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**Making Russia Great Again:
The Importance of National Identity and Policy Elites in Russian Foreign Policy**

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Major Research Paper

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July 18, 2018

Abstract

This paper examines the aspirations of Russian policy elites in defining post-Soviet Russia's foreign policy objectives by attempting to restore a great power status in accordance to its historic national self-images and interests. Promoting Russia's resurgence as a great power within the existing international order has become the primary domestic strategy during the 1990s as Russia attempted to recover from internal collapse, and has served as the foundation of modern Russian foreign policy under the auspices of President Vladimir Putin since the early 2000s. Russian resurgence is defined by the policy elite's rejection of rapid and total Westernization in the foreign policy realm as unbefitting Russia's greatness. This work seeks to untangle some of the historical factors intertwined with policy elite expectations which underlie the contemporary foundations of Russian foreign policy. A constructivist analysis can help expose these deep interconnections between Russian national identities and the psyche of the Russian foreign policy elite, which is helpful in tracing the direction of foreign policy formation. The expectation is that this analysis will provide a more in-depth understanding of the significance of history, national identity, and individual actors within the Russian foreign policy realm. The influence and authority of Russian foreign policy is readily felt on the global stage today. It is also present in many spheres of contemporary engagement between Russia and the West. Understanding the mindset of Russian policy elites therefore remains significant in formulating a wholesome and successful policy response to Russian actions.

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I. Introduction

On June 7, 2016, officials from the U.S. Departments of State and Defence convened for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Russia's geopolitical ambitions and U.S. policy towards Russia. At this meeting Mr. David Statter, a senior fellow of the Foreign Policy Institute at the John Hopkins University, posed one of the most important considerations for American policymakers that afternoon when he proclaimed that "it is with great difficulty that we understand the cultural context and psychological context of Russia and what is really going on there" (C-SPAN). Indeed, the motives underlying Russia's international behaviour remain puzzling to Western scholars and policymakers alike. When Russia has emerged as a successor state to the Soviet Union in December 1991, its foreign policy has exhibited a noteworthy characteristic in the inconsistency between policies. They asserted the need for Russia to align its foreign policy objectives with the United States and the West, or to balance against them. This work sets out to explain Russia's post-Soviet foreign policy from the point of view of Russian elites immediately after the Soviet collapse. It also examines the importance of historical national identity in psychological discourses of the elites. Since little attention is paid to this psychological source of Russian foreign policy, Western policymakers tend to overlook the importance of historical identity in shaping the outlook of Russian policy elites on numerous aspects of their country's expectations, engagement, and disillusionment with the West.

Understanding the domestic sources of Russian behaviour remain important for Western policymakers in formulating a successful engagement strategy with Russia in a time of historically low relations. The better that Western policymakers can understand and forecast the psychological forces shaping Russia's national identity and interests, the better they will be able to estimate the direction Russia's foreign policy is likely to take. In turn, they will be in a better position to

influence that policy in a more cooperative direction. To address such a need, this paper seeks to provide a broad assessment of interaction between foreign policy and domestic development in post-Soviet Russia. This is best illustrated by focusing on the major shift in post-Soviet foreign policy that took place over the 1992-2000 time period. During this period, Russia has emerged from a weak and inward-looking nation to become a power that is increasingly capable of defending its international prestige using a wide range of available means. With a large arsenal of nuclear weapons and a seat on the United Nations Security Council, Russia is likely to remain an influential player in world affairs. Therefore, being attentive to Russia's historical identity and the effect it has on the beliefs of Russian foreign policy elites would allow Western scholars and policymakers to focus on a crucial, missing piece of the puzzle of change and more importantly, resistance to change, in contemporary Russian foreign policy.

To achieve this goal, the paper aims to provide sound and sensible judgements about the significance of Russian elites in foreign policy making. Their beliefs and perceptions of Russia's role in the world are presented as the relationship between the domestic and the foreign. This relationship is shaped by the enduring influence of history and historical memory, civilizational and ideological biases, as well as perceptions and identity. These internal circumstances shape the perceptions and actions of Russian political elites as they seek to project a viable foreign policy for Russia's relations with the West at a time of rapidly changing and evolving international structures. The focal point of this paper analyzes the shift of Russian foreign policy away from a pro-Western narrative that came to define modern Russia in its first years after the Soviet collapse, to a revival of an anti-Western "Global Multipolar Order" outlook that continues to influence present Russian foreign policy thinking. This is vital in explaining Russia's renewed quest for regaining its great power position and pursuing a return to a multipolar world order.

Accordingly, this essay presents a succinct explanation of this anti-Western shift and the role of Russia's historical understanding of itself and the role of policy elites. The concepts of historical identity and elite behaviour are applied in tandem to cases of European security, global governance under the UN Security Council, and nuclear non-proliferation. This is done to emphasize the key take away that unless Russia's interests and ambitions do not undermine existing international rules, the West is better off trying to engage Russia as an equal contributor in shaping the global system. This take-away is particularly appropriate following ill-fated attempts to "reset" relations with the Kremlin after years of estrangement.

This paper is organized as follows. First, an overview of approaches to post-Soviet foreign policy is provided to illustrate numerous Western perceptions of Russia's grand strategy, and to frame the discussion on historical identity, policy elites, and areas of engagement. Second, Russian historical identity and memory are examined in their relation to foreign policy elites and their psychological undertones. Third, a concise assessment of the Kremlin elite and foreign policy formulation in the post-Soviet landscape is provided. Fourth, the discussion of change in Russian foreign policy is analyzed through a policy shift from Andrei Kozyrev's Western affinity to Yevgeny Primakov's "Global Multipolar Order." Fifth, extensive research is used to identify three areas of Russo-American and Western engagement, specifically, European security, global governance in the framework of the UN Security Council, and the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Particular emphasis is placed on the underlying concept of Russian great power aspirations, as well as on Russia's desire to be an equal partner to the United States and the West.

II. Approaches to Post-Soviet Foreign Policy

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia has emerged as a state facing a situation in which Soviet political, cultural, and economic institutions were in utter disarray. All

institutions, including national identity, were open to question (Blum, 375). It is precisely because states are experiencing challenges and transformations both internally and externally that the analysis of foreign policy becomes relevant. Foreign policy analysis connects the study of international relations, or the way states relate to each other in international politics, with the study of domestic politics, or the functioning of governments and the relationships among individuals, groups, and governments (Beasley et al. 1-2). Thus, the study of foreign policy serves as a bridge by analyzing the impact of both external and internal politics on states' relations with each other. Leaders cannot forge effective foreign policies without being aware of these connections, while scholars cannot effectively evaluate foreign policy choices without recognizing these linkages (Beasley et al. 2).

There are numerous perceptions of Russian foreign policy objectives among Western policymakers and Russia scholars. Many perceive Russia as historically pursuing policies of assertiveness vis-à-vis the West. Acting from a position of perceived strength, Russia is seen as asserting its interests unilaterally even after Western nations failed to support them. Western approaches to examining Russian foreign policy most often emphasize realist conceptions of the national interests that are defined in terms of power or security and national capabilities. These concepts are construed as an ultimate arbiter in the incessant struggle of state for dominance in international relations. In fact, the majority of writings in the West on Russia's foreign policy apply realist theories when examining it (see, for example, Mankoff, 2008; Lo, 2017; Åslund, and Kuchins, 2008.) Realists have been especially influential in advocating the notion of national interest and rationally defined action as defining factors in world politics. Realism draws attention to considerations of state power, security, and prestige. Its basic insight that no policy can materialize without due consideration for the existing structure of the international system remains

valid and impossible to ignore in understanding Russia's foreign policy. However, theories of international relations based on the structure of the international system often discount the argument that honour serves as a motive of state behaviour. The problem with realism is not that it focuses on state power, security, and prestige, but that in so doing it underestimates the role of culture and ideas in international interactions (Tsygankov, "The frustrating partnership" 7). This paper does not neglect realist theories, but argues for considering constructivism in parallel, or in addition, with realism to better understand the domestic sources of Russian foreign policy. While the factors of power and security are accounted for, they do not have an independent causal effect.

What sets this paper apart from other attempts is that it clearly underlines that internal factors have been the most salient determinants of Russia's foreign policy since the 1990s. Much constructivist international relations scholarship suggests that Russia's post-Soviet interests and its status hinge on its identity (Ambrosio (2005); Clunan (2008); Larson and Shevchenko; Trenin (2003); Tsygankov (2012)). These authors use constructivism and social identity theory to argue that political elites are psychologically motivated to create national identities that promote a collective national interest. National self-images are psychologically based on political elites' collective historical aspirations and value rationality regarding their country's international status and domestic political purpose. If Western policymakers hope to engage Russia in solving global problems, they must have a solid grasp of the constructivist explanation of Russian foreign policy psychology that is based on historical identities, national images, perennial debates, culture, perception, great power status. The challenge for the community of scholars specializing in this field has been to pinpoint how external and internal forces shape Russian actions in the global realm. These efforts have been complicated by the uncertainty concerning Russia's identity, the volatility of its institutional framework, and a degree of ambivalence in its foreign policy,

particularly toward the Western states (Omelicheva, 3). This paper will attempt to clarify these discussions and provide a concise analysis of Russian foreign policy thinking during the post-Cold War period, and how this new post-Soviet thinking continues to form the foundations of modern Russian foreign policy.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to comprehend present-day Russian foreign policy or make any forecasts about its future without some understanding of the past. There have been stark continuities in the foreign policy of Imperial, Soviet, and post-Cold War Russia, despite the radical political changes that the country has undergone during those times (Blum, 375). A historical vantage point can help to identify these enduring practices and distinguish them from more transient experiences in Russia's foreign policy behaviour. As the state accrues more of a past as time passes, that history becomes the source of new aspirations and new interpretations of previous events. The identity of a state that best corresponds with its historical aspirations and practicality should come to accentuate how political elites define the national interest (Clunan, 11). Although the perception of material power often drives states behavior in relation with each other, the core argument of this paper is that Russian foreign policy elites are moved by forces other than material power, such as ideas, norms, and other social and cultural factors that shape national interests of the Russian state and its foreign policy (Clunan, 3). Accordingly, an investigation into the role of human aspirations and human reason is needed to understand how Russian elites perceive, interpret, and construct national interests that can be projected by Russia onto the international stage.

III. Russian Historical Identity

Ignoring Russia's cultural foundations and the historical memory of Russian public and elites comes at the price of misunderstanding Russia. Analysis of Russia through its cultural lenses

is essential in explaining contemporary Russia's foreign policy, because the myths of Orthodox Christianity and Slavic cultural inheritance serve as pre-modern foundations of Russia's external interactions (Tsygankov, 7). Commonly held memories of the past generate aspirations among the elite for what the state should, and should not, be and do in the future. The definition of the national interests of any state is correlated with the formation of its national identity. Getting at the root of a state's national interests means unearthing what its elites identify as the country's political purpose and international status (Tsygankov, 7). That identification itself is shaped by the legitimacy of the past. It is this identification that turns ideas and objects into national interests, which in turn define a state's foreign policy orientations (Clunan, 3). By examining Russia's elite debates about Russia's post-Soviet development it is possible to acquire a deeper understanding of how policy elites define their state's national identity and interests and recognise where they see potential or actual threats to them. Clunan theorizes that national identities arise out of ongoing interaction of both societal structures and human agents which produces an idea that a nation or a people are "distinctive" based on their own history and experiences. In turn, they are guided to create aspirations regarding their and their nation's future (Clunan, 3-4). These aspirations play a central role in shaping which historical legacies are incorporated into national identities and which are discarded. Therefore, Russia's actions often originate from a culturally distinct source and can have a different meaning compared to similar actions and behaviour of other states (Tsygankov, 8).

