FULL REPORT OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Background
The end of Cold War divisions has placed a range of new choices before Western publics and governments. Few will be more important than the future shape of the alliances that bind some parts of the European continent, but not others. Three countries – the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland – are already a part of NATO. These three and ten others are moving – although more slowly than they would wish – towards full membership of the European Union. But there is no immediate prospect of membership for the states that lie beyond, many of them former republics of the USSR (the European Union, at its Copenhagen summit in 1993, itself made clear that membership was ‘out of the question’ in such cases). We have called these states ‘the Outsiders’, and for the foreseeable future they will constitute a borderland between full members of the European family and the rest of the Eurasian landmass. The relations that are established between these ‘Outsider’ nations and the rest of the continent will be crucial for a changing Europe, and for economic development and political stability in the ‘Outsider’ countries themselves.

Our project sought to examine the implications of EU and NATO enlargement for these ‘outsider’ states, drawing our evidence from four of the republics that formerly constituted the USSR but which now find themselves outside the negotiation of a framework that will bring together the rest of the continent: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. Did ordinary citizens in these countries, for instance, think of themselves as ‘Europeans’? Or as members of a distinctive civilisation, sharing some but not all of the values of their Western counterparts? More generally, what support was there for a ‘European choice’, involving a closer relationship with the European Union and its member countries, as compared with a ‘Slavic choice’, in which greater priority was given to relations with other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States? This is a distinction that resonates throughout the former Soviet republics, particularly those that lie ‘in between’ between Russia and the European Union. And in turn it helps to shape their domestic and international politics in a continent that has left behind the divisions of the Cold War but not yet determined its own institutional architecture.

Objectives
Our original application included four main aims:

1. Identification and analysis of attitudes towards NATO/EU expansion, and towards NATO/EU member countries and other states and international organisations, on the part of decisionmakers in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova.

2. Identification and analysis of attitudes towards NATO/EU expansion and towards NATO/EU member countries and other states and international organisations on the part of mass publics in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, based on focus groups and representative national surveys.

3. Generation of data sets based on these focus groups and surveys.

Four main research strategies were to be employed: nationally representative surveys; focus groups, including one in each country with military personnel; elite interviews; and documentary research. We kept very closely to these aims and objectives, except where we were able to enhance them - notably, by conducting full national surveys in our four countries within the same budgetary limits, although we had originally envisaged two full and two partial surveys; and by conducting more focus groups than the number for which provision had been made in our application, again within budgetary limits.

No serious difficulties were encountered in the course of our research, although we drew attention in our interim report to the problems that still arise in the transmission of sums of money to East European subcontractors (it was sometimes necessary to carry rather large amounts of cash on our visits, which involves an element of risk). The organisation of our travel arrangements, and coordination with regard to local arrangements, also took much more time than had originally been envisaged.

Methods
The project – deliberately – did not hire research staff; our principle was that the investigators should also be the researchers. As well as the three awardholders, our work involved Michael Andersen of L’viv University and later the Civic Education Project in Kyiv (as provided for in our application, he supplied translations and shorter abstracts from the Ukrainian press, and occasionally original documents). In addition, Professor Ronald Hill of Trinity College Dublin took part in our work that related to Moldova. He took part in our research visit to that country in July 2000, and coauthored one of our publications (he visited Moldova, under different auspices, for the February 2001 parliamentary elections). Ian McAllister (Australian National University), Richard Rose and Neil Munro (Strathclyde University) were also associated with some of our research and writing.

A very large part of our time was devoted to a series of field visits to our four countries. We found it desirable in principle to organise these visits, so far as possible, on the basis of the participation of all three investigators.

Our first visit to Russia took place in September 1999; a second visit took place in April 2001, when we were able to travel well outside Moscow, to the Khanty-Mansiisk autonomous region. In addition, White and Light were in Russia as observers for the European Institute for the Media in December 1999, and they acted in the same capacity during the presidential elections of March 2000. Löwenhardt acted as an observer in Tatarstan in December 1999, and conducted six interviews in Kazan’ in the immediate post-election period.

Our two visits to Ukraine were in September/October 1999 (Light and White) and September 2000 (Light, Löwenhardt and White). On the first of these visits Light and White were able to visit L’viv to observe a Ukrainian-language focus group; they also observed the focus group that was conducted during their visit to Kyiv.

