

# Linkage, Leverage, and the Post-Communist Divide

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An important source of the post-Communist divide between a relatively democratic Central and Southeastern Europe on one side and a highly autocratic former Soviet Union on the other is the different character of the international environments in the two regions. Post-Communist countries differ along two key dimensions of the post-cold war international environment: *Western leverage*, or governments' vulnerability to external pressure; and *linkage to the West*, or the density of a country's economic, political, organizational, social, and communication ties to the European Union and the United States. High linkage and leverage in Central and Southeastern Europe generated intense international democratizing pressures, contributing to democratization even under unfavorable domestic conditions. By contrast, weaker linkage and leverage in the former Soviet Union has produced a much more permissive international environment. As a result, democratization has failed in the absence of a strong domestic push.

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As noted by Ekiert, Vachudova, and others in this issue, the past fifteen years have witnessed the emergence of an enormous post-Communist divide between a mostly democratic East Central Europe and a largely autocratic former Soviet Union. This division can to an important extent be explained by differences in the character of the international environment facing the two regions. While strong ties to the West have created democracies in extremely inhospitable conditions in Central and Southeastern Europe, weaker social, economic, media, and intergovernmental ties to the European Union and the United States have undermined democratization in the former Soviet Union. Relatively weak linkage in the former Soviet Union has reduced constraints on autocratic behavior and undermined the development of a powerful domestic constituency for democracy and good relations with the West. It has also undercut Western incentives for promoting democratic development. Thus, Western governments

need to first of all open their borders to trade, tourism, information, and intergovernmental contacts. Even in the absence of further EU expansion, which may be politically difficult, increased contact between the West and the former Soviet Union will do a great deal to promote the growth of pluralism in the region—albeit at a slower pace.

### **The post-Communist divide**

A comparison of democratic development in the former Soviet Union on one side and Central and Southeastern Europe (including the Baltic states) on the other reveals striking differences. While almost all Southeastern and Central European countries have become more democratic since the early 1990s (according to Freedom House and other measures), most post-Soviet countries became less democratic from the early 1990s to 2004. For the most part, Central and Southern Europe is populated by highly consolidated democracies. Even countries facing enormous obstacles to democratic change such as Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia now have dynamic media and relatively free and fair elections. In countries where more serious democratic abuses persist—such as in Albania and Macedonia—leaders have failed to consolidate autocratic rule and have been frequently forced from power via elections.

The situation in the former Soviet Union is much worse. Ukraine stands out as the one clearly democratic exception to the autocratic rule in this region. Democratic violations are most severe in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. Antigovernment demonstrations are severely repressed, and criticism of the government is almost totally absent in the media. Finally, the jailing, banning, or forced exile of viable opposition combined with overwhelming electoral fraud have deprived elections of any real meaning. Elections have become events designed simply to legitimize the existing governments rather than to choose leaders. In other cases—such as Armenia, Georgia, and Moldova—elections have also been accompanied by sometimes significant fraud. In such cases, the government severely limits opposition access to large audience media such as nationwide television or

radio and there is sometimes significant vote fraud that may deprive the opposition of up to 10 percent of the actual vote. However, in contrast to the previous set of cases, these elections continue to generate uncertainty.<sup>1</sup> Viable opposition is not banned, and electoral manipulation is sufficiently limited that the official results still reflect real public opinion to an important extent. Incumbents can and sometimes do lose.

### **Conceptualizing the international environment: Leverage and linkage**

The post-Communist divide can to an important extent be explained by differences in the character of the international environment. To understand how different countries may face very different international environments, we conceptualize the post-cold war international environment as operating along two dimensions: *Western leverage*, or governments' vulnerability to external pressure; and *linkage to the West*, or the density of a country's economic, political, organizational, social, and communication ties to the West.

Western leverage may be defined as governments' vulnerability to external democratizing pressure. Our conceptualization of leverage includes both (1) regimes' bargaining power vis-à-vis the West, or their ability to avoid Western action aimed at punishing autocratic abuse or encouraging political liberalization; and (2) the potential economic, security, or other impact of Western action on target states. Where countries lack bargaining power and are heavily affected by Western punitive action, leverage is high. Where countries possess substantial bargaining power and/or can weather Western punitive action without substantial harm, leverage is low.

Leverage is rooted in three factors. The most important factor is the size and strength of countries' states and economies. Governments in weak states with small, aid-dependent economies are more vulnerable to external pressure than those in larger countries with substantial military and/or economic power (such as China, India, or Russia).<sup>2</sup> These latter states have the bargaining power to prevent pressure from being applied, and the various

types of pressure employed by Western powers—such as aid withdrawal, trade sanctions, and the threat of military force—are less likely to inflict significant damage.

