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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

University College

International Affairs

**ROLE OF ICT IN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS
OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION,
AND WHY THERE ARE
NO ROSES, ORANGES, OR TULIPS, IN RUSSIA**

by

Andrei Ilich Skurtu

A thesis presented to the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Washington University in
partial fulfillments for the
requirements for the
degree of Masters of Arts

August 2009

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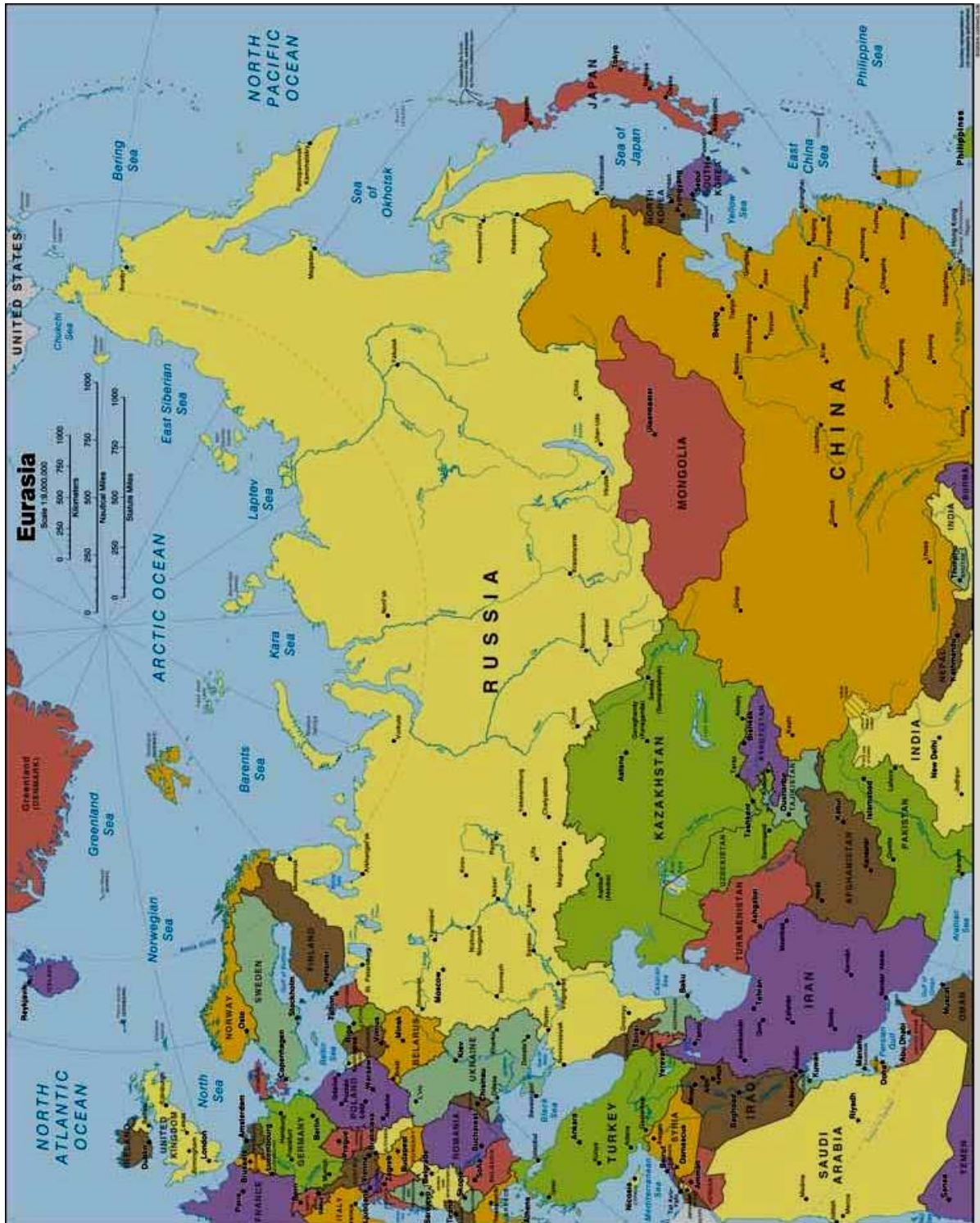
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Map 1: Eurasia



Source: *The CIA World Factbook*, 2008

Chapter 1: ICT, Democracy, and Geopolitics—U.S.
Approach to Foreign Policy

“All of America’s strategic interests—from promoting prosperity at home to checking global threats abroad before they threaten our territory—are served by enlarging the community of democratic and free market nations. Thus, working with new democratic states to help preserve them as democracies committed to free markets and respect for human rights, is a key part of our national security strategy. One of the most gratifying and encouraging.”¹

*Bill Clinton’s National Security
Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*

“...a democracy cannot survive without civic virtue...The political challenge for people around the world today, is not just to replace authoritarian regimes by democratic ones. Beyond this, it is to make democracy work for ordinary people.”²

*Fidel Valdez Ramos
President of the Philippines*

Over the past 20 years a number of important developments in the field of Information Communication Technology (ICT) have led to significant changes in the way we do business, communicate with each other, as well as receive and transmit information. Much attention is paid to the way ICT has transformed our business and government practices, and there are numerous publications on this subject. However, very little has been said or written about the way ICTs impact our ability to challenge our

¹ The White House, “A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement,” February 1996. Quoted in Mitchell, Lincoln, *Uncertain Democracy: U.S. Foreign Policy and Georgia’s Rose Revolution*, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 13.

² Sen, Amartya, *Development as Freedom*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 155.

governments, and produce revolutionary movements with ease never before thought possible. Nineteenth century revolutionaries Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels would have been truly envious of the world today, of the way that various groups and individuals are able to exchange information with lightning speed and gather support from likeminded individuals around the world to support their cause. “Groups of any size, from two to millions, can reach each other and use the Net to promote an agenda. Their members and followers can come from any geographical region on the Net, and they can attempt to influence foreign policy anywhere in the world.”³

This study will argue that many of the revolutionary movements that have taken place in the last decade would not have occurred had it not been for the various advancements in Information Communication Technologies. In addition to this, it will assert that advances in ICT are generally positive for mankind, although in some instances they can be employed in ways that are actually detrimental to individuals and society. This is particularly the case when governments utilize ICT in order to manipulate their constituents, or when it is utilized by autocratic regimes in order to exert greater control over their citizens. Having said that, much emphasis will be placed on the human factor, which was essential in every revolutionary movement discussed in this paper. While various advances in ICT certainly made the task of challenging each regime more achievable, it was up to individuals to initiate and drive every political transformation.

To date there have been four ‘non-violent’ revolutions in the former Soviet Union. In every instance the opposition groups utilized ICT in order to achieve their

³ Arquilla, John and David Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime and Militancy*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 243.

goals. The methods and level of use, however, differed substantially depending on when the event took place and the extent of technological development in each country. In addition to this, the achievements of the movements also differed substantially, and it is still not possible to really determine whether each revolution was successful.

Although the citizens of Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova had unique justifications for mobilizing an opposition movement against their governments, all of the revolutions were triggered by a single element—flawed elections. According to Thomas Carothers, Vice President of Studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace:

“When an authoritarian leader gambles on elections to legitimate his rule, then outside aid to help make the elections as free and fair as possible can be valuable...Where dictators allow no or next-to-no political space, the ability of outside groups to encourage change is much more limited.”⁴

As a result, in each circumstance the citizens of these countries were determined to rid their nation of corruption, economic poverty, and injustice by overthrowing the powers in charge, which they viewed as directly responsible for these shortcomings. This was done by exposing all the failures of the current government and promising the people economic prosperity, freedom, and democracy once the government is replaced. Before going any further, however, it is important to underline some key aspects of freedom and democracy, concepts that were fundamental in driving the revolutions in the former Soviet Union.

Freedom and Democracy

Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize-winning economist and Professor of Economics and Philosophy at Harvard University, describes five instrumental concepts, which taken together, encompass the general idea of freedom. These include *political freedoms*,

⁴ Carothers, Thomas, “Why Dictators Aren’t Dominoes,” *Foreign Policy*, (July/August 2003).

*economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security.*⁵ According to Freedom House, a not-for-profit NGO that provides an annual report on the level of freedom around the world, the level of freedom in any given country is based on *Political Rights and Civil Liberties*.⁶ In *Development as Freedom*, Amartya Sen also writes that “political rights, including freedom of expression and discussion, are not only pivotal in inducing social responses to economic needs, they are also central to the conceptualization of economic needs themselves.”⁷ Consequently, Sen concludes that democracy is something that is acquired via expression of, and intertwined with, freedom. Having said that, the idea of democracy is not something that can be described definitively since it can take many different forms. As a result, there is often misunderstanding among individuals that attempt to instill democracy in their countries, since they expect instantaneous change in ways which the West tends to ‘advertise’ it. Despite this, there are some general concepts that help clarify its meaning.

According to Seymour Martin Lipset, senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and Professor of Public Policy at George Mason University, “Democracy is a system in which no one can choose himself, no one can invest himself with the power to rule and, therefore, no one can abrogate to himself unconditional and unlimited power.”⁸

Moreover, Keith Jagers, Professor of Political Science at University of Colorado and

⁵ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 53.

⁶ Freedom House, <http://www.freedomhouse.org> Accessed on 6/19/2009

⁷ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 154.

⁸ Lipset, Seymour Martin, quoted in Keith Jagers and Ted Robert Gurr’s (1995) “Tracking Democracy’s Third Wave with Polity III,” 469.

Ted Robert Gurr, Professor of Political Science at University of Maryland, write that there are three essential elements in democracy:

- (1) *Political Choices*: existence of institutions and procedures which allow citizens to choose their leaders and the policies that impact their lives.
- (2) *Institutional Constraints*: existence of ‘checks and balances’ on executive power.
- (3) *Civil Liberties*: guarantees of liberty in daily life and freedom for acts of political participation.⁹

Jaggers and Gurr conclude that while democratic regimes can occasionally lack some of these characteristics, they should generally have most of them in place in order to remain democratic. In spite of democracy’s hard to define qualities, however, many Western countries, and the U.S. in particular, place great emphasis on freedom and democracy promotion around the world.

U.S. and Democracy Assistance

In addition to use of ICT, rigged elections, and promises of freedom and democracy, the four revolutionary movements were also similar in that to some degree, the United States was involved in supporting the opposition in every instance. According Patrick Callahan, Professor of Political Science at DePaul University, the ideas of democracy promotion and liberalism¹⁰ are among the most important factors

⁹ Jaggers, Keith and Ted Robert Gurr, “Tracking Democracy’s Third Wave with Polity III,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Volume 32, Number 4, (1995), 469-482.

¹⁰ In *Logics of American Foreign Policy*, Callahan writes that the concept of liberalism can be summarized in four main points: “(1) The U.S. should seek the expansion of liberty because the U.S. and the world are better off when trade is free, nations are governed democratically, human rights are honored, and nations have self-determination because liberty promotes prosperity, peace, and cooperation. (2) The logic of liberalism makes no specific assumptions about the power of the U.S. beyond the rather general assumption that it has the capability to increase liberty to some extent; however, any serious program actively to expand liberty necessarily makes expansive assumptions about U.S. Power. (3) Promoting liberty is a moral obligation as well as a means to advance U.S. interests. (4) The promotion of liberty has been a salient theme in the U.S. policy discourse since the country gained its independence; since the late 1800s, it has significantly shaped what the U.S. does abroad.” (Callahan: 2004, 74)

determining U.S. foreign relations.¹¹ As a result, although in the last few decades there has been a more noticeable backlash against U.S. intervention in some parts of the world, establishing and defending democracy abroad has been a key foreign policy principle of the United States since the very beginning.

According to Lincoln Mitchell, Professor of International Politics at Columbia University, democracy promotion was central to President Woodrow Wilson's vision of a post-World War I world, and World War II was also oftentimes presented as a war to protect freedom and democracy.¹² Moreover, on June 29, 1953, the U.S. National Security Council issued a Top Secret Report Number 74: NCS 158 titled *United States Objectives and Action to Exploit the Unrest in the Satellite States*. The report provided detailed description on the U.S. plans to undermine communism around the world, and listed a number of key 'psychological objectives' as well as short-term and long-term 'courses of action.' The first objective that the report lists is "to nourish resistance to communist oppression throughout satellite Europe, short of mass rebellion in areas under Soviet military control, and without compromising its spontaneous nature."¹³

During the Reagan administration, democracy promotion was implemented via 'Project Democracy,' which consisted of "exchange programs and other cultural activities aimed at exposing people from communist countries to American-style democracy."¹⁴ This was followed by the 1992 'Freedom Support Act' which

¹¹ Callahan, Patrick, *Logics of American Foreign Policy: Theories of America's World Role*, (New York, NY: Pearson Education, Inc., 2004), 83.

¹² Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy*, 10.

¹³ "United States Objectives and Actions to Exploit the Unrest in the Satellite States," Document No. 74: NCS 158, June 1953 <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/coldwar/documents/> Accessed on 6/26/2009.

¹⁴ Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy*, 11.

appropriated millions of dollars towards the countries of the former USSR for the purpose of promoting freedom and democracy.¹⁵ According to a 2004 ‘State Department Report’:

“In the twelve years since the collapse of the Soviet Union, U.S. Government (USG)—funded assistance programs have been a key element of the U.S. policy to support the political and economic transformation of the former Soviet states. By helping move the Eurasian countries in the direction of democracy and market-based economies, these programs promote long-term stability in the region and contribute to U.S. national security.”¹⁶

Many individuals, however, criticize the United States for being involved in internal affairs of other countries, and a number of regimes adamantly oppose any U.S. intervention within their borders. In the words of Uzbekistan’s President Islam Karimov, “Think for yourselves, dear friends, exporting democracy and introducing it forcibly from abroad is in itself against the nature of the concept of democracy.”¹⁷ Others claim that the U.S. is exporting revolutions and that its motives are not as pure as U.S. officials claim.¹⁸ The bottom line, however, is that United States is interested in peace and stability around the world in order to protect itself from unnecessary threats, and to provide businesses with the ability to compete in foreign markets.¹⁹ Moreover, it

¹⁵ Anable, David, “The Role of Georgia’s Media—and Western Aid—in the Rose Revolution,” *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, Volume 11, Issue 3, (Summer 2006), 20.

¹⁶ “2004 State Department Report.” Quoted in David Anable, *The Role of Georgia’s Media*, 20.

¹⁷ Islam Karimov, quoted in David Anable’s *The Role of Georgia’s Media*, 36.

¹⁸ Open Society Institute’s (OSI) Gordana Jankovic responds to the accusations that OSI (which was founded by George Soros) is responsible for producing revolutions by stating that: “this is absolutely far away from the truth. OSI is not there to create revolution. It is not there to stimulate revolution. It is there to help people learn how to better run their own societies and governments. It is they who can decide how they should do their work.” She then goes on to say that this false accusation is making “it much more difficult to encourage and stimulate the civil society groups that remain in critical watchdog roles in Georgia and elsewhere.” (Quoted in David Anable, *The Role of Georgia’s Media*, 31).

¹⁹ Callahan, Patrick, *Logics of American Foreign Policy*, 82.

is significantly cheaper than pursuing more aggressive means of foreign intervention. According to *The New York Times*, the U.S. spent approximately \$350 million on democracy promotion in Eastern Europe and the former USSR in 1991-2005.²⁰ By comparison, the U.S. has spent almost \$700 billion in Iraq as of 2009, and a Congressional Research Service Study conducted in 2008 estimated that approximately \$686 billion in inflation-adjusted dollars were spent on the Vietnam War, and \$4.1 trillion on World War II.²¹

U.S. and Geopolitics

In addition to democracy assistance reasons, the United States also has a specific interest in the Caucasus and Eurasia which stem from a number of important concepts in geopolitical theory. According to several noted scholars of international relations, including Zbigniew Brzezinski, George Friedman, and Robert Strausz-Hupe, many of the countries that comprised the former Soviet Union are located in key strategic areas that are crucial for the purpose of maintaining control in the case of Russia, or undermining Russia's control, in the case of the U.S. and other Western powers.

As far back as 1904, Sir Halford Mackinder, one of the founders of Geopolitics, and author of several important books including *Democratic Ideas and Reality*, wrote that the area occupied by the Russian Empire and countries of Central Asia has the potential to be self-sustainable and control many of the world's resources without the need for developing access to, or control of, the oceans. He went on to say that this was "the pivot

²⁰ O'Connor, Eileen and David Hoffman, "Media in Iraq: The Fallacy of Psy-Ops," *The New York Times*, December 16, 2005.

²¹ Barnes, Julian E., "The Nation: Iraq War's Cost to Pass Vietnam's," *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 2009.

region of the world's politics.”²² In 1917, he also introduced what was called the ‘Heartland Theory,’ which stated:

Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland;
Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island;
Who rules the World-Island commands the world.²³

According to Zbigniew Brzezinski, professor of American foreign policy at Johns Hopkins University and former national security advisor to President Jimmy Carter, “it is on the globe’s most important playing field—Eurasia—that a potential rival to America might at some point arise. Thus, focusing on the key players and properly assessing the terrain has to be the point of departure for formulation of American geostrategy for the long-term management of America’s Eurasian geopolitical interests.”²⁴ As a result, a number of former Soviet countries, including Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova, are strategically crucial for maintaining, or acquiring, control of the “Heartland.”²⁵

²² Mackinder, Halford, “The Geographical Pivot of History,” *The Geographical Journal*, Volume 23, Number 4, (April 1904), 423.

²³ Mackinder, Halford, *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction*, (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1919).

²⁴ Brzezinski, Zbigniew, *The Grand Chessboard*, (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1997), 38.

²⁵ A number of individuals, including writer Rick Rozoff, claim that the United States and NATO are encircling Russia in order to gain domination of the world. In a recent article he writes, “The three nations of the South Caucasus—Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia—are increasingly becoming the pivot upon which that strategy turns. With the Black Sea and the Balkans to its west, Russia to its north, Iran and the Arab world to the south and southeast and the Caspian Sea and central Asia to the east, the South Caucasus is uniquely situated to become the nucleus of an international geostrategic campaign by major Western powers to achieve domination of Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa and as such the world.” For more information see Rick Rozoff, “Eurasian Crossroads: The Caucasus in US-NATO War Plans,” *Global Research*, April 8, 2009. <http://www.globalresearch.ca/PrintArticle.php?articleId=13101> Accessed on 4/12/2009.

Chapter 2: History and Political Use of ICT

“In 1989, the world witnessed a new power:
communications’ ability to alter Europe’s political
geography.”

*Royce J. Ammon*²⁶

“It was revolution by fax machine, computer and word of
mouth, by photocopier and wall poster, by direct-dialed
phone calls, shortwave radio and letters in the mail.”

*Newsweek, 1989*²⁷

Background on ICT

According to John Pavlik, Professor of Journalism at Rutgers University, when Samuel Morse, inventor of the electromagnetic telegraph, traveled to France in 1893 and saw Louis Daguerre’s newest invention, the daguerreotype, he wrote that it was “one of the most beautiful discoveries of the age.” When Walt Whitman saw this early form of photography, he wrote “Ah! What tales might those pictures tell if their mute lips had the power of speech!” Shortly after this, newspapers across the world began to utilize photography, and with it, a new era of ICT was launched.

After successfully enabling individuals on land to transmit human voices to faraway ships, radio was also introduced into the mix in 1906. Less than 10 years later, advancements in radio technologies allowed it to carry the same human voice across the Atlantic Ocean. “Then on election night 1920, station KDKA in Pittsburgh,

²⁶ Ammon, Royce J., *Global Television and the Shaping of World Politics: CNN, Telediplomacy, and Foreign Policy*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2001), 33.

²⁷ Martz, Larry et al., “Revolution by Information. China’s Students Wage High-and Low-tech War on the Blackout,” *Newsweek*, June 19, 1989.

Pennsylvania, inaugurated service by broadcasting election returns in what is generally regarded as the first commercial broadcast of radio.”²⁸ By early 1930s, radio was already the primary news source for many individuals, providing media with unparalleled ability to supply instantaneous information.²⁹

At about the same time as radio was quickly spreading across the world, another important development in the area of ICT was taking place, the invention of the television. Television, which means seeing images at a distance, combined “radio’s power of hearing with the greater power of seeing.”³⁰ Since then, both of these powerful technologies, along with other ICTs like telephones, video and audio tapes, cameras, as well as satellite technology, have been providing information on, and contributing to, political change throughout the world. The biggest transformation, however, occurred with popularization of the Internet in the 1990s.

