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The Demise of the Soviet Union and the Pursuit of Radical Economic Reform:
Policy Initiatives and Public Opinion Responses

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The Demise of the Soviet Union and the Pursuit of Radical Economic Reform: Policy Initiatives and Public Opinion Responses

Executive Summary:

In the April 1993 referendum, Yeltsin acquired a powerful lever in his effort to push forward his economic reform program, but in the December 1993 elections, Yeltsin and Russia’s Choice paid a high price for having disregarded the electorate in three key areas. They had taken the unilateral actions which led to the demise of the USSR, although a March 1991 referendum had shown overwhelming public support for preserving the Soviet Union among voters in the nine participating republics. They had created an economic reform program whose specific features, from the beginning, were not favored by most citizens—and whose implementation produced increasing public dissatisfaction over time. And finally, they had followed a political strategy in late 1993 which resulted in a newly constituted legislature that threatened to resist government initiatives more consistently than had the disbanded Congress of People’s Deputies. In the aftermath of the December 1993 elections, both Russia’s economic reforms and relations among the republics of the former Soviet Union (FSU) are under review in Russia, and it is important that United States government policymakers recognize the appropriateness of these developments.

In the December 1993 elections, the Russian electorate provided a clear public mandate to change the pace and course of reforms. The December turnout was particularly low among key constituencies where support for Yeltsin had traditionally been strong—geographically, in Moscow, St. Petersburg and the Urals region; and sociodemographically, among the young and among entrepreneurs and other private-sector personnel. A notably higher turnout, on the other hand, was found among rural and small city residents, older respondents, and state enterprise personnel—in short, among those who were customarily more likely than many others to oppose Yeltsin’s reforms. Another factor in the December elections was growing sentiment that authoritarian power was needed to overcome Russia’s political crisis.

The question of economic performance within Russia is closely tied to the subject of economic relations among the republics of the FSU. More than 50 percent of the decline in both industrial and agricultural production in Russia since the end of 1991 has been attributed to the breakup of the USSR. The demise of the Soviet Union also had a pronounced negative effect on interrepublican trade and economic conditions throughout most of the FSU.

In this paper, we trace the course of public opinion from 1991 onward on the subjects of economic reform, relations among the republics of the FSU, and support for Yeltsin, his government, and his government’s most critical economic policy decisions. The research utilizes primary and secondary source material of several kinds, as well as public opinion data.
we collected during June and July, 1993 from general population subsamples of 1,000 adult respondents in each of the four cities where our work has centered since 1992: Moscow, Ekaterinburg, Voronezh and Smolensk.

As the historical record of late 1991 is now being interpreted by some analysts, the Soviet Union's demise that December was almost inevitable. Yet, the reality of the circumstances under which the Soviet Union was broken up more closely resembles an assault than a "collapse." Less than two months before the heads of three republics declared that the Soviet Union had ceased to exist, the heads of eight republics, along with Gorbachev, had signed an economic treaty which was intended to establish the basis for new economic and political relations among the republics. This action had a history which dated back to 1990, and which had been preceded by a long series of discussions in legislative bodies of the Soviet Union and other forums. And on March 17, 1991 an overwhelming 76 percent of voters in participating republics (minus the Baltics, Armenia, Georgia and Moldavia) had resoundingly affirmed their desire to preserve the Union in a special referendum. Eighty percent of qualified citizens in those republics had voted. We will never know how many citizens of the Soviet Union agreed with the announcement by Yeltsin, Leonid Kravchuk and Stanislav Shushkevich that the Soviet Union was no more.

The extent to which the "December coup" violated principles of democratic decisionmaking must be assessed in light of the shifting mood of the country at the time, especially in the wake of the failed August putsch. It is clear that many people in a number of republics wanted swift and decisive change--that for them, the center and much of what it represented had been thoroughly discredited. But this permissive mood was no justification for the actions of Yeltsin, Kravchuk and Shushkevich in dissolving the Union without extensive prior discussion and informed consent of the electorate throughout the region. This act would inevitably have broad and deep consequences for each affected republic and citizen--and for the world. This was not, in short, a decision which was the legitimate prerogative of three republics' leaders to make--in spite of the fact that most people accepted it without strong protest.

What is striking about public opinion on this issue in our Russian research cities is the robustness of opposition to the breakup--opposition that is pronounced across segments of the population that diverge both ideologically and sociodemographically. And it is not just in Russia that most people disapprove of the decision to dissolve the USSR. In the only two other republics we know of where public opinion on this subject has been measured, Belarus and Ukraine, most respondents recorded negative features of the dissolution of the USSR. It is
clear that in the West, however, there is strong interest in cementing the fragmentation of the
FSU that was brought about by the Minsk Accord.

On the broader subject of economic reform, public opinion research indicates that most
Russians support market-oriented reform—even in the face of precipitous declines in
productivity and purchasing power. But general orientations about a subject are only weak
indicators of more issue-specific attitudes. Whereas nearly half of our sample thought that
voucher privatization had been "a good idea," fewer than seven percent of employed
respondents, and an even smaller proportion of retirees, favored voucher privatization when it
was considered along with several alternative approaches to the question of large enterprise
privatization. Fewer than a quarter found much benefit for the general population in voucher
privatization, whereas more than three-fourths believed that enterprise directors, current
officials and crime groups were benefiting from the program. Further, a substantial majority of
respondents in our four-city study were less than enthusiastic about the results of the "small
privatization" effort, which was by that time more than half completed.

Economic reforms in Russia have not achieved the most fundamental objectives
articulated by Yeltsin and the Gaidar team. From the outset, Yeltsin viewed economic policy
as a weapon to facilitate realization of his political goals, and the reform program hastily
drawn up by Gaidar's planners had a devastating effect on the economy. Although Gaidar was
not the first Russian economist to propose macroeconomic stabilization and price liberalization,
he was the first in Russia to advocate, and then implement, widespread price liberalization
while monopoly conditions still prevailed, and to believe that the severing of interrepublican
ties provided an appropriate prelude to macroeconomic stabilization initiatives. Numerous
Russian analysts urgently warned that this approach was certain to further deepen Russia's
economic crisis, and it did.

Yeltsin's standing among voters has been strongly influenced by both economic and
political performance. Yeltsin's highest ratings were at the time he was elected Russia's
president in June 1991, following an anti-establishment campaign. Consistently, from that time
forward, until late 1993, Yeltsin's strongest public support came when he was in conflict with
his adversaries. Until October 1993, each decisive action in his struggles with enemies
strengthened his hand with voters. But after the bloodshed of October, Yeltsin's support
entered a precipitous slide from which it had not recovered when we examined the most recent
survey data available to us for this paper (May 1994).

Although support for Yeltsin declined markedly in the wake of the September-October
confrontation, there was apparently another sharp drop in the appeal of Yeltsin and his reforms
right before the December 12 elections. Arguably, a substantial proportion of Zhirinovsky’s last-minute strength resulted from the choices of previously-undecided voters who were influenced by Zhirinovsky’s apparently effective television campaign. A significant reason that so many voters were undecided on the eve of the December elections seems to be that political involvement, in general, ebbed substantially in Russia from the end of the Soviet period until the December 1993 elections---dropping notably after the September-October crisis.

The December election results, and the success of forces opposed to Yeltsin, can be accounted for by both disaffection with Yeltsin’s policies in his usual strongholds of support and by the ability of Yeltsin’s foes to mobilize voters from traditional pockets of resistance to Yeltsin’s reforms. These trends were apparently fed by the failure of Yeltsin’s strategists to build a solid basis of support for their economic reforms among voters, and actions of both executive and legislative branches in September and October 1993 which alienated large numbers of people and inevitably hastened the Yeltsin government’s day of reckoning with Russia’s electorate.

Now, Chernomyrdin’s apparent retrenchment on the economic front offers striking evidence that the concerns of citizens cannot long be ignored in a responsive political system. And Kozyrev’s more assertive recent foreign policy stance, combined with growing resentment toward the West among the Russian populace, are two of the more striking signs that the West, too, will not be exempt from accountability for the mistakes of the Yeltsin reforms. If the negative implications for US interests of these developments are to be minimized, it is vital that United States government policymakers acknowledge through their policy initiatives the primacy of the people’s will in matters of Russian economic reform. Further, it should be recognized that constructive responses within the Commonwealth of Independent States to the dissolution of the Soviet Union cannot be accurately characterized in only negative terms.

But with the Soviet Union now disbanded, Kozyrev finds it necessary to suggest to wary Western leaders that there would be nothing “wrong” in Russia’s “announcing as its goal the gradual integration---primarily economic reintegration---of the post-Soviet space on a voluntary and equal basis.” Although US government officials have pointedly voiced reservations about such a development, it is clear that the agreements which created the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) explicitly make provisions for the kind of reintegration to which Kozyrev refers. Efforts in the West to solidify the fragmentation of the former Soviet Union will predictably, we suggest, heighten Russia’s determination to resist what has increasingly come to be viewed in Russia as self-serving interference from the West, and particularly from the United States.
THE DEMISE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND
THE PURSUIT OF RADICAL ECONOMIC REFORM:
POLICY INITIATIVES AND PUBLIC OPINION RESPONSES

People no longer want an abstract government in the Kremlin. The person who
has taken upon himself the title of "leader" must be comprehensible, controllable,
and dependent upon public opinion. He must listen.

-Boris N. Yeltsin, The Struggle for Russia

The government does not endeavor to maximize its popularity, but it is important
that its active opponents are not too numerous at the critical moments. In any
case, public sentiment during a crisis cannot serve as an indicator of whether the
course of reform is correct or not.

-Sergei A. Vasil'ev, Economic Reform in Russia

Introduction

In the April 1993 referendum, Yeltsin acquired a powerful lever in his effort to push
forward his economic reform program, with 59 percent of voters saying that they had
confidence in the Russian president and 53 percent indicating support for his economic
reforms. But a year later, with the Congress of People’s Deputies replaced by new legislative
bodies and Yeltsin’s authority boosted by a constitution which granted broad powers to the
president, Yeltsin’s political stock was arguably at an all-time low. In April 1994, a survey of
1,204 residents of several Russian cities found that only 27 percent would vote for Yeltsin in a
two-person presidential race against ultranationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky. (Fifty-one
percent said that they would not vote for either candidate. By that point, Yeltsin was in trouble
with the Russian electorate not only because his economic reforms were widely seen as not
achieving their most basic objectives, but also because his stock as the leader who could

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2Sergei A. Vasil’ev [iev], “Economic Reform in Russia: Social, Political, and Institutional Aspects,” Changing

3Yeltsin’s public opinion ratings were also low at the end of 1992. The questions asked at that time did not make
Yeltsin and Zhirinovsky head-to-head contenders, of course; and thus the results in December 1992 and in April
1994 cannot be directly compared. For a discussion of Yeltsin’s late-1992 ratings, see Lynn D. Nelson and Irina
Y. Kuzes, Property to the People: The Struggle for Radical Economic Reform in Russia (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E.
Sharpe, 1994), 79.

4Julia Wishnevsky, “Polls Show Steep Drop in Yeltsin’s Popularity,” RFE/RL Daily Report, no. 82 (29 April
1994). Available from listserv@ubvm.cc.buffalo.edu; Internet.
deliver Russia from the stranglehold of Communism had fallen sharply. Thus, 900 days after Yeltsin announced his radical reform initiative in October 1991, most of the public were both dissatisfied with the progress of reforms and unpersuaded that Yeltsin should remain at the helm of Russia’s embattled ship of state.

Not only did public opinion shift dramatically during this period, but by the end of 1993 the national priorities being articulated by Viktor Chernomyrdin, Andrei Kozyrev and even Yeltsin himself had changed markedly. This new emphasis would highlight social protection more than macroeconomic stabilization, and in broader policy strokes it would seek to focus more on Russian national interests than it had earlier. These corrective measures by the executive branch, necessitated by the poor showing of Russia’s Choice and Zhirinovskiy’s unexpected success in the December elections, signaled, in the foreign relations arena, the beginning of a more wary approach among Russian democrats to Western prescriptions for economic reform. As Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Kozyrev recently highlighted the problem. “A mature strategic partnership has yet to emerge” between Russia and the United States—partially because, Kozyrev implies, it is not clear that the West’s recent “supportive policies” toward Russia have not been “motivated by paternalism or an assumed inequality.”

