Acknowledgements

After more than 50 years of viewing Russia and Eastern Europe from different vantage points – academia, government service and living in or visiting the region – like any honest author, I should begin by conceding that a huge amount of such wisdom as I’ve accumulated is borrowed. Footnotes and bibliographies are a form of very partial acknowledgement, but the debt is essentially undischargeable. Nonetheless, I would like to pay tribute to a few of my more recent intellectual creditors.

But first I would like to warmly thank the staff and members of the Centre for European Studies at The Australian National University for their hospitality over the period in which these essays were being researched and written. In particular, I would like to thank Professor Jacqueline Lo, the Director of the Centre, and Dr Annmarie Elijah, the Associate Director, for their encouragement and support, including through the award of the ANU CES Publishing Prize. The Centre provides a relaxed and stimulating environment for research, and its staff members and visiting fellows past and present have contributed a great deal to maintaining that atmosphere. I thank them all. In addition, the Centre hosts a large number of academic visitors every year, many of whom have had impressive expertise relevant to the subjects touched upon in these essays.

I owe a very great debt to Associate Professor Kevin Windle, who read the manuscript at an advanced stage, making many invaluable suggestions on structure and presentation, as well as detailed content. With his remarkable knowledge of the languages, literatures and history of Europe, especially Russia and Eastern Europe, Kevin was the ideal consultant and adviser.
Justine Molony and Mary Besemeris also read the entire manuscript, and very closely. With heroic patience they endured my serial cybervishaps, repairing their ravages with precision and great competence. I would also like to thank most warmly Emily Tinker and her colleagues at ANU Press; and Jenny Sheehan and colleagues at CartoGIS, ANU, for the maps. I am deeply grateful to them all. None of the above, nor indeed anyone else, should be held responsible for bloopers of any kind that I have managed to slip past them.

Among the people who have helped me to diagnose trends and assemble facts and arguments relevant to this book, I would particularly like to thank Kyle Wilson, David Wall, Bobo Lo, Stephen Fortescue, Robert Horvath, Peter Rutland, Csaba Nikolényi, Marko Pavlyshyn, Igor Melchuk, Peter Reddaway, Bob Miller, Peter Browne, Martin Krygier, Janek Pakulski, Seweryn Ozdowski, Chris Cvić, Peter Hill, Saša Pavković, Stefan Markowski, Nina Marković, Halyna and George Koscharsky, Marek Heleniak and Genrikh Salata.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Anna Wierzbicka, whose extensive knowledge and love of things Russian as well as Polish have taught me much over decades, and continue to save me many a google. She introduced me to a circle of remarkable and lifelong Polish and Russian friends, with whom any conversation was always a pleasure, as well as a seminar.
This text is taken from *A Difficult Neighbourhood: Essays on Russia and East-Central Europe since World War II*, by John Besemeres, published 2016 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.