As recently as 1987 the Internet consisted of approximately ten thousand linked computers. In 1989 that number grew to one hundred thousand, and by 1992 there were over 1 million computers linked to the Internet, with more being added at a rate of 20 percent per month. Because of this rapid growth, there were over 165 million people connected to the Internet by mid-1999.³¹ Today, there are almost 1.6 billion internet users around the world³², which means that almost one out of every four individuals

²⁸ Ammon, *Global Television*, 32.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

³⁰ Ammon, *Global Television*, 33.

³¹ Collings, Anthony, *Words of Fire: Independent Journalists Who Challenge Dictators, Druglords, and Other Enemies of a Free Press*, (New York University Press: New York, NY, 2001), 167.

³² *Internet World Stats: Usage and Population Statistics* (as of 3/31/2009), <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm> Accessed on 7/3/2009.

around the world is using the Internet. In addition to this, while only a decade ago Internet access was extremely disproportionate, with Europe and North America counting for nearly eighty percent of the world's total,³³ today the situation is much more encouraging. Since 2000, Africa's Internet user growth increased by a staggering 1,100 percent, and the Middle East experienced growth of 1,296 percent. Internet use in Latin America and the Caribbean also increased by 861 percent, while Asia's use grew by 475 percent. During the same time, Europe and North America only experienced an increase of 274 and 173 percent, respectively.³⁴ What this means is that although there is still a significant digital divide between countries like the U.S. and the rest of the world, the gap is rapidly narrowing.

One of the biggest impacts of the Internet was the way in which it transformed access to information. According to a report published by Freedom House in 2000,

“Censors have dogged every new communication technology since the creation of movable type in the sixteenth century, through the innovation of the telephone, radio, and television in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Internet, however, is the most formidable challenge to the censor. Cyberspace is everywhere, but headquartered nowhere. No single government can yet control a message as it originates in another country.”³⁵

Actions by governments that previously went unchecked or unnoticed can no longer remain concealed. The Internet also provides various activist groups with unprecedented ability to initiate and drive political change. Individuals around the world are beginning to question and challenge their governments with increasing rates of success. “Some of

³³ Collings, *Words of Fire*, 167.

³⁴ Internet World Stats: Usage and Population Statistics (as of 3/31/2009)

³⁵ *Press Freedom Survey 2000*, New York: Freedom House, May 2000.
<http://www.freedomhouse.org/news/pr122199.html>

these advantages appear to be merely evolutionary improvements on ‘older’ technologies such as the telephone and fax machine in terms of speed and cost. Other advantages appear to be truly revolutionary, reflections of the Internet’s unique nature.”³⁶

History of ICT Use³⁷

After decades of authoritarianism and communist oppression, Eastern and Central European regimes finally began to feel the pressure of public dissent in 1989. Although small anti-government oppositions did occur in many of these countries throughout the years, it was not until 1989 that significant resistance movements materialized in the Soviet bloc. Tired of repression, low living standards and isolation, Eastern and Central European citizens were determined to take advantage of what appeared to be a weakening of the Soviet hegemony, in order to bring change to their countries. In addition to the abovementioned factors, a number of different Information Communication Technologies were utilized in the 1980s in unprecedented ways. Developments in ICT during the previous twenty years, which included extraordinary advances in telephone, computer, video recording, and television technologies, allowed individuals to organize protests, spread information, and communicate with each other using methods over which the Soviet governments had little or no control. So while increased availability and advancements in ICT were not the most important variables in igniting the revolutions of 1989, they played a role of extreme significance.³⁸

³⁶ Arquilla and Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars*, 158.

³⁷ The focus of this paper is on revolutionary events which utilized various forms of ICT. As a result, while there were a number of revolutionary attempts 1989-2009 that occurred in the former Soviet bloc, (including Bulgaria in 1989, Azerbaijan/Moldova in 2005, and Belarus/Uzbekistan in 2006), only those examples which are relevant to this study will be addressed.

³⁸ Hester, Al and L. Earle Reybold, *The Incredible Demise of Communism, in Revolutions for Freedom: The Mass Media in Eastern and Central Europe*, (The University of Georgia Press: Athens, GA, 1991), 2.

According to Albert Hester, director of the James M. Cox Center for International Mass Communication Training and Research at University of Georgia,

“Once revolutionary change began moving in one country, news of it spread with incredible speed. It was not possible, as it had been even a few years ago, to insulate and isolate oppressed populations from change. Now, much of the world is attuned to the same news agendas. The image on the television screen is too powerful to be denied.”³⁹

As a result, the wave of protests that began to spread across Eastern and Central Europe in the middle of 1989 resulted in the fact that most of the communist regimes in the Soviet bloc were overthrown only two years later. Citizens of the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, all saw the end of communist rule.⁴⁰ By autumn of 1991, the few governments that were able to temporarily suppress the opposition movements were also overthrown as the Soviet Union dissolved.

Czechoslovakia

In July, 1989, Czechoslovakian Communist Party First Secretary Milos Jakes made a speech during which he said that it was a mistake to arrest Czech revolutionary Vaclav Havel, “because the more we persecute him, the greater a hero he will be.” He then went on to say that “We must not direct our hits directly against Havel, but against the others. Otherwise cultural figures all over the world and the democratic world will stand up in his defense.”⁴¹ Although Jakes made this speech during a private meeting that was only supposed to be heard by other communist officials, this event was secretly taped by someone present at the meeting, and later supplied to several Western radio

³⁹ Hester, *The Incredible Demise*, 2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 1.

⁴¹ Luers, William, “Czechoslovakia: Road to Revolution,” *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 69, Issue 2 (Spring 1990), 94.

stations, which immediately put the recording on the air.⁴² This event created uproar in the country and caused the Czech Party leaders to lose even more credibility. Moreover, many attribute this recording to have been a key factor in building Havel's national and international recognition, which eventually led to his election as President of Czechoslovakia in December 1989, and President of the Czech Republic following a split with Slovakia in 1993.

Another crucial factor behind the success of the 'Velvet Revolution' was the media in general. According to William Luers, former U.S. Ambassador to Czechoslovakia:

“the sight and sound of the hundreds of thousands of demonstrators in Leipzig, Berlin and Prague; East German emigrants jumping over fences and into the West German embassy; the tearing down of the Berlin Wall—these events seemed to give instant courage and a sense of community to cowed citizens of Czechoslovakia.”⁴³

Moreover, availability of foreign media, which included *Voice of America*, *Radio Free Europe* and *BBC*, allowed individuals in the Czech Republic to hear an alternative version to the state-controlled media, and caused the authorities to lose much of their legitimacy. This was particularly the case, after December 1988, when the Czechoslovak authorities stopped jamming *Radio Free Europe*.⁴⁴ As a result, radio, television, as well as illegal video news like the *Original Video Journal*, all contributed to the transformation of Czechoslovakian society and further fueled the existing dissent.⁴⁵

⁴² Ganley, Gladys D., *The Exploding Political Power of Personal Media*, (Ablex Publishing Corporation: Norwood, NJ, 1992), 39.

⁴³ Luers, “Czechoslovakia,” 90-91.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 91.

⁴⁵ For more details regarding Czechoslovakia's 'Velvet Revolution,' see Luers (1990), “Czechoslovakia: Road to Revolution.”

Romania

The pattern of revolutionary movements during the 1989-91 was similar throughout Eastern and Central Europe. Protesters gathered in the streets demanding change in leadership. The anxious authorities would attempt to intervene, resulting in some violence, occasional injuries, and even a few deaths. Romania, however, underwent a very different experience on its road to democracy, resulting in hundreds of individuals losing their lives.⁴⁶

In July 1989 a Hungarian television station aired a 40-minute interview with Reverend Laszlo Tokes that was recorded earlier in the year by two Canadians, Michel Clair and Reagan Roy. During this interview, Reverend Tokes, who was ethnically Hungarian and lived in the city of Timisoara, on the border between Romania and Hungary, spoke to Clair and Roy about human rights, corruption, and freedom. Moreover, he went on to talk about the physical and spiritual degradation of Romania under Nicolae Ceausescu's rule.⁴⁷ Although the program was aired in Hungary, a large number of Romanians were able to view it, and immediately identified with what Tokes was saying. According to Gladys Ganley, in many ways this interview was the spark that ignited Romania's 1989 revolution.⁴⁸

After Ceausecsu found out about this interview, he was furious and attempted to deport Reverend Laszlo Tokes. On December 15, 1989, when a crowd gathered around Tokes in order to protect him, "Romanian troops and police opened fire from tanks and

⁴⁶ Hester, *The Incredible Demise*, 9.

⁴⁷ Ganley, *The Exploding Political Power*, 50.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

helicopter gunships” at the crowd.⁴⁹ Following this event, protests quickly spread throughout the country, eventually reaching Bucharest on December 21, when over one hundred thousand demonstrators gathered on the streets of the capital. On December 25, Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu were executed, and the Romanian government overthrown.⁵⁰

Another important way in which ICTs were able to impact the Romanian Revolution is exemplified by the exaggerated death toll numbers and the photographs of dead bodies that were taken and widely distributed by western media. According to Peter Siani-Davies, author of *The Romanian Revolution of December 1989*, contrary to the reports that death tolls reached as high as 12,000, which was the figure reported by TANJUG (Telegraphic Agency of New Yugoslavia), the fact is that approximately 70 individuals lost their lives in Timisoara.⁵¹ Many more Romanians lost their lives in the standoff between the Romanian Army and the opposition movement after December 22, but those numbers were not related to the massacre of December 17.⁵² These reports, however, were critical in mobilizing the opposition against Ceausescu.⁵³

⁴⁹ Hester, *The Incredible Demise*, 9.

⁵⁰ For more details regarding Romania’s Revolution, see Siani-Davies, Peter, *The Romanian Revolution of December 1989*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

⁵¹ Siani-Davies, Peter, *The Romanian Revolution of December 1989*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 281.

⁵² For more details regarding Romania’s opposition movement, the National Salvation Front (NSF) see “The December Revolt and the Coup D’état – 1989: Origins of the National Salvation Front (NSF),” http://www.ceausescu.org/ceausescu_texts/revolution/december_revolt_nsf.htm Accessed 03/29/2009.

⁵³ There’s still much debate regarding the origins of the Romanian Revolution, and whether it was a revolutions, in the common sense of the word, or if it was a coup d’état. For an article discussing some of these views, see Jane Perlez, “Uprising or Coup? Romanians Ask 5 Years Later,” *The New York Times*, December 25, 1994.

Furthermore, photographs of what were presented as victims of the massacres were shown on televisions around the world, which also played an important role in fueling the revolution. Of particular significance was a photograph of two dead bodies, a mother and her child, that were claimed to be victims of the Timisoara massacre. However, “after the revolution it was revealed that the woman had in fact perished from alcohol poisoning on November 8, 1989, while the child, a young girl, had died on December 9. The bodies had been excavated during the first frenzied search for those who were missing after the massacre of December 17 and, presumably because it made a striking picture, the baby had been placed on the woman and the image filed by Novi Sad Television and MTV of Hungary.”⁵⁴

After the revolution ended, the extent of media’s impact on Romanian culture became much clearer. According to Ganley, “Romanians reported that they had kept contact with the West via networks of underground VCRs and swapped smuggled videos. The Romanians had also stayed in touch with the world through cross-border television from Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Hungary, as well as via the radio transmissions of *Voice of America*, *Radio Free Europe*, the *BBC*, and some other foreign radio stations.”⁵⁵ Despite Ceausescu’s oppressive regime, the Romanian people were able to have limited access to ICTs which allowed them to become informed about what was going on, and eventually enabled them to overthrow Ceausescu’s autocratic government.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Siani-Davies, *The Romanian Revolution*, 281.

⁵⁵ Ganley, *The Exploding Political Power*, 50.

⁵⁶ For more information on impact of ICT on the Romanian Revolution, see Thomas Rosenstiel, “TV, VCRs Fan Fire of Revolution,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 18, 1990.

Poland

Out of all the countries in Eastern and Central Europe, the opposition movement in Poland was “the most vigorous and successful [in utilizing] personal electronic media for strictly political purposes.”⁵⁷ After the communist party outlawed the Solidarity movement in 1981, the opposition managed to keep the movement alive for eight years by creating and distributing video documentaries. These videos were then shown secretly in churches and community centers throughout Poland.⁵⁸ In addition to this, the opposition also created audio tapes which included “antigovernment songs recorded in underground cabarets, interment camps, and prisons.” Because of this, the Solidarity movement was able to take control of the Polish government in 1989, after winning 160 out of 161 seats in the Polish lower house and 99 out of 100 seats in the Senate.⁵⁹

East Germany

Contrary to the rest of the countries in the Soviet bloc, East Germany was the only country whose citizens were able to receive Western radio and television broadcasts in their native language. Most of the individuals were able to receive West German broadcasts, which is why Germany’s General Secretary Walter Ulbricht was quoted saying “the enemy of the people stands on the roof,” referring to the antennas that allowed East Germans to pick up Western stations.⁶⁰ According to a German journalist,

⁵⁷ Ganley, *The Exploding Political Power*, 50.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

Dieter Buhl, “at the height of the cold War...Fighting brigades of the Communist Free German Youth (FDJ) climbed the roofs and cut down the antennas.”⁶¹

Kosovo

Many scholars have dubbed the conflict of Kosovo that went on 1996-2000, as the “the first war on the Internet.”⁶² According to John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, authors of *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime and Militancy*, both the governments and the opposition utilized the Internet in unprecedented ways for the purpose of organizing and spreading information (as well as disinformation):

“Hackers used it to voice their objections to both Yugoslav and NATO aggression by disrupting service on government computers and taking over their web sites. Individuals used it to tell their stories of fear and horror inside the conflict zone, while activists exploited it to amplify their voices and reach a wide, international audience. And people everywhere used it to discuss the issues and share text, images, and video clips that were not available through other media.”⁶³

The fact that NATO forces understood the importance of this media is exemplified by the fact that “while NATO targeted Serb media outlets carrying Milosevic’s propaganda, it intentionally did not bomb Internet service providers or shut down the satellite links bringing the Internet to Yugoslavia.” Moreover, the official stance of the U.S. government was that access to the Internet will directly benefit the Serbian people by providing them with the real story regarding Milosevic’s government.⁶⁴ Because of this,

⁶¹ Buhl, Dieter, *Window to the West: How Television From the Federal Republic Influenced Events in East Germany*, (Boston: Harvard University, Boston, MA, Gladys, 2007). Quoted in Gladys Ganley, *The Exploding Political Power..*

⁶² Arquilla and Rondfeldt, *Networks and Netwars*, 239.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 239-240.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 240.

Serbians had access to Western views regarding the conflict, and also voiced their opinions regarding the ongoing events.

Another example of how ICTs had an impact on the conflict in Kosovo is via Radio B-92. Throughout most of the conflict, the media was controlled by the state and only reported Serbia's version of the news. Radio B-92, however, tried to present an alternative view of the ongoing events. Because of this, Slobodan Milosevic repeatedly tried to shut down this insubordinate station. "On April 2, 1999, Serbian authorities—escorted by police—sealed up the doors to B-92's studio. As the station went off the air, its last words were: 'We will never surrender.'"⁶⁵ The Serbian government then replaced the original staff with employees who were loyal to the Milosevic regime and began to broadcast the 'official' version of the news.

At the same time, however, the original staff of B-92 decided to turn to the Internet. With help from a group in the Netherlands, they were able to set up a mirror site called *Help B92* which was hosted outside the country and could not be shut down by Milosevic. On www.helpb92.xs4all.nl they posted emails from Yugoslavian citizens describing the events that were taking place.⁶⁶ According to James Collings, author of *Words of Fire: Independent Journalists Who Challenge Dictators, Druglords and Other Enemies of a Free Press*:

“During the crucial period in 1999 when the Serbian government attempted to silence any independent voice, the existence of the Internet was the single factor that allowed certain oppositional groups in the former Yugoslavia to maintain

⁶⁵ Collings, Anthony, *Words of Fire: Independent Journalists Who Challenge Dictators, Druglords, and Other Enemies of a Free Press*, (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 170-3.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 173

[contact] with the outside world. It was an important test of the power of the Internet in the struggle over information control.”⁶⁷

As a result, opposition’s desire to ensure that an alternative voice was heard, combined with capabilities of the Internet, presented a real challenge to Milosevic and his regime’s attempts to cover up the truth.

In addition to founding B-92, Veran Matic⁶⁸ also established ANEM, a network of independent radio and television stations in Serbia, which were crucial in providing the public with a view that was different from the government. According to Michael McFaul, Director of the Center of Democracy Development, and Rule of Law (CDDRL) at Stanford University these radio stations were also vital in providing:

“Critical coverage of Milosevic’s wars, his economic policies, and his government’s violent arrests and abuses of young Otpor protestors helped to undermine his support among the population. Immediately after the 2000 election, independent media [also] played a direct and central role in broadcasting the news of a falsified vote, which in turn helped to bring people into the streets. At the time, Milosevic had taken B-92 off the air, so the ANEM network, along with Radio Index in Beograd, proved especially pivotal during this crisis. Without these media, popular mobilization would have been much more difficult to achieve.”⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Collings, Anthony, *Words of Fire*, 173

⁶⁸ There are some individuals who emphasize Matic’s connection with various U.S. democracy-promotion organizations, including NDI, and George Soros’ Open Society Institute. This connection, as well as Serbia’s opposition group Otpor, are credited with helping the West, and the U.S. in particular undermine Serbia’s government.

⁶⁹ Aslund, Anders and Michael McFaul, *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine’s Democratic Breakthrough*, (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 177.

Chapter 3
Georgia's 'Rose' Revolution⁷⁰

“I am not with the government and I am not with the opposition. I am with the people, and I will not take up arms against them.”⁷¹

Georgian Soldier
November 23, 2003

“One can confidently say that there would have been no revolution without the media.”⁷²

Ghia Nodia
Georgian Social Scientist

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Republic of Georgia became an independent country in March, 1991. Shortly after, Eduard Shevardnadze, the former Soviet Foreign Minister who was instrumental in managing the peaceful dissolution of the USSR, came back to his Georgian homeland in order to help restore order and stability in a country that was in political and economic freefall. Although Shevardnadze initially had contributed to Georgia's development in a number of positive ways,⁷³ by the late 1990s these few positive impacts were being overshadowed by the many negative ones. “Under his leadership, Georgia had degenerated into what many viewed as a failed state, plagued by rampant corruption, unable to provide basic services and incapable of controlling its borders. The separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia had been

⁷⁰ According to Jonathan Wheatley, the ‘Rose Revolution’ was named “in honor of the flower that opposition supporters handed to police during the weeks of protests.” (Wheatley: 2005) Furthermore, when “Shevardnadze tried to seat the newly elected parliament [on November 22, 2003], Saakashvili and his backers entered the legislature bearing roses and demanded that Shevardnadze step down.

⁷¹ Arnold, Chloe, “Georgia's President Quits in Bloodless Revolution,” *The Independent*, November 24, 2003.

⁷² Nodia, Ghia. Quoted in David Anable, “The Role of Georgia's Media,” 12.

⁷³ See Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy*, 24-42, for more information on the Shevardnadze presidency.

factually independent since 1993. Adjara, an ethnically Georgian region on the Black Sea coast, was ruled by a defiant local boss, Aslan Abashidze, who refused to pay taxes to the national budget and skimmed millions from customs and contraband.”⁷⁴ As a result, by the time the 2003 presidential election came around, Shevardnadze’s legitimacy level with the Georgian people was nearly exhausted.

What Happened?

Following the November 2, 2003 election, which most individuals acknowledged as being rigged by Shevardnadze’s government, tens of thousands of Georgians gathered in the capital city of Tbilisi demanding Shevardnadze’s resignation. Although initially lacking direction, the protests nonetheless continued for more than three weeks, until Shevardnadze resigned his presidency on November 24, 2003. The first major wave of protests occurred on November 14, after a Georgian TV station, Rustavi 2, spent the entire day broadcasting information about the protests and asking all Tbilisi residents to join the demonstrators.⁷⁵ As a result, 20,000-25,000 Georgians flowed into the streets demanding that Shevardnadze step down. “As the day went by, [however] it became clear that Saakashvili, Burjanadze⁷⁶, and Zhvania⁷⁷ were stuck. They had brought these people into the streets, but they did not have a clear agreement on a goal they wanted to

⁷⁴ “Georgia’s ‘Rose Revolution’,” *GlobalSecurity.org*, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/ops/rose.htm> Accessed on 6/5/2009.

⁷⁵ Areshidze, Irakly, *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition*, Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2007), 165.

⁷⁶ Nino Burjanadze was the Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia until 2008, and also Georgia’s Acting President between the time when Shevardnadze resigned and Saakashvili was elected in 2004.

⁷⁷ Zurab Zhvania was one of the members of the opposition during the Rose Revolution and later became Georgia’s Prime minister under Saakashvili.

achieve with them, nor did they have a plan for what to do with the masses once the speeches ended.”⁷⁸

Due to lack of organization in the opposition’s initiatives, some individuals started to question their ability to actually win this fight. On November 17, however, Saakashvili received the support that he needed, which eventually led to his victory.

