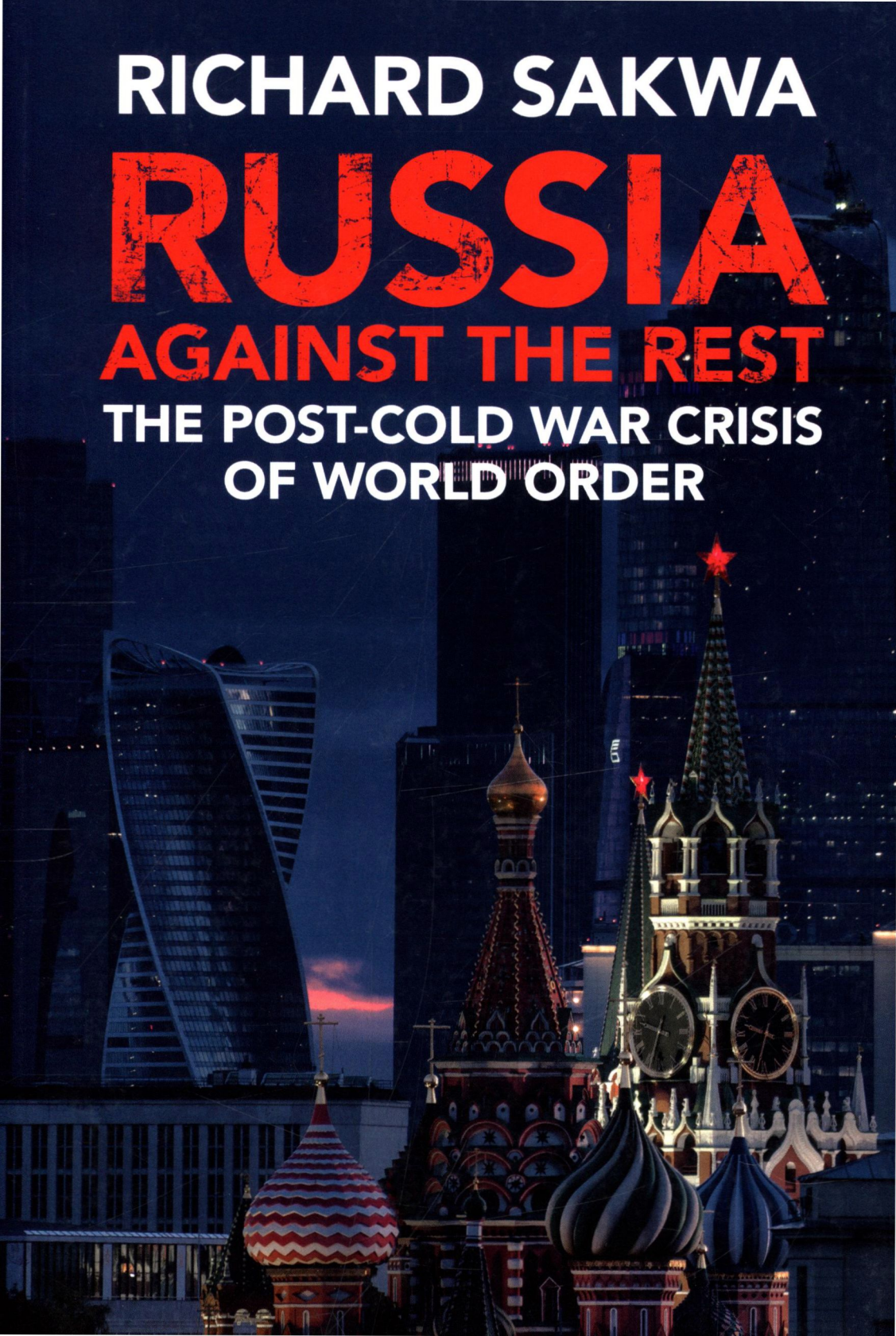
RICHARD SAKWA
RUSSIA
AGAINST THE REST
THE POST-COLD WAR CRISIS
OF WORLD ORDER

'A leading authority on Russia and Europe, Richard Sakwa articulates the much needed pluralist perspective on their relations to replace the outdated Atlantic outlook.'

