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The Politics of Russian Nationalisms

An Intelligence Assessment

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The Politics of Russian Nationalisms

An Intelligence Assessment

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The Politics of Russian Nationalisms

Key Judgments

Information available as of 31 October 1991 was used in this report.

Since 1985 various forms of Russian nationalism have reemerged to become major political forces. The most important nationalist group today is a coalition of nation-building, democratic-minded nationalists associated with Russian President Boris Yel'tsin. Their goal is to establish an independent, economically prosperous Russian nation. To achieve this, they are determined to destroy the remnants of the Communist system and to replace it with political and economic models borrowed from the West. They are willing to jettison the remnants of the Soviet empire and accept the full independence of the non-Russian republics, but they want to maintain strong economic and political ties to some republics, especially Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Kazakhstan, which have the largest Russian populations.

A group of Christian nationalists is currently allied with Yel'tsin's coalition. The Christian nationalists generally support a greater degree of political pluralism and democracy and some limited form of a market economy and usually appear willing to accept the secession of the non-Slavic republics from the union. The Christian nationalists have considerable moral stature in Russia but have been submerged in the broader coalition of Russian nation-building, democratic-minded reformers and have not been able to establish themselves as an independent political force.

A coalition of conservative nationalists—who by Western standards are reactionaries seeking to reimpose an authoritarian regime—remains unalterably opposed to Yel'tsin's goals. These conservative nationalists, in alliance with neo-Stalinists in the Communist Party, were the driving force behind the failed August coup. They believe the policies supported by Yel'tsin and President Gorbachev led directly to the loss of Eastern Europe and in the future will lead to the breakup of the union and the disintegration of Russia itself. The conservative nationalists and neo-Stalinists remain deeply hostile toward the West and the idea of a market economy. Frequently this enmity toward the West is linked to anti-Semitism and "Russophobia," a belief that the Western world is controlled by anti-Russian Jews and capitalists.

The failure of the August coup thoroughly discredited the Communist Party and its neo-Stalinist supporters, accelerated the breakup of the union, and greatly enhanced public support for Yel'tsin. Yel'tsin and his supporters are seeking to use the window of opportunity created by the

coup to push through as much of their program as they can. In the future, however, the conservative nationalists may be able to disrupt Yel'tsin's program by exploiting public fears on key issues. A wide variety of evidence indicates that, although most Russians favor in general terms the establishment of a market economy, they remain strongly opposed to it in specific detail and fear the transition to a new system. Similarly, while most Russians appear willing to allow some republics to secede from the already smaller union—especially those in Central Asia and the Caucasus—they are much less willing to concede the secession of the republics having the largest Russian populations. Finally, conservative Russian nationalists stand ready to exploit the issue of a potential breakup of the Russian Republic as some autonomous regions within Russia press for their own greater autonomy or independence.

The Russian Orthodox Church may play an important role in any future political alliance of Russian nationalists. Since his election as Patriarch last year, Aleksey II has entered into a tenuous de facto alliance with Yel'tsin's coalition and with the Christian nationalists. In the future, however, it seems likely that church leaders will push for measures that place them at odds with the nation-building, democratic-minded reformers. Some church leaders, including Aleksey, apparently hope to have the Orthodox church restored to its prerevolutionary status of a privileged institution. Aleksey, moreover, has made it clear that he shares many of the doubts that the Christian nationalists have about the Christian morality of some Western institutions, such as a market economy

Yel'tsin's coalition is now in a postcoup euphoria and may be at the peak of its popularity. As it begins to grapple with Russia's formidable political and economic problems, there will be considerable potential for some segments of society to turn to chauvinistic forms of nationalism. Historically, societies have often turned to chauvinist or extremist leaders when economic and political conditions combined to produce widespread feelings of national degradation, helplessness, and fear of the future. Within the next year or two, Yel'tsin's popularity will almost certainly decline somewhat because he is unlikely to achieve significant improvement in the living standards of most Russians in the near term. As his popularity declines, the likelihood will increase that more chauvinist nationalists may challenge his position. This will especially be the case if near-famine conditions develop in large areas of Russia or if large numbers of Russians in the non-Russian republics are subject to violence or are forced to migrate to Russia.

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The Politics of Russian Nationalisms

The Reemergence of Russian Nationalisms

Various forms of Russian nationalism have reemerged to become major political forces. Russians see some form of Russian nationalism as the only political force capable of providing an ideology that would legitimize a renewed and reformed Russian government that might, in turn, form the core of a new union. At the same time, the specter of resurgent Russian nationalism has raised concerns in the various republics and in the West because, in the past, Russian nationalism has often been associated with xenophobia, virulent anti-Semitism, chauvinism, and authoritarianism.

The growth in Russian nationalisms appears, in part, to be a response to the nationalist and separatist movements that have come to dominate the politics of most of the republics. As nationalists in other republics have pushed for greater autonomy or outright secession from the union, ethnic Russians have often interpreted these political movements as being directed against themselves. Indeed, nationalists in the republics with the strongest secessionist movements have frequently denounced Russians as "occupiers" and have invigorated their own political movements by calling for an end to Russian domination. These republic movements have, in turn, heightened the Russians' awareness of their own ethnic and national identity.

Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost* provided a strong impetus to the growth of Russian nationalisms. *Glasnost* was originally intended to encourage the Soviet people to improve the existing Marxist-Leninist system, but it quickly became a powerful weapon against the system itself. Although Gorbachev himself apparently believed that, under the tension and cynicism of the Brezhnev system he inherited there lay a basic unity of values among the Soviet people, it quickly became apparent that they had little in common and little desire to remain within the same framework. Russians, in particular, found they had little in common with other ethnic groups and have frequently seen themselves as having suffered the most under Communism. In response, they have turned increasingly to nationalism as a means of establishing some common identity in the ideological and spiritual vacuum of modern Soviet society.

The events surrounding the collapse of the August coup have greatly accelerated the growth of some forms of Russian nationalism. Much of Russian society apparently saw the coup as an attempt by the Communist Party to halt development toward a free, democratic state. Russian President Boris Yel'tsin, in particular, has been able to translate this perception into support for his own political and economic reform geared toward building a Russian nation.

The Reform Nationalists: The Democratic Reformers as Nationalists

Historically, Russian nationalism has assumed a variety of forms. These forms or strains share some common characteristics but have often led individuals to support widely varying positions on specific political issues. In the last few years, various groups of Russian nationalists have generally clustered into two disparate and feuding camps, each in alliance with other political groups. The most important of these nationalist groups today is a coalition of democratic reformers including the Democratic Russia organization associated with Yel'tsin.

