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**NAVAL  
POSTGRADUATE  
SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**RUSSIA-A NEW EMPIRE UNDER CONSTRUCTION  
THE RUSSIAN POLICY TOWARDS FORMER COMMUNIST  
SATELLITES-MECHANISMS OF EXERTION OF  
INFLUENCE**

by

Mariusz Nogaj

December 2008

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**RUSSIA-A NEW EMPIRE UNDER CONSTRUCTION  
THE RUSSIAN POLICY TOWARDS FORMER COMMUNIST SATELLITES-  
MECHANISMS OF EXERTION OF INFLUENCE**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The bankruptcy of the communist ideology left Russia in an uncomfortable position at the top of falling Empire. This new geopolitical reality had demanded redefinition of the Russian national interests and goals. Recovering from the shock of the lost Cold War lasted in Russia almost a decade, and was symbolically ended when the old and ailing President Yeltsin was replaced by young and active Putin. Under President Putin the Russian policy adopted some characteristics of radical nationalism, neo-imperialism and Great Power sentiments. This thesis examines how the Russian foreign policy strategy was developed and used as a tool for exertion of influence over the post-communist states, particularly Poland, Ukraine, and Georgia. The Balance of Power model of international relations serves as the theoretical framework to draw conclusion from the research, and to formulate some policy recommendations for the examined countries. Each case study is organized around evaluation of four dimensions of state power, namely diplomacy, information, military, and economy (DIME). The adopted approach to assess these four fields assumes that there are both conventional and unconventional mechanisms used by Russia in each of these fields.



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Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my editor of the thesis Barbara Berlitz and formatter Nancy Sharrock. They definitely made this thesis readable.

I hope that this thesis will somewhat contribute to understanding Russian behavior in the contemporary world, especially here at NPS, where my new friends are also the future U.S. military leadership. As a Polish citizen and officer, I have no doubt that the current Russian elites have abandoned the imperial ideas. Thus, I think that the truth about Russia must be disseminated wherever it is possible, hopefully, to prevent the repetition of the Georgian scenario. This thesis is my personal contribution to this goal.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE

The collapse of the Soviet communist bloc and subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union was undoubtedly one of the most significant political events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a consequence, the world's political map was populated by many newly emerged states-the former Soviet republics, e.g., Ukraine or Georgia including Russia itself. In turn, the former members of the communist bloc were given a historical opportunity to break its ties with the Russian hegemon, and to start pursuing independent policy, in order to seek for them a proper place in the international community. One of the most prominent countries from this group of states was Poland.

The geopolitical location of Poland never favored it. Located between two powerful neighbors, Germany and Russia, Poland has had to struggle many times for its survival. The last episode of this struggle took place in 1989, when Poland freed itself from Russian dominance. Since that time, Poland has tried to do its best to secure for itself a proper place in the community of the democratic countries. Those efforts were reflected in joining North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (UE).

Establishing a foreign policy based on equality, democracy and mutual respect with Polish neighbors is considered as one of the most crucial parts of the Polish national security strategy. From this point of view, the relationship with Russia has a special meaning for Poland.

However, there is little evidence that Russian policymakers have abandoned the communist doctrine of the near abroad.<sup>1</sup> Instead, there are numerous examples suggesting that Russia is attempting to sustain its zone of influence over Poland. Moreover, it seems that Poland is not the only former communist state having problems establishing a good relationship with Russia. This has been an issue for the Baltic States, Azerbaijan, the Ukraine and Georgia.

That Russia is again on the path to reestablish its zone of influence over the former communist bloc states is this thesis' working hypothesis and a starting point for further research. The research in this work is based on the case study method, and is built around the examination of the Russian foreign policy towards Poland, Ukraine, and Georgia. These countries have been chosen as case studies in order to see the full-range of Russian foreign policy initiatives, a state previously independent but dominated by the USSR (Poland) and two actual components of the former USSR (Georgia and Ukraine). Once the initial hypothesis is established, the research will be focused on examination of the underlying reasons for this Russian policy and identifying the mechanisms by which Moscow's political goals are being attempted.

The Balance of Power model of international relations serves as an analytical framework for the research made in this thesis. Based on the main assumptions of this model,

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<sup>1</sup> The term of "near abroad" refers to Soviet zone of influence. This zone contained almost all former communist countries, especially those ones geographically close to the Soviet Union. This term is commonly used by the Russian leaders to justify their attempts to influence the post-communist countries. William Safire, *On Language; The Near Abroad*, New York Times (May 22, 1994).

the attempt will be made to explain the main stipulations of the Russian foreign policy. The Balance of Power model will also serve as a point of reference in an attempt to draw some policy recommendations for Poland, Ukraine and Georgia, to counter the Russian foreign policy strategy.

It can be argued that the value of this thesis lies in exposing the widely underestimated—especially in the Western Europe—challenge that Russia poses to the international order. The Russian efforts to regain a place among the world's key players can destabilize some of the post-communist countries with subsequent negative effects for international security. Moreover, this thesis identifies several "unconventional" mechanisms of exertion of influence over the examined countries used by Russia. Some of the identified mechanisms are not in compliance with democratic standards, which raise concerns about the condition of democracy in Russia itself and Russia's credibility as a member of the family of democratic states.

## **B. PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the general mechanisms of the Russian foreign policy towards the former communist bloc countries, and to determine if there are workable strategies available for these countries to deal with the Russian pressure. The findings will allow answers to some specific research questions, which are listed below.

- To what extent do the assumptions of the near abroad idea still determine the Russian foreign policy?
- What are the Russian foreign policy goals in terms of global and local policy?

- Is the Russian foreign policy aiming at reestablishment of the Russia's zone of influence?
- What are the main mechanisms used by Russian authorities to influence neighboring countries?
  - What is the role of natural resources in the Russian foreign policy?
  - Are there any "unconventional" means available for Russia to exert influence over Poland, Ukraine, and Georgia? If so, what is the relationship between use of such means and democracy in Russia? Is the Russian democracy only a "managed democracy?"<sup>2</sup>
- What are the main differences in the Russian policy toward Poland, Ukraine and Georgia?
- Are there any policies or strategies available for the examined countries to counter Russia's policy?
- Do former communist bloc states currently pursue any coherent policy to handle the "Russian factor?"

The working hypothesis of this thesis seeks to show that the Russian policy towards countries from the former Soviet camp is biased by the near abroad communist doctrine. This doctrine assumed that the Soviet Union had a right to interfere in internal issues of its allies, particularly the ones in its geographical proximity. Today, the heritage of the near abroad idea was strengthened by the Eurasianism ideas, which became extremely influential within the Russian political circles. It results in a situation where the present state of the relationships between Russia and countries which belonged to the former communist camp can be described as a sequence of minor crises, likely rooted in

---

<sup>2</sup> By a "managed democracy" author means a political system where all the democratic institutions which constitute democracy are present, but democracy as a system is not functioning properly (e.g., Iran, Belarus or Venezuela).

the Russian neo-imperial policy. It seems that the Russian authorities' goal is to reestablish or in some cases, to sustain their zone of influence over the near abroad. Assuming that it is true, the countries under examination (Poland, Ukraine and Georgia) have to face this challenge by adopting a workable strategy towards Russia. This thesis is an attempt to identify the mechanisms through which the Russian foreign policy works. Then, based on the findings, to determine what can be the most feasible foreign policy strategies for Poland, Ukraine, and Georgia, to protect their national interests.

### **C. METHODOLOGY**

To show the broad spectrum and multi-dimensional picture of the researched problem, the analysis will be organized around four dimensions of national power: Diplomatic, Information, Military and Economic (DIME). The choice of this model, which is almost exclusively used by the U.S. Armed Forces, corresponds with the working hypothesis of this thesis that Russia is pursuing an aggressive policy. Hence, the use of the "militarized" construct and approach to the research problem seem to be relevant in terms of the Russian policy.

According to the U.S. Joint Forces Command Glossary DIME are "areas of national power that are leveraged in 'effects-based' operations against an adversary's vulnerabilities identified by Operational Net Assessment, and targeted against his will and capability to conduct



war.”<sup>3</sup> So, according to the definition above, the national power can be used in these four areas in order to conduct organized operation against an adversary in order to compromise his ability to conduct war. This definition suggests that DIME can be perceived as a defensive tool against an adversary who is somewhat likely to wage a war now or in the future. This thesis will transcend this defensive meaning of the DIME, and will attempt to show that DIME can be used offensively to restore a state’s influence throughout its zone of interests. The other direction in which the classic definition of DIME will be expanded is rooted in the unique character of relationship between Russia and the examined countries. The fact that two of the examined countries were part of the Soviet Union contributes to the assumption that there are more than only “conventional”<sup>4</sup> means of exertion available for Russia. This thesis examines the “unconventional” side of DIME and how Russia is using it. With regard to this, the findings highlight the importance of the communist heritage, which still shapes the present of the post-Soviet countries.

Each case study is built of six main parts. The first one gives a short historical background for the relationship between Russia and examined country. The second to fifth parts examine the military, economic, diplomatic and

---

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Joint Forces Command Glossary. DIME definition available online at <http://www.jfcom.mil/about/glossary.htm#D> (accessed July 16, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> By “conventional means of exertion” author means all these tools available to certain country to influence other country, given that both countries have always been separate entities or at least for sufficiently long time (e.g., USA vs. Iran, USA vs. Venezuela or Great Britain vs. Argentina in 1982). The “conventional means of influence” can be referred also as “positive” influence (e.g., foreign investments in free market economy or cultural attractiveness).

information (DIME) aspects of the Russian policy respectively. Within each of those parts there is a section which refers to the "unconventional" dimension of certain areas of DIME. The last part draws a conclusion based on the findings made within each case study.

#### **D. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This thesis is divided into six chapters, including Introduction as a first chapter and Conclusion and Policy Recommendations as the sixth one. The body of this work consists of three chapters as follows:

##### **1. Chapter II - Theoretical Framework and the Contemporary Russian Foreign Policy Foundations**

This chapter will introduce a theoretical model of international relations known as the Balance of Power model. The main assumptions of this model will be examined, particularly with reference to the period of Cold War and the role of small states. This in turn will contribute to a better understanding of what were the initial conditions, which shaped the Russian policymakers' minds for the foreign policy strategy after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The second part of this chapter will be dedicated to the examination of the Russian foreign policy foundations after the collapse of the Soviet Union with particular focus on the Eurasianism idea.

##### **2. Chapter III - Poland-On the Periphery of Near Abroad**

This chapter will be a main case study of this thesis. This is not only because of the nationality of author, but

mainly because the last several years of relationship between Russia and Poland tell almost the whole story of how Russia is pursuing its foreign policy. Poland has posed for Russian diplomacy one of the toughest challenges for the last 18 years within the post-communist timeframe. So, examination of the Russian foreign policy mechanics used against Poland will enable a deep insight into the Russian strategy and intentions.

### **3. Chapter IV - Ukraine-Close Near Abroad**

The fourth chapter will consist of examination of the Russian relationships with Ukraine. Ukraine is a good example to highlight different aspects of the Russian DIME, especially with comparison to Poland. As far as Ukraine is concerned, it seems that the (E)conomy and (I)nformation components of the Russian DIME are dominant. But, the fact that different components of DIME are more relevant for Ukraine than for Poland or Georgia is not the only reason that Ukraine has been chosen. What contributed to the fact that Ukraine is so interested in terms of its relationships with Russia is that Ukraine experienced dramatic political change known as the Orange Revolution. Examination of the Russian DIME towards Ukraine after the Orange Revolution reveals some interesting patterns in the Russian foreign policy strategy.

### **4. Chapter V - Georgia-Too Close Near Abroad**

The fifth chapter is also the last case study. In this chapter, the relationships between Russia and Georgia will be examined. Despite its small size, the location of Georgia in a strategic place, the Transcaucasus, highly elevates the

significance of this country. The Transcaucasus, is a Russian "soft underbelly" because it is a complex mosaic of ethnic, economic, and political interests, that has always contributed to instability in this region. The last military confrontation between Russia and Georgia fits the violent tradition of Caucasus very well; however, it seems that the last eruption of violence in Georgia has its roots outside the region.

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## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND THE CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY FOUNDATIONS

### A. BALANCE OF POWER THEORY

#### 1. Introduction

From the standpoint of political sciences, the last two centuries of the world's history can be described as a period of emergence, development, and dominance of the nation-state form of political organization. Within the 19<sup>th</sup> century - specifically after the Congress of Vienna in 1815 - the first burst of the creation of new nation-states took place in Europe.<sup>5</sup> As Philip G. Roeder argues "the source of new nation-states has been a crisis of 'stateness' - a crisis in which residents contest the human and geographic borders of existing states and some residents even seek to create new independent states..."<sup>6</sup> But, the question arises, what are the reasons for such a crisis of "stateness," and what triggers people to challenge existing states in order to build a new ones? Bruce D. Porter argues that, "...great wave of state formation occurred in the wake of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, which unleashed powerful forces of nationalism all across Europe. Originating in war and propagated by invading armies, this nationalism transformed dynastic states into true nation-states..."<sup>7</sup> So,

---

<sup>5</sup> Philip G. Roeder, *Where Nation-States Come From: Institutional Change in the Age of Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Bruce D. Porter, *War and The Rise of the State: The Military Foundations of Modern Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 106.

according to Porter, the transformation from dynastic states to the nation-states has its roots in war, and nationalism played a main role in nation-state building. So, it can be argued that the nation-state had emerged as a most effective form of political organization in terms of capability to wage war and protect the national interests. As it was stated above, the 19<sup>th</sup> century had witnessed the birth and development of nation-states, which shaped the world's political order for the next 100 years. These political processes can be called the first main wave of the nation-state creation. The second major wave took place after WWI, when the emergence of nation-states in Europe was boosted by the collapse of Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire. The nation-state model became the dominant form of societal organization. The nation-state's most characteristic features were the following.

- fixed borders with not-transferable territory
- promotion of economic unity
- centralized and uniform public administration;
- promotion of unified national culture, language, and values
- recognition by other nation-states<sup>8</sup>

The last big wave of nation-state creation took place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, resulting in emergence of dozens of states, especially in Africa (during the post-imperial period of the 1950s and 1960s), and in Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. At least in terms of numbers, it can be said that these political processes have

---

<sup>8</sup> Philip G. Roeder, *Where Nation-States Come From: Institutional Change in the Age of Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

decisively confirmed the dominance of the nation-state model as a basic form of political organization at the international level.

## **2. Balance of Power Theory-Main Propositions**

In the world dominated by nation-states the relationships among these entities are shaped by complex mosaic of factors, forces and interests. The realist proponents argue that all the state's political incentives and motivations can be reduced to several basic propositions, which constitute the pillars of the balance of power theory. According to T. V. Paul:

Balance of power theory is predicated on the notion that states seek to survive as independent entities. They also seek power in the anarchical global system; without power, states can become subservient to the will of others or lose their security and prosperity. Anarchy thus compels states to increase their power, because security and physical survival cannot be divorced from power maximization. As a result, the competition for power becomes a natural state of affairs in international politics.<sup>9</sup>

Similarly, Hans Morgenthau noted that:

The aspiration of power on the part of several nations, each trying either to maintain or overthrow the status quo, leads necessarily to a configuration that is called the balance of power and to policies that aim at preserving it...The balance of power and policies aimed at its

---

<sup>9</sup> T. V. Paul, *Balance of Power, Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. T. V. Paul, James J. Wirtz and Michael Fortmann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 4.



preservation are not only inevitable but are an essential stabilizing factor in a society of sovereign nations.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, it can be argued that power serves as a medium which establishes, preserves, and shapes the relationships between states. According to the proponents of the balance of power theory, the international political system can be maintained in balance once the parity in power exists among states. In other words, there is a kind of equilibrium achieved, which prevents violating the current status quo. This status quo or equilibrium is nothing more but a state of peace between states. But, what encourages states to engage in power balancing? One of the most convincing explanations is given by Kenneth N. Waltz:

From the theory, one predicts that states will engage in balancing behavior whether or not balanced power is the end of their acts. From the theory, one predicts a strong tendency toward balance in the system. The expectation is not that a balance once achieved will be maintained, but that a balance disrupted will be restored in one way or another. Balances of power recurrently form.<sup>11</sup>

Another explanation is given by Inis L. Claude who noted that "war is begun with expectation of winning,"<sup>12</sup> so if the political system is balanced in terms of power, the plausibility of war is low.

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<sup>10</sup> Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, RM-6278-ARPA (New York: Knopf, 1973), 161, quoted in Emerson M. S. Niu, Peter C. Ordeshook, and Gregory F. Rose, *The Balance of Power. Stability in International Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 75.

<sup>11</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House, 1979), 127, quoted in T. V. Paul, James J. Wirtz and Michel Fortmann, *Balance of Power. Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 6.

<sup>12</sup> Inis L. Claude, *Power and International Relations* (New York: Random House, 1962), 56.

Thus, taking into consideration what was written above, the underlying axioms of the balance of power theory can be recapitulated as follows.

- States are the main actors on the international political scene
- The international political system is anarchical, so there is no hegemon above states
- States act rationally to maximize their security, power and resources
- In the world of competing states, balance of power is a final political configuration<sup>13</sup>

The relatively basic and simple axioms of the balance of power theory constitute nothing but only the frame which can be of use to describe the states' behavior. However, this frame needs to be supplemented by more detailed considerations with reference to some implications of the balance of power theory, especially as far as "small states"<sup>14</sup> are concerned.

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<sup>13</sup> Jack S. Levy, *Balance of Power. Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. T. V. Paul, James J. Writz and Michael Fortmann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 34.

<sup>14</sup> There is no agreement between scholars on the definition of "small state." The main difficulty is that whether certain country is a "small state" or not can only be defined by comparing it to other states, not by the measuring of any objective elements of the state's capabilities. However, there are some definitions of "small states" which can be of use in order to understand this notion with reference to the balance of power theory. One of the definitions is given by Robert L. Rothstein who noted that, "A small power is a state which recognizes that it cannot obtain security primarily by use of its own capabilities, and that it must rely fundamentally on the aid of other states, institutions, processes, or developments to do so; the small power's belief in its inability to rely on its own means must also be recognized by other states involved in international politics." See, Robert L. Rothstein, *Alliance and Small Powers* (New York: Columbia University, 1968), 29.

### **3. Balance of Power Theory-Small States' Perspective and Strategies**

#### **a. Building Coalitions and Building up Arms**

If one will examine the propositions of the balance of power theory, and compare them to the political reality, it will be easy to notice that seeking power is somewhat contradictory to the notion of keeping a balance of power. Assuming that states act rationally, seeking power should be a natural incentive for them, because more power means more safety that in turn improves the prospects for survival of the state as an independent entity. On the other hand, more power on the side of one state undermines the balance of power of the whole system. So, in order to keep the political system in the equilibrium, other states are forced to seek power as well. This in turn implies that even if the political system is in the balanced state, the equilibrium is somewhat unstable. This conclusion was much better rephrased by Hans J. Morgenthau who wrote "all nations actively engaged in the struggle for power must actually aim not at a balance-that is, equality-of power, but at superiority of power."<sup>15</sup> So, to continue the reasoning, even if there is a state of balance, it is very likely that some states can gain a preponderance which inevitably threatens the other (often smaller and weaker) state actors. One of the possible strategies for the weaker states which often are unable to secure themselves is to

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<sup>15</sup> Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, RM-6278-ARPA (New York: Knopf, 1973), 208.

form a coalition (external balancing)<sup>16</sup> of weak states to balance the rising power. The other possible strategy is to build up arms (internal balancing)<sup>17</sup> in order to increase its own deterrence capabilities.<sup>18</sup> So, it can be said that small states can either form coalitions or build up arms to balance the global or regional powers **(Strategy I and II)**.

**b. Bandwagoning**

Both, external and internal balancing are not the only strategies available for small states for their foreign policy. The historical records show that in certain situations, small states are seeking protection by alignment with great power,<sup>19</sup> rather than making coalitions with other small states. This strategy is called bandwagoning. According to Stephen M. Walt, bandwagoning is a strategy based on alliance (often forced by great power) with a great or dominant power in order to appease it or for the future profits from its dominance. Bandwagoning is always asymmetrical; it means that the dominant power profits much more from the alliance than the small state. Moreover, there is a high risk involved for a small state because it must fully rely on the great power's good will<sup>20</sup> **(Strategy III)**.

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<sup>16</sup> Mark R. Brawley, *Balance of Power. Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. T. V. Paul, James J. Wirtz and Michael Fortmann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 81.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 81-82.

<sup>18</sup> T. V. Paul, *Balance of Power. Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. T. V. Paul, James J. Wirtz and Michael Fortmann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 5-6.

<sup>19</sup> These can be cases of Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Finland who bandwagoned to Nazi Germany before and during WWII.

<sup>20</sup> Stephen M. Walt, "Testing Theories of Alliance Formation: The Case of Southwest Asia," *International Organization* 42, no. 2 (1988): 275-316.

### **c. Detente**

Similarly, there is another configuration possible. It occurs when a small state along with a great power develop mutually equal relations which are aimed at reducing the tension in international politics or in balancing the threat posed by the third actor. This strategy is called *détente*. As opposite to bandwagoning, *détente* is characterized by roughly equal exchange of costs and profits between aligned states. It also involves relatively low risk for a small state because if the great power will attempt to take advantage of its power, the small state can simply break off *détente*<sup>21</sup> (**Strategy IV**).

### **d. Buck-passing**

Although the four strategies listed above are the most common ones in international politics, there are also at least two other options available for small states. The first one is called buck-passing (**Strategy V**). Buck-passing is simply declining membership in the alliance "out of the belief that this coalition already has aggregated enough power to deter or defeat the dominant power, or is likely to act even without its participation."<sup>22</sup> It is a highly risky strategy for numerous reasons (e.g., exposing the state to the threat of dominant power, undermining the existing

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<sup>21</sup> Stephen M. Walt, "Testing Theories of Alliance Formation: The Case of Southwest Asia," *International Organization* 42, no. 2: (1988) 275-316.

<sup>22</sup> Mark R. Brawley, *Balance of Power. Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. T. V. Paul, James J. Wirtz and Michael Fortmann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 83.

balancing alliance, weakening the state's credibility etc.).<sup>23</sup> The only reason for buck-passing can be explained on the basis of economy. As Mark R. Brawley noted:

Since converting economic wealth into power is costly, avoiding those costs through buck-passing may be sensible if the state believes it is not under immediate threat, or if it requires time to invest in its own economy to develop the capacity to produce military forces. Joining a balancing alliance means nothing unless the state also contributes credible forces to that alliance.<sup>24</sup>

#### **e. Neutrality**

The second of the earlier mentioned options to choose for small states is neutrality (**Strategy VI**). This option is available for few states. As Allen Sens noted:

Neutrality requires the tolerance, agreement, or approval of the great powers—at least those in the immediate vicinity—to underwrite or guarantee the neutrality of the small state, as in the case of Belgium and the Treaty of London. Several neutrality policies adopted in the interwar period were rendered superfluous when Nazi Germany simply chose not to honor them.

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<sup>23</sup> A good historical example of buck-passing strategy is given by John J. Mearsheimer. He notes that "During the early years of World War I, for example, British policymakers tried to minimize the amount of fighting their troops did on the western front and instead get their alliance partners, France and Russia, to assume the costly burden of wearing down the German army. The United Kingdom hoped then to use its still-fresh troops to win the final battles against Germany, and to dictate the terms of peace. The United Kingdom would "win the peace," because it would emerge from the war in a substantially more powerful position than either the defeated Germans or the battle-worn French and Russians. The United Kingdom's allies quickly figured out what was going on, however, and forced the British army to participate fully in the awful task of bleeding the German army white." See, John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), 159-160.

<sup>24</sup> Mark R. Brawley, *Balance of Power. Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. T. V. Paul, James J. Wirtz and Michael Fortmann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 83.

Neutrality arrangements are usually founded on the mutual self-interest principle, and if this mutual self-interest on the part of the great power breaks down, so too the viability of the neutrality policy.<sup>25</sup>

The total dependence on the good will of the great powers who guarantee the neutrality poses the biggest disadvantage of the neutrality strategy. Neutrality is also hard to achieve for countries which are geographically close to the great powers and even harder for these states which lie between great powers.<sup>26</sup> Such states are inevitably subject to the influence of the mighty neighbors. This is the reason why in the contemporary globalized world, where the great powers' interest expand almost everywhere, there are so few states which enjoy neutrality. So, the neutrality strategy is rather a theoretical option, than a real possibility for overwhelming majority of small states.

#### **4. Summary**

To sum up, the balance of power theorists agree that the principles of this theory allow states to pursue different policies and to choose different strategies for their foreign policy. There are at least six strategies available for state actors (making coalitions, building up arms, bandwagoning, détente, buck-passing, and neutrality).

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<sup>25</sup> Sens Allen, *The Security of Small States in Post-Cold War Europe: A New Research Agenda? Working Paper no. 1* (Vancouver: The Institute of International Relations, 1994).

<sup>26</sup> One of the best examples for that is Poland. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Poland was three times partitioned among its neighbors (Prussia, Russia, and Austro-Hungarian Empire). In 1939, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union partitioned Poland once again. See, Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland in Two Volumes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Although in this passage all these six strategies were analyzed from the small states' perspective, some of them are universal and can be of use also for great powers. This refers particularly to the internal balancing (building up arms), building coalitions or to the buck-passing strategy.

## **B. BALANCE OF POWER THEORY IN PRACTICE-COLD WAR ERA AND POST COLD WAR CONSEQUENCES**

### **1. Introduction**

Although the balance of power is a concept which was known as far back as ancient history, the development of the technical civilization in the last two centuries, and new world political divisions have led to the previously uncommon phenomenon: competition of the interests of great powers. In the pre-modern times, the great powers used to grow in a geographical separation from each other (e.g., Roman Empire and Chinese Empire), and the growth of one great power did not interfere with the emergence of another. There were some cases of the great powers' clashes, like the conflict between the Arab Empire and Byzantine Empire in the 8<sup>th</sup> century;<sup>27</sup> however, only the modern era made the conflicts of interests an inseparable feature of the international politics. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, England and Russia crushed the power of Napoleonic France. During WWII, Great Britain, the USA and USSR did the same to the Nazi Germany and then Japan. The collapse of one great power was caused by either overcoming it by a stronger opponent or coalition of opponents. The opposite side of these

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<sup>27</sup> Hugh Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs* (New York: Routledge, 2001).



processes was that the winning powers became even more powerful, which in turn led to the emergence of the bipolar world political order.

From the smoke of WWII battlefields, a new political order had emerged. On the world's stage, two superpowers<sup>28</sup> (USA and Soviet Union) took their positions in the opposite corners, starting an open confrontation, which has been known as the Cold War.<sup>29</sup> The Cold War was an interesting example of how the balance of power theory principles work in practice. This is one of the reasons for the examination of the Cold War in this work. The second, but even more important reason for including the Cold War considerations into this work is the fact that the outcome of this confrontation directly and strongly influences the contemporary Russian foreign policy.

