ICWA
LETTERS

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Russia's New Millennium

By Gregory Feifer

January 2000

MOSCOW—Dense clouds smothering the vast central plains stretch as far as one can see on most winter days. The afternoon I returned to Russia was no exception, starting with the mist rising from the sodden ground of Moscow's Sheremyetevo Airport. Outside my window, scrap metal covered in damp snow lay at the foot of a concrete wall, behind which rose thick, tall firs dotted with white birch trees.

But even the typically Russian view (the sight of industrial waste befouling an otherwise pristine, rugged landscape) didn't alter the sense that something had changed upon my return. Inside the airport, the atmosphere felt more tense than usual.

Perhaps the reason was that the line for foreigners waiting to pass through the airport's passport control had grown to double its usual length, with most of the flight forced to shuffle through a line manned by only one agent.

"It's because of Clinton's speech," hissed someone in line behind me. "They want to show you what you're in for coming to Russia."

Indeed, it was immediately clear this was not simply the usual bureaucratic bungling. The U.S. president had criticized Russia's policy in its campaign in the breakaway Caucasus republic of Chechnya, and the airport congestion was meant to show the West in exemplary Soviet fashion that such views weren't appreciated. It was harder to explain another sign of protest (by way of making life difficult): that only one door leading out from the airport now remained open. Presumably Russians exit there, too.

More changes were coming. By the end of the month, a new parliament would reflect a realigned balance of power in the country. The surprise was matched only by the year's top shocker: the president's momentous resignation on New Year's Eve.

Out of the rubble of failed opposition election campaigns and ensuing

Russia's Political Players: Who's on Top and Who's for Whom

Unity Party — Kremlin-founded centrist party, supports Acting President Vladimir Putin, appointed by BorisYeltsin

Union of Right-Wing Forces (SPS) — Bloc of liberal ex-"young reformers" headed by former Prime Minister Sergei Kiriyenko initially allied with Unity, now cooperating with Yabloko and OVR

Communist Party — Joined with Unity after parliamentary elections] to elect Gennady Seleznev as Duma Speaker

Fatherland-All-Russia (OVR) — Center-left, headed by Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov and Yevgeny Primakov

Yabloko Party — Social Democratic, Refusing to vote with Unity and theCommunist Party for Speaker Sekeznev, its members stormed out of Parliament with OVR and SPS

About the Author

"Whereas most observers in Russia and the West blamed the country's seeming slide backward from reform and global integration on the failure of Russia's reformers and their Western advisers over the past decade, the change in Russian attitudes in fact reflects a much larger cyclical swing that is itself rooted in centuries of the country's collective consciousness."

So wrote Gregory Feifer in his fellowship application. "In an attempt to understand the direction of Russian popular and political attitudes, I propose to study the current re-shaping of the country's cultural identity precisely in the intersection of popular (and artistic) culture and the dominant political culture. The two have traditionally been tied to each other — witness avant-garde Revolutionary propaganda in the 1920s and 1930s — and one cannot be understood without the other.

"The recent blossom of political science called transition theory, here applying to Russia's current transition, is still in full bloom. In its nearly complete inattention to — some might say purposeful neglect of — everyday life, it is not wholly unlike its predecessor, 'kremlinology.' I would want to take a different approach… My overarching theme would be the dynamics of continuity and change, with special focus on Westernization.

"From the time of Peter the Great, Westernizing reform has been imposed upon Russian society from above. As I see it, however, circumstance — often meaning everything that formed the country's political and cultural consciousness —always transformed them into something less Western and clearly more Russian, maybe even uniquely so. The examples are legion, from Catherine's Laws — from which she omitted the key elements of Enlightenment thought — to Soviet Communism, which might have dumbfounded Marx."

E-mailing his first newsletter, Gregory wrote a precede: "I chose political analysis since I couldn't *not* write about the Yeltsin resignation and the appointment of Putin — it will probably overshadow everything I write as it looms over all aspects of Russian life. I'm itching to go out into the field, but there's so much going on in Moscow that I don't want to miss this historic time here in Russia's nerve center."

recriminations rose one towering figure: Vladimir Putin, Russia's wildly popular new acting president. The steely politician, more youthful-looking than his 47 years, was a welcome sight to Russians tired of the stumbling, incoherent Boris Yeltsin. Dour even in a photo-op in which a smiling Yeltsin magnanimously handed over his Kremlin office, Putin spoke succinctly and self-confidently, projecting an image of political professionalism. The Kremlin's public-relations machine helped by duly illustrating Putin's words with footage of his judo bouts with fellow black-belters, who put on a good show but inevitably let the new boss win.