Our visit to Belarus was in May-June 2000; in addition to interviews, it was possible to observe a focus group in Minsk. White was a visitor again under different auspices in September 2001, when he was an election observer for the European Institute for the Media. White and Löwenhardt visited Moldova in July 2000 for a comparable
programme of interviews. They were able to meet the director of Opinia, who had conducted our survey, in the course of the visit.

Our interviews were generally conducted in Russian, but occasionally in English where this appeared more appropriate. We generally recorded our interviews, where interviewees were willing. In addition, we systematically prepared summaries of each of these interviews, including (where we could) sections of direct speech and comments on non-verbal communication. Our interviews were intended to cover several key sections of elite opinion in each country: the relevant desk officers in foreign and other relevant ministries; parliamentary deputies, especially members of foreign affairs, CIS and defence/security committees; senior advisers within presidential administrations; party leaders; representatives of private business; and experts; and they covered a common set of issues.

Overall responsibility for our visits was undertaken by Dr Olga Kryshtanovskaya and her colleagues in the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, who took direct responsibility for our meetings in Russia and found suitable collaborators in the other three countries. It is not easy to make arrangements of this kind in Russia and Eastern Europe: partly because of problems of access, but also because of the uncertainties that attend any effort to establish a firm timetable with busy politicians. In Belarus we were occasionally sent to the wrong address; at the other extreme, our ‘fixer’ in Moldova was generally able to accompany us on a full-time basis. Overall, the arrangements for our elite interviews were surprisingly satisfactory; and we were able to complete the c140 envisaged in our application.

We conducted a parallel series of focus groups. The first two took place in our presence in Moscow in September 1999; we also observed focus groups in Khanty-Mansiisk, Kyiv, L’viv, Minsk and Chişinău. Other focus groups were held in Dolgoprudny, Novgorod and Archangel in Russia; and in Grodno in Belarus. Military personnel participated in focus groups in Minsk (Belarus), Vladimir (Russia), Kyiv (Ukraine) and Chişinău (Moldova). We normally received videotapes, audiotapes, floppy disks, a transcript, and the moderator’s comments in each case (the military focus groups, for understandable reasons, were not videotaped and the speakers are not individually identified; nor were senior officers present, in case this would inhibit the discussion). In all, we were able to complete 16 focus groups (7 in Russia, 4 in Ukraine, 3 in Belarus and 2 in Moldova, one in each case with military personnel); this was somewhat more than envisaged in our original application.

Nationally representative surveys were conducted for the authors in each of the four countries by well-established local agencies. Our survey in Belarus was conducted by Novak under the direction of Andrei Vardomatsky. Fieldwork took place between 13 and 27 April 2000. There were 62 sampling points, and 90 interviewers conducted face-to-face interviews in respondents’ homes. The total number of interviews was 1090, using the agency’s normal three-stage stratified sampling model to secure representation of the resident population aged 18 and over. All seven of the country’s regions were included. A full set of results was made available in Stephen White and Richard Rose, Nationality and Public Opinion in Belarus and Ukraine (Glasgow: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, SPP 346, 2001).
In Moldova our survey was carried out by Opinia under the direction of Tudor Danii, in association with Socis of Kyiv. Fieldwork took place between 12 and 19 February 2000. The universe for the study was the resident population of Moldova aged 18 and over, excluding residents of the Pridnestrovskii region and the city of Bender in the self-declared republic of Transnistria, which is disproportionately Russian in population. A multi-stage stratified sample was constructed in accordance with Opinia’s normal practices; 111 interviewers were employed, who conducted 1000 face-to-face interviews in respondents’ homes. In addition, 37 monitors checked all stages of the fieldwork. Some difficulties were caused by adverse weather conditions, which led to occasional power cuts in rural areas. A full set of results was provided in Stephen White, Public Opinion in Moldova (Glasgow: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, SPP 342, 2000).