A national identity is a set of ideas, principles, values, and symbols that guide a group of actors in defining the general rules about the country's political purpose and international status (Clunan, 28). National identity is not a static or fixed concept, unchanging for all time. Politicians and intellectuals continuously instantiate and recreate the country's collective ideas, values, and

symbols, but they do not do so in circumstances of their own choosing. These members of the political elite repeatedly interpret and reinvent the country's identity in light of past experience and new events (Clunan, 29). Identities are subject to modification and alteration as political elites seek to incorporate current events and experiences that may not initially "fit" with an identity and its prescriptions.

Historical memory plays a crucial role in the formation of Russian national identity and national interests. Commonly held memories of the past allow Russian foreign policy elites to generate aspirations for what the nation should, and should not, be and do in the future. Such aspirations are most likely to be apparent when states are undergoing major political, social, or economic transformations, as was the case with the collapse of the Soviet Union (Kahneman and Tversky, 286). National interests and national identity underlie the essence of Russian foreign policy. Kahneman and Tversky have demonstrated that people are more strongly motivated by aspirations to regain what they had in the past and subsequently lost rather than by aspirations to acquire what they have never possessed (286). History does not only serve to generate aspirations based on a state's past. History directly enters into the creation of national interest, influencing how political elites define the situation their state faces. National identities and national interests are therefore historically contingent.

For most of its existence, Russian foreign policy has been a reflection of the nature and identity of Russia itself. At the core of Russia's national identity and interests has always been the historical aspiration to be and remain a great power, playing a significant role in the international system, being respected by the other great powers, and having an independent foreign policy (Tsygankov, 7). The implications of these characteristics were largely imperial in nature. Russian great power status meant that the state would be one which leads, but is not lead. It is a state that

would dominate, but is not dominated. And it is a state which would aggressively advance its own interests, but does not subordinate them to other powers. Andrei Tsygankov argues that local conditions of an aggressive external environment and a national memory of being prone to invasion have critically shaped Russian foreign policy thinking (22). Insecurity, therefore, is one of the key sources of Russian foreign policy that have historically prevailed until the present day, and continue to shape the perceptions of Russia's foreign policy elites.

Insecurity

History and historical memory play a crucial and multidimensional role in Russian foreign policy thinking and security concerns. It serves as the source of ancient fears and humiliation, as well as the basis for national pride and assertiveness (Lo, 18). Since the early 15th century, Russia's rulers have positioned their country as one with its own special interests and cultural characteristics. As the geopolitically insecure state became preoccupied with defending its borders, political independence and the international reputation of a great power figured prominently in Russian national identity. The country was often in an uncertain and volatile external environment and could only survive by constantly defending its unstable borders from the expansionist ambitions of its neighbours (Tsygankov, 30). Located in the middle of Eurasia, Russia has few natural boundaries and has been frequently attacked by outsiders seeking to conquer its territory and its people. During the modern era, Russia was invaded more often and with more force than any other early modern empire. The invasions included those by the Poles, Ottomans, and Swedes in the 17th century; by the Swedes, Austrians, and Ottomans in the 18th century; the French, British, and Ottomans in the 19th century; and the Germans (twice) and the Allies in the 20th century (Tsygankov, 31). Operating in such a harsh and predatory international environment, with no friends and many enemies, strong central control was to be expected. In parallel to this, the

ideal of a strong and socially protective state capable of defending its own subject from abuses at home and threats from abroad has emerged as an important aspect of Russian historical identity and the forerunner of Russia's great power mentality. Loyalty to the Russian state has also been an enduring norm for hundreds of years of Russian history (Berryman, 531; Tsygankov, "Russia and the West" 32). Driven by these fears, Russia was bent on increasing its strength at home and abroad in order to secure its interests in an extremely ruthless and competitive world. Therefore, the notion of increasing strength in order to ward off a volatile external environment has become a permanent perception among the Russian foreign policy elites.

These historical insecurities meaningfully affect the psychological thinking of the political elite, and are arguably more important in Russian foreign policy analysis. The breakup of the Soviet Union into 15 independent republics was traumatic not because it heralded the further disintegration of Russia, but because both the Russian political elite and public witnessed the transformation of the world's second superpower into an impotent failure. Virtually overnight everything that the Russians had taken for granted had been turned on its head and invalidated (Åslund and Kuchins, 3). The troubles of the post-Soviet collapse in the 1990s underlined the political and public feelings of disorientation and insecurity. They revealed deep divisions among the ruling elite, a largely dysfunctional government, military weakness, an economy in crisis, and acute social demoralization. In foreign affairs the "new Russia" was reduced to the status of a supplicant to the West, lacking the global standing it once had while being endlessly criticized and patronized (Lo, 19). At the same time, NATO expanded into areas that Moscow had considered its spheres of influence in Eastern Europe for decades. While this expansion was perceived as posing some military threat, most importantly, it altered the dynamic of Russia's international relations and played on the fears of the political elite (Lo, 19). One-time Eastern European allies

and client-states deserted en masse, presenting Russia with an outrageous choice of either integrating with the West on the latter's terms or facing growing isolation and backwardness (Åslund and Kuchins, 4). Given these circumstances, the Russian elite and public could not help but feel profoundly anxious about the future.

Taken together, the historical memory of foreign invasions and exacerbated conditions of the post-Cold War world have given the rise to a strategic culture in which hard power is paramount. It also enables a large number of elites to assume a darker view of a world in which security is invariably fragile, and enemies and threats are never far away (Åslund and Kuchins, 6). The fact that the Soviet Union collapsed virtually overnight instilled in the minds of the elites the sense that power and stability that they perceived to have could dissipate at any moment. Such insecurities are closely bond up with a national humiliation complex that has deep roots (Tsygankov, 30). In the post-Cold War period however, this national humiliation complex has been enshrined in the belief that the West set out to abuse Russia by exploiting its temporary weakness. According to this view, the political elite was led to believe that economic prescriptions offered by the Western reformers in the early 1990s were designed to undermine Russia from within, while NATO took advantage of the Soviet collapse to absorb the once-friendly Warsaw Pact countries, which have since rejected any Russian association, attempted to erase their shared past with the Soviet Union, and have sided with once bitter Transatlantic enemies (Lo, 20). Indeed, some elites continue to perceive the collapse of the Soviet Union as acquiescence to the West which resulted in Russia being stripped of vast territories that it had acquired over the preceding 300 years (Berryman, 537). These developments have solidified the Russian political elite's conviction to be wary of trusting in the good intentions of others, and instead led them to concentrate on rebuilding Russia's inherent strengths.

Triumph

Given these insecurities, the Russian foreign policy elites attempted to offset security concerns by projecting an image of over-confidence and triumphalism, reflected by a history that has boasted great victories and achievements. While Russia has lost many battles, it has lost few wars. Moreover, it has succeeded in reversing most of its defeats (Lo, 20). While initially overrun by the Mongols, Russia has later expanded its empire to the farthest reaches of Asia. Similarly, while the Russian Empire suffered humiliating defeats against Napoleonic France, Russia reversed the tide, occupied Paris, and led the restoration of absolute monarchies throughout Europe. And lastly, while the Soviet Union was devastated by the Nazi invasion, it raised the Soviet flag over the Reichstag and projected dominance over virtually all of Eastern Europe. This pattern of eventual victories has imbued successive generations of the Russian elite with a historical belief that Russia generally finds itself on the right side of history, even if it must undergo huge torments in the process (Lo, 21). This attitude often reflects faith that solutions will somehow be found and Russia will again emerge successfully from its troubles. Indeed, one of the traditional clichés is that Russians have self-characterized themselves as “saviours of Europe” from the Mongol hordes (Omelchieva, 5).

This belief in eventual success has another aspect relevant to Russian political culture. Confidence in its essential rightness has meant that the political leadership is hypersensitive to any suggestion of inferiority. It is insulted by the claim that the West won, and Russia lost, the Cold War, and the lack of credit Moscow has received for achieving a relatively peaceful post-Soviet transition. It is especially disturbed by the implications of such messages (Tsygankov, 34). The West’s appropriation of victory in the Cold War is viewed as a plot to justify unfair treatment of Russia, one that takes the form not only of ill-warranted criticisms about its domestic politics, but

also of attempts to marginalize it in the Euro-Atlantic space and meddle in its neighbourhood (Lo, 21).

The East and the West

Another important aspect of Russian historical identity is the prominent debate about the purpose of Russia, and what Russia is, more specifically, whether Russia is a Western country or a unique civilization. This is most famously manifested in the domestic divide between two opposing groups of Russian philosophers known as Westernizers and Slavophiles (Omelchieva, 5). The Westernizers argued that, while Russia possessed many unique and superior features, Russia's national interest should be aligned to follow the path of Western civilization. Westernizers criticized Russian autocracy and took a more positive view of the rule of law and constitutionalism (Åslund and Kuchins, 15). The Slavophiles were aristocratic romantic intellectuals who believed in the superior nature and historical mission of Russia as uniquely endowed with a culture transcending East and West. They enshrined traditional institutions as models of harmonious social organization and claimed that rationalism, legalism, and constitutionalism, acquired from association with the West, would destroy Russia's natural harmonious development and would be incompatible with the established identity of the Russian state and its people (Larson & Shevchenko, 92). This debate also holds an important consideration for the fact that it has contributed to the emergence of ambivalent attitude towards the West among the Russian public and elite.

Following the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the debate similar to one of Westernizers and Slavophiles has emerged anew. In the spring of 1993, 45% of political elites accepted the notion that Russia should follow "a special Russian path" rather than copy "the experience and achievements of Western civilization" (VTsIOM, 21-22). The elites that identified

the most with a Slavophile definition of Russia and its national interests emphasized Russia's historical past as a culturally unique civilization destined to be distinct from the West (Clunan, 57). They rejected relying on global standards in favour of Soviet or Russian traditions, while aspirations to emulate the West represented a betrayal of Russian history. Some also believed that Russia had a mission to lead the rest of the world. This recollection underscores that many Russian elites saw much that was positive in Russia's history. For them these positive features should serve as guideposts for Russia's future, rather than some non-historical, "unnatural" cultural borrowing from the West (Clunan, 57). Almost equal number of political elites in the 1991-1993 period identified with a Westernizer definition of Russia, and viewed their country's history as demonstrating that Russia's uniqueness had prevented it from attaining its place as a modern, civilized country. In their view, the past taught that democracy and private property were imperatives for development and that "any society which fails to meet them understandably finds itself on the sidelines of world development" (Clunan, 58; VTsIOM, 21-22). Instead of aspiring to a unique Russian path, Russia would have to adopt Western values and institutions. In 1993, approximately 52% of political elites held this general attitude that Russia should solve its problems through application of global Western standards and norms (VTsIOM, 21-22). The political elites of the new Russian state adopted a generally pro-Western foreign policy, which was then disenfranchised and replaced by a more traditional, nationalist thinking. This shift has valid historical connotations that continue to pervade the minds of Russian policy elites (Omelchieva, 6). The lasting influence of these debates in the psyche of Russian foreign policy elites will be examined in the following section.