Second, Western leverage may be limited by competing Western foreign policy objectives. In countries where Western powers have countervailing economic or strategic interests at stake, autocratic governments may have the bargaining power to ward off external demands for democracy by casting themselves—and regime stability—as the best means of protecting those interests.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the United States and other Western powers have exerted little democratizing pressure on major energy producing states—such as Saudi Arabia—that are deemed strategically important. In such cases, efforts to take punitive action are likely to divide Western governments, thereby diluting the effectiveness of those efforts.<sup>4</sup>

Third, the degree of Western leverage is affected by the existence or not of countervailing powers—what Hufbauer et al.<sup>5</sup> call “black knights”—that provide alternative sources of economic, military, and/or diplomatic support, thereby mitigating the impact of U.S. or European pressure. Russia, China, Japan, France, and South Africa played this role at times during the post-cold war period, using economic, diplomatic, and other assistance to buttress or bail out autocratic governments in neighboring (or in the case of France, former colonial) states, thereby softening the impact of external democratizing pressure. Examples include Russian backing of governments in Armenia, Belarus, and Ukraine; France’s support for autocrats in former colonies such as Cameroon, Gabon, and Ivory Coast; and South Africa’s support for the Mugabe government in Zimbabwe. In Central/Southeastern Europe and the Americas, by contrast, no significant countervailing power (regional or otherwise) existed during the post-cold war period.<sup>6</sup> For countries in those regions, the European Union and the United States were “the only game in town,” which heightened their vulnerability to Western democratizing pressure.

Leverage raised the cost of building and maintaining authoritarian regimes during the post-cold war period. In externally vulnerable states, autocratic holdouts were frequent targets of Western democratizing pressure after 1990.<sup>7</sup> Western punitive action often

triggered severe fiscal crises, which, by eroding incumbents' capacity to distribute patronage and pay the salaries of civil servants and security personnel, seriously threatened regime survival. Indeed, even the threat of punitive action or—in the case of Central Europe—the promise of external reward may powerfully shape the calculation of autocrats and their backers. Thus, Western pressure has at times played a central role in toppling autocratic governments (Haiti, Panama), forcing authoritarian regimes to liberalize (Kenya, Malawi, Nicaragua, Romania), deterring military coups (Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay), and rolling back coups or stolen elections (Haiti, Dominican Republic, Serbia).<sup>8</sup>

By itself, however, leverage rarely translated into effective democratizing pressure, for several reasons. First, outside the European Union and its potential member states, Western powers employed democratizing pressure inconsistently during the post-cold war period, allowing many autocrats to escape sanction. Even where Western powers pushed for political change, these efforts were limited in important ways. Pressure has also suffered from “electoralism” in that it has tended to focus on the holding of multiparty elections while often ignoring dimensions such as civil liberties.<sup>9</sup> Even in internationally monitored elections, incumbents often got away with widespread harassment of opponents, massive abuse of state resources, near-total control over the media, and substantial manipulation of the vote.<sup>10</sup> Electoralism was exacerbated by difficulties in monitoring and enforcing conditionality. Although external pressure may be used effectively for easily monitored “one-shot” measures, such as blocking coups or forcing governments to hold elections, it is less effective at guaranteeing other aspects of democracy, such as the protection of civil liberties and the maintenance of a reasonably level electoral field.<sup>11</sup> Outside of the European Union, the mechanisms of monitoring and enforcement required to impose the full package of democracy were largely absent. Hence, it is not surprising that cross-national studies have found the impact of political conditionality to have been limited during the post-cold war period.<sup>12</sup> According to one study, conditionality made a “significant contribution” to democratization in only two of twenty-nine cases during the 1990s.<sup>13</sup>

Leverage alone thus generated blunt and often ineffective forms of external pressure during the post-cold war period. Even where political conditionality was applied, autocrats frequently enjoyed substantial room to maneuver. Though compelled to hold elections and avoid massive human rights abuses, they routinely got away with minimal reforms—such as holding elections without ensuring civil liberties or a level playing field—that fell short of democracy. In other words, leverage was at times sufficient to force transitions from full-scale autocracy to competitive authoritarianism, but—by itself—was rarely sufficient to induce democratization.

