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0521545293 - Russia in the 21st Century: The Prodigal Superpower

Steven Rosefielde

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Praise for *Russia in the 21st Century*

“In this timely and important work, Steven Rosefielde, a foremost expert on Russia, underlines the extent to which Russia’s past is part of the present, and sets its conditions on the future. The result is a disturbing picture, conveying neither the end of history nor Russia as a normal state.”

– Pekka Sutela, Bank of Finland and the Helsinki School of Economics

“This is an important book that effectively challenges much of the conventional thinking about Russia and the path it will take. Professor Rosefielde has been ahead of Western intelligence communities on the USSR and now Russia for many years, and I believe he continues to be ahead with this book. Many of its conclusions are chilling. The author argues persuasively that Russia will be less inclined to follow the liberal and globalist ideas of the West and far more challenging to the West than commonly expected. Moreover, Russia’s military-industrial complex is dormant but not gone and Russia has the resources – and plan – to resurrect itself as a great military power. Such conclusions are based upon extensive original research in Russian as well as English sources, keen analysis, and nearly unassailable logic.”

– William Van Cleave, Southwest Missouri State University

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RUSSIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

This book demonstrates that Russia intends to reemerge as a full-fledged superpower before 2010, challenging America and China and potentially threatening a new arms race. Contrary to conventional wisdom, this goal is easily within the Kremlin's grasp, but the cost to the Russian people and global security would be immense. A sophisticated strategy is proposed to dissuade President Vladimir Putin from pursuing this destabilizing course. The book also explains why the Soviet Union imploded, why Western experts missed the signs of the collapse, and how Russia has metamorphosed into an authoritarian regime instead of pursuing a transition to fully democratic free enterprise. It demonstrates that the Soviet Union was "structurally militarized" and that Russia's military-industrial complex is intact. The Cold War image of the Soviet Union as a westernizing, mass consumption society committed to "peaceful coexistence" is exposed as a statistical illusion. A critique of American foreign policy making is also provided that emphasizes the confusion caused by tampering with evidence to conform with public expectations and the damage to the national interest caused by attempting to satisfy a consensus of particular special interests.

Steven Rosefielde is Professor of Economics at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Adjunct Professor of Defense and Strategic Studies, Center for Defense and Strategic Studies, Southwest Missouri State University, Springfield. The author or editor of eleven books on Russia and the Soviet Union, he has also published more than a hundred articles in journals such as the *American Economic Review*, *European Economic Review*, *Economica*, *Soviet Studies*, and *Europe-Asia Studies*. Professor Rosefielde is a member of the Russian Academy of Natural Science and was a Fellow of the Carnegie Corporation of New York from 2000 to 2003. He has served as a consultant to the Office of the Secretary of Defense as well as advised several directors of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and the U.S. National Intelligence Council. Professor Rosefielde has also worked continuously with the Swedish Defense Agency and the Central Economics and Mathematics Institute (Moscow) for more than a quarter century and with the Center for Defense and Foreign Policy (Moscow) for more than a decade.

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University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill



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0521545293 - Russia in the 21st Century: The Prodigious Superpower

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

In memory of
David Rosefielde, Bill Lee, and Robert Levy

CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	xi
<i>Preface</i>	xiii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xvii
Introduction	1
1 After “The End of History”	11
2 Prodigal Superpower	21
3 Structural Militarization	33
4 What Could Have Been Done?	58
5 Muscovite Metamorphosis	68
6 Military-Industrial Reform	86
7 National Vulnerabilities	101
8 The Miasma of Global Engagement	112
9 Putin’s Choice	117
10 Candor	123
Conclusion	131
<i>Glossary</i>	137
<i>Notes</i>	147
<i>Selected Bibliography</i>	219
<i>Index</i>	235

FIGURES AND TABLES

FIGURES

2.1	USSR: Trends in GNP and industrial and agricultural output, 1950–87	22
2.2	Growth rates of national income in the USSR over five-year periods, 1966–2000	28
3.1	Cost of U.S. and Soviet defense activities, 1966–87	43
3.2	Soviet procurement as measured in two types of constant rubles	46
3.3	Estimates of Soviet military procurement by CIA and Lee	46
5.1	Russia’s hyperdepression in the years 1989–2003	80
7.1	American mobilization capacity: Tank production 1954–88	109