While it is clear that Russia has historically assumed the status of a great power, it is nonetheless possible to identify additional key aspects of Russian historical identity that continue

to shape the thinking of Russian foreign policy elites to this day, and are important in further analysis. One is Russia's historical sense of insecurity, exacerbated by centuries of war and invasions by its neighbours and other great powers. Second is a sense of triumph, or Russia's historical ability to turn its weaknesses and shortcomings into powerful advantages and leverage against other states. And third, a historically prominent debate about Russia's identity and its role in the world propagated by the Westernizer and Slavophile philosophies has re-emerged and remains relevant in the psychological thinking of the Russian elite of today. Resenting Russia as a potentially revisionist power without considering domestic ideas and historical experiences that guide her foreign policy may mislead Western scholars to anticipate Russia's attempts and gestures toward accommodation with Western nations (Tsygankov, 8). Indeed, ignoring how Russia views itself and its national interests may lead to major misunderstandings about the sources and direction of Russia's foreign policy today.

IV. The Russian Elite

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the search for new Russian identity became deeply contested. Russian policymakers were in an exceptional position to radically redefine their country's foreign policy direction and to promote competing foreign policy visions. Understanding the process by which this occurred, as well as the differing factions among the foreign policy elite is crucial for explaining changes in Russian foreign policy. The biggest challenge presented in Russian foreign policy analysis is the complexity of its institutional structure. The multitude of political interests simultaneously competing for influence in foreign affairs, and a certain degree of disarray and conflict characterize Russia's political and policy environment (Omelicheva, 14-15; Larabee and Karasik, 7). Foreign policy networks in Russia represent a complex web of personal contacts, informal mechanisms, and non-formalized rules of interaction. A particular

foreign policy decision is often the outcome of struggles between political factions and interests groups, as well as clashes between individual representatives of the governing elite (Mankoff, 74). This is further complicated by discrepancies between the official and actual allocation of authority in policy-making in Russia and in the proliferation of special interest groups (Stowe, 49).

Key Actors

Following the Soviet collapse, the old centralized decision-making system has been abolished and institutional weakness contributed to confusion and incoherence in foreign policy. The Kremlin asserted itself as the main hub of foreign policy-making authority in Russia, with the President and his administration, as well as the Prime Minister and his government, forming the core of Russian foreign policy elite (Omelicheva, 15-16). Important decisions were made by a small circle of top officials, with no serious parliamentary oversight or public scrutiny. The lack of clear institutional lines of authority and overarching mechanisms to coordinate policy meant it often became a contest among rival factions who sought to appeal directly to the President over the heads of other bureaucratic actors (Larabee and Karasik, 8).

Competent and effective bureaucracy is essential for a state's foreign policy making. Public servants from the foreign policy institutes are responsible for gathering and analyzing information, drafting proposals, and implementing foreign policy decisions. Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been the most important foreign policy agency in this regard. Staffed with experienced diplomats and trained personnel, it has also been the most visible actor in the foreign affairs of modern Russia (Omelicheva, 16-17). Most decisions were channeled through this agency while its employees in Russia and on overseas appointments carried out the day-to-day functions related to implementing the country's foreign policy. The Ministry continues to serve as the main repository of knowledge and contacts in Russia's foreign affairs. It provides invaluable input on the critical

issues of global and regional politics, thus affecting Russia's foreign policy conduct (Mankoff, 58).

One of the most influential and unique interest groups to emerge in Russia during the 1990s were the active and retired employees of the military, security services, and law enforcement bodies. These so-called "force structures," or *siloviki* also included businessmen and government bureaucrats, who had no connection to military or intelligence units (Omelicheva, 17). *Siloviki* often exercised control and promoted interests of multiple governmental and business agencies from different policy areas, constituting a very diverse and hierarchically structured group that was held together by shared political goals, common interests, and policy agendas (Bremmer and Charap, 85). *Siloviki* supported a highly centralized state which played an active and decisive role in Russia's economy. They prioritized order and stability above everything else, and entrusted Russia's defence and security forces with the task of protecting national security (Omelicheva, 17). In the realm of foreign policy, the *siloviki* stood firmly behind the notion that Russia must return to its great power position in international relations. They viewed the United States and NATO with suspicion and hoped to reinstate Russia's presence in the politics of the former Soviet Union (Bremmer and Charap, 87). This interest group continues to form a powerful and influential core within contemporary Russian foreign policy elites.

The Russian business elite is another influential actor in Russia's domestic politics and foreign affairs. The business elite has become very involved in Russian foreign policy throughout the 1990s, and actively participated in political processes (Omelicheva, 17-18). Foreign policy interests of the business elite have diverse and determined by international competitiveness of the economic sectors they led. Accordingly, segments of the Russian economy that had low international competitiveness, such as agriculture, light and heavy industry, and defense, tended

to be politically and economically the most conservative (Stowe, 51). As competitiveness increased, these sectors became more liberal and pro-Western. Russia’s natural resources and financial sectors had also naturally been the most liberal economic sectors from the standpoint of foreign policy (Stowe, 51-52).

Table 1: Main Actors Among the Russian Foreign Policy Elite

The Kremlin & the State Duma	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Force Structures	Business & Corporations
Political administration and government bureaucracy	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and foreign service bureaucracy	Military, security services, and law enforcement agencies	Large business enterprises and the business elite

Source: Adapted from on Bremmer, Ian and Samuel Charap. “The Siloviki in Putin’s Russia: Who They Are and What They Want” (2007); Larabee, F. Stephen and Theodore W. Krasik. *Foreign and Security Policy Decisionmaking Under Yeltsin* (1997); Mankoff, Jeffrey. *Russian Foreign Policy: Return of Great Power Politics* (2009); Omelicheva, Mariya. “Russian Foreign Policy: A Quest for Great Power Status in a Multipolar World” (2013); and Stowe, Robert. “Foreign Policy Preference of the New Russian Business Elite” (2001).

Upon identifying the significant actors in Russian foreign policy debate to illustrate the complexity of the foreign policymaking environment in post-Soviet Russia, this paper focuses on the core foreign policy elite found in the Kremlin policymaking body. While other elite segments appropriately contribute to the debate over decision-making, it is important to examine the core in order to highlight the extent of the role it plays in shaping foreign policy thinking and deducting foreign policy decisions.

Key Ideologies

Despite the rejection of the ideologically driven past after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the majority of foreign policy elites in “new Russia” shared common memories of the country’s past as a distinct civilization that was not only premised on ideology, but also arose out of Russia’s cultural traditions and history as an authoritarian empire. Shared memories regarding the successes and failures of distinctly Russian and Soviet development produced common aspirations to become a modern and economically advanced country (Tsygankov, “Russia’s Foreign Policy” 87).

These shared memories did not, however, yield shared aspirations as to how to achieve such a status or agreement on whether Russia's traditional uniqueness was positive or negative (Clunan, 57). Common memories of Russia's distinctive, non-Western traditions and efforts to pursue non-Western paths of development produced conflicting aspirations. Some members of the elite viewed Russia's uniqueness as the basis for Russia's future development. Others saw it as the reason for Russia's past failure to achieve the desired level of political and economic development, and a reason to embrace a Western path (Tsygankov, "Russia's Foreign Policy, 88). On this question of what political purpose should provide the basis for new Russia's national identity, both the foreign policy elite and the Russian public remained divided (Clunan, 57). This lack of agreement has been one of the defining features of post-Soviet foreign policy making.

In analysis of Russian foreign policy elites, Clunan makes a distinction between national identity and national self-image. A national identity is a dominant national self-image, one that has succeeded in dominating political discourse. A national self-image, in turn, is a candidate national identity, one of numerous that have not come to dominate their competitors (29). Like national identities, national self-images consist of ideas regarding a state's international status and its political purpose. They entail prescriptions regarding what the country should be and do. Different ideas of the state's status and purpose make up competing national self-images (Clunan, 29-30). For example, supporters of a pro-Western foreign policy orientation hold a unique self-image in the foreign policy debate. Should they come to dominate Russian foreign policy making, their pro-Western self-image should translate into a perception that Russia operates according to a pro-Western national identity. National self-images differ from national identity in that they are the temporally conceptions of what a state is ought to be and how it is ought to behave (Clunan, 31). Usually, there are several national self-images in competition in the political arena at any one time.

If one national self-image succeeds in dominating public discourse over time, it becomes institutionalized not only in the form of domestic laws, regulations, and governmental structures but also as stable expectations of rights, privileges, jurisdictions, obligations, and norms of behaviour in relations with other states (Clunan, 31). The ideas it entails about the state's international status and political purpose become national interests with values to be upheld, defended, and projected. Other national self-images will continue to exist and be debated in the political discourse, but unless they displace the dominant national self-image in appearing to offer historically appropriate and practical means to fulfill aspirations, they are unlikely to be salient for majority of the public and therefore unlikely to shape national interests (Clunan, 31-32).

Upon the dissolution of the USSR, the guiding principles of the Soviet Union likewise disintegrated. In its place, the historical debate between Westernizers and Slavophiles re-emerged, aiming to redefine the assumptions of Russian grand strategy. These two sets of national self-images – Western and Statist – were the primary contenders for defining the Russian identity and the direction of its foreign policy during the 1990s (Mankoff, 40). At a more basic level, each of these foreign policy visions were based on historical iterations of Slavophile and Westernizer thinking. Each national self-image was constructed by examining indicators of elite preferences regarding Russia's political purpose. These derived from elite views on the proper form of political and economic system, territorial boundaries, membership in international organizations, national mission, and Russia's international status (Clunan, 34).

Table 2. National Self-Images in post-Soviet Russia, 1992-2000

Statists	Westernizers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Russia is a great power capable of advancing its own interests and is not subordinate to the West; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Russia is a responsible, Western state committed to compromise and international law;

- Russia is a sovereign, traditional power engaged in establishing a strong state to secure itself;
- Russia is the leading power in its region and dominates its sphere of interests in the former Soviet republics.

- Russia is engaged in developing democracy and market economy as it continues to integrate into the Western world;
- Russia is the leading Western power in liberal institutions and coalitions.

Source: Adapted from on Ambrosio, Thomas W. ; Clunan, Anne L. ; Mankoff, Jeffrey. *Russian Foreign Policy: Return of Great Power Politics* (2009); Tsygankov, Andrei P. *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity* (2010).

The Statist self-image emphasized Russia's positive distinctiveness as a Eurasian country and stressed Russia's great power status by harkening back directly to the appealing aspects of Russia's historic identity as a great power. This has been, arguably, the most influential school of Russia's foreign policy thinking. It was explicit in choosing values of power, stability, and sovereignty over those of freedom and democracy (Tsygankov, "Russia's Foreign Policy" 6). The Statist self-image argued that both the tsarist and Soviet past offer useful lessons in preserving the social and political order through centralized authority, the need for a strong state, as well as a traditionally hegemonic role for Russia in the former Soviet republics (Mankoff, 3). Statists were not willing to sacrifice the historically tested notion of a strong state. They emphasized the notion of external threat to Russia's security, derived from the historical memory of frequent invasions (Tsygankov, "Russia's Foreign Policy" 6). In international relations, this psychological complex of insecurity was exacerbated by the loss of Russia's outer Eastern European and inner Soviet empires. This has led to the belief that Russia continued to be exposed to external pressures and must reclaim its great power status in order to respond to threats anywhere in the world (Ambrosio, 163). Statists called for Russia's foreign policy to be based on material factors where possible, while advancing the classic balance of power politics as a strategy for international affairs. In such international arrangement, Russia would be called upon to assume the role of a stabilizer in the global power balance (Tsygankov, "Russia and the West" 6). Furthermore, Statists argued that

Russia should pursue economic integration with former Soviet republics and seek to preserve its cultural autonomy and political independence from the West, as its role was to be one of the managers of the political system (Monaghan, 64). In addition, Statists also emphasized the notion that the Soviet collapse led to illegitimate loss of Russia's international status even though it had not been defeated in a war, representing a national "humiliation" (Clunan, 114).