## **2. Cold War Era**

Among scholars there is no consensus what differentiates a great power from a superpower; however, one of the most popular explanation is given by Zbigniew Brzezinski, who lists four necessary conditions for a great power to become a superpower. These are the following.

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<sup>28</sup> The term "Superpower" was used for the first time in its contemporary meaning by William T. R. Fox-an American foreign policy professor in 1944. See William T. R. Fox, *The Superpowers: The United States, Britain and the Soviet Union-Their Responsibility for Peace* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1944).

<sup>29</sup> John L. Gaddis attributes the first use of the term of "Cold War" to President Truman's advisor, Bernard Baruch, who so named the tension between USA and Soviet Union in 1947. See, John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005), 54.

- a. **Military strength** and capabilities to wage war in any place in the world
- b. **Economic strength** and capabilities to satisfy the military needs;
- c. **Technological power** and innovations, especially in the areas of use for the military;
- d. **Cultural strength and influential ideology.** This refers to the ability to propagate the cultural models, behavior and lifestyle efficiently.<sup>30</sup>

There is little doubt that the USA and the Soviet Union were the only states after WWII which gained the characteristics of the superpower. It became especially apparent in the military area (**Point a above**). Both countries were the only states having a nuclear weapon in their arsenals, at least in the early stages of Cold War.<sup>31</sup> As far as economical and technological development (**Points b and c above**) are concerned, the first decade of the Cold War witnessed an impressive advance, especially in the Soviet Union. As Rodric Braithwaite noted:

The Soviets rebuilt their country after a fashion, but with amazing speed. Soviet military science and industry forged ahead. Soviet scientists and engineers mastered thermonuclear fusion built formidable bombs and rockets and catapulted a dog, and then a man, into space. The Soviet leaders and the Soviet people felt-for the first time in their history-that they were beating the West at its own game of technical excellence.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1998).

<sup>31</sup> Although France, Great Britain, and other countries became the nuclear powers the passage of time, their total nuclear capabilities were still significantly low in comparison to the arsenals of both superpowers.

<sup>32</sup> Rodric Braithwaite, *Across the Moscow River: The World Turned Upside Down* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 39.

Moreover, the Soviet Union was a motherland of “universalist and Messianic”<sup>33</sup> ideology of communism (**Point d above**). The communist ideology was spreading quickly, fueled by the rising power of the Soviet Union. The communist advances in Asia (North Korea, Vietnam), Latin America (Cuba, to some extent Chile before Pinochet seized power), and Africa (Angola), as well as the emergence of massive communist parties in the Western Europe (France or Italy) challenged the American position and interests, and threatened the Western political system. This constituted a fertile ground for the upcoming confrontation between both superpowers.

From the perspective of the balance of power theory the strong polarization of the international political stage after WWII was an ideal opportunity to see how the principles of the theory work in practice. So, from the theoretical standpoint, the Cold War can be regarded as an example of hard balancing. As T. V. Paul noted:

Hard balancing is a strategy often exhibited by states engaged in an intense interstate rivalry. States thus adopt strategies to build and update their military capabilities, as well as create and maintain formal alliances and counteralliances, to match the capabilities of their key opponents.<sup>34</sup>

There is little doubt that the Cold War was an open confrontation, where both superpowers made intense efforts to make alliances as broad as possible and build up their military capabilities (**Strategy I and II**). These processes

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<sup>33</sup> Rodric Braithwaite, *Across the Moscow River: The World Turned Upside Down* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 38.

<sup>34</sup> T. V. Paul, *Balance of Power. Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. T. V. Paul, James J. Wirtz and Michael Fortmann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 3.

resulted in emergence of two formal military blocs; North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949, and the Warsaw Pact in 1955.<sup>35</sup> Emergence of NATO and the Warsaw Pact left no doubt that the military capabilities would play a decisive role in this rivalry. Interestingly, even at such early stages of Cold War, there were some signs forecasting the final outcome of this struggle. Rodric Braithwaite noted that "unlike their American opponents, the Soviets had no allies, only satellites who showed from time to time a distressing tendency to rebel."<sup>36</sup> After WWII "it was inevitable that the Soviet Union would dominate Eastern and Central Europe. There was nothing that the West could do about it, unless it went to war or unless the Soviet Union changed profoundly. The West was unwilling to do the first. The second was beyond its control."<sup>37</sup> It is a very significant observation. The Soviets simply conquered Eastern Europe by installing communist regimes in the formerly independent countries beyond any democratic procedures and rules.<sup>38</sup> Although the conquered states were still formally independent, the communist regimes were directly subordinated to Moscow.

The Russian illegitimate political dominance over Eastern Europe combined with the inherent economical inefficiency of the communist system, produced a lot of

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<sup>35</sup> John Gearson and Kori Schake, ed. *The Berlin Wall Crisis: Perspectives on Cold War Alliances*, Cold War History Series (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

<sup>36</sup> Rodric Braithwaite, *Across the Moscow River: The World Turned Upside Down* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 41.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>38</sup> Richard F. Staar, "Elections in Communist Poland," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 2, no. 2, (1958): 200-218.

internal grievances within the Soviet's communist satellites. The massive workers' protests in Poland (1956 and 1980), revolution in Hungary (1956), or in Czechoslovakia (1968), were clear examples that the communist block was internally corrupted. The only glue holding it together was a brutal military force of the Red Army.<sup>39,40</sup> The Russians were able to suppress both of these revolutions; however, the need for the use force itself proved that the communist camp was more a forced alliance than the coalition of willing states. So, political legitimacy constituted the first Soviet problem. The second one was inherent in the communism system. It was the economic inefficiency. As Rodric Braithwaite noted:

... the Soviet Union was already in deep domestic crisis. Its political and economic system was muscle-bound and sclerotic. Agriculture was a mess. Capital construction was grossly wasteful. The consumer was ignored, and social services were underfunded. Above all, despite its successes in space and defense, Soviet technology was lagging increasingly behind the West.<sup>41</sup>

Being aware of these problems and particularly of the economical disadvantage of the Soviets, the USA authorities adopted an internal balancing strategy aimed at building up arms and strengthening the US economical capabilities. This strategy was intensified by Reagan administration. This acceleration was prompted by the perception "that the United

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<sup>39</sup> Andreas Gemes, "International Relations and the 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A Cold War Case Study," [http://www.cliohres.net/books/1/13\\_Gemes.pdf](http://www.cliohres.net/books/1/13_Gemes.pdf) (accessed August 14, 2008).

<sup>40</sup> Gordon H. Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution* (Princeton, 1976).

<sup>41</sup> Rodric Braithwaite, *Across the Moscow River: The World Turned Upside Down* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 39.

States had the economic strength needed to compete effectively with a faltering Soviet economy.”<sup>42</sup> A special role in this strategy was assigned to the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). This program started in 1983, and was aimed at ensuring the USA safety from the ballistic missiles. Although SDI had a defensive character, it forced Russians to respond because an efficient anti-ballistic defense would upset the nuclear balance of power also known as a doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD).<sup>43,44</sup> Although there is no hard evidence, the SDI program seemed to severely weaken the Soviet power. The Soviet Union was not capable any longer to keep pace with the USA. As a consequence, in 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev announced a program of reforms known as *perestroika* and *glasnost*.<sup>45</sup> Although, these programs were originally aimed at reforming the communist system, they unintentionally started a chain reaction, which led to the end of communism and the Cold War.

### **C. POST-COMMUNIST RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY**

#### **1. Russian Political Culture and Search for a New Identity**

On December 8, 1991, the Soviet Union was formally dissolved by the Russian, Belorussian and Ukrainian

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<sup>42</sup> Mark R. Brawley, *Balance of Power. Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. T. V. Paul, James J. Wirtz and Michael Fortmann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 91.

<sup>43</sup> Daniel O. Graham, *Confessions of a Cold Warrior* (Fairfax: Preview Pr., 1995).

<sup>44</sup> William J. Broad, *Teller's War: The Top-Secret Story behind the Star Wars Deception* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

presidents during the meeting in Belavezha. Two weeks later, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was established.<sup>46</sup> These events decisively changed the geopolitical surrounding of Russia, thus the "Russian leaders and the Russian public were faced with an almost paralyzing degree of confusion about which [course of action] would best protect Russian interests."<sup>47</sup> As Nicole J. Jackson analyzed:

Russia faced a new geopolitical situation. It had inherited 80 per cent of the former Soviet territory and 60 per cent of the Soviet population. Its economy and resources were comparatively limited, as was its military power. The Russian political elite and public faced great anxieties due to many internal problems, including a severe economic crisis and the rise of crime. ... Moreover, Russia had lost its former position as a superpower on the international stage. The threat of the Cold War was gone, but the perception of insecurity was great.<sup>48</sup>

Therefore, there was no surprise that within Russian political circles, a debate started on how to formulate the foreign policy agenda in order to strengthen the international position of Russia. This debate, however, was strongly influenced by a unique set of perceptions, attitudes and inclinations deeply embedded in the Russian mentality. This collective consciousness can be best called the Russian strategic or more broadly the Russian political

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<sup>45</sup> Prem Shankar Jha, *Perilous Road to Market: The Political Economy of Reform in Russia, India, and China* (Michigan: Pluto Press, 2003).

<sup>46</sup> Chartya'97-Novosti of Belarus website, "14 Years of Belavezha Accords' Signing," <http://www.charter97.org/eng/news/2005/12/08/14> (accessed August 21, 2008).

<sup>47</sup> Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 2.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

culture. Fritz W. Ermarth defined the strategic culture as "a body of broadly shared, powerfully influential and especially enduring attitudes, perceptions, dispositions, and reflexes about national security in its broadest sense, both internal and external, that shape behavior and policy."<sup>49</sup> In the Russian case, the strategic culture was shaped by a non-democratic, absolutist and imperial heritage. This heritage's roots can be traced to Tsar Ivan III's reign. Ivan III consolidated the political power and built statecraft's model based on "Absolutism and militarism under cautious and scrupulous control."<sup>50</sup> This model turned out to be a very effective in building the power of Russia, thus was exploited with minor modifications to the end of the Soviet Union.<sup>51</sup>

As it was stated above, the Russian political elites found themselves in urgent need to create foreign policy principles after the collapse of the Soviet Union. But, "Since foreign policy is inherently linked to perceptions of national identity, one of the basic challenges they encountered was to create a new national identity for their country."<sup>52</sup> There were two main notions around which the identity could be established, namely language and the state's borders.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Fritz W. Ermarth, "Russian Strategic Culture: Past, Present, and...in Transition?" in *Comparative Strategic Cultures Curriculum, Defense Threat Reduction Agency* (October 16, 2006): 3.

<sup>50</sup> Hugh Ragsdale, *The Russian Tragedy: The Burden of History* (New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1996), 18.

<sup>51</sup> Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 85-129.

<sup>52</sup> Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories Debates and Actions* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 28.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.



With regard to the language criterion, there were five main attitudes how to define who was or should be deemed Russian. So,

- The Russians are all people who speak Russian language in the former Soviet states;
- The Russians are all people with ethnic Russian origins;
- The Russians are people of Slavic origins living in the Former Soviet Union (FSU);
- The Russians are "imperial people" having a mission to create a supranational state;
- The Russians are all people in Russia regardless of their origin or culture-the notion of civic state.<sup>54</sup>

As far as the Russia's borders were concerned Nicole J. Jackson noted that:

those who argued that Russia should be a civic state were in agreement that the 1991 borders of the Russian Federation should be kept intact. In contrast, those who defined Russia in terms of language interpreted Russia as including the Russian Federation and also those areas of the Soviet Union inhabited by Russian-speakers. Similarly, those who rejected the linguistic definition but believed that Russia had a wider 'Union' identity also did not accept the 1991 borders.<sup>55</sup>

Besides language and state's borders which were the two main determinants of the national identity, the debate over Russia's future was also focused on several other issues (e.g., defining the Russian mission, psychological and

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<sup>54</sup> Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories Debates and Actions* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 28.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-30.

geographical identity, political and economic direction). As a result of this debate, three basic foreign policy orientations emerged.

## **2. Competing Foreign Policy Orientations in Russia**

### **a. Liberal Westernist Orientation**

The first orientation which emerged from the national debate over the future Russian foreign policy goals was a liberal westernist one. This orientation's underlying concept was "that Russia's identity should be defined as a civic state in the boundaries of the Russian Federation."<sup>56</sup> The proponents of this orientation rejected any ideas that Russia should identify itself based on the Russian uniqueness or messianic mission. Instead, they called for building Russia as "a 'normal state', with no overarching mission, whose future was to be a modern, liberal state coexisting in a benign international environment."<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, this orientation called for a peaceful, non-antagonistic world, with Russia's focus on cooperation with the West and a non-interfering policy towards the near abroad. The liberal westernist called also for democratization and market reforms as the basis on which the civic state should be built.

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<sup>56</sup> Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories Debates and Actions* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 34.

<sup>57</sup> A. Kozyrev, "Vneshnyaya Politika Rossi," *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, December 13, 1992, 2, quoted in Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 34.

**b. Fundamentalist Nationalist Orientation**

The fundamentalist nationalist orientation emerged as the total opposition to the liberal westernist one. The fundamentalist nationalists "believed in an ethnic or Slavic definition of Russia. Russia's borders were thus seen either to extend beyond the Russian Federation or to be narrowly confined to the areas populated by ethnic Russians in Russia."<sup>58</sup> The nationalists perceived the collapse of the Soviet Union as a disaster and blamed the West for that. They propagated the idea of the Russian's historical mission "to create an 'organic society',"<sup>59</sup> which could only be accomplished by gaining Russia power and prestige once again. In the nationalists' eyes, Russia was surrounded by hostile countries taking advantage of its temporary weakness. Thus, the path to restore the power and prestige to Russia was to concentrate domestic political power according to the notion of a "strong hand" rules. This in turn demanded rejection of democratic and free market principles which were perceived as undermining the strength and unity of the state's leadership. As a result, the nationalists called for isolationist foreign policy with regards to the world economic system, and at the same time they called for active policy with regards to the near abroad in order to restore the power of great Russia.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 35.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

### **c. Pragmatic Nationalist Orientation**

The mid foreign policy orientation between the liberal westernist and fundamentalist nationalist was the pragmatic nationalist one. For the proponents of this orientation, "Russian identity was generally defined linguistically and thus they strongly championed the defense of Russian-speakers in the near abroad."<sup>61</sup> The main difference between the fundamentalist nationalist and pragmatic nationalist was that the later "accepted the liberal westernist goal of liberal democracy and marketization, but wanted the process of transition to take Russian conditions into account."<sup>62</sup> The pragmatic nationalist shared the vision of great Russia with the fundamentalists, but saw Russia as a broker between West and East having its own mission and interests. The pragmatists seemed to accept use of military forces to protect Russia's interests because:

The pragmatic nationalists generally conceived of the world as organized according to the principle of 'Balance of Power' in which strong states protect their spheres of interests and, unlike the liberal westernists, they identified specific threats to Russia which included the treatment of the Russian diaspora and NATO expansion.<sup>63</sup>

The different attitudes presented by the three Russian foreign policy orientations are depicted in the table below.

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<sup>61</sup> Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 35.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-36.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

Table 1. Russian Foreign Policy Orientations.<sup>64</sup>

<i>Categories of ideas</i>	<i>Liberal westernism</i>	<i>Pragmatic nationalism</i>	<i>Fundamentalist nationalism</i>
Identity (who are the Russians?)	<i>Civic</i> : Russians in Russia	<i>Linguistic</i> : Russian speakers in FSU	<i>Union</i> : Ethnic Russians or Slavs in FSU, or <i>Ethnic</i> : Ethnic Russians in Russia or FSU
History	No use	Important	Crucial
Collapse of USSR	Positive	Negative	Negative/blame West
Russia's borders	Russian Federation	Russia (and parts of FSU)	Russia and parts of FSU/Russian Federation
Worldview	Peaceful, una[n]tagonistic	Balance of power	Hostile, surrounded by enemies
Geography	West	Eurasia	Eurasia
Self perception	"Normal" power	Great power with own interests	Great power usually with empire
Mission (Russian idea)	No mission	Unique, geopolitical mission	Historical, divine mission
Domestic politics and economics	Liberal democracy and market reforms modeled on West	Liberal democracy and market reforms, taking Russian conditions into account	Anti-democratic and anti-marketization
Foreign policy direction	West	Own path	Expansionism or isolationism
Threats	Communism	Any which threatens FSU interests (diaspora, NATO expansion)	West/pan Turkic
Relations with FSU	Not significant	Crucial	Crucial
Broad policy proposals towards FSU	Support sovereignty, equality of states, non interference	Protect Russian interests/support rights of Russian in near abroad	Future re-incorporation of certain FSU areas/isolationism

### 3. Eurasianism-the Russian Path?

#### a. *The Victory of Pragmatic Nationalists and the Rise of the Eurasianism Idea*

The debate between three main foreign policy orientations in Russia was relatively quickly concluded in favor of the pragmatic nationalists. The liberal westernists were marginalized by 1999 for numerous reasons, among which

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<sup>64</sup> Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 36-37.

the rising economic power of Russia and NATO expansion were the most significant. On one hand, the economic revival gave the Russians a sense of restoration of the great power potential and growing political power to utilize it on the international stage. On the other hand, the eternal Russian suspiciousness towards the West found a fertile ground in NATO expansion in Eastern Europe. These processes decisively undermined the popularity of westernists' ideas within both the Russian society and policymakers' circles.<sup>65</sup>

Similarly, the fundamentalist nationalists lost a lot of their influence, mainly because "the weakness of Russian nationalist stems from their inability to clearly situate Russian frontiers. Eurasianism brings an ideological foundation for post-Soviet imperialism."<sup>66</sup> Thus, it can be argued that the pragmatic nationalists won the internal Russian debate of ideas forcing their concept of Russia being a great power situated in the middle between West and East, namely in Eurasia.

The pragmatic nationalist movement was internally diverse, so there had been never established any united political entity gathering under one banner all of those who aligned themselves with the nationalist ideas. Instead of that, several political parties and organizations emerged, including the most influential *Yabloko* movement. The *Yabloko* movement can be described as a centrist nationalist party.

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<sup>65</sup> Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002), 39-83.

<sup>66</sup> Françoise Thom, "Eurasianism: A New Russian Foreign Policy?" *Uncaptive Minds* 7, no. 2 (1994), 76, quoted in John B. Dunlop, "Aleksandr Dugin's Foundations of Geopolitics," 1, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/duj01/duj01.pdf> (accessed August 25, 2008).

They "called for a balanced strategy based upon Russia's geostrategic interests and criticized one-sided Western ties, arguing that Russia's foreign policy should be conducted in terms of a strong defense of Russia's national interests."<sup>67</sup> The leader of Yabloko Aleksandr Lukin "envisaged Russia as a great power, with special interests in the near abroad and ties with to both East and West. Lukin also argued for the need... to create ... a confederal system encompassing the former Soviet Republics."<sup>68</sup>

However, with the time passing more radical versions of the nationalist ideas started to gain significance. Among them was the idea of Eurasianism. The concept of Eurasianism was not a new idea, it had been revived and re-formulated by Aleksandr Dugin in his book entitled *Foundations of geopolitics*.<sup>69</sup> As John B. Dunlop noted, "There has probably not been another book published in Russia during the post-communist period, which has exerted an influence on Russian military, police, and statist foreign policy elites comparable to that of Aleksandr Dugin's 1997 neo-fascist treatise, *Foundations of Geopolitics*."<sup>70</sup> Dugin's work on his book was strongly supported by military circles in Russia, which in turn helped Dugin to become an influential figure within the Russian political circles. Dugin was able to establish close ties with Gleb Pavlovskii-one of the main Kremlin

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<sup>67</sup> Nicole J. Jackson, *Russian Foreign Policy and the CIS: Theories, Debates and Actions* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 44.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Aleksandr Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki: Geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rosii* (Moscow: Arktogeya, 1997).

<sup>70</sup> John B. Dunlop, "Aleksandr Dugin's *Foundations of Geopolitics*," 1, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/duj01/duj01.pdf> (accessed August 25, 2008).

ideologists.<sup>71</sup> The proof for how popular the concept of Eurasianism became within the political circles in Russia can be found in a public statement made by a newly elected Russian President Vladimir Putin, who said in 2000 that "Russia has always perceived itself as Eurasian country."<sup>72</sup> Moreover, "under Vladimir Putin...Dugin had become 'one of the drafters of national security.'"<sup>73</sup> In 2001, Dugin created an International Eurasian Movement (IEM), which instantly gained huge financial support from the Russian government.<sup>74</sup> The support for Dugin's organization given by official governmental circles was not restricted only to the financial issues. Some of the influential political figures became IEM members. As it is listed on the IEM website, the members of "Higher Council" of IEM among others are as follows.

- **Troshev A.P.** - vice speaker of Russian Senate
- **Aslahanov A.A-M.** - the adviser of President of Russian Federation
- **Margelov M.V.** - the president of Committee for International Affairs of Russian Senate
- **Kalyuzhny V.I.** - vice-minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia
- **Tadjuddin T.S.** - great mufti of Russian Federation
- **Mitropolit .Andrian (Chetvergov)** - the chief of Russian Orthodox Old Believers Church

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<sup>71</sup> John B. Dunlop, "Aleksandr Dugin's Foundations of Geopolitics," 8, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/duj01/duj01.pdf> (accessed August 25, 2008).

<sup>72</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Rossiya vseгда oshchushchala sebya evroaziatskoi stranoi," *Strana.ru* (November 13, 2000), quoted in John B. Dunlop, "Aleksandr Dugin's Foundations of Geopolitics," 8, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/duj01/duj01.pdf> (accessed August 25, 2008).

<sup>73</sup> John B. Dunlop, "Aleksandr Dugin's Foundations of Geopolitics," 10, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/duj01/duj01.pdf> (accessed August 25, 2008).

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.



- **Sagalaev E.M.** - the President of National Association of Media
- **Djumagulov A.D.** - ex-prime-minister of Kyrgyzstan Republic
- **Chernychev A.S.** - Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Russian Federation<sup>75</sup>

So, there is little doubt, that IEM having such powerful supporters and members must be considered an influential organization. Thus, what are the main principles of the Eurasianism idea?

***b. Eurasianism idea-The Geopolitical Principles***

In his book *Foundations of geopolitics*-the political manifesto of Eurasianism-and then repeated on many occasions, Aleksandr Dugin explicitly presented his views on the world's geopolitical order. So, according to the official website of IEM, the basic principles of Eurasianism are as follows.

- differentialism, the pluralism of value systems versus the conventional obligatory domination of one ideology (American liberal-democracy first and foremost);
- tradition versus suppression of cultures, dogmas, and discoveries of traditional society;
- rights of nations versus the 'gold billions' and neocolonial hegemony of the 'rich North';

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<sup>75</sup> International Eurasian Movement Website, <http://evrazia.org/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1915> (accessed August 26, 2008).

- ethnicities as values and subjects of history versus the depersonalization of nations, imprisoned into artificial social constructions;
- social fairness and human solidarity versus exploitation and humiliation of man by man.<sup>76</sup>

These generally formulated principles are nothing more than both the diagnosis and proposal for a new world's political order. The contemporary unipolar world dominated by the USA should be challenged by a "new Eurasian Empire"<sup>77</sup> led by Russia. "This 'new empire' must mobilize the Eurasian continent for a global struggle against 'Atlanticism,' which through its ideology of 'mondialism,' is planning world domination."<sup>78</sup> Thus, "Russia is the incarnation of the quest for an historical alternative to Atlanticism. Therein lies her global mission."<sup>79</sup> So, according to Dugin, "the sole viable course, therefore, is for Russians to rebound from the debacle of 1989-1991 [the fall of the Soviet Union] by recreating a great 'supra-national empire,' one in which ethnic Russians would occupy 'a privileged position.' The result of such a rebuilding effort would be 'a giant continental state in the administration of which they

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<sup>76</sup> International Eurasian Movement Website, <http://evrazia.org/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1915> (accessed August 26, 2008).

<sup>77</sup> Aleksandr Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki: Geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rosii. Myslit' prostranstvom*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Moscow: 1999), 211, quoted in James H. Billington, *Russia in Search of Itself* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 81.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Aleksandr Dugin, *Our Way. Strategic Prospects for the Development of Russia in the 21st Century (Nash put'. Strategicheskie perspektivy razvitiia Rossii v XXI veke*, 1998), quoted in Marlene Laruelle, "Aleksandr Dugin: A Russian Version of the European Radical Right?," Kennan Institute Website, Occasional Paper #294, <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/OP294.pdf> (accessed August 27, 2008), 13

[Russians] will play the central role.'"<sup>80</sup> In order to achieve this goal "In the beginning stage [of the struggle against Atlanticism], Russia can offer its potential partners in the East and West its resources as compensation for exacerbating their relations with the U.S..."<sup>81</sup> Then the rising Empire should base its balancing strategy against Atlanticism on three axes: Moscow-Berlin, Moscow-Teheran and Moscow-Tokyo in order to create a multi-polar world. With regards to the axis Moscow-Berlin, Dugin proposes de facto a great alliance between Eurasian-Russian and France-Germany blocs. The Central European countries would be incorporated into either Russian or German spheres of influence. "A 'special status,' on the other hand, should be accorded to both Latvia and Lithuania, which suggests that they are to be allocated to the Eurasian-Russian sphere. Poland, too, is to be granted such a 'special status.'"<sup>82</sup> The graphic representation of the Eurasianism ideas is depicted on the following maps.<sup>83</sup>

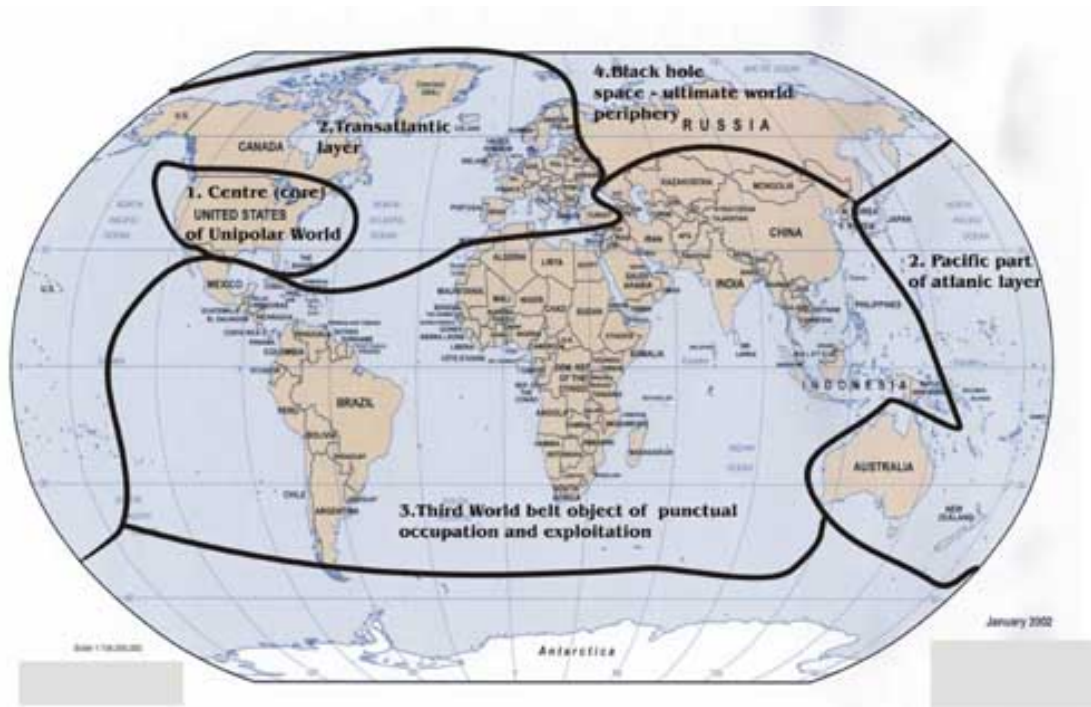
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<sup>80</sup> John B. Dunlop, "Aleksandr Dugin's Foundations of Geopolitics," 16, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/duj01/duj01.pdf> (accessed August 25, 2008).

