

# Russians' Rights Imperiled

Sarah E. Mendelson

Has Anybody Noticed?

In theory, the degree to which states comply with international norms not only testifies to the robustness of those norms but also indicates how central they are to what is commonly (and euphemistically) referred to as the "international community." Recent scholarship has shifted from establishing that norms, particularly those related to human rights, matter in international relations to specifying the mechanisms by which norms diffuse throughout this community and inside states.<sup>1</sup> A growing body of literature argues that the international human rights regime, like the "process of global democratization," is "increasing in strength and robustness."<sup>2</sup> At the start of the twenty-first century, human

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1. Kathryn Sikkink, "Human Rights, Principled Issue-Networks, and Sovereignty in Latin America," *International Organization*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (Summer 1993), pp. 411–442; Audie Klotz, *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle against Apartheid* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995); Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Autumn 1998), pp. 887–918; Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998); Matthew Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999); Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds., *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Ellen L. Lutz and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Human Rights Law and Practice in Latin America," *International Organization*, Vol. 54, No. 3 (Summer 2000), pp. 633–659; and Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001).

2. Thomas Risse and Stephen C. Ropp, "International Human Rights Norms and Domestic Change: Conclusions," in Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink, *The Power of Human Rights*, pp. 264, 260. Neorealists and institutionalists would explain this outcome not as a result of the power of norms but as a consequence of coercion: If changes in a state's behavior did occur, then they must have resulted from changes in material conditions in the international system. According to this logic, Russia should conform to the dictates of the international system, and in particular to the United

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rights norms appear to be more widespread in Europe than they were twenty-seven years ago at the dawn of the Helsinki process, and shared more widely than fifty-four years ago during the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>3</sup>

In this article I argue that even when conditions that scholars have identified as necessary and sufficient for the spread of international norms are present, significant external and internal barriers can slow or otherwise impede their diffusion. These barriers are particularly striking in Russia and in states that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Moreover, scholars (and policymakers) have paid insufficient attention to these impediments. The purpose here is to explore the contours of these barriers in relation to Russia and suggest areas of further research for the norms debate.

The barriers to norms diffusion in Russia are numerous and reinforcing. For example, a highly permissive international environment has failed to take Russia to task for its noncompliance with a variety of norms, including Russia's indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force in Chechnya. Western policymakers have on occasion criticized this brutal war, but as long as Russia has met basic institutional criteria (e.g., holding elections), its most flagrant human rights violations have largely been inconsequential to its international standing. At times, a veneer of democracy barely masks lingering authoritarianism, while it enables Western policymakers to look the other way. International norms diffusing to Russia are further weakened when they compete with increasingly robust local norms, some of which derive from the Soviet era and include residual organizational cultures hostile to, or at least ambivalent about, Western conceptions of human rights and democracy.

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States, because of its hegemonic position in that international system. See, for example, Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979); G. John Ikenberry and Charles Kupchan, "Socialization and Hegemonic Power," *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Summer 1990), pp. 283–315; John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter 1994/95), pp. 5–49; and Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory," *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer 1995), pp. 39–51.

3. The Helsinki process was an outgrowth of the 1975 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which produced the Helsinki accords and placed human rights on the European security agenda. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights is generally seen to mark the beginning of the rights revolution, yet it emerged from "a war-weary generation's reflection on European nihilism and its consequences . . . a response to the discovery of the abomination that could occur when the Westphalian state was accorded unlimited sovereignty." Michael Ignatieff, *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 4. Some scholars track both the steady erosion of sovereignty and the increased power of rights. For example, in Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink, *The Power of Human Rights*, the authors argue that all but one of the eleven cases examined in the book shows progression toward compliance with human rights norms. Some scholars argue that this dynamic was particularly important in bringing about change in

Evidence from Russia suggests not only that international norms and practices spread at best in a jagged way through the international system, but that tolerance for noncompliance with democratic and human rights norms at the international governmental level remains high. Russia is certainly not the only violator of human rights, nor is the limited international response to human rights violations in Russia especially unusual. The United States has long maintained close relations with states that have miserable human rights records, such as Saudi Arabia. The international community as a whole did little to stop the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and intervened in Bosnia only after several years of bloody ethnic strife.<sup>4</sup> Policymakers often make what they consider to be trade-offs between values and national interests.

What is different about the Russian case is that the United States has declared that “the consolidation of democratic institutions and values in Russia over the long term is a vital U.S. national security interest.” Moreover, the U.S. government along with European powers have sought to integrate Russia into the Euro-Atlantic system by spending millions of dollars over the last decade to help develop and support democratic institutions in the country.<sup>5</sup> Some of this money has been used to create transnational networks that spread norms at the microlevel (i.e., among specific groups of activists). In some cases, the impact has been substantial. Yet at the macrolevel, changes within state structures that could alter the internal balance of power do not appear to have occurred.<sup>6</sup>

The Russian case draws attention to the role that powerful Western liberal states play not only in supporting but also in undermining norms. Western

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Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union. See especially Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces*; and Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect*.

4. See Samantha Power, “Bystanders to Genocide,” *Atlantic Monthly*, September 2001, <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2001/09/power.htm>; and Michael N. Barnett, “The Politics of Indifference at the United Nations and Genocide in Rwanda and Bosnia,” in Thomas Cushman and Stjepan Mestrovic, eds., *This Time We Knew: Western Responses to Genocide in Bosnia* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), pp. 128–162.

5. The Mission Performance Plan for the U.S. embassy in Russia for 2000–02, as cited in Management Systems International, “An Assessment of USAID Political Party Building and Related Activities in Russia,” report prepared for the U.S. Agency for International Development/Moscow, Office of Democracy Initiatives and Human Resources, June 30, 2000, p. 38.

6. On transnational networks and macrolevel changes more generally, see the pioneering work of Keck and Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*; and Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink, *The Power of Human Rights*. For a discussion of how these networks function in the Russian case, see Sarah E. Mendelson, “Democracy Assistance and Political Transition in Russia: Between Success and Failure,” *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Spring 2001), pp. 68–106; and throughout Eastern Europe and Eurasia, see Sarah E. Mendelson and John K. Glenn, eds., *The Power and Limits of NGOs: A Critical Look at Building Democracy in Eastern Europe and Eurasia* (New York: Columbia University Press, forthcoming).

states sponsor the diffusion of democratic and human rights norms but too often do little to address illiberal behavior or human rights violations. To a great extent, states—both Russia as a violator of norms and the United States and European powers by failing to sanction Russian behavior—eclipse the hard work done by advocacy networks. The muted response of international organizations (IOs), several of which are supposed to monitor compliance with democracy and human rights norms, does further damage. In terms of foreign policy, high-level Western government support that overlooks or minimizes noncompliance with international norms and treaties helps to reinforce Soviet-era norms hostile to democracy. In this way, ignoring abuses has long-term international security implications.

This article seeks to further the debate on how international and domestic political dynamics, instead of diffusing international norms, interact to produce mixed—and on occasion devastatingly negative—outcomes.<sup>7</sup> Many scholars of postcommunist states in Eastern Europe and Eurasia have found that international norms and advocacy networks in fact function in complex and contradictory ways. At times the norms and networks reflect a kind of organized, or even disorganized, hypocrisy.<sup>8</sup> The findings are hardly academic; they point to a pattern of increased acceptance by liberal Western states and IOs of Russian noncompliance with international norms. For Russian policymakers the lesson is clear: There are few costs to violating treaties to which their country is a signatory.

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7. In addition to Barnett, "The Politics of Indifference," see Jeffrey T. Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory," *World Politics*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (January 1998), pp. 324–348; Ann Marie Clark, Elisabeth J. Friedman, and Kathryn Hochstetler, "The Sovereignty Limits of Global Civil Society: A Comparison of NGO Participation in UN World Conferences on the Environment, Human Rights, and Women," *World Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (October 1998), pp. 1–35; Amy Gurowitz, "Mobilizing International Norms: Domestic Actors, Immigrants, and the Japanese State," *World Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (April 1999), pp. 413–445; Chaim D. Kaufmann and Robert A. Pape, "Explaining Costly International Moral Action: Britain's Sixty-year Campaign against the Atlantic Slave Trade," *International Organization*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (Autumn 1999), pp. 631–668; Michael N. Barnett and Martha Finnemore, "The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations," *ibid.*, pp. 699–732; and Andrew Moravcsik, "The Origins of Human Rights Regimes: Democratic Delegation in Postwar Europe," *International Organization*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (Spring 2000), pp. 217–252.

8. See, for example, Pauline Jones Luong and Erika Weinthal, "The NGO Paradox: Goals, Strategies, and Non-democratic Outcomes in Kazakhstan," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 7 (November 1999), pp. 1267–1284; Erika Weinthal, *State Making and Environmental Cooperation: Linking Domestic and International Politics in Central Asia* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002); Valerie Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces*. On "organized hypocrisy," see Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).

After discussing analytical approaches to the study of international norms and making clear how they relate to Russia, I detail the ways in which this case diverges from the theoretical expectations. I discuss specific types of norms violations that have occurred. I then elaborate what I mean by external and internal barriers to the diffusion of international norms inside Russia. The evidence leads me to suggest correctives for theoretical approaches to the role of international norms. I consider the incentives and costs of continuing to ignore Russian noncompliance, especially in an era when counterterrorism is a top U.S. policy priority and the desire for a coalition with Russia is especially strong.

### *Post-Soviet Challenges to Theoretical Approaches to Norms Diffusion*

The literature on international norms and advocacy networks documents their importance in affecting policy outcomes in cases such as ending human rights abuses in Chile, South Africa, and closer to the subject at hand, Eastern Europe. Implicit in much recent scholarship is what looks to some like a steady march toward ever-greater compliance, as human rights and democracy norms have begun to “cascade” at this moment in “world time.”<sup>9</sup>

Russia in many respects seems like an ideal case for international norms diffusion. Necessary and sufficient conditions are present, and international relations scholars would expect to see democratic and human rights norms grow particularly strong. Specifically, the “principled-issue networks” described by Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink in *Activists beyond Borders* operate throughout Russia, linking activists working on various aspects of democracy and human rights to activists in Europe and North America. These networks have multiplied since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, though some date as far back as 1975 and the Helsinki Final Act.<sup>10</sup> Russian presidents Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin have over many years appeared to care what Euro-Atlantic decisionmakers think of their country, expending increasing effort

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9. On cascades and world time, see Finnemore and Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change”; and Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink, *The Power of Human Rights*.