An aspect of this reformulation of national priorities which would provoke a negative response in the West was Russia’s increasingly urgent moves to repair neglected economic and political ties with other former Union republics of its “near abroad.” Of course, the question of economic relations among the republics of the former Soviet Union (FSU) is closely tied to the subject of economic reform within Russia. The economic repercussions of splitting one country with a complex economy into 15 independent entities with no advance preparation or planning would be devastating under even the most favorable of circumstances, and those baseline problems are magnified when the country has a command economy that is characterized by not only a high level of centralization but also a production system that has depended, for a number of critical products, on the concentration of production in a few large enterprises rather than a number of smaller, geographically dispersed facilities. Economist Grigori Yavlinskii attributes a minimum of 50 percent of the decline in both industrial and agricultural production in Russia since the end of 1991 to the breakup of the USSR.6 The Ministry of Economics of the Russian Federation puts the cost of breakup even higher. Data the ministry has analyzed indicates that about 60 percent of Russia’s economic decline can be accounted for

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by the disruption of economic connections among the republics of the FSU. Yavlinski summarizes the adverse economic effects of this action: "There was immediate--in one moment--not only political but also economic dismemberment of the Union, the elimination of all imaginable organs which coordinated economic activity. . . . Then, after that, the complete severing of Russia from all other republics, including those which did not discuss [independence] at the time."8 

In addition to its adverse consequences for economic relations within individual republics, the demise of the Soviet Union also had a pronounced negative effect on interrepublican trade. In a 1993 study of the Ukrainian economy, Simon Johnson and Oleg Ustenko note that Ukrainian interrepublican exports amounted to 39 percent of the republic's net material product in 1988, but that the disruption of interrepublican trade occasioned by the dissolution of the USSR has contributed significantly to the steep decline in output since that time.9 In a World Bank study, Constantine Michalopoulos and David Tarr observe that "near chaos characterized the trade and payments in the 15 states" of the FSU during the first half of 1992, and that bilateral agreements among republics did not overcome the problem.10 

But with the Soviet Union now disbanded, Kozyrev finds it necessary to ask, "What is wrong with Russia announcing as its goal the gradual integration--primarily economic reintegration--of the post-Soviet space on a voluntary and equal basis?" He continues, "... Russia's special role and responsibility within the former Soviet Union must be borne in mind by its Western partners and given support."11 But that support has decidedly not been forthcoming of late by US government officials close to developments in the FSU. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott told the members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee in January 1994, for example, that the United States is "not even willing to accept the implications of the phrase 'near abroad.' . . . That is a phrase," Talbott continued, "that connotes that there are two categories of other states. There are those where Russia has special

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rights and then there's the rest of the world." But the agreements which created the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) do, themselves, not only "connote" but explicitly make provisions for "two categories of other states" among CIS members. The concept "near abroad" does not depend for its justifications on visions of a resurrected empire. It is solidly anchored in the agreements that created the CIS. We will suggest below that the process by which the CIS was formed was improper; but of course, without the action of Yeltsin and the two other republic leaders who breathed life into the CIS, there might now be no discussion of a "near abroad," since a trimmed-down variant of the Soviet Union would quite possibly still exist. And the recognized territorial integrity of the Soviet Union, minus the Baltic states, was affirmed by then-Secretary of State James A. Baker III as recently as March 1991, at the time of the referendum on preserving the USSR.

Efforts in the West to solidify the fragmentation of the former Soviet Union through such vehicles as the "Partnership for Peace" proposal will predictably, we suggest, heighten Russia's determination to resist what has increasingly come to be viewed in Russia as self-serving interference from the West, and particularly from the United States. Yeltsin signalled that response in an April 1994 speech to Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service, when he stated that Russia must, in the future, distinguish between "partnership" and efforts by foreign governments to dominate Russia and to urge on Moscow "actions that run counter to Russia's national interests." And Yeltsin's position on this subject has broad public support within Russia--not only among the Russian electorate, as we will indicate below, but also among a broad spectrum of political leaders as diverse as Gennadii Zyuganov, head of the Communist

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13In an interview with David Brinkley, Baker stated, "Since 1933, we have recognized the territorial integrity of the Soviet Union, except for the Baltic States" (Michael Weisskopf, "Baltics Should Be 'Free to Pursue . . . Hopes'; Secretary Stresses opposition to Soviet Force," The Washington Post [18 March 1991], A25. Available from "NEWS" library, "WPOST" file, in Mead Data Central, Inc., LEXIS/NEXIS [database online]).

14In his January 25, 1994 testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Talbott characterized the Partnership for Peace proposal as "the centerpiece of the initiative that President Clinton has put forward for building a new post-Cold War security structure in Europe." (See House Foreign Affairs Committee, "US Policy toward the Former Soviet Union."). Later in the meeting, Talbott makes clear his view of the role the Partnership for Peace could play in maintaining the new international borders that have been created on the territory of the FSU, stating, "One of the important and promising aspects of the Partnership for Peace is that it commits all of its member states to respect CSCE [Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe] principles on the sanctity of interstate borders and territorial integrity. One of several reasons why we hope the Russian Federation will sign up to the Partnership for Peace is because by doing so it will commit itself to those principles . . . ."

15Steve Foye, "Yeltsin on Near Abroad, Relations with West," RFE/RL Daily Report, no. 84 (3 May 1994).
Party of the Russian Federation, and Yavlinskii, the leader of the moderate YABLOKO reform bloc.16

Kozyrev emphasizes the importance of public opinion in mandating reformulations of both Russian reforms and Russia's foreign policy objectives. "For the first time, the policies of Russian reformers and their friends abroad must be pursued taking into account how these policies are perceived inside," he observes, because "public opinion is decisive in democracies." 17 Between the lines, of course, is an unarticulated rebuke of those who would insist that Russian leaders implement reform policies pleasing to the West, irrespective of Russian public sentiment. Talbott's position in that regard is illuminated by his January 25, 1994, testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. While acknowledging that reform "needs to be redefined in a way that takes more account of the social and, indeed, the political consequences of reform," Talbott emphasizes, ". . . there should be no serious discussion of slowing it down," and in that context Talbott acknowledges that recent appointments in the Russian government have included "individuals who are associated more with the old way of doing things," adding, "and that is a cause of concern to us." 18

But in democracies, as Kozyrev takes pains to note, neither leaders within a government nor, certainly, foreign policymakers, can decide that there will "be no serious discussion of slowing" reforms. In a democracy, leaders and their constituency are obviously free to discuss any public question they want to—at any level of seriousness they choose. Nor can foreign policymakers decide among themselves whether or not "old ways of doing things" in another sovereign state have continuing national legitimacy, since in democracies, legitimacy is not bestowed by officials of foreign governments. James Baker, who was US Secretary of State at the time the Soviet Union ceased to exist, highlighted this fundamental point shortly after the first agreement was signed to create the CIS. Responding to a question regarding US support for the new Commonwealth, Baker stated, ". . . we should not do anything that would be perceived as injecting ourselves into an internal political debate. We would not, I know, appreciate it if leadership over there decided they wanted to inject themselves into what

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16Alexander Rahr, "Yavlinsky for CIS Integration," RFE/RL Daily Report, no. 88 (9 May 1994). Here, and in several other places in this report, when quoting material directly and providing titles of articles, we follow the transliteration conventions of the authors/editors we are quoting (e.g., "Yavlinsky"), even though they may deviate from the transliteration "rules" we use in the narrative (e.g., "Yavlinskii"). Of course, if we were adhering precisely to Library of Congress transliteration conventions in this example, we would write "Iavlinskii."


18House Foreign Affairs Committee, "US Policy Toward the Former Soviet Union."
happens in the United States in 1992."\textsuperscript{19} But the recent public position of United States officials on the question of US involvement in the political debates of CIS members, collectively and individually, has not been so discreet.

In this paper, we trace the course of public opinion from 1991 onward on the subjects of economic reform, relations among the republics of the FSU, and support for Yeltsin, his government, and his government's most critical economic policy decisions. Our purposes are to identify key factors in the turnaround in public opinion before December 12, 1993, especially, which led to revisions in the Russian government's approach to economic reform and relations with the "near abroad." The latter theme is closely tied to the former, as we will show, but their interrelationship has been missed by a number of Western analysts who, in the mode of Zbigniew Brzezinski, want to frame afterthoughts among the Russian electorate about the USSR's dissolution as nothing more than an "imperial impulse,"\textsuperscript{20} or, in the manner of Paul A. Goble, would have the West respond to the problem of "decommunizing both the polity and the economy" by "recognizing that" the CIS has "outlived" its "original utility," and by "backing weaker powers against stronger ones to discourage aggression."\textsuperscript{21} But before proceeding further down this dangerous road of proposing policy strategies which are based on oversimplified and self-interested interpretations of recent events in the FSU, it would be a good idea to get the relevant recent history straight--particularly as it relates to the question of what the Russian electorate, and citizens of other former Union republics, have and have not voted for, and wanted, and found unacceptable, in the areas of economic reform and related political restructuring.

As part of our ongoing study of Russian economic and political reform, we collected data during June and July, 1993, from general population subsamples of 1,000 adult respondents\textsuperscript{22} in each of our research cities. Names were randomly selected from address bureau lists in Moscow and Ekaterinburg, and from voucher lists in Voronezh and Smolensk. All respondents were interviewed in person, and all interviews were conducted during the evening. No substitutions were permitted within a household for the individual named on address bureau and voucher lists, and interviewers made two follow-up attempts, if needed, to contact not-at-


\textsuperscript{20}Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Premature Partnership," \textit{Foreign Affairs} 73 (March/April 1994), 72.

\textsuperscript{21}Paul A. Goble, "Russia and Its Neighbors," \textit{Foreign Policy}, no. 90 (Spring 1993), 82, 88.

\textsuperscript{22}Eighteen years of age or older.
home individuals.\textsuperscript{23} In this analysis with the four-city general population sample, students, military personnel, and individuals under 50 years of age without employment outside the home are excluded. The resulting sample size is 3,294.\textsuperscript{24} Both because retired individuals are disproportionately represented in our overall sample and because retired people often have life situations that diverge markedly from those of employed individuals, we separate these two respondent categories in the tables of this report. We combined these data with other primary and secondary source material in developing the themes of this paper.

The Breakup of the Soviet Union

When the subject is the breakup of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, recent discussions in the West tend to reflect a convenient forgetfulness about the circumstances under which the USSR ceased to exist. As the historical record of late 1991 is now being interpreted by some analysts, the Soviet Union’s demise that December was almost inevitable. For Dimitri Simes, Boris Yeltsin seems to have been practically a bystander, demonstrating a "response to the collapse" which "was probably as restrained as was politically feasible." A few sentences later, Simes characterizes Yeltsin’s "overall approach to the end of the empire" as having "been fairly flexible, benign and pragmatic."\textsuperscript{25} And one must go deep into the Western collective memory, even at this close vantage point, to find traces of Ukrainian president Leonid Kravchuk’s pivotal role in the process of dissolving the Union.

On October 18, 1991, the heads of eight republics, along with Gorbachev, had signed the Treaty on an Economic Community of Sovereign States, which was intended to establish the basis for new economic and political relations among the republics. This treaty had a history. Gorbachev had called for a "new union treaty" after his election as President, and the Federation Council agreed later in 1990 that a union treaty was necessary to "guarantee real economic and political sovereignty for the republics." A draft union treaty was published in November 1990, after a long series of discussions in the Congress of People’s Deputies and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ten percent of the interviews in each city were verified either in person or by telephone. Our response rate was 93 percent.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Among the 2,720 respondents who were employed, 1,344 worked in state enterprises; 1,048 worked in privatized or privatizing firms; and 328 worked in private, start-up businesses. City by city totals for employed respondents and those who were retired or were homemakers older than 50 are as follows: Moscow, 746 employed and 82 retired/homemakers; Ekaterinburg, 695 and 124; Voronezh, 684 and 167; and Smolensk, 595 and 201. Ten percent of the interviews in each city were verified either in person or by telephone. The overall response rate was 93 percent.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Dimitri K. Simes, "America and the Post-Soviet Republics," \textit{72 (Foreign Affairs, Summer 1992)}, 80-81.
\end{itemize}
other forums. The treaty was approved in principle by the Congress in December, and after additional review it was published in revised form in March 1991. The following April 23, the leaders of nine republics, and Gorbachev, concluded the "Nine-Plus-One" agreement, which committed the signatories to adopting a new union treaty. (The "One" was Gorbachev, who had proposed the agreement.) The pact included a structure for new, less centralized, political relations and suggested that a new constitution would soon be approved. A union treaty was prepared over the summer and was scheduled to be signed on August 20, but the putsch intervened.

An express reason for the putsch was to prevent the signing of the treaty. But after the coup attempt was thwarted, a revised treaty was signed by eight republics (without Ukraine) at the Kremlin seven weeks before Yeltsin and the leaders of Ukraine and Belorussia quietly agreed on December 8 to disband the Union entirely, in favor of a vaguely-specified Commonwealth of Independent States. They did not even hold a press conference to announce their act. Yeltsin quickly took a plane to Moscow, leaving it for a reporter to announce the event on the 9:00 p.m. news program "Vremiia." His role in the Soviet Union's demise had been anything but benign.

Earlier in the year, on March 17, an overwhelming 76 percent of voters in participating republics (minus the Baltics, Armenia, Georgia and Moldavia) had resoundingly affirmed their desire to preserve the Union in a special referendum. Eighty percent of qualified citizens in those republics had voted. But the August putsch dramatically reoriented public and legislative opinion. Lithuania had declared independence on March 1990, and Georgia moved conspicuously in that direction later in the year. During the August putsch Estonia and Latvia followed their Baltic neighbor, and Ukraine declared itself independent a few days later. Before the end of August Moldavia, Azerbaijan, Belorussia and Uzbekistan followed suit--to be followed in September and October by Kirgizia, Tajikistan, Armenia, and Turkmenia. Thus, by the time the Minsk Accord was signed on December 8, all of the republics except for Kazakhstan and Russia had voted for independence.