A second dimension—linkage—is central to understanding why international pressure successfully generates democratization in some cases but not others in the post-cold war era. We define linkage to the West as the density of ties (economic, geographic, political, diplomatic, social, and organizational) and cross-border flows (of capital, goods and services, people, and information) between particular countries and the United States, the European Union, and Western-dominated multilateral institutions.<sup>14</sup> Linkage is a multidimensional concept that encompasses the myriad networks of interdependence that connect individual polities, economies, and societies to Western democratic communities. Though hardly an exhaustive list, six dimensions of linkage are of particular importance for this study:

- *economic* linkage, or flows of trade, investment, and credit;
- *intergovernmental linkage*, which includes both bilateral diplomatic and military ties and participation in Western-led alliances, treaties, and international organizations;
- *social* linkage, or flows of people across borders, including immigration, exile and refugee flows, diaspora communities, and tourism;
- *information* linkage, or flows of information across borders, via telecommunications, Internet connections, and Western media penetration;
- *civil society* linkage, or local ties to Western-based NGOs, international religious and party organizations, and other transnational networks; and
- *geographic proximity* to Western Europe or the United States.

Linkage is rooted in a variety of historical factors, including colonialism, military occupation, and geopolitical alliances. It is

enhanced by capitalist development, which increases cross-border economic activity, communication, and travel, as well as by sustained periods of political and economic openness. However, the most important source of linkage is geographic proximity.<sup>15</sup> Proximity “induces interdependence among states” and creates “opportunity for interaction.”<sup>16</sup> Countries in regions that are geographically proximate to the United States and the European Union, such as Latin America and Central Europe, generally have closer economic ties; more extensive diplomatic contact; and higher cross-border flows of people, organizations, and information than countries in less proximate areas such as Sub-Saharan Africa or the former Soviet Union. Geographic proximity by itself also increases the likelihood of intervention by more powerful states who may fear the spread of instability from neighboring countries.

Linkage serves as a transmitter of international influence. Many international effects that are commonly described as “global” are in fact rooted in concrete ties—networks, organizations, and flows of people, information, and resources—between states.<sup>17</sup> In the post-cold war era, linkage to the United States and European Union has been a major engine of democratization. Specifically, it has heightened the international reverberation caused by autocratic abuse, thereby raising the cost of such abuse; created domestic constituencies for democratic norm-abiding behavior; and reshaped the domestic distribution of power and resources, strengthening democratic and opposition forces and weakening and isolating autocrats.<sup>18</sup> In Latin America and Central and Southeastern Europe, the combination of high linkage and high leverage has generated democracy or near democracy in countries such as Albania, Nicaragua, and Romania with few democratic prerequisites. By contrast, external factors have had a far weaker impact on countries in the former Soviet Union and Sub-Saharan Africa where linkage and leverage is much less robust. In these parts of the world, democratization has hinged to a much greater extent on domestic forces. Insofar as civil society and other domestic sources of democracy are weak, the result has been the widespread failure of democratic change.

Differences in Western linkage and leverage between Central and Southeastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are important

sources of divergent regime outcomes in the post-Communist world. First, and most obviously, the two regions have differed in their relationship to the European Union. In contrast to countries in Central and Southeastern Europe, post-Soviet states have not been offered potential European Union membership. In Central and Southeastern Europe, the prospect of EU membership has significantly increased Western leverage by increasing the potential economic and political impact of Western action on these states. The prospect of EU membership, of course, has provided a uniquely powerful source of democratization. Unlike other Western forms of conditionality, the European Union demands the full democratic package, including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. Simultaneously, the (real and perceived) benefits of ties to the European core are sufficiently large as to induce far-reaching concessions on the part of prospective members among both masses and elites. The powerful pull of the European Union either turned autocrats into democrats as in Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania or empowered democrats to oust recalcitrant autocrats as in Serbia and Slovakia. By contrast, the absence of potential EU membership among non-Baltic post-Soviet states has significantly reduced Western leverage over these countries. Thus, autocrats in this part of the world have faced far fewer constraints on their behavior than have their counterparts in Central and Southeastern Europe.

While the importance of leverage and conditionality in Central Europe is widely recognized,<sup>19</sup> the critical role of less visible forms of linkage has rarely been discussed.<sup>20</sup> Dense geographic, social, economic, communication, and intergovernmental ties between Central/Southeastern Europe and Western Europe has strengthened democratic forces and provided a means and motivation for EU democratic conditionality. By contrast, weaker ties between the former Soviet Union and the West have meant that oppositions have received less support and autocrats less scrutiny. The result has been widespread democratic failure.