10. These networks involve groups “working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services.” Thomas Risse and Kathryn Sikkink, “The Socialization of International Human Rights Norms into Domestic Practice: Introduction,” in *ibid.*, p. 18. With funding from the U.S. government, organizations such as the National Endowment for Democracy, the International Republican Institute, and the National Democratic Institute have been engaged in developing these networks. For a longer listing, see M. Holt Ruffin, Alyssa Deutschler, Catriona Logan, and Richard Upjohn, *The Post-Soviet Handbook: A Guide to Grassroots Organizations and Internet Resources*, rev. ed. (Seattle: Center for Civil Society International in association with the University of Washington Press, 1999).

both hosting and visiting European and North American leaders.<sup>11</sup> Russia has also gained membership in many international clubs.<sup>12</sup> From time to time, the Russian government has depended on and received billions of dollars in international financial assistance. Western governments and foundations have spent hundreds of millions to support democracy and human rights work in Russia.<sup>13</sup> In addition, Russia is signatory to every major human rights convention created since the end of World War II.<sup>14</sup>

Yet developments in Russia challenge the argument about the diffusion of norms. Take, for example, the difference in interpretation of the so-called Pinochet effect, whereby elites in Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay, responding to charges of government-sanctioned human rights abuses, have launched investigations of some of their leaders. In Russia the Pinochet effect refers to the desire of many to see their ruler mimic the behavior of the former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. Notably, not a single legal case has been brought on behalf of the millions of Soviet citizens killed under Josef Stalin. Instead, in a 1999 poll that asked Russians to choose the “most outstanding personalities of all times and all nations,” Stalin ranked fourth with 35 percent (up from 11 percent in 1989). More Russians have significantly stronger negative feelings toward people who have gotten rich since the collapse of the Soviet Union than toward those carrying portraits of Stalin.<sup>15</sup> In December 1999 President Putin

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11. This was the dominant impression shared by a group of Canadian journalists who interviewed Putin before his December 2000 trip to Canada. Author’s interview, Chrystia Freeland, deputy editor, *Globe and Mail*, Washington, D.C., March 14, 2001.

12. Russia has membership in or a special relationship with many liberal “clubs” including the Group of Eight (G-8), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe (CoE), and even with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

13. General Accounting Office, “Foreign Assistance: International Efforts to Aid Russia’s Transition Have Had Mixed Results,” report to the chairman and to the ranking minority member, Committee on Banking and Financial Services, U.S. House of Representatives, November 2000.

14. Most important are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Organization for European Security and Cooperation Final Act (1975), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1994), the United Nations Resolution on the Right to Democracy (1999), and the Warsaw Declaration (2000). The rights outlined in the 1948 declaration and repeated in the other documents include freedom from “arbitrary arrest, detention or exile” (Article 9); the right to a “fair and public hearing” (Article 10); the right to “freedom of opinion and expression,” including the “freedom to . . . seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers” (Article 19); the right to “freedom of peaceful assembly and association” (Article 20); and the right to “periodic and genuine elections” (Article 21). Documents available at <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>; <http://www.osce.org>; [http://www.state.gov/www/global/human\\_rights/democracy/9957\\_unresolution.html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/democracy/9957_unresolution.html); and <http://www.democracyconference.org/declaration.html>.

15. One survey in 1999 found that 55 percent of respondents felt negatively toward people “who got rich in the last ten years” versus 29 percent who felt negatively toward “people carrying portraits of Stalin.” Fifty-two percent felt positively toward Stalinists. These figures come from a series of polls conducted by the All-Russian Center for Public Opinion (VCIOM) in Edward Skidelsky

reportedly toasted Stalin's birthday, and in May 2000, the Russian state issued commemorative coins honoring Stalin as a "war hero."<sup>16</sup>

The puzzle of why the Russian case contrasts with others goes far beyond Russians' nostalgia for Stalin. Because of the proliferation of institutions generally associated with liberal democracies, Russia for most of the 1990s looked—at least superficially—as if it were conforming to international norms and standards.<sup>17</sup> Indeed Russia's political landscape is not what it was a decade ago: There is no longer one-party rule, and citizens regularly turn out for elections. Local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have multiplied. The state no longer has exclusive or total control over the media. And Russians' rights are well protected under the constitution. In many ways, Russia looks like another case of the diffusion of "happy" liberal norms.

A closer inspection of Russian political and social institutions reveals a different picture. Political parties have multiplied, yet many have no constituents; and those with constituents do little but campaign for re-election. Political opponents participate in elections, but these are increasingly dogged by evidence of fraud. Few of the thousands of NGOs in the country actually advocate on behalf of others. The arbitrary rules of men more accurately describe Russian justice than does the rule of law. These might all be considered run-of-the-mill democratization problems were it not for the many other ways in which Russia dramatically contrasts with the "success stories" of norms diffusion.<sup>18</sup> Nowhere is this contrast more intense than in Chechnya.

The Russian case diverges from other cases in ways anticipated by another literature, sociology's "new institutionalism." New institutionalists have identified a phenomenon—a seeming convergence in "world culture"—which they refer to as "institutional isomorphism."<sup>19</sup> Given international assistance to Russia since the end of the Cold War, new institutionalists would expect that

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and Yuri Senokosov, *Russia on Russia: Issue Two: The Fate of Homo Sovieticus* (London: Social Market Foundation and VCIOM, 2000), pp. 60, 50.

16. Ian Traynor, "Russia's New Strongman Puts Stalin Back on a Pedestal," *Guardian* (U.K.), May 13, 2000, as carried on Johnson's Russia List, <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/>.

17. On conforming, see Finnemore and Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," p. 903.

18. Risse and Ropp, "International Human Rights Norms and Domestic Change," p. 269.

19. Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio, eds., *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). For a discussion of how this literature relates to international relations, see Martha Finnemore, "Norms, Culture, and World Politics: Insights from Sociology's Institutionalism," *International Organization*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (Spring 1996), pp. 325–348. Larry Diamond has also noted the gap between "form and substance" in what he calls "global democratic diffusion" and the generally low standard for compliance that the wealthy, established democracies and international organizations are willing to accept. See Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), p. 59.

Russia would sign on to human rights treaties, that local NGOs would monitor human rights, that citizens would turn out for elections, that NGOs would sprout like mushrooms in the spring rain, and that there would be a proliferation of other organizational units associated with democracy. One of the objectives of the new institutionalists has been to document and explain the spread of “homogeneity” in the “forms and practices” of institutions as the result of external legitimation, where states (superficially) come to resemble one another. For example, every state has a military, an airline, and a university; however, they rarely function in similar ways.

The sociological literature, which has been ignored in the norms debate, anticipates the disconnection between form and function in organizations in Russia. Indeed the new institutionalists—who have long observed that organizations in general are based on “myth,” “ceremony,” and “ritual”—expect to find gaps between the idealized, new democratic institutions and the actual practices of these organizations.<sup>20</sup>

The next step in the norms debate then is to document the disconnection between form and function and explore its ramifications. The diffusion of organizations in Russia seems to belie the uneven diffusion of norms; the proliferation of forms diverts attention from serious examples of noncompliance. The process of norms diffusion is complex, deeply contested, and sticky. And contrary to the new institutionalist literature, which ignores their significance, politics and people play a significant role in the diffusion of norms. Moreover, contrary to the international relations literature, which downplays the importance of context, Soviet-era norms and networks act as significant barriers.<sup>21</sup> In Russia, instead of cascading norms or world culture, one finds what I refer to as “push back.” That is, when global norms meet local structures, the forms may diffuse, but the attendant behavior does not.<sup>22</sup> Context matters greatly once the focus turns to how the organizations actually

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20. See John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan, “Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony,” in Powell and DiMaggio, *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, pp. 41–62.

21. John W. Meyer claims that “it is easy to predict the organization of a newly emerging nation’s administration without knowing anything about the nation itself.” Quoted in Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, “The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields,” in *ibid.*, p. 70. As Finnemore notes in “Norms, Culture, and World Politics,” p. 339, the disregard of politics implies that “world culture marches effortlessly and facelessly across the globe.” Ropp and Risse concede that they focus little on context in *The Power of Human Rights*, p. 258.

22. On this, see Checkel, “The Constructivist Turn in International Relations”; and Finnemore, “Norms, Culture, and World Politics.”



function. In Russia, beyond superficial isomorphism lies a world of competing norms and a battle of networks.

If this were only an issue of discontinuity in the social science literature, it would be easy to rectify. The real problem is that in their rush to see Russia become a democracy, policymakers in foreign governments and IOs have not paid sufficient attention to the issue of superficiality. To date, Western states have treated Russia as if it were a state governed by rules consistent with international law and custom. The OSCE and other international groups regularly approve the country's election results (despite evidence of manipulation), and neither of the wars in Chechnya has damaged Russia's relations with the organizations to which it belongs.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, as evidence of Russian human rights violations mounts, the response of the international community grows increasingly faint.

#### NORMS VIOLATIONS IN RUSSIA

After making initial improvements in human rights and civil liberties following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has begun to regress. Media outlets have been especially targeted by the state. The April 2001 shutdown and reorganization of the national television channel NTV, the newspaper *Segodnya*, and the magazine *Itogi* have been well documented.<sup>24</sup> Less often talked about in the West are the individuals (and members of organizations) who have been investigated, intimidated, interrogated, jailed, accused of treason, or beaten by

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23. On the first war, see Gail W. Lapidus, "Contested Sovereignty: The Tragedy of Chechnya," *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Summer 1998), pp. 5–49; Carlotta Gaal and Thomas De Waal, *Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); and Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998). On the second war, see Anne Nivat, *Chienne de Guerre: A Woman Reporter behind the Lines in Chechnya* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2001); and Anna Politkovskaya, *A Dirty War: A Russian Reporter in Chechnya* (London: Harvill Press, 2001).