TABLES

I.1	Soviet defense burden 1928–90: Defense spending as a percentage of GNP	5
2.1	Average annual rate of growth of National Product for selected OECD countries (GDP) and the USSR (GNP), 1951–79	23
2.2	Average annual rate of growth of per capita consumption in selected OECD countries and the USSR, 1951–79	23
2.3	Soviet economic growth by sector of origin (CIA estimates: ruble price weights)	25
2.4	USSR: Comparison of CIA estimates of industrial growth with official Soviet statistics, 1961–81, percent	26
3.1	CIA and Goskomstat estimates of total Soviet defense spending 1960–75 (billions of rubles)	35

x	<i>Figures and Tables</i>	
3.2	CIA prerevision estimates of the structure of Soviet defense activities 1970 (billions of rubles)	36
3.3	Soviet defense expenditures as a share of GNP (ruble estimates: percentage)	37
3.4	Soviet military procurement 1976–84 (billions of 1970 rubles)	38
3.5	Soviet defense activities 1976–84, including military pensions and RDT&E (valued in billions of 1970 rubles)	39
3.6	Soviet and American defense activities 1976–84, excluding military pensions and RDT&E (valued in billions of 1978 dollars)	42
3.7	Soviet military procurement 1960–75 (billions of 1970 rubles)	47
3.8	CIA estimates of Soviet weapons procurements 1980–9 (1982 ruble prices: billions)	48
3.9	Soviet munitions spending	49
3.10	Soviet defense spending	50
4.1	Real gross industrial output of the Russian Federation 1991–2000	64
4.2	Russian and U.S. military equipment arsenals, 1998	65
6.1	Defense industrial organization: The scheme for 2005–6	93
6.2	Official Russian defense budgetary statistics, 1992–2001	97
6.3	Russian defense spending in 2000 (2000 dollars)	98
6.4	Russian defense spending in 2000 (CIA, 1978 dollars)	99
7.1	Growth projections 1995–2025	106

ACRONYMS

- ACW** advanced conventional weapon
ALCM air-launched cruise missile
CER cost-estimating relationship
CBW chemical-biological warfare
CFE Conventional Forces in Europe treaty
CIA Central Intelligence Agency
DIA Defense Intelligence Agency
DOD Department of Defense
GDP gross domestic product
Genshtab general staff
GNP gross national product
Goskomstat Soviet state statistical agency
Gosplan Soviet state central planning agency
Gossnabsbyt' Soviet state wholesale allocation system
GRU Main intelligence administration of the Russian general staff (Glavnoe Razvedovatel'noe Upravlenie)
Khozaschyot economic cost accounting
IW information warfare
KGB Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti (Soviet Committee on State Security)
MBMW machine building and metalworking
MEAC Military-Economic Analysis Center (CIA)
MEAP Military-Economic Analysis Panel (CIA)
Minatom Ministry of Atomic Energy

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0521545293 - Russia in the 21st Century: The Prodigal Superpower

Steven Rosefielde

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

MIRV multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle

MOD Russian Ministry of Defense

MVD Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del (Ministry of Internal Affairs)

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NMD national missile defense

OPK oboronnyi-promyshennyy kompleks (defense-industrial complex)

OSD Office of the Secretary of Defense

PGM precision guided munitions

RDT&E research, development, testing, and evaluation

RMA revolution in military affairs

Roskomstat Russian statistical agency

Rosvooruzhenie Russian arms export agency

SORT Strategic Offensive Arms Reduction Treaty

START Strategic Arms Reduction Talks

SNA System of National Accounts

TNC tactical nuclear weapon for conventional war fighting

TNW tactical nuclear weapon

TVD teatry voennykh deystvii (theaters of military operations)

UAV unmanned aerial vehicle

VPK voennyi promyshlennyy kompleks (military-industrial complex)

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0521545293 - Russia in the 21st Century: The Prodigal Superpower

Steven Rosefielde

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE

Specialists and amateurs alike frequently hold strong views about Soviet and Russian military-economic potential, but their attitudes are seldom consistent. During the Cold War, it was fashionable to speculate that the East and West were converging, that systems were becoming mixed, that both sides shared a common interest in peace and would gradually reduce their military forces. Accordingly, analysts like Franklyn Holzman argued that the Soviets spent less on defense than America and inter alia that the healthy economic growth indicated by Goskomstat and CIA statistics was primarily attributable to the workability of the “reformed” command system. But in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse, it has become just as fashionable to blame the USSR’s demise on its excessive defense burden and the deficiencies of central planning. And, of course, transitologists and now the European Union have officially proclaimed Russia a “market economy,”¹ suggesting “blue skies” ahead, without a military cloud in the sky, since the contemporary defense burden is said to be half and the absolute dollar value less than a tenth the American level. Western economic and security advice to the Kremlin follows this script, stressing further liberalization without the slightest recognition that Russia’s defense-industrial complex is just as large as ever and that Russia’s economic and security drift is against the “globalist” tide. It is easy to understand the diverse partisan interests shaping these “approved” contradictions and even to sympathize in some regards with the disingenuousness, but insofar as policymakers believe what they say, their happy talk obstructs the resolution of serious problems vital to both Russia and the West. It is in our mutual interest to see Russia scrap “structural militarization” in favor of an “optimal” security strategy and to substitute “economic liberty” for the system of authoritarian economic sovereignty and privilege seeking

Cambridge University Press

0521545293 - Russia in the 21st Century: The Prodigal Superpower

Steven Rosefielde

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv

Preface

installed by Boris Yeltsin and rationalized by Vladimir Putin. This book constructs an analytic foundation for such an initiative by explaining why Russia will ensnare itself in a Soviet-style quagmire unless it structurally demilitarizes and westernizes its political economy. It isn't enough to offer the counsel of perfection and for Putin to say amen. The bear has to be genetically recoded.

