on when laws were passed protecting the social rights of the Russian-speaking inhabitants. In a related comment to *Diena*, the leader of the Russian delegation to the negotiations with Estonia, Vasilii Svirin, said the forces would be withdrawn, as promised, by the end of 1994. Explaining the position of his delegation, Svirin pointed only to social and economic issues: if Estonia would find the means to build housing for the servicemen, the final pull-out would be speedier. Svirin refrained from commenting on the words of the minister, 'which I did not hear'.[52]

Still, the first widely documented linkage made by Grachev appeared as late as October 1993—one year after El'tsin first had made the connection. That spring, for instance, Grachev, in a meeting with the defence ministers of Estonia and Latvia, had made a point of Lithuania's cooperativeness, compared with the other two countries. However, it appears that on this occasion too the diaspora issue was not mentioned; one report said Grachev had pointed to problems above all over reaching inter-state agreements, but also over logistics, economic compensation and the building of houses, and of social guarantees for remaining servicemen.[53] However, only two weeks after troops loyal to Grachev and El'tsin shelled the White House, Grachev explicitly explained the earlier withdrawal from Lithuania by that state's more benevolent position in relation to the diaspora. If Estonia and Latvia would guarantee Russians' rights as Lithuania had done, he said, 'we are ready to withdraw the troops immediately'.[54] A couple of weeks later, as Grachev announced the adoption of Russia's first post-Soviet military doctrine, he made sure to placate the senior officers whose hearts might have been with his opponents. As blunt as ever, Grachev made sure to assume personal responsibility for the linkage he made: 'I, as minister of defence, want to link the pull-out of troops to the protection of Russian speakers', he said. As he had done a fortnight earlier, Grachev made the statement additionally provocative by making the (dubious) point that there was 'absolutely no problem' in withdrawing the troops from a technical point of view.[55] In an interview two weeks later he repeated that there would be 'no problems' preventing a swift solution to the withdrawal issue 'if the issue of the Russian-speaking population in these states is resolved'.[56] In May 1994, responding to recent friction between Russian soldiers and local Estonians, Grachev made his most bellicose statements on Estonia and Latvia.

In a statement branded 'a threat of aggression' by the Estonian prime minister, Mart Laar, the defence minister warned that he was prepared to move in more soldiers to protect the bases there.[57] Again, moreover, he linked the withdrawal to the political rights of the diaspora, and repeated the accusation that Estonia was pursuing a policy of 'apartheid'. 'The withdrawal of [Russian troops] is closely linked to guarantees of normal life for the so-called Russian-speaking population.... If [withdrawal] talks stall, Russia will keep its 2,500 servicemen there. If the situation changes it won't take long to send reinforcements', Grachev told a news conference.[58]

One might speculate that El'tsin and his entourage intentionally used Grachev as a lightning rod—calculatedly giving disgruntled officers a false impression that their views were being addressed by the government. Such an explanation is not necessary here. A different point is that Grachev to some extent may in fact have served such a function in the government. This role may, however, easily be exaggerated, given the forces' low assessment of Grachev. While respected for the courage and competence he displayed in the Afghan war, many officers considered him to have jumped too many steps on his way to the top. Furthermore, Grachev found his personal influence moderated by Marshal Evgenii Shaposhnikov, the commander-in-chief of the CIS joint armed forces. It would be August 1993 before Shaposhnikov resigned and the idea of common CIS forces was finally abandoned.[59] Grachev's personal vulnerability, as well as the roughness associated with the Afghan veteran officers, go a long way in explaining the role he played as a minister.[60] Increasingly, Grachev was seen as a spineless ally of the president, unable or unwilling to conduct serious reform in the forces. He was stuck with the nickname awarded him by the newspaper *Moskovskii Komsomolets*—'Pasha Mercedes'—over alleged corruption. Equally important for Grachev's low esteem in the armed forces, however, was his (reluctant) siding with El'tsin in the autumn 1993 showdown between the President, on the one side, and the Supreme Soviet and Vice President Rutskoi on the other.[61] Thus, Grachev's high-key statements on the Baltic may be explained as being efforts to stay in line with the dominant mood in the officer corps. And a declaration such as 'I, as minister of defence, want to link the pull-out of troops to the protection of Russian speakers'[62] appears as being made purposely explicit by the minister as an effort to emphasise the responsibilities he had taken on himself.