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26 For a fuller discussion of these developments see Stephen White, After Gorbachev (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 176-79.
27 The Baltic republics, Georgia, Armenia and Moldova did not participate.
29 Then in March 1991, Georgian voters overwhelmingly supported a referendum initiative to seek full independence from the Soviet Union.
30 Kazakhstan voted in favor of independence on December 16.
These actions were not broadly interpreted to mean, however, that the Soviet Union had been dissolved with no continuing coordinating structure among consenting republics. The draft union treaty published in March 1991 had recognized that the reconstituted Union would consist of sovereign republics, and the "Nine-Plus-One" agreement had renamed the USSR the "Union of Soviet Sovereign Republics." (The word "soviet" means, of course, "council," and suggests a representative system of decision-making.) The Treaty on an Economic Community of Sovereign States which was signed on October 18 also recognized the "political and economic sovereignty" of the signatories. 31

The Treaty on an Economic Community, which Yeltsin himself signed as the representative of Russia, committed the signatories to, among other things, "refrain from any steps that jeopardize the implementation of this Treaty as a whole or of its individual provisions"; to conduct "coordinated policy" in such fields as transportation, the monetary and banking system, finances, taxes and prices; and "to carry out a coordinated economic policy and common measures to get out of the crisis." Including "a coordinated policy of changing over to free price formation." Further, the signatories "mutually pledge[d] not to permit unilateral, uncoordinated, actions with respect to the division of property that they recognize as joint property." 32 According to an Izvestiia reporter, Yeltsin stated at the signing ceremony that the signing of the treaty "at this time" was especially important—that "if the treaty works, it will help to stabilize the situation in Russia and in the country. 'I believe this,'" Yeltsin is quoted as having said. 33

Just 10 days after having signed the Treaty on an Economic Community, on October 28 Yeltsin spoke at the Congress of Russian SFSR People's Deputies. Whereas he had agreed on October 18 to develop coordinated policies with the other signatories, now he proclaimed that "the Russian Federation will have to conduct an independent policy." Then he announced "a one-time changeover to market prices" which would be implemented by Russia alone, with no coordination whatsoever. 34 Yeltsin nodded faintly to the other republics, stating, "We are prepared to cooperate closely with the friendly states in achieving transformations," but cooperation and coordination were clearly not in his plan. Yeltsin stated in that speech that "the preparation of a package of measures to reform the banking system is nearing

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31 CDSP, 43 (20 November 1991), 4; from Rossiiskaia gazeta (22 October 1991), 2.
32 Ibid., 5. Emphasis added.
33 CDSP, 43 (20 November 1991), 1; from Izvestiia (19 October 1991), 1.
34 CDSP, 43 (27 November 1991), 2; from Izvestiia (28 October 1991), 1-2.
completion,\(^\text{35}\) whereas 10 days earlier he had agreed to participate in coordinated actions among the signatories of the treaty] in the field of monetary and credit policy.\(^\text{36}\)

Yeltsin also stated, near the end of the speech, "We call on the republics to proceed along this path together. Coordinated actions will make movement easier."\(^\text{37}\) What Yeltsin ignored was that coordinated actions prior to such announcements as those he made on October 28 were mandated by the treaty. This was not a call for coordination. It was a proclamation of domination. In a manner reminiscent of Lenin's, 74 years earlier in Petrograd, Yeltsin had stepped confidently into a power vacuum and seized control. And Russia's Congress was no more inclined to check his drive for unchallenged power than had been the Second Congress of the Soviets in 1917.

Yet, through the efforts of Gorbachev and Yavlinskii (Gorbachev's economic adviser), among others, discussions did continue which were intended to give coherence to the turbulence that now characterized economic and political relations in the FSU. Yavlinskii had been working on the economic community agreements for months. A number of documents had been prepared which elaborated on economic arrangements within the new Community. These discussions were still underway when, on November 14, seven republics agreed at Novo-Ogarevo, near Moscow, to the text of a Treaty on a Confederal Union of Sovereign States which would be the legal "successor to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.\(^\text{38}\) It was agreed that the Union would have a new bicameral parliament and a popularly elected president. The treaty was to be signed shortly and then to be considered by the Supreme Soviets of the participating republics. But significantly, Ukraine had called for a referendum on the question of independence, and Kravchuk had decided, with the recommendation of the Ukraine Supreme Soviet that he chaired, not to participate in the work of Union bodies until the referendum results in Ukraine were known.\(^\text{39}\)

In a memorandum to Gorbachev which was prepared for the Novo-Ogarevo meeting, Yavlinskii warned that "If the treaty on an economic community does not come into force by December 20, at the latest, this will complicate to the limit the process of Russia and the other Community member-states, while all the responsibility before the people for the final collapse of the economy . . . will rest squarely with the leaders of the republics and the USSR President." And in a prediction that turned out to be only too accurate, Yavlinskii noted that

\(^{35}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{36}\text{CDSP, 43 (20 November 1991), 5; from Rossiiskaia gazeta (22 October 1991), 2.}\)

\(^{37}\text{CDSP, 43 (27 November 1991), 6; from Izvestiia (28 October 1991), 1-2.}\)

\(^{38}\text{CDSP, 43 (18 December 1991, 11; from Parkhomenko, Nezavisimaia gazeta (16 November 1991), 1-2.}\)

\(^{39}\text{CDSP, 43 (18 December 1991), 11; from Sorokin, Nezavisimaia gazeta (16 November 1991), 1.}\)
"By now, the inertia and reserves [on which the economy has been running] have been all but exhausted," and added, "The mechanism of management, which is still functioning, albeit imperfectly, . . . will have been totally destroyed by the year's [1991] end. The absence of solutions to key problems makes it impossible to form a new mechanism quickly. It is my view that the breaking point may come in the second half of January or early in February."\(^\text{40}\)

But the next day, Yeltsin signed a package of 10 decrees and resolutions designed to both set Russia on an independent economic course and severely hobble the Union government. With these decrees, Yeltsin delivered what Sergei Razin termed a "crushing knockout . . . to the Union structures."\(^\text{41}\) Russia would now take control of the USSR State Repository for Precious Metals and the USSR Chief Administration for the Production of State Bank Notes, Coins and Medals. The USSR Ministry of Finance was no more, and its functions were to be transferred to the jurisdiction of Egor Gaidar. Further, Yeltsin decreed that day the elimination of almost all Union ministries and departments, in addition to taking control of all financial agencies of the USSR that were on Russian soil. "Thus, at a single stroke," Razin observes, "Yeltsin has taken full economic power into his own hands."\(^\text{42}\) The World Bank country study Russian Economic Reform, published in 1992, underscores this judgment, noting that after the August putsch, "the Russian republic continued its policy of bankrupting the Union Government." And Yeltsin's November actions, the study continues, "complet[ed] the process of extending Russian government control over Union government functions."\(^\text{43}\)

Anticlimactically, in the wake of Yeltsin's power play, Gorbachev stated at a brief press conference 10 days later that the State Council had not initialed the Union Treaty.\(^\text{44}\) The dizzying pace of change, which had engulfed what remained of the Union, had been made-to-order for Yeltsin's "take-charge" style.


\(^\text{41}\)CDSP, 43 (18 December 1991), 1; from Komsomolskia pravda (19 November 1991), 1.

\(^\text{42}\)Ibid. On October 28, Yeltsin announced that "Russia will stop financing Union ministries and other central institutions . . . whose existence is not stipulated by the Treaty on an Economic Community" (CDSP, 43 [27 November 1991], 2; from Izvestiia [28 October 1991], 1-2). Subsequently, the State Council adopted a decision providing for the abolition of 36 all-Union ministries and 37 departments (CDSP, 43 [4 December 1991], 4; from Izvestiia [5 November 1991], 1). Yeltsin's action in this situation was also clearly preemptive.


\(^\text{44}\)CDSP, 43 (25 December 1991), 7; from Rossiiskaia gazeta (28 November 1991), 1.
On December 1—a week before the Minsk (Belovezhskaya pushcha) meeting—more than 80 percent of Ukraine’s voters45 endorsed the Act on the Independence of Ukraine which had been adopted by the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet shortly after the failed August putsch. The evening before the election, Yeltsin had appeared on Ukrainian television to proclaim that Russia would not sign the Union Treaty without Ukrainian participation—a move that Izvestiia characterized as pouring oil on the flames” that had been ignited earlier in the day in a televised speech by Kravchuk.46 Prophetically, an analysis published in Rossiiskaia gazeta the next week concluded that "If Yeltsin and Kravchuk pool their efforts, the Union center cannot withstand a struggle for its survival."47

Reflecting later on the circumstances surrounding the signing of the Minsk Accord, Pavel Voshchanov, Yeltsin’s press secretary at the time, stated, "If people could ever see how it happened, they would never forgive those people [Yeltsin, kravchuk and Shushkevich]. You could forgive them for the sake of a big idea, but there weren’t any ideas there."48

Within a few days, the Supreme Soviets of the three Slavic republics approved the Minsk Accord, and on December 21, 11 of the USSR’s 15 republics agreed to the creation of a Commonwealth of Independent States. (The circle would be closed, minus the Baltic republics, on March 1, 1994, when the Georgian parliament voted 121 to 47 in favor of ratifying membership in the CIS.49)

What followed the Minsk Accord bears more the stamp of an assault than a "collapse." On December 18 Yeltsin decreed that the USSR Ministry of Foreign Relations was abolished, and that its property and functions were to be in the hands of the RSFSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The next day Yeltsin decreed that "An RSFSR Ministry of Security and Internal Affairs shall be formed . . . in place of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs, the RSFSR Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Interrepublic Security Service and the RSFSR Federal Security Agency, which are being disbanded."50 Without a pause, Yeltsin then took over the Moscow Kremlin and a large number of USSR cultural institutions, including the Bolshoi Theater, Moscow State University and the Hermitage Museum. On December 17, the Russian parliament claimed the property of the USSR Supreme Soviet, and attempts by USSR

45Eighty-four percent of the electorate had participated in the referendum.  
46CDSP, 43 (1 January 1992), 1; from Izvestiia (2 December 1991), 1.  
47CDSP, 43 (1 January 1992), 5; from Rossiiskaia gazeta (5 December 1991), 1.  
50CDSP, 43 (22 January 1992), 10; from Rossiiskaia gazeta (25 December 1991), 3.
lawmakers to consider the agreements on the CIS which spelled doom for the Soviet Union were thwarted when the deputies from the Russian SFSR walked out—thus rendering it impossible to obtain a quorum. Gorbachev resigned eight days later, and Yeltsin quickly claimed Gorbachev’s Kremlin office.

The extent to which the “December coup” violated principles of democratic decisionmaking must be assessed in light of the shifting mood of the country at the time, especially in the wake of the failed August putsch. It is clear that many people in a number of republics wanted swift and decisive change—that for them, the center and much of what it represented had been thoroughly discredited. But this permissive mood was no justification for Yeltsin’s preemptive seizure of Union structures in November and the actions of Yeltsin, Kravchuk and Shushkevich in unilaterally developing their Agreement on Creating a Commonwealth of Independent States—a document which was neither discussed with the population for consideration nor presented to the Supreme Soviets of the republics on whose behalf it was signed. And as Gorbachev pointed out in a prepared statement, “[T]his happened at a time when the republic parliaments are discussing the draft Treaty on the Union of Sovereign States that was worked out by the USSR State Council.”

This hasty act would inevitably have broad and deep consequences for each affected republic and citizen—politically, economically, culturally, socially, and psychologically. It would directly trigger sharp economic decline, bloody conflicts in some republics, and overt Communist Party domination in others. Indeed, throughout much of the FSU, many of the same people now hold the reins of government who were in charge long before the demise of the USSR, and in many of those places, the reforms that were solidly underway in late 1991 have since been decisively rolled back. Further, the Soviet Union’s dissolution would threaten to accelerate other separatist initiatives, with uncertain and potentially disastrous consequences for the entire region. This action would quadruple the number of sovereign governments on the territory of the FSU within whose borders nuclear weapons were located—with unknown consequences for the international political order. This was not, in short, a decision which was the legitimate prerogative of three republics’ leaders to make—in spite of the fact that most people of the beleaguered Union accepted it without strong protest. Their brief exposure to democratic processes, during the Gorbachev years, undoubtedly accounts for some of this

51CDSP, 43 (8 January 1992), 4; from Izvestiia (10 December 1991), 2.
52See, for example, Lilia Shevtsova, “My umudrili’s’ otvratit’ narod ot demokratii eshche do togo, kak ona nastupila,” Literaturnaia gazeta, no. 51-52 (29 December 1993), 11.
passivity in the face of manifestly-undemocratic actions, as does the heady nature of swift and unexpected political reversals during that final phase of the Soviet Union's existence.

There is credible evidence that the Yeltsin team's desire to break up the USSR included a strong component of cynical and simplistic strategizing, based on a combination of personal ambition and perceptions of a few inexperienced decisionmakers that Russia could thrive better if it were unencumbered by close interrepublican ties. Sergei Vasil'ev, a member of the Gaidar team who was the director of the Russian government's Center for Economic Reform, stated in April 1992 that, "After the putsch, it became clear what a burden the Union had become. The [traditional] idea, 'Let's be friends,' had lost its meaning. Why should we consult with Kravchuk about stabilization of the ruble? Why should we coordinate [our activity] with Middle Asia, which is half-feudal and half-Communistic? . . . The program for disbanding the Union and creating the CIS was worked out by Gaidar. Egor Gaidar is not experiencing any political remorse. And now it is necessary, using Yeltsin's charisma, to provide an economic mechanism for Yeltsin's political program." Later, before the December 1993 elections, Gorbachev underscored Vasil'ev's interpretation. Explaining why he did not intend to vote for the Russia's Choice bloc, Gorbachev said, "If you just look at the list of their candidates, you will see people there who put huge pressure on Yeltsin in August 1991 to prevent him from signing the new Union treaty. Those people today are on the Russia's Choice list--people who directly participated in preparing papers for Belovezhskaya pushcha [the Minsk Accord], such as Burbulis, or voted for the Belovezhskaya decision in the Supreme Soviet. These decisions destroyed the country and, to a great degree, created the immense difficulties that we are experiencing now."

