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**J. Hedenskog, V. Konnander, B. Nygren,
I. Oldberg and Ch. Pursiainen (eds.),
Russia as a Great Power: Dimensions
of Security Under Putin, London:
Routledge, 2005, 464 pages.**

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- 1 In this edited volume the authors analyze the first period of Putin's rule from a number of different security dimensions. The first part of this volume explores the complexities of Russia's external security environment. In the first chapter, "Russia as a Great Power," Iver Neumann asks how Russia can exploit its post-9/11 geostrategic position, in a way that is captured by, or predicted by, realist and constructionist theories. For Neumann, Russia continues to have a role as a transatlantic balancer if it chooses not to integrate with an enlarging Europe, a route which Russia has seemingly undertaken since this volume was written. Ingmar Oldberg, in "Foreign Policy Priorities Under Putin: A *tour d'horizon*," uses Russian security and economic means to maintain its great power status and comes to the conclusion that Putin has developed a differentiated foreign policy that is able to assert Russia's regional and remaining global power in an international environment characterized by quickly waning US hegemony. For Jakub Godzimirski, in "Russia and NATO: community of values or community of interests", waning US hegemony is not so much the concern as the development of Russian NATO relations in the early 21st century. For Godzimirski the "value gap" between Russia and NATO security concerns have been narrowing but not to the point where Russia will be accepted unconditionally as a member of the Western security community anytime soon.
- 2 These same issues are explored in a slightly more theoretically rigorous fashion in Mette Skak's "The Logic of Foreign and Security Policy Change in Russia", wherein she uses the construct of two level games to understand, or at least unveil, the underlying logic behind Putin's security and foreign policy. Skak predicts "change for the better" because the domestic forces and external actors have been able to negotiate solutions to the games that have enabled the Putin regime to negotiate between nationalist forces and external threats, without losing its footing even on such complicated issues as NATO enlargement, the Chechen war, and "defection" of the GUUAM countries.
- 3 In the next part of this volume, "Dimensions of regional security," the authors map Putin's policies to deal with regional powers and countries regarded as part of the near abroad. Vilhelm Konnander, in "What Prospects for Russia in the Baltic Sea Region? Cooperation or Isolation", begins his exploration of the questions by assuming that defining Russia as a great power has always been "deeply problematic" and that Russia may indeed no longer meet any of the criteria for great power status, save for continuing to believe that it is one.
- 4 Jakob Hedenskog, in "Filling 'the gap' Russian Security policy towards Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova under Putin," offers an interesting test case for this reviewer given the different paths that events took in all of these states following the publication of this volume. Hedenskog is certainly correct when he concludes that Russia will view the political enlargement of the EU and NATO as a threat, but rely more on economic means to fill in the 'gap' that exists between Russia and Western powers regarding these states.
- 5 In "Russia's relations with Georgia under Putin: The impact of 11 September", Bertil Nygren examines the evolution of Putin's security policy in "the most unstable and insecure part

of Russia's immediate neighborhood" in the context of Putin's "cooperation" with the West following the attacks of 9/11. Nygren predicts that despite the intense security concerns and cautions raised by having the US and NATO intimately involved in Georgia's security, the Russians will pragmatically negotiate this relationship, which, despite the occasional stray missile and claims of interference in domestic affairs, has largely been the case since the volume was published.

6 Lena Jonson, in "Understanding Russia's Foreign Policy Change: The Cases of Central Asia and Iraq", covers a dynamic set of regional relationships extending from involvement in US/Iranian standoff over nuclear research and development projects to the conflict over US and Russian basing rights in Kyrgyzstan. Her analysis is that Russia's policy was driven by different explanations depending upon the time period and that the international structure and institutional rivalry explanations were most useful before 9/11. As the involvement of the United States in the region increased, in the midst of Russian overtures to the US for joining their respective "war(s) on terror," instrumental and socializing explanations began to offer more theoretical traction for explaining Russia's policies.