The Westernizer national self-image emphasized the adoption of a Western political purpose while at the same time deemphasizing Russia's great power ambitions. The Westernizers viewed the broader Western civilization in North America and Western Europe as the most viable and progressive in the world. Accordingly, they made it a key objective to facilitate Russia's transition into the status of a Western power as the key national mission. They argued that Russia had a "natural" affinity with the West based on such shared values as democracy, human rights, and a free market (Ambrosio, 24). Subsequently, Westernizers sought to foster the creation of democracy and markets in Russia on the premise that the country's democratic future can only be secured through integration into, and cooperation with, the West (Tsygankov, "Russia and the West" 5). In order to formalize and secure this new national identity and foreign policy direction, Westernizers advocated for Russia to seek political inclusion into Western and global institutions, including military alliances (Clunan, 64). This meant that Russian foreign policy was to be guided by a close alliance with Western powers in general and the United States in particular (Ambrosio, 163). In regards to the former Soviet republics, Westernizers warned against relations with former allies and insisted that only by building Western liberal institutions and joining the coalition of likeminded Western states would Russia be able to respond to its threats and overcome its economic and political backwardness (Tsygankov, "Russia and the West" 5). In contrast to Statists, Westernizers compared post-Soviet Russia to postwar Germany and Japan, suggesting that as a

defeated power it needed to recognize its guilt in order to regain standing. In their view, Russia's new status was not as a humiliated power but as a new member of the democratic club that had to deserve its position (Clunan, 114).

In the vacuum of post-Soviet collapse, Russian foreign policy elites extensively and passionately debated the question of what "national idea" was best suited for the new country. The instability in Russian national identity and national interests over this period was caused by a persistent division among Russian political elites about what the source of Russia's distinctiveness ought to be (Clunan, 105). Russian elites shared a common aspiration of attaining the status of a modern and distinctive great power. Accordingly, national self-images that were congruent with the historical aspiration to regain this status were more persuasive than those that were not. It was expected that Russian foreign policy elites were drawn to national self-images that promote Russia's positive distinctiveness and great power status (Clunan, 102). The Statist national self-image proclaimed Russia's national distinctiveness to be in its historical place among the globe's great powers and clamoured to Russia's historical national identity (Tsygankov, "Russia and the West" 55). Accordingly, by the end of the 1990s, the Statist national self-image became the dominant Russian national self-image, as it was broadly considered to be both historically appropriate and effective by foreign policy elites.

V. Orientation Shift in Russian Foreign Policy

Historical memory of what a state's purpose and status were in the past affects collective identity and generates aspirations for its present and future. These historical aspirations shape whether a candidate national identity is perceived as legitimate and whether the candidate will come to define a state's interest in security affairs (Clunan, 10). National identity consists of two pillars: beliefs about a state's appropriate system of governance and mission, what is referred to as

its political purpose; and ideas about a state’s international status. Such ideas entail the state’s historical domestic and international experiences (Clunan, 10).

Table 3: Conceptions of National Identity in Constructivist Theory

National Identity	
Domestic Experiences	International Experiences
Beliefs about a state’s system of governance and mission; political purpose.	Ideas about a state’s international status.

Source: Adapted from Clunan, Anne L. *The Social Construction of Russia’s Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press. 2008. pp. 10-12.

As mentioned previously, members of the foreign policy elite develop aspirations based on common historical memories by introducing competing national images into the political discourse in an effort to define the dominant national identity and interest (Tsygankov, “Russia and the West” 22-23). In this process, the elites argue publicly about the practicality and historical legitimacy of contending national images (Clunan, 10-11; Light, 14). The selection of a national identity consists of assessing it in light of historical aspirations, which are dominant memories of the high and low points in the country’s past. Policy elites also use their reason to evaluate whether national identities are effective or practical guides for the state, given the prevailing international and domestic conditions the country faces at the time (Light, 15). Perceptions of external factors, such as the behaviour of other states or international crises, and the perceived success or failure of persons and policies associated with particular national identities affect whether policy elites will view a particular national image as a practical guide for the state’s interest and as conforming to their historical aspirations (Clunan, 10-11). In the case of Russia, history serves as the source of new aspirations and new interpretations of previous events over time. The national identity that best corresponds with historical aspirations and practicality should come to dominate how foreign policy elites define the Russian national interest.

From the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russian debate on national identity and Russian foreign policy swung from warmly embracing the West and the United States to heatedly rebuking them. Russian foreign policy moved between Russia's incorporation into Western global structures and reviving revisionist and great power aspirations (Clunan, 101). At the outset of this period, Russian foreign policy was consistently and decisively pro-Western, and was committed to following international norms of behaviour. To some extent, Russian interests were subordinated to a desire to demonstrate that the new Russia, despite consistently being an imperial power for much of its history, had made a fundamental break from its aggressive, Soviet past and undertook a "normal foreign policy" (Ambrosio, 164). Certainly, Russia's core interests were perceived to be in making the transition from the Soviet Union to a democratic, market economy best served by a policy of acquiescing on issues that were of lesser importance (Ambrosio, 164). However, this initially dominant national image fell from grace, primarily because its prescription for Russia's international role did not correspond to the great power aspirations that the majority of Russian elites accepted as historically legitimate. The majority of foreign policy elites rejected the second-class status and negative depiction of Russia's historical distinctiveness implicit in the Westernizers self-image. Their aspiration to global great power status and the consequent rejection of Russia's role of a follower reliant on the U.S. and on the West laid the foundation for the subsequent stages of post-Soviet Russian identity politics (Ambrosio, 44). The policy failures attributed to Westernizers and the manner in which they carried out their reforms sealed the fate of the preferred self-image, as Russian political elites found pro-Western direction harmful and at odds with Russia's historical identity and aspirations (Clunan, 107). Over the next decade, political struggles over Russia's post-Soviet national identity – its political purpose and international status

in the post-Cold War world – resulted in the delegitimization of Westernizers and eventual settlement on Statist national self-images as the most legitimate alternative (Clunan, 101-102).

Andrei Kozyrev's Western Affinity

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, a group of liberal, democratic, and pro-Western policymakers in President Boris Yeltsin's cabinet became the principal leaders of Russia's foreign policy. Their primary policies drew heavily on the concept of "New Thinking" that was introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev during the 1980s (Ambrosio, 43; Larson and Shevchenko, 76). In an effort to enhance Soviet self-esteem, Gorbachev attempted to craft a new identity for the USSR as a leader in a new moral international political order, one that would ensure the Soviet Union's long-held aspiration to great power status (Khudoley, 390). Such an identity led to a sharp shift from a national interest premised on the inevitability of East-West conflict to one of cooperation (Blum, 374; Clunan, 12). Gorbachev and the Soviet elite chose the idealistic "New Thinking" over competing foreign policies because it offered a new global mission that would enhance Soviet international status while preserving a distinctive national identity (Larson and Shevchenko, 77). Recognizing that military power alone did not confer political influence or acceptance, the attainment of this new identity would have allowed the Soviet Union, and Russia, to achieve the status of a great power without first attaining a level of economic and technological development comparable to that of the United States; it was what Larson and Shevchenko called "a shortcut to greatness" (78).

Andrei Kozyrev was appointed Foreign Minister in 1991, and rapidly began positioning Russia in a pro-Western trajectory which challenged the idea of Russia's place in the international system as that of a great power which is able to shape the geopolitics of the international system (Ambrosio, 17; Trenin, 273). Kozyrev's premonition was that engaging in pro-Western policies

offered by “New Thinking” would reverse Russia’s relative backwardness by becoming more fully integrated into the world economy led by the developed Western world. Convinced that international recognition and integration with the West would have provided Russia with a “short cut to greatness”, Yeltsin’s policymakers no longer saw the West as a political-ideological or geostrategic adversary, but instead argued that the world was complex and interdependent. States had to cooperate in solving global problems such as the growing gap between rich and poor nations, nuclear war, and ecological disasters (Larson & Shevchenko, 83). In Kozyrev’s view, the loss of empire was not a bad thing, on the contrary, Russia now had the opportunity to set a new course toward prosperity and greater living conditions of its citizens which the Soviet system failed to deliver (Kozyrev, 194; Mankoff, 54). The empire, for all its trappings of grandeur, was a burden to the Russian people and state, and its remnants continued to be a burden (Ambrosio, 43). One of the most distinctive elements of Kozyrev’s thinking was the belief that “the developed countries of the West are Russia’s natural allies.” According to this perspective, Russia was fundamentally a European state which lost its way and needed to return to the “West.” Along these lines, Kozyrev believed that Russia’s relationship with the United States was of primary importance:

“For too many years confrontation with that country has been artificially developed. Today we do not see any reason that could prevent the promotion of fruitful cooperation between Russia and the United States. We do not share the fears voiced in certain quarters that the USA will now be dictating its will to us, emerging as the sole superpower in the world. This approach could lead to a recurrence of old stereotypes. We do not threaten anyone and we believe that no developed democratic civil society can pose a threat to us.” (Kozyrev, 197).

As for policy prescriptions, Westernizers under Kozyrev advocated that Russia’s integration into Western economic (International Monetary Fund, Group of 7, European Union) and possibly even military (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) institutions should occur rapidly and without regard for Russia’s historical status as a great power (Kozyrev, 201). They considered Russia’s historical

quest for great power status to be a root cause of its previous authoritarian regimes and suppression of its people. As such, they rejected efforts to uphold this status, as it would delay, even cripple, Russia's development as a Western market democracy (Clunan, 109; Kozyrev, 202). For Westernizers, the past held little of legitimate value because of Russia's autocratic traditions and the messianic and militaristic totalitarianism of Soviet rule. Communist messianism led to "expansion and reckless confrontation with the outside world" as well as the exhaustion of the economy (Kozyrev, 201). Russia was to reject that past and focus on its national interest in becoming a market democracy. This would have involved a national self-image and identity management strategy that stipulated unadulterated adoption of Western institutions, values, and cooperation with the West. For Westernizers, national interest could only be achieved by adopting the positive and distinctive features of Western countries and rejecting Russian traditions because they were the source of its negative self-esteem (Ambrosio, 44; Clunan, 110).

Despite their initial dominance, these radical Westernizers failed to lock in their Western self-image as the foundation for Russia's new identity and its national interests. Kozyrev's foreign policy concept came under substantial pressure from a wide swath of the foreign policy elite. At its core, the critics made three key charges against his policies (Kozyrev, 198). First, the Kremlin's foreign policy did not sufficiently take into account Russia's unique interests, but rather subordinated Russia to the interests of the West (Ambrosio, 81-82; Clunan, 109). The perception developed by the elites was that the Kremlin was acquiescing to the whims of the hegemonic coalition in order to appear "civilized." Second, the opposition argued that Russia has historically been and should remain a great power. Russia's status was foremost on the minds of many critics and the perception of Russia as a junior partner to the West undercut Moscow's standing on the world stage (Clunan, 111). Finally, the critics accused Kozyrev of ignoring the former Soviet

Union. At the very least, the critics believed that Russia’s immediate security interests laid within that neighbouring region. Unless Russia took a more active role there, conflicts throughout the region would eventually undermine the country’s transition to democracy and a market economy (Ambrosio, 82). Statists in particular believed that establishing a dominion over Soviet successor states should be the ultimate aim of Russian foreign policy.