<sup>81</sup> Aleksandr Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki: Geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rosii* (Moscow: Arktogeya, 1997), 276, quoted in John B. Dunlop, "Aleksandr Dugin's Foundations of Geopolitics," 18, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/duj01/duj01.pdf> (accessed August 25, 2008).

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>83</sup> International Eurasian Movement Website, <http://evrazia.org/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1886> (accessed August 28, 2008).



Map of unipolar world. 1 central nucleus, 2-3 peripheral layers and 4. black hole land

Figure 1. Map of Unipolar World.

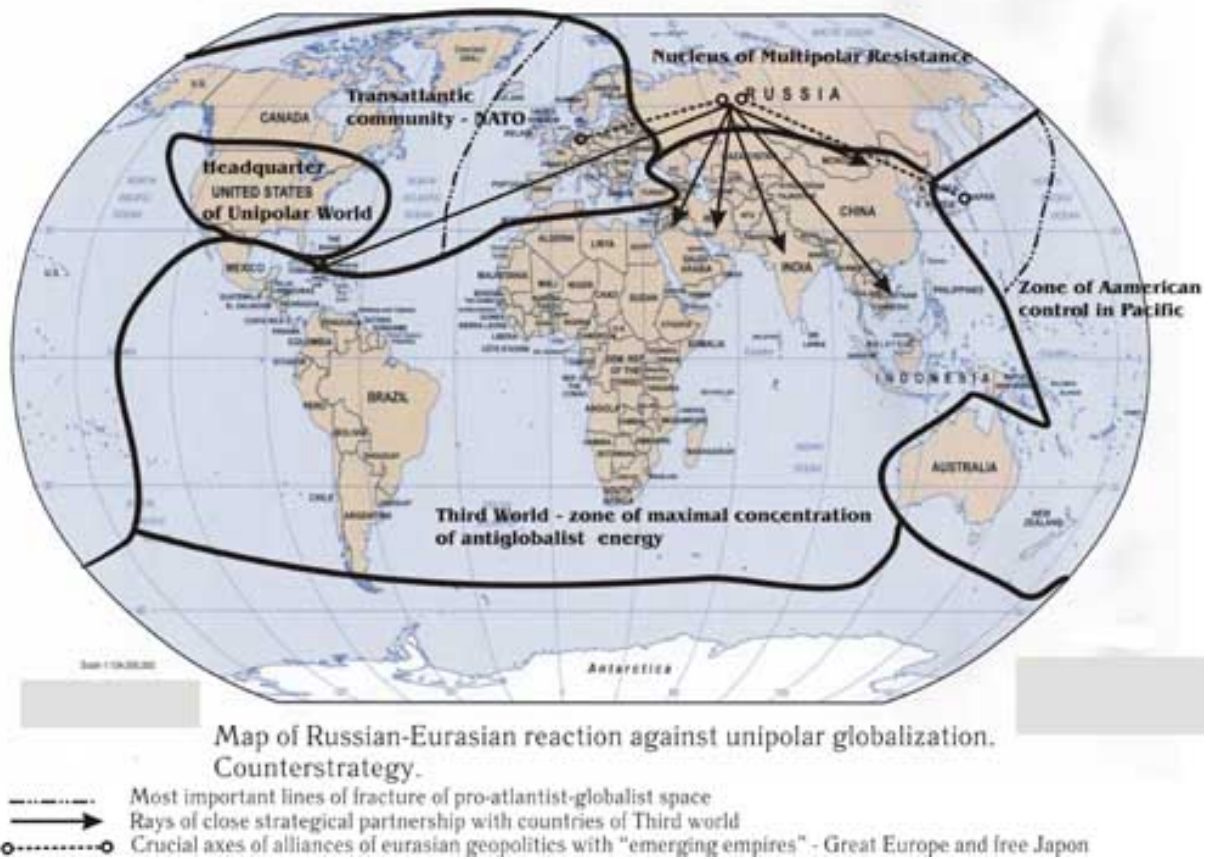


Figure 2. The Russian-Eurasian Vision of Unipolar Counterstrategy.

Thus, it seems obvious that the Eurasianism idea refers directly to new world's balance of power. The unipolar world dominated by Atlanticism would be replaced by multipolar world with Russia heading one of the counterbalancing blocs. The final and desirable future according to Eurasianists looks like the world will be divided into four main blocks: Pan-Eurasian, Anglo-American, Euro-African and Pacific-Far East. The map below shows the graphic representation of this division.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>84</sup> International Eurasian Movement Website, <http://evrazia.org/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1886> (accessed August 28, 2008).



Map of multipolar world. Four zones - four poles

Figure 3. Future Multipolar World.

Although, the Eurasianism idea undoubtedly gained some popularity within the political circles in Russia, the question arises, to what extent are the Eurasianism concepts really shaping the foreign Russian policy, especially with regards to the near abroad? Some Russian authors claim that at least some parts of Eurasianism idea are being introduced by the Russian authorities. Evgenii Ikhlov noted that:

[O]ur new chief stratum are incapable of ruling under such a democracy... [T]hey stand in need of an attractive foundation for another, non-democratic model. Here Eurasianism extraordinarily fits the bill. It offers the following: an authoritarian-charismatic (autocratic) model; selfless and ascetical serving of the regime as the highest form of valor (the messianic great power syndrome); the

agreement of ethnic and religious minorities to play a subordinate role; and imperial xenophobia...<sup>85</sup>

Similarly, Dmitrii Radyshevskii asks the question, "What induces the regime to seek a new ideology in Eurasianism?"<sup>86</sup> Radyshevskii answers:

Here [in Dugin-style Eurasianism] there are ideas which meet the psychological needs of society: there is an alternative to the failed love affair with the West; there is the [Russian] tradition of messianism; and there is the proximity of Asia... The regime stands in need of a new ideology, but of a traditional one, 'integral and great.' All of this is happily combined in Eurasianism...<sup>87</sup>

### **c. Russian Goals in its Near Abroad**

Janusz Bugajski in his book identifies six main principles and goals of the Russian foreign policy with regard to its near abroad. These are as follows.

- "achieve primary influence over the foreign orientations and security postures of the nearby states...The Russian authorities have pursued influence over the smaller and weaker states in order to secure political allies on the international stage or to neutralize their

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<sup>85</sup> Evgenii Ikhlov, "Oni v svoikh korridorakh: Dve storony novogo evraziistva," *Obshchaya gazeta* (August 2, 2001), quoted in John B. Dunlop, "Aleksandr Dugin's Foundations of Geopolitics," 12, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/duj01/duj01.pdf> (accessed August 25, 2008).

<sup>86</sup> Dmitrii Radyshevskii, "Soblazn evraziistva," *Moskovskie novosti*, no. 18 (May 1-14, 2001), quoted in John B. Dunlop, "Aleksandr Dugin's Foundations of Geopolitics," 12, <http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/duj01/duj01.pdf> (accessed August 25, 2008).

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

potential opposition to Russian policy. Moscow wants to forestall rival alliance that could effectively block Russian goals.”<sup>88</sup>

- “Russia has endeavored to gain increasing economic benefits and monopolistic position through targeted foreign investments and strategic infrastructural buyouts in Eastern Europe. This can supply Moscow with substantial influence over any country’s economic, financial, trade, and investment policies... In specific economic sectors, such as energy supplies, Russia seeks to establish regional monopolistic position.”<sup>89</sup>
- “Moscow aims to convert East Europe’s overwhelming dependence on Russian energy supplies and economic investments into long-term, constant, and predictable intergovernmental influence. Close connections between the Kremlin and the largest Russian companies, whether through executive appointments, through the promotions of overseas operations, or through financial, legal, and police instruments, demonstrate that foreign policy is closely coordinated. Russian enterprises have been encouraged to gain political influence through involvement with officials, parties, and media outlets in targeted East European states.”<sup>90</sup>
- “Russia has attempted to limit the scope and pace of Western institutional enlargement and integration, especially in the security arena in the European CIS states. Moscow has obstructed the creation of alliance such as the GUUAM initiative (comprising Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Moldova) that could block Russian inroads and deepen the region’s ties with NATO.”<sup>91</sup>
- “Moscow is preparing to use region, especially the European CIS, as a springboard for rebuilding a larger sphere of influence and global status and reversing Moscow’s decline as a major

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<sup>88</sup> Janusz Bugajski, *Cold Peace: Russia’s New Imperialism* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004), 30.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*



international player. Strategists calculate that this can be accomplished with the help of Western resources and by establishing a regional 'great power' status in Eastern Europe and Asia."<sup>92</sup>

- "by intensifying its involvement in the European arena, Moscow seeks to undercut or damage transatlantic relation or the Europe-America link. The objective is to strengthen the Europe-Russia or 'Eurasian' strategic 'pole' vis-à-vis the United States and to establish a Russia-EU system of international security for the old continent."<sup>93</sup>

To conclude, it can be argued that contemporary Russian foreign policy poses a mix of the traditional balance of power ideas combined with the specific Eurasianism concept. The Russian foreign policy towards the near abroad explicitly shows that Russia perceives the countries located there as its sphere of influence, where the influence of other powers is not welcomed.

#### **D. SUMMARY**

There is no doubt that the USA has emerged from the Cold War confrontation as an undisputable winner-the only superpower. From the standpoint of the balance of power theory "the power preponderance of a single state or of a coalition of states is highly undesirable because the preponderant actor is likely to engage in aggressive behavior."<sup>94</sup> Thus, it can be argued that the post Cold War world witnessed an emergence of a hegemon, whose power is

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<sup>92</sup> Janusz Bugajski, *Cold Peace: Russia's New Imperialism* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004), 31.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-32.

<sup>94</sup> T. V. Paul, *Balance of Power. Theory and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed. T. V. Paul, James J. Wirt and Michael Fortmann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 5.

not balanced. Does it mean that the balance of power theory is not longer suitable to describe the political reality in contemporary world, or quite the opposite; the theory propositions are still applicable for contemporary politics? In this work, the argument will be made that the balance of power theory is still appropriate. According to the basics of this theory, it is inevitable that the power of the current hegemon (USA) will be challenged by other state-actors. The working hypothesis adopted in this work is that Russia's aspiration is to balance the US domination once again. It seems that the Russian authorities, in order to achieve this goal, have adopted some Eurasianism ideas. The Eurasianism concept predicts rebuilding the great power of Russia by unifying the Pan-Eurasian zone as a balance against Atlanticism. Russia is supposed to be a leader of the opposing bloc. This in turn demands an active Russian policy, particularly in her backyard; the so called near abroad.

In the following chapters, the examples of Poland, Ukraine, and Georgia will be used to examine the mechanisms used by Russian authorities to exert influence on these countries.

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### III. POLAND-ON THE PERIPHERY OF NEAR ABROAD

#### A. INTRODUCTION

The history of Polish-Russian relationships can be perceived as a mosaic of mutual mistrust, suspiciousness and hostility constituting a fertile ground for permanent tension, which often led to military conflicts. From the historical perspective, it is very hard to point to any long period of time, in which the Polish-Russian relationships were anything, other than the preparation for the next confrontation. As a famous Russian philosopher, Nikolay Bierdaeev wrote in 1918:

The old quarrel in the Slavic family, a quarrel between Poles and Russians, is hardly possible to explain it considering only the political causes and factors. The roots of this eternal argument lie much deeper than it is often recognized . . . First of all it is a quarrel of two kindred Slavic souls, related to each other from both the language and anthropological perspectives, simultaneously so different that the mutual understanding is almost impossible.<sup>95</sup>

It can be argued that Bierdaeev was only partly right. He was undoubtedly right once he admitted that the Polish-Russian eternal quarrel really exists. On the other hand, he was totally wrong in looking for its causes in the Polish and Russian national characters or even in so called

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<sup>95</sup> Nikolay Bierdiajew, "Dusza rosyjska i polska (Russian and Polish soul)," in: "Dusza polska i rosyjska (od Adama Mickiewicza i Aleksandra Puszkina do Czesława Miłosza i Aleksandra Sołżenicyna) (Polish and Russian soul from Adam Mickiewicz to Aleksander Solzenicyn)." Materiały do „katalogu” wzajemnych uprzedzeń Polaków i Rosjan (Data for the "Record" of Mutual Distrust between Poles and Russians), ed. Andrzej de Lazari. (Warsaw: 2004).

"national souls." At the level of international relationships, there is no room for a policy made on the basis of liking or disliking. The international policy is almost exclusively a function of national interests. Thus, the argument made in this thesis is based on the assumption that the Polish-Russian relationships were always (and still are) shaped by purely political interests, rather than by any metaphysical factors.

For the sake of making the argument as clear and coherent as possible, this chapter will be divided into two parts. The first part will consist of the overview of main historical events shaping the Polish-Russian relationships, especially with regards to the 20th century. This will constitute a necessary base to fully understanding the roots of the present mutual mistrust, which is apparently present in the Polish attitude to its Eastern neighbor.

In the second part, the analysis of the present relationships between Poland and Russia will be made. This analysis will constitute the body of this chapter and will be constructed around four dimensions of the state power: diplomatic, information, military, and economic (DIME). The new approach will be adopted towards this analysis by taking into consideration the unconventional side of DIME. The underlying assumption to be proved is that the present state of the Polish-Russian relationships can be perceived as a sequence of minor crises, rooted in the neo-imperial Russian policy.

## **B. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE POLISH-RUSSIAN RELATIONSHIPS**

### **1. Pre 1989 History**

As mentioned earlier, Poland and Russia share the same Slavic roots. Their misfortune for centuries has been to be the two biggest Slavic nations sharing a long land border. History is overloaded with examples showing that in such a geopolitical environment, military conflicts were almost inevitable with numerous examples in Europe such as France and Germany. There was no exception as far as Poland and Russia were concerned.<sup>96</sup> During the Middle Ages, Poland was in a permanent conflict with Russia. Both countries were roughly equally powerful at this time, and both tried to conquer the other. As a result, the firm feeling of mutual hostility and mistrust was rooted deep into both Polish and Russian mentalities. Suffice it to say that Russia and Poland never became allies in any of the numerous wars within the thousand years of history of both countries.

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Russia and another two Polish neighbors, Prussia and Austria, took advantage of a Polish internal weakness and divided the Polish territory into three parts.<sup>97</sup> The act of the division erased Poland from the map of Europe for a hundred and twenty three years.

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<sup>96</sup> Paweł Kania, "Polish-Russian Relationships in the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> Century," [http://www.historia.terramail.pl/opracowania/nowozytna/polska-rosja\\_w\\_xvii\\_w.html](http://www.historia.terramail.pl/opracowania/nowozytna/polska-rosja_w_xvii_w.html) (accessed August 19, 2008).

<sup>97</sup> This was an act of so called partitioning of Poland. Actually, the partitioning of Poland was a series of three separate acts which took place in 1772, 1793, and 1795. These acts are known in the Polish history as the first, second and third partitioning of Poland. See Anna Pasterak, "Rozbiory Polski (Partitioning of Poland)," Cracovia, 2004, <http://www.wsp.krakow.pl/kbin/bss/hpol/rozbiory.html> (accessed August 19, 2008).

In the territories which were occupied by Russia, the Russians pursued the policy of Russification.<sup>98</sup> This policy was aimed at the elimination from public life of all the Polish national symbols, eradication of the Polish language, promotion of the Russian culture etc.<sup>99</sup> Russification policy was even reinforced after the bloody suppression of the Polish uprisings in 1830 and 1863.<sup>100</sup> The period of the Polish captivity ended only after the three occupying powers engaged themselves in a disastrous war known later as World War I.

On November 11, 1918, -the day after World War I was over, -Poland regained its independence. This was a direct consequence of the defeat of two occupying powers, Germany and Austria, and the internal weakening of the Russia, where a successful communist revolution started in 1917. On November 29, 1918, just two weeks after Poland became independent, the Russian communist leaders decided to attack Poland in order to bring the flame of the communist revolution to Germany and then to the whole of Europe. Lenin in his order to the Red Army wrote, "Over the dead body of

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<sup>98</sup> Encyklopedia PWN © Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN S.A., [http://encyklopedia.wp.pl/encid,1733669,sz\\_tresc.html](http://encyklopedia.wp.pl/encid,1733669,sz_tresc.html) (accessed August 19, 2008).

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> A very interesting analysis of the political situation in Poland under the Russian occupation was given by Augustin P. O'Brien, who witnessed the conduct of the Polish uprising in 1863. Augustin P. O'Brien, *Petersburg and Warsaw: Scenes Witnessed during a Residence in Poland and Russia in 1863-4* (London: R. Bentley, 1864), digitized by Microsoft Corporation, <http://www.archive.org/details/petersburgwarsaw00obriiala> (accessed August 19, 2008).

Poland to the heart of Europe.”<sup>101</sup> This was the first time when the communist Russian authorities decided to use military force outside their country to spread communist ideology. The Red Army in her march on the West attacked the Polish troops in March 1919, which started a Polish-Russian war. The decisive battle of this war took place on August 15, 1920. The Red Army was defeated by Polish troops in a battle called later the “Miracle on the Vistula River.”<sup>102</sup> As a result, the Russian communist leaders had to reject their plans to bring revolution to the Western Europe. This battle was later recognized by some historians as one of the most important battles in the European history.<sup>103</sup> By this victory Poland assured itself another roughly twenty years of independent existence.

On September 17, 1939, just two weeks after the German strike against Poland, the Russian troops crossed the Polish eastern border, fulfilling by this act the secret Ribbentrop-Molotov pact.<sup>104</sup> It was the beginning of a new, fifty-year period of foreign domination for Poland. The eastern provinces went under the Soviet occupation, where the Soviet secret police launched an unprecedented campaign of massive repression against Poles, especially against those who were well-educated or were working for a state before the war (e.g., scientists, military officers,

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<sup>101</sup> Józef Szaniawski, „O losy Polski i Europy: Bitwa Warszawska 15 sierpnia 1920 r. (On the Future of Poland and Europe: Battle of Warsaw August 15, 1920),” <http://www.dlapolski.pl/O-losy-Polski-i-Europy-Bitwa-Warszawska-15-sierpnia-1920-r-art1097.html> (accessed August 20, 2008).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Onet Portal Wiedzy, [http://portalwiedzy.onet.pl/43613,,,pakt\\_ribbentrop\\_molotov,haslo.html](http://portalwiedzy.onet.pl/43613,,,pakt_ribbentrop_molotov,haslo.html) (accessed August 22, 2007).



policemen, clerks, priests, teachers etc.). The barbaric Russian behavior culminated in the execution of 22 thousand Polish prisoners of war in 1940 in Katyn, Kharkov and Miednoje.<sup>105</sup> Thus, from a broader historical perspective, the Russian and German invasion in 1939 can be perceived as a new partition of Poland (the fourth one) by the same actors as in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The only difference was that Austria did not participate in this partition itself falling victim of Nazi *Anschluss* a year earlier.

WWII left Russians on the winning side along with other great powers: USA and Great Britain. The decisions made during the conferences organized by the winning powers in Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam confirmed that Poland was left in the Russian zone of influence.<sup>106</sup> The Russians got a free hand to install fully dependent communist authorities in Poland.<sup>107</sup> It can be said that Poland ultimately lost its sovereignty again after just 20 years of independence. One can challenge this opinion by reasoning that Poland was formally recognized as an independent state by the international community after WWII; however, if one will examine the classic attributes of the independent state (e.g., independence in pursuing its foreign policy) it will

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<sup>105</sup> Paul Allen, *Katyn: Stalin's Massacre and the Seeds of Polish Resurrection* (Annapolis: US Naval Institute Press, 1996).

<sup>106</sup> Lloyd C. Gardner, *Spheres of Influence: The Great Powers Partition Europe, from Munich to Yalta* (Chicago: I. R. Dee, 1993).

<sup>107</sup> Richard F. Staar, "Elections in Communist Poland," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 2, no. 2, (1958): 200-218.

be easy to come to the conclusion that Peoples Republic of Poland did not meet the requirements of an independent state.<sup>108</sup>

## 2. Post 1989 Events

In the late 1980s, rapid-and for many people unexpected-political changes took place in the Eastern Europe. The foundations of the upcoming revolution were built by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985. Gorbachev, who was fully aware of the inefficiency of the communist system, was forced to announce a program of reforms known as *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Although these reforms were at least declaratively aimed at strengthening the communist system, soon it became obvious that the once launched liberalization processes were not reversible. This in turn meant a rapid fall of the communist system. The situation and signals flowing from Moscow were carefully analyzed by the communist authorities in the Eastern Europe's Russian satellites. It can be argued that in Poland the communists first came to the conclusion that it was time to share the political power with the opposition. In the spring 1989, the Round Table Talks started.<sup>109</sup> As a result, Poland became the first communist country where the communist regime handed over the power to the non-communist opposition.

The events in Poland triggered a chain reaction within Eastern Europe, where country after country rejected communism and turned towards democracy. Similar processes

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<sup>108</sup> Stanisław Wasowski, "The Warsaw Pact," in *Foreign and Domestic Policy in Eastern Europe in the 1980s: Trends and Prospects*, ed. Michael J. Sodaro and Sharon L. Wolchik (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983).

took place within the Soviet Union which resulted in the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991. From the former Soviet Empire, several former republics emerged as independent states, including Russia. The collapse of the Soviet Union created an entirely new political environment which demanded from Polish authorities an urgent response to many challenging questions: how to secure Polish borders against possible military threat; how to establish relationships with Poland's new neighbors and other European countries, how to conduct pro-democratic and pro-market reforms without creating internal grievances etc. Indisputably the most challenging and critical issue in the foreign policy area was the problem of how to redefine the Polish-Russian relationship, especially since the Red Army troops were still present on the Polish territory. There was a fear that Russia, after recovering from the shock of the Soviet Union collapse, would attempt to reestablish its zone of influence over the Eastern Europe. These concerns were fueled not only by the historical experiences, but mainly by the numerous official statements given by both the Russian military and political leaders, more or less directly expressing their longing for the lost Empire. After the official dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, both the communist and imperial proclivities for the lost Empire culminated in the anti-Gorbachev coup. This coup did not succeed, but for Polish policymakers it became apparent that in the Russian society,

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<sup>109</sup> John Elster, *The Roundtable Talks and the Breakdown of Communism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

but perhaps even more importantly within Russian political circles, the imperialistic manner of thinking was still keen.<sup>110</sup>

### **3. Historical Background-The Key to the Present**

The short overview of the Polish-Russian history gives a necessary background, which enables looking at the present relationships between both countries from the broader historical perspective. In the remote past, one can find several examples when Poland attempted to take the advantage of the Russian weaknesses to establish Polish control over the Russian territory (e.g., the conquest of Moscow in the 17<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>111</sup> Even for an objective spectator, it is easily noticeable that the Polish-Russian history can be mainly perceived as a Polish permanent struggle against the growing Russian power. During the last three hundred years, one obvious piece of evidence has emerged: the Russian policy towards Poland has been focused on one main goal, the destruction of the Polish statehood and transformation of the Poles into the Russians (e.g., the Russification policy). This Russian policy can be labeled as imperial one. In the past, Russia pursued an imperial policy not only towards Poland, but towards many other nations, which were conquered and incorporated into the Russian Empire (the Baltic nations, the Caucasus nations or the Ukrainians). The communist revolution in 1917 did not change the imperial

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<sup>110</sup> Łukasz Komorowski, "Ustrój polityczny federacji rosyjskiej (Political System of the Russian Federation)," [http://politologia.univ.gda.pl/pomoce\\_nauk/systemy\\_pol/pdf/rosja.pdf](http://politologia.univ.gda.pl/pomoce_nauk/systemy_pol/pdf/rosja.pdf) (accessed August 22, 2007).

<sup>111</sup> Janusz Tazbir, *Polacy na Kremlu i inne historyje (Poles on Kremlin and Other Stories)* (Warsaw: Iskry, 2005).

outlook of Russia, quite the opposite; the imperial characteristics were even reinforced by the powerful communist ideology. The only change was that the imperial policy had been covered under the coat of a worldwide communist revolution's slogans. Communist Russia was thus elevated to the status of one of the two superpowers after WWII. For Poland, such a powerful Russia meant a status of being its dependent satellite for more than 40 years. Only the collapse of the Soviet Empire opened for Poland a window of opportunity to escape from the Russian zone of influence.

### **C. POLAND AND THE RUSSIAN DIME**

#### **1. Russian Diplomatic Capabilities in Poland**

##### ***a. Political Background***

Diplomacy has always been a main means to achieve the states' foreign policy objectives. In addition, negotiations have always been the main instrument to accomplish this goal.<sup>112</sup>

Having in mind the identified Russian foreign policy objectives, it can be argued that Poland is one of the main objects of the Russian interest. Poland institutionally became a part of the West by joining NATO and the EU, however, the geographical proximity to Russia made Poland a frontline country between Russia and the West.