METHODOLOGY

This book employs “standard” western economic theory and quantitative methods to analyze Soviet and Russian civilian and military-industrial potential and performance. It relies on the microeconomic utility-optimizing principles of Adam Smith and his modern mathematical successors, especially Vilfredo Pareto, to establish a benchmark for evaluating Soviet and Russian possibilities. Following Abram Bergson's precepts on welfare economics, this book employs the familiar Pareto standard as a handy and widely understood referent, not as a uniquely valid ideal.

Best Sovietological practices, including adjusted factor costing where applicable, are applied throughout to handle the special problems posed by Soviet institutions, Soviet accounting, and Marxist price fixing. My approach differs from Bergson's and the CIA's here in only one regard. Like Bergson, for the years after 1963 I reject the claim that ruble values measure consumers' or planners' utilities (marginal rates of product substitution), but I go further, denying that they reflect “production potential,” that is, marginal rates of enterprise product transformation “on average.” This means that, whereas most Sovietologists seem to believe that Soviet ruble factor cost or adjusted ruble factor cost tells us something important about Soviet neoclassical supply-side possibilities, I insist that such statistics are opaque indicators of both demand and supply. The nuance matters because if Bergson is right, western and Soviet growth statistics can be validly compared as oranges and oranges on the supply side. If he is wrong, comparisons of these statistics are inherently ambiguous, providing only an illusion of comparability.²

My standard of verification also departs significantly from Bergson's. Dating as early as 1953, he argued that Soviet data were “reliable and usable,” including subaggregates, except in infrequent cases where there was strong evidence of doctoring. This attitude, adopted before he

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0521545293 - Russia in the 21st Century: The Prodigal Superpower

Steven Rosefielde

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface*

xv

recomputed his famous GNP growth series to assess Soviet data reliability, might be likened to a qualified auditor's report that acknowledges improprieties but judges the overall result satisfactory. As guides to Soviet performance, properly computed output and combined factor productivity growth series were considered ipso facto reliable in precisely the same degree as the underlying data. This turned out to mean in practice that Bergson's perception of Soviet performance was exactly what he computed. Although he considered other viewpoints, he never gave any ground regarding the possibility that his capital series were overstated by hidden inflation or that his dollar estimates of comparative Soviet size were too high. Nor did the Soviet collapse give him pause. He acted as if his axioms were sufficient to gauge the truth and were unfalsifiable, unlike Enron's auditors in similar circumstances, who amended their appraisals. Bergson's method consequently was conviction driven and therefore unscientific judged from the strict requirements of the hard sciences. The CIA acted differently. It possessed a lax attitude toward what constituted compelling evidence of falsification, and it freely adjusted official data to suit its presumptions. This elastic interpretation of Soviet data "reliability" enabled it to craft reality to its liking while claiming that it was rigorously adhering to Bergson's strictures. This book, by contrast, takes the position that blind faith in the "usability" of Soviet subaggregates and undisciplined data manipulation are both unwarranted in the wake of the Soviet disunion. Bergson and the CIA should have amended their analyses after the events of 1991 but didn't. This book doesn't repeat their mistakes.

Relatedly, it was also discovered that the convictions shaping Sovietological attitudes and the CIA's manipulation of Soviet data were governed by "public culture" – socially approved ideas about what the world ought to be. These "idols," as Francis Bacon observed centuries ago, turn science into sophistry and garble public discourse. Therefore, pains have been taken to explain not only how flaws in Bergson's and the CIA's axiologies caused them to get the Soviet Union and Russia wrong but why these errors occurred. My method in its entirety thus begins with scientifically tested, improved axiologies of markets and plans and then moves ahead to an examination of the principles, values, and convictions determining initial axiomatic choice and policy perceptions to prevent preconceptions from biasing results and conclusions.

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0521545293 - Russia in the 21st Century: The Prodigal Superpower

Steven Rosefielde

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Cambridge University Press

0521545293 - Russia in the 21st Century: The Prodigal Superpower

Steven Rosefielde

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xviii

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0521545293 - Russia in the 21st Century: The Prodigal Superpower

Steven Rosefielde

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgments*

xix

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0521545293 - Russia in the 21st Century: The Prodigal Superpower

Steven Rosefielde

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xx

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Cambridge University Press

0521545293 - Russia in the 21st Century: The Prodigal Superpower

Steven Rosefielde

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgments*

xxi

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Cambridge University Press

0521545293 - Russia in the 21st Century: The Prodigious Superpower

Steven Rosefielde

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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