The goal of the democratic reformers is to establish an independent, economically prosperous Russian nation. To achieve this, they are determined to destroy the remnants of the Communist system. They are willing, and sometimes eager, to borrow Western political and economic models, although frequently they add that those models must be significantly modified to fit the realities of Russian politics. They appear willing, if necessary, to jettison the remnants of the Soviet empire and accept the full independence

Russian Nationalisms and the Case of Yel'tsin

"If you want to know the basic differences between Western observers of Russian nationalism, ask them to define their subject. If you want to see them quarrel in public, ask one of them to comment on the definition of the other."

Aleksander Yanov
US political scientist

The words nationalist *and* nationalism *often have negative overtones, in both Russian and English, in part because nationalists, especially Russian nationalists, are often identified with policies of national chauvinism, xenophobia, militarism, or anti-Semitism. At the same time, the word* nationalist *is sometimes applied in a positive sense to a broader spectrum of political actors who take pride in their homeland and want to improve it but who would oppose any movement toward national chauvinism. Russian President Yel'tsin, for example, has sometimes been labeled a "nationalist" because he seeks, first and foremost, to promote the interests of Russia. Yel'tsin sometimes refers to Russia's long history and frequently appeals to Russian national pride to gain support for his policies. This has been particularly evident since the failure of the coup in August. Since the coup, Yel'tsin has repeatedly referred to the critical role Russians played in defeating the coup and in securing "freedom" for the entire country. The strong popular response Yel'tsin has generated since the coup and some of his symbolic acts, such as replacing the USSR flag with the prerevolutionary Russian flag, have been seen by many observers in both the USSR and the West as evidence of nationalism. Yel'tsin and most of the political actors allied with him, including Moscow Mayor Popov and St. Petersburg Mayor Sobchak, are thus seen as nationalists primarily in the sense that they are seeking to build a modern, democratic Russia. Yel'tsin claims no special place for Russia vis-a-vis other nations, he asserts no special superiority of Russians or Russian traditions or culture, and his principal appeal is not based on Russia's traditional claim to its own unique path of development, but rather that it consciously needs to adopt Western—that is, foreign—political and economic systems. Yel'tsin and his allies thus have little in common with other nationalists such as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy or Valentin Rasputin who consciously and consistently base their appeal on notions of a special place for Russia, the superiority of Russian traditions or culture, or similar sentiments that appear intended to elevate the Russians' national image of themselves above others. Accordingly, in this paper we refer to the plural* nationalisms *to emphasize that nationalist sentiments and nationalist political figures span a broad spectrum and that, in practice, the various forms of Russian nationalism may have little in common.*

of the non-Russian republics. At the same time, however, they recognize the advantages of political and economic union with some republics. In the case of Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Kazakhstan, the Russian reformers have a strong attachment to maintaining close political, cultural, and economic links to these republics because of their large Russian populations and broader Slavic ties. After the coup, when the movement for secession from the union seemed greatly strengthened in most republics, Yel'tsin and his aides raised the issue of border settlements for those republics—except the Baltic states—that opt for complete secession. When republic leaders in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and other republics that have large Russian minorities protested, Yel'tsin sent representatives to those republics to confirm Russian recognition of the existing borders and, at the same time, ensure that those republics continued their dialogue on renewing some form of political and economic union with Russia. Yel'tsin and his allies also have a strong interest in the welfare of ethnic Russians in the non-Russian republics. Yel'tsin has been active in seeking agreements from these republics, for example, to respect the rights of ethnic Russians. His most important focus is, nevertheless, on Russia. Yel'tsin has made it clear that, while he will urge the non-Russian republics to respect the rights of ethnic Russians, he will not use force to protect their status or privileges.

Yel'tsin and the reform nationalists have a number of nonnationalist allies. One is a coalition of democratic-minded reformers associated with the "Movement for Democratic Reform," led by former Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, Aleksandr Yakovlev, and Arkadiy Vol'sky. These democratic reformers supported Yel'tsin strongly during the coup. They are distinguished from Yel'tsin's nationalists in that they are more inclined to stress the need to establish democratic institutions throughout the country and less inclined to focus special attention on Russia.

Before the coup, leaders of Democratic Russia criticized Yel'tsin for agreeing to sign the union treaty—a version that they believed would perpetuate a government dominated by a strong central government. Since the coup, Democratic Russia's leaders have gone beyond advocating sovereignty and have been more inclined to accept the independence movements of the various republics. When Yel'tsin raised the issue of borders with any republic opting for full secession, for example, they joined with political leaders from Ukraine and Kazakhstan in criticizing Yel'tsin for attempting to bully the other republics.

A second group of Yel'tsin's current allies is the cluster of former Communist Party reformers associated with President Gorbachev. These men, including Gorbachev, appear to regret the breakup of the Soviet state and want to preserve as much of it as possible. They almost certainly recognize, however, that any union that emerges from the current turmoil will be vastly different from the previous system and must be based largely on voluntary participation by the republics.

Neither the reform democrats of Democratic Russia nor the former Communist Party reformers associated with Gorbachev can currently challenge Yel'tsin's dominance of Russian politics nor alter significantly the policies he intends to implement. Their differences with Yel'tsin's policies are marginal rather than fundamental, and they probably recognize that, if they were to break with Yel'tsin and his reform nationalists, they would be able to generate little public support on their own.

The Christian Nationalists: Submerged in the Democratic Movement

A loose coalition of Christian nationalists is also currently allied with Yel'tsin. They are sometimes referred to by Western observers as "liberal nationalists," although that term is somewhat misleading outside the context of the Russian political spectrum. These Christian nationalists generally support a greater degree of political pluralism and democracy and some limited form of a market economy. They usually are willing to accept the secession of the non-Russian republics from the union, although they often add that secession would do more harm than good to those republics. They are distinguished from other democratic-minded reformers by their fervent attachment to Russian Orthodoxy and Russian traditions and by their especially strong abhorrence of Marxist-Leninist ideology and the heritage of the Bolshevik Revolution. They have been especially prominent in the fight for rehabilitation of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and his writings and frequently identify closely with his ideas, including his suspicion of Western notions of freedom of speech, a market economy, and the role of political parties.

The Christian nationalists have considerable moral stature in Russia but have not formed an effective independent political organization. In August 1989 the Christian Democratic Union of Russia (CDU) was formed under the leadership of former political prisoner Aleksandr Ogorodnikov. The platform called for a multiparty democracy, the separation of powers, free elections, and a "multitiered" market economy. The CDU soon split, however, when a faction broke with Ogorodnikov over the issue of whether to cooperate with newly elected Russian Orthodox Patriarch Aleksey II, whom Ogorodnikov believes is too thoroughly corrupted by his past connections to the KGB. In April 1990 a competing group, the Russian Christian Democratic Movement (RCDM), was founded by Orthodox priest and former political prisoner Gleb Yakunin, Orthodox priest Vyacheslav Polosin, and nationalist writer Viktor Aksyuchits. The three leaders had just been elected to the Russian Congress of

People's Deputies, and the group received sympathetic coverage in the Soviet press. The RCDM grew rapidly, and in February 1991 the Soviet press reported that the RCDM was only one of four political organizations that had attracted the minimum number of adherents to be officially registered. Later, however, the RCDM also split into rival organizations. Opinion polls conducted in Russia before the August coup indicated that only about 1 percent or less of the Russian voting-age population identified the Christian nationalist parties as most closely representing its views.

