

Tsygankov, Andrei P. (ed.). *Routledge Handbook of Russian Foreign Policy*. Routledge Handbooks. Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon, and New York, 2018. xvi + 439 pp. Notes. Bibliographies. Tables. Figures. Index. £175.

IN view of the increasing importance of the study of contemporary Russian foreign policy and the growth in the academic literature seeking to describe and analyse it, the appearance of this volume is most welcome. Andrei P. Tsygankov's *Handbook* comprises 28 chapters by different authors, each critically examining the state of the field in the study of a particular facet of Russian foreign policy and including a bibliography.

Tsygankov has divided the *Handbook* into four parts, each of which has an introduction written by him. The first part, which is perhaps the most weighty academically, concerns theoretical approaches to the field. The tools of foreign policy and some of the actors form the subject of the second part. The third and fourth parts examine policy towards particular states and regions and Russia's interactions with international organizations, respectively.

In the first part, Valentina Feklyunina provides an excellent chapter on constructivist approaches and identity issues. Viatcheslav Morozov discusses post-structuralist and post-colonialist interpretations. Realist studies are examined by Elena Kropatcheva, who argues persuasively that neoclassical realism provides the most satisfactory of the approaches within the realist framework. John Berryman's analysis of Russia's geopolitical relationships from Kievan *Rus'* to the present concludes that the treatment of Russia after the collapse of the USSR marked a missed opportunity to integrate it into international society. The role of Russian nationalism is considered by Luke March, who somewhat unusually but gracefully subjects some of his own work to criticism. Yuval Weber advocates the idea of Russia as a petrostate.

In Part II, Charles E. Ziegler writes what I think is the most useful chapter of the book. Entitled 'Diplomacy', it provides a description of the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, offering an overview of its policy. Other chapters deal with gas, the intelligence services, the military, cyberpower, and the media and public diplomacy. Nicolai N. Petro's scholarly chapter on the Russian Orthodox Church argues that it has become the partner rather than an agent of the state.

Among the highlights of Parts III and IV, Natasha Kuhrt examines Russia's 'pivot to the East'. She finds the roots of this well before Western states imposed sanctions in the wake of Russia's annexation of Crimea. Kuhrt warns that in the future China may call on Russia for support in its maritime frontier disputes, where Moscow has so far managed to avoid entanglement. Ruth Deyermond's careful analysis of Russia's view of the Collective Security Treaty Organization shows how the body's functions are evolving to include a capacity to resist the intrusion of Western democratic norms into its members.

The weaknesses of the volume relate most of all to what is not covered but should be. In a country where foreign-policy decision-making is both highly centralized and personalized, the ideas and personality of the president become highly important. But there is no chapter dealing with the presidency and its institutions (other than those linked with intelligence and the military), and so the presidential administration, which is often seen as more influential than the ministries in the making of policy, is not discussed. Nor does the book find a way of discussing the role of the presidents themselves – Boris N. El'tsin, Vladimir V. Putin, and Dmitrii A. Medvedev – although the literature on these is available and growing. Nor is there a serious discussion of the nature of the regime, with its authoritarian, kleptocratic and murderous proclivities. These find their reflection in some of the chapters, but it demands a more systematic approach.

It is easy to point out the *Handbook's* omissions of particular relationships from discussion. Germany, which until 2010 was Russia's most important trading partner and has remained one of the most important of Russia's interlocutors in the West, has disappeared in this volume into the chapter on the EU. The coverage of Ukraine, the most important arena of conflict with the West in recent years, is disappointing. Not only is the country subsumed into the chapter 'Central and Eastern Europe', but its Moscow-based authors refer to a 'civil war' in Ukraine which in fact is primarily a conflict with Russian proxies. Further, they blame the West for discouraging President Viktor Yanukovich from using violence against the demonstrators on the Maidan in 2013-14.

Nevertheless, the great majority of the chapters will be indispensable to researchers in many aspects of Russian foreign policy. While the price of £175 will mean that most academics, let alone postgraduates, will be unable to afford it, they should ensure that their library purchases a copy.

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