Figure 1: Key Reasons for Kozyrev’s Downfall



Source: Adapted from Ambrosio, Thomas. *Challenging America’s Global Preeminance: Russia’s Quest for Multipolarity* (2005); Clunan, Anne L. *The Social Construction of Russia’s Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests* (2008), Tsygankov, Andrei P. *Russia’s Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity* (2010).

The issue was whether, in becoming more Western, Russia would lose the positive features that had distinguished it from other countries: its great power status and special role in the Eurasian heartland of the former Soviet Union. The Statist coalition suggested that being like the West was not a sufficient source of national self-esteem for Russia. Given its notable history, the national identity of new Russia required distinguishing the country in positive ways from the West (Clunan, 112; Light, 44). This marked a turn in the Russian political discourse from Western-oriented national self-images toward a more assertive advocacy of Russia’s “natural” rights and roles

abroad (Light, 44). Given their aspiration for international status, Russian foreign policy elites soon found that following the West's lead was inappropriate at best and humiliating at worst. The majority of political elites opposed the second-class status entailed in the Westernist self-image. Regarded as consistent with Westernizer's overtly pro-American foreign policy orientation, this second-class status led many political elites to distance themselves from pro-Western viewpoints (Clunan, 113). Westernizers failed to persuade political elites that their national self-image offered Russia a historically appropriate international status and viable political purpose. They failed to respond adequately to charges that their program undermined Russia's legitimate status as a great power. Their economic policies exacerbated an already bad situation and seemed ineffective and damaging in post-Soviet conditions, while their political prescriptions for openness and democracy were undermined by the administration's unwillingness to share power with more moderate and Statist elements in the Kremlin (Clunan, 141).

Paradigm Shift

The initial foreign policy paradigm that emerged under Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev in the early 1990s was the embodiment of Westernizer thinking. It sought to discard the policies of the Soviet past and embark upon a close relationship with the United States and its allies, thereby advancing the idea that Russia was a naturally democratic country and an ally to the West. It was also a country that planned to forego its great power ambitions in order to assume the role of a developed Western democracy (Clunan, 110; Tsygankov, "Russia and the West" 20). As the decade progressed, the destabilizing outcomes of the Westernizer reforms and the authoritarian rule of the Yeltsin administration significantly undermined the legitimacy of Western national self-image among the Russian elite and public, preventing them from dominating the political discourse long enough to become Russia's national identity (Lukin, 35).

Perceived failures of Westernizers and their reforms led to a rapid consolidation of Statist self-images in elite and public debate. Domestically, the failures were twofold. First, the reckless manner in which the Yeltsin administration sought to push through rapid political and economic change undermined the democratic and market credentials of the Westernizers. Economic reforms, widely perceived to have been masterminded by the West, imposed hardships on the population and failed to create a society of prosperity of abundance that had been naively anticipated (Kosova, 5; Shlapentokh, 208; Tolz, 126). Second, Yeltsin often acted in an autocratic fashion, appointing the Prime Minister and others to cabinet positions all without consulting the elected legislature. The administration was effectively avoiding compromise, attempting reform through diktat, and refusing to share power with the legislature (Lukin, 36; Shlapentokh, 208-209). This turned away many Russian political elites from the Westernizer claim that Western-style democracy was realistically possible in Russia. Yeltsin's style prompted disappointed or offended former allies, prompting them to unite with his main ideological opponents, the Statists (Shlapentokh, 209). In a May 1993 poll, 87% of Russian political elites believed that interactions between Yeltsin's government and the legislature were destabilizing the country (VTsIOM, 27; Kosova, 6; Lukin, 36). In the end, the illegitimacy of Yeltsin's tactics had the effect of tarnishing the image of Westernizers for both elites and the public.

In foreign policy, Russian elites continued to debate whether or not the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 represented a historical "rupture" that had caused past identities to become obsolete, as recollections of the former might of the USSR continued to hinder the identification of Russia's proper niche in the international system (Clunan, 109). Westernizers were accused of betraying Russia's national interests in pursuing policies unbecoming to Russia's historical status. Indeed, the Russian foreign policy elites viewed Kozyrev's pro-Western policy as historically

illegitimate, idealistic, and harmful because it meant denying Russia’s historical traditions and unique role in world politics (Ambrosio, 169; Clunan, 110). They charged the Westernizers of the early post-Soviet period with not being realistic enough and with “blindly following the West’s lead” when this did not coincide with Russia’s interests (Lukin, 38; Tsygankov, “Russia and the West” 21). For many elites, the process of Westernization meant denying and rejecting Russia’s past strengths and abandoning its history as a great power, which involved the exercise of special rights and responsibilities in the former Soviet republics and Eurasia (Ambrosio, 169; Tsygankov, “Mastering space” 108). Accordingly, the former Soviet republics, were seen as “countries offering Russia optimum chances of building up real economic power in accordance with its long-term interests as a nation-state” (Clunan, 108; Lukin, 39; Tsygankov, “Russia and the West” 21).

Table 4. Goals of post-Soviet Foreign Policy, 1992-2000

Kozyrev’s Ministry	Primakov’s Ministry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russia is a good partner of the Western powers and the United States; • Russia is a responsible state committed to compromise and international law; • Russia is a county willing to forgo short-term goals for long-term benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russia is a great power which leads the international world order; • Russia is the leading power in its region and dominates its sphere of interests in the former Soviet republics; • Russia advances its own interests and does not subordinate them to the West.

Source: Adapted from on Ambrosio, Thomas. *Challenging America’s Global Preeminance: Russia’s Quest for Multipolarity* (2005); Clunan, Anne L. *The Social Construction of Russia’s Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests* (2008), Tsygankov, Andrei P. *Russia’s Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity* (2010).

The conflict between the Westernizers and the Statists was not only an elite conflict, but a reflection of a much deeper fight to define Russia and its place in the world. With a wide range of foreign policy elites arguing that President and his Foreign Minister had abandoned Russia’s unique interests and had effectively subordinated to the United States, Yeltsin and Kozyrev became more sensitive to criticism and demands of the elite (Clunan, 111; Tsygankov, “Russia

and the West” 22). While the Westernizers foreign policy concept was an attempt to define Russian political culture, it ultimately could not find a significant enough domestic constituency to emerge as dominant. The costs of Russian prestige in appearing subordinate to American interests were simply unacceptable (Ambrosio, 165; Tsygankov, “Russia and the West” 22). Critics of the initial Kozyrev foreign policy focused on the unequal relationship between the United States and Russia in order to force the Kremlin to shift away from a pro-Western foreign policy (Ambrosio, 168; Clunan, 112). The assumption of the critics, however, was that whatever was not in the interest of Russia as a “great power” was an unacceptable acquiescence to the United States, which undermined Russia’s global status (Ambrosio, 167). Moreover, this foreign policy was not one befitting a great power that Russia should be striving to become. Consequently, radical changes in Russian foreign policy were implemented. The opposition to the Yeltsin-Kozyrev administration was defined by formulating a policy that avoided direct confrontation with the U.S. and the West, but also sought to maintain Russia’s great power status and sphere of influence within the former Soviet space (Trenin, 41). The consolidation of this alternative grand strategy occurred with the elevation of Yevgeny Primakov to the position of Foreign Minister in January 1996. The so-called “Primakov Doctrine” solidified the Statists’ hold over Russian foreign policy and held that primary problem in the international system generally, and for Russian interests in particular, was America-dominated unipolarity (Ambrosio, 165; Tsygankov, “Russia and the West” 21). In its place, Primakov proposed an alternative international structure: multipolarity. Russia’s quest for multipolarity was aimed at creating conditions in which Russia could effectively resist American military, geopolitical, and economical encroachment, as well as secure its status as a great power which “mattered” internationally (Ambrosio, 166; Trenin, 44). Over a relatively short period of time, Russia returned to a version of its historic political culture of great power status. The ability

of the Statist foreign policy vision to emerge quickly as a general consensus among the Russian foreign policy elite illustrates that there were underlying themes which resisted not only the wishes of some foreign policy decision makers, but also the dramatically new international environment in which Russia found itself (Ambrosio, 172).

Yevgeny Primakov's Multipolar Global Order

By the mid-1990s, the Westernizers have been discredited for ignoring Russia's past greatness, for undermining the power and prestige of the Russian state, and for being incapable of realization in Russian conditions (Clunan, 117). Most of its proponents were removed from office and replaced with Statists. Consequently, Russian foreign and domestic policy shifted toward positions more in line with Statist national self-images (Clunan, 117; Tsygankov, "Russia and the West" 53). The emergence of Yevgeny Primakov in the mid-1990s as foreign minister and later as prime minister returned Russia to the themes of the past and placed larger importance on Russia's great power status. The "Primakov Doctrine," as it came to be known, did not require direct confrontation with the United States, the leader of the Western world, but rather the creation of a more equal relationship between Moscow and Washington (Primakov, 211; Tsygankov, "Russia and the West" 53). Primakov's notion of multipolarity was not directly confrontational. It was inherently defensive in nature, as the ultimate aim of multipolarity was to resist American domination of the international system so that Russia was not place in the role of a junior partner in its relationship with the United States nor was the United States be able to dictate unilateral outcomes which affected Russian security interests (Ambrosio, 15; Primakov, 210). Joining the West was no longer viewed as a feasible Russian interest, because a proper Russian interest was increasingly associated with preserving Russia's autonomy and independence in international affairs (Tsygankov, "Russia and the West" 53). What mattered most to Primakov was constructing

a global system of checks and balances to constrain an over-assertive United States, which emerged from the Cold War as the most powerful nation in the world.

Yevgeny Primakov appealed directly to the Russian foreign policy elite as he epitomized the great power aspiration with his Eurasian statist definition of Russia as global great power in a multipolar world. Primakov based his foreign policy on the premise that “Russia, despite present-day difficulties, was and remains a great power. Her policy in the outside world must correspond to this status.” Russia’s foreign policy orientation toward the West was to be based on “equality,” not on “a partnership where one leads and another is led,” as Primakov declared (Ambrosio, 15; Primakov, 211). Primakov adopted a strategy relative to the United States in order to gain domestic and international recognition of Russia’s status. The national interest was defined as maintaining Russia’s global status by repeatedly pointing out Russia’s Eurasian geography and historical role in both Europe and Asia as a great power (Clunan, 127; Primakov, 212). Most importantly, Primakov sought to gain recognition mainly through symbolic assertions of Russia’s status (Tsygankov, “Russia and the West” 56). Primakov and his successors promoted the notion of European security, continuously used the UN Security Council to remind the world of Russia’s status as one of the five global powers with a veto, and attempted to balance against the United States through strategic arms control (Primakov, 212).

Primakov’s stance epitomized the political elite aspiration regarding great power status. Primakov made his social creativity strategy of a “multipolar world” – in which Russia played the starring role as system stabilizer and upholder of international law – the calling card of Russian foreign policy (Primakov, 213). He depicted the United States, with its emphasis on humanitarian intervention, democracy promotion, and use of force without United Nations authorization, as acting in a manner unbecoming a great power, as it was not fulfilling its duty to stabilize world

politics. Russia, in contrast, was acting as a status quo great power should, upholding international order and the established rules of a great power concert system. To that end, Primakov pursued sustained efforts to counteract perceived U.S. efforts to erode Russia's status (Mankoff, 58; Primakov, 214). Primakov also made Russia's dominance in the former Soviet republics a key priority of foreign policy. Russia stepped up its opposition to NATO expansion and continued to pursue efforts to push for an alternative security framework in place of NATO (Clunan, 128; Primakov, 214). For conservatives, he represented the face of past Soviet power and prestige. Above all, Primakov was perceived as restoring Russia's dignity on the international stage, and his strategy therefore pleased many Statist elites.