“Out of nowhere, Tbilisi woke up to several thousand people from Adjara arriving on buses and trains and taking over the area in front of the Parliament on Rustaveli Avenue. The Adjarian protesters blockaded Rustaveli with buses on both sides of the square where they started the demonstration, and started a sit-in that clearly was going to go on into the night and the next day. The protests were being organized by the leadership of the [pro-Shevardnadze] Revival Party, who spent much of the day addressing the crowds about the need to protect the Constitution and stability, while the crowd cheered them on and waved Revival flags.”⁷⁹

The majority of Tbilisi residents were furious with the havoc this group of Adjarians was creating in their city in support of the Shevardnadze government. As a result, although the supposed origin⁸⁰ of this event came from Shevardnadze or from his supporters, the impact that it led to was detrimental to his government.

The third and final wave of protests began on November 22, as Shevardnadze was addressing Georgia’s parliament. “A group of young Georgian politicians and activists led by former justice minister Mikhail Saakashvili stormed into the first session of the newly—and fraudulently—elected Georgian parliament. Holding aloft a single red rose—the symbol of thousands who had taken to the streets in the days before—

⁷⁸ Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy*, 165.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁸⁰ According to Areshidze “it was clear from the start that almost all of the [Adjari] protesters were either being paid or were forced to come to Tbilisi by Adjarian police and security service.” That being said, it still hasn’t been determined who was behind organizing these pro-government protests. (see Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy*, 167 for more details)

Saakashvili marched forward, shouting “Resign!”⁸¹ Fearing for his life, Shevardnadze’s bodyguards rushed him out of the room, at which time “Saakashvili [assumed] Shevardnadze’s position at the podium and [drank] what remained of Shevardnadze’s tea.”⁸² This symbolic moment was broadcasted by television stations throughout Georgia as well as the rest of the world.

That same day, Moscow dispatched Russia Foreign Minister, Sergei Ivanov, to Georgia in order to prevent this conflict from escalating any further. According to most sources, Ivanov convinced Shevardnadze to step down sometime during the summer of 2004.⁸³ However, immediately after Ivanov left on November 23, 2003, Shevardnadze declared his resignation. During his last speech as President of Georgia, Shevardnadze said, “I see that all this cannot simply go on. If I was forced tomorrow to use my authority it would lead to a lot of bloodshed. I have never betrayed my country and so it is better that the president resigns.”⁸⁴ In response to this, Mikhail Saakashvili, a 35-year-old leader of Georgia’s National Movement, said “the president has accomplished a courageous act...By his resignation, he avoided spilling blood in the country...History will judge him kindly.”⁸⁵

⁸¹ Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy*, 1.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 67.

⁸³ For more details on this meeting see Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy*.

⁸⁴ MacKinnon, Mark, “New Era Dawns in Georgia as ‘Silver Fox’ Swept Aside: Dancing, Kissing in Tbilisi Streets as Shevardnadze Resigns as Leader,” *The Globe and Mail*, November 24, 2003.

⁸⁵ MacKinnon, *New Era*.

Although this was the official version of the conclusion to Shevardnadze's presidency, the decision was really made for Shevardnadze on November 22, when the opposition stormed the parliament building during one of his speeches.

“In the hours that followed, Mr. Shevardnadze proclaimed a state of emergency and handed new powers to the Defense Ministry. He warned that he might use force to restore order if the opposition didn't leave parliament, but it was already clear the police and the army would no longer obey him...In the hours before his resignation, one army unit after another proclaimed its loyalty to the opposition, and said it would ignore orders to fire on demonstrators.”⁸⁶

This is particularly doubtful considering Shevardnadze's threats earlier in the day, and the rumors that circulated regarding the government's intention to use tanks in order to stop the protests. The reality is that the military and the security forces no longer took orders from Shevardnadze, and many of them abandoned their guns in protest, or decided to join the demonstrators.⁸⁷ In the words of a soldier present at the protests, “Nobody can go against their own people. We serve the Georgian people. We are the Georgian people.”⁸⁸

Why it Happened?

Similar to many previous revolutions and those that have happened in the former USSR since 2003, corruption was one of the main reasons driving the Georgian citizens to protest. In the words of a Georgian consultant working for a Western donor organization, “only two things are sustainable here in Georgia—corruption and

⁸⁶ MacKinnon, *New Era*.

⁸⁷ Strauss, Julius, “Uprising Topples a Soviet Survivor: Shevardnadze Steps Aside as Crowds March on his Palace,” *The Daily Telegraph*, November 24, 2003.

⁸⁸ MacKinnon, *New Era*.

Shevardnadze.”⁸⁹ In addition to this, the Georgian people also felt that Shevardnadze had abandoned them and that he did not care about their welfare. According to one of the protesters, “He left us out in the cold to freeze and starve. Now he is gone.” Another protester said “We fought and died for this country and look at us now. We can barely afford a set of clothes to stand up in.”⁹⁰

Another reason why the ‘Rose Revolution’ was able to take place was because of Shevardnadze’s government underestimating the opposition movement. According to Peter Mamradze, Eduard Shevardnadze’s chief-of-staff, the president did not have an understanding of what was really going on in Georgia.

“Any time a person is cut from reality it is always the end of their career. President Shevardnadze taught us this himself. He declared a state of emergency when it was clear that the troops would not move against the people. People around him never informed him in the right way. It was difficult being in the minority and his chief-of-staff. Sometimes he would get angry if you informed him that something was not going to plan.”⁹¹

The final push towards the ‘Rose Revolution,’ however, took place on November 2, 2003 after Georgia’s presidential election. According to Irakly Areshidze, co-founder of the Georgian think tank, Partnership for Social Initiatives, and author of *Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition*, “As Election Day ended, no one but the most irresponsible members of the Shevardnadze administration even tried to claim that the vote was fully democratic. As U.S. Ambassador to Georgia Richard Miles told

⁸⁹ Wheatley, Jonathan, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union*, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005), 171.

⁹⁰ Strauss, Julius, “‘He Left us to Starve. Now He’s Gone’ Julius Strauss in Tbilisi Watches the Unfolding Emotions of a Nation During the Chain of Events that Finally Led to the End of Eduard Shevardnadze’s Reign,” *The Daily Telegraph*, November 24, 2003.

⁹¹ Mamradze, Peter, quoted in Nick Paton Walsh and Natalia Antelava, “Jubilation at Georgia’s Velvet Revolution: Scenes, Troops, and Protesters Mingle Outside Parliament,” *The Guardian* November 24, 2003.

one of the Western papers a few days later, the vote was a “mess from start to finish.”⁹² Voting was completely manipulated in approximately 25 percent of Georgia, including the Black Sea region of Adjara, Kvemo Kartli region, and Javakheti, where election results were manipulated, and turnout numbers were completely manufactured.⁹³ In addition to this, all of Georgia’s police forces “were put on special alert for Election Day, giving them an opportunity to vote not only in their home constituencies, but at their place of deployment. This resulted in policemen often voting more than once.”⁹⁴

Another important factor behind Georgia’s ‘Rose Revolution’ was the involvement of local and international NGOs, in support of a wide range of causes, most of which opposed Shevardnadze and his administration. According to Areshidze, the NGO community began to mobilize in anticipation of electoral fraud as early as September 2002. A Democracy Coalition was created, which was comprised of six different organizations including the Liberty Institute; Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association; Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy, and Development; Center for Social Research; Former Political Prisoners for Human Rights; and Partnership for Social Initiatives.⁹⁵ With funding that primarily came from George Soros’s⁹⁶ Open Society

⁹² Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy*, 149.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁹⁶ According to Irakly Areshidze, “George Soros had invested millions in Georgia over the years, allegedly promoting democracy and civil society, though his funds were largely supporting a small group of partisan NGOs that constantly attacked the business community, the Georgian Orthodox Church, and the country’s history and traditions.” In addition to this, the Georgian opposition leaders, including Gamkrelidze, Saakashvili, and Zhvania, actually travelled to Serbia in early 2003 at National Democratic Institute’s (NDI) expense in order to find out from Serbian politicians how they overthrew Milosevic. (Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy*, 97-100)

Foundation and USAID, a number of different organizations, including the major ones listed above were able to emerge in opposition to Shevardnadze's government.⁹⁷

According to Levan Ramishvili, member of the Liberty Institute, "the success in Georgia is a result of the people's commitment to democracy, but without foreign assistance I'm not sure we would have been able to achieve what we did without bloodshed."⁹⁸

Among the various NGOs that were active in Georgia, one of the most important was the Kmara youth group, which was founded in 2003 by the Liberty Institute. Initially the group consisted of a small number of students at Tbilisi State University, but it gradually became larger as the opposition movement gained momentum. From the outset, Kmara was modeled after the Serbian Otpor Movement⁹⁹, to the extent that the Liberty Institute even brought former members of Otpor to Georgia in order to train Kmara leaders on anti-government activities.¹⁰⁰ Among others, these activities included buying anti-Shevardnadze advertisements on Rustavi 2 television station, which promoted revolutionary ideals.¹⁰¹

It is difficult to measure the full impact that Kmara had, since it never really developed into a movement with a large membership, and mostly consisted of members in Tbilisi, as well as a number of regional locations. That being said, the Kmara movement "helped create an aura that the society was revolting against an authoritarian

⁹⁷ Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy*, 97.

⁹⁸ Ramishvili, Levan, quoted in "Georgia's 'Rose Revolution'."

⁹⁹ Kmara was created to function very similarly to Serbia's Otpor movement. It's mission from the beginning was "to undermine the government and its control over the country." (Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy*, 98-9)

¹⁰⁰ Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy*, 98-99.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 107.

government that was limiting civil space and liberties in the country, even though this really was not the case. In particular, Kmara constantly plastered the city with posters derogating Shevardnadze and his allies, or simply posters saying “Kmara,” Georgian for ‘enough.’”¹⁰²

ICT in Georgia

Despite Shevardnadze’s many failures, he did allow for development and growth of independent media in Georgia. This, however, proved to be detrimental to him in the end, since independent media was a key factor in fueling the ‘Rose Revolution.’ This was particularly the case in the period immediately before the election, as well as throughout the protests. Furthermore, according to Irakly Areshidze, “it was the existence of three dominant private television channels [Rustavi 2, Imedi, and Mze] (one of which openly supported the revolution while the other two were more neutral, but nonetheless anti-Shevardnadze in their coverage) that made November’s events possible, by allowing Saakashvili and others to speak directly to the people and mobilize the crowds against the Shevardnadze government.”¹⁰³

According to Michael McFaul, the independent television channel Rustavi 2 had the most negative impact on Shevardnadze. “Two programs on Rustavi 2—*60 Minutes* (a show exposing corruption modeled after the CBS program in the United States) and *Dardubala*, a satirical animated cartoon—were the most popular and the most damaging.”¹⁰⁴ In addition to this, Rustavi 2 also played a key role immediately following

¹⁰² Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy*, 99.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 249.

¹⁰⁴ Aslund and McFaul, *Revolution in Orange*, 177.

the election by broadcasting their exit poll data¹⁰⁵, which was significantly different from the official results released by Georgia's government.¹⁰⁶

In *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution*, Jonathan Wheatley writes that “it is quite clear that if Rustavi-2 had not existed, the ‘Rose Revolution’ would never have happened. By giving airtime to members of opposition parties, this channel—the most popular TV channel in Tbilisi—acquainted the population directly with their message.”¹⁰⁷ This was particularly useful after the opposition “set up a stage and a giant-screen television in front of Parliament to broadcast Rustavi 2 to the crowd.”¹⁰⁸ In addition to this, Rustavi-2 also “announced when and where opposition demonstration would take place, showed a series of highly effective anti-government advertisements by Kmara and twice aired Steve York’s award-winning film “Bringing Down a Dictator” on OTPOR’s role in the overthrow of Milosevic.”¹⁰⁹

Because of very limited availability, the Internet did not play a very important role during the ‘Rose Revolution.’ According to *The 2004 CIA World Factbook*, (see Figure 1) Georgia only had 73,500 internet users in 2002, which is less than 2 percent of the country, when taking into account Georgia’s population of 4.7 million. The same can be said for mobile telephones, which were only available to approximately 10 percent of Georgians in 2003.

¹⁰⁵ According to Lincoln Mitchell “the parallel vote tabulation and exit poll [that confirmed] that the 2003 election had been stolen were funded almost entirely by OSI or the U.S. government and supported by American and European expertise.” (Mitchell, *Uncertain Democracy*)

¹⁰⁶ Aslund and McFaul, *Revolution in Orange*, 177.

¹⁰⁷ Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening*, 186-187.

¹⁰⁸ MacKinnon, Mark, *The New Cold War: Revolutions, Rigged Elections, and Pipeline Politics in the Former Soviet Union*, (New York: Carroll & Graff Publishers, 2007), 122.

¹⁰⁹ Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening*, 187.

Did it Matter?

On November 22, 2003, Eduard Shevardnadze made a declaration that he was introducing a state of emergency in Georgia and that all opposition members would be met by force if necessary. The following day, however, Shevardnadze made an announcement that he was resigning his position as president effective immediately, and that he was going 'home'. At this moment, the 'Rose Revolution,' everything that it stood for, and everyone that supported it, became victorious. Thousands of Georgians left their homes to join the protesters "on the streets of the capital city Tbilisi, where they danced, sang and cheered."¹¹⁰ A young couple who brought their 25-day-old baby girl, Ana, with them to the protests, summarized the sentiment of the moment best. "We wanted her to be here," they said. "Now, thank God, she will not have to lead the miserable life we have led."¹¹¹

Following Shevardnadze's resignation, Nina Burdzhanadze, the speaker of Georgia's parliament was declared acting president, with new elections scheduled to be held within 45 days.¹¹² Shortly after, Mikhail Saakashvili, "became Europe's youngest president with a staggering 96 percent of the popular vote."¹¹³ During his first year as president, Saakashvili was able to get rid of the corrupt leader of the Adjara region, and re-claimed the city of Batumi.¹¹⁴ He also tripled the country's budget by raising taxes

¹¹⁰ Strauss, "He Left Us to Starve."

¹¹¹ Arnold, "Georgia's President Quits."

¹¹² Strauss, "He Left Us to Starve."

¹¹³ Beeston, Richard, "A Bright Hope for Georgia," *The Times (London)*, January 14, 2005.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

and recovering stolen funds, and he prosecuted a number of high-ranking officials for taking bribes.¹¹⁵ However, more than five years later, much still needs to be done.

Instead of turning to a path of freedom and democracy, Georgia has taken a number of steps in the opposite direction since Saakashvili became president.

Immediately after winning the presidential election,

“Saakashvili realized that given the weakness of the Georgian state, keeping the power he had gained was much more difficult than bringing down Shevardnadze... Thus, the new leader’s first task was to consolidate his grasp of the state, while strengthening its control over various political and economic elements of society (other branches of government, the business community, the Orthodox Church, the media, etc.)”¹¹⁶

As a result, in February 2004, Saakashvili initiated a number of constitutional and political changes that led to the more autocratic regime that we see in Georgia today.¹¹⁷

It is difficult to measure how much success the ‘Rose Revolution’ had in Georgia. Democracy, the way it is understood in the West, still has not taken root, and in many ways the country has actually taken a number of steps backwards since 2003. The conflict with Russia has intensified, and many of Saakashvili’s promises to the Georgian people have yet to materialize. Despite this, Georgia’s ‘Rose Revolution’ is an inspiration to individuals who hope to bring change in their countries, and a warning to many leaders who abuse their powers.

¹¹⁵ “Georgia’s Example Inspires Democratic Change in Other Countries—Saakashvili,” *Rustavi 2 TV, Tbilisi*, November 24, 2004.

¹¹⁶ Areshidze, *Democracy and Autocracy*, 191.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 197.

Chapter 4 Ukraine's 'Orange Revolution'¹¹⁸

“The authorities will never allow an aggressive minority to dictate political logic. We all know that revolutions are planned by dreamers and carried out by fanatics. And it is scoundrels who reap the benefits. There will be no revolutions.”

*Ukraine's President Leonid Kuchma
Before the 'Orange Revolution'*¹¹⁹

What Happened?

After failing to establish a winner during presidential elections held the previous month, on November 21, 2004, Ukrainians across the country participated in the second round voting in an attempt to elect the country's president. On that day, “it became clear that President Leonid Kuchma's incumbent regime had crudely rigged the elections to the advantage of its candidate, Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich.”¹²⁰ Approximately 85,000 polling officials ensured that nearly 3 million ‘extra’ votes were cast for Yanukovich, which resulted in more than two weeks of protests by the opposition.

According to Anders Aslund, senior fellow at the Institute for International Economics, and adjunct professor at Georgetown University, Ukrainians from around the country were called to gather at ‘Maidan Square’ in the center of Kiev, in order to protest the rigged election results. Although much of the media in Ukraine was controlled by the

¹¹⁸ According to Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul, “the name of the ‘Orange Revolution’ comes from the campaign color chosen by the Yushchenko campaign in the summer of 2004. Orange did not have any prior ideological connotation. The alternative would have been the traditional Ukrainian blue and yellow colors, but the greatest threat to Yushchenko's candidacy was to be labeled a radical Western Ukrainian nationalist, when the crucial swing electorate lived in central Ukraine. So the neutral orange was chosen.” (Aslund and McFaul, *Revolution in Orange*, 3-5)

¹¹⁹ Kuchma, Leonid. *RFE/RL Newswire*, November 28, 2009. http://svoboda-news.com/ukrweekly/old/archive/2004/480406.shtml?zoom_highlight=odesa Accessed on 6/2/2009

¹²⁰ Aslund and McFaul, *Revolution in Orange*, 1.

government, TV Channel 5, which was owned by Petro Poroshenko, made sure that their viewers were aware of what was going on.¹²¹ “Others stayed connected via the Internet, notably the Web newspaper *Ukrainska Pravda* (Ukraine’s Truth), and also kept in touch on mobile phones. In the freezing morning hours of November 22, thousands gathered at Maidan. Their numbers grew and grew until they finally reached roughly one million.”¹²² The protesters made it clear that they were against the state-picked Victor Yanukovich, and instead supported the pro-democratic, transparent candidate represented by Victor Yushenko. Because of this, Ukrainian officials were forced to have another round of balloting, during which Yushenko rightly won the Ukrainian presidency.¹²³

One of the most significant actors during the Orange Revolution was the opposition youth movement, Pora, Ukrainian for ‘It’s Time’. The group consisted of two separate factions, the ‘yellow’ and the ‘black’ Pora, although it has not been established which started first. According to Nadia Diuk, Black Pora borrowed many of their techniques from the Serbian youth group Otpor, which practiced civil disobedience against the Milosevic regime.¹²⁴ In addition to this, the group also learned from Georgia’s Kmara movement, which helped overthrow Shevardnadze in 2003. “The

¹²¹ Throughout the ‘Orange’ Revolution, Ukraine’s Channel 5, was the only channel that provided viewers with an independent view of the events. In addition to a small number of radio stations, the Internet and SMS texts, Chanel 5 allowed Ukrainians who did not have access to the abovementioned technologies to get the real news concerning the events that were taking place and not the censored government take on the situation.

¹²² Aslund and McFaul, *Revolution in Orange*, 1.

¹²³ Goldstein, Joshua, “The Role of Digital Networked Technologies in the Ukrainian Orange Revolution,” *Internet & Democracy Case Study Series*, Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University, (December 2007), 3.

¹²⁴ Diuk, Nadia, “The Triumph of Civil Society” in Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul’s *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine’s Democratic Breakthrough*, (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 77.

leadership of Yellow Pora came out of the Freedom of Choice¹²⁵ coalition and tended to see the role of its group as an organizer of youth and trainer of activists to ensure the integrity of the electoral process.”¹²⁶ Although these differences between the two groups are fairly significant, they did not come to the front during the Orange Revolution as both groups protested side by side. In “Pora—‘It’s Time’ For Democracy in Ukraine”, Pavol Demes and Joerg Forbrig writes:

“The central elements of voter information and social mobilization [before and during the Orange Revolution] were Pora’s responsibility. The basic idea behind Pora’s campaign was that the absence of independent media was far-reaching and greatly assisted the incumbent regime in manipulating the public in the electoral process. Alternative mass media and sources of information were needed to guarantee free and fair elections and to give the Ukrainian public more accurate information about the electoral process, the contenders running for the presidency, the rights of citizens, the importance of voting, and possible state manipulation of the election. Alternative sources of information would be instrumental in mobilizing public protest against election fraud.”¹²⁷

According to Joshua Goldstein, writing for The Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University:

“By September 2004, Pora had created a series of stable political networks throughout the country, including 150 mobile groups responsible for spreading information and coordinating election monitoring, with 72 regional centers and over 30,000 registered participants. Mobile phones played an important role for this mobile fleet of activists. Pora’s post-election report states, ‘a system of immediate dissemination of information by SMS was put in place and proved to be important.’”¹²⁸

¹²⁵ According to Nadia Diuk, the Freedom of Choice coalition came to being after the 2002 parliamentary elections in Ukraine, with a goal of curbing corruption in government.