Differences in linkage between Central Europe and the former Soviet Union help to account for divergent regime outcomes in several important ways. First, linkage has affected the degree of international salience of autocratic abuses. Heavy media, multilateral

and international nongovernmental organization (INGO) penetration, dense flows of people and communication, widespread elite contacts, as well as simple geographic proximity increase the likelihood that government abuses will become news in Western capitals. In the past ten to twenty years, of course, the growth of INGOs, the Internet, and cable news has significantly opened channels of communication between countries and the West and made it much more difficult for leaders in all countries to hide from international scrutiny. However, stark differences between countries remain that may have important effects on regime development. Thus, both cable and Internet have penetrated the former Soviet Union to a much lesser degree than Central and Southeastern Europe. On average in the 1990s, post-Soviet countries had four times fewer cable subscribers per capita and twelve times fewer Internet users per capita.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, INGOs have a far weaker presence in the former Soviet Union than they do in Central and Southeastern Europe. On average, post-Soviet countries have less than half as many INGOs (78) as do countries in Central and Southeastern Europe (183).<sup>22</sup> Many governments continue to be relatively effective at limiting information flows both out of and into their countries. Democratic violations in the former Soviet Union—particularly Central Asia—have often received little outside attention. For example, authorities in Uzbekistan have been remarkably successful at limiting international discussion and condemnation of repression in Andijan in May 2005. Thus, months after the massacre, even Western regional experts knew “very little” about what had happened.<sup>23</sup>

In stark contrast, the combination of dense diplomatic ties and the penetration of Western media made it virtually impossible for autocrats to hide abuses in Central and Southeastern Europe. In Central Europe, the dense network of regional and international organizations, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, and NATO have complemented and strengthened EU conditionality by increasing the extent of political monitoring. This network of institutional contacts have significantly bolstered monitoring. In such a context, even leaders who engage in relatively minor abuses, such as Vladimir Meciar in Slovakia (or Hugo Chavez in Venezuela)

have been tagged as rogue autocrats, even though they are often less repressive than governments in low-linkage countries (e.g., Zenawi in Ethiopia, Chiluba in Zambia) that are accepted—and even embraced—by the West.

Next, linkage increases the probability of Western response to autocratic abuses as Western governments are more likely to perceive that they have interests at stake. The potential social, political, and economic effects of instability for European countries are much greater in the Balkans than in the Caucasus or other parts of the former Soviet Union. In particular, geography and security concerns played a key role in determining which countries have been eligible for EU membership. Thus, in the 1990s, non-Baltic post-Soviet countries were a priori excluded from possible membership in part because they lacked strong ties to Western Europe and were far enough away to be considered less of an immediate threat to Western stability.<sup>24</sup> The importance of geography is particularly evident when we compare Romania in the early 1990s to its European neighbors to the east. Thus, when in June 1993 the European Union formally extended potential membership to Romania (and nine other Central European countries), the country was considered less democratic than Belarus, Russia, or Ukraine<sup>25</sup> that have never been extended such an invitation. Geography has also affected other types of engagement in the region. For example, Serbia's proximity to Western Europe explains why NATO opted for a military response to abuse in Kosovo but took little action in response to similar or worse crises (in terms of number of refugees and internally displaced persons) in Angola, Ethiopia, and Sudan.<sup>26</sup>

Next, linkage generates powerful domestic actors with a strong stake in good relations with the West. Where linkage is extensive, myriad individuals, firms, and organizations maintain personal, financial, or professional ties to the West. Because isolation from the Western democratic community would put valued markets, investment flows, grants, job prospects, and reputations at risk, these actors will be wary of government actions that threaten such an outcome. Thus, because economic linkage increases the number of firms for whom a sudden shift in trade or investment flows would be costly, business leaders in such a context often develop an interest in adhering to regional democratic norms.

Geoffrey Pridham quotes one European official: “You can never prevent an adventurer trying to overthrow the government if he is backed by the real economic powers, the banks and the businesses. But once in the community, you create a network of interests for those banks and businesses . . . ; as a result, those powers would refuse to back the adventurer for fear of losing all those links.”<sup>27</sup>

Post-Soviet economic isolation has reduced potential Western leverage against autocrats because the potential costs of isolation from the West are relatively low. Trade with EU countries and the United States (combined exports and imports) among non-Baltic post-Soviet countries was on average more than two times lower than among Central and Southeastern European countries in the 1990s.<sup>28</sup> In addition, Russia has sometimes played a key role as a “black knight,” cushioning the potentially negative effects of Western isolation. In particular, the regime of Alyaksandr Lukashenka has benefited from the fact that Belarus “is more closely intertwined [with] Russia [than with] any other state in the former Soviet Union.”<sup>29</sup> In the early and mid-1990s, Russia had the same image, that of all-powerful economic benefactor, in Belarus that the European Union did in Central Europe. Russian economic and political ties played a key role in the establishment and survival of Lukashenka’s autocratic regime. First, active Russian intervention and Soviet era ties between Belarus’s and Russia’s political elite were by most accounts key to Lukashenka’s efforts to subdue Parliament in late 1996.<sup>30</sup> Second, Russian energy subsidies to Belarusian industry significantly cushioned the economic transition in Belarus—leaving Lukashenka more popular and less exposed to potential pressure from the West.<sup>31</sup> Economists have estimated that Russian subsidies to Belarusian industry account for about 20 percent of the country’s GDP.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, Belarus has had little economic exposure to the West.<sup>33</sup> Belarus’s relative economic isolation and capacity to rely on Russia for assistance have largely immunized Lukashenka from Western democratizing pressures. As one commentator recently noted regarding European frustrations in pushing for freer elections, “As long as Russia continues to support his regime economically, Lukashenka does not seem to care much about his isolation in the international arena.”<sup>34</sup>