Putin's appointment sent politicians, political analysts, economist, and journalists around the world, not to mention the Russian public at large, scrambling to make out the man behind the seamless mask of Russia's smooth new chief executive.

While temperatures dropped, freezing slush that soon taxed the balance of even the most agile on Moscow's unshoveled streets, I set out to investigate the Putin phenomenon. As with most information-gathering in Russia, however, I quickly found the task no easier than catching a glimpse of the capital through mid-winter clouds overhead. But that may go far in showing that Putin is carrying out his appointed tasks faultlessly.

BORIS NIKOLAEVICH BOWS OUT

Americans might now be used to the spectacle of humble apologies issued by their state's chief executives. Russian's aren't. Boris Yeltsin's speech on national television in the early morning of December 31 was an unprecedented sight.

Not that anyone was watching. New Year's is Russia's Christmas, and those not sleeping in on the eve of "the millennium," the mother of all days-of-rest, were frantically running to whatever stores remained open to buy last-minute presents. Even the down-and-out treated themselves to a bottle of Sovetskaya (Soviet) Champagne and a box of ice-cream.

"I want to beg forgiveness for your dreams that never came true," slurred a bloated, grim-looking Yeltsin. "I beg your forgiveness for having failed to jump in one leap from the gray, stagnant, totalitarian past to the clear, rich and civilized future."

Following the speech, state-run television stations showed beloved Soviet-era films, as if to reinforce a sense that all was calm, and nothing unusual had happened despite the momentous change. It smacked of Communist Party tactics — during the 1991 attempted coup d'état, some of the same films were shown, as well as idyllic scenes of swans paddling around lily-peppered ponds — and reinforced the politically brilliant resignation, which made Putin's rise seem almost inevitable.

Most politicians had left the capital. Media outlets re-

A Moscow city poster featuring an image of Yuri Dolgorukii, the city's supposed 12th-century founder, echoes a theme popular with politicians: "We'll Resurrect Russia— It's our Common Goal!" Stalin erected the pictured statue of Dolgorukii, in whose image the powerful Moscow mayor now likes to dress up. In the background stands the crisis-stricken Duma lower house of parliament.

tained only skeleton staffs, anticipating two weeks of dead news time in which national vodka consumption is boosted as much as U.S. retail sales after Thanksgiving. Wire services desperately cut-and-pasted from the Yeltsin obituaries written during down time over the past several years.

By evening, however, the airwaves were abuzz with opinions.

"I don't believe it!" one Muscovite, Vladimir Sokolov, a 32-year-old driver, said when I told him the news. But the surprise wore off quickly. "Oh well, in any case, Putin's better than Yeltsin. How are you celebrating tonight?"

That reaction typified many others I encountered, all echoing the same sentiment produced by the tapping of Yevgeny Primakov as prime minister a little over a year ago. But the fickle voting public had abandoned that savior last fall and now had its sights firmly set on Putin.

"Yeltsin brought about chaos, and it's precisely out of that chaos that a real Russian dictatorship can be born,"

Moscow's new skyline near the Kremlin features domes on top of the new Manezh shopping mall and the controversial Christ the Savior Cathedral (in background), structures that symbolized the city's post-Communist rebirth. A statue of St. George Slaying the Dragon — Moscow's symbol — adorns one of the domes, glorifying Mayor Luzhov in his opponent Putin's back yard.

said the respected political analyst Sergei Markov, director of Moscow's Center for Political Studies, when I spoke to him several days after the resignation. "In that sense, the arrival of a pragmatic-seeming politician like Vladimir Putin, oriented toward the strengthening of democratic institutions, minimizes the chaos and with it the base for a future dictatorship."

Americans doing business in Russia were even more upbeat. "It means stability at last," Frank Mosier, a partner at Renaissance Capital, Russia's most powerful homespun investment bank, told me on New Year's. "Should've happened a long time ago." (Primakov was once a sometime guest of honor at Renaissance's lavish Moscow banquets when he — not Putin — was widely billed as Russia's next president.) As far as the change concerned the bank, Mosier was right. The fragile Russian stock market rose on New Year's and continued its trend for days.