24. Gazprom, which is largely owned by the Russian state and was a majority shareholder in the Media-Most holding company that owned NTV, *Segodnya*, and *Itogi*, maintains that all three were deeply in debt. Speaking at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on April 19, 2001, Boris Fyodorov, former deputy prime minister and representative of minority shareholders on the Gazprom board of directors, argued that if the takeover was debt related, then why did the new owners strip it of its assets; dismiss its most popular, talented personnel; and change the editorial staff of a publication, *Itogi*, that was profitable. The television stations ORT and RTR, as Laura Belin, media affairs observer for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), noted in an exchange on Johnson's Russia List, on May 6, 2001, also have debts with Gazprom but are pro-Kremlin in their coverage. They have not been harassed. More recently, on January 11, 2002, TV6, the station to which many journalists fled after NTV came under new management, was ordered to liquidate by the top arbitration court in Russia. This ruling was made despite the fact that the law on which the case relied was technically voided on January 1, 2002. The situation remains in flux. Julie A. Corwin, "End of the Line for TV6," *RFE/RL Russian Political Weekly*, January 14, 2002.

federal authorities. In addition to journalists, they include environmentalists, human rights activists, students, and academics—Russians as well as Americans and Europeans. Even the Salvation Army office in Moscow was at one point shut down by the authorities.<sup>25</sup>

The state's treatment of environmentalists has been particularly harsh. Several have been put on trial for espionage, and many others have experienced harassment by the tax police or the local FSB.<sup>26</sup> More consequential perhaps was the thwarting of an extremely well organized nongovernmental campaign in 2000 and 2001 that collected more than 2.5 million signatures on a petition to hold a national referendum on whether Russia should import spent nuclear waste (for which it would receive billions of dollars). A state employee told an activist from the World Wildlife Fund that the central electoral commission and the regional electoral commissions had been instructed—by whom the person did not say—to disqualify however many signatures were needed to scuttle the measure. Activists generally agree that the state engaged in fraud to do this. As of early spring 2002, the state had succeeded in foiling the referendum, clearing the way for the president to legalize the importation of nuclear waste.<sup>27</sup>

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25. Interviews with Yuri Dzhibladze, president, Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, Moscow, March 24, 2000 and June 6, 2001; and Masha Lipman, deputy chief editor, *Itoji*, Moscow, May 18, 2000 and June 6, 2001. For examples of non-Russians being harassed, see Joshua Handler, "Under Suspicion," *IEEE Spectrum*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (March 2000), pp. 51–53. In an interview on December 21, 2000, in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, Nikolai Patrushev, head of the Federal Security Service (FSB, to use the Russian acronym for the successor to the KGB, the Soviet Union's security agency), said that the FSB had information that Handler, a former Greenpeace activist and doctoral student from Princeton University, had been spying in Russia. (E-mail correspondence from Handler to the author, December 27, 2000.) Other examples include a rise in the number of foreign missionaries expelled from Russia. The British demining organization Halo Trust was accused of treason. Telephone interview with Halo Trust program officer, May 31, 2000. See also Nabi Abdullaev and Yevgenia Borisova, "String of NGO Workers Denied Visas," *Moscow Times*, July 27, 2001; Masha Gessen, "In Russia, Echoes of the Old KGB: Going After Foreign Aid Workers and Others," *U.S. News and World Report*, July 30, 2001; and Alice Lagnado, "Moscow Declares War against the Salvation Army," *Times* (London), July 9, 2001, all carried on Johnson's Russia List. *RFE/RL Security Watch* comes out weekly and tracks many of these cases. It is available at <http://www.rferl.org/securitywatch>.

26. For details on the most prominent case, see <http://www.bellona.no/nikitin>. See also Thomas Nilsen and Jon Gauslaa, "How the KGB Violates Citizens' Rights: The Case of Alexander Nikitin," *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Summer 1997), pp. 407–421. More recently, Grigory Pasko was sentenced to four years in prison for writing about the Russian military's dumping of radioactive waste into the Sea of Japan. See editorial, "Mr. Putin's Latest 'Spy,'" *Washington Post*, December 27, 2001, as carried on Johnson's Russia List.

27. Interviews with Igor Chestin, director, World Wildlife Fund, Moscow, June 5, 2001; and Askhat Kayumov, director, Dront Ecological Center, Nizhni Novgorod, June 1, 2001. Also press conference attended by author with environmental groups including the World Wildlife Fund, Greenpeace, and Dront, Moscow, June 4, 2001.

Despite the development of a national network of human rights activists, the director of the Moscow Helsinki office, Lyudmilla Alekseyeva, recently stated that "there is not a single region in Russia where the observance of human rights would meet international requirements."<sup>28</sup> Violations include intimidation, forced disappearances, and torture. A particularly blunt form of intimidation, reminiscent of Soviet days, occurred in June 2001 when Russian authorities barred a prominent human rights activist from boarding a flight in Moscow to attend a conference in Washington.<sup>29</sup>

The means that the government uses to harass its citizens are sometimes more subtle. Activist and religious (non-Russian Orthodox) organizations may be prevented from registering with the authorities for "administrative" reasons, rendering them vulnerable to being shut down.<sup>30</sup> In the scholarly community, the boundaries of acceptable behavior are becoming increasingly explicit—and more rigid. In May 2001 the Russian government issued a document ordering scientists and scholars to report all contacts with foreigners. Before the release of the document, Russian scholars observed an increase in the number of FSB officials visiting academic departments and think tanks and inquiring about their contacts with foreigners. Several admitted to being disinclined to write on specific "unfashionable" topics because they feared repercussions.<sup>31</sup>

Less subtle has been the way in which Russia has prosecuted the second war in Chechnya, which began as retribution for a series of apartment building bombings in September 1999 that killed more than 300 Russians in several cities.<sup>32</sup> The investigations that followed were deeply problematic and never

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28. Quoted in "Human Rights Violated throughout Russia," *Interfax*, October 5, 2001. See also Moscow Helsinki Group, "Report on the Human Rights Situation across the Territory of the Russian Federation in the Year 2000," <http://www.fsmonitor.com/MHG/mhg2001.pdf>.

29. Sergei Grigoryants is a former dissident and vocal critical of the Putin administration. UPI, "Russia Bars Activist from Flight to U.S.," June 7, 2001.

30. "On the Violations Committed in the Course of Registration and Re-Registration of Public Associations in the Russian Federation in 1999," report prepared by the Information Center of the Human Rights Movement and the Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, Moscow, February 15, 2000; and Sergei Grigoryants, "Russian Authorities Force Public Organizations to Become Underground," report by the Glasnost Foundation, [http://www.glasnostonline.org/eng\\_projects/registration.htm](http://www.glasnostonline.org/eng_projects/registration.htm).

31. Maura Reynolds, "Move to Restore Soviet-Style Controls on Science Feared," *Los Angeles Times*, June 1, 2001, as carried on Johnson's Russia List; and conversations with colleagues, Nizhni Novgorod, May 2001, and Moscow, June 2001.

32. Another proximate cause was the August 1999 rebel incursion into Dagestan, which borders Chechnya. From 1996 to 1999, Chechnya was a lawless place, where terrorists with ties to al-Qaeda (frequently referred to as "Arab Chechens") reportedly gathered. On the tendency of the West to ignore the problems in Chechnya prior to the second war, see Anatol Lieven, "Through a Distorted Lens: Chechnya and the Western Media," *Current History*, October 2000, pp. 321–328.

established responsibility. The sites were cleared within days, and in one case within hours. Moreover, reports from the Russian city of Ryazan suggested that some of its inhabitants had discovered an unexploded bomb that may have been planted by the FSB itself. The authorities have yet to confirm what the inhabitants found. But shortly after airing a report on the incident, the Russian television station NTV came under enormous government scrutiny.<sup>33</sup>

The second war in Chechnya has been extremely brutal. As recently as February 2002, human rights organizations had information that Russian authorities were using indiscriminate force against both ethnic Chechens and Russians. Some organizations have compiled evidence of “death squads.”<sup>34</sup> Others have growing evidence that Russian federal forces have repeatedly violated both the Geneva Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>35</sup> Some argue that this is a genocidal war.<sup>36</sup> Russian and Western NGOs have documented the disproportionate use of force against the rebels and the indiscriminate targeting of civilians, in addition to “mop-up” operations that regularly involve looting, ransom, and rape. They have also detailed forced disappearances and “filtration camps,” where rebels and civilians are routinely tortured. There is even evidence that the human rights monitors themselves are being targeted and killed by federal forces. Human Rights Watch and the Russian human rights organization Memorial have charged that the Russian

33. Geoffrey York, “War in Chechnya May Be the Result of a Power Play within the Kremlin,” *Globe and Mail* (Canada), February 3, 2000; and John Sweeney, “Take Care Tony, That Man Has Blood on His Hands,” March 12, 2000, *Observer* (U.K.), both carried on Johnson’s Russia List.

34. Human Rights in Chechnya: An Eyewitness Report, briefing by Oleg Orlov, chairman of the board, Memorial, at RFE/RL, Washington, D.C., February 22, 2002, attended by author. See also Maura Reynolds, “Activists Probe Reported Killings in Chechnya,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 7, 2002, as carried on Johnson’s Russia List; and editorial, “More Carnage,” *Washington Post*, January 9, 2002, p. A18.