Since at least the March 1989 elections, the Christian nationalists have generally allied themselves with other democratic-minded reformers in a broad coalition that has been seeking to destroy the power of the Communist Party and open up the Soviet Government and society to Western-style political and economic systems. The Christian nationalists have occasionally been prominent in supporting Russian President Yel'tsin and his policies, and they have participated actively in Democratic Russia, whose leaders have sought to unite a broad spectrum of democratic groups in support of far-reaching reforms. Father Polosin, for example, serves as chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet Committee on Freedom of Conscience and Social Work and works informally as Yel'tsin's adviser on religious affairs. Christian nationalist leaders were active in condemning the August coup and were among Yel'tsin's strongest supporters.

In working with other reform groups, the Christian nationalists have contributed to the strength of the democratic political movement and have helped figures such as Yel'tsin, but at the same time they have been overshadowed by and submerged in the larger democratic reform movement. As a result, although the Christian nationalists have had some success in gaining attention and disseminating their views, they have not established themselves as an independent political force. Today, the Christian nationalists are still subordinate to Yel'tsin's coalition, and the individual Christian nationalist groups have not demonstrated the kind of support that would enable them to function as independent political actors.

The Conservative Nationalists: Still Allied With the Devil?

Another group of Russian nationalists has formed part of the traditionalist opposition to democratic and market-oriented reforms. These nationalists oppose the former Communist Party reformers clustered around Gorbachev and the proreform, nation-building groups associated with Yel'tsin. They generally favor a state-controlled economic system and an authoritarian political system, although their specific proposals have ranged from establishing a military junta to restoring the czarist monarchy. They are frequently strong supporters of the Russian Orthodox Church and see the church as the repository of many specifically Russian values. They are highly suspicious of the West and often warn against reforms that they fear might destroy Russian values and transform Russia into a Western colony. Frequently they are strongly anti-Semitic. In the Russian political spectrum, they are frequently referred to as "conservative nationalists." By Western standards, they are reactionaries who seek to turn back the clock to an authoritarian regime.

The conservative nationalists have joined part of a broader traditionalist political coalition opposed to most democratic and market-oriented reforms. This alliance between conservative nationalists and other traditionalists—the neo-Stalinists—has sometimes been strained. In sharp contrast with the conservative nationalists, the neo-Stalinists want to restore the legacies of Lenin, the Bolshevik Revolution, and Marxism, and they usually reject both the prerevolutionary Russian monarchy and the Russian Orthodox Church.

At the same time, the conservative nationalists share some common values with their political adversaries, the Christian nationalists. Both groups usually appear to be either Russian Orthodox believers or sympathetic to Orthodoxy as an embodiment of the Russian spirit. They are strong supporters of environmental reforms and of measures to preserve historical monuments. They hate the legacy of the Bolshevik

Who Are the Conservative Nationalists?

Unlike most other political groups, the conservative nationalists have made little effort to form an organized political party or movement of their own. Instead, they have formed a loose and informal network to disseminate their ideas. Many of the members of this network are prominent Russian writers, including Valentin Rasputin, Vasiliy Belov, and Vladimir Soloukhin. Before the coup, these and like-minded literary figures largely captured control of the important weekly newspaper Literaturnaya Rossiya *and the monthlies* Nash Sovremennik, Moskva, Slovo, *and* Kuban. *In addition, the conservative nationalists were often able to express their views in publications largely controlled by their neo-Stalinist allies, including* Sovetskaya Rossiya, Molodaya Gvardiya, *and* Voenno-istoricheskii Zhurnal. *Within the USSR Congress of People's Deputies, members of the conservative Soyuz (Union) group of deputies, such as Yuriy Blokhin, often expressed the views of the conservative nationalists.*

Revolution, Lenin, and Marxism-Leninism and often are attracted to the prerevolutionary monarchy and to many ideas of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

Despite their disagreement over the heritage of Leninism, the alliance between the conservative nationalists and the neo-Stalinists has most likely held together because of their agreement on several other issues they consider more critical. Probably most important, they believe that Western-oriented reformers, including Yel'tsin, Gorbachev, Aleksandr Yakovlev, and Eduard Shevardnadze, have been implementing policies that will destroy the Russian empire. They believe the policies initiated by these men have led directly to the loss of Eastern Europe, the secessionist movements in the non-Russian republics, and even to the potential breakup of Russia itself through the granting of self-rule to minorities within the republic. The conservative nationalists and neo-Stalinists have also been allied in their hostility toward the West and the idea of a market economy. This enmity toward the West is frequently linked to anti-Semitism and "Russophobia," a belief that the Western world is controlled by anti-Russian and anti-Soviet Jews and capitalists. They see capitalism as a harsh economic system indifferent to the well-being of the individual and responsible for a mass culture that swamps the populace with Satanic rock music and pornographic films.

The August coup plotters probably were pinning their hopes for success at least partly on the ability of the conservative nationalists and their neo-Stalinist allies to mobilize broad segments of society in favor of the coup. One month before the coup, for example, the conservative newspaper *Sovetskaya Russia* published an appeal to save the country that stressed several themes dear to the hearts of conservative nationalists. The appeal referred to the efforts of "crafty and pompous masters, clever and cunning apostates, and greedy and rich money-grubbers, sneering at us, mocking our beliefs, and taking advantage of our naivete." The appeal appeared to call on the military to overthrow the Russian government, but stopped short of making an explicit call for a coup. Without naming Yel'tsin or Gorbachev directly, the appeal castigated political leaders "who do not love this country, who fawn on foreign patrons, and who seek advice and blessings across the seas." The signatories of the appeal included several coup leaders, including Deputy Defense Minister General Valentin Varennikov, and two men who in August were members of the Emergency Committee that led the coup, Vasiliy Starodubtsev and Aleksandr Tizyakov. They also included several well-known nationalist and neo-Stalinist activists, including Yuriy Bondarev, Yuriy Blokhin, Eduard Volodin, Aleksandr Prokhanov, and Valentin Rasputin.

Before the coup, the conservative nationalists and neo-Stalinists had formed a coalition and received important support from government officials—and coup leaders—including Defense Minister Yazov, KGB Chief Kryuchkov, Interior Minister Pugo, and Prime Minister Pavlov. Last year the traditionalist coalition won Gorbachev's agreement to the formation of a

Russian Communist Party (RCP) under the leadership of neo-Stalinist Ivan Polozkov. Since then, the RCP has served as a tool of the most traditionalist-minded members of the Communist Party. In the fall of 1990, the traditionalists persuaded Gorbachev to back off from implementing economic reforms that would help make the transition to a market economy. In the following months, they forced several of his most important reform-minded advisers to resign or take to the sidelines. In January 1991 they persuaded Gorbachev to at least acquiesce in an attempt to use force against the Lithuanian government.