¹²⁶ Diuk, “The Triumph of Civil Society,” 77.

¹²⁷ Demes, Pavol and Joerg Forbrig. “Pora—‘It’s Time’ For Democracy in Ukraine” in Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul’s *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine’s Democratic Breakthrough*, (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 87-88.

¹²⁸ Goldstein, “The Role of Digital Networked Technologies,” 8.

Furthermore, Pora's leaders established a website at www.pora.org.ua that provided members with a single source of information, communication, and an ability to better coordinate their activities.¹²⁹

Why It Happened?

Although most individuals point to government corruption and rigged presidential elections, as the underlying factors that set off the 'Orange Revolution', in some ways the origins of the Orange Revolution lie even deeper than that:

“In 2000, tired of unemployment and censorship, Heorhiy Gongadze, an independent journalist, launched the online newspaper *Ukrainska Pravda* and began sharply criticizing the government. Gongadze was last seen alive on September 16, 2000. His partially decayed and decapitated body was found two months later in a shallow grave seventy-five miles from Kiev... On November 28, 2000, Oleksandr Moroz, the leader of the Socialist Party, delivered a speech in the Ukrainian parliament in which he accused President Kuchma of being involved in Gongadze's disappearance. Moroz presented audiotapes as evidence, they had been recorded in the presidential office by one of Kuchma's former bodyguards. The tapes made clear that Kuchma was irritated with Gongadze and asked his middlemen to get rid of him.”¹³⁰

This was a key moment in the development of a revolutionary state of mind for many Ukrainians. The clear murder request by President Kuchma caused many individuals to rise up and start the “Ukraine without Kuchma” movement. Moreover, many Ukrainians were fed up with the lack of independent media in their country despite more than 50 official television and 400 radio broadcast stations that were present in Ukraine even before 2000 (see Figure 2).

¹²⁹ Demes and Forbrig, “Pora—‘It’s Time’,” 90.

¹³⁰ Prytula, Olena, “The Ukrainian Media Rebellion” in Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul’s *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine’s Democratic Breakthrough*, (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 105.

Furthermore, it is commonly agreed that the U.S. was involved in Ukraine's 2004 presidential elections. However, no consensus has been reached in regard to the degree of involvement by the U.S. According to Oleksandr Sushko and Olena Prystayko, "in 2004, several famous U.S. political and social leaders (Madeleine Albright, Zbigniew Brzezinski, George H.W. Bush, Richard Holbrooke, George Soros, Wesley Clark, Richard Armitage, and others) visited Ukraine with only one mission: to prevent Kuchma and his entourage from adopting an authoritarian, illegitimate solution to the probable political crisis." Furthermore, the U.S. government was also not hesitant to use a more direct and stern tone with addressing Ukrainian leadership. In a letter to President Kuchma, George W. Bush wrote that "a tarnished election will lead us to review our relation with Ukraine."¹³¹

In addition to the abovementioned diplomatic approaches, however, there are many individuals who claim that the United States was also involved in more subversive activities. Even Victor Yanukovich's wife, Lyudmilla, made claims indicating that the Orange revolution was being fueled by the CIA.¹³² In an article written by Mustafa Nayem for *Ukrainska Pravda*, he provides very detailed information regarding involvement of American political technologists Philip Griffin and Paul Manafort in Ukraine's 2006 parliamentary elections. According to Nayem, "Mr. Manafort and his partners gained popularity after their active participation in political campaigns in Third World countries in the first half of 1980s. The companies and the specialists that now

¹³¹ Sushko, Oleksandr and Olena Prystayko, "Western Influence," in Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul's *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 133.

¹³² Kuzio, Taras, "Everyday Ukrainians and the Orange Revolution," in Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul's *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough*, (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), 59.

work with Victor Yanukovych previously consulted the governments of Kenya, Somali, Angola (UNITA movement headed by Jonas Savimbi), Nigeria and Congo.”¹³³

Furthermore, Mustafa Nayem tells us that “Paul Manafort started his career in the team of America’s 38th President, the Republican Gerald Ford, [and that] after 1974, Mr. Manafort’s name could be found among the staff of almost all forthcoming Republican presidents, including Ronald Reagan (1980, 1984) and George Bush Sr. (1988).”¹³⁴

Although Manafort and Griffin’s connection to the 2004 election has not been established, the strategies that were implemented under their direction in 2006 are very close to those implemented in 2004. Particularly interesting is the use of ‘VIP-activists,’ a small number of individuals that functioned as the backbone of both campaigns.¹³⁵

“Once a week each VIP-spokesperson received a list of speaking points which they were obliged to deliver in their appearances. These directives were distributed on ordinary A4 sheets of paper, without a date or an author’s name. They were simple three to five propositions that had been developed by senior party leadership in close cooperation with the Americans. These propositions, or ‘messages’ as they were called [using the English term], were issued on a definite and very carefully determined schedule, and during these intervals it was necessary to ‘toss them to the masses.’”¹³⁶

ICT in Ukraine

When compared with previous ‘color revolutions’ Ukraine’s opposition movement did not have access to the same types of ICTs as movements in Yugoslavia,

¹³³ Nayem, Mustafa, “American Technologists At the Service of Yanukovych,” *Ukrayinska Pravda*, May 23, 2007. <http://www.pravda.com.ua/en/news/2007/5/23/7839.htm> Accessed on April 10, 2009.

¹³⁴ Nayem, “American Technologists.”

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

Georgia and other places. “There was nothing akin to B-92, the ANEM network, or Rustavi 2 in Ukraine.”¹³⁷ The Ukrainian protesters did have one advantage over the rest of the movements, however—more widespread availability of the Internet and cellular telephone technology. According to *The 2005 CIA World Factbook* (see Figure 2), 3.8 million Ukrainians were using the Internet in 2004. Although that only amounts to 8 percent of the country’s entire population of 47.4 million, many scholars agree that the Internet and cellular telephones played a central role during Ukraine’s revolution.

According to Michael McFaul, Director of the Center of Democracy Development, and Rule of Law (CDDRL) at Stanford University, “the Orange Revolution may have been the first in history to be organized largely online.”¹³⁸ During the organizational stage and throughout the actual protests, individuals and organizations utilized a number of key technologies that were not previously used for such purposes. SMS text messaging, online discussion boards, as well as other forms of online media provided a forum for activists to “share best practices and make detailed reports of election fraud.”¹³⁹

According to *Ukrainska Pravda* editor Olena Prytula, the Internet was central in organizing demonstrations during the Orange Revolution:

“With strict censorship of television, the Internet was the only medium through which one could find answers to basic questions: What is the date and location of the next meeting? What are the plans of the opposition? What is happening in the street? Sometimes events unfolded so rapidly that only Internet media provided people with up-to-date information.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ McFaul, Michael, *Revolution in Orange*, 178.

¹³⁸ McFaul, Michael, “Transitions from Postcommunism,” *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 16, Number 4 (July 2005): 5-19.

¹³⁹ Goldstein, “The Role of Digital Networked Technologies,” 3.

¹⁴⁰ Prytula, “The Ukrainian Media Rebellion,” 108.

Furthermore, contrary to the government-supported candidate, Yanukovych, “Yushchenko and his allies made active use of the Internet. Yushchenko’s site was updated to the level of the best Ukrainian news sites. It was a reliable, stable source of fresh information. The Yushchenko bloc had a site at www.razom.org.ua, and Yushchenko had a personal site at www.yushchenko.com.ua.”¹⁴¹ According to Taras Kuzio, “The authorities had never appreciated the power of the Internet and had never been able to compete in Internet publications.”¹⁴² So while the authorities were fairly confident that the media they controlled was the main source of information for Ukrainians, the Internet provided individuals with an alternative source of information not controlled by the government. According to Prytula, Internet use during the Orange revolution was very similar to the *samizdat* phenomenon in the Soviet Union. “Internet sites became a platform for those journalists who could not publish their materials where they worked because of censorship. People printed online articles and took them to their relatives, friends, and even to the rural regions where their parents lived. These articles were republished in regional presses, penetrating to even the most remote corners of Ukraine, where the Internet is still a novelty.”¹⁴³

Although information regarding who actually owned Ukrainian television stations was considered private, it was something that was often discussed in Ukrainian society. As a result, it was common knowledge that all but one of the major television stations in Ukraine were either politically or financially connected to the Kuchma regime.¹⁴⁴ This

¹⁴¹ Prytula, “The Ukrainian Media Rebellion,” 109.

¹⁴² Kuzio, “Everyday Ukrainians,” 56.

¹⁴³ Prytula, “The Ukrainian Media Rebellion,” 108.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 111.

was particularly important because for the first time since Ukraine became a sovereign nation in 1991, an independent television station was reporting news that was not influenced by the central government. As a result, although the station had a limited range and was only available to approximately 30% of Ukraine's population,¹⁴⁵ its impact on exposing government corruption, and eventual promotion of social activism, was crucial during the Orange Revolution. The opposition movement was also able to take advantage of technological improvements in the actual television sets. According to Taras Kuzio "Large television screens were used on the Maidan to broadcast to large crowds what was being said by speakers on stage, as well as important news from Channel 5."¹⁴⁶

During one of Yanukovich's visits to the city of Ivano-Frankivsk, he was hit by an egg thrown at him by a Ukrainian student. After taking a look at the egg, Yanukovich fell over, and was later transferred to a hospital after claiming that he was hit by a brick. This would not have been a big deal, except that the event, recorded by various television stations and later broadcasted by Channel 5, clearly showed that Yanukovich was in fact hit with an egg. According to Taras Kuzio, this poor attempt to draw the publicity away from the poisoning of his opponent, Viktor Yushchenko, ended up backfiring on Yanukovich as Internet sites throughout the world began to mock him, and an increasing number of 'egg jokes' began to circulate around Ukraine.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Goldstein, "The Role of Digital Networked Technologies," 4.

¹⁴⁶ Kuzio, "Everyday Ukrainians," 56.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 58.

According to *The 2005 CIA World Factbook*, Ukraine had an estimated 4.2 million cellular phone users in 2002 (see Figure 2), a number that continued to grow at a staggering rate until it reached more than 55 million subscriptions in 2007.¹⁴⁸ Also, while the older generation mainly utilized their cellular telephones for voice communication, “young people were experts with cell phones, which were extensively used. Some cell phones also have video cameras, which were used by students to video unsuspecting professors illegally agitating for Yanukovych during class.”¹⁴⁹

Radio played the least influential role during the 2004 protests. “Long before the elections, the authorities did their best to block radio channels from providing independent views. They had considerable success.”¹⁵⁰ Early in 2004, the federal government banned *Radio Liberty (RL)* from being able to broadcast on FM frequencies. When *RL* began to broadcast from a different radio station, they were also shut down under licensing issues. Other media companies were accused of bogus crimes such as distribution of pornography, money laundering, and failure to ‘properly license’ their organizations. The end result of all of this is that by the end of 2004, there were no truly independent radio stations broadcasting in Ukraine. Most of them were either shut down, or were forced to move their programs to the Internet, where they were able to continue broadcasting to a very small number of listeners.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ CIA World Factbook, “Ukraine,” <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/up.html> and http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/CIA_World_Fact_Book,_2004/Ukraine Accessed on April 27, 2009.

¹⁴⁹ Kuzio, “Everyday Ukrainians,” 56.

¹⁵⁰ Prytula, “The Ukrainian Media Rebellion,” 113.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 114-116.

Did it Matter?

Even though from a technological standpoint Ukraine was far behind many developed nations, the small number of individuals that did have access to various Information Communication Technologies were able to utilize them in a way that helped create and maintain a revolutionary movement. Armed with technologies that allowed them to have easier access to information, Ukrainian citizens were not as easily manipulated, as before.¹⁵²

Nearly five years later, some of the accomplishments of the Orange Revolution are clear. “Ukraine has become a real democracy with free and lively media, and its foreign policy has become more western-oriented.”¹⁵³ In addition to this, the Orange Revolution, exposed government corruption, allowed the rightful candidate to be elected as President of Ukraine, and enabled ordinary Ukrainians to see that they are able to impact the development of their country and are not just powerless subjects of an authoritarian state. That being said, Ukraine still has a long way to go, which is evidenced by the current political and economic issues facing the country.

¹⁵² Wilson, Andrew, “‘Virtual Politics’ in the Ex-Soviet Bloc,” *OpenDemocracy*, July 7, 2007. http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/democracy_power/ukraine_orange/soviet_political_technology Accessed on 6/5/2009.

¹⁵³ Aslund, Anders. “Ukraine’s Orange Revolution Can Still Succeed,” *Financial Times*, September 26, 2005.

Chapter 5
The Tulip Revolution¹⁵⁴

“Lemon is our symbol. We have chosen the lemon color.
We are against a party of the orange.
We are against the export of revolutions from abroad.
We want to build our house on our own.
We want to live in a sovereign and independent state.”¹⁵⁵

*Leader of the KelKel
Youth Civil Movement
January 18, 2005*

“Revolutions do not occur until people learn that there is an
alternative to their way of life”¹⁵⁶

British Economist Barbara Ward

During his visit to the United States in spring of 1993, Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev had a meeting with President Bill Clinton, who pointed to Akaev as an example of a leader who supported democratic reforms and successful economic growth. Nearly twelve years later in spring of 2005, President Akaev dissolved his government and fled

¹⁵⁴ According to Kazbek and Nazik, two of the leaders of the KelKel Movement, the original names for the Kyrgyz revolutionary movement were the Yellow or Lemon Revolution. According to Nazik, “We decided on the Lemon revolution because yellow is a color of change like on a traffic light.” The name Tulip Revolution was given to the movement in order to match Georgia’s Rose Revolution, since the wild tulip is found in abundance in Kyrgyzstan. (From Jeremy Page, From West to East, Rolling Revolution Gathers Pace Across the Former USSR. *The Times (London)*, February 19, 2005.

¹⁵⁵ *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, “Kyrgyz Youth Movement Says no to “Export of Revolutions,” from *Kyrgyz Television, First Channel*, (January 18, 2005).

¹⁵⁶ British Economist Barbara Ward quoted in Walter Wriston, “*The Twilight of Sovereignty: How the Information Revolution is Transforming Our World*” <http://hdl.handle.net/10427/36205> Accessed on 6/19/2009

from Kyrgyzstan as protesters around the country celebrated the end of an oppressive, corrupt and economically devastating regime.¹⁵⁷

What Happened?

Contrary to the previous ‘color/flower’ revolutions, Kyrgyzstan’s ‘Tulip Revolution’ did not involve as much preparation by the opposition movement. The opposition leaders were not yet unified and there were no set goals established for the movement. To an extent, the quick outcome of the revolution even came as a surprise to many individuals in Kyrgyzstan and abroad, as most opposition groups were only beginning to organize for the ‘Tulip Revolution.’ According to Zamira Sydykova, editor of Kyrgyz publication *Res Publica* and opposition activist, when president Akaev fled the country on March 24, 2005, “The opposition only intended to start protest actions, so that the authorities would annul the elections. But they did not plan the storming of the government house.”¹⁵⁸ She then goes on to state one of the possible motives behind this action was that Akaev was attempting to spark a civil war in Kyrgyzstan. “Akaev had at first planned provocations and clashes among the participants of demonstrations, and then deserted his office and abandoned his nation in the hope that after him a civil war would break out.”¹⁵⁹

In a way, Akaev’s departure was very different from that of leaders in the previous revolutions. While most of the leaders fought off the opposition until they

¹⁵⁷ Kimmage, Daniel, “Kyrgyzstan’s Revolution: Causes and Consequences,” *Hearing Before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe*, 109th Congress, 1st Session, April 7, 2005, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2007), 10.

¹⁵⁸ Sydykova, Zamira, “Kyrgyzstan’s Revolution: Causes and Consequences,” *Hearing Before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe*, 109th Congress, 1st Session, April 7, 2005(Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2007), 4.

¹⁵⁹ Sydykova, “Kyrgyzstan’s Revolution,” 4.

realized that there was nothing else they could do, Akaev deserted his position and left the country as the opposition was only beginning to mobilize. In addition to this, unlike the previous protests, Kyrgyzstan's revolution did not start in the capital of the country. Protests against the government started in the south of Kyrgyzstan in the city of Osh, and later spread to Jalalabad, where the demonstrators "eventually seized government offices, creating a tense situation in which two 'governments' claimed authority over two separate regions of the country."¹⁶⁰ After the success that the opposition experienced in the south, the protesters spread to the capital city of Bishkek.

Another difference between revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine and the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, is that the latter mostly consisted of public disorder, including vandalism and looting. According to a *Newsweek* article by Frank Brown where he describes the events of March 24, 2005:

"Looters sacked first the Narodny chain of supermarkets owned by the Akayev clan and then scores of other stores. The poorly equipped police, frightened and leaderless, were nowhere to be seen as gangs of young men, many of them drunk, carried shopping bags full of beer and laundry detergent home. By daybreak, three people were dead, more than 100 injured and the city a shambles."¹⁶¹

On the other hand, that is not to say that there was no organized protesting in Kyrgyzstan. In January, 2005, the KelKel youth movement was founded in order to promote peaceful opposition against the Kyrgyz government and to support free and fair elections in Kyrgyzstan. KelKel, which means 'renaissance,' was modeled after the earlier youth movements such as Otpor, Kmara, and Pora.¹⁶² However, although the

¹⁶⁰ Aslund and McFaul, *Revolution in Orange*, 181.

¹⁶¹ Brown, Frank, Nadya Titova and Eve Conant, "Another People's Revolt," *Newsweek*, April 4, 2005.

¹⁶² Aslund and McFaul, *Revolution in Orange*, 181.

group was founded in January, their first official protest against Akaev's government did not take place until March 23, 2005, the day before president Akaev officially fled the country. Moreover, the abovementioned protests only involved about 1,000 people in Bishkek, and resulted in an immediate backlash from the government as security forces were dispatched to stop the protests. In the end, "more than 20 students and journalists were hospitalized and 200 people were arrested."¹⁶³

In addition to this, thousands of Kyrgyz expatriates around the world began to gather in front of Kyrgyz embassies in order to protest Akaev's regime. According to Erica Marat, research Fellow at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program, protesters gathered "in front of Kyrgyz embassies and consulates in Washington, DC, Chicago, New York, Brussels, London and Moscow," on March 21, 2005.¹⁶⁴ As a result, on March 25, 2005 the Kyrgyz parliament assembled in order to name Kurmanbek Bakiyev, the leader of the opposition, as interim Prime Minister and acting President of Kyrgyzstan. This transfer of power was recognized as legitimate by the Kyrgyz courts, and the new presidential elections were scheduled for June 26, 2005. On April 3, 2005, President Askar Akaev formally resigned as president of Kyrgyzstan.

Why it Happened?

Similarly to the 2003 revolution in Georgia and 2004 revolution in Ukraine, the 2005 revolution in Kyrgyzstan was triggered by flawed elections and general corruption in government. According to Daniel Kimmage, editor of the Central Asia Report and analyst for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, there was a general perception in

¹⁶³ Marat, Erica, *The Tulip Revolution: Kyrgyzstan One Year After*, (Washington: The Jamestown Foundation, 2006), 129.

¹⁶⁴ Marat, *The Tulip Revolution*, 128.

Kyrgyzstan that Akaev's family and the government were extremely corrupt and that the ruling elite did everything in their power to maintain economic inequality.¹⁶⁵ The 'Family' controlled many of the most profitable businesses in Kyrgyzstan as well as every branch of the government, including the judiciary.

Furthermore, according to Zamira Sadykova, "President Akaev lost his constitutional right to remain at his post as far back as in 2000. However, the octopus of corruption, which his whole family has been caught by, forced him in violation of the constitution to prolong his powers." She then goes on to say that "I personally feel that this phenomenon was the result of deep poverty into which the corrupted power of Akaev has plunged the major part of the population."¹⁶⁶ As a result, the revolution that followed after the 2005 elections did not come as a surprise to Kyrgyz people, and to most individuals following the events in Kyrgyzstan.

The final blow to the Kyrgyz people, however, came during the parliamentary elections in 2003, when President Akaev did everything in his power in order to ensure that his 32-year-old daughter Bermet Akaeva, 28-year-old son Aidar Akaev, "as well as two of his sisters-in-law, the son of his Prime Minister and the son-in-law of his chief of staff" won seats in the 75-seat parliament.¹⁶⁷ Roza Otunbaevva, one of the opposition leaders who happened to be running in the same constituency as Akaev's daughter, was

¹⁶⁵ Kimmage, "Kyrgyzstan's Revolution," 11.