Primakov believed that Russia was, and must be recognized by the international community as, a great power. This status implied that Russia was to be seen as a major power center in the international community and was to be shown a level of respect befitting such status. Consequently, Russia had to have its interests taken into account by other great powers and was to not hesitate in acting when its interests were deemed to have been violated (Ambrosio, 79-80; Primakov, 209). The guiding principles of Russian foreign policy were to be Russia's objective national interests, and not some ideological allegiance to the values of the West. Under these assumptions, Russia would have had an "independent" foreign policy and would not follow the lead of the United States, or any other great power nor was Russia to be dictated to by others (Ambrosio, 81). Nevertheless, relations with the West were extremely important. However, these relations had to be based on the notion of an "equal partnership" between Russia and the Western powers. Primakov vocally subscribed to the view that Russia had to "find herself as a great power" by playing the crucial role as a balancer within the international system: "Russia in her transition

from the bipolar world to the multipolar one should play the role of a counterweight to the negative trends that are appearing in international affairs” (Ambrosio, 80; Primakov, 210).

Figure 2: Key Reasons for Primakov’s Rise



Source: Adapted from on Ambrosio, Thomas. *Challenging America’s Global Preeminance: Russia’s Quest for Multipolarity* (2005); Clunan, Anne L. *The Social Construction of Russia’s Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests* (2008), Tsygankov, Andrei P. *Russia’s Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity* (2010).

The decline of Westernizers’ influence did not represent Russian policy elite’s agreement on the country’s national identity. Instead, it produced a consensus on a partial identity of Russia as a modern and distinctive great power (Clunan, 142). Primakov argued that through careful diplomacy and a willingness to stand up for its interests, Russia would achieve its goals despite the imbalances of power between Russia and the United States. The Statist foreign policy elites held on to more traditional conceptions of Russian identity and saw Westernizers as yielding Russia’s security interests by embracing a junior partner status. Promotion of global multipolarity was seen by Statist elites as a way for Russia to bridge its great power aspirations and its relative weakness. Under a system of multipolarity, American power would be checked by an institutional and systematic framework of great powers, each committed to resisting the hegemony of any one

state and to operating by consensus (Clunan, 142; Mankoff, 58). The latter point was especially attractive to Russian policymakers, as any decision-making system which operated by consensus disproportionately benefited the weak since the strong would need their consensus to act (Ambrosio, 170; Clunan, 143). The success of the Statist national identity represented the victory of the status quo over the ones that predisposed Russian policymakers to favour increased cooperation with the West.

VI. Russia and the West

This section seeks to examine the episodes of misunderstanding and highlight failed cooperation attempts in Russia-West relations under the auspices of psychological thinking of the Russian foreign policy elite in relation to its position and status versus the United States. Examples of such tensions abound, and both sides bear responsibility for the clash in perceptions. What Moscow viewed as successful advancements of its honorable objectives – which have included security, welfare, and independence – Western nations occasionally perceived as unilateralist and revisionist behaviour (Monaghan, 67). Conversely, what the West sometimes viewed as honourable Russian policy, Moscow frequently considered it as something that compromised its national priorities. Ever since Kozyrev's Western affinity, Russian elites and public felt they made too many concessions for the purpose of gaining recognition by the Western powers (Tsygankov, "Mastering space in Eurasia" 6).

Russian relations with the United States are critical for defining both Russia's grand strategy and its perceptions of the international system. The United States has emerged from the Cold War as the sole superpower, possessing pre-eminence in political, military, and economic supremacy. The West's main task, as its leaders saw it, was to guarantee the stability of the emerging new world order (Mankoff, 97). Very few policymakers put any serious thought into

how to integrate Russia into that order. From the rhetoric of victory in the Cold War and the “end of history” in the early 1990s, the Western political community was becoming increasingly anxious about its ability to preserve peace and stability throughout the globe (Fukuyama, 16). The new ethnic conflicts in Europe and the former USSR, the perceived militant threats from the Middle East, and environmental and demographic pressures from Asia and Africa seemed to pose greater risks (Huntington, 29; Tsygankov, “Russia and the West” 180). With the growing awareness of new dangers came fear and suspicion of the non-Western world, which were best summarized by Samuel Huntington’s thesis of the “clash of civilization” (Huntington, 45; Mankoff, 97). Just as Francis Fukuyama once expressed the West’s optimism, even euphoria, about the future world order, Huntington expressed the growing feelings of anxiety and frustration (Fukuyama, 16; Huntington, 45). He insisted that, instead of expanding globally, the West should go on the defensive and prepare to fight for its cultural values in coming clashes with non-Western civilizations (Huntington, 21). In this new intellectual context, Russia, with its authoritarian past and politically unstable present, was often viewed as a source of threat rather than a strategic partner (Tsygankov, “Russia and the West” 180).

Just as the United States shaped the structure of the post-Cold War international system, Russia's relationship with the United States helped to define Moscow's position within that international system and its range of policy options (Ambrosio, 15; Berryman, 532). Moreover, for nearly fifty years during the Cold War, the US-USSR relationship was the defining characteristic of Soviet foreign policy. It was no surprise that relations between Moscow and Washington became prominent in Russia's attempt to define its post-Soviet foreign policy (Ambrosio, 16). Russian foreign policy emphasized the importance of being perceived as an equal partner with the dominant superpower, the United States, and the Western pole of the global

multipolar order in general. In principle, this need was translated most evidently in areas of European Security and the UN Security Council, as well as into the concept of strategic parity in the sphere of nuclear strategic arms between Russia and the United States (Ambrosio, 17; Mankoff, 98-99). The better that American and Western policymakers can understand the forces shaping Russia's self-defined identity and interests, the better that they will be able to forecast the direction Russia's policy is likely to take, and the better that their position will be to influence that policy in a more cooperative direction.

Given Russia's long history of seeking to be a great power and the Soviet Union's position as the superpower peer to the United States, it was not surprising that Russian national self-images held that Russia belonged to the group of great powers (Clunan, 47). In their view, Russia's rights, privileges, and obligations as a great power were not sufficiently respected by the Western great powers, particularly the United States. The Westernizers blamed Russia's negative status in the group of great powers on domestic factors, such as Russia's lack of Western political and economic credentials and the destructive legacy of the Soviet militarized economy. Integration into the West was seen as instrumental to achieving Russia's desired status in the great power group (Clunan 48; Tsygankov, "Mastering space in Eurasia" 6).

The Statist collective held the view that assimilation is not possible, as such strategy was inappropriate and impractical for Russia in light of historical traditions and the behaviour of the other great powers and Western countries (Clunan, 75; Light, 14). Following the Soviet collapse, Statists sought to reverse the status relationship with the United States and the West. Statists accepted Russia's role in Eurasia, demanding from both domestic and international audiences social recognition of Russia's status as a great power with special rights and responsibilities and its place in Western-dominated institutions. Primakov's strategy was to invert the relationship

between the U.S. and Russia. Rather than conceding Russia inferiority in a unipolar world order by the U.S., Primakov declared his doctrine of a “multipolar world” in which Russia held the superior distinction of being a genuine status quo great power seeking to restrain its fellow great power, the United States, for its own good and prevent destabilization international relations through the pursuit of ideological goals (Ambrosio, 88; Primakov, 210). Primakov cast the U.S. as the negative actor acting in a revisionist and dangerous manner, while Russia was acting responsibly, as a great power should, to uphold international order and restrain its fellow great power from going too far (Primakov, 211). His creativity was to ignore the material dimensions of great power status, by which criteria the United States was a superpower, and to create a new dimension based on responsibility and pragmatism as the defining dimension on which Russia’s status and the status of all great powers would be judged (Primakov, 212; Tsygankov, “The frustrating partnership” 347). In this case, the desire to create a positive and distinctive role for Russia in which its status was equal to the U.S., but using as a criterion the attributes of a truly responsible and reliable stabilizer of world politics rather than material capabilities (Clunan, 75-76; Light, 15).

The recipe for success in sustaining both Russia’s internal and European honour claims for Moscow was to present its values and strategic vision in a way that does not principally contradict those of Western nations. The ability of Western states to engage Moscow today will only be successful when they acknowledge Russia’s distinctive values, interests, and right to develop in accordance with its internal perceptions of honour. To succeed, neither side should define its objectives in terms of superiority over the other (Tsygankov, “Mastering space in Eurasia” 7).

VII. Importance of European Security

Following end of the Cold War, Europe underwent a transformation in redefining its security interests. Ethnic conflict, humanitarian crises, extension of the liberal zone of peace, and transnational terrorism effectively replaced power balancing as the primary security concerns for Europeans after 1991. Despite the changed security environment in Europe, Russian political elites did not share the Europeans' new definitions of security interests (Clunan, 145). As the Europeans and Americans were focused on post-Cold War security tasks, NATO underwent a transformation from an anti-Soviet alliance to take on humanitarian and counterterrorism roles, facilitating democratization of the post-communist countries through enlargement of European security institutions (Mandelbaum, 10; Trenin, 303). The United States emerged as the only true global power, with incomparable credibility to influence developments anywhere in the world, particularly in the former Eastern Bloc. For Russian political elites, however, the continued existence and eventual expansion of NATO became the central issue in post-Soviet foreign policy debate in the latter half of the 1990s (Clunan, 145; Trenin, 303). Russian policymakers viewed NATO as a Cold War relic and thought that it should be retired as the Warsaw Pact had been in 1991. The organization represented everything that Russian policymakers and the Russian public feared or resented about the post-Cold War order: American domination of the international system and the dramatic decline of Moscow's power within the Soviet Union's sphere of influence (Ambrosio, 110; Mandelbaum, 11).

Given the historical nature of the Cold War rivalry still fresh in the minds of many Russian elites, their country's loss of military power, territory, and strategic depth after 1989 was exacerbated by the proposed NATO's expansion. The Russians, who had come to regard the neutrality of their former allies as a protective buffer between their Western ex-adversaries-turned-

partners and themselves, became deeply worried. They also believed that they had been cheated by the West, whose leaders had given private and non-binding promises that the NATO alliance would not move eastward (Trenin, 304). As a result, the Russian foreign policy elites and public began to perceive the West and the Alliance as a genuine security threat and were preparing to respond accordingly (Clunan, 147; Mandelbaum, 10). With the loss of a considerable portion of territory, population, and military infrastructure in 1991, Russian political elites felt threatened by NATO both in military terms by in status terms. Continued NATO expansion was perceived as increasing Russia’s isolation from Europe, while at the same time directly projecting conventional military power in the former Soviet sphere of influence (Clunan, 153). Traditionally a great power and a former superpower, Russian perception of its military weakness was exacerbated by the radical decrease in Russian military spending, armed forces personnel, and conventional military hardware from 1990 to 2004, as exemplified by Table 5. Therefore, Russia has been seeking to correct this new military imbalance in Europe, where Russia was outnumbered and outgunned by NATO by a ratio of 4:1. The possibilities of NATO for power projection deep into European Russia were perceived seriously by the Russian elite (Ambrosio, 111; Clunan, 152; Defence Intelligence Agency, 11; Trenin, 290).

Table 5: Russian Military Power, 1990-2004

Military Spending		Armed Forces		Military Hardware	
1990	2004	1990	2004	1990	2004
\$171 billion	\$26.1 billion	2.6 million	900,000	52%	37%

Source: Adapted from Clunan, Anne L. *The Social Construction of Russia’s Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests* (2008), pp. 150-153.