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'In this theoretically sophisticated and empirically rich analysis, Richard Sakwa both explains the course of development of Russia–West relations after the end of the Cold War and points to what could be done to escape the dead end into which we have blundered. If you are going to read only one book on post-Cold War international politics, read this superb study.'

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In this book Richard Sakwa provides a new analysis of the end of the Cold War and the subsequent failure to create a comprehensive and inclusive peace order in Europe. The end of the Cold War did not create a sustainable peace system. Instead, for a quarter of a century a 'cold peace' reflected the tension between cooperative and competitive behaviour. None of the fundamental problems of European security were resolved, and tensions accumulated. In 2014 the crisis exploded in the form of conflict in Ukraine, provoking what some call a 'new Cold War'. *Russia against the Rest* challenges the view that this is a replay of the old conflict, explaining how the tensions between Russia and the Atlantic community reflect a global realignment of the international system. Sakwa provides a balanced and carefully researched analysis of the trajectory of European and global politics since the late 1980s.

Richard Sakwa is Professor of Russian and European Politics at the University of Kent and an Associate Fellow of the Russia and Eurasia Programme at Chatham House. He graduated in History from the London School of Economics and took a PhD from the University of Birmingham.
He has published widely on Soviet, Russian and post-communist affairs. Recent books include *Russian Politics and Society* (2008), *Putin: Russia's Choice* (2008), *The Crisis of Russian Democracy: The Dual State, Factionalism, and the Medvedev Succession* (2011), *Putin and the Oligarch: The Khodorkovsky–Yukos Affair* (2014) and *Putin Redux: Power and Contradiction in Contemporary Russia* (2014). His latest book is *Frontline Ukraine: Crisis in the Borderlands*.

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although at times sharp remains (mostly) collegial and scholarly. This also applies to my membership of the Valdai International Discussion Club, which provides an invaluable platform for politicians, practitioners and international scholars to examine common problems and concerns. As always, David Johnson's Russia List (JRL) has been of immeasurable help in keeping up with facts and opinions, and I am indebted to him for his arduous and continuing commitment to covering the contradictions and complexities of Russian life. Russian studies would be immeasurably poorer without his indefatigable work.

I have the good fortune to be part of an international community of scholars dedicated to the study of Russia and global issues, creating a network of colleagues and friends too numerous to list. Naturally, any omissions or mistakes are my sole responsibility. This book is written in the spirit of enquiry, critique and problematisation. Through dialogue, I believe we may achieve something approximating the truth.

Richard Sakwa
Canterbury, March 2017

Abbreviations

AA	Association Agreement (with the EU)
ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
APR	Asia-Pacific region
ASEAN	Association of East Asian Nations
BMD	ballistic missile defence
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CFE	Conventional Forces in Europe (treaty)
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CMEA	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon)
CoE	Council of Europe
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (now OSCE)
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organisation
DCFTA	deep and comprehensive free trade area
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EAS	East Asia Summit
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EDA	European Defence Agency
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ERI	European Reassurance Initiative
EST	European Security Treaty
EU	European Union
GDP	gross domestic product
IMEMO	Institute of the World Economy and International Relations
IMF	International Monetary Fund

INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (Treaty)
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
MAD	mutually assured destruction
MSR	Maritime Silk Road
NAM	non-aligned movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NIEO	New International Economic Order
NPT	New Political Thinking
NRC	NATO-Russia Council
OBOR	One Belt One Road
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (previously CSCE)
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PCA	partnership and cooperation agreement (with the EU)
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PJC	Permanent Joint Council
PPP	purchasing power parity
R2P	responsibility to protect
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SDI	Strategic Defence Initiative (star wars)
SEEC	Supreme Eurasian Economic Commission
SPIEF	St Petersburg International Economic Forum
SREB	Silk Road Economic Belt
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (talks)
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
TTIP	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organization

Contents

Introduction

When George Orwell coined the term 'cold war' in an article in *Tribune* in October 1945, he could hardly have imagined that seventy years later we would still be discussing whether the term was the right one to describe the renewed period of confrontation between Russia and the West.[1] The intervening period saw the 'first' Cold War starting soon after the end of the Second World War until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, followed by the twenty-five years of the 'cold peace', which gave way to what some call the new Cold War. The nuclear balance helped prolong indefinitely a 'peace that is no peace', as Orwell put it. In 2014 the European security system established in the wake of the Cold War collapsed in a spectacular manner. It turned out that for a quarter of a century Europe had been living in an extended period of indeterminacy, caught between the continuation of old institutions and practices while new structures and ideas failed to flourish. In those years none of the fundamental problems of European security had been resolved. The failure to create a genuinely inclusive and comprehensive peace order encompassing the whole continent gave way to renewed confrontation and divisions.