ON THE BANDWAGON

What did Russia's politicians think? Their playing field, after all, had been altered by Putin's new incumbency, since elections, the Constitution dictated, would be held in 30 days — on March 26 — rather than June 4 as originally scheduled.

Those in the Unity Party were ecstatic. The organization was only recently seen as a pathetic joke, having been cobbled together less than three months earlier by Yeltsin advisers in a bid to counteract the overwhelming popularity of the Fatherland-All Russia (OVR) alliance. That bloc was led by the powerful Moscow mayor, Yuri Luzhkov, and the popular Primakov, the Kremlin's most bitter enemies who seemed set then to take over the presidency.

But Luzhkov and Primakov hadn't counted on the Kremlin's influence over state-controlled media outlets, through which it proceeded to out-smear its opponents with exceptional zeal. By the time parliamentary elections took place on December 19, Unity's ratings were flying high after Putin had publicly approved the party, himself amazingly popular for his hard-line rhetoric backing Moscow's brutal war in the breakaway North Caucasus republic of Chechnya.

Unity swept into parliament with 23 percent of the vote, wrecking OVR's political hopes.

Allied with Unity was the Union of Right-Wing Forces (SPS), the alliance of liberal ex-reformers led by former Prime Minister Sergei Kiriyenko. They, too were ecstatic, having received an unexpected 9 percent of the vote in a seeming mandate for reform.

Almost everyone else — save OVR's core — followed shortly after. In early January, a "public citizens'" initiative group nominated Putin as a candidate for the March 26 presidential election. There was very little "public" in the affair, held in Moscow's prestigious and exclusive President Hotel, closed to all reporters but those working for state-run RTR television network. The powerful regional governors who once backed OVR were there, as were theater directors, doctors, and other celebrities of all kinds.

"I hope Putin will resurrect the great Russian film industry, as befits any great power," said Yevgeny Mironov,

Visitors to Russia find striking the number of elderly forced to fend for themselves on city streets. Pensioners often don't receive their pittance pensions, while in 1999 Russians' real income dropped no less than 15 percent from the grueling year before. The average monthly wage amounted to 1,565 rubles (U.S.$57) in December, down from $74 in ruble terms in December 1998, making life a struggle to survive, let alone enjoy any of the benefits of reform. Putin promised wage and pension hikes of around 20 percent in January.

a popular actor, sheepishly, to explain his own strange presence at the meeting.

It seemed that for every problem in every sphere, the all-mighty Putin could provide a solution. A cult of personality was quickly springing up around him.

A TUMULTUOUS YEAR

On the surface, the dramatic shift toward Putin last December reflected a growing attitude among the populace: the desire for a strong state capable of battling with the country's rampant lawlessness and restoring Russia's lost dignity at home and abroad.

The country has undergone years of economic decline while widespread and earnest efforts to build a market economy have had little effect on most people's lives, except to make many worse. Gleaming Mercedes and BMWs zipping from Moscow's haute cuisine restaurants to Gold's Gym and Christian Dior trumpet the success of a tiny minority of insiders who have made it, many through the corrupt appropriation of the old Soviet state's assets. But the drab existence of impoverished millions — pensioners and state workers, for example, go months without being paid — is the growing result.

"You westerners have plundered our country of everything good," one acquaintance told me recently, echoing a widespread belief in who's to blame for Russia's ills. "And if you think America really landed a man on the moon and won World War II, you'll believe any kind of propaganda," the 22-year-old woman added

Inside the Manezh shopping mall, adjacent to Red Square and completed in 1997, the mall's western-style shops are chiefly for Moscow's well-to-do, who take time off from their mobile phones to browse for clothes.

Putin inherits a sparkling, newly-renovated Kremlin. Contracts for much of the rebuilding went to the Swiss Mabetex firm, which allegedly supplied considerable bribes to members of Yeltsin's family. The scandal was just one of the many have plagued the decade-long administration.

bitterly, harking back to an old Soviet version of history.

After almost a decade of looking up to the West for economic and political advice, Russians feel demoralized and yearn for continuity with past achievements. They'd also like to feel that despite current troubles, Russia is special, even somehow superior to the West. NATO bombing of Kosovo last year swelled that feeling and triggered a wave of public outrage and anti-westernism.