In addition to adapting to the new environment in Europe and new definitions of security, Russian foreign policy elites perceived European security interests in relation to historical aspirations of

reclaiming Russia's global status as a great power (Clunan, 146). With the rise of Yevgeny Primakov to the Foreign Ministry in 1996, Russian policy on European security became reactive to perceived Western efforts to undermine Russia's aspirations regarding its global status. Russia's interests in European security were driven by Russia's aspirations to be an independent global power whose interests were taken into account by the Western powers (Primakov, 208). Russian political elites still viewed Russia's traditional status as a European and global great power as highly legitimate, while Russian participation in world affairs was viewed as crucial to its prestige and status as something more than just a regional power (Mandelbaum, 9). This perception was exacerbated by the perception of Kremlin elites that Russia held a secondary status to the United States (Clunan, 147). Rejecting this status of a junior partner was particularly important in Europe, as it was in this region that Russia and then the Soviet Union historically became a peer, at least in the eyes of the Russian public, to the leading great powers of the day (Tsygankov, "The frustrating partnership" 348). Russian policy elites framed European security in terms of Russia's global status, which in turn was seen as dependent on its status as an equal partner to the United States in NATO. Yevgeny Primakov made pursuit of Russia's global status the centerpiece of his foreign policy from 1996 to 1999 (Tsygankov, "The frustrating partnership" 348). Under Primakov, Russian emphasis on its interest in global status maintenance was largely manifested in incessant assertions that "Russia is a great power" on the part of the government and elites (Primakov, 208). In turn, Russia attempted to bind Western and American power in Europe by limiting its engagement through a cooperative framework offered by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

Russian elite have long called for a common and comprehensive European security architecture, which would include Russia and eliminate "blocs" from the region. This architecture

was needed to maintain Russia's historical status as a global great power by effectively balancing Western, particularly American, ambitions in Europe by bounding Western action in a common European security framework. This would allow Russia to level the playing field with the American hegemon (Ambrosio, 112; Borawski, 402). Russian elites hoped to accomplish this through an attempt to replace NATO with the OSCE, which was established during the Cold War as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), a forum for discussion between the Soviet bloc and the West (OSCE, 1996). In 1990, the CSCE adopted the Paris Charter for a New Europe, which charged the organization with taking a leading role in managing the transition from the Cold War and dealing with crises throughout the continent. In 1994, the CSCE was transformed into the OSCE, with an expanded mission and more permanent institutions. The benefits to Russia under an OSCE-dominant Europe were three-fold. First, under a dominant OSCE, American-led NATO, and thus the security architecture of Europe, would be replaced with an OSCE Security Council which would include Russia, and possibly a formal veto. Under such a system, NATO would become just one tool at the disposal of the OSCE, and NATO would need to be fundamentally transformed from a military alliance into a peacekeeping/making organization operating under the mandate of the UNSC and the OSCE (Borawski, 404, OSCE, 1996). Second, although the OSCE fostered coordination of policies toward crises and conflicts in Europe, the OSCE was not a military alliance. As a result, the implications of the military imbalance between Russia and the Western powers would be dramatically lessened. In addition, the OSCE lacked enforcement ability and did not include any formal structures akin to NATO's military committee (Borawski, 404-405; OSCE, 1996). Finally, the ascendancy of the OSCE would remove the likelihood that NATO would expand. Russia's inability to stop NATO expansion raised questions about Russia's international and regional status (Ambrosio, 113; Borawski, 405).

As plans for NATO expansion were confirmed by American policymakers, Primakov stated bluntly that NATO expansion was not in Russia's interests. He dismissed NATO claims that it was interested in transforming itself to fit a new mission for a "post-confrontation" era. Ultimately, NATO's core mission remained unchanged: the organization remained a military alliance focused eastward (Ambrosio, 112; Primakov, 216-217). While Primakov dismissed that NATO was poised "to strike a direct blow at Russia," the fact remained that possible expansion would mean that the biggest military grouping in the world, which has an enormous offensive potential, would come in direct proximity of Russian borders. The dispute over NATO enlargement was the defining episode in the post-Cold War security and political relationship between Russia and the West. To the Russian military, Central European membership in NATO above all gave an advantageous forward position to the Alliance vis-à-vis Russia. They feared Western nuclear and conventional deployments and extensive use of its infrastructure would enable NATO to strike anywhere in European Russia (Trenin, 133-134). Russian foreign policy elites subscribed to much the same opinion. Primakov went on to reject the notion of a partnership between Russia and NATO since Russian interests would not be secured under these conditions, no matter how much the United States attempted to make NATO expansion diplomatically palatable. Instead of NATO expansion, Primakov was open to a "post-confrontational" NATO in which the alliance would remain where it was, and both NATO and Russia would jointly guarantee the inviolability of European borders (Ambrosio, 113; Primakov 217).

VIII. Importance of the UN Security Council

What distinguished Russia from most other countries is the degree to which it used multilateral mechanisms to project influence, status, and moral legitimacy. Beginning in the mid-1990s, Russian policymakers undertook a series of policies aimed at constructing global

multipolarity. One of the approaches in promoting this doctrine included advancing international institutions, such as the United Nations, as a way to enhance Russia's own power by restraining Western, particularly American, unilateralism. Given Russia's dire socio-economic and military problems at the time, internal balancing to dramatically increase the strategic state assets of Russia itself was not a realistic option (Ambrosio, 100, Tsygankov, "Russia's Foreign Policy" 102). Therefore, the Kremlin focused on upholding the power of the United Nations as the key agency of dealing and enforcing the rules of international conduct as a way to check American hegemony and enhance its ability to secure Russian interests (Tsygankov, "Russia's Foreign Policy" 101). With its status as a successor state of the Soviet Union, Russia remained a permanent member of the UN Security Council and retained an absolute veto on the body. Russia planned to exercise its voting power as it saw fit, while at the same time contributing to world peace and stability as a member of the world's "concert of great powers" (Ambrosio, 117, Makoff, 87). In practical terms, the new foreign policy direction strove to exert disproportionate influence over American foreign policy if the U.S. was forced to act through the Security Council on all, or most, serious international issues. It was also seen as a legitimate tool of diplomacy and power balancing while avoiding confrontation with the United States (Tsygankov, "Russia's Foreign Policy" 102).

The UN, and in particular the Security Council, was seen by Primakov and his supporters as means by which Russia could restrain American unilateralism. In 1996, Primakov stated that "the United Nations [is] the key mechanism capable of ensuring a smooth transition from the bipolar and confrontational world to a multipolar and democratic one" (Ambrosio, 116). By forcing the U.S. to act through the Security Council, and therefore be made subject to a formal Russian veto, it was hoped that Moscow could increase its leverage over Washington and constrain America's foreign policy options (Tsygankov, 102). Many Russian foreign policy elites have seen

the United Nations, and especially the Security Council, as a possible cornerstone of multipolarity. They expressed support for this initiative, viewing the use of the Security Council, as well as other multilateral fora, as one of the more direct way to counter American hegemony:

“The new architecture of international security should correspond to the multipolarity of today’s world. The three building materials for this architecture are essentially already in place. They are a well-developed system of international organizations headed by the United Nations, influential regional groupings, and the tightly woven fabric of bilateral relations between states” (Primakov, 216).

A large number of Kremlin elites perceived NATO as a cover for American power and expressed particular concern over the expansion of this alliance into the former Eastern bloc (Mankoff, 89). Russia’s attempt to enhance the power of the United Nations was in effect an admission of weakness on its part. Since Russia was no longer capable of effectively balancing the United States through material forces, it needed to seek alternative means to increase its own freedom of action and to block American influence in areas of security interest to Russia. As Russian elites perceived their country as a major power, a permanent seat on the UN Security Council was seen as the right step towards Russia’s renewed great power status by being able to use the institution to shape and constrain interpretations of law and international norms in the wider community of states, as well as in Russia’s own neighbourhood (Tsygankov, 103). This policy was inherently pragmatic and did not present a true embrace of United Nations as an end in itself (Ambrosio, 101). Often, Russia’s relationship with the UN Security Council was inherently hypocritical, as Russia wanted to use this institution to further its own means but refused to allow the same organization to restrict Russia’s freedom of action. Oftentimes, Russia found that in order to restrain the U.S. collective action through an institutional framework under the UN Security Council, Russian geopolitical ambitions had to be similarly constrained by the same rules (Tsygankov, 102).

For the Kremlin elite and decision-makers, the best kind of multilateralism was encapsulated by the UN Security Council, and especially proceedings involving the Permanent Five (P5) members. Along with the institutionalization of strategic parity in nuclear weapons, the P5 was the most visible symbol of Russia's formal equality with the United States and, by extension, its "permanent" status as a global power (Lo, 75). To the Kremlin, the P5 represented the most effective means of limiting or counterbalancing American power, after nuclear weapons have lost much of their utility as tools of geopolitical influence. It converted a largely abstract proposition of "the multipolar order" into a substantive reality, albeit in a very particular and narrow dimension (Ambrosio, 102, Mankoff, 89). Exercising the veto, or better still, the implicit threat of its use, was seen as a key guarantee of Russia's continuing centrality in global affairs. Numerous times, the power of the veto has not only given Russia a prominent voice, but also but also contributed to the paralysis of Western policymaking (Lo, 75). The importance of the UN Security Council as an instrument of Russian foreign policy meant that Moscow attempted to shut down discussions of significant reforms to its structure and operation of the organization. In particular, it opposed the extension of veto powers beyond the P5. The reasons for its stance are logical, as attempts to make the UNSC more representative of contemporary international security would have undercut Russia's special status and the influence it derived from this (Lo, 76, Mankoff, 88). Such a concern was all the more pertinent as it would have substantively challenged Russia's status in international politics. In the hypothetical event of a reformed Council, Russia would find it very difficult to pretend that it was the global equal of the United States and China. The comparisons would instead be with India, Brazil, Germany, and Japan, which was unthinkable for a country that was one of the only two superpowers almost three decades ago (Lo, 76).

The Russian foreign policy elite has also viewed international institutions, especially the UN Security Council, as main vehicles for promoting the projection of Russian great power globally and reinforcing its international status. Russian elites understood well that influence and status are intertwined with legitimacy (Lo, 73). Therefore, while it may or may not have been desirable for a particular multilateral process to achieve results, participation, no matter how formalistic, was invariably essential (Lo, 73). Primakov's insistence on upholding the power of the United Nations as the key agency for defining and enforcing the rules of international conduct can also be understood in terms of preserving the principles of fairness and equality in world politics (Tsygankov, "Russia and the West" 186). Moscow supported "the central coordinating role of the UN as the principal organization regulating international relations" precisely because this ensured collective decision-making by the major powers on the basis of equality (Allison, 1256). The minister was also careful not to isolate Russia from the mainstream international politics centered at the UN Security Council. Russia cloaked its actions in legal language with the aim of fostering a reputation as a lawful actor. (Allison, 1258, Tsygankov, "Russia and the West" 188). Russia's formalistic approach to the UN also highlighted the attempt at fostering national interests close to home. As a result, the Kremlin elites attempted to take advantage of the cumbersome bureaucratic process of the UN to control rather than facilitate problem solving. Particular care has been taken to ensure that any multilateral actions that are approved or tolerated did not impinge on Russia's sovereign prerogatives and national interests (Allison, 1281).