In this context it may be appropriate to ask whether the Russians, who on several occasions proclaimed a suspension of the military withdrawal, really did 'walk the walk': was the withdrawal in fact ever halted? We have already seen that MID officials in March 1993 admitted without much ado that the withdrawal actually had continued after El'tsin announced a halt half a year earlier. Despite the high-profile announcements to the contrary, the withdrawal also continued after the March 1993 initiative by Grachev. Indeed, even that rather radical statement was met with little alarm on the part of the leader of the Latvian delegation at the Latvian–Russian negotiations, Janis Dinevich. Citing unnamed sources, Dinevich said that the Russian forces in Latvia had not received any new orders or instructions.[63] Analysts generally agree that the Russian forces were trickling out throughout the periods of 'suspension'. Whereas troop estimates may partly contradict each other—different sources may have had different reasons to tamper with the figures[64]—this is also confirmed by a brief survey of different estimates in the three states: as mentioned earlier, by

1992 there were a total of some 120 000 troops in the Baltic states.[65] An overview of the withdrawals shows that a very substantial reduction of the forces took place in the first 6–8 months of 1992—perhaps to half of the original size. From then on to the spring of 1993, however, things went more slowly; in Estonia, for instance, the number fell from 9000 to 7600.[66] By November 1993 a Russian spokesman said that the number of troops had been reduced to 17 000 in Latvia and 4000 in Estonia.[67]

Local forces and commanders—positions and motives

If a close examination of the statements made by defence minister Grachev indicated a limited interest in the diaspora issue, this impression is even clearer from statements by other high-ranking officers. And whilst there is every indication that the military disliked the manner in which the withdrawal was conducted, this was related above all to the conditions for the servicemen, and to the position of the military pensioners and their families.

When the Russian Supreme Soviet in early June 1992 debated the ratification of the January 1991 interstate agreement with Latvia, the head of the Russian delegation to the negotiations with Latvia, Sergei Zotov, said the list of problems related first and foremost to the 'military bloc' of issues—the status of units of Russia's forces and the procedure for their withdrawal—and the 'humanitarian' bloc—legal guarantees of the rights of the Russian-speaking minority. On the other hand, Lt Gen. V. Semenov, commander of the general-purpose forces within the CIS Joint Armed Forces, while also referring to a need for guarantees of civil and legal rights, did so specifically in relation to military personnel: their status as permanent citizens, right to flats etc.[68] Similarly, while adhering to the Russian view that the forces were still not ready for a full pull-but, Sergei Volkov, a navy spokesman in Tallinn, did not cite civic rights of the diaspora as an issue relevant to the withdrawal. Rather, he pointed to the difficulties in finding storage places for withdrawn hardware, as well as lack of housing for the personnel, and lack of money in general.[69] Nevertheless, the policy of linkage was clearly in the making at this point. In mid-October 1992, only a few days before the MO first announced a halt to the withdrawal, a Russian officer, Col Vadim Solov'ev, in an opinion piece in *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, strongly criticised the linkage that was becoming evident on the part of the political leadership in Moscow. As a distinction was being drawn between Lithuania on the one hand and Latvia and Estonia on the other, and the withdrawal linked to territorial claims and the rights of national minorities, the Russian Federation troops had become 'hostages' to 'political and diplomatic intrigue', Solov'ev said.[70]

It is significant that the events that led up to El'tsin's decree on a halt in October 1992 did not start with the MO suspension a few days earlier. For some time already, local officers' assemblies had served as channels for the expression of dissatisfaction in the ranks. In the Baltic states their actions were particularly controversial—not least since several of these groups had links with such organisations as Zhirinovsky's Liberal-Democratic Party and the National Salvation Front.[71] As an example, such a coordinating council was elected among fleet personnel in the city of Baltiisk, Kaliningrad, in November 1991. They joined the protests from the ground forces against a likely accelerated withdrawal from the Baltic states. In an appeal to the

USSR and RSFSR presidents, they insisted that all decisions on the timetable for withdrawal and the new places of deployment of troop units, enterprises and institutions should be made only on agreement with the coordinating council. 'We will not leave our garrisons and facilities without ensuring normal social and everyday conditions at the new places of deployment of troops agreed with the authorities of the republics', they threatened.[72] During 1991–92 such assemblies laboured to prevent a decision to withdraw being made, at least until the time when the officers would be guaranteed proper housing upon returning. And the local Russian commander, Col-Gen Mironov, gave them 'more than tacit support' in these efforts, concluded Allison.[73]

In one remarkable display of insubordination, the servicemen of the 15th army in mid-September 1992 adopted an appeal to the Supreme Soviet and Russia's citizens threatening that they, 'in the event of a hasty and unprepared withdrawal', would be 'forced to take legal action through the Russian Federation Supreme and Constitutional Courts against Army General Pavel Grachev'. The servicemen said they would only begin the withdrawal when there was a legal basis for doing so, when social problems had been solved, treaties concluded, and the legal status of Russian citizens remaining had been determined.[74] By early October dissatisfaction had reached the level where the Co-Ordinating Council of the Officers' Assembly of the North-Western Group of Forces took the dramatic step of announcing that they would boycott any withdrawal from the Baltic region. That moratorium would be effective until the Constitutional Court had examined the legality of the withdrawal as it was proceeding. The Council said officers refused to accept as housing 'tents on an open field'. Furthermore, its chairman, Vladimir Kandalovsky, described the withdrawal as a strategic blunder. Its place was being filled by others, 'and we are left without a reliable defence of our own borders'.[75]

