

**FROM STATUS INCONSISTENCY TO REVISIONISM: A  
STUDY OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY FROM 1991 TO  
THE COLOUR REVOLUTIONS**

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**ASIA-EUROPE INSTITUTE  
UNIVERSITI MALAYA  
KUALA LUMPUR**

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REVOLUTIONS**

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## ABSTRACT

This study is an analysis of Russian Federation's grand strategic orientations and its foreign policy behaviours between two major shocks; the disintegration of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and the colour revolutions in newly independent countries that were parts of USSR. While the collapse of Soviet Union and the end of cold war in 1991 fostered an optimistic view of Russia's collaboration within the Western liberal order. The wave of "Rose", "Orange" and "Tulip" revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kirgystan (2003-2005) cause Russia to adopt a radical revisionism towards the statu quo order. This study attempts to present the rationale behind such "paradigm change" in Russia's grand strategic orientations between two major shocks, from the search for the status via different enhancement strategies in light of status quo from, to revisionism after the colour revolutions. It aims to explain why Russia's grand strategy changed to revisionism – anti status quo - after a phase of committing to reassurance of the Western liberal order, and how Russia become discounted with the "constitutive and normative structure" of international order.

Meanwhile, this study uses the post-Soviet Russia as a case with which to demonstrate the influence of status concern, inconsistency/dilemma based on a qualitative method. In order to explain why and how Russia's grand strategic orientation has been created and changed, this study employs content analysis. The sources available to conduct the research came from a collection of archival official documents, speeches and transcripts of leading figures of Russia involved in the state's grand strategy making process and foreign policy actions, from 1992 to 2008. Using existing explanations, this study develops an alternative theoretical rational on why a rising power may adopt revisionism. It argues revisionism is rather partially outcome of concern over a state's status, in particular the status recognition dilemma resulting from the failure of status seeking process. Revisionism in this account is an outcome of the status enhancement

process of changing perceptions from status inconsistency to status dilemma – achievable to unachievable status. On this alternative account, Russia's revisionism was rather partially due to internal effects of the perceived status dilemma. It was in a part a response to the lack of status recognition from the West; in particular, the process of changing perceptions from status inconsistency to recognition dilemma caused Russian leaders to adopt revisionism, particularly after the colour revolutions. The findings of this study provide confirmatory evidence that the concern over Russia's and the desire to have an equal role in the order shaped in post-Cold war era, remains consistently in the post-Soviet Russian grand strategic thinking and orientations. While the perception of status inconsistency led Russia to adopt enhancement strategies through reassuring the West and within the framework of liberal order up to the mid-2000s. However, the failure of the strategies to enhance its status or correct the inconsistency, due to lack of recognition from the West, left Russia with no choice but seek a revision of the post-Cold war liberal order fundamentally, in particular after the colour revolutions.

## ABSTRAK

Kajian ini adalah analisis orientasi-orientasi strategik yang besar dan dasar luar negara Persekutuan Rusia termasuk hubungannya di antara dua kejutan utama. Perpecahan Kesatuan Republik Sosialis Soviet (USSR) dan revolusi warna di negara-negara yang mencapai kemerdekaan dan yang telah merupakan sebahagian daripada USSR. Kejatuhan Kesatuan Soviet dan akhiran Perang Dingin pada tahun 1991 memupuk pandangan yang optimis terhadap kerjasama Russia bersama dengan perintah liberal dari sebelah Barat. Gelombang revolusi “Rose”, “Orange” dan “Tulip” di Georgia, Ukraine dan Kirgyzstan (2003-2005) menyebabkan Rusia untuk mengamalkan revisionisme radikal terhadap perintah *status quo* iaitu dalam keadaan hal semasa. Kajian ini berusaha untuk membentangkan pemikiran rasional terhadap "perubahan paradigma" yang berlaku dalam orientasi strategi yang besar oleh Rusia iaitu daripada proses pencarian status melalui penambahbaikan strategi-strategi yang berbeza dari *status quo* kepada revisionisme selepas konteks revolusi warna. Hal ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan faktor yang menyebabkan strategi yang besar oleh Rusia berubah menjadi revisionisme - *anti status quo* selepas fasa pemberian komitmen terhadap jaminan perintah liberal dari sebelah Barat dan bertujuan untuk menjelaskan bagaimana Rusia menjadi aspek tolakan dengan “struktur konstitusi dan normatif” oleh perintah antarabangsa. Sementara itu, kajian ini menggunakan pasca- Soviet Rusia sebagai kes untuk mencerminkan pengaruh status dari segi aspek perhatian, aspek ketidakkonsisten atau dilema berdasarkan kaedah kualitatif. Bagi menjelaskan faktor dan cara yang menyebabkan penciptaan dan perubahan orientasi strategi yang besar oleh Rusia, kajian ini menggunakan kaedah analisis kandungan. Sumber-sumber yang tersedia ada untuk menjalankan kajian adalah didapati daripada koleksi dokumen-dokumen rasmi dari arkib, aspek ucapan dan transkrip-transkrip dari sumber tokoh-tokoh utama Rusia yang terlibat dalam proses penggubalan strategi besar negara dan pasukan tindakan dasar luar negara dari tahun 1992