7 The third part of this volume, "The internal dimensions of security", examines the internal security issues including the ability to maintain effective force structures and military-industrial base. In "Putin, the army, and military reform," Isabelle Facon maps out the early Putin necessities and strategies for military reform and repairing civil-military relations in the cloud of the Chechen wars. For Facon the Putin regime has been able to keep military-civil relations on a pragmatic keel through difficult times, and ends on the optimistic note that greater contact with Western militaries may become an "engine of future military reform" in the interests of the West.

8 Roland Götz, in "Russian economic security in a medium-term perspective", had one of the more difficult tasks in this volume because his predictions and analysis lie at the economic core of Russia's current assertiveness on the international scene. Long term crises forecast by Götz do not substantially affect the short or medium term growth of the Russian economy, so to a certain extent his article is an accurate depiction of growth at least out to 2010-2015 where the long term potential crises have not yet whittled away at the dramatic economic gains that the major external factor – energy prices – have given the Russian economy.

9 In "Forming a new security identity in modern Russia," Nikita Lomagin takes a constructivist approach to analyze the ways in which a new security identity has been discursively constructed under Putin, incorporating new tendencies of thought typified by greater exposure to Western ideas since the fall of the Soviet empire. This reviewer would venture to guess that if Lomagin returned to the data reflecting contemporary attitudes, that Russian public opinion would turn definitely towards hard security concerns, a new security identity perhaps a bit less in flux as Lomagin concludes in her article.

10 Christer Pursiainen, in "Nuclear safety and environmental risks of north-west Russia", is concerned with a very real soft-threat that is the danger of a serious if not catastrophic failure of Soviet era nuclear power stations in northwest Russia. There are regional entities, such as Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and even NATO-Russia Council forums to discuss these issues and consequence management if the disasters come to pass. Russia and other regional states must be engaged in all of these forums given the severity of the problem and the difficulty in predicting exactly which policy mix will produce solutions.

11 In the fourth part of this book, "Terrorism: a new security threat", the authors are writing about yet another set of issues that has dramatically changed based on the "pacification" of the situation in Chechnya, fallout from Iraq and Afghanistan, and the continuing consolidation of the power of the *siloviki* within the Russian polity. Ekaterina Stepanova, in "Russia's approach to the fight against terrorism", begins with a discussion of the impact of the Chechen conflicts on Russian understandings of the terrorist threat and counterterrorist policy and goes

into greatest detail examining the impact of 9/11. Stepanova concludes by outlining strategic options for Russian to follow in fighting terrorism, not surprisingly including pragmatic cooperation with the West and building regional cooperation bodies in the near abroad, but also reaching out to Russia's own 20 million strong internal Muslim community for advice, support, and intelligence, in order to develop a comprehensive counterterror strategy that attempts to disrupt the processes that produce recruits to terror. Pavel K. Baev, in "Counterterrorism as a building block for Putin's regime", takes a slightly different and more critical tack. For Baev "counterterrorism has become a key part of Putin's ideology of 'statism'" a view of Russian political reality demonstrated by events that have occurred since the publication of this volume.

12 In the concluding chapter the editors sum up the preceding discussion and offer some predictions or forecasts about the near future evolution of the Putin regime. Most of the pieces stressed the pragmatic albeit authoritarian nature of the Putin regime. The editors state, somewhat unsurprisingly, but this is again exemplified by subsequent, that terrorism and political instability will remain the main security concerns of the Russian state, and perhaps missed the growing concern over aggressive enlargement of NATO and the proposed placement of ABM systems so close to the Russian borders, yet again the pragmatism that these authors almost uniformly see, has kicked in to prevent these possibly destabilizing events from interrupting Russia's attempts to re-ascend to great power status.

13 This volume provides an excellent and comprehensive overview of the first period of Putin's arrival to, and consolidation of, power, and the authors' forecasts and analysis have been confirmed by events that have occurred since publication. This book is a useful edition to any research collection since many of the pieces summarize and build upon the main arguments in their analysis of the respective dimensions of Russian power that they focus on. This book would be useful as a secondary text in a course on Russian foreign, national or internal security policy, or as a primer on Russia's role in Eurasian politics generally, but would need to be supplemented by a more current general text or more recent peer-reviewed publications.

References

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