Not only was Gaidar's contribution pivotal, as Vasil'ev saw it, to the dissolution of the USSR, but Gaidar's action was implicated in a stream of historical inevitability, Vasil'ev believed. "Empires are fated to collapse," Vasil'ev continued. This "inevitability" notion is, for Vasil'ev, adequate justification for the Belovezhskaya pushcha decision. "There are some problems which cannot be decided democratically," he insisted.

Gennadii Burbulis, one of Yeltsin's closest strategists during this period, underscored this "inevitability" claim in a June 1992 interview. "No one 'invented' the Belovezhskaya pushcha,

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54Yuri Sorokin, "Parlament, pravitel'stvo i prezident nikuda ne denutsia drug ot druga," Novaia ezhednevnaia gazeta, no. 67 (1 December 1993), 2.
55Demchenko, "Epokha 'reformatorstva sverkhu.'"
the CIS. It was an objective historical act. It needed to find its performers.\textsuperscript{56} Yavlinskii’s response to the reasoning of Burbulis and Vasil’ev was unequivocal. "Empires fall apart inevitably, unavoidably," Yavlinskii agreed. "But because a person must eventually die, ‘inevitably, unavoidably,’ must he, then, be killed?"\textsuperscript{57}

A large majority of the respondents in our four-city study did not think so. Seventy-two percent believed that "the decision to break up the Soviet Union at the end of 1991" was "the wrong decision" (Table 1). Because our sample consisted of urban residents, this percentage may underestimate the strength of popular sentiment throughout Russia against the USSR’s dissolution, since rural and small town residents tend to be more conservative than urban dwellers. (But a September 1992 survey of 2,000 people throughout Russia, which was conducted by the Russian Center for Public Opinion Research (VCIOM)\textsuperscript{58} found that 70 percent opposed the dissolution of the USSR.\textsuperscript{59}) Further, more than two-thirds of our respondents now believe that stronger political ties should be created among the CIS countries (Table 1).

Goble’s 1993 claim that "those who prefer resurrected empire tend to be more authoritarian in disposition" than others\textsuperscript{60} is in no way supported by our findings or any others with which we are familiar. (Nor did Goble cite any evidence in support of his assertion.) Indeed, this argument, and Brzezinski’s warning of a growing "imperial impulse," ignore the wrenching economic aftershocks visited upon the people of the FSU by the secret decision to dissolve the Soviet Union.

What is striking about public opinion on this issue in our research cities is the robustness of opposition to the country’s dissolution—opposition that is pronounced across segments of the population that diverge both ideologically and sociodemographically. Even the youngest adults, age 18 to 25, opposed the breakup of the USSR by a wide margin, with 59 percent calling it "the wrong decision," compared to only 26 percent who believed that it was the correct thing to do. (Fifteen percent were uncertain.) Most respondents with graduate degrees opposed the action (62 percent, compared to one-third who favored it), and in Moscow, which is generally regarded as the most reform-oriented Russian city, 68 percent disagreed with the decision to fragment the Union. Among those in our general population sample who said that they

\textsuperscript{56}Ibid.; quoting \textit{Komsomol’skaia pravda} (6 June 1992).
\textsuperscript{57}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{58}Often, the acronym used in Russia is VTsIOM, but the Center now uses VCIOM in its published material.
\textsuperscript{59}V.D. Sokolov, "Naravstvennye kollizii sovremennogo Rossiiskogo obshchestva," \textit{Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia}, no. 9 (1993), 45.
\textsuperscript{60}Paul A. Goble, "Russia and Its Neighbors," 83.
supported the government’s privatization program. 61 percent opposed the breakup of the Soviet Union, while 29 percent supported it, and among those who stated that they were in favor of a market economy for Russia, 64 percent took issue with the decision to dissolve the USSR, while 26 percent agreed with the move and 9 percent were undecided. Even 56 percent of respondents who worked in start-up private businesses (non-state and not privatized) opposed the decision, while only 35 percent supported it.

And it is not just in Russia that most people disapprove of the decision to dissolve the USSR. A national survey of 1,148 Belarus adults conducted by the Independent Institute for Social, Economic and Political Studies in November and December 1993 found that 55 percent favored restoration of the USSR, while only 22 percent of respondents were opposed to the idea. (Twenty-two percent were uncertain.) Another question in that study asked people to evaluate the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States in December 1991. Only 18 percent described this development as having been "the first step toward complete independence of the republics of the former USSR." In contrast, 39 percent characterized it as "the breakdown of a great state and a crime against our people." (Eighteen percent considered it "a necessary measure to prevent a bloody form of disintegration," and 24 percent were undecided.)

The only other republic for which we have found survey data on this subject is Ukraine. Shortly before the Ukrainian parliamentary elections in March 1994, a national study found that more than 80 percent of respondents evaluated the Ukrainian economic situation as "bad" or "very bad." And when asked what factors had contributed importantly to Ukraine's economic difficulties, 79 percent picked "the breakup of the Soviet Union" as one of their choices. (Respondents could select several answers.) Two answers garnered even more votes. "Incompetence of the political leadership" in Ukraine was chosen by 83 percent, and 81 percent blamed "the mafia, which captured the market and the economy." 63

The Context and Course of Radical Economic Reform

The Political Basis and Objectives of Economic Reform. Václav Klaus, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic and himself an economist, argues that "The leading role in transforming
a society and its economy belongs, not to economists, but to politicians. Broad popular support for reforms is vital, Klaus insists, and "that means that there must be politicians who are trusted." In a democracy such trust comes, Klaus continues, through citizen approval of policies enacted by the politicians. A further consideration, in addition to the desirability of democratic decision-making, is that the magnitude of change that is produced by reform in formerly socialist countries is too great for reforms to be successful without broad support from the people. And the enduring public support necessary to carry out ambitious programs cannot be realized just on the basis of "negation—saying, 'We don't want to return to the past.'" Public approval will be forthcoming, Klaus adds, only when leaders clearly state the objectives of reform and pursue those objectives effectively.

The Russian reformers, however, did neither. In announcing his reform program on October 28, 1991, Yeltsin proposed as his overall goal "to stabilize the economic situation over several months and to begin the process of improving that situation. . . . If we embark on this path today," Yeltsin declared, "we will obtain real results by the autumn of 1992."

But the emperor had no coherent reform program. He had heralded a new path along vaguely-articulated monetarist lines (supplied by Gaidar’s working group), but he had no map to chart Russia’s unexplored economic way. He had abandoned the Economic Community program, which had been developed over a long period of deliberation and debate, in consideration of the demands and constraints of the Community’s economic circumstances, in favor of unspecified "drastic economic reforms"--a phrase which literally had no substance. And when economic advisers who were later appointed to work with the Russian government, such as Marek Dabrowski of Warsaw’s Centre for Social and Economic Research, attempt to excuse Yeltsin’s unpreparedness for the journey on which he had already set the Russian people, the surrealism here becomes even more palpable. It is correct, Dabrowski acknowledges, that "the Yeltsin-Gaidar cabinet never published any clear formulation of the government programme. . . . But this is not to say that the new government had no comprehensive concept for economic reform at the onset. Indeed, the concept was drafted by Gaidar’s 'team' just before its nomination to government. In October and early November

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65Ibid.
66CDSP, 43 (27 November 1991), 1; from Izvestiia (28 October 1991), 1-2.

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1991, a special working group, appointed by President Yeltsin and headed by Gaidar, gathered in a government dacha in Arkhangelskoe (near Moscow) to perform this task. “68

Dabrowski here admits that even the "task" of formulating a "concept for economic reform" was not developed by Gaidar’s people until after Yeltsin’s "drastic economic reform" speech. Yeltsin was a president, with a bold proclamation, now in search of an economic program. And, to make the situation worse, its outline would have to be formulated in utmost haste. According to Nikolai Fedorov, then the Minister of Justice and a member of the President’s State Council, at a November 4 ‘round table’ meeting of five people, including Yeltsin, Burbulis handed Yeltsin a proposal for creating "a group in government," to be headed by Egor Gaidar, "which would elaborate, within a week, the first necessary economic measures. The President read it aloud, got to the point about appointing Gaidar, and then looked to see who had signed the proposal. Again, with as much artistic talent as he [Yeltsin] has, he repeated, emphasizing the importance of the name: ‘Egor Timurovich [Gaidar’s patronymic]—Who is this? What are you proposing? What are you suggesting?’ Yeltsin was seriously annoyed, and threw the proposal across the table. Burbulis reddened and hid the papers. We did not decide anything that day, and we did not meet the next day. But on the sixth [of November], a decree appeared appointing Gaidar as a vice-minister, and Burbulis as the first vice-minister.” Fedorov then asked, "What had happened, in a day?" 69 Thus Russia’s economic future was hurriedly entrusted to "a circle of fellow believers," in Yeltsin’s words, with yet another theoretical vision for a new Russian revolution--this one, also, imported from abroad. 70 Later, Yeltsin’s press secretary at the time, Pavel Voshchanov, would insist, "When Gaidar came to power, if he had come with different ideas--not ‘shock therapy,’ but something else, Yeltsin would [also] have agreed to that." 71

The "Economic Policy Memorandum" of February 1992, issued after the price liberalization initiative in January had already sent the economy reeling, was the first public document prepared by the Yeltsin government which articulated objectives of the program. It

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70Yeltsin, The Struggle for Russia, 155. Yeltsin’s description of that situation is somewhat different: “Burbulis became acquainted with Yegor Gaidar in the fall of 1991 . . . When he met Gaidar’s team at a dacha outside Moscow, he couldn’t help but like them. . . . Once I had grasped Gaidar’s concept of economic reform and then met the author himself, I had to agree with Burbulis. Several days later, I signed a decree appointing Gaidar deputy prime minister and economics minister. Several of Gaidar’s close colleagues were appointed along with him to key economic posts in the government” (155-56).

71The Struggle for Russia, (written and produced by Sherry Jones).
stated two goals: "sharp reduction in the pace of inflation, to a low level by the end of 1992, and counteraction of the drop in production." The text of the memorandum also addressed the urgent need to balance the budget and stabilize the ruble, and it acknowledged responsibility for offering social protection to the needy. 72 The "Economic Strategy of the Russian Government," which was issued a month after the "Economic Policy Memorandum," introduced several specific reform objectives--"to create a market economy based on private property," "to replace most bureaucratic distribution of resources with market relations," to provide financial stabilization and stabilize prices, to provide a legal basis for new economic relations, to speed up land reform, and to liberalize foreign trade. The importance of privatization was underscored in the document. "We consider privatization to be the most important element in our movement toward the market," the document stated. 73

Gaidar was not the first Russian economist to propose macroeconomic stabilization and price liberalization. But he was the first in Russia to advocate, and then implement, widespread price liberalization while monopoly conditions still prevailed, and to believe that the severing of interrepublican ties provided an appropriate prelude to macroeconomic stabilization initiatives. Numerous Russian analysts urgently warned that this approach was certain to further deepen Russia's economic crisis. For example, Boris Fedorov, former Russian Minister of Finance and former executive director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, emphasized in a June 1991 Stockholm conference that, "Contrary to the popular beliefs of Western economists, the Soviet stabilization of the future is not a simple repeat of the usual IMF recommendations. The IMF or any other international institution has never yet tackled anything akin to the Soviet economic system. That is why price liberalization cannot be immediate." 74

But Fedorov's position, which was shared by nearly all prominent Russian economists, was rejected in favor of the course recommended by Western advisers. 75 Thus emboldened, Gaidar launched, at Yeltsin's initiative, a two-pronged, devastating attack on the Russian

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72 "Osnovnye napravleniia ekonomicheskoi politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii," Kommersant, no. 9 (24 February-2 March, 1992), 22.
73 "Ekonomicheskaia strategiia pravitel'stva Rossii" (part 3), Biznes, banki, birzha, no. 14 (1992), 1.
economy—first by pressing for, and achieving, disruption of the economic ties among Union republics, and then by liberalizing prices under conditions which were certain to transform Russia’s economic downturn into a catastrophic free-fall. The predictably-devastating effects on the economy of the Gaidar team’s first salvos are fully consistent with Yavlinskii’s assessment that the reformers began their work with a strong “dislike, and even hate of their own country. They said, ‘Everything here is bad; everything here is sovok; everything here is filthy. And now, we are starting the cleaning fire of inflation. We will demolish everything here, and then we will start building.’”76

Yeltsin found, in Gaidar’s economic plans, a powerful weapon to help him extend and reinforce his campaign against the center and against Gorbachev himself—an offensive which he had launched in 1989 against the Kremlin Old Guard, after Gorbachev dismissed him from the Moscow Party Committee post to which he had been appointed, by Gorbachev, only months earlier. Yeltsin quickly parlayed his image as a David battling the entrenched Soviet Goliath into chairmanship of the Russian Supreme Soviet. A week before he was elected to that position, which served as his springboard to the Russian presidency and ultimately to ascendance over the man who had dismissed him from his Communist Party post in Moscow, Yeltsin had ignited the chamber with a speech calling for the “real sovereignty” of Russia and rapid political and economic transformation.77 It was 1990. That formula proved to be so successful for Yeltsin that, following the August 1991 putsch, he was within striking-distance of the Kremlin itself. With Gaidar’s help Yeltsin now was well-positioned to finish off his old comrades.