¹⁶⁶ Sadykova, "Kyrgyzstan's Revolution," 3-5.

¹⁶⁷ Page, Jeremy, "From West to East, Rolling Revolution Gathers Pace Across the Former USSR," *The Times (London)*, February 19, 2005.

barred from running “because she had been living abroad for the past five years, first as Ambassador to Britain then as a UN representative in Georgia.”¹⁶⁸

However, although the rigged elections were the final push that launched the country into protest, the roots for dissatisfaction were much simpler. According to Yulia Savchenko, fellow at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, DC, and television anchor of “No Edits” a talk show on Kyrgyz Pyramid TV:

“Allegations of vote-rigging served as the catalyst for the Kyrgyz revolution, but it was pent-up frustration among the population over persistent poverty and pervasive government corruption that packed the revolution with its explosive power. Many supporters of the revolution are not necessarily interested in democracy; they are just preoccupied simply with providing for themselves and their families.”¹⁶⁹

According to U.S. Senator Sam Brownback, Chairman of the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, President Akaev “failed to meet the expectations of his people, who were extremely frustrated by years of official corruption and the prospect of more of the same.”¹⁷⁰

In *The Washington Times*, Ariel Cohen, author and senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation, writes:

“Kyrgyzstan was the quintessence of everything wrong with post-communist Central Asian regimes, though hardly the worst offender. The country is poor and corrupt, with one gold mine responsible for 40 percent of hard currency earnings. The elites are essentially Soviet, with a sprinkle of small traders and criminals.”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Page, “From West to East.”

¹⁶⁹ Savchenko, Yulia, “Kyrgyzstan’s Revolution: Causes and Consequences,” *Hearing Before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe*, 109th Congress, 1st Session, April 7, 2005, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2007), 13.

¹⁷⁰ *Hearing Before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe*, “Kyrgyzstan’s Revolution: Causes and Consequences,” 109th Congress, 1st Session, April 7, 2005 (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2007), 2.

¹⁷¹ Cohen, Ariel, “Kyrgyzstan’s Tulip Revolution,” *The Washington Times*, March 27, 2005.

Because of this, on March 24, 2005, for the first time in the history of Kyrgyzstan, people refused to idly stand by while another rigged transfer of power occurred in their government.

While some believe that the Tulip Revolution was deliberately instigated by foreign actors, similar to the previous color revolutions, quite a bit of evidence paints a different story. According to Zamira Sadykova, the Kyrgyz people saw the revolutions happening in Georgia and Ukraine and they wanted the same type of change to happen in their country.¹⁷² Furthermore, according to an interview with a KelKel leader in January, 2005:

“Lemon is our symbol. We have chosen the lemon color. We are against a party of the orange. We are against the export of revolutions from abroad. We want to build our house on our own. We want to live in a sovereign and independent state.”¹⁷³

As a result, while some foreign intervention, mainly in form of financial assistance, was certainly a factor during the Tulip Revolution, the people of Kyrgyzstan were the driving force in this revolution.

One of the ways in which the U.S. government was involved in Kyrgyzstan was through Freedom House, a pro-democracy organization that receives some of its funding from the U.S. government. In 2005, Freedom House “set up Kyrgyzstan’s only independent printing plant, publishing the opposition newspapers that fuelled popular discontent in the weeks prior to the Tulip Revolution.”¹⁷⁴ In his interview with Mike

¹⁷² Sadykova, “Kyrgyzstan’s Revolution,” 4.

¹⁷³ *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, “Kyrgyz Youth Movement.”

¹⁷⁴ Spencer, Richard, “Quiet American Behind Tulip Revolution Mike Stone,” *The Daily Telegraph (London)*, April 2, 2005.

Stone, the Kyrgyzstan project director for Freedom House, Mr. Stone describes some of the activities that he was involved in, including assisting media development and printing newspapers, like the opposition publication *MSN (My Capital News)*. According to Mr. Stone, none of these activities were directed at creating a revolution. Furthermore, “Brian Kemple, a lawyer who runs a project working with the Kyrgyz government reforming the legal system for USAID, said internal dissatisfaction with a corrupt regime was what motivated the protests.”¹⁷⁵ That being said, U.S. funded programs definitely enabled more Kyrgyzstanis to become aware of what was going on in their country, and provided them with new methods of being able to voice their dissatisfaction.

ICT in Kyrgyzstan

Although there were only 263,000 Internet users in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 (See Figure 3) the Internet played a significant role before and during the Tulip Revolution. The opposition movement had a number of websites, including www.gazeta.kg, www.kyrgyz.us, and www.msn.kg, which published articles by opposition leaders, supplied information regarding opposition activities, and provided a forum where opposition members could communicate with each other. Opposition groups also created sites like www.Akaevu.net (No to Akaev in Russian), which did not represent a specific political group, but instead served as a rallying point for anyone dissatisfied with President Akaev. In addition to this, email was used for communication purposes, which allowed the dissidents to get their message out much quicker.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Spencer, “Quiet American.”

¹⁷⁶ Wilkinson, Claire, “Kyrgyzstan: E-Revolution,” *EurasiaNet.org*, July 21, 2005, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp072105.shtml> Accessed on 6/26/2009.

It is clear that the Kyrgyz government also understood the Internet's potential. On more than one occasion, various groups connected with the authorities attempted to hinder opposition efforts on the Web. The first attempt occurred in January, and consisted of a 'black PR' e-mail campaign. "Messages aimed at discrediting the opposition [were] being sent from "spoofed," or falsified, e-mail addresses supposedly belonging to legitimate independent Internet domains such as Gazeta.kg and CentrAsia.ru."¹⁷⁷ According to Claire Wilkinson of Birmingham University in UK, "many of the messages launched personal attacks on opposition leaders, especially Otunbaeva and Kurmanbek Bakiev, who were variously portrayed as Western-funded agents, self-interested money-grabbers, printers of counterfeit money, and communist-era politicians intent on deceiving people for their own gain."¹⁷⁸

The second ICT attack by the government was much more direct, in that it actually involved attempts to limit the access to the Internet. Attacks were carried out "on major internet service providers such as Elcat and AsiInfo to block access, as well as flooding e-mail accounts with spam. The result of these 'denial of service' attacks was to make many sites, regardless of affiliation or ownership, inaccessible for a period of several weeks both inside the republic and abroad, further curtailing already limited coverage of events in Kyrgyzstan."¹⁷⁹ Among the websites that were impacted by this attack were www.gazeta.kg and www.kyrgyz.us, and www.msn.kg.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Wilkinson, "Kyrgyzstan: E-Revolution."

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ *Reporters without Borders for Press Freedom*, "Authorities Harass Independent Media Ahead of Legislative Elections," February 25, 2005. http://www.rsf.org/spip.php?page=impression&id_article=12671 Accessed on 6/26/2009.

The opposition group KelKel also had a website at www.KelKel.kg which was launched in February, 2005. However, shortly after launching the website, the government used this Internet domain to host a ‘clone’ website that promoted pro-government views. According to Wilkinson, this website contained messages such as: “We are for stability in the country and do not want young people to be used as ‘pioneers’ for an imported revolution or for personal interests. We think that young people should get on with their own business, and that they are more suited to studying and going on dates.” and “Down with demonstrations! Down with the revolution!”¹⁸¹

While only five percent of Kyrgyzstan’s population had access to the Internet, nearly everyone was able to listen to the radio. Radio Azzatyk, which was a Kyrgyz-language branch of *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* that was financed by the United States, was the only independent radio station in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. Among other activities, Radio Azzatyk aired summaries of opposition newspapers on its airwaves in order to reach a broader audience in a more cost-effective way.¹⁸² The government, however, was adamant in preventing Radio Azzatyk from broadcasting in Kyrgyzstan and attempted to shut it down on numerous occasions. One of these attempts took place on February 24, three days before the parliamentary elections, “after RMTR, the technical service of the state distributor Kyrgyztelecom, decided to abruptly interrupt broadcasts of Radio Azattyk, on the pretext of holding a first auction of short and medium waves.”¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Wilkinson, *Kyrgyzstan: E-Revolution*.”

¹⁸² *Reporters without Borders for Press Freedom*, “Authorities Harass.”

¹⁸³ *Ibid*.

One of the largest independent television stations, Pyramida, was also key in fostering the revolutionary movement. It had a number of controversial shows, including a weekly political show, *Nashe Vremya* ('Our Time' in Russian) which criticized the government. In addition to this, it also provided airtime to various opposition leaders, which no government-influenced television station was willing to do.¹⁸⁴ The only other independent television station in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 was Osh TV, which broadcasted to a limited area in the south of Kyrgyzstan, where the protests that led to Mr. Akaev's ouster began. Osh TV expanded its reach with equipment paid for by the State Department."¹⁸⁵ Like Pyramid TV, Osh TV also carried the U.S.-supported *Nashe Vremya* Talk Show, which contributed towards raising awareness of government corruption in Kyrgyzstan.

One of the most effective tools of the opposition, however, was the Media Support Center publishing house. Funded by Freedom House, MSC was the only independent printing press, and it was the source of every major opposition publication in Kyrgyzstan. These included *Respublica*, *Analitika*, *Litsa* and *Moya Stolitsa Novosti* (*MSN – My Capital News* in Russian). "MSN informed people in the north of the unrest in the south. The newspaper also played a critical role in disseminating word of when and where protesters should gather."¹⁸⁶ The contribution of the abovementioned publication to damaging the image of Akaev and his regime can be seen from the fact that

¹⁸⁴ *Committee to Protect Journalists*, "Attacks on the Press 2004: Kyrgyzstan," March 14, 2005. <http://cpj.org/2005/03/attacks-on-the-press-2004-kyrgyzstan.php> Accessed on 6/26/2009.

¹⁸⁵ Smith, Craig, "U.S. Helped to Prepare the Way for Kyrgyzstan's Uprising," *The New York Times*, March 30, 2005.

¹⁸⁶ *Reporters without Borders for Press Freedom*, "Authorities Harass."

the government attempted to shut down the publication on several occasions.¹⁸⁷ The most obvious of these attempts was when the state utility company, Sevelektro demanded that the power to the printing facility be cut off from February 22-26. Fortunately, however, MSC was able to find an electricity generator which allowed it to continue printing its publications.¹⁸⁸

Did it Matter?

According to Dr. Martha Olcott, Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International peace, “The mass protest in Kyrgyzstan against Kyrgyzstan’s flawed parliamentary elections that led to the ouster of President Akaev were as momentous in their own way as the Rose or Orange revolutions.” The Tulip Revolution made it clear that people living in Central Asian countries also expect their rights as citizens to be protected, and that their governments are responsive to the needs of the people.¹⁸⁹ The protests also “demonstrated that long-term U.S. and OSCE investments in projects designed to build citizen participation at the grassroots level are worthwhile, that the presence of a deeply rooted nongovernmental organizations, once they reach a critical number, can play a decisive role in political struggles by serving as the instrument to challenging public protests in peaceful ways.”¹⁹⁰

In addition to this, the Tulip Revolution also had an impact on the other Central Asian countries, as well as on other oppressive regimes in the former Soviet Union.

¹⁸⁷ Spencer, “Quiet American.”

¹⁸⁸ *Reporters without Borders for Press Freedom*, “Authorities Harass.”

¹⁸⁹ Olcott, Martha, “Kyrgyzstan’s Revolution: Causes and Consequences,” *Hearing Before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe*, 109th Congress, 1st Session, April 7, 2005, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2007), 7.

¹⁹⁰ Olcott, “Kyrgyzstan’s Revolution,” 7.

During the same time that the protests were unfolding in Kyrgyzstan, over 1,000 individuals gathered on the streets of Minsk, Belarus, in hopes of igniting similar change in their countries. Meanwhile, leaders in the neighboring countries began to close their borders and further oppress the opposition movements in their countries.

A few weeks after President Akaev fled from Kyrgyzstan, Zamira Sadykova, editor of Kyrgyz publication *Res Publica* and opposition activist, made the following statement in a hearing before U.S. Congress: “It’s definite that Kyrgyzstan will now support civil society, freedom of mass media, transparency of state government.”¹⁹¹ That being said, more than four years later, many of the promises made by the opposition leaders in 2005, have yet to materialize. In addition to this, President Kurmanbek Bakiyev has made a number of changes that have actually had a detrimental effect to Kyrgyzstan’s level of freedom and democracy.

According to *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* article written on the four-year anniversary of the Tulip Revolution, the current level of media freedom in Kyrgyzstan is lower than it has been in years. Contrary to Bakiev’s promises that he would make all media independent, most media in Kyrgyzstan is controlled by the government.¹⁹² A year and a half after Bakiev’s election, however, there was only one independent TV channel (Pyramid TV) in Kyrgystan, out of a total of 47 stations. In addition to this, many individuals say that what Bakiev basically did is “replaced rule by his predecessor’s family with rule by his own. [And that] on his watch, corruption is

¹⁹¹ Sadykova, “Kyrgyzstan’s Revolution,” 5.

¹⁹² *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, “Kyrgyzstan: ‘Crackdown’ on Opposition, Media Continues as Election Looms,” March 24, 2009.

believed to have become even more entrenched.”¹⁹³ According to Bekdzhan Derbishev, of Pyramid’s founders, “One begins to remember the Akayev days as a golden age because the people who are in power now are completely out of control.”¹⁹⁴

One of the reasons why the Tulip Revolution has not been very successful is because the Kyrgyz opposition movement did not have a single leader around which they could mobilize. Instead, there were several opposition leaders, all of whom had different ideas of what the post-Akaev Kyrgyzstan should look like. Because of this, shortly after Kurmanbek Bakiev assumed the presidency, most of the other opposition leaders turned against him, and he ended up curtailing access to the vehicles which helped the opposition when he was the one attempting to make changes. “In the first 18 months of Bakiev’s presidency, there were near-constant demonstrations as the populace grew dissatisfied with a perceived lack of urgency on the government’s part to fulfill promises of reform. Calls of “Bakiev must go!” became common across cities and towns in Kyrgyzstan.”¹⁹⁵

According to Social Democratic Party leader Roza Otunbaeva, who was one of the opposition leaders in 2005, the Tulip Revolution was a victory of the Kyrgyz people, but it was a victory that was stolen:

“We witnessed only how one clan was changed for another one. When we were discussing whether we should celebrate this day or not, I said that the revolution is still happening. Those people who wanted to arrest us [in 2005], who became very rich under Akaev’s regime, they are still here [around Bakiev now]—but

¹⁹³ *The Economist* (U.S. Edition), “Wilting Tulips: Kyrgyzstan,” April 14, 2007.

¹⁹⁴ Robertson, John, “Analysis: Kyrgyz Opposition Demands TV Coverage of Protests,” *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, November 3, 2006.

¹⁹⁵ *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, “Kyrgyzstan: “Crackdown” on Opposition.”

those who made this revolution are left on the streets, that's why they are all disappointed.”¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, “Kyrgyzstan: “Crackdown” on Opposition.”

Chapter 6: **Moldova's Twitter Revolution**

“Moldovan journalists are poorly paid and frequently sell their services to the highest bidder. Hidden advertising, acceptance of money and gifts, recycling of stories—these are just some of the most common journalistic offences in Moldova.”¹⁹⁷

Natalia Angheli

“North of Moldova TV IS OFF!!! But we have
THE ALMIGHTY INTERNET!
Let us use it to communicate peacefully for freedom!!”¹⁹⁸

*Twitter Message
Chisinau, 04/08/09*

According to Stratfor, a world leader in global intelligence founded by George Friedman, “between 10,000 and 30,000 protesters stormed the presidential palace and the parliament building in Moldova’s capital, Chisinau on April 7, 2008.”¹⁹⁹ Most sources, however, estimate the number of protesters to have been somewhere between 15,000 and 20,000. That number might not seem very large, but it is fairly significant when one considers the size of Moldova. To draw a comparison between Moldova’s population of 4 million people and more than 300 million in the US, that is akin to a riot of approximately 1-1.5 million individuals in the US. To put it another way, it is about the same as 15-20,000 Maryland(ers) storming the White House, the House of

¹⁹⁷ Angheli, Natalia, “Media in Moldova,” in Art Silverblatt and Nikolai Zlobin, *International Communications: A Media Literacy Approach*, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 199.

¹⁹⁸ Walker, Shaun, “Russia Furious with EU over Twitter Revolution: Moscow Backs Moldovan President After He Accuses Romania of Supporting Coup,” *The Independent*, April 9, 2009.

¹⁹⁹ *Stratfor Global Intelligence*, “Geopolitical Diary: The Aurochs Revolution?” http://www.stratfor.com/geopolitical_diary/20090407_geopolitical_diary_aurochs_revolution April 8, 2009. Accessed on 04/09/09

Representatives, causing both to be evacuated as property was being destroyed and the buildings set ablaze.

Contrary to previous ‘color revolutions,’ which got their names from the colors of the flags that were used during the protests, most of the media has labeled the protests in Moldova after the technology that was used. Moldova’s ‘Twitter Revolution’ was initiated by a string of posts on Twitter, which is a social-networking tool commonly used to communicate brief messages to a network of individuals, or followers, in Twitter terms.²⁰⁰ Although Europe’s poorest and least developed country, Moldova is a perfect example of how individuals can use simple and low-cost information communication technologies to organize protests, riots, and even generate revolutionary movements that demand change from their governments. In a matter of hours, thousands of protesters were mobilized by a thread of posts under the tag of *#pman*, which stands for *Piata Marii Adunari Nationale*, the name of the city square in Chisinau, Moldova where the protests began.²⁰¹

What Happened?

In “The Revolution Will Be Tweeted: Moldovan Protesters Exploit Social Networking Sites,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* journalist Ron Synovitz writes that “opposition leaders and activists in Moldova have been using text messages, blogs, and social-networking sites like Twitter and Facebook to draw thousands of people to the

²⁰⁰ For more information on Twitter see <http://twitter.com/about#about> and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitter>

²⁰¹ Denisov, Vadim, “Moldova’s Twitter Revolution,” *Net Effect: Foreign Policy*, http://neteffect.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/04/07/moldovas_twitter_revolution April 7, 2009.

antigovernment demonstrations.”²⁰² According to Alexei Ghertescu, a 27-year-old lawyer from Chisinau, Twitter has been a key source of most current information for him. “I just received updated information about what is going on at the square in the center of the city, and on the [closed] border [with Romania] and from other places. So it is actually a main source of information for me about what is going on.”²⁰³ Furthermore, according to RFE/RL Chisinau Bureau chief, Vasile Botnaru, electronic text messages were key in mobilizing protesters in Moldova:

“I received at least two e-mail messages inviting me on [April 6] to ‘light a candle for the funeral’ in the center of the city of Chisinau because of the Communist election victory. And these e-mail messages were asking the receivers to resend the message to all of the people they know. This is the way the information spread out like ripples on the surface of the water. This was a test of the ability of young people to benefit from their use of the Internet networks.”

In an interview with Evgeny Morozov, author and senior fellow at the Open Society Institute in New York, he points out that while individuals are in fact utilizing ICT’s to organize and challenge their governments, the authorities are also learning from their mistakes. According to Morozov, even though

“The technology and cell phone coverage and Wi-Fi networks were [initially] available in the central square in Chisinau, they were later turned off. And people who were trying to post the updates on Twitter, which were their blogs, they could not do it just because the technology was not there. So I think it reveals that authorities are also learning their lessons, doing their homework, and essentially learning how to manipulate the technology to stay in power.”²⁰⁴

²⁰² Synovitz, Ron, “The Revolution Will be Tweeted: Moldovan Protesters Exploit Social Networking Sites,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, April 9, 2009. <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1604740.html> Accessed on 5/20/2009.

²⁰³ Synovitz, “The Revolution Will be Tweeted.”

²⁰⁴ *PRI’s The World*, “Moldova’s Twitter Demonstrations” (audio interview with Evgeny Morozov), April 8, 2009. <http://theworld.org/?q=node/25620> Accessed on 6/5/2009

Although direct government involvement in the mobile and internet networks has not been confirmed, many individuals claim that the Moldovan government did in fact shut down the mobile and internet networks in Moldova during the highest points of the protests. According to RFE/RL's Vasile Botnaru:

“The mobile-phone network went down in central Chisinau for about three hours on April 7, for users who subscribe through one of the two most popular providers in the country—the company Orange. He says there are suspicions among demonstrators that government authorities were responsible for that outage. Meanwhile, the owners of websites that have been inaccessible in recent days are investigating the cause of their problems. They say they have yet to determine if their websites were intentionally blocked by authorities with the goal of cutting communications between protesters, or if there simply has been a network failure because the system was overloaded by too much traffic.”²⁰⁵

In addition to the ICT countermeasures by Moldovan government, more traditional methods of controlling the protest were also utilized by the authorities. According to the European Parliament, “acts of horrible violence” occurred in Moldova during and after the April protests. Delegates from EU's fact-finding mission claimed that many arrested individuals “were brutally beaten and forced to walk through ‘corridors of death,’ two rows of police officers who beat them with their fists, feet, and truncheons.”²⁰⁶

Why It Happened?