35. Many groups—including Human Rights Watch (HRW), Amnesty International, Physicians for Human Rights, the Russian groups Memorial and Soldiers’ Mothers in St. Petersburg, and the French groups Doctors of the World and Doctors without Borders (a Nobel Peace Prize recipient)—have gathered testimony on the abuses by federal forces. See, for example, Human Rights Watch (HRW), *Swept Under: Torture, Forced Disappearances, and Extrajudicial Killings during Sweep Operations in Chechnya* (New York: Human Rights Watch, February 2002); Human Rights Watch, *Burying the Evidence: The Botched Investigation into a Mass Grave in Chechnya* (New York: Human Rights Watch, May 2001); Human Rights Watch, *The “Dirty War” in Chechnya: Forced Disappearances, Torture, and Summary Executions* (New York: Human Rights Watch, March 2001), both available at <http://www.hrw.org>; *Welcome to Hell: Arbitrary Detention, Torture, and Extortion in Chechnya* (New York: Human Rights Watch, October 2000); and O.G. Trusevich, “Mass Violations of Human Rights during the Armed Conflict in the Chechen Republic,” from Moscow Helsinki Watch, [http://www.fsmonitor.com/MHG\\_99/Chechnya.shtml](http://www.fsmonitor.com/MHG_99/Chechnya.shtml).

36. Francis Boyle, a University of Illinois law professor who successfully sued Yugoslavia for committing genocide in Bosnia, filed papers with the International Court in The Hague in July 2000 on behalf of Chechnya accusing Russia of committing genocide. RFE/RL briefing report, “Chechnya Seeks Genocide Finding against Russia,” August 15, 2000.

government concealed evidence of mass graves, discovered in Chechnya in February 2001, in an area controlled by the Russians next to a military base. A videotape filmed by Memorial before the corpses were buried shows gunshot wounds to the head, hands bound, and skin peeled back.<sup>37</sup> Some evidence suggests that the Russians may have used chemical weapons against the civilian population, despite Russia's ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention in December 1997. Although extremely difficult to prove, the U.S. government has reportedly deemed the evidence serious enough to warrant an investigation, the details of which are classified.<sup>38</sup>

Since the mid-1990s the United States, several European countries, and a number of international organizations have largely bracketed the well-documented, disproportionate, and indiscriminate use of force by the Russian government against its own civilian population. As one senior American diplomat implied, the United States will not jeopardize its relationship with Russia over Chechnya.<sup>39</sup> The lack of a coherent U.S. policy on Russian abuses in Chechnya has had negative unintended consequences for the development of democratic institutions in Russia. Indeed, instead of international norms diffusing inside Russia, hostile local norms have become more robust.

### *External and Internal Barriers to Norms Diffusion*

External and internal impediments hinder the diffusion of international norms in Russia and contribute to its growing record of noncompliance. Below I identify two main external barriers to the diffusion of international norms: the per-

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37. For descriptions of killings by federal forces in December 2001 of several human rights activists, who received funding from the National Endowment for Democracy, see press release at [www.friendly.narod.ru](http://www.friendly.narod.ru). On the mass graves, see Human Rights Watch, *Burying the Evidence*. Author's viewing of videotape *Mass Graves in Chechnya*. See also Elizabeth Rubin, "Down the Dark Hole of Chechnya," *New York Times Magazine*, July 8, 2001.

38. Omar Khanbiev, Chechen minister of health, presentation at RFE/RL, Washington, D.C., May 17, 2001, attended by author. In August 2000 Khanbiev treated patients whose symptoms matched exposure to chemical weapons, with one exception: Their symptoms also included hallucinations.

39. Interview, U.S. embassy, Moscow, June 5, 2001. Since Alexander Vershbow became U.S. ambassador to Russia in the summer of 2001, embassy statements on Chechnya have toughened somewhat. See, for example, Reuters, "U.S. Envoy Hails Ties, Chides Russia on Chechnya," December 28, 2001, as carried on Johnson's Russia List. Overall, however, U.S. policy continues to be dominated by concerns that focusing on the war in Chechnya would have a negative impact on U.S. foreign policy. For example, a recent letter from Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage to Marc Nathanson, director of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, makes clear that the administration will press Congress to "delay or suspend the start of" RFL/RL broadcasting in "North Caucasian languages." The letter expresses the administration's concern that these broadcasts would affect U.S. "credibility" and result in a "perception that we have shifted our support to one side." Copy of letter dated December 21, 2001, obtained by the author, February 25, 2002.

missive international climate for noncompliance, especially that created by powerful liberal democracies' and IOs' lack of response to abuses and atrocities, and the dysfunctional behavior of Western NGOs. I then discuss internal barriers to the diffusion of international norms associated with democracy and human rights, including lingering Soviet-era organizational norms that compete directly with international norms. Decisionmakers and local authorities continue to embrace Soviet conceptions of empire, power, and interest that tend to be hostile to norms associated with liberal internationalism. Russia is a battleground between domestic networks that contest democratic norms and the transnational networks trying to diffuse them.

#### THE PERMISSIVE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Because different agendas compete more directly with one another in international politics than is generally acknowledged in the social science literature, one finds more inconsistency in policies and less community than many studies suggest. Regardless of theoretical orientation, international relations scholars tend to treat the international "system," "community," or "society" analytically as if it were more or less a coherent whole.<sup>40</sup> This assumption is revealed in talk about transnational advocacy networks getting a norm-violating government on "the international agenda."<sup>41</sup> In reality, there are multiple international agendas and conflicting policy priorities, such as trade coalitions that downplay democracy and human rights; traditional security agendas where concerns for these rights fade completely if they compete with the possibility of getting a nuclear weapons treaty signed; and the current international security agenda where the democracy and human rights problems of coalition partners are de-emphasized in the name of fighting terrorism.

Among liberal democracies, foreign policies are especially contradictory.<sup>42</sup> Throughout the 1990s, for example, decisionmakers in the Clinton administra-

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40. Scholars such as Thomas Risse and Kathryn Sikkink refer to the "international society" as a "smaller group than the total number of states in the international system" and recognize that foreign policy is rarely consistent. Yet their model assumes a level of commonality across states that evidence does not support. On the international society, see Risse and Sikkink, "The Socialization of International Human Rights Norms into Domestic Practice," p. 11. For an exception to this, see James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, "A Tale of Two Worlds: Core and Periphery in the Post-Cold War Era," *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Spring 1992), pp. 465–491.

41. Risse and Ropp, "International Human Rights Norms and Democratic Change," p. 272 (emphasis added).

42. Krasner, *Sovereignty*; and Moravcsik, "The Origins of Human Rights Regimes." Although Keck and Sikkink in *Activists beyond Borders* and Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink in *The Power of Human Rights* acknowledge this phenomenon, they do not adequately address its implications for their argument. Specifically, the robustness of a set of norms is called into question if powerful Western states regularly ignore or undermine them.

tion highlighted the importance of democracy in Russia but supported President Yeltsin regardless of the damage done by his policies. The administration consistently underfunded programs designed to assist Russian political and social activists and was loath to address—let alone criticize—instances of blatantly undemocratic behavior. Although U.S. officials talked often about democracy, they rarely met with the people who worked on these issues in Russia. Instead they embraced the leaders who threatened the very institutions that the United States professed to be supporting.

The contradictory nature of U.S. policy toward Russia was not exclusive to the Clinton administration. After his first meeting with President Putin in June 2001, President George W. Bush declared that he had looked into Putin's eyes and felt that he could trust him. President Putin enjoys nights at the opera with British Prime Minister Tony Blair and was the toast of the town at the July 2000 G-8 meeting in Okinawa. Russia was present at the meeting despite its lack of either a strong industrialized economy or a robust democracy.<sup>43</sup> Only a few months earlier (in April 2000), Putin had declined to meet Mary Robinson, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), who was in Russia to investigate war crimes in Chechnya. A few weeks later, Putin was hosted to tea with the Queen of England.

In addition to inconsistent decisionmaking, one finds numerous contradictions in the behavior of international organizations.<sup>44</sup> NATO, for example, used force in Kosovo to stop Serbian human rights abuses. In Chechnya, however, where evidence suggests that the number of civilians whose rights have been infringed is much greater, NATO's members are nearly silent.<sup>45</sup> The secretary-

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43. There is growing sensitivity to this issue in the United States. One editorial called for disinviting Russia to the July 2001 G-8 meeting, arguing that "there should be no place at a summit of Western democracies, or any European political council, for a government that has suppressed freedom of speech, built up a secret police apparatus and waged a brutal campaign of repression like that in Chechnya." "Consequences for Russia," *Washington Post*, April 18, 2001. Congressman Tom Lantos (D-California) also requested Russia's suspension. "U.S. Congressman Wants to Suspend Russia from G-8," May 8, 2001, Reuters, as carried on Johnson's Russia List.

44. Barnett and Finnemore, "The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations." The policies of international financial institutions on marketization in Russia are another example. See keynote address by Joseph E. Stiglitz, senior vice president and chief economist at the World Bank, "Whither Reform? Ten Years of the Transition," Annual Conference on Development Economics, World Bank, Washington, D.C., April 1999, available at <http://www.worldbank.org/research/abcde/pdfs/stiglitz.pdf>; and Janine R. Wedel, *Collision and Collusion: The Strange Case of Western Aid to Eastern Europe, 1989-1998* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998).

45. Physicians for Human Rights, "War Crimes in Kosovo: A Population-Based Assessment of Human Rights Violations against Kosovar Albanians," Washington, D.C., August 1999; and Physicians for Human Rights, "Endless Brutality: War Crimes in Chechnya," May 2001, which is also based on surveys. In an author's interview, when asked to compare the destruction in Kosovo with that in Chechnya, a program manager from the demining organization Halo Trust hesitated, but

general of NATO, Lord George Robertson, led a rapprochement with Moscow in February 2000, shortly after Russian forces had committed some of the worst atrocities of the second war in Chechnya. Like Clinton administration officials before them, NATO officials refused to call Russian abuses in Chechnya war crimes. They continued their rapprochement with Russian defense officials even after these same officials had hosted an indicted Serbian war criminal.<sup>46</sup>

The responses of other members of the international community to Russian abuses in Chechnya also display a certain dysfunction. In April 2000 the UN Commission on Human Rights, for example, issued a resolution that satisfied no one and had no impact.<sup>47</sup> The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe suspended Russia's voting rights in April 2000 but restored them in January 2001, despite no change in behavior. Romano Prodi, president of the European Commission, saw "reasons for optimism" in the European Union's developing relationship with Russia, citing Putin's commitment to "reform and open[ess] to European ideals."<sup>48</sup> During a May 2001 visit by CoE Secretary-General Walter Schwimmer to Moscow, the web site strana.ru (which has close ties to the Kremlin) noted that "here it is planned to talk not so much about Chechnya as about the entire range of Russia's relations with the Council of Europe." The posting noted with satisfaction that Schwimmer had de-

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then gasped, "It was a joke." Based on his work for Halo Trust in Bosnia from 1993 to 1995, in Kosovo from June to August 1999, and in Chechnya from September to December 1999, he claimed that what he saw in Chechnya was the "worst destruction anywhere." Telephone interview, March 31, 2000.