Harvard government professor Graham Allison78 co-chaired the Joint Working Group which created the "Window of Opportunity" proposal that was presented in June 1991 to President Bush and Secretary of State Baker in the US, the other G-7 heads of government, and to Presidents Gorbachev, Yeltsin and Nazarbayev in the Soviet Union. Their "Joint Program for the Soviet Union’s transformation to democracy and the market economy"79 was intended to assist in preparations for the meeting between Gorbachev and the G-7 heads of state in London that July. (Gorbachev ultimately proposed a different plan, called by one American official, Allison states, "the Pavlinsky Plan"—more Pavlov than Yavlinsky."80) The

76 Demchenko, "Epokha ‘reformatorstva sverkhu.’"
77CDSP, 42 (27 June 1990), 1; from Pravda (23 May 1990), 4.
78 At the time, Allison was Dean of Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government.
80 Ibid., ix.
"Windows of Opportunity" program called for a comprehensive process, from 1991 through 1997, which would create the legal and economic framework for a market economy through institution building, develop "a full program of macroeconomic stabilization" and market reforms, and carry out privatization and sweeping structural reforms. The program proposed both Soviet actions and Western responses.  

Gorbachev hesitated to accept the program—for understandable reasons, we submit. The Allison-Yavlinskii plan was too idealistic, proposing a strategy which was not likely to be accepted by the diverse interest groups in the USSR, and proposing a level of Western aid for Russian reform which has since been shown to be unrealistic. While acknowledging "the necessity for mutual advantage" for the USSR and the West in any aid program, the "conditionality" provision of the proposal assumed too readily that the economic reform prescriptions of Western financial institutions were the optimal strategies for the Soviet Union; and it would have placed the USSR in the unenviable position of finding itself committed, perhaps too stringently, to the recommended Western approach, once the country became dependent on the aid being doled out "step-by-step." Further, and perhaps the document's most glaring flaw, the complexity of the country's economic and political problems was not sufficiently reflected in the proposal, as it had not been in the "500 Days" program which was in many ways its inspiration.

Not only Gorbachev's hesitation to accept the Allison-Yavlinskii proposal, but also the August putsch, intervened. When Allison penned his "Preface" that September, following the putsch, he noted that "In the wake of the defeat of the bureaucratic, authoritarian coup, Yavlinsky was chosen as one of the four-man committee to manage the government in the transition and to make recommendations about the new governing arrangements. He was specifically charged with proposing a new comprehensive economic reform program for movement to the market economy and integration into the world economy. That program will bear more than a little resemblance to the economic program for the Soviet Union outlined here."  

But Yeltsin lost no time in taking full advantage of the opening provided him by the putsch to displace Gorbachev. And Russia got Gaidar, not Yavlinskii, to direct the country's economic course. Later, Yavlinskii would charge that, in creating his new plan for radical

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81 Allison and Yavlinsky, Window of Opportunity, 39-66. The primary responsibility of Allison and his team was for the parts of the proposal which discussed Western perspectives and possible Western initiatives and responses.


83 Allison, "Preface," xii.
reform, "Boris Nikolaevich and his close circle had very clear political aims." They wanted, he emphasized, to cause "immediate--in one day--both political and economic disintegration of the Union and elimination of all economic structures . . . and to completely isolate Russia from the other republics." Yavlinskii continued, "At the same time, the President wanted to personally lead the economic reform, which meant that it had to be both fast (with the first improvement by the summer-fall of 1992!) and appealing (Make as much money as you want, with no limitations; take as many rights as you want; shorten the working day!). That was a political order. The question was, who would take responsibility to carry an economic reform program intended to satisfy these political requirements? My colleagues and I have a point of view that is very different in principle. . . . The reforms we had proposed would not have been as fast or as striking, but they would have worked."84

Apparently Yeltsin did ask Yavlinskii to head Russian reforms. "In public, I said 'yes,'" Yavlinskii remembered. "But in a conversation with the President's closest circle, and with him directly, I categorically insisted that with such preconditions that [Yeltsin and his advisers] had set as political goals, successful economic reform was not possible in principle. It was necessary to choose--either these political goals, or economics. Then there was a discovery. Another person [Gaidar] came, and said, 'I'll do it.'"85

In an interview for Nezavisimaia gazeta, Yavlinski added, "I think that to build, it is not necessary to destroy everything first."86

In October 1991, at the time that Yeltsin proposed radical economic reform and requested extraordinary powers from the parliament to carry out his reforms, the inflation rate was six percent yearly, production was declining at a yearly rate of 15 percent, and 60 rubles could be exchanged for one US dollar. A year later, the economy was in notably sharper decline, and most of the reformers' economic objectives were decidedly further from realization than they had been before the reforms began. Inflation was now 28 percent per month (3,275 percent yearly, by the end of 1992), production was declining at a yearly rate of 25 percent, and it now took 403 rubles to get a US dollar at exchange.87 For the first time since World War Two, the death rate exceeded the birth rate. Infant morality was on the rise, as were income inequality, homelessness and crime. An increase in the availability of goods was more than matched by pronounced deterioration in people's ability to buy even essential

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85 Ibid.
86 Irina Demchenko, "Epokha 'reformatorstva sverzhu' v Rossi z akonchilas'," Nezavisimaia gazeta, no. 21 (4 February 1993), 5.
87 Tsitriniak, "Pogranichnaia situatsiia."
items. A study by the London-based Centre for Economic Policy Research found that among wage earners in high, medium, and low income categories, all of whom had, overall, experienced significant income growth during the Gorbachev years, real incomes dropped by up to half during the first year of Yeltsin's reforms. Total real household wealth plunged 86 percent during 1992. Almost all of people's savings disappeared, due to price liberalization and inflation. Not surprisingly, the structure of spending changed. Food accounted for an ever-increasing proportion of most families' budgets. Overall, people bought 39 percent less in 1992 than the year before, including 13 percent less meat, 20 percent less milk, 30 percent fewer shoes, and 54 percent less clothing. Further, the foreign investment that Gaidar and privatization head Anatolii Chubais had hoped for did not materialize at a level that even began to approach expectations, and developments in the privatization sphere were not instilling public confidence that the program's most fundamental objectives would be realized, as we will show below.

Yet, most Russians continued to favor market-oriented reforms in the face of the precipitous declines in productivity and purchasing power that followed price liberalization in January 1992. After a year-and-a-half of Russia's most painful economic times since World War Two, and some say since the October 1917 Revolution, although most, by far, of our four-city respondents believed that price liberalization had been unnecessary and a majority thought it to have been a mistake (Table 1), half of our employed general population sample still supported, in principle, the government's privatization program (Table 2).

But general orientations about a subject are only weak indicators of more issue-specific attitudes, in Russia as elsewhere. Whereas nearly half of our sample thought that voucher privatization had been "a good idea" (Table 2), fewer than seven percent of employed respondents, and an even smaller proportion of retirees, favored voucher privatization when it was considered along with several alternative approaches to the question of large enterprise privatization (Table 3). We did not need to probe far to learn why. Fewer than a quarter found much benefit for the general population in voucher privatization (Table 4), whereas more than three-fourths believed that enterprise directors, current officials and crime groups were

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89 See also, Lynn D. Nelson and Irina Y. Kuzes, "An Assessment of the Russian Voucher Privatization Program," *Comparative Economic Studies* (forthcoming). The principal objectives of privatization in Russia, as articulated in state privatization programs of the Russian Federation, are to form a group of private owners who can contribute to economic revitalization, to improve enterprise efficiency, to ensure the availability of a social safety net, to promote financial stabilization, to promote a competitive economic environment, and to attract foreign investment. See "Gosudarstvennaia programma privatizatsii gosudarstvennykh i munitsipal'nykh predpriiatii v Rossiiskoi Federatsii za 1992 god," *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta*, no. 29 (July 1992), 15-18.
benefiting from the program. Consistent with these results, a study by the Institute of Complex Social Studies in November 1993 found that only 19 percent of respondents were even "partly satisfied" with the way privatization had been carried out. And a national VCIOM survey of 1,965 workers in November and December indicated that only 20 percent expected the privatization of the enterprises where they worked to benefit them personally, and only a quarter thought that privatization would be beneficial for their enterprises overall. Most directors, also, neither expected privatization to help them individually (37 percent expected a positive result) nor their enterprises (40 percent). These judgments do not merely reflect weariness with the hardships of economic reform. They show dissatisfaction with its course.

To add emphasis to this obvious unhappiness about privatization as it was being realized, a substantial majority of respondents in our four-city study were less than enthusiastic about the results of the "small privatization" effort, which was by that time more than half completed. The privatization of retail and consumer services enterprises had made more goods, and a better selection of merchandise, available in all of our research cities, but neither the quality of goods nor the ability of people to buy them were seen as having improved (Table 5).

Nor did most people believe that recent political and economic developments were moving the country in the right direction. Only about a third of respondents had gained more hope for the future (Table 5), and fewer than one in eight were more optimistic about the political situation than they had been a year earlier (Table 1). There were fundamental issues here of whether or not political strategies were furthering economic goals, as our analysis of questions about the dissolution of the USSR and the January 1992 price liberalization initiative illustrate.

Sociologist Tat’iana Zaslavskaya summarizes the reversal, not only of people's fortunes but also of the priorities of economic planners, in reflecting on the days of Gorbachev's perestroika. The initial idea of perestroika was to improve people's lives, she remembers--"to create a system which would stimulate work, allowing people to make good money and live better and better. . . . Now, no one talks about that." Instead, she observes, government planners today measure "the success of reforms" by the increasing number of goods whose prices have been freed, the growing number of privatized enterprises, and perceived progress in stabilizing the exchange rate. "They speak about everything except the quality of people's lives. The reformers prefer not to notice what is going on with people now, what price they

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are paying for the transformations, and what they will pay in the future. These problems do not occupy the reformers," who consider the "human factor" to be an impediment to the realization of their depersonalized ideas. "Only if there is a threat of social explosion can they be persuaded to make corrections in their strategy . . . Not only are reformers not listening to the voices from below, but they do not want to hear them."

Stalin could operate that way, but Yeltsin learned in December 1994 that he could not. Whether it means rapid reform or reversal of reforms, the people’s will ultimately prevails when democratic expression is valued. And one advantage of democratic processes, which has been demonstrated repeatedly over time in the West, is that the people’s wisdom regarding fundamental public issues often exceeds that of their leaders.

The Inevitable Point of Accountability. Russia’s readiness in late 1991 for a sharp break with the Soviet past is manifest. But at year’s end, after Yeltsin announced his "one-time changeover to market prices," a national VCIOM survey of 3,002 employed respondents found that only 30 percent supported the proposal for a rapid transition to a market economy. Seventy percent of respondents at that time favored a market economy, but most of those wanted the transition to be gradual. But the Gaidar planners had a different idea, insisting that rapid price liberalization was an urgent priority, to soon be followed by rapid privatization. There have been a number of opposing voices in this discussion, and not only among most of the Russian electorate and most Russian economists. United Nations economist Jozef M. van Brabant, for example, offers a skeptical view about "the desirability of fast and widespread divestment" in economies such as Russia’s. "Rapid privatization will inevitably be unfair and in time undermine public support for economic transformation and confidence in democratic decision making," he maintains. This caution proved to be prophetic for Russia.

On the one hand, 30 percent approval for a rapid transition to the market might be seen as gratifyingly strong support for Yeltsin’s initiatives, in light of Russia’s long history with central planning. But it must be remembered that Yeltsin was not the person who ushered in sweeping Russian economic reforms. Gorbachev was. And in a study with data from 2,307

94 CDSP, 43 (27 November 1991), 2; from Izvestiia (28 October 1991), 1-2.
employed respondents in 41 cities that were collected during the first five months of 1991, Nelson, et al., found that 35 percent of those respondents also believed that "the transition to a market economy" should be "as rapid as possible."97 (The typically more conservative positions on such questions among rural residents probably accounts for the somewhat lower percentage in the VCIOM study, which included rural as well as urban respondents.) Three-fourths of those 1991 respondents favored market-oriented economic transformation well ahead of Yeltsin's announcement of "radical economic reform," and most also expressed a high level of dissatisfaction with the economic system then in place. Thus Yeltsin "inherited" an electorate primed for economic reform.

Maxim Boycko, et al., present, as evidence for the success of Russian privatization, survey data from Russia's State Property Management Committee which suggest that more than 60 percent of the Russian population support privatization.98 In our four-city study, 63 percent of working Muscovites and 51 percent of retired Moscow residents held that position; and in the four cities overall, 50 percent of working respondents and 33 percent of retired respondents favored it (Table 2). Among those who supported privatization in our four cities, nearly two-thirds would prefer that it proceed more rapidly. But the general public finds serious flaws in the privatization program—as we have shown here and elsewhere.99 The reasons for these problems, the public thinks, are not to be found in disapproval of the privatization concept—but in other failings of the program, such as the neglect of equity considerations, and the failure of Russian privatization to adequately address question of improved economic performance as part of the privatization effort. It is clear from our data that what most Russian people mean by privatization is quite different from the neo-liberal ideas of Russia's privatization planners. Ninety-one percent of our respondents believe that child care services should continue to be subsidized; 82 percent favor the availability of medical services for no charge; and 69 percent believe that the cost of housing should remain subsidized for both working and retired people.

