Editor's Note

This issue begins with two articles discussing Soviet relations with Islamic countries in southwest Asia during the final decade of the Cold War, showing how Soviet policy-makers tried to cope with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism inspired by the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the subsequent ascendance of a hardline Islamic regime in Iran. The first article, by Vassily Klimentov, discusses how the pro-Soviet Marxist-Leninist regime in Afghanistan, which Soviet troops in late 1979 were sent to prop up, gradually transformed itself during the nine-year Soviet war in Afghanistan. Rather than preserving the basic features of Soviet-style Communism, the authorities in Kabul sought to win support from a greater share of the Afghan population by gradually shedding the vestiges of Communist rule. That process reached its culmination under the final pro-Soviet ruler of Afghanistan, Mohammad Najibullah, who changed his name from Najib in 1986 to reflect the entrenchment of Islamic norms in the country. This transformation was intended to earn greater popular support and to co-opt insurgent fighters. By the time Soviet troops pulled out of Afghanistan in February 1989, Najibullah's government was able to sustain itself in power for more than three years, until the post-Soviet authorities in Moscow terminated material and financial support for the Afghan regime and precipitated its collapse.

The second article, by Timothy Nunan, explains how the Soviet Union and the Islamic authorities in Iran were able to forge a rapprochement in the late 1980s. Although both countries were staunchly opposed to Western "imperialism," they initially competed with each other to promote that goal. The new Islamic regime in Iran sought to present itself after 1979 as the leader of all those seeking to undercut Western dominance. Soviet officials responded by trying to rally global anti-imperialist forces under Moscow's own mantle. Each country sought to elevate its own model of anti-imperialism in Southwest Asia and the Middle East, but the competition between the two gradually diminished in the face of changes necessitated by globalization. Both countries had to accommodate pressures for a less radical, more moderate stance, and the result by the late 1980s was that anti-imperialist groups and governments did not have an obvious leader. Radical transnational organizations partly filled the vacuum, but the changing positions of the Soviet Union and Iran took at least some of the edge off the world's anti-imperialist movement in the final years of the Cold War.

The next article, by Joseph Torigian, reassesses the ouster of the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in October 1964. Khrushchev had been in office during a dangerous phase of the Cold War, including the building of the Berlin Wall in August 1961, the armed confrontation between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact at Checkpoint Charlie in October 1961, and the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962. Although foreign policy issues, especially the Soviet Union's

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acrimonious rift with the People's Republic of China (PRC), were not totally irrelevant to his downfall, the main factors spurring his rivals to dislodge him were concerns about internal politics and Khrushchev's ability to turn against them as leader of a Marxist-Leninist system. Contrary to depictions of Khrushchev's removal as inevitable, Torigian shows that in fact the Soviet leader had crucial resources at his disposal and institutional means to defend his position. For various reasons, however, he did not act decisively at key moments (as he had in June 1957) to triumph over his rivals, despite his awareness that a challenge was brewing. A close analysis of Khrushchev's downfall highlights the crucial role of contingency and chance, as well as the distinctive characteristics of Leninist politics, in the events that led to his ouster.

The next article, by Alsu Tagirova, recounts the efforts by Soviet and Chinese officials from 1969 to 1978 to resolve their border disputes. In the 1950s the Soviet Union and the PRC had been staunchly allied against the United States, but by the end of the decade the two Communist great powers had split angrily apart. In March and August 1969, the conflict between the two had sparked fierce armed clashes along their border, leading to fears that a wider war might ensue. The negotiations that began at high levels in September 1969 and continued until 1978 were designed to prevent further violence and resolve the border differences, but ultimately the talks produced no concrete movement toward a settlement. International events and domestic political changes (especially the deaths of the Chinese leaders Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai in 1976) buffeted the talks, and Tagirova shows that, after a rocky start amid deep suspicion on both sides, the talks served mostly as a vehicle for the two countries to strengthen their international positions. Of particular importance was the increasingly close relationship between the PRC and the United States, culminating in a quasi-alliance against the Soviet Union by the late 1970s, with intelligence sharing and eventually weapons sales from the United States to China.