On balance, however, the coalition of conservative nationalists and neo-Stalinists has proved ineffective in blocking movement toward a more open, democratic, and market-oriented system. The quick collapse of the coup showed clearly how little support the traditionalist coalition had in Soviet society. Even before the coup, it was clear that traditionalists were out of touch with most of Russian society. In June, when then Prime Minister Pavlov asked the Supreme Soviet for extraordinary powers and his request seemed to be supported in speeches from Yazov, Kryuchkov, and Pugo, the Supreme Soviet voted overwhelmingly against Pavlov in support of Gorbachev. Within the Russian Republic, the election in March 1990 for the Russian Congress of People's Deputies indicated that popular support for traditionalist candidates was far weaker than for those supporting democratic and market-oriented reforms. The strong electoral victory of Yel'tsin for Russian President in June 1991 against an array of traditionalist and Communist Party candidates indicated that support for the traditionalist coalition had continued to decline. Opinion polls, likewise, have indicated that public support for traditionalist political figures and policies continues to decline steadily. Yel'tsin's plan before the coup to call for new elections of local soviets was based on his perception—probably correct—that public support for traditionalist officials was so low that new elections would effectively drive most of them from their positions of power in local governments.

Since the coup, public support for neo-Stalinist political figures has gone into a free-fall. The coup served to thoroughly discredit most traditionalist political figures—even those not directly implicated in it. Yel'tsin has acted quickly to capitalize on this and has sought to remove from office any Russian officials who supported the coup. The Communist Party has been effectively destroyed: its assets and archives have been seized, its headquarters sealed, and its activities banned from most workplaces.

This destruction of the party and discrediting of its neo-Stalinist members may also suggest that the alliance between the neo-Stalinists and conservative nationalists is coming to an end. Since the coup, most conservative Russian nationalists have kept a low profile. Valentin Rasputin, for example, was prolific in the months preceding the coup in publishing nationalist political articles. He has published nothing since. Writer Yuriy Blokhin, who is also a USSR people's deputy and leader of the Soyuz deputies group, has sought to distance himself from the coup participants and has stressed his support for peaceful, constitutional change. Blokhin's signature on the July appeal suggests that his current support for peaceful, constitutional change is not one of his core beliefs—it is clearly self-serving and intended to salvage what is left of his political standing. Blokhin, Rasputin, and other conservative nationalist spokesmen clearly understand, nevertheless, that any future response they are able to generate in society must be distinguished from the discredited policies of the neo-Stalinists. It seems possible, therefore, that in the future the conservative nationalists may be less inclined to maintain their alliance with the neo-Stalinists and more inclined to seek other allies or articulate their own nationalist position

The Extremists: From Russia With Hate

The whole of the European integration process is a dangerous conspiracy by Freemasons and Zionists.

Pamyat leader Dmitriy Vasilyev

At the far end of the nationalist spectrum are a few groups that oppose most democratic and market reforms but are so extreme in their views and pronouncements that they have been kept at arm's length by other conservative nationalists and have not effectively joined the traditionalist political coalition.

Pamyat (Memory) is the most well known of these extremist groups, but other groups are also active. When Pamyat emerged from political obscurity in the late 1980s, it received considerable publicity in the Soviet and Western press and was initially accorded some support from traditionalist Communist Party officials, particularly in St. Petersburg (then Leningrad). It has since split into several rival organizations, each espousing some combination of rabid anti-Semitism and obsession with what its members believe is a "Jewish-Masonic conspiracy" to destroy Russia. As it became increasingly apparent that Pamyat members hate Communists as much as they hate Jews and Western capitalists, however, party officials quietly dropped their support for the organization, and some Pamyat leaders have been prosecuted for their public statements calling for expulsion of Jews from positions in government and educational institutions.

police officials suspect Pamyat members have been involved this year in the murders of four Russian Orthodox priests who were either active in the democratic reform movement or were Jewish converts. Pamyat and similar organizations remain on the fringe of the Soviet political spectrum. In elections for the USSR Congress of People's Deputies in March 1989 and for the Russian Congress of People's Deputies in March 1990, no candidate openly associated with Pamyat was elected.

The Dynamics of Nationalism in the New Russia

There is no better breeding ground for parochial nationalism than economic stagnation, the feeling of helplessness, and the fear of tomorrow.

Jerzy Jedlicki, Polish historian

The August coup had at least three immediate effects on the dynamics of Soviet politics: it thoroughly discredited the Communist Party and its neo-Stalinist supporters, it accelerated the breakup of the union, and it greatly enhanced public support for Yel'tsin. In turn, Yel'tsin now faces formidable obstacles. The economy is in shambles, and there is little he can do that would significantly improve it in the next year or so. The breakup of the union exacerbates the economic problems because it threatens to disrupt the economic links that remain among the republics.

The combination of economic deterioration and political disintegration has left many ethnic Russians in the non-Russian republics feeling vulnerable to discrimination or communal violence and has caused many Russians within Russia to wonder if chaos can be avoided. Developments since the coup have reinforced these fears—which were already significant—and suggest that there is considerable potential for large segments of Russian society to turn to chauvinistic forms of Russian nationalism. For example, although Yel'tsin received a strong mandate for his Western-oriented democratic and economic reforms when he won the June election for Russian President, the third-highest vote went to Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, a rabid conservative nationalist whose campaign was characterized by confusing and contradictory polemics against Jews, the market economy, and Western enemies of Russia. Zhirinovskiy received 6 percent of the total vote—far behind Yel'tsin's 57 percent and significantly behind former Premier Ryzhkov's 16 percent. Nonetheless, although Zhirinovskiy may have received some help from the KGB, he campaigned without the benefit of a widespread party organization or grassroots following and drew considerably more votes than other, better known candidates, including former Interior Minister Vadim Bakatin.

In the future, if Yel'tsin's popularity declines and other political leaders who support his form of nation-building nationalism based on Western-oriented reforms are not able to capture part of that loss, larger segments of society could turn to nationalists such as Zhirinovskiy, who would institute more authoritarian or chauvinistic policies. Although the party is no longer a cohesive national force, remnants of it remain in place and could align with anti-Yel'tsin nationalists. This could particularly be the case as Russia confronts three of its most difficult problems: the transition to a market economy, the dissolution of the union, and the potential breakup of Russia.