"The U.S. has no right to tell Serbia what to do, especially since everyone knows Kosovo's Albanians are drug smugglers and criminals in general. They deserved what they got," said Katya Larina, another young woman, a journalist whose perceptive insights into Russia's politics I once much admired.

It was against that background that several apartment building explosions rocked Russia last August, killing around 300 people and causing increasing public demand, or clamor, for strong action from the government.

Putin promptly responded, blaming the blasts on separatist militants from the southern republic of Chechnya — despite a complete lack of proof. His rhetoric seemed to help prompt Moscow begin a military campaign in September, with the goal of eliminating what it called "terrorists and bandits."

With that move, Putin did much to restore Russians' feelings of dignity after a decade of economic catastrophe and political corruption. And he reaped the benefits, earning approval ratings of over 70 percent as prime minister. The ratings continued to climb after New Year's, even though another former prime minister, Sergei Stepashin, said in late January that Russia had planned to attack Chechnya not after the apartment bombings, but early last spring.

NO LACK OF SUPPORT

Immediately following Yeltsin's resignation, many western observers decried the move as undemocratic, saying the decision was influenced by allegations of massive corruption against the president in recent months. Yeltsin had reportedly been looking for assurances of his and his family's safety before stepping down, and Putin obliged by giving him immunity the very day of his resignation.

But in Moscow, I was hard-pressed to find anyone to question whether the move, meant so obviously to benefit the Kremlin's current occupants, would weaken the development of democracy in Russia.

Kiriyenko, the cherubic and eloquent SPS leader who had gallantly fought Luzhkov's corrupt Moscow administration in a battle for City Hall (Luzhkov predictably won in December with around 76 percent of the vote), seemed to have compromised his bloc's "opposition" stance almost irrevocably by vociferously supporting Moscow's campaign in Chechnya and wholeheartedly backing Putin.

Even the Communist Party, usually harshly critical of the Kremlin's every move (that criticism comprising the

bulk of the party's political platform), toned down its opposition (later, there was talk that the party had already made a deal with the Kremlin to give it the upper hand in the new Duma).

Ever-cynical political analysts, on whom as a reporter I could always depend to provide bitter criticism of politicians of every stripe, thought Putin's arrival was good for Russia, Markov being chief among them.

Indeed, despite Yeltsin's seeming rigging of the coming election, if lawfully, a real sense arose that the course of reform, derailed during a tumultuous year of catastrophic economic and political crises, would be taken up again.

THE BLACK HOLE

While trying to find out as much as I could about Putin for myself, I was struck by the vastly differing opinions I encountered, despite his exceptional popularity — or were they its cause?…

Kiriil Rogov, editor of Polit.ru, an influential Website that reports wire-style on political events as they happen,

Polit.ru's Rogov: "It's hard for Putin's opposition to issue rhetoric against someone who promises order amid Russia's chaos."

found the same. "All the pedagogic analyses of Putin have come about because Putin is a kind of black hole about which we must guess," Rogov told me. "In fact, it's fully possible that Putin is more like a sponge that will suck up society's idea of what he is. In that sense, a lot will depend on the development of society's sense of the political situation, and not necessarily on Putin himself."

Rogov was one of the first observers I encountered who questioned the recent developments' ramifications. "It's very important for the Russian president to carry out the role of strict guarantor of basic rights of freedom and liberal economics," he said. "I saw those guarantees under Yeltsin, but not under Putin."

The Moscow Carnegie Center's Nikolai Petrov, Russia's latest hot-shot political analyst — lately quoted all over the Western press and invited to conferences galore — also looked askance at Putin's tapping.

"Putin the phenomenon is an indicator of the extremely poor situation in which Russian society finds itself," he said. "Russia accepts within the space of three months as its most popular leader and main presidential contender an unknown person with nothing to recommend him, solely on the basis of his previous post and a series of events beginning with the terrorist acts in Russia and ending with the war in Chechnya."

THE KNOWN PUTIN

Yeltsin appointed Putin — then an unknown bureaucrat who headed the Federal Security Service (FSB), a successor to the KGB — to the premiership only last August. The acting president has contributed to a sense of secrecy by keeping details about his past well under wraps. But it's now well known that he worked in East Germany, allegedly cooperating closely with the "Stasi," East Germany's once-dreaded secret police, before briefly becoming a chief deputy of St. Petersburg's liberal-reformer mayor, Anatoly Sobchak.