The next article, by Max Paul Friedman and Roberto García Ferreira, offers a critical perspective on the Alliance for Progress, the U.S.-sponsored program announced with great fanfare by President John F. Kennedy in March 1961 to "complete the revolution of the Americas." The goal of the Alliance, Kennedy averred, was to promote "political freedom" and "material progress" in Latin America by "transform[ing] the American Continent into a vast crucible of revolutionary ideas and efforts." Exploring the case of Guatemala in great depth, Friedman and García contend that the Kennedy administration, far from moving toward its goal of a "peaceful revolution," stymied the efforts of local actors and populations in Latin America to achieve the sorts of gains the administration said it favored. Kennedy's policies entrenched the elements in Latin America who sought to maintain authoritarian privileges and to block greater equity and freedom.

The issue then includes two items that mark the thirtieth anniversary of the demise of the Soviet Union. The first, an article by me, explains how and why the Soviet Communist system ended in late August 1991 and the Soviet state broke apart four months later. When Mikhail Gorbachev rose to the highest post in the

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Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in March 1985, he set out to strengthen the USSR and reinforce its position in the superpower competition with the United States. Gorbachev adopted drastic changes in Soviet foreign policy that were instrumental in ending the Cold War in 1989, but the domestic changes he implemented proved much less effective than he had hoped. Rather than strengthening Soviet institutions, his internal policies gravely weakened the Soviet polity and plunged the country into a debilitating economic crisis. Hardliners in the USSR staged a coup attempt in August 1991 to undo Gorbachev's proposed Union Treaty and restore a centralized authoritarian system, but their actions, far from achieving their goals, ended in failure and dealt a mortal blow to what remained of the Communist system. Four months later, the state known as the USSR, which had been formally established in 1922 by the Bolsheviks after they seized power in Russia in November 1917, was dissolved. The vast amount of archival evidence that has emerged over the past 30 years, along with myriad firsthand accounts by all the key figures in the drama, has helped scholars to explain why the Soviet Union broke apart—an outcome that seemed inconceivable in 1985.

The final item, a review essay by Bruce Parrott, assesses a new book by Archie Brown, a British scholar (and member of the JCWS Editorial Board) who has written extensively about the Gorbachev era in the Soviet Union. Brown's latest book, *The Human Factor: Gorbachev, Reagan, and Thatcher and the End of the Cold War*, focuses mostly on Gorbachev's role in ending the Cold War and his interactions with U.S. President Ronald Reagan (and later George H. W. Bush) and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, but the book also adds to Brown's previous work on the fate of the USSR. In evaluating the book, Parrott draws out what he sees as major lessons of the Cold War.

The issue ends with four shorter book reviews.

From December 2020 through December 2021, three of the founding members of the JCWS Editorial Board—Paul Schroeder, Donald Kagan, and Robert Jerrvis—died. Their deaths were attributable not to the COVID-19 pandemic but to another scourge of humanity, cancer. Bob Jervis's death at age 81 on 9 December 2021 came as a particular jolt. Although Bob had mentioned to me in the spring of 2021 that he had been diagnosed with lung cancer, he had remained active and in good spirits until the time of his death. I had almost begun to hope that his cancer would go into remission and that he would escape death for another decade or two. Bob was admired all around the world as an eminent theorist of international relations and a brilliant commentator on U.S. foreign policy. He published several articles and many book reviews in the JCWS. In addition to his stellar scholarly reputation, Bob was one of the kindest and most genial people I have known. He was a revered mentor to me and to many others 20–30 years younger than he, whom he always treated as equals. His death leaves a void not only on the JCWS Editorial Board but in numerous academic fields: political science, international relations, and diplomatic history.

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