The Emergence of a Market Economy

The Bolshevik legacy of collective farming and state ownership of nearly all property reinforced a long Russian tradition of village communal agricultural work and close state supervision of most businesses. Many Russian nationalists today—even those who otherwise hate the legacy of Communism—remain profoundly distrustful of a full market economy and private ownership of property, especially private ownership of land. Some, such as conservative nationalist writer Rasputin, believe that a market economy would destroy most traditional Russian values that derive their strength from Russian village life. Others, such as Christian Democratic Movement cochairman Viktor Aksyuchits, recognize that some form of a market economy is needed, but prefer to emphasize that a market economy in Russia must include provisions for full employment, a strong social safety net, and the values of "Christian justice."

Over the past year, both the USSR and the Russian Republic Supreme Soviets have passed a number of laws allowing some limited degree of private enterprise and landownership but have kept heavy restrictions. The hesitancy of these entities to adopt more far-reaching reforms embracing private business activity and private ownership of land reflects the recognition, shared by virtually all Soviet political leaders, that Russian society remains profoundly distrustful of a market economy and private property. This perception is well-founded. Although a wide variety of evidence from public opinion polls and other data indicates that the Russian public is thoroughly disenchanted with Communism and the role of the Soviet central government in the economy and supports the general concept of establishing a market economy, Russians clearly are suspicious about many of the essential components of a market economy and are fearful about the economic insecurity inherent in making the transition to a different system. A poll taken in Russia early this year indicated that almost half the respondents (49 percent) believe it is permissible for some people to be very wealthy if their activity contributes to society's well-being, but a large percentage (40 percent) believe that, under no circumstances should a person be allowed to get much richer than others, because such inequality is immoral. Another poll, conducted in May by a US publishing company, found that even many Russians who favor a market economy in theory are opposed to its application in specific detail. They overwhelmingly oppose private ownership of basic industries and have strong reservations about a market economy.

Before the attempted coup, Christian and conservative Russian nationalists were unable to use successfully the issue of the danger of transition to a market economy to broaden their public support, even though most of Russian society seemed to share their concerns. Their failure to attract more support was partly due to differences among themselves on other issues and to the absence of any other coherent program they could offer to replace the current system. In the meantime, Yel'tsin has been moving quickly to institute his most important reforms while the window of opportunity created by the coup is still open.

It is unclear how much a system of a market economy and private ownership of land he will be able to lock in over the next few years. What is clear is that the Russian economy will continue to experience severe difficulties in the next few years and may experience a fundamental collapse that would result in a highly fragmented, autocratic economic system. In these circumstances, conservative Russian nationalists in particular might be well placed to exploit the inevitable popular discontent in order to push their own political agendas. This would especially be the case if large segments of society came to believe that the market reforms made so far were the cause of their own difficulties. In such a situation, an alliance of conservative nationalists working with other traditionalists, including perhaps some Christian nationalists, could potentially draw upon enormous support in Russian society to reinstitute a more authoritarian system.

The Dissolution of the Union

Another issue that has considerable potential to disrupt Yel'tsin's program of "nation building" is related to the potential secession of some republics from the USSR. Russians across the political spectrum were surprised at the speed of disintegration of the "external empire"—the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the ongoing withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern

Europe, and the reunification of Germany, all of which were accompanied by a strong and ill-concealed anti-Russian sentiment among the peoples of Eastern Europe. Russian nationalists remain divided about the consequences of the loss of this "external empire," but almost all of them see a similar process taking place in the movements of some republics for greater autonomy or outright secession from the USSR.

The loss of the "internal empire" is even more difficult for many Russians to accept because almost all of the non-Russian republics have significant ethnic Russian minorities, and because most of them were, in czarist times, a part of the Russian empire. Indeed, conservative nationalist writers such as Vasiliy Belov, Valentin Rasputin, and Vladimir Kropin have joined with neo-Stalinist writers such as Aleksandr Prokhanov and Eduard Volodin in criticizing any Russian support of republic independence movements. In January, for example, shortly after Yel'tsin condemned the central government's use of force in Lithuania, these nationalist and neo-Stalinist writers signed an open letter accusing Yel'tsin of supporting those who would "dismember the state of Russia and the single Russian national body." The letter accused Yel'tsin of "trampling the national and historical interests of Russia and the Russians" and of seeking the destruction of Russia itself. For Russian nationalists such as Rasputin and neo-Stalinists such as Prokhanov, Russia and the USSR are the same thing, and Russian interests in the non-Russian republics should take priority over any native sentiment for autonomy or secession.

So far, however, the conservative nationalist response to equate Russia with the USSR has not generated enough political pressure to mobilize a significant segment of the Russian population against any of the republic independence movements. On the contrary, public opinion polls indicate that Russians understand and even accept the loss of at least some of the "internal empire." For example, in January, three days after the central government's use of force in Lithuania, a Soviet polling organization asked 962 persons in 13 cities of the Russian Republic whether they approved or condemned the actions of the troops. They replied:

- Approve—29 percent.
- Condemn—55 percent.
- Difficult to answer—16 percent.

Similar polls taken on 16 January showed that, in Moscow and St. Petersburg, 74 percent of those questioned condemned the troops' actions, and 15.4 percent supported them. Two other polls, taken in February and March, indicated that, although ethnic Russians were about evenly split over whether the Baltic republics should be allowed to secede, by a 3-to-1 margin they opposed the use of force by Moscow in dealing with the Baltic republics. Clearly, although many Russians might prefer to keep the union intact, few are willing to sanction the use of force to maintain it. Conservative nationalist appeals for a firm policy in dealing with secessionist republics have received little support in the USSR Congress of People's Deputies, in the Supreme Soviet, or in Russian society.

Even ethnic Russians living in the non-Russian republics seem to be accepting the breakup of the union. Public opinion polls up to the end of 1990 indicated that from one-third to one-half of the Slavic population in the Baltic states supported independence, and that support increased substantially and steadily after the attempts to destabilize the republic governments in January and continued until Baltic independence was recognized in September. Although a hardcore of Russians unalterably opposed to independence may continue trying to subvert the Baltic governments, their ability to mobilize the Russian and other Slavic populations in those republics will probably be marginal.

In other non-Slavic republics, there has been a similar, hardcore Russian minority unalterably opposed to republic movements for political autonomy or outright secession. A public appeal from Russians in Dushanbe last year, for example, captured the sense of panic and indignation apparently felt by many Russians in the periphery. The letter appealed for help against the "fanatical crowds, the bloodletting, the blind hatred, and the pillaging." It criticized the compromises of the central government and warned darkly that religious—that is, Muslim—fanaticism could bring Tajikistan to anarchy. Similarly, in Azerbaijan, Russians have appealed to the Soviet military for protection, complaining that they have become "refugees in their own country."