While Ukraine benefited from Russian subsidies to a lesser extent, the main economic elite backing Kuchma—Viktor Medvedchuk and Viktor Pinchuk—had relatively weak ties to the West and very strong ties to Russia. This fact seems to have reduced the West's potential leverage over Ukraine—where the fall of Kuchma was driven overwhelmingly by domestic factors. By contrast, autocrats in Central Europe—most notably Bulgaria, Serbia, and Slovakia—tried but mostly failed to gain significant Russian backing for their regimes. For example, when in 1994 and 1995 the ruling Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) in Bulgaria attempted to reestablish closer ties to Russia and obtain energy subsidies, it was largely rebuffed.<sup>35</sup> To a much greater extent than their post-Soviet counterparts, these leaders had little choice but to rely on Western support.

Weak social linkage in the former Soviet Union has also undermined democratic development because a smaller share of the elite and population has a strong stake in good Western relations. In particular, democracy has suffered from fewer education exchanges. People educated in the West often retain important professional, social, economic, and political bonds with Western countries. Strong ties mean that elites are more likely to understand how democratic institutions function and to face high costs from Western isolation. In the post-cold war era, association with autocrats is likely to threaten these ties and therefore hamper efforts to create a strong coalition behind authoritarian rule. The powerful role of Western-educated elites has arguably been an important source of democratic consolidation in Latin America in the contemporary era. In Mexico, for example, U.S.-educated elites have dominated governments at the top levels. These officials maintained close ties to U.S. academic, business, and policy circles and closely followed global intellectual and ideological trends.<sup>36</sup>

Communist regimes of course worked hard to limit and control social contact with Western countries. At the same time, the strength of ties to the West differed significantly among different Communist countries. Contact between Central Europe and the West was for the most part much greater than between the USSR and the West.<sup>37</sup> In the 1990s, less than half as many post-Soviet as Central/Southeastern European students as a share of the country

population studied in the United States or Western Europe.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Western-educated officials in Russia, Ukraine, and other post-Soviet countries have generally represented a tiny fraction of the governing elite. As a result, leaders have been less likely to internalize norms of democratic behavior and have less to lose from isolation. In Russia, this situation gave pro-Western Russian elites leverage over Western governments because they could credibly claim that Russia's pro-Western orientation hinged on their political survival. As a result, reformers around Yeltsin were able to convince the West to turn a blind eye to antidemocratic behavior such as the bombing of Parliament in 1993 and restricted media access to the opposition Communists in the 1996 presidential election.

Finally, linkage combined with leverage reshapes the domestic balance of power within authoritarian regimes. Opposition ties to Western governments, parties, and NGOs can yield critical sources of finance and organizational support—as occurred in Serbia in 2000. Linkage may also enhance domestic public support for democratic forces. Thus, in Croatia, Nicaragua, and Slovakia, where nondemocratic governments were perceived to threaten their countries' access to the Western democratic community, opposition parties' ties to the West and credible promise to improve relations with Western powers proved to be valuable electoral assets.

One important impact of weak linkage and leverage is that the defeat of autocratic or semiautocratic leaders in the former Soviet Union—in contrast to Central and Southeastern Europe—has often *undermined* rather than promoted democratic consolidation. Viacheslau Kebich in Belarus in 1994, Petru Lucinschi in Moldova in 2001, and Leonid Kravchuk in Ukraine in 1994 all lost power to leaders who turned out to be more autocratic. New leaders in the former Soviet Union faced far less direct and unified pressure from Western governments to abide by democratic norms. Their elite and mass constituents were also a lot less likely to suffer significantly from potential Western isolation. Rather than becoming more democratic, these leaders thus learned from the “mistakes” of past leaders and more effectively monopolized political control than the previous incumbents.<sup>39</sup>

As a result, these countries, like other post-Soviet cases, became more autocratic over time.

