



The crisis in Ukraine and protests in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) have made this calendar year an exceptionally eventful one for our region. This issue profiles Alexander Vershbow, Russian Institute alumnus, deputy secretary general of NATO, and former U.S. ambassador to Russia, South Korea, and NATO, who provided a thoughtful perspective on the crisis in Ukraine in his April 2014 speech titled, “A New Strategic Reality in Europe.” In addition, Mykalo Riabchuk, a former Harriman Institute Petro Jacyk Visiting Professor, draws on various scholarly and journalistic arguments to analyze the sources of the Maidan protests and Ukraine’s deeper struggle to balance Eastern and Western influences. Turning to the political unrest in BiH, Tanya Domi, adjunct professor of international and public affairs, and Jasmin Mujanović, visiting scholar at the Harriman Institute, find hope in the creation of grassroots popular assemblies to address deep political cleavages.

In these challenging times, historical perspective is in high demand and, too often, short supply. In a profile of the late Peter H. Juviler, professor emeritus of political science at Barnard College and cofounder of Barnard’s human rights program, we see what it was like to travel to the USSR in 1956 as one of the first U.S. graduate students to visit the region after the Stalin years. Tom Kent, adjunct professor of journalism and of international and public affairs, who was a correspondent in Moscow during the Brezhnev years, reflects on reasons for the survival of Brezhnev’s failing regime, giving us a taste of life during the last years of the Soviet Union. Then, on a more humorous note, the award-winning author, Gary Shteyngart, a Harriman faculty member, discusses his new memoir, *Little Failure*, and what it was like to come to the United States from Leningrad as a seven-year-old. We were fortunate to host Shteyngart for a reading and discussion this spring, and you can find photographs of the event accompanying the interview (to watch the video, go here: harriman.columbia.edu/event/reading-and-conversation-gary-shteyngart).

We also have a special treat. Last fall, we had the pleasure of mounting Nina Alover’s “The Dancers,” a retrospective of her photographs of Russian ballet in the Soviet Union and the United States from the 1960s to the twenty-first century. You can find some of these photographs within the pages of this magazine. We’ve also profiled Stephen Reidy, a former Russian Institute student who currently sits on the board of the New York City Ballet. And, last but not least in the ballet section, we have a piece on the prominent ballet historian and Harriman faculty member Lynn Garafola, who won fellowships from both the Guggenheim Foundation and the New York Public Library’s Cullman Center for the year 2013–14 to support research for her biography of Bronislava Nijinska.

In addition, Cathy Popkin of Columbia’s Slavic Department recently published the new Norton Critical Edition of *Anton Chekhov’s Selected Stories*. We are thrilled to reprint excerpts from her Introduction as well as a story from the collection. We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to hearing your feedback and ideas for future stories.

Timothy Frye
Director, Harriman Institute