This, then, was the setting when the MO officially suspended the withdrawal. The suspension would be effective, the ministry explained, 'until all questions linked to the settlement at new locations have been resolved'. Whereas observers did make the linkage between this action and the rights of the Russian minorities, this was not explicitly made by the MO. Rather, the ministry explained this move above all by issues of housing and social infrastructure.[76] Moreover, the statement from the ministry was very candid about the growing dissatisfaction among the officers who were already being pulled out of Lithuania, stating that they were being relocated to places where up to 18 000 servicemen were living without housing. 'The officers are losing confidence in the command of the Russian armed forces, and this is liable to draw the army into political disputes', the MO warned, clearly addressing Western fears of a military coup in Russia.[77] The MO statement described the officers' concerns as 'perfectly understandable', but at the same time attacked 'certain forces' for fanning passions among them: 'far-reaching political ends are being pursued here—to involve the army again in resolving political disputes'. Again, we should note that the MO statement said that the suspension would be valid for 'those units and combined units of the North-Western Group of Forces and the Baltic Fleet for which the appropriate amenities have not been created in the places to which they are being withdrawn'.[78] In a related statement, a spokesman for the General Staff openly suggested that Russia's officers were turning against their leaders, for which he

blamed 'certain circles' in the Baltic states.[79] As El'tsin signed the order to halt the withdrawal, Deputy Defence Minister Gromov was quoted as saying that the process might take another seven or eight years, owing to logistical problems. Deputy Foreign Minister Vitalii Churkin, on his part, justified the suspension by referring not to compatriots in general but to the unsolved issues related to military pensioners and their families.[80]

Shortly before the president signed the order to halt the pull-out, Major General Nikolai Tailakov, leading the process of withdrawal of the Russian forces in Latvia, told *SM-Segodnya* that Moscow's plan was now to re-start the withdrawal only in 1994. 'I consider this decision to be fully justified', the general said, pointing to Latvia's lack of support for the building of houses for officers in Russia—but making no reference to the diaspora in general.[81] Only a few days after President El'tsin's decree, Lt-Gen. Fedor I. Melnichuk, the first deputy commander of the North-Western Group of Forces, gave a first-hand account of how the Russian officers were experiencing the withdrawal. The general said he was fearful for the morale of the servicemen, above all because of the 'unspecific and unplanned character of the work'. As for the most recent orders to halt the pull-out, he interpreted those as 'demands for an activation of the work on new places of relocation of the forces, since we already have experience that when the forces move to new places, if it is not completely empty there, it is almost empty ... To us, the question of housing is the most pressing one'.[82] The contrast with El'tsin's linkage thus became clear as General Melnichuk explained Russia's delay in pulling out by the lack of housing in Russia. Later that same month Melnichuk repeated this, predicting that the forces, owing to housing problems, would remain in the Baltic through most of 1994 and perhaps into early 1995.[83]

In late 1992 Vladimir Kandalovsky and his co-chairman of the Coordinating Council Evgenii Milashchenko, were both dismissed from the armed forces, as the MO made an effort to regain its authority over its forces in the Baltic. However, illustrating the radicalism that characterised a significant part of the servicemen at the time, both continued to serve as leaders of the Coordinating Council of the Officers' Assembly. In an interview in early 1993 the two were as uncompromising as ever. 'Our sin was to defend the people, and it seems we did it for real', Kandalovsky said. Notably, when describing the reasons for their continued concern, the two leaders did not mention the diaspora, but only the conditions of the officers who were being taken out of service.[84] There can be no doubt that the military by 1992–93 was in a troubled state. Across political systems, the military tends to rate stability highly; the post-Soviet realities offered anything but that: the Soviet system of authority was breaking up, and new ones were contending for leverage, and the forces themselves found themselves deprived of the material security that they had enjoyed in the Soviet era. 'Conversion' was the name of the game for the military industry; for hundreds of thousands of troops, it was 'withdrawal'. From the GDR alone, half a million troops were returning. Moreover, they did so first and foremost through the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad and through Lithuania, thereby putting the local military infrastructure under additional pressure. Under these circumstances the housing situation of the military deteriorated rapidly. By August 1993 *Krasnaya zvezda* reported that some 125 000 officers in Russia were virtually homeless. On top of that,

