

# GREAT DECISIONS

1918 • FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION

2015 EDITION

## I. Russia and the near abroad

### Acronyms and abbreviations

CIS—Commonwealth of Independent States

KGB—*Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti*, the main security agency for the Soviet Union from 1954 to 1991

NATO—North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO—Non-governmental organization

START—Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

USSR—Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WTO—World Trade Organization

### Glossary

**1991–99 Yugoslav Wars:** Encompassed a series of ethnic conflicts that were fought in former Yugoslavia, involving the issue of ethnic minorities in the new republics such as Serbs and Albanians, many of whom were targeted in ethnic cleansing and genocides.

**2008 Russian-Georgian War:** Five-day military conflict between Russia and Georgia revolving around the breakaway provinces South Ossetia and Abkhazia. After tensions regarding the provinces' independence escalated into heavy fighting, tensions resulted in a ceasefire agreement and Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent.

**Cold War:** The political and military tensions between the U.S., the Soviet Union and their respective allies that occurred between 1947 and 1991. Although no direct fighting ensued, the U.S. and Soviet Union armed themselves in case of a possible nuclear war and amassed many nuclear weapons.

**Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS):** A regional organization formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. CIS consists of former Soviet Republics

and has nominal coordinating powers in trade, finance, lawmaking and security.

**Crimean Peninsula:** Located between the Black Sea and Sea of Azov, it was part of Ukraine until the occupation by Russian troops in 2014. The occupation of Crimea led to a popular referendum, wherein many ethnic Russians voted to secede, resulting in annexation of Crimea by Russia.

**Euromaidan:** The series of civil unrest and demonstrations in Ukraine that took place in 2013–14. Demonstrators initially called for the country's closer integration with Europe, but went on to also demand the resignation of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich and led to the 2014 Ukrainian revolution.

**Mikhail Gorbachev:** Last leader of the Soviet Union until its fall in 1991, known for his *glasnost* ("openness") and *perestroika* ("restructuring") reform policies, and for reorganizing the Soviet system that contributed to the end of the Cold War and the Soviet Union's disintegration.

**Mikhail Khodorkovsky:** Former Russian oligarch who accumulated wealth through Yukos, a Russian oil company, and was charged in 2003 for fraud, and later embezzlement and money laundering. He was imprisoned until 2013. Later court rulings determined his arrest was politically motivated with the intent to destroy Yukos, and to obtain the company's assets for the Russian government.

**Loans-for-Shares:** 1995–96 program that allowed some of Russia's state industrial assets to be leased and privatized through rigged auctions, resulting in an increased wealth gap and rise of Russian business oligarchs holding concentrated amounts of power and wealth.

**New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START):** A nuclear arms reduction treaty signed between the U.S. and Russia in 2010, entered into full force in 2011, and expected to last at least until 2021. The treaty's terms require that the number of strategic nuclear missile launchers be reduced by half but does not limit inactive warheads. (The original START was in force from 1994 to 2009.)

**Military Doctrine (April 2000):** Replaces the doctrine of 1993 and touched upon a number of topics, from nuclear weapons to “illegal armed formations” within Russia. The threats outlined include claims upon territory and interference in Russian affairs.

**Orange Revolution:** A series of protests that took place in Ukraine from late 2004 to early 2005, after the 2004 Ukrainian presidential election was speculated to be rigged and in favor of Viktor Yanukovich over Viktor Yushchenko. The protests led to a revolt and ultimately Yushchenko's victory over Yanukovich under “fair and free” circumstances.

**Vladimir Putin:** The current Russian president in his third term of office. Also former Russian prime minister.

**Sevastopol:** A city on the Black Sea in the southwestern region of the Crimean Peninsula. The location of its harbors has made the city an important military and naval base. It is home to the Russian Black Sea Fleet.

**Silovik:** A Russian term for politician from security or military services, like the Soviet Union's Committee for State Security (KGB) or Russia's Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU).

**Soviet Union:** Former single-party state composed of multiple Soviet republics and controlled by the Com-

munist Party that existed between 1922 and 1991; the dissolution of the Soviet Union after the Cold War (lasted from 1947 to 1991) resulted in the formation of post-Soviet states and the Russian Federation.

**Yulia Tymoshenko:** First woman appointed as Prime Minister of Ukraine. She served from January to September 2005 and again from December 2007 to March 2010; co-led Orange Revolution and was imprisoned for embezzlement and abuse of power in October 2011, but was released in February 2014 near the end of Euromaidan.

**Viktor Yanukovich:** President of Ukraine until he was removed from power in 2014, after his refusal of a European Union agreement earned the ire of pro-European Union Ukrainians, which led to mass protests that ultimately caused him to flee to Russia.

**Boris Yeltsin:** First president of the Russian Federation from 1991 to 1999, known for introducing shock therapy, price liberalization and privatization to Russia's command economy to reform it into free market economy; the economic policies ultimately failed and made Yeltsin's popularity drop.

**Yukos:** Former Russian oil and gas company acquired by Russian oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky through “loans-for-shares,” which became one of the largest Russian companies during its operation. It was liquidated after Khodorkovsky was arrested in 2003, declared officially bankrupt in 2006, and has been defunct since.

**Viktor Yushchenko:** Third president of Ukraine from 2005 to 2010 after winning the 2004 Ukrainian presidential election; also the former Ukrainian prime minister and National Bank of Ukraine's governor.