The main reason behind the riots in Moldova's capital was the result of the parliamentary election that was held two days before the protests. According to most Western sources, including Baroness Emma Nicholson, who is a member of the European Parliament and was part of the International Election Observation Mission in Moldova

²⁰⁵ Synovitz, “The Revolution Will be Tweeted.”

²⁰⁶ *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, “European Fact-Finders Cite ‘Horrible Violence’ Against Moldova's Protesters,” April 30, 2009. <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1619000.html> Accessed on 5/20/2009.

during the elections,²⁰⁷ she and others with the IEOM had a “very, very strong feeling” that there was some sort of manipulation on behalf of the Communist party.²⁰⁸

Furthermore, according to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), opinion polls before the vote gave the Communist Party about 36 percent of the vote, which is far lower than the 50 percent that the Communists claimed to have won.²⁰⁹

In addition to this, the Mayor of Chisinau, Dorin Chirtoaca, made a public statement supporting the protesters, and stating that it was not possible for people to vote for the Communist party in such large numbers.²¹⁰ According to Alina Martiniuc, a student who was present at the protests:

“I went to see the protests yesterday. I got a few messages from colleagues that there’ll be protests, but I did not know how dangerous it was going to be. There were scuffles between students and the police. A colleague of mine was hit by a policeman. Students were throwing stones at the building, breaking most windows. Some of my colleagues went in and later said that they went to the 14th floor, smashed everything and put the president’s chair and portrait on fire. The students are discontented with the election result. Most of the people who voted for communism are old people, but old people are dying and there are more young people voting now than before. So the result is definitely not true. It’s not logical.”²¹¹

In addition to the election results, Moldovan citizens are generally weary of their Communist government’s corrupt regime and its inability to bring the type of positive

²⁰⁷ *Emma Nicholson Online*. <http://www.emmanicholson.info/> Accessed on April 20, 2009.

²⁰⁸ *BBC News*, “What is Behind Unrest in Moldova,” <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/7989780.stm> April 9, 2009.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ *BBC News*, “Police Retake Moldova Parliament,” <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/798893.stm> April 9, 2009.

²¹¹ *BBC News*, “Eyewitness: Moldova Protests,” <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/7989919.stm> April 9, 2009.

change to Moldova that its constituents long to see.²¹² Writing during his visit to Moldova in 2007, Chad Nagle, a US attorney and author, wrote the following:

In the small southern city of Comrat, an old woman on crutches told me her pension was well below sustenance level and was seldom paid on time. Her neighbor agreed, complaining loudly: “We don’t want a perfect life, only something a little better than now.” It was difficult to imagine that conditions could get any worse. A polling station worker in the small village of Mihailovka told me: “People couldn’t care less about the geopolitical orientation of Moldova. All they want is to live decently, have enough to eat, and drink the occasional glass of wine.”²¹³

Moldova is officially the poorest country in Europe with an average monthly wage of less than \$250²¹⁴, and approximately 25 percent of its population working abroad at any given time. When combined, with the conflict in Trans-Dniester, where part of Moldova is under Russian control, and neighboring Romania’s recent admission to the European Union, there is much for the average Moldovan to be disappointed about.²¹⁵ According to Liliana Calmnatui, an NGO worker who was present at the protests:

“Most of the people in Chisinau voted for the democratic parties. I’ve been asking friends, neighbors, people on the street. Indeed in the villages, where there are only old people left, most people would vote for the Communist Party. But the young people of our country want a better life, they can’t be satisfied with \$150 a month. There is room for [vote] fraud. I think 10-15% is unaccounted for. I’ve visited villages as part of my work, where 200 new names have appeared on election lists with nobody knowing who those people are. That’s just one example, but also, it is not clear what happens when you change address, or when you go abroad and some of that data can be used to manipulate results.”²¹⁶

²¹² Denisov, “*Moldova’s Twitter Revolution*.”

²¹³ Nagle, Chad, “An American Compares Transnistria and Moldova,” *The Tiraspol Times & Weekly Review*, 3/33/2007, http://www.tiraspoltimes.com/opinion/an_american_compares_transnistria_and_moldova.html Accessed on 5/5/2009

²¹⁴ *BBC News*, “Communists Win Moldovan Election,” <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/7984582.stm> April 9, 2009.

²¹⁵ *BBC News*, “What is behind Unrest in Moldova?”

²¹⁶ *BBC News*, “Eyewitness: Moldova Protests.”

In addition to this, many claim that that as many as 180,000 ‘dead souls’ voted for the Communist party during the election.²¹⁷

ICT in Moldova

To get a better understanding of the significance of the protests that took place in Chisinau, however, it is also important to discuss the level of ICT use in Moldova, where it is most predominant, and who tends to use the various ICTs that have the capacity to create a movement of this size. In his article, *Over the Digital Divide*, Alexander Baranov defines the idea of digital inequality in a population as “deep inequality in access to social, economic, educational, cultural and other opportunities owing to unequal access to information and communication technologies.”²¹⁸ In Moldova, the topic of investing into Information Communication Technology has been discussed since the early 1990s. However, the extreme poverty of the country has not allowed the government and businesses to invest into the development of ICTs. As a result, even though the country has a fairly good infrastructure, it was not until 2003 that some specific steps have been taken in the direction of developing ICT in Moldova.²¹⁹ According to the data from the *Internet World Stats*, Moldova had 727,700 Internet users as of August, 2007, which is approximately 20 percent of the population.²²⁰ This is a

²¹⁷ Allnut, Luke, “Moldova’s Dead Souls,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, April 17, 2009, <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1610634.html> Accessed on 5/20/2009.

²¹⁸ Baranov, Alexander, “Nad ‘Tsifrovoi Propastiu’,” *Zerkalo Nedeli*, No. 2/427, (January 18-24, 2003), <http://www.zerkalo-nedeli.com/2000/2675/37343/> April 17, 2009.

²¹⁹ Burtseva, Ludmila, et al, *Digital Divide: A Glance at the Problem in Moldova*, (London: Idea Group Publishing, 1997), 78.

²²⁰ This figure is also confirmed by *The 2009 CIA World Factbook*, which lists approximately 700,000 Internet users in Moldova for 2007. For more information see (Figure 4)

drastic increase from 2000, when Moldova had only 25,000 Internet users.²²¹

Furthermore, according to the most recent information published by the CIA, there were 1,883,000 cell phone subscriptions in Moldova in 2007, which is approximately half the country's population (see Figure 4).

During the past several years, there has also been an increased initiative on the part of the government to promote ICT growth in the various sectors of Moldovan society. As a result, in 2005 the Ministry of Information Development was created, and “the government has accepted the strategy of information-society creation called ‘Electronic Moldova’ and the action plan for its implementation.”²²² This has led to a number of important developments, including creation of an online payment system, <http://www.fincompay.com> for various municipal services, and a number of other e-services which are available via websites like <http://www.gov.md>. Consequentially, while there is still a large digital divide in Moldova, the gap is rapidly shrinking.

Apart from the Internet and cellular telephones, however, most of the other types of Information Communication Technologies are not as promising. *The 2009 CIA World Factbook* claims that in 2006 Moldova had 31 Radio Broadcast Stations and 40 Television Broadcast Stations. That, however, does not mean that there are many independent voices in Moldova's Radio and Television. According to Natalia Angheli's article in *International Communications: A Media Literacy Approach*, “Growing numbers [of TV and radio stations] have not translated into a free and balanced media. Excessive government control and harassment by authorities and inadequate regulating

²²¹ *Internet World Stats: Moldova*. <http://www.internetworldstats.com/euro/md.htm> Accessed on April 20, 2009.

²²² Burtseva, *Digital Divide*, 97.

and self-regulating mechanisms seriously hinder the development of media in Moldova.”²²³ Furthermore, Angheli writes that “Censorship of state-owned media is widely spread, especially after Communists came to power in February 2001. Journalists are openly ordered what and how to write, and “disloyal” media managers are routinely sacked. The most vivid example of this censorship is seen in the national TV channel Moldova 1, whose newscasts are sadly reminiscent of the old Soviet “talking-head” news about the comings and goings of the Communist elite.”²²⁴ And since television and radio are the predominant sources of information for most Moldovans this means that many individuals do not get an unbiased perspective when it comes to events that impact their lives. During the Twitter Revolution, this phenomenon was clearly articulated in a statement by a 21-year-old economics student at the Free International University of Moldova, Adrian Blajinski:

“I wanted to participate myself in such a protest after hearing the official elections results because I think they have been rigged. I tried to find out more information about the elections from Moldovan state television, but it was broadcasting only movies and comedy programs—nothing about what is going on [with the protests]. The other information source for me has been information news sites. I managed to find one Internet site that had not been shut down yet—because many of them have been shut down—and it was there that I found out about the protest [on April 7] and that the main square was already full.”²²⁵

Did it Matter?

What was supposed to be a smooth transition of power, as Vladimir Voronin passed the Moldovan presidency to Prime Minister Zinaida Greceanii, turned out to be much more complicated “after three opposition parties said they would boycott the

²²³ Angheli, “Media in Moldova,” 195.

²²⁴ Ibid., 198.

²²⁵ Synovitz, “The Revolution Will be Tweeted.”

contest,” and the Moldovan Parliament decided to reject Voronin’s protégé.²²⁶ According to Valeriu Sava, head of parliament’s election commission, [Voronin’s successor] won 60 votes—one less than the 61 needed to win in [Moldova’s] 101-seat chamber.”²²⁷ In effect, the opposition parties were able to ‘nullify’ the results of the parliamentary elections that triggered the protests in Moldova. Furthermore, according to Vladimir Socor, “failure to elect the head of state after two rounds of balloting triggers the dissolution of parliament and new elections from scratch. This procedure is now set in motion.”²²⁸ A new parliament, head of state, and government might be in place by August or September, provided that a governing majority emerges from the elections.”²²⁹ As a result, the protesters were in effect able to reverse the outcome of the elections that they believed to be rigged, and directly impact the political direction of their country.

However, there are some individuals like writer Daniel McAdams, who believe that the protests in Moldova were not the result of sporadic ideas set in motion by a few young people. In an article on *LewRockwell.com*, McAdams writes that “while the press lauds the “spontaneous” mass organization to overthrow Voronin, one does not have to dust the scene of the crime too carefully to see U.S. foreign policy fingerprints all over the place.”²³⁰ Furthermore, McAdams provides the reader with a number of sources that

²²⁶ *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, “Moldovan Communists Fail In Presidential Vote,” May 20, 2009. <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1735650.html> Accessed on 5/20/2009.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ New Parliamentary elections were set for July 29, 2009, after the Moldovan parliament was dissolved on June 15, 2009.

²²⁹ Socor, Vladimir, “Moldova Enters Unstable Pre-Election Period,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 6, Issue 110, (June 9, 2009).

²³⁰ McAdams, Daniel, “Moldova’s Twitter Revolution: Made in America?” *LewRockwell.com*, April 8, 2009. <http://www.lewrockwell.com/blog/lewrw/archives/026241.html> Accessed on 4/10/09.

support his argument. According to him, one of the organizations that is responsible for leading this movement is *Hyde Park Organization*, which receives support from the Internet Access Training Program (IATP), which is a program funded through the U.S. State Department under the Freedom Support Act (FSA).²³¹ According to the US government, IATP “provides local communities with free access to the Internet and to extensive training in all aspects of information technology.”²³² Furthermore, he points to various programs funded by USAID, such as the Strengthening Democratic Political Activism in Moldova (SPA) Program, whose objective is to cultivate “new political activists who can formulate and pursue concrete political objectives.”²³³

Although claims like the one by Daniel McAdams might seem farfetched, he is certainly not alone. Russian-backed leaders in Moldova, as well as political leaders in Russia, are also pointing the blame towards the West. According to Gennadiy Zhuganov, leader of Russia’s Communist Party, “These are provocateurs at work, using the elections as a shield. The same people stand behind the events in Moldova, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, and behind [President Mikhail] Saakashvili in Georgia.”²³⁴ Furthermore, according to Vladimir Voronin, “When the flag of Romania was raised on state buildings, the attempts of the opposition to carry out a coup became clear. We will not allow this.”²³⁵ In addition to this, according to an article published in Stratfor:

²³¹ McAdams, “Moldova’s Twitter Revolution”

²³² For more information on IATP see <http://www.irex.org/programs/iatp/index.asp> Accessed on 4/10/2009

²³³ For more information on USAID’s programs in Moldova see http://moldova.usaid.gov/moldova_act.shtml Accessed on 4/10/2009

²³⁴ *BBC News*, “What is Behind Unrest in Moldova?”

²³⁵ Walker, “Russia Furious.”

Moldova gives the United States and Europe the opportunity to strike even closer to the Kremlin's heart. Russia, feeling confident about its situation with Ukraine and Georgia, thus far has engaged in discussion on the BMD [Ballistic Missile Defense] issue under assumptions that its actual periphery was safe from Western encroachment. But, though there has been no evidence of U.S. involvement in Moldova's protests yet, Washington well might use the situation in Chisinau to remind the Kremlin that it has many levers—in many colors—to throw Moscow off-balance.²³⁶

It is still early to determine what the eventual outcomes of Moldova's Twitter Revolution will be. At this point, there is still no consensus on the origin of this revolution, and whether it was the outcome of six young Moldovans expressing their frustration with their country, utilizing the most recent social networking and other ICT technologies, or if this was a carefully executed program by the United States and other Western powers. Was this just an expression of anger on behalf of Moldova's citizens, or was this in fact the latest occurrence in a long line of 'color revolutions? If it's the latter, does this mean that positive change is on its way? These are questions that will not be answered for a long time to come. What we can say, however, is that Moldova's Twitter Revolution is just a beginning of a much larger trend, as individuals across the globe have the ability to create a large-scale protest, movement or even a revolution, with unprecedented ease and quickness.

²³⁶ *Stratfor Global Intelligence*, "Geopolitical Diary: The Aurochs Revolution?"

Chapter 7 The Case of Russia

“Democracy is now on hold in Russia. Former Soviet leader Yuri Andropov once said, “First we’ll make enough sausages and then we won’t have any dissidents.”²³⁷

Ian Bremmer
The J-Curve

"We've seen an epidemic of refusals to provide information in the last four years. As soon as Putin came, they all remembered the traditions of the Soviet era. They release information or not on a whim, and if you say there are laws about this, they don't care."²³⁸

Oleg Panifilov (Media Activist)

“It doesn’t matter what color the cat is—as long as it catches mice.”

Deng Xiaoping

Reading about Russia’s system of democracy in most Western publications one cannot help but get the feeling that Russia is much more autocratic now than it has been in years. The political system in Russia seems to be much closer to a Tsarist form of rule than to democratic governance as it is understood in the West, and individual freedoms are constantly reduced. As a result, it is difficult to feel anything other than hopelessness for the future of Russian people and their prospects of joining the rest of the world as a free and democratic nation. In addition to this, few Russian publications that are not connected with the Kremlin will contest the abovementioned view, and even Russian scholars who feel very hopeful about Russia’s future will still point out that politically,

²³⁷ Bremmer, Ian, *The J-Curve: A New Way to Understand Why Nations Rise and Fall*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 132

²³⁸ Fitzpatrick, Catherine, “A Conversation with Media Activist Oleg Panifilov,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty - Media Matters*, Volume 4, No. 14, (August 2, 2004), <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1343720.html> Accessed on 6/23/09.

Russia is an autocratic regime. According to Dmitry Trenin, author of *Getting Russia Right* and director of the Carnegie Moscow Center:

“There is no question that [Russia] has a tsarist political system, in which all major decisions are taken by one institution, the presidency, also known as the Kremlin. The separation of powers, provided for under the 1993 constitution, is a fiction. All institutions of the federal government, from the cabinet to the bicameral legislature, are in reality mere agents of the presidency. The legal system is anything but independent, especially when dealing with the opponents of the Kremlin, and the prosecutor general’s office has become a tool of choice in the hand of the presidency. Officially known as a federation, Russia is in reality closer to a unitary state, with the governors of the country’s seven dozen regions appointed and dismissed by the president.²³⁹

Despite all of this, however, Russia’s citizens do not seem to have a revolutionary state of mind. Even though, technologically, Russia is in many ways more developed than many countries that surround it, and most of its citizens are aware of what is going on around them, there is not much opposition to the federal government and to the exclusive authority that it has over Russian lives.

Freedom in Russia

When Mikhail Gorbachev made the “decision to permit partially free elections to the Soviet Congress of People’s Deputies in 1989, [this was] the first opportunity for societal forces to try to influence politics directly. The electoral process produced an unprecedented whirl of societal mobilization. Media criticism exploded; electoral clubs sprouted; and noncommunist, pro-perestroika organizations convened.”²⁴⁰ For the first time in Russia’s 1,000-year history, individuals were able to experience political freedom, and Russian people felt like they had an actual say in political decisions that

²³⁹ Trenin, Dmitri, *Getting Russia Right*, (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007), 9.

²⁴⁰ Michael McFaul and Elina Treyger, “Civil Society,” in Michael McFaul Nikolai Petro, and Andrei Ryabov, *Between Dictatorship and Democracy: Russian Post-Communist Political Reform*, (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004), 146.

impacted their lives. Although Tsarist Russia did provide the “state and limited arenas [with some] autonomous social activity, especially from 1861,”²⁴¹ this autonomy was very limited. Moreover, whatever freedoms may have been acquired by Russian people in the late nineteenth century, were quickly taken away as communism spread across Russia.

That being said, there were little spurts of individual freedom that did emerge across the Soviet Union prior to 1989, particularly during Leonid Brezhnev’s rule, when “a small number of brave, dissident individuals and groups openly challenged the Soviet system, and informal intelligentsia groups composed of scientists, writers, and other professionals began to challenge Stalinist taboos, communicating their views primarily through *samizdat*, self published critical literature on forbidden subjects.”²⁴² Moreover, there were always various religious groups that were active during the Soviet times, which defied the government and continued to practice religious freedom. This, however, was not done in the open and when caught, these individuals were subjected to extreme punishments.

In 1991, the Soviet people took their newly obtained freedom to unprecedented levels, as protests erupted across the country, leading to eventual dissolution of the USSR in December 1991. Although the new Russian government, led by Boris Yeltsin, “did not call for elections after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the first post-Soviet elections did not take place until December 1993,”²⁴³ Yeltsin did not take any of the new

²⁴¹ McFaul, “Civil Society,” 142.

²⁴² Ibid., 143-4

²⁴³ Ibid., 149

freedoms away from Russian citizens. The new constitution that passed under Yeltsin in 1993, “provided for the protection of basic civil liberties—the freedoms of speech, press, religion, association, and peaceful assembly—without which a civil society could not meaningfully exist.”²⁴⁴

Negative Developments

When Putin came to power in the spring of 2000, however, Russia experienced a sharp reversal, and many of the newly-acquired freedoms that Russians began to experience following the breakup of the Soviet Union began to wither away. According to Michael McFaul, director of the Center on Democracy, Development, and Rule of Law at Stanford University, and Elina Treyger, of Harvard University, “the strategy of Putin’s government appears to be to eliminate as many opposing actors from the political playing field as possible and to create what some of his advisers call ‘managed democracy.’”²⁴⁵ Moreover, one of the defining features of the Putin regime is an increasing climate of fear, termed by some ‘the KGBization of the state.’ The harassment of activists, researchers, and journalists, [...] has been communicating a clear message to those involved in independent activities.”²⁴⁶

According to Ian Bremmer, author of *J-Curve: A New Way to Understand Why Nations Rise and Fall*, and president of the Eurasia Group:

“When Putin took office, he reportedly called together the new business leaders and forged an unwritten but plainly understood pact with them: the oligarchs could keep the cash and property they had amassed in the rigged privatization deals of the Yeltsin years without fear of prosecution, as long as they paid their

²⁴⁴ McFaul, “Civil Society,” 150

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 160

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 163

taxes and steered clear of political conflict with the president. The latter condition precluded use of the oligarchs' media holdings to criticize Putin or his administration."²⁴⁷

Although this was understood by most of the oligarchs, Boris Berezovsky and Vladimir Gusinsky were reluctant to give up the political influence that they had during the Yeltsin administration, and continued to utilize their media companies in order to criticize the Putin government. As a result, Kremlin security guards, armed with automatic weapons, raided Vladimir Gusinsky's NTV television station in April, 2001. "By sunrise, NTV was a new television network with an editorial philosophy more in harmony with the Kremlin's worldview."²⁴⁸

In 2003, Putin made another political choice which further defined his presidency as autocratic. A well known oil tycoon, Mikhail Khodorovsky,²⁴⁹ was openly contributing to several political parties that were trying to win seats in the Russian Duma²⁵⁰ during the 2003 elections. "In particular, he gave generously to the two best-known liberal-reformist, pro-market parties, Yabloko and the Union of Right Forces."²⁵¹ A number of warnings were sent by Kremlin to Khodorovsky urging him to stop his

²⁴⁷ Bremmer, *The J-Curve*, 133.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Mikhail Khodorovsky was a Russian oil tycoon/oligarch, and chairman of oil company YUKOS. Following his arrest, many western companies lost confidence in the Russian economy, but Putin did accomplish his intended result. The reign of the oligarchs was over, and while they kept much of their financial power, they no longer had any political control. Most Russian oligarchs are now abroad, living extremely lavish lifestyles, but their influence in Russia is very limited.