an additional 75 000 officers and warrant officers who were dismissed from the army or volunteered to leave the forces were eligible for state housing. By the time the withdrawals were completed, an estimated 400 000 officers would be in line to receive such housing.[85] Dissatisfaction was brewing also among the troops in the Baltic states. The toll on the forces became a focus of attention not only in *Krasnaya zvezda*, but was also covered eagerly by nationalist and communist newspapers. For instance, in September 1992 *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, a newspaper close to the Communist Party, published a letter from a group of wives of air force servicemen in Latvia. In their words, a pull-out had been planned for no earlier than 1994, but had now been speeded up to begin that same year, 'although the government of Russia is not at all prepared'. 'The main problem is housing!', the women wrote. 'These and other problems are making it impossible for us to live on in Latvia, but we also cannot leave, since it is impossible for us to go anywhere'.[86] In the Supreme Soviet, the co-chairman of Otchizna, a faction organising mostly military deputies, Boris Tarasov, described recent Russian policies in the Baltic as 'ill-considered and obviously criminal'. He too emphasised the toll on the servicemen. But he also pointed to the losses in terms of territorial control: 'the efforts throughout many centuries, which led to an access to Baltic Sea, have been undone completely'.[87]

The lack of accommodation for the officers was not the only reason for the slowness of the withdrawal and for its suspensions. For understandable reasons, the Baltic states secured a reduction of the Russian troops by persuading Russia to agree that no new conscripts would return to replace those who left after serving their time. This, in turn, left units very much below strength, and delayed the transport of hardware etc. Whereas this certainly was an argument that could be misused by the Russian side, this was a real effect, as has been pointed out by military analysts.[88] Adding to the military's dissatisfaction was the increasing level of confrontation between locals and the Russian forces. On the one side, local authorities complained of the troops' lack of respect for their countries' independence; the Russians conducted manoeuvres, violated Baltic airspace, and ignored local customs regulations and power enforcement organs largely at their own discretion. On the other side, locals were becoming increasingly daring in their approaches towards the Russian forces. In May 1992 some 2000 environmental activists had made their way into the nuclear base at Paldiski before they were stopped by armed soldiers.[89] That same month it was also reported in Russia that a group of unarmed Russian servicemen working on the border troops' communication cables had come under armed attack from 'Latvian militiamen'. One private was wounded, the rest were arrested, and only released after the Russian side protested.[90] In Estonia, CIS C-in-C Shaposhnikov and Russian defence minister Grachev in the summer of 1992 both authorised the troops to use force, if necessary, to defend themselves and their installations. By the autumn of 1993 General Melnichuk complained that the forces were 'very much disturbed by anti-army propaganda'—above all around election times. The bases would be picketed by locals, most of them youths.[91] At this stage, not only a long-term security problem of inter-state relations was perceived, but also a shorter-term one, related to the risk of uncontrolled escalation of local tensions as local military commanders got involved in confrontations.[92]

The way things turned out in the end, Moscow did manage to complete the withdrawal in a controlled manner. The completion of the withdrawal on the last day of August 1994 was low-key, and so were the celebrations in Estonia and Latvia; both very different from the ceremony when the last soldier left Germany on that same day.[93] Still, the completion of the withdrawal was not quite as dignified as the Moscow leadership would pretend. Less than a week before the August 1994 deadline, dissatisfaction boiled over among naval officers in Tallinn, as four hundred officers threatened not to leave their headquarters. They were protesting at their treatment by Moscow authorities and demanding guarantees that they would be secured housing when they returned to Russia. In an open letter to President El'tsin, the officers said many had been tricked into retirement, with the promise of accommodation that did not exist as more than 'holes in the ground'. Moreover, the fleet was not being withdrawn, 'but rather demobilised in place. We are told to look after ourselves'. An Estonian government spokesperson confirmed that the Russians were retiring people as young as 36, and leaving them behind to be taken care of by the local authorities.[94]

Conclusions

People rarely do things for just one reason at a time. And the things they do rarely serve only one purpose. Several arguments may be put forward that each contribute to explaining why the Russian side opted to explicitly link the diaspora issue with the issue of the military withdrawal. In the introductory section on the President and the MID, I explained the linkage made by these actors, and the fluctuations in their foreign policy rhetoric in general, as adjustments made to end the opposition's monopoly on a cause assumed to be important to the public.

By the second half of 1992 several circumstances—the Baltic citizenship legislation that was taking shape, the dissatisfaction in the military over their social conditions, the tense political situation—came together to make linking seem a sensible thing to do on the Russian side. It may be speculated that El'tsin's high-profile initiative in October 1992 in fact was quite spontaneous; the President even at this early stage was in the habit of making important policy choices lightheartedly. In any case, the linkage took on a life of its own, and became the focus of much attention. It is outside the scope of this article to discuss what Russia in the end achieved with this policy. On the other hand, it should be emphasised that the political and economic costs to Russia would have been very serious if it had opted to go all the way and attempted to keep the forces in the Baltic indefinitely. To President El'tsin, whose image was that of the man who brought democracy to Russia, this was not a real option.

