5 The State of the Second World

Formerly an entity with its own objectives and dynamic, the Second World is currently in complete disarray. While it consists of societies in transition, their paths and destinations are not at all clear at this stage. Some, such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Russian Federation, and Belarus, appear to be in transition from former antistrategic countries (FASCs) to strategic countries (SCs). Others, such as the Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Albania, could well be in transition from FASCs to nonstrategic countries (NSCs). Those in between may have to be satisfied in the foreseeable future with emerging strategic country (ESC) status. It will all depend on their varying abilities to engage with the global strategic transition (GST) by developing a viable dynamic strategy. This variety of dynamic outcomes is usually overlooked by those who see these societies moving as a group from command to market systems.

In this chapter the state of the former Second World is analysed using dynamic-strategy theory. This involves a discussion of the real nature of FASCs, what the concept of ‘transition’ actually means, why the Second World rose and fell, and how the performance of FASCs differs from that of other societies attempting to enter into the GST.

5.1 THE REAL NATURE OF ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION

In the broader attempt to provide analytical categories that reflect dynamic reality, a distinction was drawn in Chapter 4 between NSCs, ESCs, FASCs, and SCs according to their relationship with the global strategic transition. The results for FASCs are summarized in Table 4.3 section III, where GST rankings range from the Czech Republic’s 27th place to the Kyrgyz Republic’s 81st place. These FASC outcomes extend across the entire range of the ESC category from the NSC to the SC thresholds. Yet, while FASCs and ESCs overlap in terms of material outcomes, their relationships with the GST are very different. The ESC is in transition from the NSC to the SC category, whereas the FASC is in transition from the antistrategic country (ASC) to the SC, NSC, or ESC categories. In other
words, the essence of Second-World transition is from the pursuit of anti-strategic to strategic objectives, rather than from a command to a market economy. The implications of the distinction will become clearer as we proceed.

The FASCs are historically unique. While there have been global strategic transitions before our own – during the pre-palaeolithic, palaeolithic, and neolithic technological eras – there has never been an antistrategic global process. The disastrous Soviet experiment of the twentieth century was an attempt by radical antistrategists to survive and prosper by developing an economic/political/social system that would overwhelm strategists not only in Russia but the entire world. In the attempt, the USSR established itself as an antistrategic force to rival the strategic leadership of the Western World.

The Soviet experiment led to a momentous clash between the great dynamic principle that has generated the progress of human society over the past two million years on the one hand, and the negation of that principle that could have brought civilization to an end on the other. The great dynamic principle is the strategic pursuit, and its negation is the antistrategic containment. More specifically, the antistrategic containment was an attempt to transform individual strategists (profit-seekers) into antistrategists (rent-seekers) who would follow the dictates not of prevailing economic forces but of the ruling antistrategists.

For three generations between the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the collapse of the USSR in 1990, the world consisted of two non-interacting and combative economic systems: the strategic system of the Western World and the nonstrategic system of the Soviet world. These two systems competed with each other for global supremacy, attracting NSCs into their respective orbits. This was less a clash of ideologies than a clash between the forces of dynamics and of stasis because, if the Soviet world had gained global supremacy, there would have been no reason for the ruling antistrategists to encourage growth. Economic growth was a burdensome necessity if the USSR was to compete effectively with the West. But if they had managed to overwhelm the West, containment of the potential strategists (who are always a threat to the antistrategists) and extraction of rents would have been enough. By the antistrategic negation of the dynamic-strategy principle, flux would yield to stasis. The great intellectual quest for stasis from Plato to Marx would have been realized (Snooks 1998a: ch. 3).

The two opposing principles of flux and stasis cannot coexist over the longer term because the triumph of one requires the elimination of the other. The problem for the antistrategic world is that, although it had