Europe once again resumed its apparently interminable 'civil wars'. The conflict in Ukraine exposed the underlying tensions in the European order, and starkly revealed that the security system established at the end of the Cold War was not working. There had long been indications that all was not well, but the collapse of Europe 'whole and free' came as a shock to many. It is easy to blame one side or the other, but instead this book aims to 'problematise' the 'new Cold War', which I will argue is just part of a much larger shift in global politics. The standard definition of 'problematise' is 'Make into or regard as a problem requiring a solution'; in other words, to make something problematic, and that is precisely the aim here. Problematisation was central to Michel Foucault's 'search for truth'; the way that historical developments and their interpretations have

[1] George Orwell, 'You and the Atomic Bomb', *Tribune*, 19 October 1945.

been reflected upon.[2] I question much of the standard commentary and instead interrogate what too often is regarded as axiological – truths taken as axiomatic and not susceptible to questioning and challenge. This has given rise to a hermetic (closed) style of thinking, which in the end, as René Girard describes so well, leads to an escalation of extremes.

I will examine how various practices come to create a distinctive set of international relations. These practices and the accompanying views were shaped in interaction with each other, but the fundamental dynamic is the enlargement of the apparently victorious Western system, the radicalisation that took place as a result, and Russia's reactions to this expansion and radicalisation. Enlargement meant simply a scaling up of what already existed, whereas successive Moscow leaderships have called for a transformation of global politics. The Cold War ended without a formal peace conference, but by 1989 was clearly over. The last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, adopted a genuinely transformative programme of change on coming to power in March 1985. He was inspired by the ideas of Alexander Yakovlev, the Politburo member responsible for ideology during perestroika who is known as the 'godfather of glasnost'.[3] The two understood that the Soviet Union confronted some fundamental challenges, and although it could muddle through, it was faced with declining economic growth, a range of negative social indicators, and the enormous financial burden of confrontation with the West. However, it was not primarily material factors that precipitated the New Political Thinking (NPT) but a reborn idealism that a transformation of international politics was possible. The programme of perestroika (restructuring) became increasingly radical, which by 1989 had effectively dissolved the communist system.

Gorbachev's ambition to transform international politics through the NPT represented a fundamental rethinking of the structural dynamics of international politics.[4] This was a positive politics of transcendence that sought to make the end of the Cold War a common victory, not only of the great powers but for all the countries trapped in between. It drew on the long struggle in Western countries to overcome the 'arms race' and the militarised opposition of the two blocs in Europe and the world.[5]

[2] Michel Foucault, 'Polemics, Politics and Problematizations', interview with Paul Rabinow in May 1984, in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *Essential Works of Foucault*, Vol. 1, *Ethics* (New York, The New Press, 1998), pp. 111–20.

[3] Richard Pipes, *Alexander Yakovlev: The Man who Saved Russia from Communism* (DeKalb, Northern Illinois University Press, 2015).

[4] M. S. Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (London, Collins, 1987).

[5] Matthew Evangelista, *Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War* (Cornell, Cornell University Press, 2002).

In his speech to the United Nations (UN) on 7 December 1988 Gorbachev effectively declared the Cold War over. He argued that '[f]urther world progress is now possible only through the search for a consensus of all mankind, in movement toward a new world order'.[6] In his speech to the Council of Europe (CoE) in Strasbourg on 6 July 1989 Gorbachev spoke of a 'common European home' stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, thus giving voice to the aspiration for pan-European unity that remains to this day in the guise of 'Greater Europe'.[7] The tumultuous events of 1989 were a consequence of this fundamental policy shift. The partially free parliamentary elections of 4 June 1989 in Poland gave the opposition a decisive victory, and in September the country elected its first post-war non-communist prime minister. In the following months the East European communist regimes crumbled one after another, with the Berlin Wall coming down on 9 November. A certain Vladimir Putin, a relatively low level Soviet security (KGB) official, watched these events with alarm from his posting in Dresden.[8] Although he missed the heady excitement of perestroika at home, he nevertheless absorbed the fundamental ideas of the NPT and the principles of perestroika. The fate of the two Germanys was the subject of the Malta summit between the American president George H. W. Bush and Gorbachev in December 1989, followed in later months by controversial discussions over whether a united Germany would join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in whole or in part.[9]