In Russia our survey was conducted by the All-Russian Centre for the Study of Public Opinion (VTsIOM), in association with the Centre for the Study of Public Policy at the University of Strathclyde under grant R000238107 to Richard Rose and Stephen White. Fieldwork took place between 19 and 29 January 2000. The universe was the resident population of the Russian Federation aged 16 and over, and 2003 interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis in respondents’ homes (our results are based on the 1940 interviews that took place with those aged 18 and over). A four-stage stratified sample was constructed in accordance with the agency’s normal practices. Interviews took place in 107 primary sampling units in 38 of the 89 subjects of the Federation; 193 interviewers were employed, and 16 per cent of the interviews themselves were monitored by agency supervisors. A full set of results was provided in Richard Rose, Russia Between Elections: New Russia Barometer VIII (Glasgow: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, SPP 328, 2000). Our cooperative arrangement with the CSPP, which was approved by the Programme Director, allowed us to run a further set of ‘Outsider’ questions in June 2001 as part of the New Russia Barometer X.

In Ukraine our survey was conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology under the direction of Vladimir Paniotto and Valeriya Karuk. The questionnaire was piloted between 28 and 31 January and fieldwork took place between 18 February and 3 March 2000. A four-stage stratified sample was constructed, and 110 primary sampling units were employed. A total of 125 interviewers took part, who conducted 1600 interviews on a face-to-face basis in respondents’ homes of which 10 per cent were subject to a check by supervisors, yielding a valid total of 1590. Interviews averaged 55 minutes in duration, and the response rate was 72 per cent. Again, the Centre for the Study of Public Policy at Strathclyde University arranged the publication of a booklet with a full set of results: White and Rose, Nationality and Public Opinion in Belarus and Ukraine.

Results
We have annexed two outputs, one published and another in press, which between them incorporate many of our more detailed findings, and which draw upon distinct bodies of the evidence we have collected. Overall, our principal conclusions include the following:

1. Mass identities and commitments are clearly divided, between a ‘European choice’ that extends to a European self-perception and a wish to move towards EU
membership, and a ‘Slavic choice’ that embraces an orientation towards a closer relationship with the other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States and nostalgia for the USSR. This is not an artificial distinction, but a real-life tension that has found direct expression in parliamentary and presidential elections throughout the region; and it was reflected in the responses we received during interviews, particularly with representatives of the political parties. Equally, our research made clear that it is a distinction that has several levels of complexity.

Levels of ‘European’ identity, for instance, vary considerably across the region, and they do not necessarily correspond to high levels of commitment to EU membership. Russians and Belarusians, for instance, were the most likely ‘often’ to think of themselves as Europeans. Russians, however, were also the least enthusiastic about the European Union and the least likely to wish their country to become a member, while Moldovans were in both respects the most positive. Our surveys also identified high levels of uncertainty. Opinion about the European Union was overwhelmingly positive – where it existed. But substantial numbers – 69 per cent in Russia – felt unable to offer a view of its aims and activities. We asked at the same time about levels of knowledge, inviting respondents to identify the EU headquarters out of a list of five European capitals. Typically, no more than a third could do so, a level not much higher than would have resulted from an entirely random choice. We found in interviews that low levels of information about the EU were also characteristic of foreign policy elites (except for officials whose work brought them into direct contact with the Commission) – and even in Ukraine and Moldova, where governments favour the earliest possible admission.

2. We also found high levels of commitment to an association with other CIS states, and (in the case of the other three) with Russia. There was very strong support, across all four states, for the proposition that it was a ‘great misfortune the Soviet Union no longer existed’. Our Belarusian, Ukrainian and Moldovan respondents agreed for their part that good relations with Russia were ‘very important’, and much more so than good relations with China, Britain, the USA or the European Union. In our interviews, foreign policy elites in Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova also emphasised the importance of maintaining good relations with their Slavic neighbour. Russians, for their part, favoured a closer association with all of the other members of the CIS, and most of all with the other Slavic republics. No fewer than 90 per cent, in our 2001 survey, favoured the formation of a single state with Belarus, and similarly with Ukraine.

But even Russians were reluctant to contemplate a closer union if, for instance, they had to increase the support they offered to its other members. A plurality (36 per cent), indeed, thought existing levels of support should be reduced. And there was little appetite for military action if fellow nationals in other CIS countries were under threat (20 per cent were in favour, but 79 per cent against). Fellow Slavs, further away, attracted no particular sympathy: 19 per cent of our Russian respondents identified with the Serbs in the Kosovo conflict (our survey took place a year after the NATO action), but 36 per cent were ‘not interested’ and 42 per cent ‘had no sympathy for either side’.