Poland's act in joining NATO in 1999, decisively changed the relationships between Warsaw and Moscow. Poland

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<sup>112</sup> Fendrick J. Reed, "Diplomacy as an Instrument of National Power," in *Guide to National Security Policy and Strategy*, ed. Bartholomees (U.S. Army War College, 2004), 181.

became a member of the Alliance which was originally designated to confront Russia, so the Polish membership in NATO was not celebrated in Moscow. The Russians knew that it would be no longer possible to use the argument of force in relations with Poland. For Poland in turn, the membership in NATO warranted the safety guarantees but also was a confirmation of Poland's eternal place in the Western cultural hemisphere.<sup>113</sup>

In 2000, a newly elected Russian President Vladimir Putin, reoriented the Russian strategic priorities. The internally oriented policy under President Yeltsin was abandoned. Instead of that, a foreign policy oriented towards the restoration of the Russian influence, especially in the near abroad gained the supremacy. This change inevitably contributed to a growing tension between Warsaw and Moscow. At that time the main goal of Polish diplomacy was to assure for Poland a strong position in the international community. This could be achieved by creation of Poland as a regional leader, and supporter of democracy and free market in the East, especially in Ukraine and in the Baltic states. Polish strategists assumed that this policy combined with cautious diplomacy and patiently elaborated compromises would enable normalization of the relationships with Moscow.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Janusz Bugajski, *Cold Peace: Russia's New Imperialism* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004), 1-28.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

**b. Classic and Non-Conventional Russian Diplomatic Means in Poland**

Russia as a member of numerous international organizations-including those most influential (e.g., the permanent membership of the UN Security Council)-developed powerful, skilful and experienced diplomatic services. The challenges of the global diplomacy demand extremely well orchestrated and efficient diplomatic apparatus. There is little doubt that Russian diplomacy meets all the requirements. So, on one hand, the power of the Russian diplomacy depends on the position that Russia enjoys in the international community. On the other hand, however, the power of the Russian diplomacy is a function of the Russian foreign policy goals. The identified Russian foreign policy goals apparently demand active diplomatic measures. This in turn contributes to the growing power of the Russian diplomacy in terms of both an access to state's resources, and the position in the state's hierarchy.

The Russia's interests with regards to Poland can be described as both local and global. Poland is perceived by Russians as a country located on the periphery of the near abroad area.<sup>115</sup> This perception constitutes the local dimension of the Russian policy towards Poland. Simultaneously, Poland being a member of the EU and NATO, belongs to the West. This enables the Russians to use Poland as a convenient proxy to target both these organizations. The Russians also use the inverted logic, and try to utilize their influence within the EU to force changes in the Polish

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<sup>115</sup> Janusz Bugajski, *Cold Peace: Russia's New Imperialism* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004), 1-28.

attitude towards Russia. Thus, it can be argued that Poland is at the same time a target and a proxy for the Russians, who are simultaneously pursuing their strategic interests at both levels.

Diplomacy is critical for Russia in its relations with the West. It seems that the primary Russian foreign policy goal is to challenge the position and influence of the USA elsewhere, and particularly in Europe. The Russian policy aims at exploiting and deepening the divisions between the USA and the EU, as well as within the EU itself.<sup>116</sup> Poland, which strongly supported the US invasion of Iraq, started to be perceived in many European capitals as the US Trojan Horse in Europe.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, the Poles irritated the "old EU," (mainly France and Germany), when Poland formed a coalition of smaller states within the EU in order to fight for a more advantageous European Constitution.<sup>118</sup> These two events combined with a fact that in 2005 the Parliamentary elections in Poland brought a victory to the conservative Law and Justice Party of Jaroslaw Kaczynski, triggered within the EU a wave of criticism against Poland. The Russians spotted a window of opportunity to weaken both the unity of the EU, and the transatlantic ties between Europe and the USA by targeting

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<sup>116</sup> Janusz Bugajski, *Georgia: Epicenter of Strategic Confrontation*, "Center for Strategic and International Studies (Washington, D.C.: August 12, 2008).

<sup>117</sup> Ewa Kasprzycka and David Holley, "Prospects of War Chips Away at Poland's Pro-Americanism," *Los Angeles Times*, March 8, 2003, <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines03/0308-03.htm> (accessed September 29, 2008).

<sup>118</sup> "Poland Threatens Veto in EU Row," *BBC News*, December 11, 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3308917.stm> (accessed September 29, 2008).



Poland. Thus, beginning in 2005, the Russian diplomacy undertook active measures to weaken the Polish position in the EU and to alienate Poland from the European community.

These active measures were mainly based on the assumption that Poland would protest against any Russian attempt to seek any bilateral agreements with the states-members of the EU "over the Polish heads."<sup>119</sup> Thus, when the Russians announced the projects of the South and Nord Streams-pipelines bypassing Poland, transporting Russian gas and oil directly to the Western Europe, Poland protested fiercely.<sup>120</sup> These projects were discussed by Russians in bilateral talks with Germany and France. From the Polish perspective, both pipelines have posed a direct threat to the Polish energy security. Russia, having two alternative ways to transport its supplies to the Western Europe, will be able to easily blackmail Poland with cutting the supplies to Poland, not being afraid of the West's reaction.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> See similar criticism by the Russian President Medvedev on Lithuania. Vladimir Socor, "EU-Russia Summit Targets New Partnership Agreement," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 126 (2008), [http://www.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article\\_id=2373194](http://www.jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2373194) (accessed September 29, 2008).

<sup>120</sup> Steven Woehrel, "Russian Energy Policy towards Neighboring Countries," *CRS Report for Congress RL 34261* (Washington, D.C.: updated January 17, 2008), 4-6.

<sup>121</sup> There is a "Friendship" pipeline crossing Polish territory, in which gas and oil is delivered to Poland and to Western Europe. The Polish reaction to the Russian projects of two new pipelines was to look for alternative sources of gas and oil. The idea was to build a pipeline from Norway to Poland with German participation. The German leader, Gerhard Schroeder, whose close personal relationships with President Putin were well known, refused the German support for this project. Several months later, after the lost elections, Gerhard Schroeder became a very well paid general director of a Russian company, which was supposed to build the Nord Stream pipeline along the bottom of the Baltic Sea, connecting Russia with Germany. Such a project, by no means, would marginalize the significance of the "Friendship" pipeline as a main source of the Russian gas and oil for Western Europe.

Thus, the Russian diplomacy instantly started to present Polish fears as a reflection of the Polish Russophobia, isolationism, and disability to cooperate because of the historical prejudice. Poland in turn, started to insist on the joined EU policy towards Russia. Polish diplomacy highlighted the danger that the Russian strategy to talk bilaterally to the strongest states within the EU posed to the EU unity. The Polish standpoint could be best described by a slogan "nothing about us without us."<sup>122</sup>

The crisis in relations between Warsaw and Moscow caused by the projected pipelines was even reinforced by other mutual insults. The Polish support given for the Orange Revolution in Ukraine helped prevent the seizure of power by the pro-Russian bloc with Victor Yanukovych.<sup>123</sup> The Russians in turn imposed an embargo on Polish meat. The Polish reaction was to bring this issue to the forum of the EU by blocking the EU-Russia trade agreement. This strategy was extremely risky, and the Polish image of the country, which is ready to sacrifice common EU projects for national interests, was likely to be created.<sup>124</sup> Indeed, the Russians tried to exploit the meat crisis exactly along these lines, presenting the Polish veto on the European forum as a malicious retaliation for the pipeline projects.

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<sup>122</sup> "Poland Promises Effective and Flexible Solution for Kaliningrad," *neurope.eu*, <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/4658.php> (accessed September 29, 2008).

<sup>123</sup> Stuart D. Goldman, *Russian Political, Economic and Security Issues and U.S. Interests*, CRS Report for Congress RL 33407 (Washington, D.C.: updated January 17, 2008), 11-14.

<sup>124</sup> "Russia Lifts Ban on Polish Meat Supply," *People's Daily Online*, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90853/6323505.html> (accessed September 23, 2008).

The chilly Polish-Russian relationships became even colder when the issue of possible U.S. anti-missile shield installation in Poland surfaced. Although the US administration claimed that this project has a defensive character, and is aimed at the nuclear threat posed by rogue states and terrorists, the Russians' response was strongly negative.<sup>125</sup> Officially, the Russians expressed their concerns about the shield being allegedly designated against Russia, however; within Polish political circles another explanation gained popularity. According to the alternative version, the Russian objections were motivated by the fact that the US installation on the Polish territory will ultimately pull Poland out from the Russian zone of influence. Indeed, these explanations are more likely to be supplementary to each other rather than contradictory, so both of them can be valid.

Only the Parliamentary elections in Poland in 2007, which brought the victory to the Civic Alliance, changed the political atmosphere around the anti-missile shield. The new Polish government seemed to be not so determined to sign the agreement, seeking rather better cooperation within the EU than with the USA.

Finally, the very last involvement of the Polish President Lech Kaczynski in the Georgia-Russia conflict, and Kaczynski's visit to Tbilisi along with the Presidents of Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, forced the EU to react more decisively to the Russian military operation. The EU reaction in turn probably stopped the Russians' attempt

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<sup>125</sup> Steven A. Hildreth, *Long-Range Ballistic Missile Defense in Europe*, CRS Report for Congress RL 34051 (Washington, D.C.: updated April 25, 2008), 14.

to topple the Shakashvili government in Georgia.<sup>126</sup> The Russian diplomacy once again managed to convince the EU leaders not to condemn the Russians; however, the unexpected consequence of this war was that the Polish government quickly finished the negotiations with the USA and signed the anti-missile shield agreement. This can be perceived as the serious failure of the Russian diplomacy.

To sum up, it can be said that Poland became one of the most important objects for the Russian foreign policymakers. Two main Russian interests overlap in Poland: (1) local-to minimize Polish significance in the East European region, to prevent the Polish influence in Ukraine and Baltic states; (2) global-to use Poland, which is the most vulnerable target to weaken the EU, and to erode the transatlantic ties between Europe and USA. Both of these major goals are being accomplished by use of the powerful Russian diplomatic capabilities. The conventional dimension of these capabilities is reflected in classic diplomatic negotiations, articulation of the Russian interests on the international forums, building alliances, signing agreements, etc. The unconventional dimension refers to the state of contradiction between the official declared intentions and the real objectives behind them. With regards to Poland, there is abundant evidence that Russia in one way or another, attempts to diminish the reliability of Poland in the eyes of international public opinion and policymakers. This is highly consistent with the local dimension goal. A weakened, unreliable Poland would be

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<sup>126</sup> Andrew Curry, "Will Poland Split EU over Russia Policy," *Spiegel.de*, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,572105,00.html> (accessed September 29, 2008).

incapable of exerting its influence over Ukraine and serving it as an advocate in the EU. This in turn will inevitably allow Ukraine slowly to gravitate towards the Russian zone of influence.

## **2. Russian Informational Capabilities in Poland**

### **a. Information-A Soft Power**

The contemporary world is often labeled a global village. This popular phrase owes its emergence mainly to the information revolution that world witnessed during the last several decades. As a consequence of this revolution, information and ability to control it became a crucial element of a state's power. Joseph Nye argues that the understanding of power in world politics has changed. There is a new dimension of power which Nye calls "soft power." In its most general meaning "soft power" is an ability to influence the decisions of other countries without resorting to military force or economic pressure.<sup>127</sup>

According to Frank L. Jones, information as an element of power includes four basic elements: (1) public diplomacy, which includes information activities and popularization of culture; (2) public affairs, (3) international broadcasting; and (4) international military information, which include overt psychological operations.<sup>128</sup> It seems interesting that in democracies it is relatively difficult to develop and conduct long-lasting

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<sup>127</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Soft Power," *Foreign Policy*, no. 80 (Fall 1990): 155-171.

<sup>128</sup> Frank L. Jones, *Information: The Psychological Instrument*, in *Guide to National Security Policy and Strategy*, ed. Bartholomees (U.S. Army War College, 2004), 213-215.

information campaigns. The reason for that is the policymakers' terms in office are usually too short, and competing bureaucratic interests are likely to compromise the efforts to build a coherent information strategy.<sup>129</sup> Unlike real democracies, authoritarian states do not have problems with conducting cohesive, massive and influential information campaigns. It is sufficient to examine the Nazi or the Soviet propaganda<sup>130</sup> mechanisms in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to confirm this.

Thus, having in mind that contemporary Russia is a "managed democracy"<sup>131</sup> the question emerges: Is Russia pursuing any coherent informational campaign in Poland, and if so, what are the characteristics of the Russian informational strategy towards Poland?

#### **b. Russian Informational Strategy in Poland**

With regards to Poland, the Kremlin is pursuing an extremely active informational policy. It can be argued that Poland became a target for the Russian information operations beginning with the Vladimir Putin's first term in office, and this policy has been not abandoned to date. These informational campaigns have been waged with the use of both overt (classic) and covert (unconventional)

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<sup>129</sup> Frank L. Jones, *Information: The Psychological Instrument*, in *Guide to National Security Policy and Strategy*, ed. Bartholomees (U.S. Army War College, 2004), 217.

<sup>130</sup> For more information on how the Soviets were conducting their propaganda operations see Richard M. Schultz and Roy Godson, *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy* (New York: Pergamon Brassey's, 1984).

<sup>131</sup> What is "managed democracy" in Russia, and how it works with regard to information strategy is best depicted in the book by Peter Baker and Susan Glasser, *Kremlin rising: Vladimir Putin's Russia and The End of Revolution* (Washington: Potomac Books, 2007), 293-311.

measures, and have been aimed at the Polish, European, and Russian societies as well as at the political circles in Poland and Europe.

The reasons for which Poland became a target for Russia's informational operations are fully understandable having in mind the Russian foreign policy goals. From the Russian perspective, "Poland was promoting an imperial agenda of its own in Russia's near abroad; Warsaw's preoccupation with development in Ukraine was especially resented."<sup>132</sup> Moreover, "the Kremlin was perturbed that Warsaw was intent on pursuing close ties with Kiev and depicted Poland as an aspiring regional power seeking to replace Russia. Warsaw was allegedly pursuing the formation of a belt of states between the Baltic and Black Sea and constructing a cordon sanitaire around Russia."<sup>133</sup> In addition to that

The Poles eagerly adopted the role as 'Russian experts' in the EU and championed an initiative—the 'eastern dimension'—that offered 'partnership relations' with countries located between the expanded EU and Russia. Poland has welcomed the prospect of leading the block of states that U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has labeled New Europe. From the perspective of the Kremlin, the forgoing provides strong evidence that Russia is right in seeing Poland as an American Trojan Horse in the EU.<sup>134</sup>

Thus, for Russian policymakers, it became obvious that Poland, being a member of the EU and NATO, is not

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<sup>132</sup> Richard J. Krickus, *The Iron Troikas: The New Threat from the East* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2006), 13-14.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

vulnerable to military pressure, but might be sensitive to a well prepared and conducted informational campaign aimed at tarnishing the Polish image and undermining Polish appeal "to other CIS states; to use [Poland] as a springboard into the vast EU market and exploit its membership to shape EU policies toward Russia at large; and to gain sufficient leverage over it to prevent Washington from using it as an agent of influence in Russia's near abroad.<sup>135</sup>

**c. Overt (Classic) Informational Means**

The Russian overt (classic) informational means towards Poland mainly employ public affairs. The Russian authorities use their official representatives, particularly diplomats, but also journalists or scientists, to present the Russian point of view on certain problems. The most characteristic feature of the Russian use of public affairs is that the official statements made by Moscow are often followed by actions which are contradictory to what was previously declared. This mechanism creates an informational chaos, and a state of confusion of the targeted audience. In the informational chaos, it is extremely difficult for people to decide what is going on and who is right. Moreover, if the state of chaos lasts for a longer period of time, it can exhaust the public opinion relatively quickly. This is why in the peoples' eyes, the party which contributes to the solution of the problem is favored regardless of the fact, which party created the problem.

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<sup>135</sup> Richard J. Krickus, *The Iron Troikas: The New Threat from the East* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2006), 17.



The example how this strategy was used to weaken the position of the Jarosław Kaczyński's government in the Polish public opinion eyes, is the case of the ban put on the importation of Polish meat to Russia. In 2005, the Russian authorities put the ban on the importation of Polish meat, which allegedly did not meet Russian sanitary requirements. From the beginning the Russians claimed that lifting the ban is only a technical issue and had nothing in common with the political tension between Russia and Poland, which started to grow after the elections in Poland brought the victory to Kaczynski's party. The negotiations were extended by Russians, who were making different conditions including the possibility of Russian inspections in Polish slaughterhouses. In the meantime, however, the Polish government was under growing pressure from the meat producers and public opinion to solve the problem. The Russians started to accuse Polish authorities of Russo phobia, exploiting the commonly known suspiciousness of the Polish leadership towards Russia. The official Russian statements called for Polish cooperation in solving the problem, while in practice Russia was denying any cooperation. The Polish government finally asked the EU for help, which Russians in turn labeled a politicizing of a non-political problem. Finally, after the Parliamentary elections in Poland in autumn 2007 swept away the Kaczynski's government, the Russians lifted the ban on Polish meat without any additional conditions. This move was a clear signal for Polish society that suggested the Kaczyński's government was the main obstacle for quick solution to the meat conflict. However, in reality the

Russian decision to put a ban on Polish meat seemed to be a part of the broader action aimed at weakening the Polish pro-Western and particularly pro-American government.<sup>136</sup>

The meat conflict gives also a good insight into another overt information technique used by Russian. The Russians became active in Polish TV and radio stations, newspapers and magazines. The Russian experts were invited to explain the background of the conflict to the Polish society. Although most of them claimed their independence from the Russian authorities, the opinions they were expressing were highly consistent with the official Russian standpoint. Almost all the Russian experts underscored the significance of the conflict, labeling the Polish response as exaggerated and emotional. The overall trend was to present Polish authorities as Russo phobic and xenophobic, and to blame the Polish party for spoiling the relationships with Moscow. The same mechanism was used to tarnish the Polish image on the EU forum, once Poland decided to veto the EU-Russia trade agreement.<sup>137</sup>

In the Russian informational arsenal, there are also less manipulative techniques used to shape Polish public opinion in Russia's favor. These are mainly public diplomacy mechanisms. For example, the Russian government has been financing the work of the Polish-Russian Friendship Association, which is a successor of the communist Polish-

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<sup>136</sup> People's Daily Online, "Russia Lifts Ban on Polish Meat Supply," <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90777/90853/6323505.html> (accessed September 23, 2008).

<sup>137</sup> A very good example how the Kaczynski's government was depicted in the Russian media can be found in the article by Yelena Shesternina. Yelena Shesternina, "Big Blunder of Kaczynski Brothers," <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20071023/85197290.html> (accessed September 25, 2008).

Soviet Friendship Association. This Association is very active in propagating the image of Russia being a normal democratic country with a flourishing economy, insisting on partnership relations with Poland. The Russians are also financing different cultural initiatives like the Russian Song Festival, which was resumed in 2008 in Zielona Góra<sup>138</sup> or the film workshops, to list only few.<sup>139</sup> The last and highly symbolic example of how Russia is attempting to use culture for the political purposes is the movie titled "Year 1612." This film, which was indirectly financed by the Russian government, tells a story about expelling the Poles from the Kremlin in 1612. The movie was distributed in Russia and Poland. The Poles were presented there in a very unfavorable light. What makes this rather mediocre movie really interesting, looking from the political perspective, is the fact that the Russian authorities under President Putin "moved a [Russian] public holiday from November 7, which has Communist associations, to November 4 to celebrate the date of Russia's triumph over the invading Polish army in 1612 and the liberation of Moscow."<sup>140</sup> Thus, it can be argued that this film-and especially the intentions behind it-is a somewhat symbolic element of the ongoing Russian informational campaign toward Poland.

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<sup>138</sup> Maja Salwacka, "Wskrzeszony Festiwal Piosenki Rosyjskiej (the Russian Song Festival Revived)," *Gazeta.pl*, <http://miasta.gazeta.pl/zielonagora/1,51944,4977802.html> (accessed September 25, 2008).

<sup>139</sup> Russia-Poland New Gaze, <http://www.newgaze.info/english> (accessed September 25, 2008).

<sup>140</sup> Tom Birchenough, "'1612' Makes Date with Russia," *Variety.com*, <http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117975238.html?categoryid=13&cs=1> (accessed September 25, 2008).

**d. Covert (Unconventional) Informational Means**

There is abundant evidence that the Soviet Union became an unbeaten master in conducting covert informational operations. These operations were based on two main pillars, namely propaganda and disinformation, and were often labeled the active measures in the Soviet strategy.<sup>141</sup> It can also be argued that contemporary Russia still uses these powerful tools to achieve its political goals. A good example of the Russian propaganda operation was conducted at the time of NATO expansion towards the Eastern Europe. As Janusz Bugajski noted:

Regular propaganda attacks by Russia's state media outlets are supplemented by more systematic disinformation campaign in familiar KGB style operations. These have targeted particular government, specific politicians, or pro-Western political parties in nearby states. These targets are depicted as dangerously 'Russophobic' and thus their inclusion NATO would allegedly poison the West's relations with Russia and introduce unstable states into the Alliance. The Russian press has frequently cited U.S. and European commentators who speak out against NATO enlargement on the grounds that it will undermine relations with Moscow by making the Alliance more anti-Russian.<sup>142</sup>

This type of propaganda operation was conducted extremely patiently, carefully and with use of a broad repertoire of measures. This usually included insertion of specific press articles in foreign newspapers, sponsoring NGOs or informal groups (anarchists or ecological

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<sup>141</sup> See Richard H. Schultz and Roy Godson, *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy* (New York: Pergamon Brassey's, 1984).

<sup>142</sup> Janusz Bugajski, *Cold Peace: Russia's New Imperialism* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004).

activists), or so called black PR (public relations).<sup>143</sup> All these efforts were orchestrated with the operational activity of the Russian special services (Federal Security Service (FSB), Military Intelligence (GRU), and Foreign Civilian Intelligence Agency (SWR)).

FSB as well as GRU and SWR are direct successors of their communist ancestors. In communist Poland, the Soviet special services enjoyed the superior position. Once the Soviet Union collapsed the agents were "frozen," but with the time passing the Russian operatives managed to "defrost" these people. The Russian agents were placed in the strategic areas of the Polish state, particularly in the governmental administration, armed forces, universities or media. The spy scandal which broke out in 1999, after three Polish counterintelligence officers were accused of spying for Russia, revealed the scope of the problem.<sup>144</sup> These captured spies were classic agents, however, the most dangerous and harmful weaponry in the Russian arsenal, are so-called "agents of influence." According to Richard H. Schultz and Roy Godson:

The agent of influence may be a journalist, a government official, a labor leader, an academic, an opinion leader, an artist, or involved in one of a number of other professions. The main objective of an influence operation is the use of the agent's position-be it in government,

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<sup>143</sup> For more about how black PR works in Russia see a book by Alena V. Ledeneva, *How Russia Really Works: The Informal Practices That Shaped Post-Soviet Politics and Business* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 28-57.

<sup>144</sup> For more see the Report released by the Verification Commission, which was established after the Polish Military Special Services were disbanded in 2006. Verification Commission Report, <http://www.raport-wsi.info/> (accessed September 25, 2008).

politics, labor, journalism, or some other field-to support and promote political conditions desired by the sponsoring foreign power.<sup>145</sup>

The main problem with agents of influence is that "the agent of influence may [be] the most complex and difficult to document. In fact, even skilled counterintelligence officers find it very difficult to follow and unravel orchestrated agent-of-influence operations."<sup>146</sup> In most cases, there is no material evidence, which allows connecting certain persons with the foreign power, however, at the time of important events, it is relatively easy to notice increased public activity of certain people or organizations. Within the last decade, at least three events activated certain political circles, groups or individuals in Poland. These were Polish accession to NATO and EU and the discussion on installing the American anti-missile shield in Poland. All these issues concerned Russia, and in all these cases Russia found influential advocates within the Polish establishment.<sup>147</sup>

The examination of both overt and covert measures, which were adopted by Russian to wage informational operations in Poland, shows that they tend to depend on the covert means. There are at least three reasons for that. The first one is that the covert means allow more control with

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<sup>145</sup> Richard H. Schultz and Roy Godson, *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy* (New York: Pergamon Brassey's, 1984), 133.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 132-133.

<sup>147</sup> See the excerpts from interview with Wojciech Olejniczak-the former leader of the post-communist Democratic Left Alliance (SLD). W. Z, "Deadlock in Missile Shield Talks," *Warsaw Voice.com*, <http://www.warsawvoice.pl/view/18394> (accessed September 25, 2008). Note from author: Author does not suggest in any way that Wojciech Olejniczak's views and activity are in any way a result of anything other than his personal beliefs.

more predictable results in a shorter time (agents' operations), while the overt public affairs campaigns demand time and the results are uncertain. The second reason is that the Russians still have in Poland a huge reservoir of trusted and well placed agents, which was inherited from the communist times. The third reason is that the overt campaigns need to be at least partly positive, attracting the targeted audience to the message's sender. In the Polish case, the memory of Russian occupation is still fresh, so the Russians do not have too much ammunition to efficiently appeal to the Polish society.

### **3. Russian Military Capabilities With Regards to Poland**

#### **a. Russian Armed Forces**

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian armed forces have been in permanent turmoil. The allocation of resources caused by a transition from the Soviet militarized economy to a semi-free market one, contributed to the massive military budget cuts, and reduction in troops from 4.3 million in 1986 to 1.2 million in 2008.<sup>148</sup> The Russian armed forces are still based on the conscript, so "readiness and morale remain low, and draft evasion and desertion are widespread."<sup>149</sup> Despite these problems, the Russian Army still remains "by far a largest army in the region."<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Stuart D. Goldman, *Russian Political, Economic and Security Issues and U.S. Interests*, CRS Report for Congress RL 33407, (Washington, D.C.: updated August 26, 2008), 18.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

Beginning in 1999, the improving economical situation in Russia allowed the Russian authorities to increase the military budget. In 2007, defense budget was about \$31.6 billion, and "if one adds the funds allotted in 2007 for the nuclear, security, and defense-related law-enforcement activities to the total defense expenditures, total budget spending on defense reaches around \$58 billion."<sup>151</sup> According to the report for the Swedish Defense Ministry, "the decade-long downsizing of the Armed Forces has now definitely come to a halt. Arms procurement is small but rapidly increasing while the number and complexity of exercises are significantly increasing, albeit from a low level. It is likely that Russian military capability will increase considerably in a ten-year perspective."<sup>152</sup> Today, it seems that the Russians are militarily coming back on the international stage. This process is reflected in the fact that "some high-profile military activities have been resumed, such as large-scale multi-national military exercises, show-the flag naval deployments to the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, and strategic long-range bomber patrols that approach U.S. and NATO airspace."<sup>153</sup>

The Russian status of a world's major power is assured not by the reviving conventional forces, but almost solely by the Russian nuclear, and more generally, WMD

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<sup>151</sup> Stuart D. Goldman, *Russian Political, Economic and Security Issues and U.S. Interests*, CRS Report for Congress RL 33407, (Washington, D.C.: updated August 26, 2008), 18-19.

<sup>152</sup> Jan Leijonhalm and others, *Russian Military Capability in a Ten-Year Perspective: Problems and Trends in 2005*, (Swedish Defense Research Agency, June 2005), 6, <http://www.foi.se/upload/rapporter/foi-russian-military-capability.pdf> (accessed September 30, 2008).