It also appears that in the armed forces, too, the withdrawal was taken as a foregone conclusion. Opposition, be it on the part of local commanders or of Defence Minister Grachev, related to the manner in which the withdrawal was taking place, and not the withdrawal itself. It seems most likely that Grachev's initiatives on the withdrawal, too, to a significant degree were reactive in character—triggered by events not really related to the diaspora issue *per se*. Dissatisfaction was at a threateningly high level in the forces in the Baltic; as we have seen, the linkage made by El'tsin in October

1992 first started as a boycott of the withdrawal by local officers, which was later taken up by a MO trying to stay on top of events. Moreover, exploiting the issue of the diaspora made sense for Grachev personally since he could safely assume that this was an issue close to the hearts of senior officers who had no special liking for him personally. And, given that it was important to Grachev to appear as an effective and competent leader, focusing on political concerns rather than logistical hurdles made more sense. By October 1993 Grachev had even more reason to re-direct frustrations, having stretched the loyalty of his subordinates to the utmost on the orders of El'tsin. With the concessions ultimately made by Estonia and Latvia on the issue of the social protection of military pensioners, Grachev and El'tsin himself also appeared to have achieved tangible results from the negotiations. That was important not least in relation to the mood within the military forces.

From this material, one conclusion that comes out very clearly is that military servicemen were deeply concerned over their own material well-being in a time of great insecurity. Hundreds of thousands of servicemen had already been withdrawn to Russia, and many of them had been left practically in open fields. In this situation of remarkable turbulence, the servicemen acted politically first and foremost on their own fundamental needs. It was a matter of priority, of the intensity vs. the character of sentiments: there is every reason to think that the great majority of officers deplored the break-up of the USSR, the loss of military control over the Baltic, and the treatment of the 'compatriots'—especially in Estonia and Latvia. Still, it was their own individual fate, and not that of their compatriots, that came first when the military in the Baltic states on their own initiative declared a moratorium on the withdrawal.

For the Baltic states, drawing the attention of the outside world to Russia's diaspora-withdrawal linkage was a clever policy. Among Russia's arguments to slow down the withdrawal, this linkage had implications that were potentially far-reaching, and it was therefore easily deemed unacceptable in the international community. That is not to say that the Baltic states did not worry about Russian foot-dragging; if the world got used to the status quo, the forces might, some believed, have dug in their heels for good.

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[1] This happened by a presidential decree signed on 27 January 1992. See 'Decree of the President of the Russian Federation on the Transfer of the North-Western Group of Forces and the Baltic Fleet to the Jurisdiction of the Russian Federation', published in *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 1 February 1992, in FBIS-SOV-92-024. Only in May 1992 did El'tsin decree the establishment of the Russian Federation armed forces. Simultaneously, he assumed the office of supreme commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the Russian Federation, and as Russia's first defence minister. Itar-Tass, 7 May 1992, in FBIS-SOV-92-090.

[2] In fact, a small number of servicemen were to remain for some time longer, at bases including Paldiski in Estonia and Skrunda in Latvia.

[3] For the purpose of this article I will use the term 'diaspora' to describe a community separated from its putative homeland. I will use 'compatriots' (*sootechestvenniki*) as a general term to describe the categories whose rights different Russian actors were speaking up for—categories that on the Russian side were defined also as *etnicheskie rossiyane, russko-yazychnye* or *russkie*). The issue of defining the Russian diaspora in the Baltic states is dealt with in more detail later in the article.

[4] John W. R. Lepingwell, 'The Russian Military and Security Policy in the 'Near Abroad', *Survival*, 36, 3, Autumn 1994, pp. 81–82.

[5] The academic focus on a possible 'russification' (in an ethnic sense) of Russian foreign policy was less prevalent, but was represented at this time by works including Jeff Chinn & Robert Kaiser, *Russians as the New Minority* (Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1996); Paul Kolstoe, *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics* (London, Hurst, 1995); Neil Melvin, *Forging the New Russian Nation. Russian Foreign Policy and the Russian-Speaking Communities of the Former USSR*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Russian and CIS Programme Discussion Paper 50, 1994; and Vladimir Shlapentokh, Munir Sendich & Emil Payin (eds); *The New Russian Diaspora: Russian Minorities in the Former Soviet Republics* (Armonk, NY, M. E. Sharpe, 1994).

[6] Bruce D. Porter & Carol R. Saivetz, 'The Once and Future Empire: Russia and the 'Near Abroad', *The Washington Quarterly*, 17, 3, 1994, pp. 76–77.

[7] Mark Smith, *Pax Russica, Russia's Monroe Doctrine* (London, Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, 1993), p. 31.

[8] Zbigniew Brzezinski, 'The Premature Partnership', *Foreign Affairs*, 73, 4, March–April 1994. Other studies that represent similar lines of thinking include Leon Aron, 'The Emergent Priorities of Russian Foreign Policy', in Leon Aron & Kenneth M. Jensen (eds), *The Emergence of Russian Foreign Policy* (Washington DC, United States Institute of Peace Press, 1994); and Paul Goble, 'Russia and its Neighbors', *Foreign Policy*, No. 90, Spring 1993.