In most of these republics, however, ethnic Russians constitute a smaller minority than they do in the Baltic states, and opinion polls suggest that a significant number are willing to move back to Russia in the future (see table 1 and inset). In Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, about a third or more of the ethnic Russians would like to return to Russia. In Estonia, western Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, the percentage of Russians who would like to return to Russia is about 20 percent. Soviet ethnographers have noted that an outmigration of Russians from the Central Asian and Caucasus republics began in the mid-1970s and has increased since then. They have also noted that, not surprisingly, those Russians who are most assimilated into the local culture through a knowledge of the local language are the least likely to leave and the most likely to support local independence movements. In Tashkent, for example, public opinion polls indicate that, whereas 37 percent of all Russians have expressed a desire to return to Russia, only 11 percent of those who know the Uzbek language would like to leave.

Table 1
Russians in the Republics

Percent

	1979	1989
Russia	83.5	81.5
Kazakhstan	40.8	37.2
Latvia	32.8	34.0
Estonia	27.9	30.3
Ukraine	21.1	22.7
Kyrgyzstan	25.9	21.5
Byelorussia	11.9	13.2
Moldova	12.8	13.0
Turkmeniya	12.6	9.5
Lithuania	8.9	9.4
Uzbekistan	10.8	8.4
Tajikistan	10.4	7.6
Georgia	7.4	6.3
Azerbaijan	7.9	5.6
Armenia	2.3	1.6

Collectively, these figures and those in the most recent Soviet census suggest that the de-Russification of the periphery will continue in the coming years, perhaps at a rapid pace. The process could snowball and result in Russian flight from areas of Central Asia or the Caucasus. The net result of this in the long run would be to dissolve the few remaining ethnic and cultural bonds between Russia and the peripheral republics, and with them the basis of conservative Russian nationalists to assert some authority over the non-Russian republics. Within the next few years, however, a mass flight of Russians from the peripheral republics would exacerbate problems of Russian unemployment, place severe strains on local social services, and could provoke a severe backlash from Russian nationalists.

Conservative Russian nationalists might be able to increase their support in some circumstances short of a mass flight of Russians from the periphery. Christian nationalists, for example, often claim they do not oppose the secession of the non-Russian republics, but in practice they appear willing to accept the secession of only some republics. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who often appears to reflect the views of many Russian nationalists, apparently described the sentiments of many Russians in his widely disseminated pamphlet *How Shall We Rebuild Russia?*—which generated a considerable response among Russians when it was published last year. Solzhenitsyn proposed that all non-Slavic republics be allowed to secede if they chose to do so, and in the case of the Central Asian republics he indicated that Russia should urge them to go. But Solzhenitsyn argued that Ukraine and Byelorussia were still essentially Russian in their history and culture and that the Ukrainian and Byelorussian languages were merely derivatives of Russian. These republics, he said, should be part of a Slavic union with Russia, although he stated that they should not be forced to join.[1] Furthermore, he argued

[1] Solzhenitsyn's remarks provoked considerable furor among Ukrainians and Byelorussians. In response, Solzhenitsyn published a letter to a Ukrainian human rights activist in which he reiterated that if Ukrainians wanted to secede they should be allowed to do so. At the same time, Solzhenitsyn expressed concern for areas such as the Crimea where ethnic groups are mixed, and he criticized Ukrainian nationalists for ignoring the fact that the present borders of Ukraine were shaped by Lenin.

Attitudes on Emigration of Russians in Non-Russian Areas

In November and December 1990, the Soviet Center for Public Opinion and Market Research polled 1,005 Russian residents of 18 cities outside the Russian Republic on their attitudes toward their status in the republic of their residence. This poll offers a useful snapshot of ethnic Russian sentiment in the Soviet periphery (Answers are given in percentages.):

Question
On the whole, are you satisfied that you live in this republic?

	Yes	No	Difficult to answer
Estonia	51	19	30
Latvia	75	7	18
Western Ukraine	36	21	44
Georgia	62	22	16
Azerbaijan	86	6	10
Kazakhstan	73	11	16
Kyrgyzstan	56	4	40
Tajikistan	61	25	14
Uzbekistan	64	11	25

Question
Would you like to emigrate to Russia rather than remain in this republic permanently?

	Leave for Russia	Remain	Difficult to answer
Estonia	23	50	27
Latvia	16	65	19
Western Ukraine	26	44	31
Georgia	37	36	26
Azerbaijan	5	68	27
Kazakhstan	20	63	17
Kyrgyzstan	31	42	26
Tajikistan	37	38	25
Uzbekistan	38	36	26

Question
A massive Russian exodus from your republic sometime soon is:

	Very likely	Fairly likely	Unlikely	Hardly likely	Don't know
Estonia	12	16	51	3	18
Latvia	3	28	48	2	17
Western Ukraine	16	25	38	2	19
Georgia	10	24	37	4	25
Azerbaijan	16	27	27	8	22
Kazakhstan	2	22	49	4	23
Kyrgyzstan	17	54	11	5	13
Tajikstan	44	35	14	0	7
Uzbekistan	35	45	7	0	13

that northern Kazakhstan, which is inhabited primarily by Russians, be split from the rest of the republic and incorporated into the Slavic union. These views have received considerable support from a broad spectrum of Russian particularly as reflected in public opinion polls. In two polls taken in February and March, for example, Russians appeared about evenly divided over whether to permit the possible future secession of Georgia and Armenia, but a firm majority (59 percent) opposed Ukrainian independence.

Yel'tsin and his coalition of nation-builders have shown acute sensitivity over the breakup of the union, especially the potential secession of Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Kazakhstan. Soon after the coup collapsed, when it became evident that the Ukrainian independence movement was moving ahead rapidly, Yel'tsin issued a statement in which he said Russia reserved the right to raise the issue of a revision of borders with any republic—except the Baltic states—that chose to leave the union. Russian Vice President Rutskoy reiterated this assertion, saying that Russia's bilateral treaties with other republics recognized existing borders only as long as the republics remained within the union. [redacted]

[redacted] later told [redacted] that Yel'tsin's warning on border issues should be taken seriously and that Russian deputies were greatly concerned about areas that were historically part of Russian territory or had large Russian populations.

Yel'tsin hopes to halt the breakup of the union by establishing a new, voluntary confederation. The temporary union structure that was approved on 5 September by the USSR Congress of People's Deputies envisages a voluntary, loose confederation of largely independent states bound primarily by economic ties and interruptible agreements to share some common costs, such as defense. The central government that remains would be severely limited in its powers and strictly subordinated to the republics.

This union agreement remains vague on key points, and there is significant potential for it to break down. Ukrainian leaders, for example, continue to insist that Ukraine will introduce its own currency, which would severely complicate any economic agreements. Central Asian republics, traditionally dependent on subsidies from other republics, may balk at paying taxes to support a common defense if they do not continue to receive subsidies. The remaining republics, particularly Russia, may refuse to continue the subsidies. The Central Asian republics, moreover, are still largely in the hands of authoritarian leaders, and there is a high potential for ethnic conflict if Russians in those republics begin to demand the same political rights as their ethnic brethren in Russia or if the Central Asians begin to discriminate against Russians enough so that the Russian government feels compelled to intervene in some way. In these circumstances, economic ties or political agreements to share costs could become hostage to other issues, especially treatment of ethnic minorities in the republics, and could push some republics to secede entirely. If the current temporary arrangements lead to a more permanent structure, however, then it seems likely that, as long as Russian minorities in the non-Russian republics are not subject to widespread or systematic violence and there is no sudden mass flight of ethnic Russians back to Russia, nationalist calls to maintain the integrity of the union are not likely to generate much response.