46. In early May 2000, the Russian defense ministry held meetings with Yugoslav Defense Minister Dragoljub Ojdanić. In 1999 the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague had indicted Ojdanić for committing war crimes. NATO's Permanent Joint Council met later in the month with officials from the Russian defense ministry in Florence.

47. Although the UN Commission on Human Rights did pass a resolution in 2000 (twenty-five in favor, seven opposed, and nineteen abstentions) calling for an independent investigation into Russian abuses, human rights groups considered the resolution to be weakly worded. The vote followed UNHCHR Mary Robinson's visit to Russia, where she was prevented from seeing what she wanted to see. But instead of insisting in strong, clear language on the need for a national and an international independent commission to investigate human rights abuses, she spoke only of the need for an investigation. According to human rights groups, she "dropped the ball": Without an international commission working alongside a national one, few think that a review will be truly independent of the Russian state. Interviews with officials from human rights NGOs in Boston, New York, and Moscow, spring 2000. The 2001/24 UN resolution on Chechnya was more strongly worded, but more states voted against it (twenty-two in favor, twelve opposed, and nineteen abstentions). In any case, as of February 2002 the Russian government has not implemented either resolution, and abuses continue with no international consequences.

48. Romano Prodi, "Moscow's Mandate for Change," *Financial Times*, May 26, 2000, as carried on Johnson's Russia List.



cided not to go to Chechnya and that the CoE meeting to be held in Istanbul later that year would place "no special emphasis on Chechnya."<sup>49</sup>

The politics behind the permissive international environment are complex and should be addressed more extensively in future research. A preliminary investigation suggests, however, that norms diffusion in Russia is weak for at least three reasons. First, decisionmakers in Western states tend to see compliance as a value to be favored when convenient but not as an interest to be pursued and enforced at the expense of other opportunities. So human rights abuses do not disqualify a state from becoming a partner in the fight against terrorism, even though those very abuses may create the kind of environment that breeds extremism. Furthermore, the policies of Western liberal states in international organizations need to be examined. As one human rights activist has observed, Russian diplomacy seems to specialize in "divide and conquer" techniques.<sup>50</sup> Outcomes such as softly worded resolutions or IO silence vis-à-vis lack of compliance often appear more satisfactory to Russian delegations than to others.

Second, the dynamics of unilateralism and bureaucratic politics contribute inadvertently to the undermining of human rights treaties and the conventions and norms they codify. Within certain branches of the U.S. government, for example, there appears to be significant resistance to holding states accountable to international law for fear that the same could be done to the United States. Kenneth Roth, president of Human Rights Watch, argues that the U.S. government's position has been that "there is enough international law." Roth finds that many treaties to which the United States is a signatory are in essence designed to have "zero" domestic impact. Moreover, bureaucratic politics within institutions encourages policymakers to "sabotage" the development of organizations such as the International Criminal Court. For example, although the U.S. Department of Defense may have much interest in preventing

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49. The web site <http://www.strana.ru> was set up by Gleb Pavlovsky, a public relations specialist who ran Putin's presidential campaign in March 2000, and is said to receive money from the Kremlin. Viktor Sokolov, "Coming Closer to Europe Will Help Russia to Come Closer to America," May 22, 2001, <http://www.strana.ru>, as carried on Johnson's Russia List.

50. Telephone interview with Rachel Denber, deputy director, Europe and Central Asia Division, Human Rights Watch, May 31, 2000. For example, at the November 2000 meeting of the OSCE in Vienna, the Russian delegation, "using the OSCE's own rules," blocked the adoption of resolutions on "Russia's obligation to withdraw troops from Moldova, close down at least two military bases in Georgia, observe the southern flank ceilings set by the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe and cooperate with international efforts to restrain the dictatorship in Belarus." Vladimir Socor, "There's a Bear in the Woods," *Wall Street Journal Europe*, December 8, 2000, as carried on Johnson's Russia List.

genocide, it is driven by the greater organizational interest of protecting its soldiers.<sup>51</sup>

Third, Russia's residual material power has muted international responses to Russian noncompliance with international norms, especially in Chechnya. Although Russia does not have the same level of military might that the Soviet Union had, its nuclear weapons continue to be a factor in the politics of decisionmaking. Put simply, many policymakers suggest that because Russia has nuclear weapons, little can be done to curb its human rights abuses. In making this argument, policymakers seem to have forgotten the prominent attention that Soviet human rights violations received in U.S. foreign policy in the 1970s. In any case, the argument goes: The U.S. government (and NATO) had more latitude to stop human rights violations in Kosovo than they do in Chechnya. And because power in the post-Soviet era is not merely related to the threat of destruction, and because Russia is the largest exporter of gas in the world and the third largest exporter of oil, it plays an increasingly influential but underappreciated role in energy politics in Europe.<sup>52</sup> For example, French criticism of the war in Chechnya, which at one time had been sharper than that of other states, was suddenly muted in October 2000, as oil prices rose and winter approached.<sup>53</sup>

#### DYSFUNCTION WITHIN WESTERN NGOS

The permissive climate created by powerful Western democracies and international organizations is not the only external barrier to international norms diffusion. Within advocacy networks that might be expected to generate pressure on issues related to democracy and human rights in Russia, Western NGOs seem to fall prey to their own dysfunction.

Most troubling, despite working toward similar goals, the democracy assistance community and the human rights organizations in the United States and in Russia are almost entirely disconnected.<sup>54</sup> As a result, while human rights

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51. Kenneth Roth, presentation at the Harvard Colloquium on International Affairs, Harvard University Law School, Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 4, 2001. On the Pentagon's response to the mass killing in Rwanda, see Power, "Bystanders to Genocide."

52. Tara McFeely, "The Russian Natural Gas Industry: Friend or Foe?" Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, May 2001.

53. "Facing Energy Crisis, Europe Has Forgiven Russia for Chechnya," Agence France-Press, October 31, 2000.

54. On the democracy assistance community in general, see Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999). On the community in Russia, see Mendelson, "Democracy Assistance and Political Transition in Russia." Human rights groups do show some level of coordination among themselves. See Jackie Smith and Ron Pagnucco with George A. Lopez, "Globalizing Human Rights: The Work of Trans-

organizations have for the most part done an admirable job collecting and disseminating information on Russian atrocities and abuses—for example, in Chechnya—the democracy assistance community has barely responded. Nor has this community worked with these organizations to strategize about how to support fragile institutions threatened by gross noncompliance. Despite the increasingly negative consequences of the war for a variety of institutions—from elections to the media—democracy assistance groups have not viewed this coordination as central to their mission.<sup>55</sup> The lack of coordination has meant that one potentially important source for drawing attention to abuses in Russia has been underdeveloped.

While international relations scholars point to the “successful” diffusion of international human rights norms, human rights organizations often seem overwhelmed by reports of the very abuses they are meant to prevent. Most of the NGOs that monitor human rights issues and track violations are strikingly understaffed and underfunded. Consider just some of the issues that organizations had to deal with in 1999: Serbian aggression in Kosovo, NATO use of force in Kosovo, the sale of diamonds to finance conflicts in Africa, international trafficking in women and children, violence in the Middle East, and the second the war in Chechnya.<sup>56</sup>

The competition for funding means that as these organizations move from one campaign to another, or mount simultaneous ones, they are often reluctant to share information.<sup>57</sup> Alternatively, even if they want to share information, they do not have the funds to process the data they collect, even when timely release could help to save lives. For example, Physicians for Human Rights collected information on Russian abuses in Chechnya for their report *Endless Brutality* in February and March 2000, but the findings were not published until May 2001, and the publication was not distributed until November 2001. Organizations that do release information designed to pressure policymakers into using the term “war crimes” in reference to Chechnya may refrain from mounting larger campaigns to stop the war for fear of being

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national Human Rights NGOs in the 1990s,” *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (May 1998), pp. 379–412.

55. There are exceptions: Carl Gershman, president of the National Endowment for Democracy, and Nadia M. Diuk, senior program officer for Central and Eastern Europe and the New Independent States at the National Endowment for Democracy, are examples. See, for instance, Diuk, “Helsinki Accords Work Today: Human Rights Return as an Issue,” *Washington Times*, May 24, 2001, p. 25.

56. Conversations with human rights groups, including Physicians for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch, in spring and summer 2000. Campaigns cost money, and so much was spent on Kosovo, complained one activist, that little was left to cover the war in Chechnya.

57. HRW’s work with Memorial seems to be an exception.

perceived as “political.” As human rights groups, they are “not for peace, per se.”<sup>58</sup>

#### OLD VERSUS NEW NORMS

Local norms in the post-Soviet space continue to influence both the general population and elites.<sup>59</sup> Although not well understood, this dynamic, which can hinder the diffusion of international norms and the work of transnational networks, has been observed in numerous surveys.<sup>60</sup> For example, the Soviet legacy continues to compete with Western concepts of human rights, particularly among Russians who have been harmed by attempts at market reform. Drawing on survey data from 1992 to 1993 and 1995 to 1996, Judith Kullberg and William Zimmerman argue that among the masses, “poverty and limited opportunities in the new market economy are impeding the successful internalization of democratic norms by large segments of the Russian population.”<sup>61</sup>

Evidence suggests that this trend grew in the late 1990s. In another survey conducted in 1998, when asked, “What political system suits Russia best?” more than 50 percent responded either the pre-perestroika Soviet system or the perestroika-era Soviet system. Only 18 percent answered “Western-type de-

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58. Letter from a human rights organization to the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya. The author thanks Scott Lindsey for sharing the letter.

