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CERES Brown Bag Talk:
**The Authoritarian International: Tracing How
Authoritarian Regimes Learn in the Post-Soviet Space**
Stephen G. F. Hall

Department of Politics, Languages and International Studies
University of Bath, UK

Stephen Hall argues that democracies can preserve their norms and values from increasing attacks and backsliding by better understanding how authoritarian regimes learn. He focuses on the post-Soviet region, investigating two established autocracies, Belarus, and Russia, and two hybrid-regimes, Moldova and Ukraine, with the aim of explaining the concept of authoritarian learning and revealing the practices that are developed and the sources of that learning.

Hall finds clear signs of collaboration between countries in developing best survival practices between authoritarian-minded elites, and demonstrates that learning does not just occur between states, rather it can happen at the intra-state level, with elites learning lessons from previous regimes in their own countries. He highlights the horizontal nature of this learning, with authoritarian-minded elites developing methods from a range of sources to ascertain the best practices for survival. Post-Soviet regional organisations are crucial for the development and sharing of these survival practices as they provide 'learning rooms,' and training exercises.

This presentation highlights the findings of the book and explains that learning is multi-faceted and undertaken by autocracies to survive. However, thankfully they do not always learn the right lessons and so are in a constant race for survival.