<sup>153</sup> Stuart D. Goldman, *Russian Political, Economic and Security Issues and U.S. Interests*, CRS Report for Congress RL 33407, (Washington, D.C.: updated August 26, 2008), 19.



arsenal. The Russian nuclear arsenal is the second largest in the world, and remains almost intact since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Keeping a high readiness of the strategic nuclear forces was a timeless priority for the Russian authorities. Despite the fact, that in 2000, the Russian President Vladimir Putin decided to reduce the number of the nuclear warheads from 6000 to 1500.<sup>154</sup> This reduction did not deprive Russia from a capacity to conduct a nuclear strike. And "even if global (nuclear) war is no longer the foremost planning factor, Russia's nuclear triad [N, B, C] will remain and increased emphasis will be put on tactical nuclear weapons. Thus, Russia will develop both its strategic and tactical nuclear arsenals."<sup>155</sup>

**b. The Military Dimension of the Polish-Russian Relationships**

As it was argued earlier in this chapter, Poland's membership in NATO and the EU diminished the likelihood of a direct Russian military action against Poland to the theoretical measurement. Nevertheless, it does not mean that within the last 16 years the Polish-Russian relationships were not influenced by military issues.

By a year 2000, Poland managed to achieve its two main military strategic goals, namely to convince Russia to withdraw its forces from Poland (1993), and to join NATO (1999). Once the ailing Russian President Yeltsin was

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<sup>154</sup> Stuart D. Goldman, *Russian Political, Economic and Security Issues and U.S. Interests*, CRS Report for Congress RL 33407, (Washington, D.C.: updated August 26, 2008), 18.

<sup>155</sup> Jan Leijonhalm and others, "Russian Military Capability in a Ten-Year Perspective: Problems and Trends in 2005," (Swedish Defense Research Agency, June 2005), 6, <http://www.foi.se/upload/rapporter/foi-russian-military-capability.pdf> (accessed September 30, 2008).

replaced by Vladimir Putin, the Russian foreign policy priorities changed. The new Russian leadership reconciled itself with the fact that Poland became a part of the West, and secured itself from the direct military Russian action. At the same time however, the growing tension between Poland and Russia encouraged the Russians to use armed forces, and a military rhetoric, to put more or less symbolic pressure on Poland. Among the numerous problems in the Polish-Russian relationships there are at least two issues, which illustrate how Russia exploits its military component of power to exert influence on Poland. These are the Kaliningrad enclave problem, and the U.S. anti-missile shield.

(1) Kaliningrad Enclave. In 2000, the Polish authorities obtained satellite images from NATO, which showed a deployment of the Russian tactical nuclear missiles to the Kaliningrad enclave.<sup>156</sup> This small part of Russia of strategic significance is encircled by Poland and Lithuania. The Kaliningrad enclave was at that time a closed militarized zone, where the Russians concentrated a significant number of troops. These troops being deployed only several kilometers from the Polish border have always posed a concern for Poland. Thus, the information about the Russians deploying the nuclear missiles back to Kaliningrad

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<sup>156</sup> Joanna Rohozińska, "Winter Deepens as the Bear Awakens," *Central Europe Review* 3, no. 2 (2001), <http://www.ce-review.org/01/2/rohozinska2.html> (accessed October 1, 2008).

enclave alerted Poland, which "swiftly called international inspection of alleged Russian weapon stores in the Kaliningrad enclave."<sup>157</sup>

From the strategic standpoint, it was clear from the beginning that the Russian action was aimed not at Poland itself, but rather at NATO and more broadly at the international public opinion. Grzegorz Kostrzewa-Zorbas-a Polish analyst-argued that "'installation of missiles is a bad sign for the Baltic countries, which want to join NATO, but which Moscow wants to keep in its sphere of influence ... It is a step back towards Cold War realities.' He elaborated, 'From the military point of view, the deployment of the tactical weapons has limited significance. However, the move may persuade public opinion internationally that NATO expansion would destabilize regional security.'"<sup>158</sup> Similarly, an unnamed Polish diplomat noted that "the alleged deployment probably served to discourage NATO from further eastward expansion and preserve Moscow's image as a military superpower despite a decline in its conventional forces. 'It is a worrying sign that Moscow still treats Kaliningrad as a military bastion rather than a zone of economic cooperation with the Baltic region and the European Union, ...'"<sup>159</sup>

Although, the Russians rejected the allegations of deploying nuclear missiles in Kaliningrad

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<sup>157</sup> Joanna Rohozińska, "Winter Deepens as the Bear Awakens," *Central Europe Review* 3, no. 2 (2001), <http://www.ce-review.org/01/2/rohozinska2.html> (accessed October 1, 2008).

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

enclave,<sup>160</sup> the doubts did not vanish. This case was never decisively concluded, partly because the Russians denied any international military inspections to check the allegations. In fact, "Kaliningrad is the only 'western' part of Russia that is not subject to the special 'flank' restrictions of the CFE Treaty, limiting troop re-deployments."<sup>161</sup> Interestingly, in 2007, Russia withdrew from the CFE Treaty.<sup>162</sup>

(2) Anti-missile Shield. The most recent "hot topic" in the Polish-Russian relationships is the issue of the U.S. anti-missile shield installation on the Polish territory.

On August 20, 2008, the US-Polish agreement was signed "to install a base for 10 interceptor missiles in northern Poland and a radar tracking system in the Czech Republic to protect the United States and Europe from possible future attacks from what it calls 'rogue' states."<sup>163</sup> The Polish authorities overtly commented that this U.S. installation will also contribute to the Polish security, however, not by defending Poland against the missiles from "rogue" states, but by the presence of the

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<sup>160</sup> Ian Traynor, "Russians Deny Nuclear Deployment to Baltic," *The Guardian* (January 5, 2001), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/jan/05/russia.iantraynor> (accessed October 1, 2008).

<sup>161</sup> Matthieu Chillaud and Frank Tetard, "The Demilitarization of Kaliningrad: A 'Sisyphean Task,'?" *Baltic Security & Defense Review* 9 (2007): 171-186.

<sup>162</sup> "Russia Suspends Arms Control Pact," *BBC News*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6898690.stm> (accessed October 10, 2008).

<sup>163</sup> "Poland, U.S. Formally Sign Anti-Missile Shield Agreement," *China View*, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-08/20/content\\_9543670.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-08/20/content_9543670.htm) (accessed October 1, 2008).

U.S. troops on Polish territory.<sup>164</sup> Such a statement clearly indicated that after the NATO failure in Russia-Georgia conflict, Poland was seeking strengthening bilateral ties with USA. These ties are supposedly a more credible security guarantee for Poland than the NATO membership. There is also little doubt that the Russian action in Georgia in August 2008, boosted the U.S.-Polish negotiations towards the successful end.

Not surprisingly, the idea of deploying a part of the anti-missile shield in Poland has triggered a strongly negative Russian reaction. This time however, unlikely as it was earlier, Russians decided to overtly threaten Poland by use of nuclear weapon. The Russian President Dmitry Medvedev stated that "the deployment of new missile defense facilities in Europe is aimed against the Russian Federation."<sup>165</sup> He was instantly followed by the Russian General Nogovitsyn who said, "By hosting these [anti-missile interceptor base], Poland is making itself a target. This is 100 per cent certain. It becomes a target for attack. Such targets are destroyed as a first priority."<sup>166</sup> Nogovitsyn further explained that "Russian military doctrine sanctioned the use of nuclear weapons 'against the allies of countries having nuclear weapons if

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<sup>164</sup> See the Polish President Lech Kaczyński speech cited in "Umowa w sprawie tarczy podpisana (Anti-Missile Shield Agreement Signed)," *Gazetaprawna.com*, [http://prawo.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/31855,umowa\\_w\\_sprawie\\_tarczy\\_podpisana.html](http://prawo.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/31855,umowa_w_sprawie_tarczy_podpisana.html) (accessed October 2, 2008).

<sup>165</sup> Harry de Quetteville and Andrew Pierce, "Russia Threatens Nuclear Attack on Poland over US Missile Shield Deal," *Telegraph.co.uk*, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/2566005/Russia-threatens-nuclear-attack-on-Poland-over-US-missile-shield-deal.html> (accessed October 2, 2008).

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

they in some way help them,' as Poland had done in signing the deal."<sup>167</sup> The explicitly expressed threat was the strongest one issued by the Russian authorities since the Soviet Union collapsed. The Polish reaction seemed to be highly moderate. Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski said that "Poland was open to Russian inspections because it wanted to give Moscow 'tangible proof' that the planned base was not directed against Russia."<sup>168</sup> There was no response from Moscow.

To sum up, it can be argued that the Russians do not have too much military leverage on Poland. Poland is member of NATO and EU, so any direct military action solely against Poland is almost unimaginable. Nevertheless, the Russians are using the military rhetoric more in an attempt to influence the international public opinion and decision makers, than to change the strategic military balance. This was the case in the deploying of the nuclear missiles to Kaliningrad enclave. Regarding this action, it can be argued that the Russians used their military capabilities as a part of bigger information campaign aimed at preventing the NATO enlargement. One can call it a non-conventional use of military force.

The latest events regarding the deployment of the elements of anti-missile shield in Poland showed, however, that Russia is not shy to use its military

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<sup>167</sup> Catherine Philp and Tony Halpin, "Russia in Nuclear Threat to Poland," *Timesonline.co.uk*, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article4543744.ece> (accessed October 2, 2008).

<sup>168</sup> "Russia Threatens Poland with Attack," *The Jerusalem Post*, <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=SimpleSite/JParticle/Sho wFull&cid=1218710373444> (accessed October 2, 2008).

capabilities in a more traditional manner. This time, the openly expressed threats against Poland, and suggestions that Poland became a target for the Russian nuclear forces, point out that Russia is on its way back to the Cold War rhetoric. Thus, in case of a global armed conflict, the possibility that Polish territory will be targeted by nuclear strike must be seriously taken into account. From this perspective, the Russian strategy shows the characteristics of a conventional use of military force.

#### **4. Russian Economic Capabilities with Regards to Poland**

##### ***a. Russian Energy Strategy***

In today's economically interdependent and globalized world, where the major players are supranational companies, a state's economic power seems to be the least useful mean to exert influence on other states. Even a powerful tool like economic sanctions is not likely to be efficient, unless the sanctions are introduced into being by a broad coalition of states for a sufficiently long period of time. It is hard to imagine that any unilaterally conducted economic action against any state can be successful. It seems that there are some exceptions to this general rule. One of the most striking examples of that was the Russian policy of using their natural resources, mainly gas and oil, as a "political weapon."<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> See Adrian Blomfield, "Russia's Powerful Weapon: Oil and Natural Gas," *Telegraph.co.uk*, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/2645890/Russias-powerful-weapon-oil-and-natural-gas.html> (accessed October 3, 2008).

In 2003, the Russian authorities adopted a new energy strategy for the period up to 2020.<sup>170</sup> In this document, one can find it explicitly stated that the Russians are going to use energy for political and economic control over other states and actors. The goal is that other actors should be dependent on Russia, while Russia should be at the same time independent from external influences.

In one of the most detailed analysis of the Russian energy policy, Jan Leijonhielm and Robert Larsson argue that the actual energy policy of Russia can be described as an energy strategy.<sup>171</sup> The authors identify three goals of the Russian energy strategy:

Russian economic growth;

- Increase Russian international influence;
- Guarantee an economic independence for Russia.

The authors conclude that Russia enjoys a huge capability to influence the world's energy market; however, it has no capability to control it. Internally, the Russian authorities control almost 100% of the natural resources and its outflow from Russia. The energy industry is either owned by the state or controlled by the state. Thus, the Russian authorities are continuously strengthening their abilities to use energy as a tool for foreign policy. The record shows

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<sup>170</sup> Russian Ministry of Industry and Energy, "Energeticheskaja strategija Rosii na period do 2020 goda [Russia's Energy Strategy for the Period up to 2020]," Government decree dated August 28, 2003 [http://ec.europa.eu/energy/russia/events/doc/2003\\_strategy\\_2020\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/russia/events/doc/2003_strategy_2020_en.pdf) (accessed October 3, 2008).

<sup>171</sup> Jan Leijonhielm and Robert Larsson, "Russia's Strategic Commodities: Energy and Metals as Security Levers," November 24, Abstract, [http://www.foi.se/FOI/templates/Page\\_4356.aspx](http://www.foi.se/FOI/templates/Page_4356.aspx) (accessed October 3, 2008).



that Russia has already used its “energy weapon” against countries both within and outside the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).<sup>172</sup>

Figure 4 shows the dependence on Russian gas in 2003. Although the data are from 2003, there was not substantial change in the numbers. In 2007, import from Russia still constitutes about 63% of the Polish consumption.

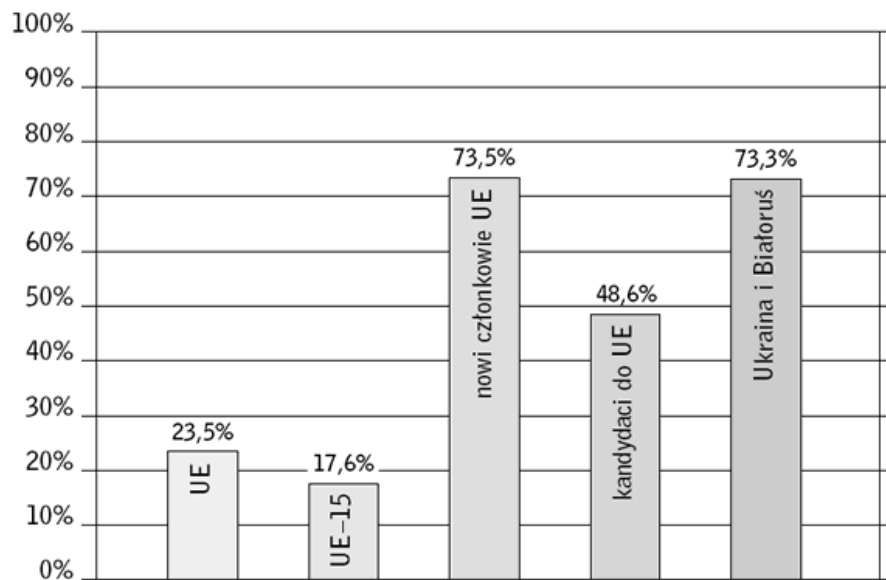


Figure 4. The Dependence of Various European Groups of States on Imports of Natural Gas from Russia in 2003 (Ratio of Imports from the Russian Federation to Total Consumption) [x-axis labels from left to right: EU, EU-15, new EU members, EU candidate countries, Ukraine and Belarus].<sup>173</sup>

<sup>172</sup> Jan Leijonhielm and Robert Larsson, “Russia’s Strategic Commodities: Energy and Metals as Security Levers,” November 24, Abstract, [http://www.foi.se/FOI/templates/Page\\_4356.aspx](http://www.foi.se/FOI/templates/Page_4356.aspx) (accessed October 3, 2008).

<sup>173</sup> Agata Łoskot, “Bezpieczeństwo dostaw rosyjskiego gazu do UE-kwestia połączeń infrastrukturalnych,” [Security of Supply of Russian Gas to the EU-the issue of infrastructure connections] Centre for Eastern Studies, (Warsaw: Punkt widzenia, February 2005), <http://www.osw.waw.pl/pub/punkt/0502/gaz.htm> (accessed October 3, 2008).

Keith C. Smith-another analyst of the Russian energy policy-stated in his report:

... the current policies of the Russian government, under Vladimir Putin, pose a significant challenge, to the development of transparent democratic governments and free markets in those countries dependent on Russia on their energy resources. Over the past few years, the Kremlin has increasingly used its energy monopoly to influence policies in the neighboring countries of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine. Russia's national security interest, as defined by Putin, is to re-establish Moscow's control over strategic infrastructure in the neighboring countries. This control is to be used to ensure that there are friendly governments in place to support Russian security and economic interests. It would be an exaggeration to call Russian economic power projection imperialism, but the neo-colonial characteristics of Russia's foreign energy policy are readily apparent to those living in the immediate neighborhood.<sup>174</sup>

Thus, how has the Russian "energy weapon" has worked against Poland up to date?

***b. Poland in the Russian "Pipeline Tongs"***

As it was stated earlier, the main Polish energetic concern is the dependence on the Russian gas. In light of the Russian strategy to use its energy supplies as a tool to exert influence, Poland must consider looking for diversification of its gas sources.

The planned pipeline from Russia to Germany on the bottom of the Baltic Sea, currently poses a special concern

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<sup>174</sup> Keith C. Smith, *Russian Energy Politics in the Baltics, Poland and Ukraine: A New Stealth Imperialism?* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2004).

for the Polish authorities. To date, the main Russian pipeline to Poland with extension to the Western Europe has been the "Jamal" pipeline. The "Jamal" pipeline crosses the Polish territory, so Poland has been somewhat immunized to the Russian "energy weapon." The reason for that is the Russians will have to cut off the supplies to Western Europe in case they would like to "punish" Poland. This seems unacceptable from the Russian strategic standpoint. Once the Baltic pipeline called "Nord Stream," which will directly connect Russia with Germany and Western Europe, is built, Poland will become fully vulnerable to the Russian "energy weapon." There are two reasons for that: (1) The "Jamal" pipeline will no longer be necessary to supply gas to Western Europe, so the Russians can freely manipulate the gas supplies to Poland without hurting Western Europe, (2) once the "Nord Stream" pipeline becomes the main road for the Russian gas to the West, it will financially hurt Poland. Poland will have to buy the Russian gas from Germany, which is much more expensive because of the German high transit fees. In addition to that, Poland will lose money currently earned for the Russian gas transit via the "Jamal" pipeline.

Simultaneous to the "Nord Stream" project, the Russian company Gazprom is participating in building another pipeline called "South Stream." This pipeline will connect Russia with Italy and Western Europe via Austria. The "South Stream" pipeline is competitive to the EU project of the "Nabucco" pipeline, which goes from the Caucasus region to Western Europe. In light of the Russian energy strategy, there is little doubt that both the "Nord Stream" and the "South Stream," pipelines, which encircle the Middle Europe,

will expose countries like Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Baltic States to a direct Russian energy threat. Officially, the Russian authorities claim that both projected pipelines are necessary to avoid the possibility of cutting off gas supplies by "unstable" transit countries (e.g., Belarus, Ukraine or even Poland). It seems that this argument is unjust, at least regarding Poland. It is hard to imagine any circumstances in which the Polish decision to cut off the Russian gas supplies to Western Europe could be profitable for Poland.

Both Russian projected pipelines also undermine the common EU energy policy by dividing the EU into two geographical areas. The first area lies outside the "pipeline tongs" and contains roughly the "old EU" countries. By building the pipelines, Russia plans to get direct access to its Western customers. The second area, inside the "pipeline tongs," contains the new EU members as well as Belarus and Ukraine. These countries will become totally dependent on the Russian good will. In practice, it means that Russia will broaden its zone of influence towards the west.

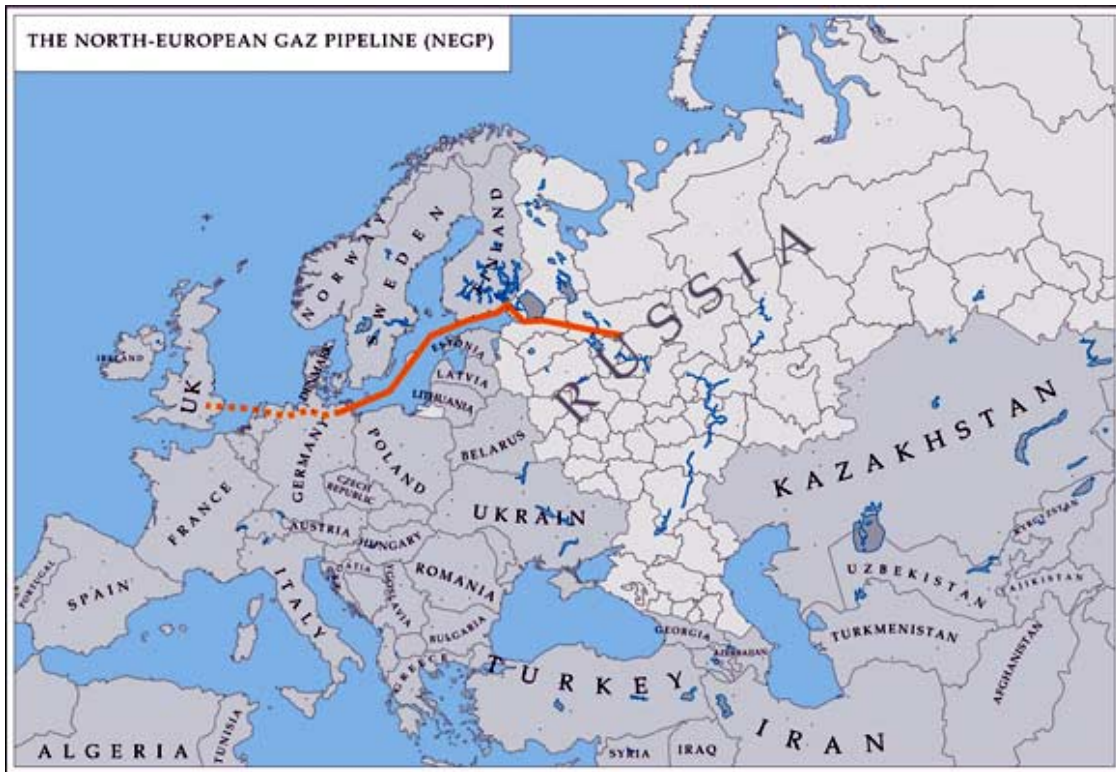


Figure 5. Map of the "Nord Stream" Pipeline.<sup>175</sup>

Although, the proponents of both pipelines argue that these projects are economically justifiable, only the cost of the offshore part of the "Nord Stream" is estimated at 7.4 billion Euros, what makes the project 3-4 times as expensive as any alternative pipeline built on ground (e.g., crossing Polish territory).<sup>176</sup> It contributes to the suspicions that the "Nord Stream" is actually a politically motivated project. These suspicions are even amplified by such events like employment of the former German Chancellor Gerhard Shroder by the Nord Stream Company. This triggered a

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<sup>175</sup> Hydrocarbons-technology.com, <http://www.hydrocarbons-technology.com/projects/negp/negp1.html> (accessed October 3, 2008).

wave of suspicions of corruptions within Germany because Gerhard Schroder at the time of being in office was negotiating the "Nord Stream" projects with Russians.<sup>177</sup> Similarly, in August 2008, the Nord Stream Company hired another ex-Prime Minister as a lobbyist. This time it was the Finnish ex-PM-Paavo Lipponen. At his time in the office, he strongly supported the idea of building the "Nord Stream" pipeline.<sup>178</sup>

To sum up, if one will compare the assumptions of the Russian energy strategy with the Russian efforts to encircle the Middle Europe's countries by two bypassing pipelines, it will become clear that the economic motivations for both pipeline projects are doubtful. From the Polish perspective, the Russian economic policy can be perceived as an attempt to exert consistent influence on Poland. The use of natural resources in order to achieve this goal can be labeled as an unconventional economic campaign, which obviously serves the strategic Russian interests.

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<sup>176</sup> "Gazprom: Projected Nord Stream Cost Nearly Doubles," *Downstreamtoday.com*, [http://www.downstreamtoday.com/News/Articles/200803/Gazprom Projected Nord Stream Cost Near 9701.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1](http://www.downstreamtoday.com/News/Articles/200803/Gazprom%20Projected%20Nord%20Stream%20Cost%20Near%209701.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1) (accessed October 4, 2008).

<sup>177</sup> "Schroder's New Job Stinks," *Spiegel Online International*, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,390131,00.html> (accessed October 4, 2008).

<sup>178</sup> "Politicians Take Mainly Positive View of Lipponen Pipeline Lobbying Effort," *Helsingin Sanomat International Edition Business & Finance*, <http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Politicians+take+mainly+positive+view+of+Lipponen+pipeline+lobbying+effort/1135238727769> (accessed October 4, 2008).

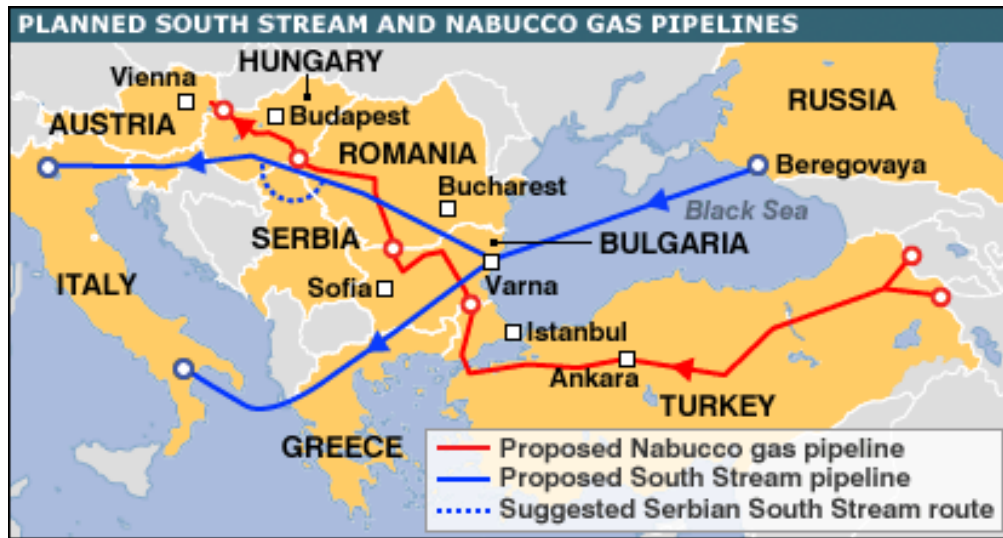


Figure 6. The "South Stream" and the "Nabucco" Pipelines.<sup>179</sup>

***c. "Conventional" Dimension of the Polish-Russian Economic Relationships***

As far as the "conventional" dimension of the Polish-Russian trade relationships is concerned, Russia, despite its economic potential, is not the main Polish trade partner by significant figures. According to the data from the Polish Trade Ministry within the first 6 months of 2008 Polish export to Russia was worth 2 926,9 million Euros, and import was worth 6 822,7 million Euros. This is 5.12% and 10.02% of Polish export and import respectively. Interestingly, 87.1% of the total Polish import from Russia constitutes gas and oil.<sup>180</sup> These figures place Russia in the seventh position among the Polish trade partners. The main products imported from Russia, except gas and oil, are

<sup>179</sup> "Balkan Boost for Russian Gas Plan," *BBC News* <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7195522.stm> (accessed October 3, 2008).