59. This issue is explored further in a multiyear study that the author is undertaking with Theodore Gerber on how Russians think about human rights and about Chechnya. Findings from a survey that we wrote and that VCIOM carried out in September and October 2001 with 2,405 respondents across Russia suggest that there is currently little demand for the protection of civil liberties. See Theodore P. Gerber and Sarah E. Mendelson, “How Russians Think About Human Rights,” PONARS (Program on New Approaches to Russian Security) Policy Memo No. 221, December 2001; Theodore P. Gerber and Sarah E. Mendelson, “How Russians Think About Chechnya,” PONARS Policy Memo No. 243, January 2002; and Theodore P. Gerber and Sarah E. Mendelson, “The Disconnect in How Russians Think About Human Rights and Chechnya: A Consequence of Media Manipulation,” PONARS Policy Memo No. 244, January 2002, all available at [http://www.csis.org/ruseura/ponars/policymemos/pm\\_index.html](http://www.csis.org/ruseura/ponars/policymemos/pm_index.html).

60. See, for example, David P. Conradt, “Changing German Political Culture,” in Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, eds., *The Civic Culture Revisited* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1989). Of the Almond and Verba study, Conradt writes, “In neglecting to examine directly or systematically the effects of history upon political culture, [Almond and Verba] were unable to deal satisfactorily with the problem of change. If there is a relationship between a country’s ‘traumatic history’ and its political culture, what happens to political values over time as the traumatic events become increasingly remote to an increasingly large segment of the population?” Conradt found that trauma decreased in salience as a state’s economy developed. In the Russian case, trauma seems to have heightened in salience as the economy has faltered. *Ibid.*, p. 225.

61. Judith S. Kullberg and William Zimmerman, “Liberal Elites, Socialist Masses, and Problems of Russian Democracy,” *World Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (April 1999), p. 354. See also Yuri Fedorov, “Democratization and Globalization: The Case of Russia,” Working Papers Series No. 13 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000). In both works, surveys were carried out with the polling firm ROMIR (Russian Public Opinion and Market Research).

mocracy.”<sup>62</sup> A 1999 survey by Timothy Colton and Michael McFaul puts the number of Russians who preferred the Soviet system at 25 percent and Soviet “but in a different, more democratic form” at 41 percent. Only 9 percent wanted “democracy of the Western type.”<sup>63</sup>

The All-Russian Center for Public Opinion, a polling firm, found that in the first ten years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the salience of “our past, our history” had risen to become the primary factor that respondents pointed to “when you think about our people.”<sup>64</sup> By 1999 “a significant number, if not [a] majority,” believed that “Soviet leaders were not only more able, but also more honest, authoritative and solicitous than post-Soviet leaders.”<sup>65</sup> In addition, many Russians still considered state security much more important than individual rights, and social and economic rights more important than civil or political rights. Russians found “the right to free education, medical care, social security in old age and in the event of illness” (68 percent) and “the right to a well-paid job in line with one’s training” (53 percent) vastly more important than “freedom of religion” (8 percent), “the right to have access to information” (9 percent), or “the right to elect representatives to the bodies of power” (8 percent).<sup>66</sup>

Many issues relating to democracy clash with political legacies of the Soviet period. The legacy of Russian antipathy toward political parties, for example,

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62. Fedorov, “Democratization and Globalization,” p. 4. The response in the early 1990s to the same question indicated that “more than 70%” favored democracy. Fedorov writes, “The opinion polls of the 1990s confirmed that by the end of the decade the Russian public was less supportive of democratic values than it was at the beginning of it.” *Ibid.*, p. 3.

63. Timothy J. Colton and Michael McFaul, “Are Russians Undemocratic?” Working Paper No. 20 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2001), p. 7, Table 5. Ironically, the purpose of the authors’ paper was to challenge “key elements of the emerging master narrative of Russian politics” that Russians are disinclined toward democracy. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

64. In 1989, 300 out of 1,250 survey respondents (24 percent) pointed to history; in 1994, 1,094 out of 2,957 respondents (37 percent) pointed to history; and in 1999, 960 out of 2,000 participants (48 percent) had the same response. Yuri Levada, “Homo Sovieticus Ten Years On,” in Edward Skidelsky and Yuri Senokosov, *Russia on Russia: Issue Two* (London: Social Market Foundation and VCIOM, 2000), p. 22.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 18. Notably, “assessments of the Stalin and Brezhnev eras have markedly changed for the better.” *Ibid.*, p. 23. Leonid Sedov, “Attitudes to Government,” in Skidelsky and Senokosov, *Russia on Russia*, p. 49, writes that in 1999, 65 percent of those polled said that Soviet leaders were “more authoritative” than their post-Soviet counterparts; 65 percent thought that Soviet leaders “cared more for the common people”; 47 percent thought that they were “stronger and resolute”; and 46 percent thought that they were “more honest.”

66. Yuri Senokosov, “The Burden of Greatness,” in *ibid.*, p. 11. These findings contrast with Colton and McFaul, “Are Russians Undemocratic?” where their survey asks only about freedoms associated with political (and not economic) rights, and where the numbers are very high. According to a survey taken by Senokosov, 50 percent of the population felt that the army exerts “too small” an influence on Russian society, and 37 percent felt that state security bodies exert “too small” an influence. Senokosov, “The Burden of Greatness,” pp. 10–11. See also the gap in the elite and mass

has been extensively documented: Stephen White, Richard Rose, and Ian McAllister found that although “trust in parties is normally considered a civic virtue . . . in the Russian context it most often characterized Communist voters. Conversely, liberal reform voters are lowest in trust, because the party that most readily comes to mind is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.”<sup>67</sup> This Soviet legacy has also reduced the impact of transnational advocacy networks as they have tried to promote the development of horizontal ties within the country between, for example, human rights NGOs and political parties on issues of mutual concern. As Moscow’s Helsinki Group Director Alekseeva once claimed, ties with parties “will ruin our reputation.”<sup>68</sup>

If, as polls suggest, Soviet-era norms remain a factor in the mind-sets of Russians, what role do they play in the diffusion of international norms? Residual organizational norms are necessary and sufficient for explaining how local democratic activists respond to new ideas and practices generated by transnational advocacy networks. The interaction of local and international norms often presents a significant barrier to diffusion, yet it has gone largely unexplored in the literature.<sup>69</sup> In cases where Western ideas and practices in some way complement the organizational culture of a specific local group, activists are receptive. If ideas and practices help to solve specific problems (e.g., increasing a candidate’s electoral chances), local activists are particularly likely to adopt them. When ideas and practices appear to *compete or clash* with local customs or beliefs, however, even in cases where the logic of consequence might dictate the adoption of the new ideas and practices (i.e., it would be the “rational” thing to do), activists initially reject them based on what James March and Johan Olsen have identified as the logic of appropriateness.<sup>70</sup> In

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surveys conducted at the end of 1992 and early 1993 and from late 1995 through the summer of 1996. Kullberg and Zimmerman, “Liberal Elites, Socialist Masses, and Problems of Russian Democracy,” p. 324, argue that “a substantial segment of the Russian electorate has not accepted the westernizing liberalism of those who led the democratic revolution and has instead opted for socialism or authoritarian nationalism and the corresponding ‘red’ and ‘brown’ political parties.”

67. Stephen White, Richard Rose, and Ian McAllister, *How Russia Votes* (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House, 1997), p. 232.

68. Quoted in meeting of the Moscow Helsinki Group attended by the author, Moscow, December 14, 1999.

69. For exceptions, see Jeffrey W. Legro, “Which Norms Matter? Revising the ‘Failure’ of Internationalism,” *International Organization*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Winter 1997), pp. 31–64; and Gurowitz, “Mobilizing International Norms.” For further discussion on the interaction of local and international norms in Russia, see Mendelson, “Democracy Assistance and Political Transition in Russia.”

70. James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1989); and James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, “The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders,” *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Autumn 1998), pp. 943–970.

other words, local norms tend to trump international ones, even among populations that view international norms favorably.

#### THE BATTLE OF THE NETWORKS

Federal and local authorities in Russia are increasingly embracing aspects of the Soviet legacy relating to state power. They seek to counter the effectiveness of transnational advocacy networks in their country by drawing on their own networks. Their principal issue involves shoring up a weakened Russia (creating a "vertical power" structure), which has had the effect of rolling back or attempting to manage certain influences stemming from Western liberalism. Although their efforts tend not to be well coordinated, at a minimum, these domestic networks make the conditions under which transnational norms and networks function inside Russia more hostile.<sup>71</sup>

Until 1999 most transnational networks, with the exception of environmental groups, existed in an atmosphere of benign neglect. Activists were free to travel and develop ties with other activists, and networks proliferated. By 1999, however, the political climate had changed as Putin and others in the federal bureaucracy started to strengthen state organs. Despite the supposed protection of rights "institutionalized" in Russia's constitution, activists began to live in fear.<sup>72</sup>

In the late 1990s, the Russian government started to use the rule of law to enforce authoritarian rather than democratic trends.<sup>73</sup> Federal, regional, and local authorities manipulated laws seeking to constrict Russia's fragile NGO community. The reregistration campaign of NGOs is illustrative. According to the Russian constitution (Article 30), every individual has the right to participate in nongovernmental associations. By law, federal and local representatives of

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71. One well-coordinated campaign being directed by the Kremlin is widely seen as an effort to create a civil society that the state can manage and, in some cases, manufacture. Interviews with Russian activists in Moscow, June 2001. These efforts were observed in a meeting that Putin held with handpicked NGOs in June 2001 and a civic forum held in November 2001.