[9] Franklyn Griffiths; 'From Positions of Weakness: Foreign Policy of the New Russia', *International Journal*, XLIX, Autumn 1994, p. 699.

[10] 'As its World View Narrows, Russia Seeks a New Mission', *The New York Times*, 29 November 1993.

[11] Pavel Baev, 'Russian Military Thinking and the 'Near Abroad', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, December 1994, pp. 531–532.

[12] See Vera Tolz, 'What is Russia: Post-Communist Debates on Nation-Building', paper presented at the 1997 AAASS convention, Seattle, WA; and Vera Tolz, 'Conflicting "Homelands Myths" and Nation-State Building in Postcommunist Russia', *Slavic Review*, 57, 2, Summer 1998.

[13] For a convincing analysis of phases in the regime's foreign policy see Neil Malcolm & Alex Pravda, 'Introduction', in Neil Malcolm, Alex Pravda, Roy Allison & Margot Light, *Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996). For a parallel analysis of policy phases related to the diaspora issue see Neil J. Melvin, 'The Russians: Diaspora and the End of Empire', in Charles King & Neil J. Melvin (eds), *Nations Abroad. Diaspora Politics and International Relations in the Former Soviet Union* (Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1998).

[14] According to the 1989 census, 50.8% of the Soviet population were ethnic Russians (*russkie*), while the corresponding figure for the RSFSR was 81.5%. Goskomstat SSSR, *Natsional'nyi sostav naseleniya SSSR* (Moscow, Finansy i statistika, 1991), pp. 9.

[15] A detailed discussion of the different definitions of russianness that were employed is provided in Melvin, *Forging the New Russian Nation. Russian Foreign Policy and the Russian-Speaking Communities of the Former USSR*, pp. 17–22. These terms are also discussed in Sven Gunnar Simonsen, 'Raising "the Russian Question": Ethnicity and Statehood—*Russkie* and *Rossiya*', *Nationalism & Ethnic Politics*, 2, Spring 1996, pp. 91–110.

[16] Kolstoe, *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics*, p. 109.

[17] For an analysis of the military's vote see James Sherr, 'Russia's Elections—the Military Implications', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, February 1994, pp. 67–68.

[18] 'Vyvod voisk iz Pribaltiki priostanovlen. Odna iz prichin—narusheniya prav russkikh', *Izvestiya*, 30 October 1992; 'Fury in Baltics over Yeltsin Troops Decree', *The Independent*, 31 October 1992; *Facts on File World News Digest*, 19 November 1992.

[19] 'Rossiya ne sobiraetsya ushchemlyat' interesy Pribaltiki', *Kommersant-Daily*, 31 October 1992; 'Vyvod voisk iz Pribaltiki priostanovlen. Odna iz prichin—narusheniya prav russkikh', *Izvestiya*, 30 October 1992.

[20] 'Yeltsin Asks U.N. to Help Russians in the Baltics', *The New York Times*, 8 November 1992. This effort did not pay off: the General Assembly shortly after adopted a resolution demanding the 'complete withdrawal of foreign military forces' from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. UPI, 26 November 1992.

[21] 'Prikaz Prezidenta Rossii do voisk ne doveden', *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 4 November 1992.

[22] 'President's Baltic Move. Are Internal Political Priorities Coming to the Fore?', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 3 November 1992, in FBIS-SOV-92-214.

[23] Reuters, 10 June 1993.

[24] *RFE/RL Daily Brief*, 25 June 1993.

[25] Estimates by IISS. *The Military Balance 1992–1993* (London, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1993).

[26] Chinn & Kaiser, *Russians as the New Minority*, p. 122.

[27] See Riina Konka, 'Estonia: A Difficult Transition', *Transition*, 2, 1, 1 January 1993.

[28] Baltfax, 6 March 1992, in FBIS-SOV-92–046.

[29] Itar-Tass, 8 May 1992; FBIS-SOV–92–092.

[30] Interfax, 6 August 1992, in FBIS-SOV–92–152.

[31] Text distributed by the MID at the meeting of 6 August. From Ekho Litvy, 7 August 1992, reprinted in Rossiiskii nezavisimyi institut sotsial'nykh i natsional'nykh problem, *Nesokrushimaya i legendarnaya. V ogne politicheskikh batalii 1985–1993 gg.* (Moscow, Terra, 1994), pp. 427–428.

[32] 'Will a colonialist become a citizen?' *Moscow News*, No. 40, 1992. That did not do much to please the 'national-patriots', however. One opposition newspaper described Kozyrev's speech and the MID warnings of political sanctions as 'a light political flirt' with no serious implications, and stated that if Russia really had the will, the status of the 'Russian speakers' could be changed at any time. 'Igra s ognem', *Literaturnaya Rossiya*, 2 October 1992.

[33] 'Pavel Grachev shantazhiruet Rigu i Tallinn po sobstvennoi initsiative, utverzhdayut rossiiskie diplomaty', *Izvestiya*, 22 October 1993.