### **Linkage, leverage, and other sources of democratic failure**

Of course, low linkage and leverage are not the only factors affecting the failure of democracy among post-Soviet republics. Above all, scholars have long argued that economic development promotes democratic consolidation. Such development has frequently empowered new groups and actors in society—businesspeople, the working class—to assert their rights against efforts to concentrate power in a small number of state leaders.<sup>40</sup> It has often been considered the single most important determinant of democratic success. Except for oil-exporting countries, virtually all high-income countries in the world today are stable and consolidated democracies. Differences in development would seem to be important in explaining the post-Communist divide. Thus, post-Soviet countries had on average five times lower GDP per capita than did Central and Southeastern European countries in the 1990s.

Comparing the impact of economic development and linkage is difficult because the two are so highly correlated. Thus, economic development is an important source of Western linkage in the form of increased economic integration, greater travel, and education. With a few exceptions, countries with strong ties also tend to be economically highly developed. However, an analysis of post-Communist cases suggests that—controlling for other standard explanations of democracy—linkage is more highly correlated with democracy than is economic development.<sup>41</sup> This suggests that differing international environments—in addition to domestic factors—have played a key role in shaping divergent regime outcomes in East-Central Europe on one side and the former Soviet Union on the other.

At the same time, the importance of ties to the West in no way means that domestic factors are irrelevant. First, the extent of ties to the West is strongly affected by domestic factors such as economic development. Furthermore, linkage is an incredibly

powerful engine of democratization because it operates *through* domestic actors. Linkage generates domestic stakeholders in democratic governance. Faced solely with pressure from the outside, autocrats rarely change their behavior in important or long-term ways. However, external pressure *combined* with demands from voters and economic actors with a strong stake in democracy and good relations with the West make it much harder for autocrats to survive without abiding by democratic norms. In high-linkage countries, international and domestic factors become one. Finally, weak linkage in no way precludes democracy. It only means that prodemocracy groups have to rely to a much greater extent on their own resources. Democratic forces depending primarily on domestic support and finances can and do overthrow autocrats as in Ukraine in 2004. But supporters of democracy face a much greater challenge in these countries.

### **Policy recommendations**

This analysis has straightforward policy implications. To promote democracy in the region, Western actors must increase both leverage on and linkage with the former Soviet Union. In the short run, the most effective means of promoting democracy would be to continue EU expansion, which has been so effective precisely because it generates both high levels of linkage and powerful leverage. However, even in the absence of further expansion, which may be politically difficult, increased contact between the West and the former Soviet Union will do a great deal to promote the growth of pluralism in the region—albeit at a slower pace. To generate denser ties with the West among the political elite, the United States and EU countries should focus on increasing educational exchanges at both the university and mid-career levels. An ambitious but worthwhile goal for the United States and EU countries would be to ensure that every staff member and minister of national governments in the former Soviet Union has an opportunity to spend at least half a year in the West at some point in his or her career. To incorporate future leaders, Western governments and nongovernmental organizations should focus on increasing educational exchanges with top

students from each country's elite universities. Such an effort would obviously build on numerous existing programs and must involve both governmental and nongovernmental agencies and multilateral organizations. Western governments also need to promote a broader public constituency for close ties to the West by opening borders to increased tourism and labor migration. Simultaneously, Western governments should expand all forms of intergovernmental contacts and contacts with civil society and opposition actors from post-Soviet countries. To create a strong business constituency for close Western ties, both the United States and EU countries should reduce trade barriers on agricultural and other products. Finally, Western governments and NGOs should build on and increase efforts to reduce information isolation in post-Soviet countries. This may involve financing the expansion of Internet access into schools and libraries in rural areas. In the more closed polities such as Belarus, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, such an effort might also include the increased financing of publication equipment and radio stations located in nearby democracies. Such policies in the long run will create powerful domestic constituencies for democracy and close ties to Western governments. Increased linkage will also make it harder for autocrats to hide abuses.

At the same time, the European Union and the United States must use highly targeted measures to strengthen leverage in a manner that does not reduce linkage. Thus, broad economic trade sanctions are a potentially disastrous course of action—especially in countries that already have few ties. In such cases, groups with strong Western ties are unlikely to have the capacity to bring about regime change. Simultaneously, broad sanctions are likely to even further weaken these groups and drive the country into greater isolation—thus promoting even greater autocracy. Instead, the West must focus on sanctions targeted at a very small group of the highest regime elites in autocratic states. Such actions might include travel bans and the freezing of bank accounts. While sending a powerful signal to midlevel and lower-level regime elites, such actions will not affect broader processes of increased linkage. Western actors should also utilize other types of pressures (such as support for opposition) that *increase* rather than

*decrease* Western integration with post-Soviet countries. Thus, even if such policies are ineffective in the short term, they will promote longer-term integration that will ultimately provide the strongest basis for stable democratic development.