<sup>180</sup> Polish Trade Ministry Website, <http://www.mg.gov.pl/Clo/StatystykiAnalizy/> (accessed October 5, 2008).

metallurgical products (6.8% of total import from Russia) and chemicals (3.6% of total import from Russia).<sup>181</sup> As far as Polish exports to Russia are concerned, Poland exports mainly machinery and mechanical equipment (35%), chemicals (21%), and metallurgical products (11%).<sup>182</sup>

The above numbers clearly indicate that Russia has rather small "conventional" economical leverage on Poland. Even such problems described earlier such as the meat issue, are more matters of prestige than anything what could be really harmful for the Polish economic condition. Except for the gas and oil, Russia is not a source of any strategic goods for Poland. Thus, it can be argued that the Russian "conventional" economic position in Poland is relatively weak.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

The geopolitical location of Poland was rarely favorable for this country. The geographical proximity of Russia has started to pose an increasing challenge for Poland since 17<sup>th</sup> century. Russia's growing power ultimately threatened the further existence of Poland. This threat materialized in Poland's divisions roughly 200 years ago, as well as in the Soviet occupancy after WWII.

Since 1989, Poland managed to take advantage of the historical opportunity and assured for itself a solid place in the Western community (NATO and the EU). Thus, once the recovering Russia again adopted some characteristics of the

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<sup>181</sup> Polish Trade Ministry Website, <http://www.mg.gov.pl/Wspolpraca+z+zagranica/Wspolpraca+gospodarcza+Polski+z+krajami+WNP+i+pozaeuropejskimi/Rosja.htm> (accessed October 5, 2008).

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.



neo-imperial policy attempting to expand its sphere of influence over Poland, it had to deal not only with Poland but also with NATO and the EU.

The examination of the Russian diplomatic, informational, military, and economic capabilities in Poland shows that Russia, in order to pursue its identified foreign policy goals, uses its economic "stick" as a primary tool to exert influence on Poland. The economic capabilities are closely followed by the informational component of the Russia's power, which provides an explanatory function for the Russian strategy. The diplomatic and military measures have relatively smaller leverage potential, although by no means small.

## IV. UKRAINE-CLOSE NEAR ABROAD

### A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 1. Introduction

Unlike any other state, Ukraine's history is strongly interrelated with the history of Russia. As Alexander J. Motyl wrote:

Ukraine cannot be understood in isolation from Russia, but, by the same token, Russia cannot be understood in isolation from Ukraine. The two countries define each other in a way that few others do. The historical interconnections between Ukraine and Russia have penetrated every aspect of the current relationship. Their relations are therefore complex and are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.<sup>183</sup>

In fact, the Ukrainians have not enjoyed a long tradition of the Ukrainian statecraft. Ukraine's national identity emerged at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the national sentiments were too weak to produce an independent state. Even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the already independent Ukrainians often had been called an "unexpected nation."<sup>184</sup> Why? Andrew Wilson argues that "Ukraine was then considered to be an unlikely candidate as a new nation, given its pronounced patterns of ethnic, linguistic, religious and regional diversity."<sup>185</sup> So, what

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<sup>183</sup> Alexander J. Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence: Ukraine after Totalitarianism* (New York: Council on Foreign Relation Press, 1993), 5.

<sup>184</sup> Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface, xi.

was the mechanism, which contributed to the emergence of independent Ukraine? One possible explanation is that the fall of the Soviet Union contributed to an enormous confusion among the former Soviet leaders. Thus, "... both Yeltsin and Kravchuk accepted that 'if we go to the people and announce that there is no Union and propose nothing in its place-there will be inevitable explosion. [Some] variant is necessary. Transitional.'"<sup>186</sup> Hence, it can be argued that the independent Ukraine has emerged as a transitional entity in order to prevent further confusion within society, and to buy a time for the USSR resurrection.<sup>187</sup> But, once triggered, the powerful nationalistic forces quickly transformed Ukraine into a fully independent state. The independence referendum took place on December 1, 1991, and brought decisive victory to the independence supporters. Even the traditionally pro-Russian Crimea population voted "yes." Historians noted that, "the old guards were still in charge, a little dazed perhaps, but still perfectly capable of looking after their own interests."<sup>188</sup>

Thus, having in mind the close historical ties between Ukraine and Russia, it is a truth that today's relationships between both countries are decisively shaped by a common historical experience. With regards to that, special attention needs to be paid to the period when the Ukrainians and the Russians were unified within the Soviet Union.

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<sup>186</sup> Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 169-170.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

## 2. Ukraine as a Part of the Soviet Union

On December 22, 1922, the Soviet Union was formed. The previously independent Socialistic Republic of the Eastern Ukraine became formally a part of the newly created Union. Along with the strengthening of the communist rules in the Soviet Union, the idea of promoting the national elements (language, culture, etc.) in Ukraine emerged within the communist leadership. This was labeled as the Ukrainization policy, and it was the communist tactical move taken in order to facilitate the communist propaganda.

The famine in 1921-22, which affected Ukraine, was exploited by communists to justify their fight against religion and clergy. A New Economical Policy introduced by Lenin eased the tension in rural areas, and improved the economical situation, but Stalin's seizure of power turned the clock back in Ukraine. In 1928, the communist authorities started a big industrialization program followed by forced collectivization of the agriculture. The peasants' resistance was crushed by massive repressions, including an artificially imposed famine, which claimed about 4.5 to 8 million lives.<sup>189</sup> The brutal repressions were followed by equally drastic Russianization policy. This included eradication of the Ukrainian language, devastation of the Ukrainian antiquities, and physical extermination of priests of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. During the period of "big terror" in USSR (1935-1938), Ukraine suffered heavily. Only the First Secretary of the Communist Ukrainian Party-Nikita

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<sup>189</sup> Anatol Lieven, *Ukraine and Russia: A Fraternal Rivalry* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999), 34.

Krushchev slightly eased the oppressiveness of the security forces, while at the same time strengthening the Russianization processes.<sup>190</sup>

After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, Ukraine became an arena for the most devastating military operations in history. The retreating Soviets adopted a "scorched earth policy," and three years later the Germans repeated exactly the same scenario to stop the advancing Red Army. Some estimates say that during the Second World War, Ukraine suffered about 5 million civilian deaths.<sup>191</sup> Paradoxically, despite of these horrible human losses, the final outcome of WWII can be perceived as somewhat beneficial to Ukraine. This is because the winning Soviet Union expanded its boundaries, thus Ukraine got some territorial gains (e.g., the Eastern part of Galicia, Volhynia, Bessarabia or Transcarpathia). This territorial expansion increased Ukraine's land area by about 25%, and the population by about 11 million people.<sup>192</sup>

After WWII, the Russianization policy was quickly resumed by Stalin's regime. This included massive deportations of "uncertain elements" like the Cossacks or the returning prisoners of war. The repressions were stopped after Stalin's death. In 1954, the Soviets exploited the 300-year anniversary of the Treaty of Pereiaslav, to highlight the "age-old brotherly love of Ukrainians and

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<sup>190</sup> Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 144-146.

<sup>191</sup> Paul R. Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 638.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 639-642.

Russians.”<sup>193</sup> As a proof for the love and trust between these two nations, the communists decide to include Crimea into the Ukrainian Republic.<sup>194</sup> In reality, this act had no real meaning. The break in a harsh Russianization had lasted to early 1970s, when this policy was once again resumed by a new First Secretary-Leonid Brezhnev.

The re-Russianization policy contributed to the resurgence of the nationalistic ideas in Ukraine. This time, however, the nationalists joined their efforts with the democratic activists; the illegal papers-so called “samizdat”-were widespread. Ukraine also witnessed the resurgence of religious faith: the Orthodox, Unity, and Catholic Churches revived. It can be argued, however, that the decisive event, which stimulated the Ukrainian national awareness, was the Chernobyl catastrophe in 1986. Moscow’s typical old-fashioned communist reaction to this disaster shattered the Ukrainian public opinion, and it triggered wave of massive protests.<sup>195</sup> This in turn provided the basis for emergence of more organized social movements, among which the Rukh (Popular Movement of Ukraine for Reconstruction) gained mass popularity. The Rukh movement won 100 seats in the 450-seat Supreme Soviet in Ukraine in the 1990 elections. This success attracted some communists to the Rukh, which allowed passing an independence

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<sup>193</sup> Paul R. Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 654.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 653.

<sup>195</sup> Yuri Sayenko, “Ukrainian Population and Chornobyl Disaster: Face-To-Face Confrontation,” <http://ecolu-info.unige.ch/colloques/Chernobyl/pages/Sayenko.html> (accessed October 6, 2008).

declaration on July 16, 1990.<sup>196</sup> This status quo was firmly confirmed by the independence referendum in 1991, where 92% of voters said "yes" to Ukraine's independence with participation of 80% of the eligible population voting.<sup>197</sup>

### **3. Post-Soviet Era**

#### **a. Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)**

As was stated earlier in this chapter, in December 1991, the former communist apparatchiks—the then Presidents of Russia and Ukraine—Leonid Kravchuk and Boris Yeltsin, decided that there was a need to create a transitional political entity to replace the failing Soviet Union. This idea was introduced in December 1991, when the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was established. Twelve out of fifteen of the former Soviet republics became members of the CIS (three Baltic republics decided not to join, and Georgia joined as late as 1993). Interestingly, although Ukraine was among the founders of the CIS, it has never ratified the charter of the CIS, so formally has not been a member of the CIS to date.<sup>198</sup>

From the beginning however, many of the CIS's members were interested in transferring to the CIS as little power as possible. This attitude reflected the fears of creating a kind of "new Soviet Union," which could limit its

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<sup>196</sup> Paul R. Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 670-672.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 674.

<sup>198</sup> Alexei Pushkov, "The Commonwealth of Independent States: Still Alive Though Not Kicking," *NATO Review* 40, no. 3 (1992): 13-18, <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1992/9203-3.htm> (accessed October 9, 2008).

members' independence. At the same time, however, the former Soviet republics recognized the necessity for close economic cooperation. The close economic cooperation was somewhat enforced by the heritage of the Soviet centralized economy (e.g., not all industrial branches were developed in all republics).<sup>199</sup> Thus, it can be argued that there was an economic reasoning which convinced many of the CIS members to join this organization. This notion was best reflected in the Ukraine's attitude to the CIS's role. According to the Ukrainian point of view, establishment of the CIS was only a preparation to a "civilized divorce."<sup>200</sup> A similar attitude was more or less adopted by other newly emerged independent states. The only exception was Russia, which was interested in closer integration within CIS under the Russian leadership.<sup>201</sup>

#### **b. "Orange Revolution"**

Even from the short four-year long perspective, there is little doubt that the Presidential election in Ukraine in 2004 was one of the most significant events in the Ukraine's history. This election was a plebiscite for the future place of Ukraine in the international community.

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<sup>199</sup> Alexei Pushkov, "The Commonwealth of Independent States: Still Alive Though Not Kicking," *NATO Review* 40 no. 3, (1992): 13-18, <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1992/9203-3.htm> (accessed October 9, 2008).

<sup>200</sup> Peter van Ham, *Ukraine, Russia and European Security: Implications for Western Policy*, (Institute for Security Studies, 1994), <http://aei.pitt.edu/465/01/chai13e.html> (accessed October 7, 2008).

<sup>201</sup> Kornely K. Kakachia, "Will GUUAM and EEC Bury the CIS?" *Perspective XI*, no. 2 (November-December 2000), <http://www.bu.edu/iscip/vol11/kakachia.html> (accessed October 8, 2008).



The pro-Russian orientation was represented by acting Prime Minister Victor Yanukovych, while Victor Yushchenko was the leader of the pro-Western party.

Both candidates scored roughly equally in the first round, so the second round was to determine the new President. The pro-Russian candidate Victor Yanukovych got a strong support from the outgoing President Kravchuk as well as from the Russian President Putin. Despite that support, the pre-voting polls were showing 11% lead of the pro-Western candidate. In the period of time between the first and second round, and especially a day before the second round, rumors about the authorities' preparations for the vote-rigging were widespread. The officially announced Yanukovych's victory, triggered a wave of massive protests. The elections frauds and abuses were confirmed by independent observers, and then officially by the Ukrainian Supreme Court, which also ordered the re-run of the vote. The repeated election brought decisive victory to Victor Yushchenko (52% against 44% for Yanukovych). All these events were later labeled "Orange Revolution."<sup>202</sup>

It can be argued that the significance of the "Orange Revolution" has two dimensions. First, it brought a victory to the party which saw Ukraine's place in the Western community, rather than at the Russia's side. This constitutes a geo-strategic dimension. Second, the "unexpected nation"<sup>203</sup>-the Ukrainians, for the first time

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<sup>202</sup> Nikolai Petrov and Andrei Ryabov, "Russia's Role in the Orange Revolution," in *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough*, ed. Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul (Carnegie Endowment, 2006), 145-164.

<sup>203</sup> See Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

experienced their own power since independence was declared in 1991. Thus, the "Orange Revolution" was priceless in terms of creating a genuine civil society in Ukraine. This constitutes the social dimension of the revolution.

## **B. RUSSIAN DIME TOWARDS UKRAINE**

### **1. Russian Diplomatic Capabilities in Ukraine**

As was stated in the previous chapter, diplomacy is the main tool for accomplishing foreign policy goals. Therefore, examination of the Russian diplomatic capabilities in Ukraine should be preceded by identification of the Russian foreign policy goals in Ukraine.

Similarly, as in the Polish case, the Russian foreign policy towards Ukraine adopted some characteristics of a neo-imperial policy. It seemed that the main Russian goals in Ukraine were: (1) to keep Ukraine in the Russian zone of influence, (2) to prevent Ukraine from joining the Western political and military alliances like NATO or the EU, (3) to strengthen the Ukraine's economic dependence on Russia. There are, however, some significant differences between the Polish and the Ukrainian situation. The most important are the following.

- Ukraine is not a member of NATO nor the EU
- Ukraine was formerly a part of the Soviet Union
- Ukraine has a large Russian diaspora
- Ukraine has the Russian troops on its territory (Black Sea Fleet)
- Ukraine is almost fully dependent on the Russian energy supplies

It can be argued that each of these facts can be labeled the Ukrainian Achilles' Heel with regard to its relationship with Russia. This makes Ukraine far more vulnerable to the Russian political pressure than Poland is.

The Russian authorities employ both classic and unconventional diplomatic means to accomplish their goals in Ukraine. The classic Russian diplomacy towards Ukraine includes mainly cooperation within CIS, by that Russia attempts both to strengthen its ties with Ukraine, and to weaken the pro-Western sympathies in Ukraine. In the following paragraph the Ukrainian presidential election in 2004 will be examined to show how the Russians used their diplomatic capabilities to exert influence on Ukraine in an unconventional way.

**a. Russian Interference in the Ukrainian Presidential Election in 2004**

One of the most obvious examples of the Russian active diplomacy was their interference in the presidential election process in Ukraine in 2004.

This election "was considered a crossroads by the Russian elite since choosing the country's future was on the agenda. Ukraine faced integration with the Euro-Atlantic structures or close economic cooperation with Russia..."<sup>204</sup> Thus, "Russia set only one goal: to keep Ukraine in the sphere of Russian influence, and, at a minimum, to maintain their existing relationship. Any other option was ruled

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<sup>204</sup> Nikolai Petrov and Andrei Ryabov, "Russia's Role in the Orange Revolution," in *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough*, ed. Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul (Carnegie Endowment, 2006), 146, 145-164.

out.”<sup>205</sup> The way to achieve to this goal led through the active diplomatic measures aimed at supporting any pro-Russian candidate. Moscow’s strategy “was based on the premise that the centerpiece of the upcoming election would be... a confrontation between eastern Ukraine, drawn toward friendship with Russia, and the nationalistic western part of Ukraine.”<sup>206</sup> The Russians pursued this strategy into two general directions. The first one was an active participation of the Russian specialist in the Yanukovich election campaign (e.g., Gleb Pavlovsky—advisor to the Putin’s presidential administration or Vyacheslav Nikonov—influential Russian political consultant). The second one was based on making some economic and political concessions to highlight the importance of the Ukraine-Russia cooperation, in order to strengthen the pro-Russian party.<sup>207</sup> Interestingly,

Neither the Ministry of Foreign Affairs nor the presidential administration’s Department of Foreign Affairs was involved. Only branches dealing with domestic politics took part, as was usual for important missions in the post-Soviet space. A peculiarity of the Ukrainian presidential campaign was that it was headed by the chief of the Kremlin administration. This underlined the importance President Putin attached to the Ukrainian election....<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Nikolai Petrov and Andrei Ryabov, “Russia’s Role in the Orange Revolution,” in *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine’s Democratic Breakthrough*, ed. Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul (Carnegie Endowment, 2006), 146, 145-164.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 151.

During the presidential campaign, the Russian officials exploited some channels of influence. Two most important were the Yanukovych's campaign headquarters: the official one in Donetsk, and the unofficial one known as the "Russian Club" in Kyiv. The first one gave the Russians direct access to Yanukovych where the work of the Russian political consultants was directly supervised by Vyacheslav Nikonov. The second one, the "Russian Club," organized a rather classic political campaign, including meetings with voters, leaflets actions, etc.<sup>209</sup> Shortly, before the voting day the Russian authorities, being aware of the uncertain Yanukovych's position, decided to influence the elections by organizing President Putin's visit to Kyiv. This visit was supposed to convince the "unconvinced," and "create a turning point in the campaign just before the election."<sup>210</sup>

Despite the Russian efforts, the first voting round did not bring decisive victory to any candidate, so the second round was necessary. Once again, President Putin decided to visit Ukraine. This time he met with outgoing President Kuchma and Yanukovych on Crimea. "During this visit, Yanukovych was reportedly advised to rely mostly on administrative interference: to maximize the voter turnout in the regions that supported Yanukovych in the first round, while replacing disloyal local officials with more industrious bureaucrats in other regions."<sup>211</sup> Additionally, the Russian authorities undertook some measures to convince

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<sup>209</sup> Nikolai Petrov and Andrei Ryabov, "Russia's Role in the Orange Revolution," in *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough*, ed. Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul (Carnegie Endowment, 2006), 153.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 157.

those candidates, who lost the first round, to transfer their support to Yanukovych. Especially well known in this context was the mission of the Russian Communists' leader-Valery Ziuganov, who was asked to convince the Communist Party leader in Ukraine-Petro Symonenko to support Yanukovych.<sup>212</sup>

Despite all, the well known final outcome of the presidential elections in Ukraine in 2004 can be called disastrous in terms of the Russian strategic goals. The "Orange Revolution" pushed Ukraine towards the West, while undermining the Russian credibility both in Ukraine and in the eyes of international community.

The multi-level Russian involvement in the presidential election campaign in Ukraine in 2004 is unquestionable. The Russians used their diplomatic capabilities in Ukraine in a very unusual way, without employing the institutions responsible for pursuing foreign policy (e.g., Ministry of Foreign Affairs). As was mentioned earlier, in the former Soviet hemisphere, it is rather a common Russian behavior, but from the standpoint of classic diplomacy, it seems to be a highly unconventional approach.

## **2. Russian Informational Capabilities in Ukraine**

In comparison to Poland, the Russian informational capabilities in Ukraine are far more powerful. The Russian language is widely spoken in Ukraine, so the Russian newspapers, radio and TV stations have access to the

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<sup>212</sup> Nikolai Petrov and Andrei Ryabov, "Russia's Role in the Orange Revolution," in *Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough*, ed. Anders Aslund and Michael McFaul (Carnegie Endowment, 2006), 153.

Ukrainian society. In addition to that, a huge Russian ethnic minority is concentrated in the Eastern Ukraine, especially on the Crimea Peninsula. These people openly express their sympathy to Russia, so the Russian cultural, spiritual and informational influences find a fertile ground there. All these factors facilitate the Russian public diplomacy and other classic informational activities.

The presence of the Russian diaspora in Ukraine also gives the Russians an opportunity to use that "Crimea card" in informational campaigns abroad, mainly aimed at preventing Ukraine's accession to NATO and the EU.<sup>213</sup>

**a. Russian Diaspora in Crimea-Russian leverage on Ukraine**

Although Russia has formally recognized the territorial integrity of Ukraine,<sup>214</sup> the pro-Western turn in Ukraine's policy after the Orange Revolution, and especially the strong support given by Ukraine to Georgia after the Russian invasion in 2008, changed the Russian attitude. As Vladimir Socor noted:

Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov and senior members of Russia's Duma persist in making territorial claims to Sevastopol, following Luzhkov's foray into the Ukrainian territory of the Crimea. These continuing statements appear designed to question Ukraine's sovereignty in Sevastopol, and more broadly in the Crimea, at the Russian-Ukrainian

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<sup>213</sup> Taras Kuzio, "Russian Intelligence Seeks to Destabilize Crimea," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 5, no. 188 (October 1, 2008), <http://www.ucipr.kiev.ua/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&id=6032579&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0> (accessed October 12, 2008).

<sup>214</sup> The recognition of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity was enclosed in the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Partnership between Russia and Ukraine signed in 1997 and ratified in 1999.

level and even internationally. Russia's executive branch of government is itself moving, albeit less demonstratively than the politicians, from unqualified recognition of Ukraine's territorial integrity to a qualified recognition, contingent on Ukraine's decisions with regard to Russia's naval base in Sevastopol and Ukraine-NATO relations. Russia is building leverage to pressure Ukraine on those issues by questioning the territorial status quo.<sup>215</sup>

The new Russian attitude was even more explicitly expressed by Luzhkov, who said that "Ukraine thinks that the Crimea belongs to Ukraine and that Sevastopol also does. I say that this state has no grounds whatsoever for appropriating the Crimea and Sevastopol."<sup>216</sup> In light of the changing Russian view on the territorial status quo in the Crimea Peninsula, it can be argued that "Moscow seems interested in generating some kind of bilateral or international debate about the status of the Crimea and Sevastopol."<sup>217</sup> Thus, it can be said that Russia is using the "Crimea card" in a broader context, both to influence domestic politics in Ukraine, and "to help those in NATO and the EU who oppose Ukrainian membership in their organizations."<sup>218</sup>

The Russian informational activities with regard to the Russian diaspora are based on two pillars. The first

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<sup>215</sup> Vladimir Socor, "Moscow Casting Doubt on Territorial Status Quo in the Crimea," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 5, no. 92 (May 14, 2008), <http://www.ucipr.kiev.ua/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&id=6032451> (accessed October 12, 2008).

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Stephen Velychenko, "Russia's Information war Against Ukraine in the EU (Pt.2)," *Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research*, <http://www.ucipr.kiev.ua/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&id=6032502> (accessed October 12, 2008).



pillar is focused on depicting the Russians in Ukraine as the "oppressed" minority.<sup>219</sup> This strategy is aimed mainly at the international public opinion and policymakers, and its goal is to provide a justification for the Russian involvement in Ukraine under a cover of protecting the Russian diaspora. It seems however, that the Russian notion of "oppressed minority" is not very well grounded in reality. Stephen Velychenko argues that:

If Russians are "oppressed" how, in Donetsk province, where 38% of the population are Russian speaking Russians, can there be approximately 1000 Russian-language newspapers and magazines and one Ukrainian language newspaper?....How can Russians be "oppressed" in a country where, although they are not more than 20% of the population, the media,..., was still overwhelmingly Russian? Only 10% of Ukraine's annual published book titles, 12% of its magazines, 18% of its TV programs and 35% of its newspapers were in Ukrainian. These figures would be even lower if totals included Russian-language products and programming imported/broadcast from Russia. Foreign non-Russian corporations in Ukraine, finally, function in Russian.<sup>220</sup>

The second pillar is oriented towards changing the ethnic ratio in Crimea in the Russian favor by distribution of Russian passports among the society.<sup>221</sup> So, the "Ukrainian authorities have become highly sensitive to the

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<sup>219</sup> Stephen Velychenko, "Russia's Information war Against Ukraine in the EU (Pt.2)," *Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research*, <http://www.ucipr.kiev.ua/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&id=6032502> (accessed October 12, 2008).

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> 60% of the Crimea population are Russians or Russian passports holders. See Maria Danilova, "Crimea is Next Concern over Russia's Plans," *Associated Press*, [http://www.philly.com/philly/sports/phillies/20081012\\_Crimea\\_is\\_next\\_concern\\_over\\_Russia\\_s\\_plans.html](http://www.philly.com/philly/sports/phillies/20081012_Crimea_is_next_concern_over_Russia_s_plans.html) (accessed October 14, 2008).

threat of a Russian policy of destabilization since the Kremlin invasion of Georgia. One particular area of concern is the issuing of Russian passports to Ukrainian citizens in light of Russia's pretext of coming to the "defense" of Russian citizens in the two frozen conflicts [South Ossetia and Abkhazia] where Russia had illegally distributed passports."<sup>222</sup> An influential Ukrainian deputy, Borys Tarasiuk, openly called "the distribution of passports as Russia's 'secret aggression against Ukrainian citizens.'"<sup>223</sup>

To sum up, it can be argued that the Russians have very significant informational capabilities in Ukraine. They use the classic informational tools to strengthen the Russian cultural influence domestically in Ukraine. At the same time the Russian policymakers are using the "Crimea card" to prevent Ukraine from orienting toward the West. The informational dimension of this strategy has some characteristics of disinformation (the notion of "oppressed diaspora"), as well as active measures (handling Russian passports). Both these actions can be labeled as unconventional information campaign against Ukraine.

### **3. Russian Military Capabilities in Ukraine**

Ukraine's Defense Doctrine is the key document on which the Ukrainian defense policy is based. This doctrine was assumed in 1993, and slightly modified in 2004. According to this document, the threat to Ukraine is defined as every "state whose consistent policy presents a military threat .

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<sup>222</sup> Taras Kuzio, "Russian Passports as Moscow's Geopolitical Tool," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 5, no. 176 (September 15 2008), <http://www.ucipr.kiev.ua/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&id=6032558&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0> (accessed October 14, 2008).

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

. . [or] leads to interference in the internal affairs of Ukraine, or encroaches on its territorial integrity and its national interests."<sup>224</sup> It is easy to notice that the earlier discussed examples of the Russian diplomatic and informational campaigns fit the cited passage very well. Thus, what about the Russian military? Does it pose a direct and realistic threat to Ukraine?

It can be argued that the Russian-Ukrainian military relationships are almost entirely determined by a single factor, namely the Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF). The BSF is a Soviet heritage, which is currently used as a powerful Russian lever on Ukraine.