[34] *Ibid.* Accordingly, deputy foreign minister Vitalii Churkin was reported as saying that Russia would not 'link the withdrawal of its troops from Latvia and Estonia with other problems'. Radio Rossii, 27 October 1993, in FBIS-SOV-93–208. That was not the first time Churkin sent out signals contrary to those of more senior politicians. Neither was it the most remarkable occasion: on 1 November, only two days after El'tsin's first 'linking' decree, Churkin said the withdrawal should not be linked to the Russian minority's rights, and that the two questions should be solved in accordance with international law, which prohibited any military presence in a foreign state without its consent. 'There are no reasons to be too excited about the decision of President Boris El'tsin to suspend the withdrawal', he told a briefing. According to Churkin, moreover, it was not Russia's policy to link the two issues. Asked whether El'tsin's decision was the result of military pressure, however, Churkin did not deny this: 'the opinions of Defence Ministry officials are taken into account indeed, but decisions are made by the President'. Itar-Tass, 1 November 1992, in FBIS-SOV-92–212.

[35] 'Russia seems to take steps back on reform', *Boston Globe*, 19 January 1994; 'CIS and Baltic countries are focus of Russia's immediate vital interests', report from Itar-Tass, reprinted in *Krasnaya zvezda*, 19 January 1994; Reuters, 18 January 1994.

[36] 'CIS and Baltic countries are focus of Russia's immediate vital interests', report from Itar-Tass, reprinted in *Krasnaya zvezda*, 19 January 1994. The MID later claimed that Kozyrev had been quoted out of context. This was, however, the habit of the MID at the time; several of Kozyrev's radical statements in this period were subject to later denials. 'Moscow Backpedals in Row over Baltic Troops', *Financial Times*, 20 January 1994.

[37] Anatol Lieven, 'Estonia Accused of "Apartheid" over Russians', *The Times*, 7 May 1994.

[38] 'Summary of Estonian-Russian Treaty on Troop Pullout', BNS, 27 July 1994.

[39] 'Iz Latvii zavershen vyvod rossiiskikh voisk', 3 September 1994, MA (Broadcast), transcript from WPS Agency/RFE/RL Research Institute, 5 September 1994.

[40] 'Baltic States Mark End of Russian Troop Presence', Reuters, 31 August 1994.

[41] Charles J. Dick, 'Initial Thoughts on Russia's Draft Military Doctrine', *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 5, 4, December 1992, p. 553. See also James M. Greene, 'The Peacekeeping Doctrines of the CIS', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 5, 4, 1993.

[42] Charles J. Dick, 'The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 6, 1, 1994.

[43] Melvin, 'The Russians: Diaspora and the End of Empire', p. 39.

[44] 'General says "Great Russia" will Return', *The Independent*, 25 July 1992.

[45] It is worth nothing that reports even as early as the end of 1991 pointed out that Soviet soldiers and officers in the Baltic had begun protesting against the plans to relocate them eastward, fearing precisely a lack of proper housing. See Dzintra Bungs, 'Latvia: Laying New Foundations', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 3 January 1992.

[46] Interfax, 20 October 1992, in FBIS-SOV-92–204.

[47] Radio Rossii, 22 October 1992, in FBIS-SOV-92–206.

[48] 'Vyvod rossiiskikh voisk prodolzhaetsya, prichem iz dal'nego zarubezhya on idet bolee organizovanno, chem iz blizhnego', *Krasnaya zvezda*, 3 November 1992.

[49] Itar-Tass, 23 September 1992; FBIS-SOV-92–186. This interview took place shortly after agreement had been reached on a mid-1993 withdrawal from Lithuania.

[50] 'Moskva priostanovlyaet vyvod voisk iz Baltii', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 31 March 1993.

[51] *Ibid.*

[52] 'Voiska pokinut Baltiyu togda, kogda russkikh budet zashchishchat' zakon', *Diena* (semi-official Latvian newspaper), 21 September 1993.

[53] 'Dve formuly vyvoda rossiiskikh voisk iz stran Baltii', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 27 May 1993.

[54] Agence France Presse, 20 October 1993.

[55] 'Russia Shifts Doctrine on Military Use', *The Washington Post*, 4 November 1993.

[56] Radio Mayak, 16 November 1993, in FBIS-SOV-93–220.

[57] 'Estonia asks West to Press for Russian Withdrawal', *The Guardian*, 12 May 1994; UPI, 6 May 1994.

[58] Reuters, 6 May 1994.

[59] This author's survey of the media coverage from this period indicates that Prime Minister (from December 1992) Viktor Chernomyrdin and CIS JAF Commander (until August 1993) Shaposhnikov only participated to a very modest degree in the debates over the Baltic states and the military forces there.