The Dissolution of Russia

Conservative nationalists may attempt to tap popular support by trying to portray Yel'tsin and the reformers as insufficiently firm in defending the territorial integrity of Russia itself. The issue of the breakup of Russia emerged in late 1989, when a draft Communist Party platform on nationalities proposed that the Russian Republic be divided into large autonomous regions and that autonomous formations already existing within the USSR be given more authority. Most of the USSR's autonomous formations are located within the Russian Republic. When the 1989 party program was published, Russia had 16 autonomous republics (ASSRs), five autonomous oblasts, and 10 autonomous okrugs. (A decree in July 1991 upgraded the autonomous oblasts to full autonomous republics; see table 2 and map.) Both proposals were widely seen at the time as an attempt by Gorbachev and his supporters to fragment Russia as a means of weakening Yel'tsin's growing power. Both proposals drew immediate fire, not only from Yel'tsin's supporters but also from Christian and conservative Russian nationalists, who feared that the proposals would weaken the cohesiveness of the republic. After Yel'tsin was elected chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet in May 1990 and the Russian legislature issued a declaration of sovereignty the following month, Gorbachev continued pursuing this divide-and-rule strategy and, behind the scenes, apparently encouraged Russia's autonomous formations to

declare their sovereignty from the Russian Republic. He was assisted in this strategy by a number of traditionalist Communist Party officials in the ASSRs who opposed Yel'tsin's reforms.

Initially, Yel'tsin countered Gorbachev's moves by publicly encouraging the autonomous republics to take all the authority they wanted. In the spring of 1990 he traveled around Russia attempting to defuse the growing sentiment in the ASSRs for greater autonomy [redacted] during his travels, Yel'tsin privately warned local leaders not to go too far in their assertions of local autonomy. Later, Yel'tsin altered his public position so that, although he acknowledged the rights of the ASSRs to exercise their sovereignty, he also insisted they remain part of the Russian Republic and subject to republic law. At the same time, Yel'tsin appealed to the large ethnic Russian population in the ASSRs to support him in the creation of a renewed federal system for the Russian Republic.

Yel'tsin's strategy had some temporary success. With the exception of the Tatar ASSR, all of the ASSRs participated in the June 1991 elections for the Russian president, and all—except the Tatar and Bashkir ASSRs—dropped their demands for status equal to other USSR republics and agreed that their representatives would sign a new union treaty as part of the Russian Republic delegation. With the conclusion of the April nine-plus-one accord, Gorbachev withdrew his earlier support for the ASSRs against Yel'tsin, and Yel'tsin won the grudging support even of many conservative nationalists who were alarmed at Gorbachev's earlier efforts to split the Russian Republic.

Public opinion polls indicate there is considerable support for Yel'tsin's position of allowing the ASSRs more autonomy within the republic. Russians may be even more willing than is Yel'tsin to allow some ASSRs, especially those on the periphery, to secede from Russia, although they agree with Yel'tsin that, for ASSRs remaining in Russia, republic laws must take priority over ASSR laws. One poll taken in September 1990 of 1,458 residents in 25 Russian cities noted that:

- Over half of the respondents (55.9 percent) were willing to accord the ASSRs equal rights with the republic.
- An equal number (55.9 percent) were willing to allow the ASSRs to secede if a majority of the population voted for secession.
- Only 26.5 percent thought that ASSR laws should take precedence over republic laws, whereas 46.6 percent thought republic laws should take precedence.

Gorbachev's earlier efforts to weaken Yel'tsin by pushing measures that would fragment the Russian Republic did much to discredit Gorbachev in the eyes of most Russian nationalists. Yel'tsin, by contrast, has managed to use the issue to present himself as the defender of Russian interests and territorial integrity. The issue, however, is by no means resolved. While Yel'tsin has been somewhat successful in persuading the political leaderships of most of Russia's autonomous regions to remain within Russia, none have dropped their demands for far-reaching regional sovereignty. The dissolution of the union and key traditionalist institutions after the failed coup emboldened regional ethnic movements to press separatist aims.

Yel'tsin's ability to deal effectively with the separatist challenges in Russia will determine his success in removing the problem from the package of issues that some Russian nationalists have sought to use against him. In a recent major policy speech, Yel'tsin strongly affirmed that he would not allow the disintegration of Russia. In the future, as Yel'tsin guides the drafting and ratification of a republic constitution through the republic legislature, he will face a significant challenge in balancing the conflicting interests of various groups. The status of the Tatar ASSR and other areas with large Muslim populations will be particularly difficult to negotiate. In the near or midterm, conservative Russian nationalists will attempt to use the

Autonomous Areas in the Russian Republic

issue of the political fragmentation of Russia to broaden their base of support and challenge Yel'tsin's program for a new Russian confederation.

Russian Nationalisms and the Orthodox Church

With the exception of some extremists who have said that Russians should reject Christianity entirely and return to their pagan traditions, most Russian nationalists today embrace some form of Russian Orthodoxy. They are deeply divided, however, in their attitudes toward the Russian Orthodox Church. Most Russian nationalists believe the church should play an important role in any moral and spiritual regeneration of society but disagree about whether the present church hierarchy has been too thoroughly tainted by its past cooperation with the KGB and whether it now has sufficient moral courage to lead a regeneration of society. They also disagree on what kind of moral regeneration the church should strive for. Nation-building nationalists generally look to the church for

Table 2
The Ethnic Makeup of Russia's Autonomous Regions

	Ethnic Group	Percent of That Ethnic Group	Percent of Russians
ASSRs			
Bashkir	Bashkirs	21.9	39.3
Buryat	Buryats	24.0	70.0
Dagestan	Avars	27.5	9.2
	Dargins	15.6	
	Kumyks	12.9	
Kabardino-Balkar	Kabardians	48.2	32.0
Kalmyk	Kalmyks	45.4	37.7
Karelian	Karelians	10.0	74.0
Komi	Komis	23.3	57.7
Mari	Maris	43.3	47.5
Mordva	Mordovians	32.5	60.8
Severo-Osetin	Ossetians	53.0	29.9
Tatar	Tatars	48.5	43.3
Tuva	Tuvinians	64.3	32.0
Udmurt	Udmurts	30.9	58.9
Checheno-Ingush	Chechens	57.8	23.1
	Ingush	12.9	
Chuvash	Chuvash	67.8	26.7
Yakut	Yakuts	33.4	50.3
Autonomous oblasts [a]			
Adygey	Adygeys	22.1	68.0
Gorno-Altay	Altays	31.0	60.4
Yevrey	Jews	4.2	83.2
Karachayevo-Cherkes	Karachays	31.2	42.4
Khakass	Khakass	11.1	42.4
Autonomous okrugs			
Aginskiy Buryat	Buryats	54.9	40.8
Komi-Permyak	Komi-Permyaks	60.2	36.1
Koryak	Koryaks	16.5	62.0
Nenets	Nentsy	11.9	65.8
Taymyr	Dolgans	8.9	57.1
	Nentsy	4.8	
Ust'-Ordynskiy Buryat	Buryats	36.3	56.5
Khanty-Mansi	Khanty	0.9	66.3
	Mansi	0.5	
Chukot	Chukotsk	7.3	66.1
Evenk	Evenkis	14.0	67.5
Yamalo-Nenets	Nentsy	4.2	59.2