72. The Russian constitution is available at <http://www.fipc.ru/fipc/constit/>. One Russian human rights activist writes, "The people must first accept that they have rights, and understand that these rights are in the Russian constitution." Annemarie Gielen, "Soldiers' Mothers Challenge Soviet Legacy," *Give and Take*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Summer 2000), p. 20. This journal tracks civil society activity in Eurasia and is published by the Initiative for Social Action and Renewal in Eurasia, Washington, D.C.

73. The building blocks of democratic states, including parties, media, and civic groups, are inherently neutral—rather than exclusively positive—organizational structures. Sheri Berman, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," *World Politics*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (April 1997), pp. 401–429, documents how these building blocks contributed to the development of a fascist state in Germany.

the ministry of justice were required to reregister these groups by June 30, 1999. Yet many groups found that “regional and local authorities *used* the requirement for NGOs to re-register as an opportunity to get rid of ‘undesirable’ organizations which criticize the authorities’ actions in certain areas or suggest alternative remedies.”<sup>74</sup> Russian activists estimate that less than 50 percent of all national organizations were reregistered by federal and local authorities. Service provision groups that work with the elderly, veterans, and orphans have had fewer problems because they are seen as assisting the state; advocacy groups have been targeted because the authorities view them as a threat to the state.<sup>75</sup>

Many officials in the prosecutor general’s office, the ministry of press, the ministry of justice, the military, the ministry of the interior, and the FSB appear to share Putin’s politics. But Putin himself plays an extraordinary role in spreading fear among activists. First as head of the FSB, then as prime minister and acting president, and now as president, Putin has made strengthening state power and shaping civil society a priority. One of the first indicators of this trend came in a July 1999 interview, when Putin was head of the FSB. In the interview he argued that environmental NGOs in Russia tended to be in the employ of foreign intelligence agencies. This statement not only reflects how FSB agents perceive environmentalists but also helps to create a permissive climate for investigations into the activities of local representatives of transnational networks.<sup>76</sup> Putin’s conception of state power leaves little room for a robust civil society; he has overseen harassment of the media and has also established a legal basis for increasing government control over the distribution and control of information by signing early in his presidency a “national security information doctrine.”<sup>77</sup> Putin has repeatedly shown signs of being

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74. See “On the Violations Committed in the Course of Registration and Re-Registration of Public Associations in the Russian Federation in 1999,” report prepared by the Information Center of the Human Rights Movement and the Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, Moscow, February 15, 2000, p. 2 (emphasis added). See also press conference with Sergei Kovalev, April 18, 2000, distributed by the Federal News Service, as carried on Johnson’s Russia List.

75. On targeting advocacy groups, interview with Dzhibladze; and telephone interview with Alyson Ewald, Sacred Earth Network, May 17, 2000.

76. Aleksandr Gamov and Yevgenia Uspenskogo, “Vladimir Putin: Gosudarstvennii perevorot Rossii ne grozit” [Russia is not in danger of a coup d’état], *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, July 8, 1999, pp. 8–9. Geraldine Fagan and Lawrence Uzzell, “Church-State Relations in Putin’s Russia,” Keston News Service, No. 4, article 14, April 14, 2000, <http://www.keston.org>, reports that the FSB also believes that Western missionaries are really engaged in intelligence activities.

77. Victor Yassman, “The Roots of Putin’s Attack on Media Freedom,” *RFE/RL Security Watch*, August 7, 2000.



influenced by the organizational culture in which he spent most of his professional life: the KGB.<sup>78</sup>

The role of the Soviet Union's legacy is more complicated, however, than simply recognizing that old ideas and networks are resurgent. The Soviet Union will not be reconstituted despite, according to one survey in 2000, the wishes of 58 percent of the Russian population who feel that "it would be better if things in this country had remained as they were before 1985 [the year Mikhail Gorbachev became general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party]."<sup>79</sup> Russia is not doomed forever by its past, but the Soviet legacy still has power even as new values and practices diffuse and are incorporated into the Russian consciousness. Its people are adapting to the new, post-Soviet situation but often in incremental and contradictory ways. So even though a majority of Russians believe that the Soviet Union should not have been dissolved and prefer the Soviet system to either Western-style democracy or what Russia has today, one survey shows that 64 percent "support the idea of democracy," and 60 percent think that democracy would be a "very good way" or a "fairly good way" of governing Russia.<sup>80</sup> There is much evidence that even the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) has incorporated various new norms and practices into its culture. As one scholar notes, "The CPRF organization has become thoroughly entangled with the parliamentary apparatus."<sup>81</sup> In other cases—for example, in the Russian military—Soviet-era organizational norms overwhelmingly continue to dominate, usually with devastating consequences.<sup>82</sup>

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78. See Vladimir Putin, *First Person: An Astonishingly Frank Self-Portrait by Russia's President* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2000). Jeffrey W. Legro's discussion in "Military Culture and Inadvertent Escalation in World War II," *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Spring 1994), p. 115, is particularly relevant where he defines organizational culture as "the pattern of assumptions, ideas, and beliefs that prescribe how a group should adapt to its external environment and manage its internal structure."

79. This figure is up from 44 percent in 1994, in Levada, "Homo Sovieticus Ten Years On," p. 15. Sedov, "Attitudes to Government," p. 50, notes that only 16 percent of respondents are not sorry that the Soviet Union collapsed. Colton and McFaul, in "Are Russians Undemocratic?" p. 6, found in a 1999 survey that 73 percent of respondents fully agreed or agreed that "the Soviet Union should never under any circumstances have been dissolved."

80. Colton and McFaul, "Is Russia Undemocratic?" p. 8.

81. Richard Sakwa, "Left or Right? The CPRF and the Problem of Democratic Consolidation in Russia," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 14, Nos. 1–2 (1998), p. 150.

82. See also Fedorov, "Democratization and Globalization," p. 24. The way in which the Russian military handled the sinking of the nuclear-powered submarine *Kursk* in August 2000 is a particularly vivid example. It misinformed and delayed in telling the public about the sinking, withheld the names of those onboard until one newspaper bribed a naval official for the list, and hesitated in

When Soviet-era legacies and norms are more robust than Russia's new norms and institutions, the effect on organizations and networks is dramatic. This norms competition is particularly acute when assessing the impact of Russia's abuses in Chechnya on the development of democratic institutions. The war continues to play a significant role in squashing whatever independent media emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union, as the government expands its conception of what it considers information vital to Russian national security. Indeed there has been a creeping securitization of information: The government has increasingly restricted reporters' abilities to investigate the war, efforts to provide details on abuses and atrocities by the federal forces, and access to information on casualties.<sup>83</sup> Russian journalists who have gone beyond these restrictions have been punished.<sup>84</sup>

The war in Chechnya has helped to embolden the military and the FSB, institutions that have not been reformed since the Soviet era, and at the same time diminish an already fragile rule of law. It has been central to the culture of impunity that has developed among the 80,000 federal forces currently stationed in Chechnya, where few soldiers have been prosecuted for abuses, although more than 1,000 complaints have been filed. The troops are getting signals from the minister of defense, former KGB Col. Sergei Ivanov, that he is sympathetic to their conduct, even when it involves murdering civilians.<sup>85</sup>

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accepting assistance from NATO member states that many at the time thought might have saved lives. For numerous accounts, see <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson>.

83. See, in particular, Putin's discussion of Radio Liberty correspondent Andrei Babitsky's coverage of the war: He claimed that Babitsky "was working directly for the enemy . . . what [he] did is much more dangerous than firing a machine gun." Putin, *First Person*, pp. 171, 173. After writing critically about the war, Babitsky "disappeared" somewhere within Chechnya for several weeks. As of 2001, he was living in Prague. There are some reports that regional newspapers were "informed orally that it is prohibited to publish any information concerning Chechnya." See "New Restrictions on News from Chechnya," GDF/IFEX, September 12, 2000, <http://www.gdf.ru>.

84. Babitsky is perhaps the most celebrated case. Matt Bivens, former editor of the *Moscow Times*, in a talk at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, D.C., on February 22, 2001, claimed that it is not possible for Russian journalists to report on the "torture camps." Indeed *Novaya Gazeta* journalist Anna Politkovskaya went to investigate accounts of torture in Chechnya and then was herself detained and roughed up. Politkovskaya, "How the Heroes of Russia Turned Into the Tormentors of Chechnya," *Guardian* (U.K.), February 27, 2001, as carried on Johnson's Russia List. In an article published in *Novaya Gazeta* on September 10, 2001, Politkovskaya writes of executions and torture carried out by a unit of interior ministry troops from Khanty-Mansiysk serving in the Oktyabrskiy district of the Chechen capital, Grozny. Following threats on her life, she fled to Vienna, Austria. See Artyom Vernidoub, "Threatened Journalist Flees from Russia," October 18, 2001, <http://www.gazeta.ru>.

85. Ivanov is on record as expressing sympathy for Col. Yuri Budanov, the highest-ranking military officer to date to be put on trial. Of this officer, who had confessed to killing a Chechen woman, Ivanov lamented that he was a "victim of circumstance." In May 2001 Ivanov was in a meeting with editors from five newspapers when he noted that "just before the murder took place,

### *Toward a Better Understanding of Norms and Networks*

More than a quarter-century after the Helsinki Final Act and a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union, gains in human rights and democracy have yet to be consolidated in Russia. Instead there has been increasing regression.<sup>86</sup> Despite the presence of transnational advocacy networks, leaders who generally care about Western opinion, dependence on foreign assistance, and a constitution that protect individuals' rights, the reality in Russia diverges from expectations generated by much of the scholarly literature on the power of norms.

The Russian case suggests that the literature must better specify the role of powerful states and decisionmakers in the diffusion of norms. Moreover, when making policy, government officials in Western liberal states must take into greater consideration the degree to which states adhere to international norms. The power to help enforce compliance resides not with nongovernmental advocacy networks but with states in the Euro-Atlantic security community. It is not enough for Russia to care about its image in the international community. It is not enough for the networks to publicize norms violations, although they should continue to do so. The pressure to persuade Russia to be compliant must be more than "moral discourse."<sup>87</sup> Networks, especially when dealing with a state as vast and still relatively powerful as Russia, are constrained in their ability to bring about change absent the support of states and international organizations.