hingga 2008. Sambil mempertimbangkan penjelasan yang sedia ada, kajian ini membangkitkan persoalan terhadap pemikiran rasional yang mengkaitkan teori sebagai alternatif dalam mengenalpasti faktor yang menyebabkan kuasa yang semakin meningkat kuat mempunyai peluang untuk menerima revisionisme. Ia berdebat bahawa revisionisme adalah agak sebahagian hasil daripada perhatian terhadap status negara, tetapi secara khususnya dalam dilema pengiktirafan status ia adalah hasil kegagalan proses mencari status. Revisionisme dalam aspek ini adalah hasil daripada proses penambahbaikan status yang mengubahkan persepsi daripada status ketidakkonsisten kepada dilema status - status yang boleh dicapai dan tidak boleh dicapai. Dalam aspek alternatif ini, revisionisme oleh Rusia adalah aspek yang pernah menjadi agak sebahagian disebabkan oleh kesan dalaman dilema status yang disedari. Ia adalah sebahagian daripada respon terhadap kekurangan pengiktirafan status dari sebelah Barat; Secara khususnya proses perubahan persepsi daripada aspek ketidakkonsisten kepada dilema pengiktirafan menyebabkan para pemimpin Rusia untuk mengadaptasi revisionisme terutamanya selepas revolusi warna. Penemuan kajian ini memberikan bukti yang sah iaitu perhatian terhadap status Rusia dan keinginan untuk mempunyai peranan yang sama dalam aspek perintah yang dibentuk dalam era pasca- Perang Dingin, tetap kekal secara konsisten dalam pemikiran dan orientasi strategik yang besar oleh pasca-Soviet Rusia. Sementara itu, persepsi ketidakkonsisten status menyebabkan Rusia untuk mengadaptasi penambahbaikan strategi-strategi melalui meyakinkan kuasa Barat dan rangka kerja terhadap perintah liberal sehingga pertengahan tahun 2000-an. Walau bagaimanapun, kegagalan strategi-strategi untuk meningkatkan statusnya atau membetulkan ketidakkonsisten status disebabkan oleh kekurangan pengiktirafan dari sebelah Barat menyebabkan Rusia yang tiada sebarang pilihan untuk mencari semakan terhadap asas perintah liberal pasca-Perang Dingin terutamanya selepas revolusi warna.

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## LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APEC	Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum
CES	Common Economic Space
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
EEC	Eurasian Economic Community
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
PJC	Permanent Joint Council
CEE	Central Eastern Europe
CEE	Central Eastern Europe
CIS	The Commonwealth Of Independent State
EBRD	European Bank of Reconstruction and Development
EBRD	European Bank of Reconstruction and Development
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FPC	Foreign Policy Concept of Russian Federation
FPC	Foreign Policy Concept of Russian Federation
FSR	Former Soviet Republics
FSR	Former Soviet Republics
FSS	Former Soviet Space
G-7	Group of Seven Industrial Nations
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MD	Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation



MID	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation
MDR	Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation
MDS	Missile Defense System
NAC	the North Atlantic Council
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
ODIHR	The Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OECD	Economic Co-operation and Development
PfP	Partnership for Peace initiative
RD	Resource Deprivation Theory
RDT	Relative Deprivation Theory
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SIT	Social Identity Theory
UN	United Nations
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
UNSC	United Nation Security Council
UNSCOM	United Nations Special Commission
US	United States
WB	World Bank

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The end of the Cold War and the subsequent disintegration of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) gave birth to post-Soviet states, which were previously known as Soviet Socialist Republics. This breakup led post-Soviet states to create independent foreign policies amidst the desire to integrate in the emerging international order. In the 1990s, these new states, which were experiencing changes, began to work on their outreach programmes. The end of the bloc system would result in the end of decades of geopolitical, economic, and military rivalries among countries. Such an assumption was particularly strong regarding Russia's years of economic, social and psychological disruption, in 1990s.

