Immigration Phobia and the Security Dilemma
Russia, Europe, and the United States

*Immigration phobia* is a paradoxical global phenomenon: Neither theories that link conflict to “symbolic” and “realistic” threats nor the “contact hypothesis” can systematically explain intense antimigrant alarmism and exclusionism toward marginally small migrant minorities. Through a careful comparative study of immigration attitudes in the Russian Far East, the European Union, and the United States, this book is the first to demonstrate that concerns about national identity and economic interests associated with migration are themselves ignited by a unique perceptual logic of the security dilemma. Regression analysis and case studies trace support for expulsion of migrants to human yearning for preemptive self-defense under uncertainty. Alarmism and hostility arise from ambiguities about immigration consequences and migrants’ motivations. Framing migration as a national security problem is therefore logical, but counterproductive. The book instead recommends managing migration through economic incentives and new institutions at the global, national, and local levels.

Mikhail A. Alexseev is an associate professor of political science at San Diego State University. A former Kremlin correspondent of the *News from Ukraine* weekly, Alexseev was the first Soviet citizen to receive a Reuters’ Fellowship at the University of Oxford and the NATO Democratic Institutions Fellowship in 1990. He is the author of *Without Warning: Threat Assessment, Intelligence, and Global Struggle* (1997) and the editor of *Center-Periphery Conflict in Post-Soviet Russia: A Federation Imperiled* (1999). His articles have appeared in numerous journals, newspapers, and magazines, including *Political Science Quarterly*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Political Communication*, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *USA Today*, and *The Seattle Times*.
Immigration Phobia and the Security Dilemma

Russia, Europe, and the United States

MIKHAIL A. ALEXSEEV
San Diego State University
Contents

Acknowledgments  page vii

1 Immigration Phobia and Its Paradoxes  1
2 The Immigration Security Dilemma: Anarchy, Offensiveness, and “Groupness”  33
3 The Two Faces of Socioeconomic Impact Perceptions  70
4 In the Shadow of the “Asian Balkans”: Anti-Chinese Alarmism and Hostility in the Russian Far East  95
5 Who’s Behind “Fortress Europe”? Xenophobia and Antimigrant Exclusionism from Dublin to the Danube  148
6 Los Angeles Ablaze: Antimigrant Backlashes in the Nation of Immigrants  178
7 Immigration and Security: How Worst-Case Scenarios Become Self-Fulfilling and What We Can Do About It  213

Appendix A Primorskii 2000 Survey: Regression Results  239
Appendix B Eurobarometer Survey No. 47.1 (1997): Regression Results  246
Appendix C A Journey into Fear: The Immigration Phobia Self-Test  251

References  259
Index  279
This book may be traced to the time around 1997 when Chechnya achieved de facto independence from Russia, when the leaders of Russia’s constituent regions and republics became popularly elected and claimed increasing autonomy from the Kremlin, and when eight time zones away from Moscow Russia’s Far Eastern provinces had been intensifying economic, political, and cultural exchanges with their dynamic East Asian neighbors. This set the backdrop for my focusing on Chinese migration – first as a possible tangible threat to Russia’s security and increasingly as an imagined and overrated threat. It would be impossible to remember all the people who shaped this project, but I must acknowledge first and foremost the profound intellectual stimulation and encouragement at the most important turning points in this project by Stephen Hanson, Herbert Ellison, Ronald Grigor Suny, Robert Jervis, Wayne Cornelius, and Richard Hofstetter. This work would not see the light of day if it were not for a lot of help from my colleagues and friends in Russia when I conducted fieldwork there: Tamara Troyakova, Viktor Larin, Yevgenii Plaksen, and Liudmila Romanova in Vladivostok and Volodya and Liuda Vagin in Moscow. I am also indebted to all those whose support and whose comments sustained my fieldwork, writing, and public presentations of research that culminated in this book (listed in no particular order): Nykola Mirylovic, Phil Roeder, Bruce Acker, Dominique Arel, Deana Arsenian, Jere Bacharach, Akihiro Iwashita, Rajan Menon, Blaire Ruble, Charles Ziegler, Pavel Minakir, Nadezhda Mikheeva, Sergei Chugrov, John Davies, Boris Tkachenko, German Dudchenko, Valery Tishkov, Aleksei Voskresenskii, Bob Huber, Jonathan Mogul, Kimberly Righter, Andreas Wenger, Jeronim Perovic, Oleg
Acknowledgments

Alexandrov, Jinichiro Tabata, Hillary Appel, Richard Pape, Balazs Szelenyi, Yulia Shevchenko, Andrei Znamenskii, Les Vogel, James Billington, Sergey Khrushchev, Dipak Gupta, Lei Guang, Kristen Maher, Farid Abdel-Nour, Ronald King, Brian Loveman, Lyndelle Fairlie, Jonathan Graubart, Dennis Grady, Lou Terrell, Sergey Golunov, and members of my intellectual family – the Program on New Approaches to Russian Security of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (PONARS) – Celeste Wallander, Astrid Tuminez, Ted Gerber, Bear Braumoeller, Matthew Evangelista, Fiona Hill, Nikolai Petrov, Ivan Kurila, Georgi Derlouguian, Mark Kramer, Yoshika Hererra, Andrew Kuchins, Andrei Makarychev, Nikolai Sokov, Vladimir Popov, Yekaterina Stepanova, Edouard Ponarin, Vladimir Gel’man, and Dmitri Gorenburg. The project would have been impossible without the dedication and professionalism of the Primorski survey interviewers Olga Funtusova, Irina Tikhonova, Nadezhda Romanova, Yevgenii Plaksen, Jr., Svetlana Plaksen, and Yelena Larina. Research was made possible, in large part, by generous support of the United States Institute of Peace, the Pacific Basin Research Center of the John F. Kennedy School of Government and the Soka University of America, the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, and the John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress, where most of the first draft of the book was written in 2002 and 2003. I am also grateful for travel and fieldwork support to the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the International Research and Exchanges Board, Appalachian State University, and San Diego State University. I am thankful for being able to present my earlier writings at the Council on Foreign Relations, the National Bureau of Asian Research, the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California–San Diego, the PONARS conferences, the Wilder House of the University of Chicago, the Kluge Center at the Library of Congress, the Keck Center for International and Strategic Studies at Claremont McKenna College, the Slavic Research Center of the Hokkaido University, the Kennan Institute at the Center for Security Studies and Conflict Research of the ETH Zentrum in Zurich, and the Korea Research Institute for Strategy. Limitless gratitude goes to the woman of my dreams and passions, Cindy Machen. My parents, Lyudmila and Anatoli Alexseev, helped greatly in Moscow. The book was written with love for my daughter, Leah Alexseev, whose generation, I hope, will be able to harness the benefits of international migration more than its predecessors.