3. In a more detailed analysis, presented in our attached paper on ‘A European or a Slavic Choice? Foreign Policy and Public Attitudes in Post-Soviet Europe’, we
examine the *distribution of opinion* within Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine in terms of their orientation towards the EU in the west, or Russia and the other Slavic states in the east. We also relate these patterns of support to the support that our respondents offered to a variety of types of political party. There were close associations, for instance, between a European commitment and support for a pro-market party, and between a Slavic choice and support for a communist or socialist party - associations that were clearly reflected in our interviews with representatives of these parties in all four countries. We conclude that a substantial constituency exists in each of these countries in favour of both the ‘European’ and the ‘Slavic choice’, which helps to account for the absence of such divisive issues from national elections. And although there may be short-term variations in the positions of governments, the existence of the veto groups of this kind suggests that a ‘multidirectional foreign policy’ is likely to be sustained for some time to come.

**Activities**

Given the direct policy relevance of our work, we attached the highest priority to a programme of meetings and briefings that would bring our findings promptly to the attention of practitioners as well as of our academic colleagues.

The project quickly established its own website, including electronic versions of its publications (see [www.gla.ac.uk/icees/outsiders.html](http://www.gla.ac.uk/icees/outsiders.html)).

Aiming particularly at non-academic users, we organised a workshop on 15 December 2000 at the London School of Economics, in association with another Programme project and the Programme Director. The emphasis was upon the ‘other Outsiders’, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. We presented two panels with overviews of our policy-relevant findings, with three additional contributions by scholars who were associated with us in our work (Clelia Rontoyanni, who was during the period of the project an ESRC-funded research student at Glasgow, Ronald Hill and Michael Andersen). All the members of our steering group were invited, and a wide range of contacts in the FCO, MoD, EU Commission, business, the relevant embassies, journalism and elsewhere; the total attendance was about 50. A second workshop with a specific focus on Russia took place on 27 April 2001, with the participation of two other Programme projects. About 40 attended, including representatives of the Russian, Uzbek and Belgian embassies, and Deutsche Bank.

Our other meetings with practitioners included:
In April 1999 Light and White were invited to take part in discussion of UK policy towards Russia at 10 Downing Street.
All of us attended a Programme meeting in the FCO in April 1999.
In October 1999 Light and White both offered evidence to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee and were invited to provide oral testimony.
In November 1999 Light took part in a discussion meeting at the FCO on ‘Russia as a Global Partner’, and in a briefing meeting for the new British Ambassador to Moscow.
In June 2000 Light participated with other members of the Programme in a briefing meeting for Christopher Patten, EU Commissioner for External Relations.
In July 2000 Light and White visited NATO headquarters and were able to have a full day of meetings with relevant desk staff, including Chris Donnelly, Special Adviser to the Secretary General on Central and Eastern Europe.
In October 2000 Light participated in a briefing meeting at the FCO for David Gowan, new Counsellor and deputy head of Mission in Moscow (whom we met again during our April 2001 visit).

In May 2001 Light took part in a briefing on Russia and European security for the new Finnish Ambassador to Estonia.

In June 2001 Light spoke on Russian foreign policy to a Diplomatic Service course for FCO at LSE, and at a Programme seminar at the RIIA followed by a briefing for NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson.

Among us we have given a very large number of talks and lectures to non-academic audiences (and a still larger number to primarily but not exclusively academic audiences, within the UK and abroad). At the national and international level, these have included:

The annual conferences of three UK national associations (BASEES in 2000 and 2001; BISA in December 2000; and the PSA in April 2000).

In addition, we addressed audiences in a wide variety of foreign locations: Moscow, Tartu, Darmstadt, Leuven, Bochum, Kyiv, Genval (Belgium), Leiden, Paris, Iowa City, Tel Aviv, Warsaw, and (more than once) Brussels.

