



The year 2017 marks the centenary of the Russian Revolution, and it is certainly proving to be an unsettling year when it comes to geopolitical developments. In these turbulent and unpredictable times, it is important to maintain an open and constructive academic space for debate and to revisit the past. On that note, I am delighted to announce that the Harriman Institute has come into the possession of an invaluable resource. Journalist and Carnegie Europe senior fellow Thomas de Waal has donated a collection of audio files containing all the unique interviews he conducted for his first two acclaimed books—*Chechnya: Calamity in the Caucasus* and *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War*. These books detail the history and evolution of two conflicts often overlooked by the international community, but whose details and dynamics we know about largely because of Tom's brave reporting.

In this issue of *Harriman Magazine*, we travel back to the 1990s, to Russia's first conflict with Chechnya, in an in-depth interview with de Waal about his first book. De Waal covered the conflict from its inception, and he takes us into the minds of the Kremlin policymakers and Chechen resistance fighters of that time, reminding us just how easily the conflict could have been avoided. He also recounts the history of the relationship between Russia and Chechnya—the resistance against the Russian Empire, Stalin's deportations—highlighting the importance of historical context when it comes to policymaking. Stay tuned for the spring issue for an interview with de Waal about his second book on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Also in this issue, we have a piece from our postdoctoral research fellow Yana Gorokhovskaia, about the upcoming presidential elections in Russia; profiles of political scientist Kimberly Marten, our alum Matthew Schaaf—who currently directs Freedom House's first office in Ukraine, and the Russian graphic journalist Victoria Lomasko; and an essay about my latest book, *Dictators without Borders: Power and Money in Central Asia*.

We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to hearing your feedback and ideas for future stories.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Alex Cooley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Alexander Cooley
Director, Harriman Institute