²⁵⁰ The Federal Assembly of Russia is comprised of the State Duma, which is the lower house and consists of 450 members, and the Federation Council, which is the upper house, and consists of 176 members. According to Dmitri Trenin, "The entrance bar to the state Duma, the lower house of parliament, is set at 7 percent, which makes it prohibitive for any political groups that are not part of the Kremlin-designed system." (Trenin, *Getting Russia Rights*, 10)

²⁵¹ Bremmer, *The J-Curve*, 135.

political activity. When this did not happen, Putin intervened. “On October 25, 2003, armed agents stormed [Khodorovsky’s] private plane during a refueling stop, arrested him, and returned him to Moscow in handcuffs. [He] is now serving an eight-year prison sentence in a Siberian penal colony.”²⁵² Furthermore, in a Washington Post article, Masha Lipman, editor of the Carnegie Moscow Center’s *Pro et Contra* journal, wrote that following his arrest, Khodorovsky’s “thriving business was destroyed through mind-boggling tax claims and legal shenanigans [by Kremlin] that ensured YUKOS paid its “debts” to the state.”²⁵³

The next big step that Putin made in order to further centralize political control in Russia came in 2004, following the Chechen terrorist attack in Beslan. Putin knew that the nation was rallied around him at this time so he made a decision to use this opportunity.²⁵⁴ Shortly after, he made a proposal that ended popular election of Russia’s eighty-three governors²⁵⁵. “According to the plan, the president, subject to ratification by the local legislatures, gained the right to handpick the leaders of Russia’s regions.

²⁵² Bremmer, *The J-Curve*, 136.

²⁵³ Lipman, Masha, “Medvedev’s Promises on Trial,” *The Washington Post*, April 8, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/04/07/AR2009040703377.html> Accessed on 05/27/2009

²⁵⁴ According to some individuals, including Mark MacKinnon, the terrorist bombings that took place in Russia following the attack in Beslan, were actually carried out by Russian FSB agents, and made look like the Chechen terrorists were responsible, in order to get public support for the war in Chechnya. For more information on this, see Mark MacKinnon, *The New Cold War*, New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2007).

²⁵⁵ According to <http://www.RussiaProfile.org>, Russia is comprised of 46 official regions (oblast), 21 republics (respublika), 4 autonomous districts (avtonomny okrug), 9 territories (krai), 2 federal cities (Moscow and St. Petersburg), and one autonomous region (avtonomnaya oblast). There have been plans to consolidate many of these regions, in order to cut the number down to approximately half the current figure. This has been proposed because of the difficulty in managing such a large number of regions.

...Putin also proposed an end to gubernatorial term limits. Sitting governors can now hold their posts indefinitely; all they need is the favor of the Kremlin.”²⁵⁶

That same year, Vladimir Putin also made a proposal that called for all the seats in the Russian parliament to be filled from national party lists. This action allows elected officials to act in a way that is not dependent on their constituencies.

“Members of Russia’s lower house now depend for their seats not on local voters but on party leaders, an effective way for Putin to reduce the number of variables he faces as he pushes reform, or refuses to push reform, through parliament.”²⁵⁷

Furthermore, in October, 2004, the Russian Federal Assembly passed a law which gave the Russian president power to approve the judges for all of Russia’s high courts. This law “also gives the president the power to discipline and dismiss senior judges if, once chosen, they demonstrate qualities the Kremlin wants to discourage.”²⁵⁸

Positive Developments

At the same time that all of these negative changes have been taking place, detrimentally affecting freedom in Russia, there have been some positive developments that are worth noting. Being able to own private property in a way equals to freedom, and the “degrees of freedom [are] proportional to the amount of property one owns.”²⁵⁹ In today’s Russia we can clearly see that individuals across society are taking advantage of this recently-acquired freedom. “Indeed, at the beginning of the twenty-first century Russia, once a paradigm of collectivism, has largely gone private. Individualism is spreading, often at the expense of solidarity. More and more people are interested in

²⁵⁶ Bremmer, *The J-Curve*, 138.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 139.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁹ Trenin, *Getting Russia Right*, 14.

making a good living for themselves.”²⁶⁰ Economic growth, and consequent consumption, can be seen everywhere in Russia, and it is the focus of most Russian citizens today.

Russians are also experiencing unprecedented religious freedom. While the Soviet era was known for religious persecution and no freedom of worship was allowed, today’s Russia is fairly open towards most religious expression.

“Since 1988, when the still officially communist state joined the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) in celebrating the millennium of Christianity in Russia, the ROC has moved to occupy a central place in Russia’s spiritual realm. In the same period, Muslim revival was no less conspicuous and even more vibrant. Judaism was officially recognized as an indigenous religion, and official anti-Semitism became history.”²⁶¹

Contrary to the four established religions, Russian Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism, other Christian groups, including various Protestant faiths and Catholicism, are only allowed to operate with certain restrictions.²⁶²

In addition to being able to own property and practice certain religions, Russian citizens are also able to travel around Russia and abroad without restrictions. Contrary to the Soviet times, when one was not able to obtain a passport for international travel except in very specific instances, today’s Russians are traveling in unprecedented numbers. “In 2005, 6.5 million Russians traveled abroad, with Turkey, China, and Egypt, all holiday destinations, topping the list.”²⁶³

²⁶⁰ Trenin, *Getting Russia Right*, 15.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 18

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid., 19

ICT in Russia

In 1997, one typically paid around \$2,200 for a basic desktop computer system in Moscow City. Compared to the United States at around the same time, this price was approximately 50-70 percent higher. In 2003, a basic desktop computer system purchased in Moscow City cost around \$1,000.²⁶⁴ In addition to this, Russia's Internet usage has been steadily rising since late 1990's and in 2005 it was estimated that about 9.4 percent of Russian adults were using the Internet at least once a week.²⁶⁵ According to D.J. Petersen, Director of Corporate Advisory Services at Eurasia Group, this means that in 2005 Russia's Internet penetration percentage was not high enough to be considered a 'mass medium. "At more than 20 percent penetration, the Internet is considered to be a mass medium by commercial service and content providers, and the Internet starts to become an important element of people's lives, leading them to watch less TV and to read fewer newspapers."²⁶⁶ In 2007, that number reached 25 percent.²⁶⁷

The Government

The Russian government has repeatedly indicated that it understands the impact that ICT is capable of having on society. Despite lacking funds, the authorities have invested quite a bit into incorporating ICT into the various governmental functions. Since early 1990s, the Russian government has been transforming the way it collects taxes by investing millions in IT at the Ministry of Taxes and Collections, upgrading the

²⁶⁴ Peterson, D. J., "*Russia and the Information Revolution*," Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, National Security Research Division, 2005), 72.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 69

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 73

²⁶⁷ Troianovski, Anton and Peter Finn, "Kremlin Seeks to Extend Its Reach in Cyberspace: Pro-Government Sites Gain Influence," *The Washington Post*, 28 October, 2007.

information and communication infrastructure at the Russian Railways Ministry, upgrading geographic information systems at the State Land Survey, and investing more than \$1.5 billion on various projects with the Ministry of Education and Science.²⁶⁸

However, while the Yeltsin administration certainly paid attention to ICT, it became a real priority for the Russian government during the early years of the Putin administration. Following the takeover of NTV in 2001, Vladimir Putin proceeded to close TV-6, “another independent station to which many former NTV staff flocked after NTV’s seizure.”²⁶⁹ Shortly after, the government closed down a third station, TVS.²⁷⁰ With the current situation being that Kremlin controls all Television networks in Russia except for RTVi which is a small station owned by Vladimir Gusinski, a former media mogul, who has been exiled from Russia and uses the station to reach Russian-speaking expatriates from around the globe.²⁷¹

In spring of 2001, Vladimir Putin held a widely publicized internet conference during which individuals from Russia and abroad were able to submit questions for the Russian president, which he in turn attempted to answer. One of the outcomes of this internet conference was the creation of the Electronic Russia (E-Russia) program, which is aimed at increasing the level of ICT throughout Russian government in order to increase government effectiveness and efficiency.²⁷² Shortly after the federal government’s decision to implement ICT throughout its branches, many regional and

²⁶⁸ Peterson, “*Russia and the Information Revolution*,” 50.

²⁶⁹ McFaul, “Civil Society,” 168.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 169.

²⁷¹ Trenin, *Getting Russia Right*, 20.

²⁷² Peterson, “*Russia and the Information Revolution*,” 50-51.

local governments followed suit. “In 2004, federal government annual spending on information technologies and services rose to more than \$640 million. Government spending on IT at all levels in 2004 amounted to an estimated \$1.8 billion or about 0.3 percent of the GDP; this rate compares favorably with a number of other countries in recent years.”²⁷³ Furthermore, since July 2003, all federal agencies in Russia have to “publish 40 categories of information online, including laws and regulations, draft legislation, and repealed legislation; information about agency programs, meetings, news conferences, and speeches; and biographical information about officials, including their travel itineraries.” Many government agencies are also required to post job openings on their websites in an attempt to control preferential hiring.²⁷⁴

One of the positive outcomes of these efforts by the federal and local governments is that Russian citizens now have access to decisions that are impacting their everyday lives. “When legislative proposals appear online, policy activists (such as those concerned about welfare benefits, the environment, conscripted personnel, and information technology) have greater opportunity to critique them.”²⁷⁵ According to an article by Ambassador James Collins and Anton Ivanov, Chief Justice of the Russian Supreme Arbitrazh Court,

“The Arbitrazh Courts have initiated administrative changes to help increase transparency. Court rulings are now disseminated online, and an effort is underway to digitize most court documents and make them available on the internet. Leaders of the Court are also working towards using the internet as an effective tool to curb corruption by publishing all correspondence received by

²⁷³ Peterson, “*Russia and the Information Revolution*,” 51.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 58.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

judges pertaining to cases before their bench. [...] Possibilities of using cellular phone technology are also being explored.”²⁷⁶

In addition to this, there are many other initiatives at the Federal and regional level aimed at improving the flow of information, improving transparency, and increasing efficiency throughout Russia. According to Dr. Jeffrey Cochrane, at USAID Information Technology Team, the benefits of ICT can be seen in a number of areas including the Environment, Procurement, Legal Systems, Agriculture, Education, and Energy.²⁷⁷ It is difficult to estimate the effect that all of these efforts will have on Russia’s development, but its benefits are generally positive. That being said, however, much still has to be done.

The Society

In order to understand Russian society today, it is necessary to take a historical and cultural approach. Throughout Soviet times, Russia’s citizens were ceaselessly bombarded with government propaganda via the printed press and radio, which were the most common media formats in Russia before popularization of television. As a result,

“Russian society has often come to perceive the media as a continuation of politics by the ‘dirty means’ of *kompromat*, as a tool for the squaring of accounts in the struggle between the powerful of the world, people who are indifferent to the everyday needs and cares of ordinary readers. An atmosphere has arisen in the mass media that does not reflect public interests at all, but only private interests that are divorced from the real feelings, moods, and preferences of the overwhelming majority of the country’s population.”²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ James Collins, Anton Ivanov, “Rule of Law in Russia,” April 3, 2009, <http://carnegieendowment.org/events/?fa=eventDetail&id=1314> Accessed on 5/27/2009.

²⁷⁷ For more specific information on how ICT benefits development and reduction in corruption in Russia, see Cochrane, Jeffrey, “Information and Communications Technology to Control Corruption,” *The Information Technology Team, USAID*, http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/ac/sector/ICT.doc Accessed on 05/23/2009

²⁷⁸ *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, “Otvetsvennost’ Sredstv Massovoy Informatsii,” June 14, 1977 in Ivan Zassoursky, *Media and Power in Post-Soviet Russia*, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 98.

Furthermore, according to *The Economist*, only 28 percent of Russians thought that media coverage was objective in January, 2009.²⁷⁹

To an outsider this might seem like a horrible situation, but the reality is that “there is still precious little demand for democracy” in Russia. Instead of focusing on politics, most Russians are turning to more ‘practical matters’.²⁸⁰ In *Getting Russia Right*, Dmitri Trenin writes that although today’s Russians are “apathetic toward politics, [they are] avid consumers, aiming to improve their personal lives. This is a major development. On TV, the public demands around-the-clock entertainment rather than politics. The widening network of shopping malls across Russia is a symbol of the spread of the emerging middle classes.”²⁸¹ This is one of the main reasons why Putin continuously has such high approval among Russians despite taking away the various freedoms that one considers essential in the West. According to Ian Bremmer, “Putin’s chief ambition as Russian president has been to build Russia into an economic powerhouse. He has argued that developing Russia’s economic muscle will allow Moscow to reassert itself politically—in its traditional sphere of influence and beyond.”²⁸²

The other side of this is that Russians today are also very concerned with national sovereignty and they are willing to give up many of their freedoms at home as long as they are not being pressured by foreign powers. This can clearly be seen from the rising

²⁷⁹ *The Economist*, “Uncle Volodya’s Flagging Christmas Spirit,” January 3, 2009.

²⁸⁰ Trenin, *Getting Russia Right*, 24.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁸² Bremmer, *The J-Curve*, 136.

levels of nationalism across Russia, particularly with younger people. Kremlin has been exploiting this nationalism, and has created numerous organizations for young people, including Nashi (Ours), which is a youth organization that promotes support for Putin. From lavish summer camps to privileged internships with the government and top businesses, Kremlin is very careful about making sure that it has the support of the young people. At summer camps, they are told that “the Orange Revolution [in Ukraine] was a foreign plot, and that President Yushchenko was poisoned by his supporters to win sympathy.” Moreover, they are told that “Russia’s foreign and internal enemies will try to instigate a similar revolution [in Russia]. They [the US] have tried it before, and soon they will try it here, perhaps as early as the Moscow Duma elections this autumn. Your job is to defend the constitutional order if and when the coup comes.”²⁸³ Efforts like these have been very successful, which are evident in statements like the one by 16-year old Moscow resident, Ksenia. “We don’t want a revolution here. We want to make the country stronger.”²⁸⁴ Furthermore, according to a statement by Nashi leader, Nikita Borovikov, to the *Moscow Times* in April 2009, “Regime change in our country is impossible, because Russia’s leadership is not passive and cowardly.”²⁸⁵

While previously the Russian government spent most of their time and resources focused on radio, print and television, due to Internet’s low penetration rates, recently the Russian authorities have been taking very aggressive steps towards increasing their Internet presence. “Allies of President Vladimir Putin are creating pro-government news

²⁸³ Evans, Julian, “How Putin Youth is Indoctrinated to Foil Revolution,” *The Times (London)*, 18 July, 2005.

²⁸⁴ Evans, “How Putin Youth is Indoctrinated.”

²⁸⁵ Abdullaev, Nabi, “Moldova Underscores Failed Russian Policy,” *The Moscow Times*, 9 April, 2009.

and pop culture Web sites while purchasing some established online outlets known for independent journalism. They are nurturing a network of friendly bloggers ready to disseminate propaganda on command. And there is talk of creating a new Russian computer network—one that would be separate from the Internet at large and, potentially, much easier to control.”²⁸⁶

Another big reason for this change in focus occurred in 2004, after the events that took place in Ukraine’s Orange Revolution. Russian authorities got to witness firsthand how “blogs and uncensored online publications helped drive a popular uprising in Ukraine after a pro-Moscow candidate was declared the winner of a presidential election.”²⁸⁷ In their *Washington Post* article, writers Anton Troianovski and Peter Finn provide an excellent example of this phenomenon:

“On April 14, an opposition movement held a march in central Moscow that drew hundreds of people; police detained at least 170, including the leader of the march, chess star Garry Kasparov. Pavel Danilin, a 30-year-old Putin supporter and blogger whose online icon is the fearsome robot of the Terminator movie, works for a political consulting company loyal to the Kremlin. He said he and his team, which included people from a youth movement called the Young Guard, quickly started blogging that day about a smaller, pro-Kremlin march held at the same time. They linked to one another repeatedly and soon, Danilin said, posts about the pro-Kremlin march had crowded out all the items about the opposition march on the Yandex Web portal’s coveted ranking of the top five Russian blog posts. “We played it beautifully,” Danilin said.”²⁸⁸

According to Sharon LaFraniere of *The Washington Post*, in theory, Russia’s legal system provides its citizens with many of the same rights that are enjoyed in the U.S.

“Both the Russian constitution and a 1995 law prohibit law enforcement agencies from

²⁸⁶ Troianovski, “Kremlin Seeks to Extend Its Reach.”

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

monitoring phone calls, pager messages, radio transmissions, e-mails or Internet traffic without a court order. But in practice, court orders are little more than legal niceties in Russia. An obscure set of technical regulations issued in the late 1990s²⁸⁹ permits total access without ever approaching a judge.”²⁹⁰ According to Nail Murzhakhanov, director of Bayard-Slavia Communications in Volgograd, if he decides to comply with FSB requests and provides them with everything that they’ve asked him for, “they could very easily have read all the clients’ passwords. And once they learned the passwords, they could have controlled online all the e-mail traffic. They could have read or rewritten an e-mail even before the receiver got it, and the user would never know.”²⁹¹ In this case, Murzhakhanov refused to sign the FSB’s request, a move that caused him financial loss and resulted in a number of restrictions placed on his business, however, most of the times, the Internet service providers simply comply with FSB orders. Furthermore, Russian “prosecutors have [also] begun to target postings on blogs or Internet chat sites, charging users with slander or extremism after they criticize Putin or other officials. Most such incidents have occurred outside Moscow, and federal officials deny that they signal any broader campaign to control the Internet.”²⁹²

²⁸⁹ These regulations are referred to as System for Operational-Investigative Activities (SORM), and “they require Internet providers to give their local FSB office whatever hardware, software and fiber-optic lines may be needed to tap into the provider’s system and all its users.” (LaFraniere, *Russian Spies, They’ve Got Mail*).

²⁹⁰ LaFraniere, Sharon, “Russian Spies, They’ve Got Mail: Regulations Allow Security Services to Tap into Systems of Internet Providers,” *The Washington Post*, 7 March, 2002.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Troianovski, “Kremlin Seeks to Extend its Reach.”

Conclusion

According to an article by Nikolai Petrov in *The Moscow Times*, a number of different protests and demonstrations happened throughout Russia in February 2009. “Many different organizations participated in the anti-government protests, including the Federation of Automobile Owners, the Communist Part, the Left Front, The Other Russia, Solidarity, the United Civil Front, the Communist Youth Union, the National Assembly, the banned National Bolshevik Party, and Yabloko.”²⁹³ In addition to this, as we can see in a number of different publications²⁹⁴, the Russian government has adapted their tactics to the current nature of protests. We see less and less violent intervention by the government putting down protesters,²⁹⁵ as the government is beginning to utilize the same organizational tactics as the protesters and hold their own counter-protests in support of Kremlin.²⁹⁶ In the words of Dmitri Trenin, “Democracy is a fairly late child of capitalism. It is usually preceded by a period of liberal and constitutional development. There are few shortcuts here, but the process itself, driven by interests, is by and large reliable.”²⁹⁷

²⁹³ Petrov, Nikolai, “Testing the Public’s Appetite for Protests,” *The Moscow Times*, February 3, 2009, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=22691> Accessed on 5/27/09.

²⁹⁴ Evidence of this can be seen in many different publications by authors like N. Petrov, A. Troianovski, I. Zassourski, etc.

²⁹⁵ See Ivan Zassourski, *Media and Power*, and *The Economist*, “Uncle Volodya’s Christmas Spirit,” for examples of violent intervention by the government.

²⁹⁶ Petrov, “Testing the Public’s Appetite for Protests.”

²⁹⁷ Trenin, *Getting Russia Right*, 48.

Chapter 8: **Conclusion**

“While in the past, political leaders could get away with [bad] behavior, we have now moved into a revolutionary new world. All over the planet executive and bureaucratic hierarchies are being challenged by increasingly empowered and informed electorates, as well as by e-enabled protest. Voters want service and ongoing accountability, not dictation and top down arrogance. And if they cannot get it they will employ ways other than through voting and party politics to satisfy their needs.”