In 1997, the Partition Treaty was signed between Ukraine and Russia, according to which the Soviet Black Sea Fleet was divided between Ukraine and Russia. According to this Treaty, Ukraine agreed to lease its territory and facilities for the Russian part of the BSF up to 2017. Thus, the Russians assured a 20-year presence on the Ukrainian soil for their 15,000 troops at the Naval Base in Sevastopol. This Russian presence on the Crimean Peninsula has not caused any problems for almost 10 years. Only the Orange Revolution and subsequent Ukraine's foreign policy reorientation towards the West changed this calm. The Russians decided to adopt some active measures in their policy towards Ukraine, and one of the strongest tools available to the Russians was the Black Sea Fleet.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Stephen D. Olynyk, "Ukraine as a Post-Cold War Military Power," *JFQ*, Spring 1997, [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq\\_pubs/18\\_15.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq_pubs/18_15.pdf) (accessed October 13, 2008).

<sup>225</sup> "Black Sea Fleet," *FAS.org* <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/agency/mf-black.htm> (accessed October 14, 2008).

The "BSF tool" has been used particularly intensively in the aftermath of the Russia-Georgia conflict in September 2008. Some of the BSF's warships anchored close to the Georgian coast were participating in the Russian invasion. The Ukraine's authorities, strongly supported Georgia backlash as evidenced by President Yushchenko speech at that time in Tbilisi. The Ukrainian government confirmed in May 2008, the earlier decision not to expand the BFE stationing agreement beyond the year 2017. In addition to that, Ukraine's President, Victor Yushchenko, obliged the Ukrainian government to finish the work on the final delimitating of the Ukraine-Russian border on both the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. These steps were followed by Yushchenko's decree which "requires Russia's Black Sea Fleet to submit a request to return to its base in the Crimea 10 working days before its planned return [from the Georgian territorial waters]." <sup>226</sup> This decree was then expanded "requiring prior notification from Russia of all movements by naval vessels and aircraft from Sevastopol." <sup>227</sup>

All these Ukrainian steps have been perceived in Russia as an ultimate confirmation of Ukraine's strategic decision to affiliate with the West. Thus, it can be argued that the Russian authorities decided to use the BSF as another lever for pressure on Ukraine. Some commentators argue that "Russia is using the dispute [over BSF] to play on deep divisions in Ukraine's fractious 'Orange coalition,' while

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<sup>226</sup> "Ukrainian Armed Forces to Implement Yushchenko's Decree on Russian ships," *Unian News Agency*, <http://www.unian.net/eng/news/news-267228.html> (accessed October 14, 2008).

<sup>227</sup> "Ukraine PM Speaks against Conflict over Russia's Black Sea Fleet," *GlobalSecurity.org*, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/ukraine/2008/ukraine-080908-rianovosti03.htm> (accessed October 14, 2008).

also trying to delay or prevent Ukraine from acceding to NATO.”<sup>228</sup> In general, the “Russia’s strategy is to extend discussions in the hope that supposedly Moscow-friendly forces will control the Ukrainian government in 2017 and will agree to extend the basing agreement.”<sup>229</sup>

From the military perspective, the BSF has little significance. What makes it a powerful lever is its symbolical meaning. The BSF, with bases in Sevastopol, a city symbolizing heroism and patriotism for the Russians, feeds the Ukrainians’ fear of possible separatism in Crimea. This is the reason the dispute over BSF resonates so strongly both in Moscow and Kiev.<sup>230</sup>

To sum up, it is necessary to underline that the Russian foreign policy is highly cohesive and employs different dimensions of national power to accomplish well defined strategic goals. As far as the military dimension is concerned, Russia uses its BSF basing in Crimea to exert political pressure on Ukraine rather than a military one. From this perspective, the military presence of the Russian troops on the Ukrainian soil is exploited in a non-conventional way (e.g., non-military). With regard to the classic use of military power, it seems that the Russian authorities cautiously avoid threatening Ukraine, at least

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<sup>228</sup> Taras Kuzio, “Russia/Ukraine: Black Sea Fleet Dispute Intensifies,” *Oxford Analytica* 2008, [http://www.taraskuzio.net/media21\\_files/OA\\_BlackSeaFleetDispute.pdf](http://www.taraskuzio.net/media21_files/OA_BlackSeaFleetDispute.pdf) (accessed October 14, 2008).

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

as long as Ukraine is still not in NATO. Once there, Ukraine will likely be a target for the direct Russian military pressure.

#### **4. Russian Economic Capabilities in Ukraine**

The common Soviet past is still a main factor which shapes the economic relationships between Ukraine and Russia. The statistics show that Russia is a main trade partner for Ukraine, absorbing 25.7% of Ukraine's export, and giving 27.8% of Ukraine's import.<sup>231</sup> As with the Polish case, natural resources (mainly gas) contribute to about 80% of the Russian export to Ukraine. Ukraine has a monopoly on the sale of Russian gas across Europe, because of the Russian pipelines crossing its territory. In contrast, Russia almost completely controls the flow of gas to Ukraine.

In early 2005, almost immediately after Orange Revolution, Gazprom began talks with Ukraine on increasing the gas prices. Although there was a valid agreement assuring Ukraine a low price (50 USD per thousand cubic meters [tcm]) of gas supplies up to 2009, Gazprom requested prices as high as 160 USD per tcm, and in late 2005 even 230 per tcm.<sup>232</sup> Gazprom officials argued that 50 USD per tcm was far below the market price. Ukraine fiercely rejected this request pointing out the valid contract. So "President Putin

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<sup>231</sup> Polish Trade Ministry Website, <http://www.mg.gov.pl/Wspolpraca+z+zagranica/Wspolpraca+gospodarcza+Polski+z+krajami+WNP+i+pozaeuropejskimi/Ukraina.htm> (accessed October 16, 2008).

<sup>232</sup> Jim Nichol, Steven Woehrel, Bernard A. Gelb, *Russia's Cutoff of Natural Gas to Ukraine: Context and Implications* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, February 15, 2006).

in late December stated that Russia's 'fraternal ties' with Ukraine dictated his open intervention, and he offered a loan to Ukraine to help it pay for the higher priced gas. When Ukraine rejected this proposal, Russian state television showed Putin and Gazprom head, Aleksey Miller, (one of Putin's long-time associates) agreeing on December 31 to cut off supplies to Ukraine."<sup>233</sup> The Ukraine's reaction was to compensate by taking gas which was designated for European consumers. This action in turn provoked "Gazprom to accuse Ukraine of 'stealing' [gas] and of being an unreliable transit country. Ukraine argued variously that it was continuing a long-time arrangement of taking gas as a transit fee in lieu of cash or that it was taking delivery of gas provided by Turkmenistan."<sup>234</sup>

Although the gas conflict was quickly resolved, mainly because of the European countries' protests, the Russians managed to force Ukraine to buy the Russian gas by an intermediary firm, RosUkrEnergo. About 50% shares of this firm belong to Gazprom, while the shareholders of the rest remain undisclosed. This situation raises concerns that the RosUkrEnergo shares can be owned by some Russian and Ukrainian officials as well as by organized crime individuals.<sup>235</sup> The new gas price was established at the level of 95 USD per tcm.

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<sup>233</sup> Jim Nichol, Steven Woehrel, Bernard A. Gelb, *Russia's Cutoff of Natural Gas to Ukraine: Context and Implications* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, February 15, 2006).

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

It can be said that both sides found themselves in a stalemate because the Russian "gas weapon" was balanced by the Ukraine's ownership of the pipelines. The gas conflict between Ukraine and Russia in 2005 was by far not the last stage of the "energy war." In 2007 and 2008, the Russians exerted a firm pressure on Ukraine forcing once again higher gas prices. President Yushchenko in turn called for elimination of RosUkrEnergo as a redundant proxy. This time however, the Russians did not encounter such a sharp Ukraine's reaction as in 2005. Two factors contributed to that: (1) the political situation in Ukraine was already significantly different with the growing popularity of the opposition pro-Russian Party of Regions, and (2) the Ukrainians could not afford to endanger their credibility on international stage once again. Moreover, the Russian plans to build pipelines bypassing Ukraine (Nord and South Streams) made Ukrainians aware of the possible loss of their pipeline lever on Russia. Thus, some analysts argued that in the worst case scenario, Ukraine was seriously considering using another pressure on Russia, namely preventing the Russians from joining the World Trade Organization (WTO). Russia had unsuccessfully attempted to join WTO for several years. There are chances that Ukraine will become a member of WTO earlier than Russia allegedly with the USA and the EU support. Once a WTO member, the decision to admit Russia to WTO will be in the Ukraine's hands. The reason for that is an admission of new country requires unanimous approval of all WTO members.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Henryk S. Tuszyński, "Ukraina-Rosja, czyli jaki będzie wynik tego meczu. Ukraine vs. Russia, What Will be the Result of this Game," *GlobalEconomy.pl*, <http://globaleconomy.pl/content/view/2533/28/> (accessed October 16, 2008).



The analysis of the Ukraine-Russia economic relationships shows that the word "economic" can be highly deceptive. It can be argued that Russia and Ukraine are in a state of protracted political confrontation, where the economy, mainly gas supplies in this case, serves pure political goals as in few other places on the world's map. The Russians use their "gas weapon" eagerly, while the Ukrainians try to exploit all available pressures on Russia to counter this.

In the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Georgia, the tension between both countries grew even stronger. In the economic area this growing tension was reflected in the Russian ban on the Ukrainian powdered milk introduced in August 2008. Earlier in this year, the Russians introduced some restrictions on the Ukrainian meat and cheese import, and are currently threatening to do the same with alcohol, which can seriously hurt the Ukraine's economy.<sup>237</sup>

Thus, it can be argued that the economic relationships between Ukraine and Russia are highly dependent on current political situation and economic activities. The economy is simply subservient to politics. It seems that the active side in this "game" is Russia, while weaker Ukraine reacts defensively.

### **C. CONCLUSION**

Ukraine, as with every young state, must find its own path of development to secure itself a safe place among

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<sup>237</sup> Maciej Pietruszewski, „Rosja jest o krok od wojny handlowej z Ukrainą. Russia is on the Verge of War in Trade with Ukraine,” *psz.pl*, <http://www.psz.pl/tekst-12837/Rosja-jest-o-krok-od-wojny-handlowej-z-Ukraina> (accessed October 16, 2008).

other states and prosperity for its citizens. In 2004, the Ukrainians chose what they saw as the future of their country in the Western hemisphere. This choice was not welcomed in Moscow, where the Russian authorities still seem to perceive the world's politics as a zero sum game, meaning that the Russians see only two options for Ukraine, (1) to be a part of the West, thus against Russia, (2) to be in the Russian zone of influence, thus against the West. The Orange Revolution in Ukraine finally convinced the Russian authorities that Ukraine is drifting towards the West, so the Russians adopted some active measures to reverse this trend. In addition to the classic diplomatic, informational, military, and economic measures, the Russians employed a broad spectrum of unconventional means.

It can be argued that in Ukraine, which is neither a NATO nor EU member, the Russians are allowed to operate more openly and aggressively. The pivotal point in the Russian strategy is Crimea where a huge Russian ethnic minority constitutes a de facto majority, and where the Russian Black Sea Fleet is based. The Russian authorities seem to pursue a coherent policy aimed at using these two facts to pressure the Ukrainians in order to change the Ukraine's political choices. Moreover, the "gas weapon" is also of use in the Russian hands. All these measures adopted by Russia can be labeled unconventional use of DIME.

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## V. GEORGIA-TOO CLOSE NEAR ABROAD

### A. HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

#### 1. Georgia-A Part of the Transcaucasus Ethnic Pot

The Transcaucasus region seems to be politically one of the most unstable regions of modern-day Europe. Today, the Transcaucasus comprises three countries: Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia and is home for numerous ethnic groups.

This land-bridge between Europe and Asia has always been perceived by regional powers as strategic for their interests. The Russians labeled Transcaucasus their "soft underbelly."<sup>238</sup> In different historical periods the Ottoman Empire, the Persian Empire, and Russia executed control over this region. Each of these powers had to take into account the fact that the homogenous, old, and proud Georgian nation had been living there for centuries. Surprisingly, despite the powerful neighbors' influences, the Georgians managed not only to survive as a nation, but were also able to establish and secure its own state for an impressively long time. This status quo changed in the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century when Georgia along with a better half of the Transcaucasus was absorbed into the Russian Empire. Despite everything, even as a part of both the Russian and then Soviet Empires, the Georgian nation cultivated its traditions and sustained a sense of national identity. A

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<sup>238</sup> Edward W. Walker, *Russia's Soft Underbelly: The Stability of Instability in Dagestan* (Berkeley: University of California, 2000), [http://bps.berkeley.edu/publications/2000\\_03-walk.pdf](http://bps.berkeley.edu/publications/2000_03-walk.pdf) (accessed October 22, 2008).

strong national awareness enabled the Georgians to quickly reestablish an independent state after the collapse of the Soviet Empire. The burst of the Georgian nationalism highly concerned leadership of two Georgian autonomous regions, namely Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Both these regions, to which the autonomy was granted by the Georgian authorities, started to pursue a policy oriented towards either unification with Russia or independence.<sup>239</sup>

In order to understand the roots of the ethnic conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, it is necessary to stretch back this investigation to the period of Stalin's reign. Stalin, as a head of a state composed of hundreds of ethnic groups (USSR), was fully aware that nationalism could be a deadly threat for his Empire. Thus, the overall ethnic policy pursued by Stalin was aimed at oppressing any nationalistic sentiments and tendencies within USSR. To accomplish this goal, the communist apparatus directed by Stalin exterminated, deported or resettled whole nations across the Soviet Union. The republic's boundaries within USSR were drawn on the map, often personally by Stalin, deliberately violating the ethnic pattern on the ground. In accordance with the old rule *divide et impera* Stalin pursued establishment of Soviet republics and autonomous regions by division of the homogenous ethnic areas. As a result the boundaries of the Soviet republics were drawn in a manner, which created within each administrative unit one or more ethnic minority enclave.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Ronald G. Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994).

<sup>240</sup> Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 439.

Although Georgia was Stalin's ethnic motherland, it fell victim to the same national policy as many other regions. Stalin did not hesitate to suppress potential bursts of Georgian nationalism by creating within the Georgian Soviet republic two enclaves, namely the Abkhaz Associated Republic and the South Ossetian autonomous region.<sup>241</sup> Stalin's policy decisively contributed to the present ethnic tension in these two Georgian regions.



Figure 7. Map of Georgia with Autonomous Regions Marked.<sup>242</sup>

<sup>241</sup> Martin Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 439-442.

<sup>242</sup> Perry Castañeda Library Map Collection, [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/georgia\\_republic.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/georgia_republic.html) (accessed October 22, 2008).

## 2. The Rose Revolution

Parliamentary elections in Georgia in 2003 became the breakthrough, both for this country, and its northern neighbor-Russia. Social discontent as a direct result of suspicions of the parliamentary electoral fraud, combined with a disastrous economic condition of the country, massive corruption and widespread lawlessness, particularly in the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, triggered massive protests against the government of President Eduard Shevardnadze. The several weeks long protests led by a well organized opposition with Mikhail Saakashvili as a leader, finally swept away Eduard Shevardnadze. Consequently, the presidential elections in January 2004, brought victory to Mikhail Saakashvili. These events were later called the Rose Revolution.<sup>243</sup>

The rapid and rather unexpected political change in Georgia, which brought power to the pro-Western opposition, strengthened the Russian perception that external powers were trying to exert influence over the Transcaucasus, and Georgia particularly. This impression was even reinforced by the political agenda of the new Georgian authorities, which highlighted the necessity to join NATO and a need to pursue an independent energy policy.

Thus, there was little surprise that Russia's reaction to this dangerous political shift in its "soft underbelly" was firm. The Russians activated all available means of influence to minimize the effects of the Rose Revolution. In the following passages of this chapter the most stunning

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<sup>243</sup> Michael Barker, "Regulating Revolutions in Eastern Europe," <http://www.zmag.org/znet/viewArticle/2846> (accessed October 22, 2008).

examples of the Russian policy will be described. For the sake of a better understanding of the Russian reaction, it seems necessary to present a short analysis of the main Russian foreign policy goals in the Transcaucasus and in Georgia especially.

## **B. THE RUSSIAN INTERESTS IN THE TRANSCAUCASUS**

The term "soft underbelly" tells almost everything about how important the Transcaucasus region is for Russia. The special place in this region belongs to Georgia, which has a longest border with Russia. It can be argued that the main Russian interests in Georgia, and more broadly in the Transcaucasus, are concentrated around four pillars: (1) maintaining stability in the region, (2) ensuring the Russian military presence and political dominance, (3) tightening the economic ties with Russia, (4) protecting the Russian diaspora in the region.

The land bridge between Black and Caspian Sea, and especially the Caucasus Mountains have been for ages a natural boundary between Russia and the Muslim world. The concerns in Moscow about spreading radical Islam were fueled by the situation in Chechnya. The war in Chechnya contributed to the instability of the whole region, resulting in rising violence in Dagestan, Ingushetia or North Ossetia. So, the Russians have simply perceived the Transcaucasus as a gate through which the radical Islam,



terrorism and instability can easily enter Russia, triggering more secessionist problems similar to those ones, with which Russia must deal in Chechnya.<sup>244</sup>

Moscow has also considered the stability in the Transcaucasus as a function of the Russia's ability to control this region. Thus, any external influences have been unwelcome, either from Asia (radical Islam) or from the Western hemisphere. With regards to the later, "Moscow is seeking to prevent Georgia's integration into transatlantic security structures. Russia also wants to achieve a much greater geostrategic objective: to close the strategic access route to the heartland of the Eurasian continent for Western interests."<sup>245</sup>

As far as the Russian military presence in Georgia is concerned, the Russians assumed control of the former Soviet military bases in Georgia in 1991. Initially, the number of the Russian troops was about 20,000, and gradually decreased to about 3000 in 2007. The main Russian bases in Georgia were located in Akhalkalaki, Batumi and Tbilisi. After the Rose Revolution, the presence of the Russian troops in Georgia became a serious source of friction between both countries. In March 2005, the Georgian Parliament issued a resolution calling for withdrawal of the Russian troops. The Russian authorities tried to negotiate a prolongation of the presence of Russian troops, but encountered a strong Georgian denial. At the summit in Sochi in 2006, Georgia,

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<sup>244</sup> "Caucasian Dominoes; Russia's Hot Spots," *The Economist*, October 15, 2005, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-137506917.html> (accessed October 22, 2008).

<sup>245</sup> Mamuka Tsereteli, "Beyond Georgia: Russia's Strategic Interests in Eurasia," *Central Asia Caucasus-Institute* (June 2008), <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4879> (accessed October 22, 2008).

being supported by Western countries, achieved a great success; the Russians agreed to withdraw its forces from their bases in Georgia no later than in January 2008. In late 2007, the withdrawal of the Russian troops was completed. Despite that, the Russian troops have been present as the peacekeeping forces in the break-away republic of Abkhazia.<sup>246</sup>

Similarly, as it was in both the Polish and Ukrainian cases, the economic relations between Russia and Georgia were almost exclusively an issue of natural resources trade. Before the pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan was built in 2006, Georgia was fully dependent on the gas and oil as well as on the electricity supplies from Russia. Georgia also plays a major role as a transit country for gas and oil from Central Asia to Turkey and Europe. Excepting the natural resources trade, the economic ties between Georgia and Russia have been relatively weak, but still much more significant for Georgia than Russia. The main Georgian export products to Russia include wine, agricultural products, mineral water, coal and different minerals.

Similar to the Ukrainian case, protection of the Russian diaspora in Georgia became, at least declaratively, is a central issue for the Russian policymakers. Although the Russians represent only 6% of the population of Georgia, their presence there has been used as a justification for

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<sup>246</sup> "Russia Troops 'Quit Georgia Base,'" *BBC News*, November 15, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7095857.stm> (accessed October 22, 2008).

the Russian involvement.<sup>247</sup> The "ethnic card" is still used by Russians for pressure on Georgia, both internally and at the international stage.

### **C. RUSSIAN DIME TOWARDS GEORGIA-"M" TAKES PRIORITY**

In August 2008, the tension between Georgia and Russia culminated in an open military confrontation, which was launched by Georgia's attack on the break-away South Ossetia republic. Along with the immediate Russian military intervention in Georgia, the Russian DIME both conventional and unconventional merged into one big "M." It can be argued that in the aftermath of this short but intense military conflict, the relationships between both countries have been frozen. However, it seems that it can be a valuable lesson to study how the tension between Georgia and Russia was evolving up to the point of military confrontation.

Thus, in the following passages the chronology of the Russian-Georgian relationships will be presented with a special emphasis on how both sides used their Diplomatic, Informational, Economic and Military means to accomplish their strategic goals. For the sake of clarity, the places in the text where a specific aspect of DIME is discussed are marked [D], [I], [M], and [E], appropriately.

#### **1. Georgia-Russia: 1991-2003**

Since the proclamation of independence by Georgia on April 9 1991, the Soviet and then Russian Federation has

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<sup>247</sup> Rajan Menon, "Introduction: the Security Environment in the South Caucasus and Central Asia," in *Russia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia: the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Security Environment*, ed. Rajan Menon, Yuri Fedorov and Ghia Nodia (New York: EastWest Institute, 1999), 11.

regarded Georgia as part of their exclusive zone of influence. Russian-Georgian relations have been dominated by security issues, namely the issue of border security, terrorism, conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the Russian bases on the territory of Georgia. Russia has based its policy towards Georgia on fueling internal instability in this country.<sup>248</sup>

In 1991, there was a conflict between the anti-Russian President of Georgia Zviad Gamsakhurdia and the opposition. The support received from Moscow contributed to the Gamsakhurdia's overthrow [D, I]. The Military Council was established, which almost immediately called for Eduard Shevardnadze to come back to the country. As a result, Shevardnadze became chairman of the Parliament and then in 1992, became President of Georgia.<sup>249</sup>

#### **a. Conflict in South Ossetia**

In 1991, the Georgian-Ossetian conflict turned into open military confrontation. The Georgian troops entered the South Ossetia. The clashes lasted for a year. Despite the initial advantage of the government forces, Georgians had not been able to seize the capital of South Ossetia-Tskhinwali. Finally, the Ossetians succeeded mainly because of unofficial support from Moscow (money, volunteers from North Ossetia, and weaponry).[D, M]. Following the conflict, the South Ossetian Parliament asked the Russian State Duma for the adoption of South Ossetia in the Russian

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<sup>248</sup> Kakha Jibladze, "Russia's Opposition to Georgia's Quest for NATO Membership," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (2007): 45-51.

<sup>249</sup> Dow Lynch, *Why Georgia Matters* (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, February 2006), 45-51.

Federation and joined it with North Ossetia into a single entity. Facing a real prospect of losing a part of its territory, Georgia asked the Russians about mediation. As a result on June 25, 1992, an agreement was signed by Eduard Shevardnadze and Boris Yeltsin according to which the Georgian-Russian-Ossetian peacekeepers were placed in South Ossetia.<sup>250</sup> [D]

Finally, the Georgian-Ossetian conflict strengthened the Russian position in Georgia, and permanently deprived Tbilisi of the control over part of its territory.

#### ***b. Conflict in Abkhazia***

During the Georgian-Abkhazian war in years 1992-1993, Russia has played a considerable role. The war broke off in August 1992, when the Georgian troops entered Abkhazia under the pretext of chasing the former president Gamsakhurdia's supporters. Supposedly, the Georgians counted on a quick success. Initially, the Georgians were able to force the Abkhazia's government to leave the republic's capital Sukhumi, but as time passed the Georgian prospects of winning this war started to look unclear. Although, the Russians officially declared neutrality, in reality the Russian units stationed in the territory of Abkhazia supported the Abkhazian side by providing them with ammunition, weapons and fuel from Russia. Abkhazian forces had the Russian tanks T-72 and T-80. [M, I] Also, volunteers

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<sup>250</sup> Dow Lynch, *Why Georgia Matters* (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, February 2006), 18-21.

from Chechnya were allowed to cross the Russian-Abkhazian border. These factors contributed to the decisive change in the strategic situation in Abkhazia.

In September 1993, the Abkhazian forces took over control of the republic when they seized the capital-Sukhumi. It can be argued that regular supplies of the Russian military equipment influenced the outcome of this conflict.<sup>251</sup>

### **c. Georgia between Russia and West**

Russia's involvement in the Georgian-Abkhazian war and apparent military disaster of Georgia, led to the reorientation of the Georgian foreign policy. Georgia started to build more partnership relations with Russia. President Eduard Shevardnadze hoped for the Russian assistance in restoring the territorial integrity of Georgia by helping to solve the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In exchange for that, Georgia committed itself to join the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the Treaty of Tashkent. Both of these happened in 1993. **[D, I]** In addition, Russia was allowed to deploy its forces in three military bases: Wazi, Akhalkalaki, and Batumi.<sup>252</sup> **[D, M]**

The Georgian authorities quickly noticed that despite the more favorable attitude on the part of the Russians, who helped to establish a ceasefire in both break-away republics, there was still another big Georgian problem unresolved-the economic crisis. In order to improve the

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<sup>251</sup> Dow Lynch, *Why Georgia Matters* (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, February 2006), 18-21.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-51.

economic situation of Georgia, huge investments were necessary. These assets were available in the Western countries. Georgia's adoption to CIS did not help the economy. Therefore, Tbilisi started to seek Western investment in the country, which in turn resulted in a reorientation of foreign policy and a loosening of ties with Russia and the CIS. Georgia sought also to improve relations with the neighboring countries and to get acceptance from the West for its policies. In March 1996, Georgia signed an agreement for the transit of Azeri oil by a pipeline Baku-Supsa. Simultaneously, the pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan started to be built. In addition to that, beginning in 1997, Georgia started to strengthen its direct ties with the West, as well as became one of the founders of the GUAM organization (Organization for Democracy and Development)<sup>253</sup>.

From the standpoint of the Russian interests, the main concern was the rising presence of Americans in Georgia. The U.S. influence was reflected in Georgia's accession to the NATO program PfP (Partnership for Peace).<sup>254</sup> NATO countries and particularly the United States had begun to provide support for Georgia by providing it with equipment and capital. It helped reforms of Georgia's armed forces and adaptation to NATO standards. From a political standpoint, it was a clear sign of support for the aspirations of President Shevardnadze, who was calling for

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<sup>253</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Website, [http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang\\_id=ENG&sec\\_id=129&info\\_id=1497](http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=129&info_id=1497) (accessed October 24, 2008).

<sup>254</sup> Partnership for Peace Website, <http://www.pims.org/country/georgia> (accessed October 24, 2008).

withdrawal of the Russian troops from Georgia. As a consequence, along with improvement of the Georgia-West relations, the Russia-Georgia relations were deteriorating.