Those critical of Putin point to his past career, but reports of him as a "super-spy" are almost certainly overblown. Testimony seems to indicate he was a second-tier operative who left the service when his prospects there began to dim.

Putin's life — aside from law school in St. Petersburg, service in Yeltsin's Security Council, and a short time as a shadowy manager of St. Petersburg's administration — was little devoted to reform. After coming to Moscow, he essentially continued his KGB activities — this time, collecting compromising materials about regional leaders and state organs about their fulfillment of presidential orders — before becoming head of the FSB.

"Putin's was a typical path that deviated only when he worked with Sobchak for a year and a half," Petrov said.

"Those people with whom Putin dealt [when in St. Petersburg] might now help fuel illusions of his market orientation," Petrov added. "But in my opinion, neither his life choices nor his actions and speeches allow one to build

The Moscow Carnegie Center's Petrov: "At least tens of other politicians with Putin's status and with similar backgrounds could have occupied his shoes with about the same amount of successs."

illusions about his reformer tendencies."

STRONG STATE OR STRONG OLIGARCHS?

Putin has talked of mixing moderate reform with the need for strong government to combat Russia's widespread lawlessness and corruption. But his speeches also hark back to Russia's recent communist past as much as to a bright, reformed future. "Our country Russia was a great, powerful, strong state and it is clear that this is not possible if we do not have strong armed forces, powerful armed forces," Putin said in a widely quoted appearance before television cameras in January.

Despite recent military setbacks in Chechnya and an increasingly critical press, the war is largely seen as just in Russia, and nothing short of a complete military disaster will make it unpopular. With help from loyal media outlets, Putin looks set to overcome the defeats in the field by acting tough himself.

As for the economy, Mikhail Delyagin, an outspoken, youthful economist known for his dire predictions of doom and gloom in Russia's future, thinks little will change in the running of the country under an all-but-certain Putin presidency. Delyagin, who advised the Kremlin from 1991 to 1999, now says Putin's economic policy will most likely come from the Kremlin's chief strategists, those most responsible for bringing him to power: Boris Berezovsky and Anatoly Chubais.

Berezovsky, a so-called arch-"oligarch" also reputed to be a top Kremlin strategist, built an oil and media empire earlier this decade. During last year's parliamentary campaign, newspapers and television stations he controls — despite the state's majority stakes — grilled Luzhkov and Primakov on an open fire with unsubstantiated — albeit not completely unconvincing — accusations of corruption, fraud and even murder.

Chubais, a reformer icon and now Russia's top utility magnate, oversaw the country's mass privatization program, for which he is still detested by much of the populace.

The dominance of those two men does not bode well for Russia's future, Delyagin says. "The acting president is no economist, and Berezovsky and Chubais have proven their inability to run Russia," he said.

Since becoming prime minister, Putin has been busy appointing his own colleagues to posts in the government and agencies affiliated with the state, such as its media. That may help him in time to counteract influence from clan-like groups run by Russia's financial and industrial "oligarchs."

Immediately following his appointment as president, Putin fired several of Yeltsin's top advisers to distance himself from the Yeltsin administration. Those sacked included Yeltsin's daughter Tatyana Dyachenko, widely disliked by the public, especially after her name began to figure prominently in Kremlin corruption allegations.

Putin also appointed reformer-type technocrats to the finance and economy ministries and elevated Finance Minister Mikhail Kasyanov to first deputy premiership. That was seen as a nod to the West since Kasyanov spent many months renegotiating Russian debt with western creditors who grew to trust him. On the whole, however, it is Putin's colleagues from the secret services who seem to be gaining the best positions across the board.

As part of an effort to strengthen the state's crime-fighting abilities, Putin is now also carrying out reforms of Russia's security services.

"They're recreating the system they once knew," said Petrov, adding that Putin will emerge from control of the oligarchs on the back of a "semi-police state" if elected in March.

Petrov's view is almost diametrically opposed to Delyagin's. Putin, he says, will control a strong bureaucracy and make his own decisions. The oligarchs will lose out. Both observers, however, criticize the West for silently boosting Putin by acquiescing to his rhetoric about policy and institution building — precisely the kinds of things that in Russia tend to hide the vital work of the Chubaises and Berezovskys — and hoping that reform will indeed be carried out. "Concerning the idea of his relatively liberal market views, that idea isn't really based on anything," Petrov adds.