**Outputs**
(jointly authored by the project investigators, or in a few cases with other collaborators, unless otherwise stated):

‘Jullie geloven niet langer in ons en wij geloven niet langer in jullie’: Russen over het nieuwe Europa’, *Internationale Spectator* 53:12 (December 1999), pp. 672-7

‘A wider Europe: the view from Moscow and Kyiv’, *International Affairs* 76:1 (January 2000), pp. 77-88


Light, ‘Memorandum’, in ibid., pp. 51-3; ‘Examination of witnesses’, ibid., pp. 59-69


White, ‘The view from Freedom Avenue’, *The European Quarterly* no. 7 (Summer 2000), pp. 17-19


*Russian Voters and Foreign Policy* (Glasgow: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, 2000, 32pp.)

White, *Public Opinion in Moldova* (Glasgow: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, 2000, 52pp.)

Russia and the Dual Expansion of Europe (Brighton: Sussex European Institute, One Europe or Several Programme, Policy Paper 02/00, 2000, 15pp.)

Löwenhardt, ‘The future of Russia – the relations between centre and regions’, in The Future of Russia and its Relations with the European Union and the Baltic States (Tartu: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2000), pp. 19-29


Nationality and Public Opinion in Belarus and Ukraine (Glasgow: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, SPP 346, 2001, 60pp)

‘You no longer believe in us and we no longer believe in you’: Russian attitudes towards Europe’, in Helen Wallace, ed., Interlocking Dimensions of European Integration (London and New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 87-102

‘A wider Europe: the view from Minsk and Chisinau’, International Affairs 77:3 (July 2001), pp. 605-20


Löwenhardt and David Betz, eds., Army and State in Postcommunist Europe (London and Portland: Frank Cass, 2001)


‘Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine: looking East or Looking West?’ Perspectives on European Politics and Society 2:2 (August 2001), pp. 289-304


The three datasets relating to our surveys in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine have been deposited with the ESRC Data Archive at the University of Essex. Our 2000 Russian survey, which was conducted in association with the Centre for the Study of Public Policy at the University of Strathclyde, will be deposited at the conclusion of the project under which it was sponsored in early 2002 (grant R000238107).

**Impacts**

We would wish to draw particular attention to the series of seminars and briefings of diplomats mentioned above under ‘Activities’. These included a series of less formal research-informed briefings provided by Light for Uzbek diplomats and the Chinese assistant military attaché. Members of the project were also consulted by diplomats in the course of their preparation of policy papers (for instance, Light was consulted by David Gowan on his paper for the Centre for Economic Reform). The Centre sent Light to Moscow in July 2001 to take part in a two-day conference with Russian, European and American policy makers and academics.

Our work also made a contribution to informed journalism on the issues with which it was concerned. All members of the team were involved in media work, in print and broadcast form. Light and White’s short paper on the Putin administration’s ‘wild theories’ was noted in the Guardian, 27 July 2001, p. 22. Light, additionally, provides regular short contributions on Russian themes for a fax line on East European emerging markets, circulated daily on a subscription basis by a financial services company to a variety of commercial customers.

We might also note that several of our publications (and particularly early ones) were – by choice – in journals with a strongly practitioner orientation.

**Future research priorities**

An immediate research priority for the project is the preparation of book-length publications, setting out our findings and engaging with the relevant academic and policy audiences.
A first book is now under contract for the Macmillan/Palgrave ‘One Europe Or Several?’ series, under the primary authorship of Margot Light, with the provisional working title **Identity and Foreign Policy Perceptions in the Other Europe**. The book will use the framework of recent theoretical developments in the study of identity formation and the impact of perceptions on foreign policy choices. It will draw upon the elite interviews, focus groups and representative surveys to map changing definitions of statehood in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova, and perceptions of the place of each state in the international political system and its foreign policy choices within a changing external environment.

We have had a warm reception from Rowman and Littlefield to the prospect of an edited book, drawing substantially on the project but including the work of others, to be entitled **Postcommunist Belarus** (White and Löwenhardt to coedit with Elena Korasteleva, a British Academy postdoctoral fellow at Glasgow for three years from October 2001).

In due course we envisage a further book, with White to lead, that will focus more directly on Russia and domestic-foreign linkages.

Beyond our immediate writing commitments, we will certainly wish to consider an application for funding that extends our work into the (apparently) very different circumstances that have arisen after September 11 and that will follow further NATO expansion and the admission of the first accession states to the EU. We will equally follow with some attention the development of the Council’s proposed Programme on International Security in a Global Age.