Bill Clinton's and Boris Yeltsin's project of zone of peace of the Euro-Atlantic region "from Vancouver to Vladivostok", resembling Mikhail Gorbachev's project of "Common European House" was promising in this new era of cooperation and the management of the world politics. However, this assumption, promising a new era of harmony, cooperation and integration of Russia in the Western-dominated order, proved to be too hasty, and came too soon. The initial optimistic view of Russia's integration with the West was steadily altered by fragile relationships imbued with shared "suspicion, mistrust and political confrontation" (Kasymov, 2012, p. 58).

During the initial post-Soviet years, Moscow-influenced liberalisation laid the foundation of a new democratic system, followed by a market-oriented economy within Russia. In terms of foreign policy, Yeltsin and then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrei Kozyrev managed to pursue a strategic partnership with the Western powers, mainly with the US. Kozyrev was also prime supporter of Russia's inclusion into pro-West alliances and institutions. He believed that this would in turn, position Russia as an equal to the

Western powers. The Kremlin demonstrated its willingness of close cooperation with the West by not blocking North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) enlargement that included the former Soviet clients i.e. the Visegrád states in Central Eastern Europe (CEE). It also supported Western initiatives in the Serbia crisis.

The mid-1990s saw Yevgeny Primakov's rise to power in Russia which played a role in the change of foreign policies. While Moscow continued its cooperation with the West in some areas, (for example it signed an agreement with NATO to create a Russia-NATO Permanent Joint Council (PJC)), it also distanced itself from the West by pursuing close cooperation with Asian powers such as China and India. Emphasising on "multipolarity", Russia became more assertive in the attempt to counterbalance the West's (mainly the US) unilateral policies. Moscow requested that it should be given a special status over NATO's Eastward enlargement plan. Moscow was actively involved in the main issues of the World politics and opposed the Western powers. Examples of this opposition were the US-led operations in Iraq and Kosovo. During Yeltsin's tenure, Russian foreign policy oscillated from close cooperation to more assertion towards the end.

The turn of the new millennium saw Vladimir Putin coming to power and he continued an active foreign policy. The terror attack in Washington in September 2001 gave Russia an opportunity to play a greater role in world politics as a co-stabiliser and a great power on par and in cooperation with Western counterparts. Moscow actively pursued the pragmatic, cooperative approach towards the West, mainly with regards to the "War on Terror". Moscow extended logistical support to the US-led operation in Afghanistan in the hopes of receiving the long-aspired "equal status" from the West. Similarly, in its interactions with NATO and the European Union (EU), Russia initially pursued a less assertive stance, although it still emphasised Russia's special standing over major issues.

It is worthy to note however that, gradually, towards end of his first administration, Putin took a more assertive stance versus the US, in particular, in the Iraq crisis.

Despite the variations in Russia's foreign policies, the periodic economic and political partnerships and occasional assertiveness towards the West, Russia's grand strategic orientations were never anti-status quo. In other words, besides all the divergent views in different issues during the 1990s and early 2000s, Russia pursued a more reassuring stance in general with the West, and Western liberal centred status quo order was shaped after the Soviet collapse. However, from the mid-2000s, Russia's foreign policy had shifted to an explicitly cold, confrontational and aggressive policy complemented by military demonstrations and a harsh and uncompromising rhetoric that typified Putin's policies from his second term onwards (Gretskiy, Treshchenkov, & Golubev, 2014; Kasymov, 2012, p. 58).

Consequently, besides a commitment to the reassurance of the Western liberal centred status quo order, in the "long revolutionary decade" after the USSR disintegration, Russia's grand strategic orientation began to shift towards revisionism, soon after colour revolutions in the former Soviet region i.e. Georgia (2003/4), Ukraine (2004/5), and Kyrgyzstan (2005). The leaders of Russia emphatically retreated the necessity of creating a new world order beyond the Western centred status quo shaped on liberal values. They clearly talked about the necessity of achieving "a higher degree of generalisation, perhaps going beyond the framework of Western liberal thought, of which the products were capitalism, socialism and communism" (Lavrov, 2005b). Thereafter, Russia began to search for a "radical renovation" of the existing liberal order and interaction model with the West to find a new position in the international scene. The new model would permit Russia, as an independent centre of power with her privileged zone of interest in a polycentric order, to maintain its undivided stance relating to all the concerns on "the

world political agenda” equal with the Western and other rising power centres (Putin, 2007, February 10).