The behavior of international organizations toward Russia requires more systematic study. Rather than IOs reflecting the balance of power in the international system, and in some way influencing Russia as it transitioned away from communist rule, Russia seems to have found a way to mute the responses of these organizations to its lack of compliance.<sup>88</sup> Equally troubling, as the case

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ten servicemen from his regiment had been killed by a sniper. As a commander, he couldn't stand idly by while his soldiers were killed." Quoted in Sergei Grigoryants, "Human Rights Activists' Letter to President Putin," [http://www.glasnostonline.org/news\\_en/2001/may/20/01.html](http://www.glasnostonline.org/news_en/2001/may/20/01.html). On the weakness of military justice, interview with Deiderik Lohman, director of HRW, Moscow, September 2000.

86. Speaking on what would have been Andrei Sakharov's eightieth birthday, his widow, Yelena Bonner, expressed fear that Russia has made little progress toward achieving the ideals that her husband espoused. As cited in editorial, "Sakharov's Ideals Can Save Russia," *Moscow Times*, May 23, 2001, as carried on Johnson's Russia List.

87. On moral discourse, see Risse and Sikkink, "The Socialization of International Human Rights Norms into Domestic Practice," pp. 13, 36.

88. On the debate about the likelihood of institutions reflecting the balance of power in the system, see Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions"; and Keohane and Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory."

of NATO's 1999 air war in Kosovo shows, these organizations have themselves failed to comply with international humanitarian law even as they responded to human rights violations.<sup>89</sup> The result has been growing confusion: Which values should Russian decisionmakers embrace? Those that encourage the use of force to stop human rights abuses in Kosovo and more recently in Afghanistan? Or those that overlook war crimes in Chechnya? Because the logic and customs of democratic states are themselves ambiguous and contradictory, the diffusion of norms is problematic.

One focus of this study has been to detail the fragility of international norms, but more comparative work needs to be done to identify the factors that matter most in undermining or strengthening international norms. Is it inconsistency in Western foreign policy, for example, when states maintain friendly relations with some human rights offenders while castigating others? Responding with force to some abuses but seeming to ignore others? What influence do the politics of international organizations have on the erosion or promotion of norms? In particular, what is the impact of organizations that are meant to monitor and enforce democratic and human rights norms but fail to do so? Inside Russia, under what conditions will Soviet-era networks and norms weaken?

The growing body of work on norms depicts globalization as the spread of ideas, rules, and practices that underpin democratic values and human rights, affecting both societies and elites. Increasingly, and particularly in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, one observes a less discussed but related phenomenon: internationalization.<sup>90</sup> Capital and information cross borders easily, but their impact on average citizens is often exclusively superficial. As sociology's new institutionalists would predict, ideas and institutions in the form of laws, constitutions, political parties, NGOs, and other formal structures proliferate and appear to reflect or grow out of liberal internationalist norms. In fact, support for norms associated with civil liberties is weak.<sup>91</sup>

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89. Human rights organizations differ over the degree to which they find NATO in compliance with international humanitarian law, with HRW finding more compliance. See Amnesty International, "NATO Violations of the Laws of War during Operation Allied Force Must Be Investigated," AI Index EUR 70/025/2000 News Service No. 102, <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/print/EUR700252000?OpenDocument>; and Human Rights Watch, "New Figures on Civilian Deaths in Kosovo War," February 2000, <http://www.hrw.org/press/2000/02/nato207.htm>.

90. The author thanks members of the Program on New Approaches to Russian Security, then located at the Davis Center for Russian Studies, Harvard University, for the January 2000 discussion on internationalization.

91. Gerber and Mendelson, "How Russians Think About Human Rights."

The scholarly literature has not addressed the enabling role that these new institutions play for Western decisionmakers.<sup>92</sup> That Russia holds elections, that NGOs multiply, and that Russian officials speak of human rights helps Western decisionmakers overlook systematic torture and killing, repression, and harassment of the political opposition. Decisionmakers in the United States and Europe applaud the creation of institutions in Russia but ignore evidence suggesting that their role is often only ceremonial. The responses of the Euro-Atlantic states to Russian behavior suggest that it is possible to violate norms and still be a member of the "in-group."<sup>93</sup> Contrary to the findings of some scholars, my research shows that there is little evidence that for Russia, "talking the talk" and developing institutions necessarily obligates, "entangles," or "entraps" decisionmakers into taking action consistent with human rights.<sup>94</sup> Instead rhetoric is often a substitute for real change.<sup>95</sup>

### Conclusion

The process of political transition in Eastern Europe and Eurasia looks much less progressive than the scholarly literature on norms diffusion would sug-

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92. This phenomenon does bear some resemblance to the organized hypocrisy that Stephen Krasner identifies, although there is a disorganized, random quality to it as well. Krasner, *Sovereignty*, pp. 51, 52, 57, argues that rulers are driven by instrumentality to object to norms violations when it suits them and ignore them when it does not. Rulers in most political systems, however, do not choose by themselves which evidence to look at but are guided by layers of bureaucracy and dozens of advisers. Contingency plays a large role in how issues are framed by bureaucrats and advisers, and ultimately how they get on agendas.

93. Risse and Sikkink, "The Socialization of International Human Rights Norms into Domestic Practice," p. 38. For other examples, see Krasner, *Sovereignty*, p. 52, where he cites the favorable treatment of Iran by states even as American diplomats were being held hostage. Moravcsik, "The Origins of Human Rights Regimes," pp. 219–220, draws attention to democracies allying with dictatorships.

94. See Risse and Sikkink, "The Socialization of International Human Rights Norms into Domestic Practice," pp. 16, 38; and Risse and Ropp, "International Human Rights Norms and Domestic Change," pp. 248, 255. For examples of statements by Putin, see "Putin Says No Threat of Police State," *Izvestia*, July 14, 2000; and Vladimir Putin, "Address to the UN Millennium Summit," New York, September 6, 2000, both carried on Johnson's Russia List.

95. Some evidence suggests that this phenomenon occurs elsewhere as well. For example, even though democratic rule has replaced military dictatorship in Brazil, torture is still widespread. See "They Treat Us Like Animals"—Torture and Ill-Treatment in Brazil: Dehumanization and Impunity in the Criminal Justice System," report by Amnesty International, October 18, 2001, <http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/brazil/braziltorture10182001.pdf>. A striking parallel on the appearance versus the reality of democracy is captured in this observation by a Turkish politician: "You have all the language and institutions of democracy while at the same time a vast array of security laws which can be used to crush dissent." Quoted in Scott Anderson, "Starving Their Way to Martyrdom," *New York Times Magazine*, October 21, 2001, p. 45.

gest. Some postcommunist states have moved steadily toward democracy (e.g., the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland), but others have regressed (e.g., Belarus, Georgia, Russia, and Ukraine). Still others confront conditions worse than those under the Soviet Union (e.g., Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan).<sup>96</sup> Evidence from the Russian case shows that international norms on human rights and democracy are not as strong as scholars or policymakers have assumed. Moreover, these norms are increasingly being challenged by official sources, both inside and outside Russia. Most disturbing, the diffusion of international norms appears weak at the same time that the number of transnational networks has been growing and as Russia has been formally integrated into European institutions.

Despite committing gross violations of both domestic and international laws, Russia has paid no price in the global arena. Two wars in Chechnya, both of which involved war crimes, do not qualify as low-level or routine abuses even if one coded manipulation of national elections, abhorrent prison conditions, widespread abuse in the military, harassment of NGOs and religious organizations, and the intimidation of journalists and academics as such. Based on the Russian case, the level and number of norms violations that are tolerated over time by so many parts of the international system suggest that the threshold for noncompliance is extremely high, and that international human rights norms are less robust than is commonly believed. In Russia, tens of thousands have suffered as a result of these violations—some have even lost their lives—yet they remain largely silent and unseen.

One might argue that Russia's political trajectory will be little affected by international responses to its behavior. Or, it may well be that post-Soviet Russia will take longer to internalize international norms than, for example, post-apartheid South Africa or post-Pinochet Chile, cases that scholars argue demonstrate the power of norms. Perhaps some momentous domestic event will galvanize public opinion and push Russia toward engaging in behavior more consistent with Western conceptions of human rights and democracy. Without critical media, however, the chances of this happening significantly decrease. Moreover, given that Russia continues to have ideational resources

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96. Cassandra Cavanaugh, "The Iron Hands of Central Asia," *Washington Post*, August 2, 2000, as carried on Johnson's Russia List. Cavanaugh is a researcher for Human Rights Watch. Sophie Lambroschini, "Central Asia: Russia Sanctioning Anti-Islamic Crackdown," *RFE/RL*, August 2, 2000, states that human rights organizations have evidence that Russia under Putin offers "moral support and material aid" to those engaged in human rights abuses in Central Asia. The Bush administration may inadvertently do the same. Peter Slevin, "New Trade Relations Sought for 8 Countries," *Washington Post*, January 6, 2002, as carried on Johnson's Russia List.

independent of liberal internationalism (e.g., old norms and networks from the Soviet era), it is unlikely that Russia by itself, absent international pressure, will begin to comply with these norms.

In the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C., the temptation for the United States and Europe to overlook Russian human rights abuses and atrocities, especially those committed in the name of countering terrorism, has only intensified. The competition in policy priorities is again extreme; during the Cold War, the United States often formed cooperative relations with right-wing dictators to contain communism. Today the United States is looking for support in the fight against terrorism from almost any state, especially from those in Afghanistan's neighborhood. Yet if the trade-off between values and national interests was questionable during the Cold War, it is even more so now; states that routinely engage in human rights abuses create precisely the conditions that breed extremism. Perhaps instead the fight against terrorism will be recast as a fight for open society, for the promotion of human rights and democracy by powerful liberal states. Then human rights and democracy will finally be treated as strategic interests and not only as values. If that occurs, the prospects for democracy in Russia should improve.