Lord Howell of Guildford,
Opposition Spokesman on Foreign Affairs,
*United Kingdom*²⁹⁸

There is an increasing awareness among governments and individuals that they have the capacity to combat various forms of discrimination, injustice, deceit and corruption that are present in their societies. In addition to this, citizens around the world are realizing that they have the power and technological capabilities to challenge powerful political figures and corrupt governments. The Internet, cell phones, videophones, blogging, podcasts, camcorders and other Information Communication Technologies are providing regular individuals with unprecedented capacity to voice their opinions, organize social protests, challenge corrupt regimes and initiate change in a way that has not been possible before. With decreases in communication costs, and increases in access to information, this is a perfect opportunity for individuals and governments alike, to explore the various ways in which “the Internet and media can be used positively to create forms of globalization that generate social justice.”²⁹⁹ At the same time,

²⁹⁸ Williams, Christopher. *Leadership Accountability in a Globalizing World*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY: 2006. p. 178

²⁹⁹ Jones, Andrew, *Dictionary of Globalization*, (Malden: Polity Press, 2006), 203.

however, it is up to the individuals and the governments to initiate positive political change in their countries. Although ICTs certainly make the task at hand easier, the responsibility to utilize these technologies in a positive way rests with mankind.

Many individuals, however, are not as optimistic about the ‘color revolutions’ that have been taking place in the former Soviet Bloc over the past 20 years, or ICTs ability to make change. In an article in OpenDemocracy.net Vassela Tcherneva, senior policy fellow at the European council on Foreign Relations writes:

“The “orange” and “rose” revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia have been widely cited as precedents of Moldova’s ‘Twitter Revolution.’ These however have become less than inspiring comparisons, for the current condition of both countries’ democracies is bleak. Ukraine, amid endemic political turmoil and on the brink of economic collapse, could turn into the biggest failed state in Europe. Georgia, amid rooted political polarization and distrust, faces constant street protests against Mikheil Saakashvili’s authoritarian tendencies (including curbs on the independence of Georgian courts and media, and intimidation of the opposition) and discontent over his handling of the war with Russia in August.”³⁰⁰

As a result, the increased level of control and authoritarianism that we are seeing in many countries, is making it much more difficult for individuals to create any type of an opposition movement. Furthermore, many of these countries are also prohibiting foreign NGOs from acting within their borders. The reason for this is clear: had any of the countries in the former Soviet Union that experienced revolutions been true dictatorships, it is very unlikely that these revolutions would have occurred. Leaders that took control after the revolutions understand this, and so do leaders like Vladimir Putin.

In addition to this, many point to the fact that while individuals certainly have access to more ICTs, the authoritarian governments also utilize ICTs as countermeasures against dissenters. However, according to Gladys Ganley the “governments have always

³⁰⁰ Tcherneva, Vassela. “Moldova: Time to Take Sides.” *European Council on Foreign Relations*, April 14, 2009. http://ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary_tcherneva_open_democracy_moldova/

had such powers and these new ones are merely relative. The important change is one of balance, and the scale, previously always tilted toward the government's side, has at least for the moment tipped toward the individual."³⁰¹

There are also some individuals that argue that all of these revolutions are simply the result of manipulation by the U.S. and other Western powers attempting to contain Russia. However, while organizations from the U.S. and other western countries have certainly been involved in each revolution that took place in the former Soviet Union, their impact on what actually took place need not be overstated. Their contribution, while significant in helping many groups organize, is not the main factor driving these revolutionary movements. In each instance the movements were driven by local populations, and they have been increasingly independent with every attempt. While in Georgia foreign involvement was a primary factor in fueling the opposition, the Ukraine's 'Orange Revolution' had more local support. This is even more so in the case of Kyrgyzstan, and the most recent 'Twitter Revolution' in Moldova, where foreign support, although present, was very minimal.

In conclusion, it is still early to determine the long-term effects of these revolutions, but their importance cannot be overstated. If these countries are eventually successful in increasing the level of democracy and raising the economic level for their citizens, it will be a positive example for other countries to follow. If, on the other hand, the leadership of these countries fails to live up to the promises they made when they were leaders of these opposition movements, then this will also be a sign for oppressive regimes everywhere, allowing them to feel more stable and secure as they continue to

³⁰¹ Ganley, 5.

rule their country in a way that is beneficial to a select few and not for the benefit of their people.

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS, CONCEPTS AND INDIVIDUALS

ASKAR AKAEV: President of Kyrgyzstan until March, 2005, when he was ousted by the Kyrgyz opposition during the Tulip Revolution. He was replaced by President Kurmanbek Bakiev.

AUTOCRACY: Form of government in which all political powers are held by a single individual.

B-92: Anti-Milosevic radio station in Serbia that provided listeners with a view that was not controlled by the government. The radio station received much of its funding from foreign sources and was crucial in overthrowing Slobodan Milosevic.

BALKAN STATES: A geopolitical region which includes Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, and former Yugoslav Republics (except Slovenia).

BALTIC STATES: A geopolitical region which includes Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania.

BLOG: Popularized in the late 1990s, blogs are websites which typically belong to an individual or an organization where one posts regular entries. The term is a contraction of *Web Log*, and is oftentimes used to post news items and images, which are then discussed by blog visitors.

THE CAUCASUS: A geopolitical region located between Europe, Asia and the Middle East. The Caucasus consist of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and adjacent parts of Russia.

CENTRAL ASIA: A geopolitical region comprised of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

CIVIL SOCIETY: Voluntary social and civic organizations that are the basis of a free society. Civil Society is an essential element in opposing authoritarian regimes.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES (CIS): A regional organization which is headed by the Russian Federation and includes most of the former USSR (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan).

COMMUNISM: A form of socialism that is based on collectivism instead of free market and private ownership.

CAPITALISM: An economic system based on private ownership of capital goods and on competition in a free market.

DEMOCRACY: Although there is no agreed on definition, democracy typically refers to a political system in which the power lies with the people, who then choose their representation via free elections.

DUMA: The State Duma is the lower house of the Federal Assembly (parliament) of Russia and consists of 450 members.

EASTERN EUROPE: A geopolitical region that includes Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Serbia and Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Macedonia, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova.

E-GOVERNMENT: Short for Electronic Government, E-Government refers to the use of ICT in providing various government services in order to increase transparency, efficiency and effectiveness.

FACEBOOK: Founded on February 4, 2004, Facebook is a social networking site that provides millions of users around the world with unprecedented ability to organize and communicate with each other. According to the website, “Facebook’s mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected.” Facebook played an important role in Moldova’s ‘Twitter Revolution.’

FLICKR: An online photo management and sharing application that allows users to make their content available to anyone, anywhere, around the world. Flickr played an important role in Moldova’s ‘Twitter Revolution’ by allowing protesters to post images of the events which were seen around the world.

FREEDOM: Although there is no agreed on definition, Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen, breaks down the idea of freedom into five different concepts: *political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security.*

FREEDOM HOUSE: A U.S.-based, non-profit and non-partisan organization, whose mission is to promote democracy and freedom around the world. Freedom House accomplishes this via a wide range of publications and international programs that are partially funded by the U.S. government. Freedom House played an important role in the color revolutions.

GEOPOLITICS: A concept that originated in the early 20th century, and emphasizes the importance of geography on politics and foreign affairs. Many scholars argue that geopolitics is the central factor behind U.S. interventions in the former Soviet bloc.

GLASNOST: Russian for ‘openness,’ Glasnost was a Soviet policy introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986 that allowed open discussion of political and social issues,

and provided more freedoms for the media. Many argue that Glasnost was an essential factor behind the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

GLOBALIZATION: The process of integrating the various countries and individuals into a single ‘global’ society. Globalization is a key factor in fueling opposition movements around the world.

HARD POWER: Power obtained from use of the military and economic sanctions.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT): An umbrella term that includes all technology utilized for communication purposes.

THE INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE (IRI): U.S.-based, non-profit and non-partisan organization, whose mission is to advance “democracy worldwide by developing political parties, civic institutions, open elections, good governance and the rule of law.” IRI receives nearly 100 percent of its funding from the U.S. State Department and played an important role in the revolutionary movements throughout the former USSR.

KELKEL: Meaning ‘Renaissance,’ Kelkel was a Kyrgyz youth movement that was modeled after Otpor, Kmara and Pora movements.

KMARA: Meaning ‘Enough,’ Kmara was a Georgian youth movement created by the Liberty Institute and modeled after Serbia’s Otpor movement. Kmara played an important role in overthrowing Shevardnadze and bringing Saakashvili to power.

THE LIBERTY INSTITUTE: Open Society Institute-backed NGO that was part of the opposition movement against Eduard Shevardnadze. Also helped create the Kmara youth movement.

MANAGED DEMOCRACY: A phenomenon that occurs when the ruling elite maintain an appearance of democracy by allowing certain freedoms to exist, but do everything in their power to restrict these freedoms. In a managed democracy, the government holds elections, but controls their outcome.

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE (NDI): A U.S.-based, non-profit and non-partisan organization, whose mission is to “support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.” NDI played an important role in the revolutionary movements throughout the former USSR, and receives most of its funding from the U.S. government.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY (NED): A non-profit agency funded by the U.S. government, whose mission is to promote democracy around the world. NED provided funding to a number of organizations that were leading the opposition movements in Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova.

OTPOR: A Serbian youth movement that was funded by the U.S. government and played an important role in protests against Slobodan Milosevic. Meaning ‘Resistance,’ Otpor was a model for Pora, Kmara and KelKel youth movements in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, respectively.

PERESTROIKA: Russian for ‘restructuring,’ Perestroika was a set of political and economic reforms introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987. Many argue that Perestroika was an essential factor behind the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

PORA: Meaning ‘It’s time,’ Pora was a Ukrainian youth movement that led the opposition against Yanukovych. Pora was partially funded by the U.S. government and modeled after Otpor and Kmara movements.

RUSTAVI 2: An independent television in Georgia that was central in fueling the opposition movement during the ‘Rose Revolution.’

SAMIZDAT: According to H. Gordon Skilling, samizdat is “the distribution of uncensored writings on one’s own, without the medium of a publishing house and without permission of the authorities...Although there are examples of *samizdat* in eighteenth and nineteenth century Russia, the term first emerged in late 1950s, “when a Moscow poet described the bound, typewritten publication of his poem, ‘Samsebyaizdat,’ i.e., ‘publishing house for oneself.’ The same poet coined the term *samizdat*, with the same meaning. It was the latter word which came into general usage to refer to unofficial publications of all kinds and to the entire process of unofficial publication. There is no English equivalent, other than the awkward ‘self-publication.’”³⁰²

SOFT POWER: Power obtained from the use of diplomacy and co-option.

GEORGE SOROS: A billionaire philanthropist and founder of Open Society Institute. Soros has provided billions of dollars to various pro-democracy organizations around the world. Many consider Soros to be one of the key supporters of the revolutionary movements in Eastern Europe.

TWITTER: Twitter is a social networking site that provides users with an ability to organize and stay connected through an exchange of quick messages. Twitter played a central role in Moldova’s ‘Twitter Revolution.’

YUGOSLAVIA (FORMER): Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was established in 1946 and consisted of six republics (Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Macedonia).

³⁰² Skilling, H. G., *Samizdat and an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989), 3-5.

Figure 1: Georgia in 2003

Background	Georgia was absorbed into the Russian Empire in the 19th century. Independent for three years (1918-1921) following the Russian revolution, it was forcibly incorporated into the USSR until the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991. Ethnic separation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, poor governance, and Russian military bases deny the government effective control over the entirety of the state's internationally recognized territory. Despite myriad problems, some progress on market reforms and democratization has been made. An attempt by the government to manipulate legislative elections in November 2003 touched off widespread protests that led to the resignation of Eduard SHEVARDNADZE, president since 1995.
Area	Total: 69,700 sq km
Population	4,693,892 (July 2004 est.)
Ethnic Groups	Georgian 70.1%, Armenian 8.1%, Russian 6.3%, Azeri 5.7%, Ossetian 3%, Abkhaz 1.8%, other 5%
Religions	Georgian Orthodox 65%, Muslim 11%, Russian Orthodox 10%, Armenian Apostolic 8%, unknown 6%
Languages	Georgian 71% (official), Russian 9%, Armenian 7%, Azeri 6%, other 7% <i>note: Abkhaz is the official language in Abkhazia</i>
Literacy	Total population: 99% (male: 100%; female: 98%) (1999 est.) Definition: age 15 and over can read and write
Legal System	Based on civil law system
GDP (Per Capita)	\$2,500 (2003 est.)
Labor Force	2.1 million (2001 est.)
Telephones (main lines in use)	648,500 (2002)
Telephones (mobile cellular)	503,600 (2002)
Radio Broadcast Stations	AM 7, FM 12, shortwave 4 (1998)
Television Broadcast Stations	12 (plus repeaters) (1998)
Internet Hosts	3,032 (2002)
Internet Users	73,500 (2002)

Source: The CIA World Factbook, 2004

Figure 2: Ukraine in 2004

Background	Following the collapse of czarist Russia in 1917, Ukraine was able to bring about a short-lived period of independence (1917-20), but was re-conquered and forced to endure a brutal Soviet rule that engineered two artificial famines (1921-22 and 1932-33) in which over 8 million died. In World War II, German and Soviet armies were responsible for some 7 to 8 million more deaths. Although final independence for Ukraine was achieved in 1991 with the dissolution of the USSR, democracy remained elusive as the legacy of state control and endemic corruption stalled efforts at economic reform, privatization, and civil liberties.
Area	Total: 603,700 sq km
Population	47,425,336 (July 2005 est.)
Ethnic Groups	Ukrainian 77.8%, Russian 17.3%, Belarusian 0.6%, Moldovan 0.5%, Crimean Tatar 0.5%, Bulgarian 0.4%, Hungarian 0.3%, Romanian 0.3%, Polish 0.3%, Jewish 0.2%, other 1.8% (2001)
Religions	Ukrainian Orthodox - Kiev Patriarchate 19%, Orthodox (no particular jurisdiction) 16%, Ukrainian Orthodox - Moscow Patriarchate 9%, Ukrainian Greek Catholic 6%, Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox 1.7%, Protestant, Jewish, none 38% (2004 est.)
Languages	Ukrainian (official) 67%, Russian 24%; small Romanian-, Polish-, and Hungarian-speaking minorities
Literacy	Total population: 99.7% (male: 99.8%; female: 99.6%) (2003 est.) Definition: age 15 and over can read and write
Legal System	Based on civil law system; judicial review of legislative acts
GDP (Per Capita)	\$6,300 (2004 est.)
Labor Force	21.11 million (2004 est.)
Telephones (main lines in use)	10,833,300 (2002)
Telephones (mobile cellular)	4.2 million (2002)
Radio Broadcast Stations	AM 134, FM 289, shortwave 4 (1998)
Television Broadcast Stations	At least 33 (plus 21 repeaters that relay broadcasts from Russia) (1997)
Internet Hosts	94,345 (2004)
Internet Users	3.8 million (2003)

Source: The CIA World Factbook, 2005

Figure 3: Kyrgyzstan in 2005

Background	A Central Asian country of incredible natural beauty and proud nomadic traditions, Kyrgyzstan was annexed by Russia in 1864; it achieved independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Nationwide demonstrations in the spring of 2005 resulted in the ouster of President Askar AKAYEV, who had run the country since 1990. Subsequent presidential elections in July 2005 were won overwhelmingly by former prime minister Kurmanbek BAKIYEV. Current concerns include: privatization of state-owned enterprises, expansion of democracy and political freedoms, reduction of corruption, improving interethnic relations, and combating terrorism.
Area	Total: 198,500 sq km
Population	5,146,281 (July 2005 est.)
Ethnic Groups	Kyrgyz 64.9%, Uzbek 13.8%, Russian 12.5%, Dungan 1.1%, Ukrainian 1%, Uygur 1%, other 5.7% (1999 census)
Religions	Muslim 75%, Russian Orthodox 20%, other 5%
Languages	Kyrgyz (official), Russian (official)
Literacy	Total population: 97% (male: 99%; female: 96%) (1989 est.) Definition: age 15 and over can read and write
Legal System	Based on civil law system
GDP (Per Capita)	\$2,100 (2005 est.)
Labor Force	2.7 million (2000)
Telephones (main lines in use)	416,400 (2004)
Telephones (mobile cellular)	263,400 (2004)
Radio Broadcast Stations	AM 12 (plus 10 repeater stations), FM 14, shortwave 2 (1998)
Television Broadcast Stations	NA (repeater stations throughout the country relay programs from Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkey) (1997)
Internet Hosts	18,539 (2005)
Internet Users	263,000 (2005)

Source: The CIA World Factbook, 2005, 2006

Figure 4: Moldova in 2009

Background	Part of Romania during the interwar period, Moldova was incorporated into the Soviet Union at the close of World War II. Although independent from the USSR since 1991, Russian forces have remained on Moldovan territory east of the Dniester River supporting the Slavic majority population, mostly Ukrainians and Russians, who have proclaimed a "Transnistria" republic. One of the poorest nations in Europe, Moldova became the first former Soviet state to elect a Communist as its president in 2001.
Area	total: 33,843 sq km (country comparison to the world: 146)
Population	4,320,748 (July 2009 est.) (country comparison to the world: 123)
Ethnic Groups	Moldovan/Romanian 78.2%, Ukrainian 8.4%, Russian 5.8%, Gagauz 4.4%, Bulgarian 1.9%, other 1.3% (2004 census)
Religions	Eastern Orthodox 98%, Jewish 1.5%, Baptist and other 0.5% (2000)
Languages	Moldovan (official, virtually the same as the Romanian language), Russian, Gagauz (a Turkish dialect)
Literacy	Total population: 99.1% (male: 99.7%; female: 98.6%) (2005 est.) Definition: age 15 and over can read and write
Legal System	Based on civil law system; Constitutional Court reviews legality of legislative acts and governmental decisions of resolution; accepts many UN and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) documents; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction
GDP (Per Capita)	\$2,500 (2008 est.) (country comparison to the world: 172) <i>note: data are in 2008 US dollars</i>
Labor Force	1.327 million (2008 est.) (country comparison to the world: 126)
Telephones (main lines in use)	1.08 million (2007) country comparison to the world: 76
Telephones (mobile cellular)	1.883 million (2007) country comparison to the world: 115
Radio Broadcast Stations	AM 2, FM 29, shortwave NA (2006)
Television Broadcast Stations	40 (2006)
Internet Hosts	223,869 (2008) (country comparison to the world: 57)
Internet Users	700,000 (2007) (country comparison to the world: 94)

Source: The CIA World Factbook, 2009.

Figure 5: Russia in 2009

Background	The Soviet economy and society stagnated in the following decades until General Secretary Mikhail GORBACHEV (1985-91) introduced glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring) in an attempt to modernize Communism, but his initiatives inadvertently released forces that by December 1991 splintered the USSR into Russia and 14 other independent republics. Since then, Russia has shifted its post-Soviet democratic ambitions in favor of a centralized semi-authoritarian state whose legitimacy is buttressed, in part, by carefully managed national elections, former President PUTIN's genuine popularity, and the prudent management of Russia's windfall energy wealth. Russia has severely disabled a Chechen rebel movement, although violence still occurs throughout the North Caucasus.
Area	Total: 17,075,200 sq km
Population	140,041,247 (July 2009 est.)
Ethnic Groups	Russian 79.8%, Tatar 3.8%, Ukrainian 2%, Bashkir 1.2%, Chuvash 1.1%, other or unspecified 12.1% (2002 census)
Religions	Russian Orthodox 15-20%, Muslim 10-15%, other Christian 2% (2006 est.) <i>note: estimates are of practicing worshipers; Russia has large populations of non-practicing believers and non-believers, a legacy of over seven decades of Soviet rule</i>
Languages	Russian, many minority languages
Literacy	Total population: 99.4% (male: 99.7%; female: 99.2%) (2002) Definition: age 15 and over can read and write
Legal System	Based on civil law system; judicial review of legislative acts; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction
GDP (Per Capita)	\$15,800 (2008 est.)
Labor Force	75.7 million (2008 est.) (country comparison to the world: 7)
Telephones (main lines in use)	43.9 million (2006) country comparison to the world: 6
Telephones (mobile cellular)	170 million (2007) country comparison to the world: 5
Radio Broadcast Stations	AM 323, FM 1,500 est., shortwave 62 (2004)
Television Broadcast Stations	7,306 (1998)
Internet Hosts	4.822 million (2008) (country comparison to the world: 15)
Internet Users	30 million (2007) (country comparison to the world: 12)

Source: The CIA World Factbook, 2009.

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