Manifested by Russian leaders, particularly since Putin’s address at 43<sup>rd</sup> Munich Conference, Russia turned to that crucial moment to “think seriously” about the architecture of the post-Cold War global order. In Munich, Putin condemned the post-Soviet liberal centred “unipolar order”, harshly criticised the US and its “hegemony”, which “overstepped its national borders in every way...visible in the economic, political, cultural, and educational policies it imposes on other nations”. The Russian President had no doubt that “the economic potential of the new centres of global economic growth will inevitably be converted into political influence and will strengthen multipolarity”. Nevertheless, Putin lamented, “we are witnessing the opposite tendency” in favour of strengthening the West, the US led unipolar order. “Of course” the world cannot, “be indifferent observers in view of what is happening”, when “certainly” has “the means to counter” the threats of the unipolar tendencies (Putin, 2007, February 10).

Delegitimising the post-Cold War order as “flawed” with “no moral foundations for modern civilisation”, the Russian President was “convinced that the unipolar model is unacceptable” and even impossible for modern world. Therefore, while no one including Russia was satisfied with the order, Putin emphasised the world must proceed for revision of the entire post-Cold War status quo order, and search for a new one based on “a reasonable balance between the interests of all participants” (Putin, 2007, February 10). As the world did “arrive at the recognition of the necessity of reviewing the whole international agenda”, the then Foreign Minister Lavrov reemphasised, “a radical revision is unavoidable, since it is the imposition on all, including Russia, of the West’s unilaterally painted view of the world’s development since 1992” (Lavrov, 2008, September 1). While the leaders openly emphasised on the inevitability of reconsidering

the entire “global agenda”, through radical revision of the post-Soviet liberal status-quo (Lavrov, 2008, September 1; MID, 2008, January 16, p. 194; Putin, 2007, February 10). They also did not hesitate to assert Russia’s readiness to balance the West, in line with what Putin declared in Munich i.e. taking an “asymmetrical” response to West “symmetrical” security, military, and political agenda (Putin, 2007, February 10).

Russia deemed pursuing revisionism as a grand strategy orientation towards the Western liberal status quo order at its most fundamental level, the hegemon of the system, liberal normative and constitutive architectures, legitimising the hegemon and the system. In line with Lavrov, “Russia as a ‘revisionist power’ coming out against the status quo”, which shaped “after the end of the Cold War”, actively pursued “formation of a polycentric international system” (Lavrov, 2008, October 25, 2008, September 1). Less surprising if some scholars hint, not limited, to aggressions versus some former soviet republics, rounds of energy cut offs, war in Georgia, takeover of Ukraine together with the consequent taking over of Crimean peninsula, the strong position in Syria crisis, along with harsh and uncompromising rhetoric of Russian leaders and the state’s withdraw from the Western institutions, as evidences of the Moscow’s “revisionism”, “expansionism” and its “anti-Western” aggressive foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> A few days after the Georgia war, Lavrov celebrated the promise of the post-American order, arguing “America needs to acknowledge the reality of the ‘post-American world’ and start adapting itself to it” (Lavrov, 2008, September 1).

Foreign policy analysts from different theoretical backgrounds scrutinised Russian foreign policies after the Cold War, and mainly attempted to explain the “paradigm shift”

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<sup>1</sup> The issue was broadly reflected in literature review. For example (Bugajski, 2009; Carafano et al., 2015; Fedorov, 2013; Gaddy & O'Hanlon, 2015; Granholm, Malminen, & Persson, 2014; Gressel, 2015; Lucas, 2009, 2014; Mankoff, 2009; Mearsheimer, 2014; Stoner & McFaul, 2015)

in Russia's grand strategic orientations from reassurance to status quo towards revisionism. In particular, within the revisionist camp, the war in Georgia 2008, interference in Ukraine and the consequent take-over of Crimea in 2014 were the main episodes of Russian revisionism. As the common dominator, both events were seen as anti-status quo in the former soviet region. "Expansionist", "aggressive" policies of "revisionist" Russia was to bring "incremental changes" in its neighbouring region, "re-creating a Russian-controlled empire", or creating "a totally new one", and establishing "greater Russia" "on the Eurasian landmass" via using "military force, if necessary" (Braun, 2014; Gressel, 2015).<sup>2</sup> The scope and ambition of Russia's revisionism went far beyond both Georgia and later Ukraine, and even the region. The challenges posed by Russia were not merely regional, they were systemic, as the state challenged "the legitimacy of international norms" and the "order that has been built mainly by the US after World War (WW) II, (and expanded after the end of the Cold War), and the liberal democracies of Europe and the US" (Speck, 2015, August 13).