Could there be a third possibility? In all the debate about whether Putin is an eternal KGB apparatchik or a real reformer, the question of his possible weakness as a leader has rarely been raised.

If Putin acts chiefly as a consensus-seeker while giving the appearance of a tough leader, that would allow a concealed oligarchy of politicians, financiers, industrialists and criminals — a group much broader and more stable than the Chubais and Berezovsky clans — to run the country behind the scenes. Putin would function as a large cloud blotting out any true sense of Moscow's political landscape from the outside. Judging by the fact so much speculation is currently swirling around Putin and his probable future as Russia's elected president, that might indeed constitute his most important role.

BATTLES IN THE DUMA

Putin's path to the elected presidency might not be entirely smooth sailing. His near-unanimous support faltered toward the end of January with the new Duma's first session.

Under a deal ostensibly cut between Unity and the Communist Party, the porcine Communist Gennady

Seleznev was elected Duma speaker a second time with their majority of votes. Parliament's minority parties — which had looked forward to a compromise — were entirely locked out of consultations.

Unity won control of nearly half of parliament's key committees. Other parties were given only a handful of posts. Refusing to vote for the speaker, more than a third of the chamber's deputies — from OVR, SPS and the liberal-oriented Yabloko Party — stormed out of the hall, saying no real work could be accomplished or legislation passed under the whiny Seleznev, who often came out strongly in favor of Communist Party initiatives such as impeaching Yeltsin last spring.

No one in Moscow questioned the accepted notion that it was the Kremlin rather than Unity that made the deal with the Communists. "Precisely for that reason, the agreement with the Communists was made in a way meant to be provocative, to split Putin from the reformers," Rogov said.

One version has it that Berezovsky orchestrated the deal to weaken the position of Chubais, a top SPS leader. Meanwhile, two former prime ministers, Stepashin and Primakov, gave blistering speeches in the Duma. Primakov called the deal "a total collapse of democracy" and a "desecration."

Kiriyenko, while criticizing Putin, didn't burn his bridges. The SPS leader said his party still backed Putin for president, although its support would be conditional on Putin's carrying out a pro-reform program. Kiriyenko knows Putin will need SPS — one of the few Duma parties with an actual platform — to carry out legislation in the Duma and he can't rely on the neophyte Unity Party for that. And SPS will need Putin if it wants to retain its early promise of having influence to push reform in the government.

"The main thing will be to see his reaction," Kiriyenko said on a widely watched television talk show the evening of the walkout. "Not to react — this is also a form of reaction," Kiriyenko added.

Putin didn't react for days, and never really commented on Seleznev's appointment. While he seemed to have gained politically, not least by showing the Communists to be opportunists — undercutting their role as an opposition force to the Kremlin ahead of the elections — his silence shows he's still holding off positioning himself politically. That will help him maintain a broad base of voters and avoid mistakes until the elections. In other words, he's still an unknown entity, and will most likely remain so at least until March 26.

For that reason and many others, the course of Russia's political future remains further from sight than one would think, but that's always been the case in Russia. As in the Soviet days of Cold War-driven attitudes, many observers still read too much into political rhetoric and jockeying. Winter pushes on and the election season fast approaches, and some of the mist may rise in time. But most will stay, and I look forward to the prospect of striking out from the shadow of Kremlin politics to probe beyond the roll calls of politicians and their "oligarchs" (or is it vice versa?). ❑

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Fellows and their Activities

EUROPE/RUSSIA

Adam Smith Albion—Uzbekistan

A former research associate at the Institute for EastWest Studies at Prague in the Czech Republic, Adam is studying and writing about the republics of Central Asia, and their importance as actors within and without the former Soviet bloc. A Harvard graduate (1988; History), Adam has completed the first year of a two-year M. Litt. Degree in Russian/East European history and languages at Oxford University.

Gregory Feifer—Russia

With fluent Russian and a Master's from Harvard, Gregory worked in Moscow as political editor for *Agence France-Presse* and the weekly *Russia Journal* in 1998-9. Greg sees Russia's latest failures at economic and political reform as a continuation of failed attempts at Westernization that began with Peter the Great — failures that a long succession of behind-the-scenes elites have used to run Russia behind a mythic facade of "strong rulers" for centuries. He plans to assess the continuation of these cultural underpinnings of Russian governance in the wake of the Gorbachev/Yeltsin succession.