By elevating the importance of international organizations and rules, Russian foreign policy elites attempted to not directly influence the distribution of Western and American power in world politics, but to recapture the image of Russia as a great world power. The UN, and specifically the Security Council, has mitigated the consequence of Russia's post-Cold War

decline by providing a significant check on American hegemonic power. This strategy, however, has not proven immediately successful for Russia. Short of the UN Security Council's authorization, NATO commenced its Kosovo operation in 1999, while the United States unilaterally launched its military operation in Iraq in 2003 (Ambrosio, 118). These contraventions of the global multipolar order showed the ineffectiveness of Russia's efforts to bind U.S. hegemony through the use of international organizations (Omelicheva, 10). But such exceptions did not discount the main point, which was that the Russian foreign policy elites valued these institutions principally as equalizers of power and influence vis-à-vis the United States (Lo, 73). While the goal of forcing the US to be subject to Russian veto was clearly out of Moscow's reach, the proposals that Russia made are further evidence of the dramatic shift away from a pro-Western orientation and toward balancing and great power status seeking (Ambrosio, 118).

IX. Importance of Strategic Arms Control

Historically, the notion of hard military power is directly correlated to the status of a great power in Russian foreign policy discourse. The preoccupation with Russia's historical status led the Kremlin elite to use arms control as a means of expressing its equality in status with the United States. For these post-Soviet elites, nuclear weapons played a major politico-psychological role as one of the few remaining attributes of their country's great power and global status (Trenin, "End of Eurasia" 284). Post-Soviet Russia's identity and interests in strategic arms control were defined by the policy elite aspirations regarding Russia's international status. The country's past served as the main cognitive reference point for Russian political elites when considering Russia's future, and Russia's past status as a global great power was tightly bound up with its immense nuclear arsenal (Clunan, 178). Historically, the dilemma of power and the Soviet position in the international system were at the forefront of Soviet thinking, and was expressed in terms of the

“correlation of forces” between primarily the United States and the Soviet Union (Åslund and Kuchins, 18, Baev, 5). During the Cold War, Soviet diplomacy assumed that achievement of strategic military parity with the West would entitle the USSR to be treated as a political-diplomatic equal as well, validating its arrival as a major player on the international scene. With this, Soviet Union clearly opted for a strategy of social competition, attempting to equal or surpass Western military might (Larson & Shevchenko, 93). The Soviets’ drive for acceptance as an equal power accelerated with Khrushchev’s optimistic effort to reach the U.S. level of nuclear capability, or at least to deceive the West about the strength of Soviet nuclear delivery capacity, based on the conviction that an altered military balance would translate into enhanced political status for the Soviet Union (Larson & Shevchenko, 94). Putting Soviet missiles into Cuba was a shortcut to parity with the United States in nuclear destructive power. The Brezhnev leadership retained the strategy of social competition with the United States but concentrated on achieving a real strategic balance with the United States rather than an image based in part on deception and bluster (Larson & Shevchenko, 94). The Brezhnev administration’s achievement of nuclear parity was a seminal development that at last consolidated the Soviet international identity as a superpower equal to the United States (Clunan, 178; Åslund and Kuchins, 18; Baev, 5) The Soviet Union was able to constrain the military power of the U.S. as it was able to extract a number of concessions through arms control agreements: the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in 1972 and 1979, respectively (Baev, 6; Larson and Shevchenko, 94).

Following the Soviet collapse, weaknesses in Russia’s economy and conventional military forces led Moscow to rely more on its nuclear capabilities in an attempt to maintain its international role and to gain a stronger position vis-à-vis perceived Western pressure (Clunan, 177). Russian debate on strategic arms control in the post-Soviet period was highly politicized. The center of

expert debate on Russia's interests was dominated by competing definitions of the costs and benefits of strategic arms control. Two benchmarks underlay this debate. The first was the Soviet principle of parity with the West, which continued to be widely viewed as critical for the maintenance of great power status. Strategic nuclear interests were once again framed in terms of status maintenance rather in an effort to advance Russia's aspirations to maintain its status as a global great power (Trenin, "End of Eurasia" 255). In essence, Russian nuclear equity with the United States was the only remaining legacy of this great power status. In the view of the Kremlin elites, this equality required that the United States continue to treat Russia with respect, as nuclear weapons remained a symbol of Russia's strategic independence from the United States and NATO, and their still-formidable capabilities alone assure for Russia a special relationship with America (Trenin, "End of Eurasia" 255).

The second benchmark of the debate was the necessity of nuclear parity with the United States. In addition to great power prestige, rough nuclear parity was long perceived by the Russia foreign policy elite as the essence of strategic and hence global stability. Since the advent of the doctrine of mutual assured destruction, strategic stability between the United States and the Soviet Union was premised on maintaining enough nuclear forces to guarantee unacceptable retaliatory damage to the other side after a first strike (Pikayev, 3; Trenin, "Russia's Nuclear Policy" 7). For much of the Soviet period, strategic stability required matching unit for unit the nuclear forces of the United States, France, and Great Britain. This demand for exact numerical parity of Russian nuclear forces began to disappear from the mainstream political elite debate in the 1990s as economic issues dominated Russian politics. Most political elites, however, continued to accept that rough, rather than exact, parity was sufficient for strategic stability (Pikayev, 3; Trenin, "Russia's Nuclear Policy" 9). Strategic arms control went from being the key means of stabilizing

Soviet-U.S. relations to becoming the primary means of asserting Russian equal status and demonstrating its parity with the United States.

Soviet-American negotiations on limiting strategic nuclear weapons began in the late 1960s and gradually evolved to reach the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) phase. The START process, unlike all preceding arms control agreements, committed both sides to reduce, rather than just limit, their deployed strategic arsenal and to establish and establish an intrusive verification and monitoring regime. START II would have reduced the number of nuclear warheads to 3,000-3,500 and would have eliminated the most destabilizing strategic nuclear weapons (Pikayev, 5; Baev 11). For Russian elites, the START process was perceived as an opportunity to ensure parity with the United States in relation to such material factors as nuclear weapons and strive to preserve Russia's status as co-guarantor of international stability. Without START II, Russian forces, with a shortage of funding, would go down in ten years to 1,000 warheads on their own, while at the same time, the United States can easily afford to maintain the present level of its strategic forces (Pikayev, 7). In this way, if there was no further arms control agreement, in ten years the United States would, inadvertently, acquire nuclear forces that are five to six times over that of Russia for no additional cost. The importance of strategic arms control was also emphasized by the proposition that the United States would have a retaliatory second-strike capacity fifteen times greater than Russia's under START I – but only three times greater under STRART II (Pikayev, 8; Trenin, "Russia's Nuclear Policy 12). The negotiation of effective strategic arms control regimes effectively tied the United States tied to ratification and would allow Russia to regain approximate parity at a low cost and in a more flexible way (Pikayev, 8; Trenin, "Russia's Nuclear Policy" 12). In the end, fear of American nuclear superiority was the principal

motive for many Russian elites to emphasize the importance of nuclear non-proliferation in Russian foreign policy.

As a result, Russian interests in strategic arms control were defined in terms of Russia's need to maintain material power parity with the United States at a low cost, while also pursuing historical aspirations of equal power status on globally. The elite's consensus on Russia's status as an independent great power and guarantor of global security meant strategic nuclear arms control was defined as part of the political elite's broader interest in maintaining and demonstrating Russia's international status. Altogether, the Kremlin elites used nuclear non-proliferation to ensure security against all manner of physical threats great and small, while at the same time held the United States accountable when it was perceived to treat Russia as less than an equal partner on issues often far from the realm of nuclear security.

X. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has attempted to untangle some of the psychological factors that underlie the contemporary foundations of Russian foreign policy. The expectation is that this analysis will offer a more in-depth understanding to American and Western policymakers on the significance that historical national identity has in influencing the thinking and actions of the Russian foreign policy elites. The influence of Russian foreign policy is readily felt on the global stage and is present in many spheres of contemporary engagement. Understanding the mindset of the Kremlin elites remain an important factor for formulation of a wholesome and successful Western and American policy responses. Western scholars and policymakers must be aware of the historical and psychological motives underling contemporary Russian foreign policy. The intertwined nature of historical identity and policy elite behaviour was demonstrated in a practical analysis of the historical shift in post-Soviet foreign policy by examining the debates between

Westernizers and Statists, the move away from pro-Western foreign policy, and a pursuit of a more assertive Global Multipolar Order which continues to serve as the foundation of modern Russian foreign policy thinking.

In order to provide a conclusive argument, this essay focused exclusively on the formative decade of post-Soviet Russian foreign policy during the 1992-2000. Adopting a Constructivist lens of assessment, the analysis of Russia's national interests has not been examined with conventional zero-sum assessments, perceptions of material threat, or the hostility of the international environment that surrounds Russia. Instead, this paper suggested that aspirations to regain the international great power status that Russians believed their country enjoyed throughout its history were critical in forming Russia's present national identity and national security interests. During the formative decade of post-Soviet Russian foreign policy in the 1990s, Russian foreign policy elite converged around a status-driven Statist national image that generated diffuse national interests in social, rather than material, competition for global status, primarily with the United States. This thinking continues to serve as the psychological foundation for modern Russian foreign policy direction, its national identity, and national interests. There is an entrenched consensus by the elite that Russia's identity was that of a global great power and that the state's strength and modernity are the core methods to attain the country's interests.

Promoting Russia's resurgence as a great power within the existing international order has been the domestic strategy when Russia was weak, as it was throughout the 1990s, and as it grew stronger thereafter. Russian foreign policy elites rejected rapid and total Westernization and adoption of a pro-Western line in foreign policy as unbecoming Russia's greatness. For Western decision-makers, the primary problem is that Russian political elites want to participate in the contemporary, Western-dominated international society, but they view this society through a 19th

century lens rather than one that takes into account the impact the democratization, economic liberalization, increasing interdependence, globalization, and softened sovereignty are having on that society. Elite aspirations to retain Russia's historical status led Russian foreign policy elites quickly to reject the initially dominant Westernizer national self-image and elevate to power a Statist self-image advocated by Yevgeny Primakov. As a result, Russian foreign policy shifted rapidly from following the West to competing for status with the United States.

Accordingly, this essay presented a succinct explanation of this anti-Western shift and the role of Russia's historical image of itself and the policy elites in it. The concepts of historical identity and elite behaviour were applied in tandem to cases of European security, global governance under the UN Security Council, and nuclear non-proliferation. This was done to emphasize the key take away that unless Russia's interests and ambitions did not undermine existing international rules, the West would better off trying to engage Russia as an equal contributor in shaping the global system. This take-away is particularly appropriate following ill-fated attempts to "reset" relations with the Kremlin after years of estrangement.

This paper first provided, an overview of approaches to post-Soviet foreign policy is provided to illustrate numerous Western perceptions of Russia's grand strategy, and to frame the discussion on historical identity, policy elites, and areas of engagement. Second, Russian historical identity and memory was examined in its relation to foreign policy elites and their psychological undertones. Third, a concise assessment of the Kremlin elite and foreign policy formulation in post-Soviet Russia was provided. Fourth, the discussion of change in Russian foreign policy is analyzed through a policy shift from Andrei Kozyrev's Western affinity to Yevgeny Primakov's "Global Multipolar Order." Fifth, extensive research was used to identify three areas of Russo-American and Western engagement, specifically, European security, global governance in the

framework of the UN Security Council, and the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Particular emphasis was placed on the underlying concept of Russian great power aspirations, as well as on Russia's desire to be an equal partner to the United States and the West.

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