[60] For an overall assessment of the character of the Afghan veteran officers who came to hold influential positions under El'tsin see Harriet Fast Scott; 'Rise of the Afghantsi', *Air Force Magazine*, August 1993.

[61] A good analysis of the civil-military relations dimension of the October events is given in James H. Brusstar & Ellen Jones, *The Russian Military's Role in Politics*, McNair Paper 34, January 1995.

[62] 'Russia Shifts Doctrine on Military Use', *The Washington Post*, 4 November 1993.

[63] 'Rossiiskie voennye novykh rasporyazhennii ne poluchali', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 3 April 1993.

[64] For instance, Lt-Gen Fedor I. Melnichuk said in November 1993 that Russia had some 25 000 personnel in Latvia and Estonia, 18 000 of these located in Latvia. However, Latvia's defence minister Pavlovskis said the Russians had inflated the number, and that the Russians had only about 13,000 troops in his country. 'To Latvians, a Single Russian Soldier Is Still One Too Many', *The New York Times*, 30 November 1993.

[65] Lepingwell, 'The Russian Military and Security Policy in the "Near Abroad" ', pp. 81–82.

[66] Mark Webber, *The International Politics of Russia and the Successor States* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 182, based on several sources, mostly RFE/RL publications.

[67] *Rossiiskie vesti*, 17 November 1993, in FBIS-SOV-93–220.

[68] 'Russia Wants to Ratify Treaty with Latvia—but can't Afford to', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 10 June 1992, in *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, XLIV, 23, 8 July 1992, p. 19.

[69] 'Ex-Soviet Army Still in Estonia', *The Washington Times*, 2 June 1992.

[70] Col. Vadim Solov'ev, 'Withdrawing Russian Federation troops from Baltics, or drawing military into new political maelstrom?', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 17 October 1992, translated in *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, XLIV, 42, 18 November 1992, p. 17.

[71] Smith, *Pax Russica. Russia's Monroe Doctrine*, pp. 31–35.

[72] 'Fleet Personnel Discontented', *Pravda*, 21 November 1991, in FBIS-SOV-91–228.

[73] Roy Allison, 'Military Factors in Foreign Policy', in Neil Malcolm, Alex Pravda, Roy Allison & Margot Light, *Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 265.

[74] 'Officers of 15th Army Intend to Appeal to Constitutional Court', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 23 September 1992, in FBIS-SOV–92–186.

[75] 'Baltiiskie ofitsery obyavili boikot ministerstvu', *Megapolis-Ekspress*, 21 October 1992; Radio Rossii, 10 October 1992, in FBIS-SOV-92–198.

[76] Itar-Tass, 20 October 1992.

[77] 'Russians halt troop removal', *The Washington Times*, 21 October 1992.

[78] 'Troops must be Withdrawn from Baltic Region only to Places with Amenities' (statement from the Russian Federation MO), *Krasnaya zvezda*, 21 October 1992, in FBIS-SOV-92–204.

[79] Radio Rossii, 22 October 1992, in FBIS-SOV-92–206.

[80] 'Russia says Baltic Pullout could take Years', *The Herald*, 31 October 1992.

[81] 'Generaly v osade i v dosade', *SM-Segodnya*, 30 October 1992.

[82] 'Vyvod rossiiskikh voisk iz Baltii. Dva vzglyada na odin vopros', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 4 November 1993.

[83] 'To Latvians, a Single Russian Soldier is Still One Too Many', *The New York Times*, 30 November 1993.

[84] 'Opasno: Armeiskaya elita!' *SM-Segodnya*, 9 March 1993.

[85] *Krasnaya zvezda*, 19 August 1993, quoted in Konstantin E. Sorokin, 'Russia and the Former Soviet Union', in Constantine P. Danopoulos & Cynthia Watson (eds), *The Political Role of the Military. An International Handbook* (London, Greenwood Press, 1996), pp. 395–396.

[86] 'Pismo zhen rossiiskikh voennosluzhashchikh v Latvii', *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 26 September 1992, reprinted in *Nesokrushimaya i legendarnaya*, pp. 431–432.
[87] Otchizna press conference, 11 November 1992, *Official Kremlin International News Broadcast*.
[88] *The Military Balance 1993–94* (London, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1993), p. 94.
[89] 'Ex-Soviet Army still in Estonia', *The Washington Times*, 2 June 1992.
[90] 'Anti-army Actions: Chance or Provocation? If the Latter is True, Military Intend to Shoot', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 23 May 1992, in FBIS-SOV-92–103.
[91] 'Vyvod rossiiskikh voisk iz Baltii. Dva vzglyada na odin vopros', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 4 November 1993.
[92] See e.g. Eugene B. Rumer, *The Building Blocks of Russia's Future Military Doctrine* (Santa Monica, RAND, 1994), p. 20.
[93] Reuters, 31 August 1994.
[94] 'Troops want Flats before Baltic Pullout', *The Guardian*, 27 August 1994.