## Notes

1. Countries such as Azerbaijan and Russia fall somewhere between the extremely autocratic countries described above and this set of more democratic countries.
2. Joan M. Nelson and Stephanie J. Eglinton, *Encouraging Democracy: What Role for Conditioned Aid?* (Washington, D.C.: Overseas Development Council, 1992), 20, 47.
3. *Ibid.*, 20.
4. Gordon Crawford, *Foreign Aid and Political Reform: A Comparative Analysis of Democracy Assistance and Political Conditionality* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 211-27.
5. Gary Clyde Hufbauer, Jeffrey J. Schott, and Kimberly Ann Elliott, *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered: History and Current Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics, 1990), 12.
6. Russian support for Serbia in the late 1990s is a partial exception.
7. Nelson and Eglinton, *Encouraging Democracy*, 20; Crawford, *Foreign Aid and Political Reform*, 210-27; and Milada Vachudova, *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage and Integration after Communism* (London: Oxford University Press, 2005).
8. Steven E. Clinkenbeard, "Donors versus Dictators—The Impact of Multilateral Aid Conditionality on Democratization: Kenya and Malawi in Comparative Context, 1990-2004" (PhD diss., Department of Political Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, 2004); and Jon C. Pevehouse, *Democracy from Above: Regional Organizations and Democratization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
9. Terry Lynn Karl, "Imposing Consent: Electoralism versus Democratization in El Salvador," In Paul Drake and Eduardo Silva, eds., *Elections and Democratization in Latin America, 1980-85* (La Jolla, CA: Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies, 1986); and Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 55-56.
10. Thomas Carothers, "The Observers Observed," *Journal of Democracy* 8:3(1997): 17-31.
11. Nelson and Eglinton, *Encouraging Democracy*, 35; and Olav Stokke, "Aid and Political Conditionality: Core Issues and the State of the Art," In Olav Stokke, ed., *Aid and Political Conditionality* (London: Frank Cass/EADI), 63-67.
12. See Nelson and Eglinton, *Encouraging Democracy*; Stokke, "Aid and Political Conditionality"; Gordon Crawford, "Foreign Aid and Political Conditionality: Issues of Effectiveness and Consistency," *Democratization* 4:3(1997): 69-108; and Crawford, *Foreign Aid and Political Reform*.
13. Crawford, *Foreign Aid and Political Reform*, 187.
14. This discussion draws on Laurence Whitehead, ed, *The International Dimension of Democratization: Europe and the Americas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Geoffrey Pridham, "International Influences and Democratic Transition: Problems of Theory and Practice in Linkage Politics," In Geoffrey Pridham, ed., *Encouraging Democracy: The International Context of Regime Transition in Southern Europe* (Leicester, UK: Leicester University Press, 1991); and Jeffrey S. Kopstein and David A. Reilly, "Geographic Diffusion and the Transformation of the Postcommunist World," *World Politics* 53 (October 2000), 1-37. It is worth reiterating that this argument applies *only to the post-cold war era*. We do not expect ties to the United States to have a democratizing impact during the Cold War period.
15. Kopstein and Reilly, "Geographic Diffusion"; and Daniel Brinks and Michael Coppedge, "Patterns of Diffusion in the Third Wave of Democracy" (Paper presented at the 2001 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, 30 August–2 September 2001). See also Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, *All International Politics Is Local: The Diffusion of Conflict, Integration, and Democratization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