Questions about the appropriate pace for overall economic reform, then, are tied to such issues as how price liberalization and demonopolization of production and distribution should be juxtaposed, whether privatizing enterprises should be rapidly initiated into an unfamiliar

market environment or whether the introduction should be more gradual, and how the
provision of health care, transportation, and other similar services should be organized.

On this broader question about the overall pace of Russia's economic reforms, the public
will is clear, as is its progressive turn away from the vision that Yeltsin's reformers have been
implementing since 1992 began. A year after the Gaidar program was launched, VCIOM found
that support for rapid economic reform had dropped from 30 percent in late 1991 to 18 percent
a year later. Preference for gradual reform had risen from 40 percent to 49 percent of
respondents.100 By the time of the December 1993 elections only 13 percent of respondents
favored rapid reform, and 50 percent believed that the economic transition should be
accomplished gradually.101

Political scientist Peter Stavrakis aptly observes that Russia has had the ironic
misfortune, "for the second time in this century," to be "ruled by a small elite animated by an
ideology that maintained economics was the basis of all social existence."102 At a time when
a large proportion of the populace were ripe for sweeping democratization and progressive
market-oriented reforms, the Russian government fell into the hands of another cadre of
visionaries--this time, believers in neo-liberal monetarism--who were determined, as had been
their Marxist predecessors, to pursue their political program for economic revolution at the
expense of severe hardship among the population in the short term, with the justification that
yet another "radiant future" awaited at some future time--a future in which subsistence living
would be rewarded with abundance and "strong presidential power" would give way to
representative democracy. But now, the reformers insisted, what was needed was a
"dictatorship of the monetarists." Sergei Vasil'ev, who was one of Gaidar's principal economic
reform strategists, illustrates in an interview with Liudmila Saraskina the kind of detached,
elitist thinking that became commonplace among Yeltsin's officials and economic reform
strategists. "The government has to provide for their [the people's] survival--a condition which
can be easily explained: not to let them die from hunger, and not to let them kill one
another."103

100Khakhulina, "Tri goda ekonomicheskikh reform." In this survey, 1,877 respondents were interviewed.
101Ekonomicheskie i sotsial'nye peremeny, no. 2 (March-April 1994), 74.
102Peter J. Stavrakis, "State Building in Post-Soviet Russia: The Chicago Boys and the Decline of Administrative
Capacity," occasional paper no. 254 (Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies: Washington, DC, 1993), 42.
103Liudmila Saraskina, "Pasyntki Russkoi usobitsy," Moskovskie novosti, no. 42 (17 October 1993). In her
Moskovskie novosti article, Saraskina identifies the speaker only as "a high government official." But see
Demchenko, "Epokha 'reformatorstva sverkhu,'" Vadim Belotserkovskii mistakenly attributes the statement to
Gaidar (Vadim Belotserkovskii, "Mozhno li sozdat' spisok deianii, sovereign' kotorye nel'zia," Novaja ezhegodnaia
gazeta, no. 54 (24 November 1993), 3.

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Nikolai Medvedev, a high-ranking executive in Yeltsin’s administration, anticipates the positive outcome of authoritarian rule, maintaining, "When the alternative economy [market economy] appears, there will be alternative ownership. Then there will be the necessary basis for both pluralism and democracy." 104 And Vasil’ev describes what he considers to be "a profound delusion" from which reform "theorists and practitioners alike have suffered." Their delusion," Vasil’ev maintains, "has consisted of a belief that a correct policy must be based on a balance of interests and demands of various social groups." Having stated one of the foundation principles of democratic policymaking, Vasil’ev proceeds to deny its applicability to Russian reform, insisting that such an approach is not "applicable to a society in crisis." 105

Such reasoning can be faulted on both empirical and philosophical grounds. Pereira, et al., note that findings from a number of studies contradict this argument that new democracies are more dysfunctionally influenced by interest group pressure than are established ones, and they continue, "And even if it were true that authoritarian regimes are more capable of imposing and persevering with economic reforms, we would not be willing to treat democracy as an instrumental value to be judged by its consequences for economic performance." 106

The carte blanche freedom that Yeltsin was afforded at the end of 1991 to follow an economic reform path which broke sharply with the wishes of most citizens derived from Yeltsin’s broad-based popularity, on the one hand, and the people’s already-seasoned rejection of the familiar command system, on the other. The uncritical support provided to Yeltsin by Western leaders during this time added valuable camouflage to the manifestly undemocratic actions of Yeltsin’s cadre of planners. (We have detailed some of these processes elsewhere and will return to this critical subject in another paper.) Thus democratic development was sacrificed in the name of economic reform, at the same time that major elements of the economic reform program were acknowledged even by privatization head Chubais to be, at their core, political in intent and hardly at all concerned with economics. 108

104Vil’ Dorofeev, "‘Vysokie materii etim liudiam ne poniat’!" Nezavisimaja gazeta, no. 250 (29 December 1993), 5.
105Vasil’ev, "Economic Reform in Russia."
107Nelson and Kuzes, Property to the People.
108When we interviewed Chubais in August 1993, he stated, speaking of the privatization program, "This is not an economics program; it is a political program. It is five percent economics and 95 percent politics." See also Anders Åslund, "Prospects for a Successful Change of Economic System in Russia." Working paper no. 60, Stockholm institute of [Soviet and] East European Economics (November 1992), 3. Åslund states, "... I would suggest that politics take primacy over economics in the transition."
But this misdirection strategy was not hidden from the Russian electorate, as they have repeatedly shown in public opinion surveys and as they again demonstrated in the December 1993 elections. It should be no comfort to democrats that, with the strong endorsement of Yeltsin and two political parties—Russia’s Choice and Zhirinovsky’s LDP—Russian voters approved a new constitution which was tailor-made for authoritarianism. In the wake of the elections, a number of Russian analysts suggested that, indeed, Zhirinovsky’s support for the “Yeltsin constitution” may have been more influential than Yeltsin’s in getting the constitutional referendum passed by voters. But in his January 24, 1994 testimony before the Senate Appropriations Committee, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott expressed satisfaction that now, “Russia has its first genuine post-Soviet, post-communist constitution”—neglecting to note that authoritarianism neither began nor ended with Soviet Communism.109

Uses of Political Confrontation: Public Opinion Evidence

Boris Yeltsin’s standing among voters has been strongly influenced by both economic and political performance, of course. VCIOM has tracked public opinion about Yeltsin since 1991. His highest ratings through the period were at the time he was elected Russia’s president in June 1991, following an anti-establishment campaign. Consistently, from that time forward, until late 1993, Yeltsin’s strongest public support came when he was in conflict with his adversaries—first with Gorbachev, in mid-1991; and then with the putsch forces, that August; and finally, with Russia’s lawmakers.

Yeltsin’s earliest problem with the electorate seems to have been directly tied to the price liberalization policy that was implemented in January 1992. According to a nationwide VCIOM survey which was conducted at the end of 1991, only 26 percent of the respondents said they supported price liberalization; another 18 percent said they didn’t know; and 56 percent stated that they definitely opposed the idea.110 Yet those skeptics never congealed into an organized opposition. By February, however, another VCIOM study found that 45 percent of respondents would support a general strike against the price increases which had been instituted the previous month,111 and three months later, in May, 70 percent of the respondents in a nationwide survey said they did not believe that price liberalization would help lead the country

110Megapolis-Express, no. 7 (13 February 1992), 15. The survey included 1,960 respondents.
111Tat’iana Boikova, “Draka poka ne zakazana,” Megapolis-Express, no. 7 (13 February 1992), 21.
out of its economic crisis.112 Both Yeltsin and Gaidar had been promising the public an economic turnaround during 1992, and clear signs that the "upturn" they had heralded was nowhere in sight only underscored the reluctance of most people to accept the logic of price liberalization.

By June 1992, Yeltsin’s approval rating had dropped to an unenviable 32 percent,113 and his support among the public continued to decline until the time of his December clash with the Seventh Congress of People’s Deputies that created the conditions for a head-to-head appeal to voters in April 1993.114 And by the time Yeltsin finished his most recent autobiography in late 1993, even he was in search of a someone to blame for the economic prescription which had sapped his public support. "Yegor Gaidar kept giving assurances that stabilization was just around the corner," Yeltsin states, adding, "I was in turn forced to mimic his confidence."115

Over the course of 1992 Yeltsin’s ratings declined with the worsening of the economy, to rise slightly when he angrily strode out of the Seventh Congress in December. Yet, after the close of December’s tumultuous session of the Congress, when asked, "Who would you charge to lead the country out of the current political and economic crisis?" the percentage of respondents who were uncertain or uninterested in the question (48 percent) topped both the percentage favoring the legislature (7 percent) or the Russian president (31 percent).116 In this study, which was carried out by the All-Russia Broadcasting Company (VTRK) Ostankino, more people said they did not "approve the economic and political course of the government and the president" (34 percent) than answered that they approved (23 percent). The most frequent choice was "difficult to say" (43 percent).117

But Yeltsin’s approval rating rose sharply in March 1993 when the Congress nearly impeached him, and it continued to improve until the time of the April 25 referendum, only to fall again after the referendum, until his September confrontation with the parliament, when it

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114The survey included 1,200 respondents in 30 regions of Russia and was conducted by the Institute for Complex Social Studies from June 1 until June 5.
115See, for example, Boris Grushin, "Kogda Rossiiskie lidery lidmney liubiat svoego prezidenta?" Nezavisimaia gazeta, 8 (16 January 1993), 1-2.
116Yeltsin, The Struggle for Russia, 165.
117Fourteen percent gave no answer.
118"Esli by referendum provodilsia segodnia, to prezident potuchil by podderzhku treti izbiratelei," Literaturnai a gazeta, no. 1-2 (13 January 1993), 11.
peaked for the second time in the year.\textsuperscript{118} Until October 4, each decisive action in his struggles with enemies strengthened his hand with voters.

We submit that Yeltsin, and such top advisers as Gennadii Burbulis, a former professor in Sverdlovsk of Marxism-Leninism,\textsuperscript{119} had learned well from Lenin’s experience with the short-lived, and also popularly elected, Constituent Assembly in January 1918.\textsuperscript{120} Lenin biographer Adam Ulam describes the Bolsheviks’ position in terms that were closely paralleled from March through September 1993 by Yeltsin’s stance toward Russia’s second popularly elected legislature. Ulam notes that the Bolsheviks agreed to allow the Assembly to meet "because, to put it bluntly, they were scared of the consequences of the as yet most open and drastic violation of their democratic professions. They were going to probe the public sentiment, and they found out that their fears had been vain. Apart from a noisy demonstration in the streets of Petrograd no force appeared to support the representatives of the Russian people."\textsuperscript{121} But Lenin, unlike Russia’s head in 1993, did not use "psychological warfare" tactics against the legislators and their supporters. The result for Yeltsin, until October 3, also followed this previously-traveled course. As historian Oliver Radkey observes in his classic work, \textit{Russia Goes to the Polls}, Lenin’s fatal blow to the Constituent Assembly was carried out “amid the plaudits, open or secret, of both the extremes of Russian political life.”\textsuperscript{122}

But when Yeltsin’s longstanding feud with Russia’s lawmakers culminated in another march into Moscow by Russian soldiers, and shelling of the Russian White House, Yeltsin’s support dropped markedly. It has shown no signs of recovery since that time, according to the most recent survey data available to us for this paper.

VCIOM carried out a survey among 1,603 respondents in several cities on September 24-28--just after Yeltsin shut down the Russian parliament. Forty-four percent said at that time that they trusted Yeltsin and the executive branch more than Rutskoi, Khasbulatov and the legislative branch.\textsuperscript{123} Even at that time, nearly a third supported neither side in the standoff.