At the time of the second Chechen war in 1999, Russia began to accuse Georgia of being a transit country for weapons and volunteers from Muslim countries to Chechnya.<sup>255</sup> **[I, D]** In addition, mutual relationships worsened after OSCE summit in Istanbul in November 1999, where the issue of the Russian troops based in Georgia was discussed. **[D]** With the support of Western countries, Georgia had obtained a commitment from Russia to withdraw two of the four Russian bases located on Georgian territory in Wazi and Gadauta in 2001. In reality, Russia has withdrawn only from the air force base in Wazi, while in the base in Gadauta in Abkhazia the Russian replaced the Russian flag with the flag of CIS peace forces.<sup>256</sup> **[M, I]**

#### ***d. Beginning of the Russian "Active Diplomacy"***

Since 1999, Russia began to pursue a policy towards Georgia aimed at "punishing" it for its pro-Western sympathies, and for a "too independent" policy. The Russian politicians began to declare that Russia has the right to launch preemptive strikes outside the country in case of the emergence of direct threats to Russia's security. **[I]** The Georgian authorities read it as an unambiguous threat to Georgia. Since then, the Russian jets had begun flying into the Georgian air space—a regular Russian behavior for the

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<sup>255</sup> James Kilner, "Russia Accuses Georgia of Aiding Rebels," *Reuters.com*, <http://www.reuters.com/article/europeCrisis/idUSL16237483> (accessed October 21, 2008).



next several years. [M, I] The next hostile step was to introduce the Russian visa requirement for citizens of Georgia. [D, I] This obligation was, however, waived for the pro-Russian oriented inhabitants of the separatist republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.<sup>257</sup> [I] In this way, Russia has limited the extremely important Georgians' opportunities for travelling to work in Russia, and also indirectly supported the separatist tendencies within the country. This decision had significant social consequences because it is estimated about 500 thousand Georgians were working in Russia at that time.<sup>258</sup> [E] Another Moscow action striking at the economy of Georgia was cutting off gas supplies to Georgia at the turn of 2000 and 2001.<sup>259</sup> [E, I]

## **2. Georgia-Russia: in the Aftermath of the Rose Revolution**

Once the Rose Revolution succeeded, the new Georgian administration of President Mikhail Saakashvili announced the Georgian priorities in the foreign policy. Literally, these were: (1) improvement of the Georgian-Russian relationships, (2) pro-Western orientation of the foreign policy, and (3) struggle for restoration of the territorial integrity of the country. It can be argued that the first two objectives were mutually exclusive.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Dow Lynch, *Why Georgia Matters* (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, February 2006), 45-51.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> "Russia to introduce visa regime with Georgia," *United Press International*, December 2, 2000, <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-67514897.html> (accessed October 20, 2008).

<sup>259</sup> Dow Lynch, *Why Georgia Matters* (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, February 2006), 45-51.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 23-34.

Yet at the beginning of 2004, it seemed that the normalization of relations between Russia and Georgia could be achieved. In February 2004, President Saakashvili paid his first foreign visit to Moscow. During this visit the agreement was signed about a coordination of mutual efforts to secure the Russian-Georgian border. Also the talks on the status of the Russian bases in Georgia were initiated. [D] This "honey-moon" in relations between both countries, however, did not last long.

***a. The Russia-Georgia Relationships on the Slippery Slope***

One of the first steps of new Georgian administration was seizure of control over another separatist region in Georgia-Ajaria. The pro-Russian regime of Aslan Abashidze was toppled, and the Ajaria authorities have committed themselves to conduct free elections in the region and to disarm the paramilitary groups. Of course, these events were not welcomed in Moscow because it lost another potential pressure point on Georgia.

As it was argued earlier, one of the main foreign policy objectives of President Mikhail Saakashvili has been the integration of Georgia into NATO and the EU. From the Russian point of view, particularly the possible Georgian membership in NATO was completely contrary to the Russian vision of order in the South Caucasus. Therefore, Russia absolutely opposed this idea, unofficially calling for the guarantee that on Georgia's territory, there will be no NATO bases. [D, I] Moscow also resisted for a long time to fulfill its commitment adopted at the OSCE summit in 1999, to withdraw its two remaining military bases from Georgia.

[D, M] With regards to this, however, with the support of the West, Georgia has achieved a big success, which was the agreement signed in March 2006, in Sochi. Russia committed to withdraw its troops from bases in Batumi and Akhalkalaki by the end of 2007. Moscow also perceived Georgia's withdrawal from the Council of CIS Defense Ministers in February 2006, as another Georgian step aimed at the Russian foreign policy. Further escalation of the conflict took place in July 2006, when both countries carried out apparently provocative military maneuvers. [I, M] It can be argued that from that time, both countries adopted a policy leading to escalation of the tension. Thus, when Russia closed, in 2006, one of the border crossings to Georgia, [D, E] the Georgian response was to withdraw its agreement to Russia's acceptance into the World Trade Organization.<sup>261</sup> The culmination of the crisis in mutual relationships took place in September 2006, when the Georgian special services arrested four Russian officers and started to occupy the headquarters of the Russian troops in Transcaucasus. These officers were accused of spying for the Russian military intelligence (GRU) and the preparation of diversion actions. These events were accompanied by an anti-Russian campaign in the mass media, aimed at gathering more support for Georgia in the West.<sup>262</sup> There was little surprise that the Georgian steps provoked a strong Russian reaction. The Russians denied any allegations and accused Georgia of

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<sup>261</sup> Kakha Jibladze, "Russia's Opposition to Georgia's Quest for NATO membership," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (2007): 45-51.

<sup>262</sup> Michael Mainville, "Georgia arrests Russian for Spying and Surrounds Army HQ," *The Guardian*, September 28, 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/sep/28/russia.georgia> (accessed October 19, 2008).

provocation and plans to implement a forceful solution of the ethnic conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. [I] In addition, the Russians demanded that Georgia hand over the arrested officers, and the Russian ambassador in Tbilisi was summoned to Moscow. [D, I] Russians newspapers were citing the most prominent Russian officials, who were accusing Georgia of terrorism and banditry. [I] Moreover, some information was spread that the Russian troops were preparing military maneuvers close to the Georgian border which suggested a possibility of use of military force. [I] There was also some unofficial information that Russia was financing the Georgian opposition parties. An example of this has been the support which was given for Igor Georgadze-a sharp critic of Mikhail Saakashvili residing in Moscow. [I] Another example was the activity of Irakli Okruashvili-a former defense minister and a leader of the opposition "For United Georgia" party. This party criticized President Mikhail Saakashvili, taking advantage of the public dissatisfaction with the economic reforms conducted by Saakashvili's administration. [I]

Finally, under the pressure of OSCE, the EU, and the U.S., Georgia released the suspects and lifted the blockade of the Russian troops' headquarters.

**b. Economic "Cold War"**

The release of the detained officers did not mean the conflict was over. Russia has used two types of instruments to punish Georgia. The first instrument was a political one. It attempted to pass a resolution condemning Georgia by the UN Security Council. [D] Russia failed because this resolution was blocked by the U.S. and Great

Britain. The political restrictions were also used by Russia domestically, and were aimed at the Georgian diaspora. These restrictions comprised of closing the Georgian shops and restaurants, police actions aimed at street salesmen or even registration of the Georgian children in schools. [D, I] The second instrument used by Russia much more successfully was economic sanction. Russia introduced a communication blockade of Georgia by closing all land, maritime and air passages. [E] The sanctions included banning postal communications. The blockade of the transfers of funds was also announced.<sup>263</sup> [E]

These Russian sanctions against Georgia were not the only acts of this kind in recent years. The Russians were not shy to use their most powerful economic stick, gas and oil. As was stated earlier, Georgia was fully dependent on Russian supplies of gas until the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline was opened. In the years 2000-2001, Moscow had exerted a big influence on the Georgian politics by the breaks in the gas supplies to Georgia, especially in winter. Another Russian lever on Georgia was increase in the gas prices sold to Georgia. The Georgian authorities had no good strategy to oppose this, being fully dependent on the Russian supplies.

In January 2006, in the middle of heavy winter, the Georgians faced a critical situation. The Russian territory pipeline supplying gas to Georgia was blown up, and simultaneously the high voltage lines supplying electricity to Georgia were damaged. As a result of this

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<sup>263</sup> Dow Lynch, *Why Georgia Matters* (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, February 2006), 45-51.

diversion, Georgia had been affected by a very serious energy crisis. [E, I] For several days, the whole country was deprived of gas and electricity which had significant implications for the Georgian economy. The crisis prompted Georgian authorities to take action to diversify energy sources, which resulted in the signing of contracts for the supply of gas from Iran and Azerbaijan, and the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum oil pipelines. In addition to that, Turkey and Azerbaijan agreed to make available for Georgia necessary supplies of gas, which supposedly has made this country independent from Russia as far as the energy supplies are concerned. For Russia, it was a spectacular failure, because it lost one of its powerful levers of pressure on Georgia.<sup>264</sup>

Just a couple months after the energy crisis, Russia hit Georgia with another economic stick. This time Russia imposed a ban on the import and sale of Georgian wines, products of plant and mineral water, explaining that they did not meet the Russian sanitary standards. [E]

***c. When DIME is Narrowed to Pure M***

Although there is apparent tension between Russia and Georgia with the economic "cold war" and the military provocations became something natural in the mutual relationships, the summer of 2008 brought an unexpected acceleration of the hostile actions, which ultimately led to the military confrontation in August.

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<sup>264</sup> "Russia Blamed for Gas Sabotage," *BBC News*, January 22, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4637034.stm> (accessed October 23, 2008).

The war began on August 7, 2008, when the Georgian forces started to attack Tskhinwali, the capital of South Ossetia. The initial Georgian successes were quickly erased by a huge Russian offensive, which within two days swept away Georgians from South Ossetia. [M] Then, the Russians did not stop, but began to occupy the Georgia's territory including Gori, one of the main cities. [M, I] At that time, it became apparent that Georgia lost this war. The reaction of the EU and the U.S. was contained to verbal protests against the Russian disproportionate use of military force. Only the diplomatic action carried out by French, Polish, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian Presidents, who visited Tbilisi during this period, allegedly stopped the Russian advance. Finally the truce was signed according to which the Russian troops would withdraw from the Georgian territory.<sup>265</sup>

The most interesting question is why this war broke off, and what were the objectives of both sides? Answering these questions is entirely hypothesis, but some possible explanations seem to be highly consistent with the identified Russian foreign policy strategic goals.

The examples for the tension between Georgia and Russia expanding beyond the accepted frames started to accumulate in the spring of 2008. The Russians were shooting down Georgian unmanned air vehicles (UAV) flying over Abkhazia, and then the same thing happened to UAVs over

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<sup>265</sup> Ryan O'Donnell and Sally McNamara, "The Return of History: Confronting the Russian Bear after the Georgian War," *Heritage Foundation Website*, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/RussiaandEurasia/wm2056.cfm> (accessed October 23, 2008).

South Ossetia.<sup>266</sup> [M] The Georgians claimed that the reason for that was that Russians wanted to hide their preparations for a war, building shelters for tanks, improving railroads, etc. The shootings between the South Ossetian separatists and Georgian forces intensified, and the separatists started to shoot at the Georgian villages, which had not happened earlier. The Russian peacekeepers found themselves helpless to stop these shootings. [M, I] In July 2008, the Russian 58<sup>th</sup> Army conducted a huge military exercise on the northern slopes of the Caucasus, [I, M] while at the same time, the Georgians with participation of the US soldiers, were conducting similar maneuvers on the southern side of the Caucasus.<sup>267</sup> It can be argued that all these events were the signs of preparation for war. So, it is plausible that a decision on war had to be made earlier.

If one will examine the broader political situation, it would be easy to notice that Russia suffered two major political failures in the spring of 2008. The first one was the declaration of independence of Kosovo, and the second was the unclear decision made on the NATO summit in Bucharest with regards to Georgia's membership in NATO. Although the Membership Action Plan (MAP) was not extended to Georgia, NATO also did not reject the possibility of Georgia's membership in the future.<sup>268</sup> Following the

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<sup>266</sup> Alexi Mostrous, "Russian Jet 'Shoots Down' Georgian Spy Plane," *Times Online*, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article3791435.ece> (accessed October 19, 2008).

<sup>267</sup> "Russia vs. Georgia: The Fallout," *International Crisis Group*, Europe Report, no. 195 (August 22, 2008).

<sup>268</sup> "NATO Delays MAP for Georgia," *Civil.ge*, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=17511> (accessed October 23, 2008).



recognition of Kosovo's independence, Moscow warned the Western countries that Russia has a right to do the same with the break-away republics in Georgia. **[D, I]** This declaration combined with Russia's inability to use an energy weapon against Georgia, and combined with Georgia's plans to join NATO, created an environment where the military option against Georgia could be the most tempting for Russia. It can be argued that the Russian strategists could count on multiple profits from the military action: (1) to punish Georgia, (2) to intimidate other countries from the Russian zone of influence, and force them to cooperate in Moscow's favor, (3) to secure the Russian military presence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, (4) to show the world who is the dominant power in the Transcaucasus, (5) to reduce the Western influences in Georgia, (6) to use the victory in Georgia for strengthening its political power domestically.

If the reasoning presented above is close to the truth, then the war in Georgia must be perceived as a part of a bigger Russian game. Allegedly, the Russians decided to use their military power against Georgia aiming primarily at the international audience, while Georgia itself was rather an additional aim. In other words, at the expense of Georgia, the Russians attempted to establish both their deterrence credibility against the U.S and the EU, and confirm its hegemonic position in their zone of influence. The unilateral recognition of independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia seems to prove this hypothesis.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> "Russia Recognizes South Ossetia and Abkhazia to Save People's Lives," *Pravda.ru*, [http://english.pravda.ru/russia/kremlin/26-08-2008/106214-russia\\_ossetia\\_abkhazia-0](http://english.pravda.ru/russia/kremlin/26-08-2008/106214-russia_ossetia_abkhazia-0) (accessed October 23, 2008).

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

The Russian authorities perceive the Transcaucasus as within their sphere of influence, where Russia has vital interests both political and economic. In particular, Russia is concerned about securing its southern border, preventing the access of international organizations like the EU and NATO to the region, and assuring that oil and gas from the Caucasus does not compete with the Russian supplies of these resources in international markets.

These Russian strategic goals are contradictory to Georgia's national interests. The tension between both countries was rising from the beginning of the existence of independent Georgia. The Russians, in order to weaken Georgia, adopted mixed measures of influence. The dominant Russian strategy towards Georgia was based on fueling the protracted conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia in order to weaken Georgia's position.

The Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2004 only raised the tension, especially when it became apparent that the administration of President Saakashvili was seeking partnership with the West rather than with Russia. In response to the dangerous situation, from Moscow's point of view, the Russian authorities adopted gradually more and more aggressive countermeasures. It included some political and economic restrictions as well as growing support for the break-away republics (economic, military and informational).

In 2008, Russia suffered some diplomatic debacles on the international forum (independence of Kosovo or NATO plans to adopt Ukraine and Georgia). In addition, the Georgians managed to escape from the Russian gas and oil

trap by building a strategic pipeline from Azerbaijan to Turkey. This could erode the Russian position as a supreme supplier of natural resources to Europe. All these facts together allegedly contributed to the use of military force as the most feasible solution. Although, there is enough evidence that Georgia struck first in this war, but in fact the situation in South Ossetia just before the war broke off looked already like a semi-open military conflict. Therefore, having in mind how high was the tension in South Ossetia in summer 2008, it can be argued that the war was rather inevitable.

The results of the war can be labeled as disastrous for Georgia. It lost a lot of sympathy in the West because of the accusations of starting this conflict. Georgia also lost, probably for a long time, any possibility to solve the problem of separatist republics, given that the Russian troops are present there and the fact that Russia recognized independence of both break-away republics. Finally, Georgia probably lost its opportunity to become a NATO and the EU member in a foreseeable future.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. THESIS ASSUMPTIONS

As it was argued in the Introduction chapter, the working hypothesis adopted for this thesis was that Russia's overall foreign policy is aimed at restoration for Russia a position among the world's key players. This hypothesis was validated by a detailed examination of Russia's foreign policy instruments towards three countries: Poland, Ukraine, and Georgia. All these countries are the former members of the Soviet Empire. Each of the examined countries has a distinct history of its relations with Russia. Poland has a long tradition of hostile and violent relationships with Russia, and was not a part of the Soviet Union. Similarly, Georgia resisted for a long period of time Russian imperialism, however, finally became a part of the USSR. Ukraine in turn, did not exist as independent country until it emerged from the smoke of the falling Soviet Union. Thus, examination of the Russian foreign policy towards these differently shaped countries was expected to reveal some universal patterns in the Russian foreign policy strategy.

The relationships between Russia and the three examined countries were evaluated with a use of DIME model, which predicts that the state's power is projected in four main areas: (D)iplomatic, (I)nformational, (M)ilitary, and (E)conomic. Within each of these areas, both conventional and unconventional mechanisms used by the Russian policymakers were identified.

## **B. THESIS FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Russia**

Balance of Power theory served as a theoretical model to evaluate contemporary Russia's behavior in the international arena. This model predicts that both multipolar (before WWI) and unipolar (after Cold War) models of the world's political order are likely to be unstable, while the bipolar (after WWII) model seems to be the most stable. According to the basic notion of the Balance of Power theory, the world's political system has a natural tendency to seek a balance, thus an unbalanced power (e.g., USA after the Cold War) is likely to be challenged by other states.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it seemed that Russia would not be a problem for the West any more. The economic and political turmoil combined with the separatist tendencies forced the Russian authorities to focus on internal problems, thus externally Russia was seeking support from the West rather than a confrontation.

This situation changed once the presidential elections in 2000 were won by a young and active former KGB's colonel, Vladimir Putin. Under his term in office, Russia adopted some characteristics of imperial policy, especially towards so called near abroad. It seems interesting that the idea of Eurasianism fits in the new Russian foreign policy principles. The idea of Eurasianism-which gained a huge popularity within influential political circles in Russia-is based on the assumption that Russia should pursue a foreign policy aimed at creating a multipolar world, where Russia

should be a leader in the Euro-Asian zone. This idea calls for incorporation of the former Soviet republics, and now independent countries, into Russia, while other states within the Euro-Asian zone should be either federated with Russia or be "friendly" to Russia. According to this notion, Poland is located in the area where a "friendly" to Russia government should be installed, while Ukraine and Georgia should be incorporated back into Russia.

Thus, the main Russian foreign policy goals in the Russian near abroad were identified as follows.

- Moscow has tried to achieve primary influence over the foreign orientations and security postures of the nearby states
- Russia has endeavored to gain increasing economic benefits and monopolistic position through targeted foreign investments and strategic infrastructural buyouts in Eastern Europe
- Moscow aims to convert East Europe's overwhelming dependence on Russian energy supplies and economic investments into long-term, constant, and predictable intergovernmental influence
- Russia has attempted to limit the scope and pace of Western institutional enlargement and integration, especially in the security arena in the European CIS states
- Moscow is preparing to use region, especially the European CIS, as a springboard for rebuilding a larger sphere of influence and global status and reversing Moscow's decline as a major international player
- Moscow seeks to undercut or damage transatlantic relation or the Europe-America link by intensifying its involvement in the European arena. The objective is to strengthen the Europe-Russia or 'Eurasian' strategic 'pole' vis-à-vis the United States and to establish a Russia-EU system of international security for the old continent.

## **2. Poland vs. Russia**

The examination of the Polish-Russian relationships showed that both nations have a record full of mutual hostility and distrust. Particularly, the last 300 years of Polish history is a permanent struggle against the imperial Russian Empire whether it was Tsarists Russia or the Soviet Union.

The fall of Soviet Union created an opportunity for Poland to escape from the Russian orbit, and this was materialized in Poland's joining NATO and the EU. This author believes that the Russians reconciled themselves to the fact that Poland became a part of the West. Even the proponents of Eurasianism see Poland located outside the boundaries of the future Russian Empire. However, Poland is located in a strategic place on Europe's map, being a gate for Russia to Western Europe. Thus, the Russian interests in Poland are vast, and the Russian policy is generally aimed at ensuring a Polish "friendly" attitude to Russia.

The examination of the Russian capabilities in Poland showed that Russia primarily uses its economic "stick" (gas and oil supplies) as a tool to exert influence on Poland. The economic capabilities are closely followed by a coherent informational policy which provides an explanatory function for the Russian strategy. The Russian informational capabilities in Poland are mainly based on the Russian ability to exploit the still existing ties and sentiments of the communist times, rather than for any modern and attractive message. The diplomatic and military measures have relatively smaller leverage potential, although by no means small.

Thus, it can be argued that the overall Russian strategy in Poland employs all DIME components, which are mutually supportive. The economic and informational capabilities are used in a highly unconventional manner and are strictly subordinated to the political agenda.

### **3. Ukraine vs. Russia**

What differentiates Ukraine from Poland and Georgia is the fact that Ukraine had never been an independent state until as late as in 1991. Ukraine, as it emerged from the falling USSR, is a state deeply divided into two parts: the Western part, which is pro-European and nationalistic oriented, and the Eastern part, where pro-Russian sentiments are dominant.

From the Russian perspective Ukraine is absolutely a key country which has to be kept within the Russian zone of influence. Thus, any attempts to change this status quo are vigorously opposed by Russia. This was the case of the Orange Revolution. The Orange Revolution in Ukraine finally convinced the Russian authorities that Ukraine is orienting towards the West, so the Russians adopted some active measures to reverse this trend.

The active measures encompassed mainly direct diplomatic and informational interference, especially right before the Orange Revolution succeeded. Then, Russia even sharpened its attitude to Ukraine using its pressures on Ukraine gradually more aggressively and overtly. The special attention in the Russian strategy has been granted both to the huge Russian ethnic minority in Crimea Peninsula, and to the Russian Black Sea Fleet basing there. The Russian



authorities have used these pressures on Ukraine in order to change the Ukrainian political choices. In addition to the "ethnic and military cards," the "gas weapon" is also of use in the Russian hands. All these measures adopted by Russia can be labeled an unconventional use of DIME. Russians are also highly effective in taking advantage of the communist heritage, namely the existing ties and pro-Russian sympathies within the Ukrainian elites. This is especially apparent in the Eastern Ukraine, where the Ukrainian economic and political elites see the country's future in a close partnership with Russia.

#### **4. Georgia vs. Russia**

The geopolitical location of Georgia in an ethnically unstable Transcaucasus region makes this country vulnerable to ethnic problems. The Russian authorities, who perceive the Transcaucasus as within their sphere of influence, decided to use the "ethnic card" to force Georgia to adjust its political agenda to the Russia's interests. This is the background for the protracted ethnic conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Although the "ethnic card" was played very smartly by the Russians, Georgia was gradually escaping from the Russian zone of influence in lieu of the West. This process was decisively accelerated after the Rose Revolution. The new Georgian administration started to seek partnership with the Western institutions like NATO or the EU.

Because the Russian strategic goals were contradictory to Georgia's national interests, the tension between both countries was rising, mainly fueled by gradually more and more aggressive Moscow's steps. It included some political

and economic restrictions as well as growing support for the break-away republics (economic, military and informational). This ultimately led to the military confrontation in South Ossetia in 2008.

Although the first major military action in this war was perpetuated by the Georgia's troops, this author believes that the intensifying Ossetian military provocations did not leave too much room for Georgia other than a military reaction. The military conflict was a matter of time and was provoked successfully which played in the Russian hands, who managed to accomplish their political goals in Georgia by military means.

The author also argues that the decision for the military solution of the Georgian issue was made in Moscow in order to establish Russia's deterrence credibility. After some international diplomatic debacles in 2008, (Kosovo or NATO plans to adopt Ukraine and Georgia), the Russian authorities decided to use Georgia as an example to show the Russian determination to defend its interests. If it is a true assumption, this strategy worked. First, the Russians recognized the independence of both break-away republics (obvious retaliation for recognition of the independence of Kosovo). This act practically partitioned Georgia. Second, the Georgian credibility was destroyed, mainly because it allowed itself to be provoked. As of now, this makes the Georgian accession to NATO and the EU hardly imaginable. Third, the Russians came back militarily to the Transcaucasus, which can be hard to overestimate from the political point of view.

### **C. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

As it is argued here, the Russian foreign policy has adopted some characteristics of neo-imperialism. So, the need to counter the Russian policy is apparent. This particularly refers to the three examined countries.

As of now, the main strategy of all three countries with regards to Russia was to seek the support from the West. This particularly meant to seek membership in NATO and the EU.

Poland is the only examined country which accomplished both these goals. The Polish security strategy was based on the assumption that membership in these organizations would assure the military and economic safety of the country. Membership in NATO and EU can be labeled as the backbone of the Polish security strategy. Once in the Western hemisphere, Poland recognized that its safety also depends on having friendly countries on the Eastern side of the Polish borders. This constituted the basic reason for which Poland has actively pursued so called Eastern policy. This policy was based on political support given for the former Soviet republics, especially for Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine and Georgia. The democratization processes in those countries has been seen in Poland as positive contributions to the Polish national security. Particularly, Poland has supported the NATO and the EU aspirations of Ukraine and Georgia. It can be argued that Poland has been playing an advocacy role for both countries with regards to their accession to the West. This Polish policy seems to be optimal to strengthen national security.

Although, the Russian invasion of Georgia, and especially the weak reaction of the West, showed that Ukraine can potentially face the same threat in the future, it seems that there is no better strategy for Ukraine than strengthening its ties with the West. As long as the Russian policy is based on the imperial resentments, the Ukraine's critical interest is to keep away from the Russian zone of influence. The Ukrainians should cooperate closely with Poland because it is also a Polish interest to pull Ukraine away from the Russian orbit, and both countries have significant demographic and economic potentials to force their political agenda. At the same time, however, seeking the partnership with the West should not mean cutting relations with Russia. This could only validate the Russian notion of the zero sum game which is played between Russia and the West, and strengthen the imperial wing internally in Russia. This can be difficult to keep in balance in the Ukrainian foreign policy, taking into account that Ukraine is apparently divided into two opposite parts; a strongly pro-Russian Eastern Ukraine and pro-European Western Ukraine.

After the Russian invasion in Georgia, the prospects for this country are not clear. It seems that the main task for the Georgians is to restore their credibility within the Western countries. It would help Georgia to be more efficient in attracting Western investments, and subsequently to reform its economy. This should be the focal point for Georgia as of now. Georgia's political objectives, especially the issue of the separatist republics, should not be abandoned; however, this problem should be managed cautiously in order to involve the international community

in solving it. Any Georgian unilateral actions are not likely to succeed. Georgia should also keep good relations with its neighbors in Transcaucasus, especially with Azerbaijan. Energy independence, key in this, is a critical factor in the Russian policy.

Undoubtedly, Georgia is in the least advantageous position among the three examined countries. Being divided by Russia, with the Russian troops in its territory, it has little room for political maneuver. The Russian military action in Georgia and subsequent recognition of independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia can be, however, the issues which can be exploited politically in Georgia's favor. The Russian actions convinced many, especially in the West, that Russia is not necessarily a reasonable partner. To take advantage of this damaged Russian image poses both an opportunity and a challenge for the Georgian leadership.

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