16. Gleditsch, *All International Politics Is Local*, 4-5.
17. *Ibid.*, 13.
18. This discussion draws heavily on Pridham, "International Influences and Democratic Transition"; Kopstein and Reilly, "Geographic Diffusion"; and Whitehead, *The International Dimension of Democratization*.
19. Vachudova, *Europe Undivided*; and Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier, *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).
20. Important exceptions include the work of Pridham, "International Influences and Democratic Transition"; Kopstein and Reilly, "Geographic Diffusion"; and Whitehead, *The International Dimension of Democratization*.
21. Data from the World Bank World Development Indicators.
22. Jackie Smith and Dawn Wiest, "The Uneven Geography of Global Civil Society: National and Global Influences on Transnational Association," *Social Forces* 84:2(2005) 621-52. Of course, this measure should be interpreted with some caution since it is in part endogenous to democratization.
23. Victoria Clement, "Yellow Revolution? Recent Referendums and Elections in Central Asia" (Presented at the conference "Shades of Revolution: Democratization in the Former Soviet Union," University of Illinois, Urbana, 12 September 2005). See also "A Show Trial," *The Economist*, 1 October 2005.
24. Karen Smith, *The Making of EU Foreign Policy: The Case of Eastern Europe*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 109.
25. In 1992-1993, Belarus, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine had combined Freedom House scores of 7, 8, 7, and 6, respectively. At the same time, Russia is obviously a separate case that was probably excluded for other reasons including its size.
26. Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings International, 2002), 194. On a per capita basis, refugees in the Balkans received ten times more aid than refugees in Africa. See Christine M. Chinkin, "Kosovo: a 'Good' or 'Bad' War?" *American Journal of International Law* 93:4(1999): 847.
27. Geoffrey Pridham, ed., *Encouraging Democracy: The International Context of Regime Transition in Southern Europe* (Leicester, UK: Leicester University Press, 1991), 220.
28. As calculated using IMF Direction of Trade Statistics. Calculated as an average of the annual total of imports and exports over GDP 1992 to 2000.
29. Andrei Sannikov, "Russia's Varied Roles in Belarus," In Margarita Balmaceda et al. eds., *Independent Belarus: Domestic Determinants, Regional Dynamics, and Its Implications for the West* (Cambridge, UK: HURI Press, 2002), 222-31.
30. Lucan Way, "Authoritarian State Building and the Sources of Political Competition in the Former Soviet Union" (Manuscript, University of Toronto, Canada, 2006).
31. Between the mid-1990s and the beginning of 2004, Belarusian industry paid just \$30 per thousand cubic meters of Russian natural gas—about one-half and one-third of the price paid by Ukrainian and Western companies (*Ukrainska Pravda*, 16 October 2000; and Vitali Silitski, "What Are the Consequences of the Russian 'Gas Attack'?" *RFE/RL Belarus Ukraine Report*, 23 September 2003).
32. Anders Aslund, "Is the Belarusian Economic Model Viable?" In A. Lewis, ed., *The EU and Belarus: Between Moscow and Brussels* (London: Federal Trust London, 2002), 173-84.
33. Thus, in the late 1990s, Belarus had an external debt that was just 6 to 7 percent of GDP.
34. Jan Maksymiuk, "EU Warns against Unfair Presidential Referendum—But to What Avail?" *RFE/RL Belarus Ukraine Report*, 15 September 2004.
35. Todor Tanev, "Emerging from the Post-Communist Chaos: The Case of Bulgaria," *International Journal of Public Administration* 24:2(2001): 236-48; and Venelin Ganev, "Ballots, Bribes and State Building in Bulgaria," *Journal of Democracy* 17:1(2006): 78-79.
36. Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, "Competitive Authoritarianism: The Origins and Evolution of Hybrid Regime Change after the Cold War" (Manuscript, 2006).
37. Thus, according to UNESCO figures, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Romania had 318, 426, 123, and 147 students (respectively) studying in the United States and Western Europe as compared to just 31 from the *entire* USSR in 1970.
38. In the 1990s, population flows to Western Europe and the United States were more than three times lower from the former Soviet Union than from Central and Southeastern

- Europe (based on available data 1990 to 2000 from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and New Cronos [Europe]); at the same time, international tourism as a share of country population was about seven times lower in the former Soviet Union than in Central and Southeastern Europe on average (based on calculations from UNESCO data).
39. Thus, especially in the context of weak linkage, it is important to distinguish between autocratic breakdown and full democratization. Autocratic breakdown occurs when autocrats lose power; democratization only occurs when the government respects civil liberties and conducts free and fair elections. The recent fall of autocrats in Georgia and Ukraine has created important openings for greater democracy. It is, however, still too early to know whether these autocratic breakdowns in fact represent truly successful efforts at democratization.
  40. For recent debates on the impact of economic development on regime outcomes, see Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes, "Endogenous Democratization," *World Politics* 55:4(2003): 517-49; and Adam Przeworski et al., *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
  41. Because linkage and economic development are so highly correlated, they cannot be put in the same regression equation. Thus, to compare their impact, we compared the adjusted  $R$ -squared that results when each is put separately in the same regression equation (with variables measuring oil production, Muslim population, presidential power, and the level of democracy at the start of the transition). Linkage yields an adjusted  $R^2$  of .830 while economic development yields an adjusted  $R^2$  of .716. Linkage is measured by four components: (1) extent of trade with the United States and fifteen EU member countries (exports/imports over GDP); (2) population movements as measured by the log of the yearly average travel (for all purposes, business, education, tourism) by country residents to the United States and European Union 1990 to 2000; (3) communications ties as measured by per capita Internet and cable access 1990 to 2000; and (4) membership in the Organization of American States (OAS) or potential membership in the European Union. Each of these components has been put into a 5-point scale relative to data for all non-Western countries in the world. Democracy was measured using the 2005 Freedom House scores. Economic Development was measured using log GDP per capita (2004). Other control variables were oil production (from World Development Indicators), presidential power (as measured by the World Bank), Muslim population, as well as the level of democracy at the start of the transition in 1990 (as measured by Freedom House).