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\textsuperscript{119}"Listening to the music of life is the essence of being a politician," Burbulis responded when asked in a Literaturnaya gazeta interview if he had been an architect of the Minsk accord (Ol’ga Kuchkina, “Gennadii Burbulis: ‘Ot intelligentsii zhдут не messianstva, а professionalizma,'” Literaturnaya gazeta, no. 29 [21 July 93], 11).
\textsuperscript{120}Lenin dissolved the Constituent Assembly after only one session, on January 5, 1918 (January 18 by the Western calendar).
\textsuperscript{121}Adam B. Ulam, \textit{The Bolsheviks} (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 397.
\textsuperscript{123}“Kolichestvo Rossian, ravnodushnykh k rospusku parlamenta, vozroslo v tri raza,” Segodnia, no. 60 (2 October 1993), 3.
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(32 percent), but Yeltsin's support declined decisively after the events of October 3 and 4. A nationwide survey by the Institute of Sociology in November found that only 19 percent of respondents had supported his decision to storm the Russian White House, and 58 percent judged that action to have been "a national shame in which both branches of power are to be blamed." 124

By the time of the December 12 elections, Yeltsin's strength among voters had declined to its lowest level ever, 125 in spite of his vigorous attempt to justify his September-October actions in the December election campaign. And Yeltsin's political strength continued to wane in early 1994, when for the first time since his rise to center-stage prominence in Russian politics, other leaders were rated more highly than Yeltsin in major surveys. VCIOM's periodic survey of confidence in leaders found in January that Yavlinskii received a marginally higher confidence rating than Yeltsin, and he still held this lead in March—which is the most recent date for which we have VCIOM data for that question. 126 And Nezavisimaia gazeta's monthly ranking of "the most influential" Russian politicians, based on votes of a standing panel of 50 leading figures in several fields, placed Yeltsin behind Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin in February 127—a ranking that still held in May. 128 In a January 1994 VCIOM national survey of 3,977 respondents, only 19 percent believed that "The activity of Boris Yeltsin [was contributing] to the way out of the present crisis." 129 Yeltsin's support was about the same among those under 30 (21 percent favorable) as among respondents who were 50 or older (20 percent favorable), and even in Moscow and St. Petersburg, where support for Yeltsin has customarily been strong, only 28 percent believed that Yeltsin was helping to resolve the current crisis. 130

With the old parliament eliminated and a new constitution written to Yeltsin's specifications, there was now no obvious stage for the confrontational dramas which had elevated Yeltsin's standing in the past. And the economic slump continued to deepen. The drop in industrial output during the first quarter of 1994 was the steepest of the Yeltsin

125 Ibid.
129 "Informatsiia," Ekonomicheskie i sotsial'nye peremeny, no. 2 (March-April 1994), 53.
130 Ibid.
administration, and the decline was accelerating. Compared to corresponding months in 1993, industrial production in early 1994 was down 23 percent in January, 24 percent in February and 27 percent in March.\textsuperscript{131} (Of course, 1993 production was sharply reduced from that of 1992.) And no comfort was to be found in the familiar response that Russia needs "fewer tanks and missiles," anyway.\textsuperscript{132} During the first two months of the year, the production of consumer goods declined 27 percent in comparison with the same period in 1993. Fewer than 40 percent as many overcoats and skirts were produced, and the production of pants and suits fell to 60 percent of its early 1993 level. Meat production was down 26 percent and butter, 31 percent. Seventeen percent less milk was being produced than a year earlier, and even bread, which had now become the primary source of food for a growing number of impoverished citizens, had suffered a production downturn of 13 percent.\textsuperscript{133} With the economy continuing its downward slide as mid-1994 approached, and Yeltsin's ratings at a low ebb, Yeltsin needed a hook to halt the slide in his political fortunes.

**Voting Patterns in April and December 1994**

Our four research cities span a broad spectrum of Russian public opinion regarding Yeltsin's reform at the time of the April referendum, and they illustrate the public opinion turnaround in Russia after that time. In April, Yeltsin and his reforms had received an impressive vote of confidence in large cities. Yeltsin's showing in his home city of Ekaterinburg was especially strong, with 88 percent expressing confidence in Yeltsin and 81 percent favoring his reforms. In Moscow, the percentages favorable were 75 and 70, respectively. He had done less well in some smaller cities, and his support was even weaker in rural areas. In Smolensk (city), for example, a bare 40 percent had voiced confidence in Yeltsin and 37 percent had endorsed his reforms. The usual rural-urban divergence can be seen in the Voronezh oblast, where in the city of Voronezh 65 percent voted for Yeltsin and 58 percent favored his reforms, but in the more rural areas of the oblast, where nearly two-thirds of the people lived, the corresponding percentages were 42 percent and 38 percent.

**Defeat of Reformer in Smolensk.** In April, voters in the Smolensk oblast were also electing a governor. The sitting governor at the time, Valerii Fateev, was a committed Yeltsin reformer who had worked for radical economic transformation throughout the oblast. By the

\textsuperscript{131}Keith Bush, "Industrial Output Plunges in First Quarter," RFE/RL Daily Report, no. 83 (2 May 1994).

\textsuperscript{132}See, for example, Michael Mandelbaum, "By a Thread," The New Republic (5 April 1993), 20.

\textsuperscript{133}Roskomstat, "Promyshlennost': spad prodolzhaetsia," Ekonomika i zhizh', no. 11 (March 1994), 1.
end of 1992, there were no collective farms remaining in the oblast, for example, and privatization was strongly underway. The pace of privatization had bested the state’s goal for the oblast. Smolensk was the site of one of the first voucher auctions in Russia, at the beginning of the "large privatization" effort. But production in the oblast declined 42 percent during 1992, and by year’s end 60 percent of the population had incomes that were below the poverty level. From a field of 7 candidates, Smolensk voters picked Anatoli Glushenkov, an enterprise director who was a member of the Smolensk oblast soviet. In his campaign, Glushenkov promised to slow the pace of economic reform. Defeated governor Fateev took a job in the Ministry of Economics in Moscow and began working with Gaidar’s Association of Privatized and Private Enterprises. "The results of this election mean that there will be a turnaround in all spheres in the life of Smolensk," Fataeev stated in an Izvestiia interview, and added, "I hope that the people of Smolensk will find the courage within themselves to recognize this mistake and correct it."  

Fateev’s interpretation of the April results in Smolensk were typical among the Yeltsin team when the vote did not go their way in December, also. The people were at fault—not the government program, they believed. The voters had not recognized the superior insight of Russia’s reform planners, and if the people could not be convinced they would simply be ignored. Just after the first results became known in the December elections, Gaidar held a press conference. "The government’s economic course will be corrected," Gaidar stated—but added that "the corrections" would be entirely in the direction of solidifying and deepening the reform course that was "interrupted" in the spring of 1992. Any kind of compromise would be rejected, Gaidar emphasized.  

**Conservative Ascendancy in Voronezh.** Voronezh’s governor, Andrei Kovalev, had been appointed by Yeltsin in the summer of 1992, but did not become a strong advocate of the Yeltsin government’s reform program. Ivan Shabanov, who had formerly served as first secretary of the Voronezh obkom (oblast Party committee), organized a local campaign in opposition to the reforms. Both the executive and legislative branches in Voronezh worked during 1993 to ease the pain of economic hardship among Voronezh residents—keeping the prices for consumer goods more in line with salaries than they were in most regions, as Russia’s galloping inflation remained unchecked during much of the year. And voters in the Voronezh oblast, who had barely failed to give Yeltsin majority support in April (49.7 percent

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favorable), gave their greatest support in December to Zhirinovsky's LDP, Gennadii Zyuganov's Communist Party of the Russian Federation, and the Agrarian Party.

Economic Uprising in Ekaterinburg. The Urals region poses privatization dilemmas; and the Ekaterinburg voting pattern in 1993 highlights, on the one hand, the area's obvious pride in their native son, and on the other, the muting effect of economic concerns on Yeltsin's appeal even in his home territory. The Urals boasts many huge enterprises which are undoubtedly undervalued, such as the heavy machinery giant "Uralmash," which gave up 18 percent of its shares to an outside investor in 1993 for 130,000 vouchers which had been bought for the equivalent of about a million US dollars. Many huge firms in the Urals, however, badly need modernization, and a number are undoubtedly doomed to fail in a market environment. Our Ekaterinburg respondents were markedly less satisfied than Muscovites with the results of "small privatization," and only one in five believed that privatization would soon bring any improvement in people's lives (Table 2). And with the advent of privatization in the Sverdlovsk oblast had come a particularly severe crime problem.136 So in April 1993, while backing Yeltsin by a one-sided margin of nearly nine-to-one, the Sverdlovsk electorate voted to take economic matters into their own hands by wresting themselves free of control from Moscow in the economic sphere. More than 80 percent of voters approved a proposal to create a Urals Republic within the Russian Federation. Its constitution was approved on October 27 by the Sverdlovsk soviet, but this action was declared void by the Kremlin. And in the December elections, most of the electorate stayed home. Yet, among the 48 percent of Sverdlovsk oblast residents who voted, Russia's Choice did much better than in many other regions of Russia. Only 45 percent of voters favored the proposed new constitution, however.

National Verdict in December. Our four-city results indicate that, well into the summer, general support for market reforms and endorsement of the government's price liberalization initiative and privatization program continued to be stronger in Moscow than in the smaller cities--both among employed respondents and retired individuals (Tables 1 and 2). Already, Ekaterinburg was showing clear signs of departure from the Yeltsin fold, with a pattern of responses to some questions that more closely resembled Voronezh and Smolensk than Moscow.

Eight months later, Russia's Choice garnered only 15 percent of the votes for the 225 "party" seats in the State Duma. Zhirinovsky's LDP received an impressive 23 percent, and Zyuganov's Communist party snared 12 percent. Eight parties/blocs gained party seats in the

136See, for example, Lidii Malash, "Mafiia v Ekaterinburge," Megapolis-Express, no. 32 (18 August 1993), 12.
Duma, and by any accounting, reformers were outnumbered by opposition deputies. The remaining 225 Duma seats went to deputies elected from local single-mandate (single-member) constituencies, and it is difficult to categorize some of these deputies in terms of parties and blocs. Overall, however, it can be said that in the State Duma "reform" deputies are in the minority. Deputies favorable to Russia's Choice initially held about 94 of the 450 seats (21 percent). By May 1994, however, about 20 of the elected Russia's Choice deputies had left the bloc and aligned themselves with other factions. (Members of the 176-member Federation Council, the upper house, cannot be neatly categorized according to political affiliation.)

There was apparently another sharp drop in the appeal of Yeltsin and his reforms right before the December 12 elections. Because the Central Electoral Committee had ruled that no public opinion data could be published within 10 days of the elections, the last survey data available within Russia were released on December 1. At that time, according to a nationwide VCIOM poll, only 43 percent of eligible voters had decided to take part in the elections. Russia's Choice was clearly ahead of any other party or bloc at that time, with backing from 30 percent of voters. Second place went to the Yavlinskii-Boldyrev-Lukin bloc, with 14 percent. The Movement for Democratic Reforms had 9 percent support, and the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, 8 percent. Polling continued after December 1, however, and later results were available in the West. A VCIOM survey on December 8 found that, by that time, Zhirinovsky's party had climbed "from nowhere" to second place.137

VCIOM analyst Leonid Sedov attributes a substantial proportion of Zhirinovsky's last-minute strength to the choices of previously-undecided voters.138 And two other VCIOM researchers, Vladimir Shokarev and Aleksei Levinson, after studying a large volume of survey data collected in the weeks before the December elections, concluded that about 40 percent of those who voted for Zhirinovsky decided which candidate to support during "the very last days."139 They attribute Zhirinovsky's unexpectedly strong showing to effective television campaigning right before the elections.140

140Ibid., 32. See also Yuri Levada, "Ne brosat'sia ot illuuzii k panike," Izvestiia, no. 240 (15 December 1993), 4. Several analysts have suggested that Yeltsin's advisers were instrumental in creating the "Zhirinovsky phenomenon," and that their strategy of playing with this kind of fire backfired. We will speak to this point in a future paper.
A significant reason that a large number of voters were undecided on the eve of the December elections seems to be that political involvement, in general, ebbed substantially in Russia from the end of the Soviet period until the December 1993 elections--dropping notably after the September-October crisis. A VCIOM national survey in early November found that 60 percent said that they were "only slightly" or "not at all" interested in politics--up from 36 percent who expressed those views in the fall of 1991.141 This represented the lowest level of political interest among the population that had ever been recorded by VCIOM. Consistent with this attitudinal change, December's voting turnout of 46 percent was down 18 percent from the April referendum.142 (This final voting percentage was several points lower than the turnout originally claimed by the Central Electoral Commission--and means, if the review board's finding is accurate, that the constitutional referendum actually failed to pass, since the vote on the constitution required a turnout of 50 percent to be valid. On May 5, however, Vladimir Mezhenkov, a spokesman for the presidential administration, stated that there would be no new referendum on the constitution.143)

The VCIOM study found that the December turnout was particularly low among key constituencies where support for Yeltsin had traditionally been strong--geographically, in Moscow, St. Petersburg and the Urals region; and sociodemographically, among the young and among entrepreneurs and other private-sector personnel. A notably higher turnout, on the other hand, was found among rural and small city residents, older respondents, and state enterprise personnel--in short, among those who were customarily more likely than many others to oppose Yeltsin's reforms.144

Another factor in the December elections was growing sentiment that "authoritarian power or a dictatorship is the only possible way to lead the country out of the crisis." When VCIOM posed the question after the April 1993 referendum, 20 percent of respondents agreed, and 50 percent disagreed. Thirty percent were uncertain. But in April, political discord had not deteriorated into violence at the highest levels of Russian government. By November, 29

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142There is evidence that the turnout in April was also lower than reported, although the magnitude of discrepancy between the actual and reported percentage is not known. See A. Sobianin, E. Gel'man and O. Kaiunov, "Politicheskii klimat v Rossii v 1991-1993 gg," Mirovaja ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnoshenija, no. 9(1993), 20-32.
143Vera Tolz, "Falsification of Results of December Vote Announced," RFE/RL Daily Report, no. 87 (6 May 1994). Available from listserv@ubvm.cc.buffalo.edu; Internet. The review board was set up by Yeltsin.
144Sedov, "Politicheskii analiz."
percent agreed with this statement, and 44 percent disagreed.\textsuperscript{145} Thus, the shift at both ends of this question was toward an authoritarian resolution, and the proportion of respondents clearly in this camp by November had jumped 45 percent in just seven months.