[a] All being upgraded to autonomous republics.

support in adopting Western political models to develop a more open, democratic society. Christian nationalists look to the Orthodox Church to lead a spiritual renewal of society to ameliorate what they see as the most troublesome aspects of Western institutions such as a market economy, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion. Conservative nationalists, who are even more suspicious of a market economy and other aspects of Western society, look to the church for a moral and spiritual ideology justifying an authoritarian political and economic system that will protect Russia from the corrupting influence of the West.

Under Patriarch Aleksey II, the church has been moving to distance itself from the central government and to support the general goals of the Christian nationalists. When Aleksey was elected last year, many church reformers believed he was thoroughly compromised by his past connections to the KGB, which were well documented in the Soviet press at the time of his election. Some reformers, such as Gleb Yakunin, even threatened to provoke a schism within the church to protest Aleksey's election. Since then, however, Aleksey has taken a number of steps to demonstrate his independence from the government and his commitment to Orthodox moral and spiritual values:

- At his first press conference after being elected, he harshly criticized the government for its past persecution of the church.
- He reportedly criticized Gorbachev strongly [redacted] because of Gorbachev's failure to protect Orthodox Christians in Ukraine.
- In January he issued a tough public condemnation of the government's actions in the Baltic republics as a gross political error and sin.
- In February he publicly rebuked Orthodox Georgians for their treatment of South Ossetians.
- He publicly endorsed the religious services celebrated throughout the USSR in June commemorating all Orthodox believers repressed during the Communist era.

- In an interview in June, he said the church had distanced itself from "the government's burdensome tutelage" and claimed the right to "bear witness to breaches of God's truth" when the government was wrong. Then, in response to a question calling attention to his own past cooperation with the KGB, Aleksey acknowledged "the submissions to pressure, the silences, the forced passivity or expressions of loyalty," and apologized for his actions.

These moves have encouraged reformers within the church and have helped them continue a de facto informal political alliance with Christian nationalists, Yel'tsin's reform nationalists, and other political leaders who are pushing for reforms generally based on Western political and economic models. In the near term, this alliance is likely to continue because the groups involved have a common goal of finally destroying the system of authoritarian control from the central government and maintaining some form of union with all republics that have a significant Russian population.

In the longer term, however, church leaders may push for measures that place them at odds with the nation-building democratic reformers. Some members of the church hierarchy apparently hope to have the Orthodox Church restored to its prerevolutionary status of a privileged institution. In an interview in July, Aleksey warned that "humanization" and "Christianization" have little to do with the process of Westernizing the Soviet way of life. He said that Catholic missionary activities planned among the Russian population would seriously impair relations between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Vatican and said that a parish would suffice for the Catholics living in Novgorod, whereas the Pope had assigned an archbishop. Aleksey and other church hierarchs are pressing for the government to restore seized church property, but at the same time are lobbying forcefully that other churches such as the Ukrainian Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church and Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church should not be permitted to reclaim lost parishes or claim special status from the state. Christian nationalists who identify closely with Orthodox values such as Russian Christian Democratic leader Gleb Anishchenko, moreover, stress the role of Christian justice in the economy and believe that an economic system should be structured that will "interweave economics and morality." In such a system, according to Anishchenko, Russian businessmen could function the way he believes they did in prerevolutionary times, "without 'paper' contracts, just on the honest word of a Christian." For nationalists such as Anishchenko, Orthodox values would be interwoven with laws regulating virtually all aspects of economic and political life, and government regulators would be given broad discretion to interpret those Orthodox values in such a way that "paper contracts" would not be an impediment to "Christian justice." If the Russian Orthodox Church adopts such attitudes and begins to push for reforms based on this kind of policy, Christian and conservative nationalists almost certainly would support the church against the nation-building nationalists and democratic reformers.

Prospects

Yel'tsin's coalition of nation-building democratic reformers is the most powerful political force in Russia today. This coalition, and Yel'tsin in particular, may also be at the peak of their popularity. As they emerge from the atmosphere of postcoup euphoria to grapple with Russia's formidable economic and political problems, there will be growing potential for some segments of society to turn to more chauvinistic forms of nationalism.

The nationalists that would probably oppose Yel'tsin's coalition in these circumstances would come primarily from the coalition of conservative nationalists who have long opposed Western-oriented economic and political reforms. In addition, Christian nationalists who are currently allied with Yel'tsin but who retain strong suspicions about foreign political and economic systems might break with Yel'tsin and join the conservative opposition. They might be assisted by the Russian Orthodox Church, whose current hierarchy under Patriarch Aleksey II seems only marginally committed to democratic and market reforms, and fully committed to gaining a privileged place for itself in Russia and in establishing a set of Orthodox values for the society.

Historically, societies have often turned to chauvinist or extremist leaders such as Hitler or Vladimir Zhirinovskiy when economic and political conditions combined to produce widespread feelings of national degradation, helplessness, and fear of the future. These feelings are certainly present in Russian society today, but not pervasive. In the past, conservative nationalists have been largely ineffective in tapping these sentiments to draw more support in society. Although large numbers of Russians apparently sympathize with the conservative nationalists, the group has been handicapped by its alliance with the most traditionalist elements of the Communist Party and by their own inability to offer any specific and positive remedies to Russia's problems. Indeed, their vague appeals to the glorious and often mythical past of the Russian people have found little resonance in Russian society when compared with the proposals of the nation-building democratic reformers, who point to the political and economic institutions of the West as specific models for a renewed Russia.

Yel'tsin, more than any other political figure, has been able to articulate a sense of hope that has struck a responsive chord with most of Russian society. Within the next year or two, however, Yel'tsin's popularity will almost certainly decline, because he is unlikely to achieve significant improvement in the living standard of most Russians in the near term. This will especially be the case if economic conditions deteriorate enough so that near-famine conditions develop in large areas of Russia or if large numbers of Russians in the other republics are forced to migrate to Russia. In these circumstances, we believe chauvinistic nationalists would be more likely to challenge Yel'tsin's program.