Whitney Mason—Turkey

A freelance print and television journalist, Whit began his career by founding a newspaper called The Siberian Review in Novosibirsk in 1991, then worked as an editor of the Vladivostok News and wrote for *Asiaweek* magazine in Hong Kong. In 1995 he switched to radio- and video-journalism, working in Bosnia and Korea for CBS. As an ICWA Fellow, he is studying and writing about Turkey's role as nexus between East and West, and between traditional and secular Islam.

Jean Benoît Nadeau—France

A French-Canadian journalist and playwright, Jean Benoît studied drama at the National Theater School in Montreal, then received a B.A. from McGill University in Political Science and History. The holder of several Canadian magazine and investigative-journalism awards, he is spending his ICWA-fellowship years in France studying "the resistance of the French to the trend of economic and cultural globalization."

SOUTH ASIA

Shelly Renae Browning—Australia

A surgeon specializing in ears and hearing, Dr. Browning is studying the approaches of traditional healers among the Aborigines of Australia and the indigenous peoples of Vanuatu to hearing loss and ear problems. She won her B.S. in Chemistry at the University of the South, studied physician/patient relationships in China and Australia on a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship and won her M.D. at Emory University in Atlanta. Before her ICWA fellowship, she was a Fellow in Skull-Base Surgery in Montreal at McGill University's Department of Otolaryngology.

sub-SAHARA

Marc Michaelson— Ethiopia

A program manager for Save the Children in The Gambia, Marc has moved across Africa to the Horn, there to assess nation-building in Eritrea and Ethiopia, and (conditions permitting) availing and unavailing humanitarian efforts in northern Somalia and southern Sudan. With a B.A. in political science from Tufts, a year of non-degree study at the London School of Economics and a Master's in International Peace Studies from Notre Dame, he describes his postgraduate years as "seven years' experience in international development programming and peace research."

THE AMERICAS

Wendy Call—Mexico

A "Healthy Societies" Fellow, Wendy is spending two years in Mexico's Isthmus of Tehuantepec, immersed in contradictory trends: an attempt to industrialize and "develop" land along a proposed Caribbean-to-Pacific containerized railway, and the desire of indigenous peoples to preserve their way of life and some of Mexico's last remaining old-growth forests. With a B.A. in Biology from Oberlin, Wendy has worked as a communications coordinator for Grassroots International and national campaign director for Infact, a corporate accountability organization.

Paige Evans—Cuba

A playwright and former Literary Manager of the Manhattan Theatre Club in New York City, Paige is looking at Cuba through the lens of its performing arts. With a History/Literature B.A. from Harvard, she has served as counselor at the Buckhorn Children's Center in Buckhorn, Kentucky (1983-84), as Arts Editor of the International Courier in Rome, Italy (1985-86), and as an adjunct professor teaching a course in Contemporary American Playwrights at New York University. She joined the Manhattan Theatre Club in 1990.

Peter Keller—Chile

Public affairs officer at Redwood National Park and a park planner atYosemite National Park before his fellowship, Peter holds a B.S. in Recreation Resource Management from the University of Montana and a Masters in Environmental Law from the Vermont Law School. As a John Miller Musser Memorial Forest & Society Fellow, he is spending two years in Chile and Argentina comparing the operations of parks and forest reserves controlled by the Chilean and Argentine governments to those controlled by private persons and non-governmental organizations.

Susan Sterner—Brazil

A staff photographer for the Associated Press in Los Angeles, Susan received her B.A. in International Studies and Cultural Anthropology at Emory University and a Master's in Latin American Studies at Vanderbilt. AP gave her a wide-ranging beat, with assignments in Haiti, Mexico and along the U.S.-Mexican border. Her fellowship topic: the lives and status of Brazilian women

Tyrone Turner—Brazil

A photojournalist (Black Star) whose work has appeared in many U.S. newspapers and magazines, Tyrone holds a Master's degree in Government and Latin American politics from Georgetown University and has produced photo-essays on youth violence in New Orleans, genocide in Rwanda and mining in Indonesia. As an Institute Fellow he is photographing and writing about Brazilian youth from São Paulo in the industrial South to Recife and Salvador in the Northeast.

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