The Malta summit represents the symbolic end of the Cold War.[10] The old order born of the Yalta summit in February 1945 was irrevocably shattered, and the two leaders came together to chart what Bush later called the 'new world order'. The old bloc politics was dissolving and it seemed that everything was possible. Eastern Europe regained its liberty after years of complex servitude, and the Soviet Union embarked on an unprecedented political and social experiment. Gorbachev's urge to transcend the Cold War did not come out of the blue but had been shaped by years of questioning and debate within the Soviet Union, notably in some

[6] 'Gorbachev's Speech to the UN', 7 December 1988, https://astro.temple.edu/~rimmerma/gorbachev_speech_to_UN.htm, last accessed 26 May 2017.

[7] Mikhail Gorbachev, 'Europe as a Common Home', Address to the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 6 July 1989, www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2002/9/20/4c021687-98f9-4727-9e8b-836e0bc1f6fb/publishable_en.pdf, last accessed 26 May 2017.

[8] Vladimir Putin, *First Person: An Astonishingly Frank Self-portrait by Russia's President Vladimir Putin*, with Nataliya Gevorkyan, Natalya Timakova, and Andrei Kolesnikov, translated by Catherine A. Fitzpatrick (London, Hutchinson, 2000).

[9] The period is analysed in detail by Raymond L. Garthoff, *The Great Transition: American-Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, Brookings Institution Press, 1994).

[10] Robert Service, *The End of the Cold War* (London, Pan, 2016), pp. 416–26.

of its leading research institutions such as the Institute of the World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO).[11] This ferment gave rise to the NPT, the view that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the West could not only coexist peacefully, but that ultimately a global order based on cooperative and even amicable geopolitical and ideological pluralism was possible. This was the view that inspired Gorbachev when he launched perestroika, and which shaped his actions at the Malta summit.[12] In the event, rather than registering a positive transcendence of the Cold War, little more than a power shift took place.[13]

The promise of 1989 for Gorbachev and later Russian leaders was an entirely new logic of power in Europe and the world. It appeared that there was a unique opportunity not only to overcome the specific forms of Cold War confrontation but to transcend the logic of ideological conflict that had given rise to it in the first place. This would for the first time allow the unification of the whole continent from Lisbon to Vladivostok as a new political community of free nations, while transforming the quality of global affairs and the character of the international system. Instead, as this book will demonstrate, this new peace order folded in on itself and incorporated so much of the earlier institutional and moral baggage that in the end it reproduced the logic of conflict. That is why the term 'Cold War' has returned. It describes elements of the confrontation in Europe and great power conflict today, although it fails to capture the broader shifts in the international system.

Four key processes shape the discussion in this book. The first is the failure to achieve a transformed and inclusive peace order after 1989. This generated tension long before Putin came to power in 2000. Two contrasting narratives came into conflict. For the West, nothing needed to change. The institutions and ideas of the Atlantic community had effectively won the Cold War, demonstrating the technical and ideological superiority of the Western order. All that was required was for Russia to join the expanded Western community. The door was indeed wide open, but for successive Russian leaders the terms were not right. This was made clear by Boris Yeltsin in the 1990s, in an incoherent and contradictory manner, and by Putin ultimately rather more forcefully. The West invited Russia to join an *expanded* Atlantic community, but Russia sought

[11] Nick Bisley, *The End of the Cold War and the Causes of the Soviet Collapse* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2004).

[12] For an overview of the evolution in Gorbachev's thinking, see Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996).

[13] Joshua R. Shifrinson, 'The Malta Summit and US–Soviet Relations: Testing the Waters Amidst Stormy Seas. New Insights from American Archives', www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/the-malta-summit-and-us-soviet-relations-testing-the-waters-amidst-stormy-seas, last accessed 26 May 2017.