The December election results, then, and the success of forces opposed to Yeltsin, can be accounted for by both disaffection with Yeltsin's policies in his usual strongholds of support and by the ability of Yeltsin's foes to mobilize voters from traditional pockets of resistance to Yeltsin's reforms. These trends were apparently fed by three especially critical developments: the failure of Yeltsin's strategists to build, over time, a solid basis of support for their economic reforms among voters, and actions of both executive and legislative branches in September and October 1993 which alienated large numbers of people and inevitably hastened the Yeltsin government's day of reckoning with Russia's electorate. It is significant in this regard that usual Yeltsin loyalists seem to have been more prone than other voters to react to the September-October events by withdrawing from electoral politics, at least temporarily. A rising tide of nationalism is implicated in the anti-government vote, and it, too, is tied to Yeltsin's politics--specifically, to his actions in spearheading the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The Unheeded Citizenry

It would have been a daunting task for any reform team to have persuaded a largely skeptical electorate to support a reform program whose specifics were not only unpopular with most people from the start, but whose objectives appeared further from realization the longer the program continued. It became impossible, the way Yeltsin's reformers approached the problem--"refusing," as even Yeltsin admits, "to dirty their hands with politics."\textsuperscript{146} In his autobiography, Yeltsin complains that "Gaidar and his people never traveled around the country to take the pulse of the nation."\textsuperscript{146} Yet, Yeltsin himself did not hesitate to issue a torrent of decrees which carried his government's reforms increasingly off the course that was favored by most voters. And Western leaders did not shrink from advising Yeltsin to "stay the course" after the December 1993 elections--even though such inattention to the voices of the electorate would be a formula for failure in any democracy if, as we believe, the electorate's assessments of the Yeltsin government's reform program are more realistic than the very different interpretations of Yeltsin's strategists and Western leaders.

\textsuperscript{145}Sedov, "Mezhdu putchem i vyborami," 15.
\textsuperscript{146}Yeltsin, \textit{The Struggle for Russia}, 158-59.
In assessing Russia's reform program, the Russian electorate have been in the position of being required to judge the program by its after-the-fact results. They did not have the opportunity for careful advance deliberation and debate, either as a society or through the voices of their elected lawmakers. That was partially due to the fact that Yeltsin's reformers themselves had only a sketchy outline at the beginning of reforms, and they made major changes in the program during its first few months—introducing the voucher privatization scheme, for example, when both Gaidar and Chubais had originally opposed such a plan. But with unchecked authority to devise a reform strategy, they pushed ahead with implementation of their hastily-devised plan and asked voters to trust their judgment. And the voters did—during months in which economic promises were unkept and the very economic, political and social fabric of the country was being severely strained. These developments could be unreservedly defended if it were clear that the Yeltsin government's reforms were, as the reformers insisted, the only alternative to a return to the discredited command economy. Yeltsin, Gaidar, and other government reformers have repeatedly sounded this theme in justifying their approach. Key Western advisers and government officials, also, have delivered the same message. As Yavlinskii puts it, "Your experts came in and said, This is the only way to do it. This is absolutely the only way." But the sobering reality is that the tumult in which Russia was plunged as a direct result of Gaidar's program was based on economic theories which remain highly controversial in the West. We continue to emphasize this point, because apologists for the Yeltsin-Gaidar strategy continue to repeat the message that Yavlinskii highlighted. For example, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott restated this position during his January 1994 testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Speaking of the January summit earlier in the month, Talbott noted, "In Moscow two weeks ago Mr. Yeltsin vowed that he would keep reform going full speed ahead, and President Clinton promised that in response the U.S. would use its leadership position in the G-7 to intensify multilateral support for Russian reform." And Talbott continued, "As Russia maps its economic course for the coming year, its leaders must realize that slowing the pace of reform will not ease the social pain of economic transition; in fact, quite the contrary. Gradual reform is a prescription for hyperinflation and economic collapse." In the characteristic mode of such affirmations by government officials in

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147For a recent illustration, see Gaidar, "Novyi kurs."
148The Struggle for Russia. (written and produced by Sherry Jones). See also, for example, Åslund, "A critique of Soviet Reform Plans"; and Sachs, "Russia's Struggle with Stabilization."
149House Foreign Affairs Committee, "US Policy Toward the Former Soviet Union."
Congressional hearings which focus on the economy of Russia, no evidence for this assertion was offered and none was sought.

What should be noted in such discussions is that the appropriateness of neo-liberal shock therapy for command-type economic systems in transition—however severe or moderate, or consistent or inconsistent the "shock" factor may be—has never been demonstrated and remains highly questionable. Thoughtful treatments of this problem are prominent in the recent literature, where the relative advantages of "sequencing" and shock treatment are considered, along with various approaches to privatization, inquiry into the most appropriate role of the state in effective economic transitions, and related questions. But the Yeltsin reformers took Russia "out of the loop" of those incalculably critical discussions, by forcing on Russia a system of their making through a series of presidential decrees—which were put into force illegally after Yeltsin's "emergency powers" expired on December 1, 1992—and then by shutting down the parliament that was constitutionally charged with review and oversight of governmental policy.

Conclusions and Policy Implications for the United States Government

In December 1993, Yeltsin and Russia’s Choice were paying the high price of having disregarded the electorate in three key areas—in taking the unilateral actions which led to the demise of the USSR; in creating an economic reform program whose specific features, from the beginning, were not favored by most citizens; and finally, in having followed a political strategy in late 1993 which resulted in a newly constituted legislature that threatened to resist government initiatives more consistently than had the disbanded Congress of People’s Deputies. Thus Yeltsin’s decisiveness in crisis situations was both his greatest strength, as he had repeatedly shown, and a crippling weakness, as his October actions demonstrated. Many who approved of his authoritarian tendencies chose other candidates in the December 1993 elections—candidates who offered an even greater measure of authoritarianism—while many who had been drawn to Yeltsin’s democratic leanings simply stayed home, having been revulsed by the spectacle of a country’s president ordering the shelling of his own parliament.

Now, Chernomyrdin’s apparent retrenchment on the economic front offers striking evidence that the concerns of citizens cannot long be ignored in a responsive political system.

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And Kozyrev's more assertive recent foreign policy stance, combined with growing resentment toward the West among the Russian populace, are two of the more striking signs that the West, too, will not be exempt from accountability for the mistakes of the Yeltsin reforms. If the negative implications for US interests of these developments are to be minimized, it is vital that United States government officials acknowledge through their policy initiatives the primacy of the people's will in matters of Russian economic reform.

Further, it should be recognized that constructive responses within the Commonwealth of Independent States to the unauthorized actions of Yeltsin, Kravchuk, Shushkevich in dissolving the Soviet Union cannot be accurately characterized in only negative terms. There are clear indications that the CIS may be strengthened over time, and opposition to such a development by the government of the United States would inevitably heighten the already-worrisome skepticism in Russia regarding the underlying objectives of United States foreign policy toward the republics of the former Soviet Union.
Table 1: Political and Economic Attitudes, by City and Employment Status
(Percentages in Parentheses for Employed Respondents are Standardized on Moscow, with Controls for Age, Sex, Education and Enterprise Type [State, Privatized, Private]. Students, Military Personnel, and Individuals Under 50 Years of Age without Employment Outside the Home Are Excluded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Moscow</th>
<th>Ekaterinburg</th>
<th>Voronezh</th>
<th>Smolensk</th>
<th>Sig.?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent who believed that the decision to break up the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 was the right decision</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>(27.9)</td>
<td>(19.8)</td>
<td>(18.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent who favored stronger political ties among the CIS countries</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>(61.6)</td>
<td>(66.8)</td>
<td>(78.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent who favored a market economy for Russia</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>(67.5)</td>
<td>(65.4)</td>
<td>(67.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent who believed that price liberalization in January 1992 was &quot;a necessary action for the Russian economy&quot;</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>(33.8)</td>
<td>(30.9)</td>
<td>(28.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1--Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Moscow</th>
<th>Ekaterinburg</th>
<th>Voronezh</th>
<th>Smolensk</th>
<th>Sig.?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent who believed that price liberalization in January 1992 was a mistake</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>45.4 (41.1)</td>
<td>43.1 (53.5)</td>
<td>55.9 (58.5)</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>55.0 (58.0)</td>
<td>47.1 (57.7)</td>
<td>59.9 (56.2)</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent who were more optimistic about the political situation than they had been a year earlier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent who were less optimistic about the political situation than they had been a year earlier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>48.5 (58.0)</td>
<td>59.9 (57.7)</td>
<td>58.5 (56.2)</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a For a discussion of this typological regression standardization (TRS) procedure and citation of related literature, see Lynn D. Nelson and Irina Y. Kuzes, Property to the People: The Struggle for Radical Economic Reform in Russia (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 202-4.

*b Chi-square p <.05.

*c Overall, among employed respondents, 69.7 percent thought that the decision was wrong, and 9.7 were uncertain. In the retired/homemakers category, 81.8 percent believed that the decision was wrong, and 6.0 percent were uncertain.

*d In 2 x 4 table.

*e The third choice was "Uncertain."

*f Dependent variable split is too extreme for TRS analysis.

*g Other choices, in addition to "More optimistic" and "Less optimistic," were "No change" and "Uncertain." "No change" was chosen by
24.1 percent of employed respondents and by 16.3 percent of those in the retired/homemaker category.
Table 2: Privatization Attitudes and Assessments, by City and Employment Status (Percentages in Parentheses for Employed Respondents are Standardized on Moscow, with Controls for Age, Sex, Education and Enterprise Type [State, Privatized, Private]. Students, Military Personnel, and Individuals Under 50 Years of Age without Employment Outside the Home Are Excluded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Attitudes/Assessments and Employment Status</th>
<th>Moscow</th>
<th>Ekaterinburg</th>
<th>Voronezh</th>
<th>Smolensk</th>
<th>Sig.?a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent who were supportive of the government's privatization program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent who believed that voucher privatization was &quot;a good idea&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent who would prefer voucher auctions to alternative proposalsb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employed respondentsc</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent who were &quot;not at all satisfied&quot; with the results, &quot;so far,&quot; of the privatization of retail and consumer services enterprises in their city, or who had not seen any change as a result of &quot;small privatization&quot;d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 2--Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes/Assessments and Employment Status</th>
<th>Moscow</th>
<th>Ekaterinburg</th>
<th>Voronezh</th>
<th>Smolensk</th>
<th>Sig.?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent who believed that privatization would make people's lives better within the next 5 years&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent who believed that privatization would make people's lives worse within the next 5 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Chi-square p < .05.

<sup>b</sup>See Table 3 for additional choices.

<sup>c</sup>Dependent variable split too extreme for TRS analysis.

<sup>d</sup>The other stated choices were "Fully satisfied" (9.2 percent) and "Not quite satisfied" (24.1 percent).

<sup>e</sup>Other choices, besides "It will make life worse," were "There will not be much change," and "Uncertain."
Table 3: Preferred Method for Privatizing Large Production Enterprises, by City and Employment Status (Column Percentages within each Employment Status Category). Students, Military Personnel, and Individuals Under 50 Years of Age without Employment Outside the Home Are Excluded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status and Answer</th>
<th>Moscow</th>
<th>Ekaterinburg</th>
<th>Voronezh</th>
<th>Smolensk</th>
<th>Sig.?(^1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voucher auctions</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of ownership to enterprise personnel</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of shares to interested buyers</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposes privatizing large prod. enterpr.</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voucher auctions</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of ownership to enterprise personnel</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of shares to interested buyers</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposes privatizing large prod. enterpr.</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\)Chi-square p < .05.
Table 4: Percent Who Believed that Selected Groups Were Benefiting "A Great Deal" or "Somewhat" from the Voucher Program, a by City and Employment Status (Percentages in Parentheses for Employed Respondents are Standardized on Moscow, with Controls for Age, Sex, Education and Enterprise Type [State, Privatized, Private]. Students, Military Personnel, and Individuals Under 50 Years of Age without Employment Outside the Home Are Excluded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group and Employment Status</th>
<th>Moscow</th>
<th>Ekaterinburg</th>
<th>Voronezh</th>
<th>Smolensk</th>
<th>Sig.?b</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The general population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise directors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former nomenklatura</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mafia and crime groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current officials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aOther choices were "Not much," "Not at all," and "Uncertain."

bChi-square p < .05.

48
Table 5: Percent Who Believed that there Had "Definitely" or "Probably" been a Positive Change during the Past Year on the Dimensions Listed, by City and Employment Status (Percentages in Parentheses for Employed Respondents are Standardized on Moscow, with Controls for Age, Sex, Education and Enterprise Type [State, Privatized, Private]. Students, Military Personnel, and Individuals Under 50 Years of Age without Employment Outside the Home Are Excluded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Moscow</th>
<th>Ekaterinburg</th>
<th>Voronezh</th>
<th>Smolensk</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The availability of more goods in stores&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A better selection of goods&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Better quality goods&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;More money for most people to purchase the goods they need&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Higher paying jobs for people in privatized enterprises&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A higher crime rate&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>89.0</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>91.6</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5--Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Moscow</th>
<th>Ekaterinburg</th>
<th>Voronezh</th>
<th>Smolensk</th>
<th>Sig.?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A general sense that there are better job opportunities now&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;More hope for the future in the society overall&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed respondents</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/homemak., 50+</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Chi-square p < .05.

b Dependent variable split is too extreme for TRS analysis.