The Russian military campaign against Georgia is an illustrative example of the Putin administration's, "explicitly cold, aggressive and confrontational" foreign policy and its "disregard for international legal norms" (Kasymov, 2012). According to Berryman (2015), the crisis in Ukraine indicates the US and EU's misperception and "misreading of the end of the Cold War" that "it shifted international relations (IR) away from zero sum confrontational issues to a win-win one". It was a Western mistake to be convinced that the Soviet disintegration together with its ideological invalidation was "the ideological victory of Western democracy, liberalism and capitalism over communism"

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<sup>2</sup> Gressel (2015) went further and stated recently military presence of Russia in Syria should be interpreted as a continuity of such an expansionist policy, or part of "Russia's military planning", the vision that "centred on the Eurasian landmass, and above all those areas surrounding Russia's post-Cold War borders" (Gressel, 2015).



that would lead to the “obsolescence of hard power”. The “revisionist” Russia never entered into a post-Cold War “geopolitical settlement”, as her efforts had “already shaken the balance of power and changed the dynamic of international politics” (Berryman, 2015).

Importantly, for the purpose of this research, Russia’s revisionism was mainly a “direct consequence” of the “colour revolutions” amongst other origins, like the West and US “unilateral use of force and proclivity for confronting Russia with a series of *fait accompli*” in the Balkans, or elsewhere in Iraq, and the NATO enlargements in the former Soviet region (Mankoff, 2009; Saltzman, 2012; Sherr, 2009). According to Mankoff (2009) Russia’s renewed “imperialism”, “hostility” and “assertive” confrontational policy, revealed in military conflict in Georgia was “in many ways a direct consequence of the coloured revolutions”. The US mounted a challenge of imprinting its foothold on Russia’s areas of “interests and influence” regionally, as well as globally. It was seen as a very dangerous step in containing and weakening Russia (Mankoff, 2009, p. 110).

Sherr (2009), was convinced that the war in Georgia was “a defining moment” for Russia in terms of a “realisation of a revisionist agenda” to rescue its stance and interests, its hegemony in the region that was perceived as shaken by the West security arrangement, the NATO enlargement in the region. The origin of that aggression reverted to “the coloured revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine” that were perceived in Moscow as the “Western special operations from beginning to end”. This jeopardised Putin’s efforts in the former Soviet region. After Moscow’s close cooperation in the fight against terrorism, i.e. the War in Afghanistan in 2001, the revolutions “were seen as nothing short of betrayal” of the West. The perceived shortcomings (with respect to Ukraine, the perceived failure) of the revolutions reinvigorated Putin’s efforts to dominate the region. The “sense of betrayal” became dangerous and “combined with a sense of vindication”.

Hence, long before the outbreak of the War, it was “increasingly obvious that the West’s entire post-Cold War and largely post-modern schema of security had done nothing to avert, and perhaps much to abet, the revival of a classically modern, Realpolitik culture of security in Russia” (Sherr, 2009, pp. 204-205).

Russia’s policies in Ukraine crisis were seen similarly, to have originated in the “Orange Revolution” in 2004, beyond the recent “Maidan”. Lilia Shevtsova highlighted that the Orange Revolution was seen as Russia’s clash with the Western world i.e. “the end of post-Cold War settlement” that ended optimism of “Russian integration” in the Western centred status quo. “Instead of trying to join Western civilization, Russia is now striving to become its antithesis”. Until the new round of crises in 2013, Russia was neither “ready to confront the West openly”, nor did it require “external aggression”. However, the Maidan movement in Kiev gave opportunity to Moscow to pursue “it’s great-power and imperialistic aspirations” by playing the role of “revanchist state”. To “preserve the domestic status quo inside Russia”, the Kremlin began to challenge the international status quo, and “the principles underlying it”. It initiated “regional expansionism” and began its “struggle for sphere of influence” (Shevtsova, 2014). In that sense, Russia’s intervention in Ukraine was part of its long awaited struggle with the West after the Orange Revolution that powered the sense of renewed Cold War narratives and an “intensified geopolitical struggle between East and West” (“The Maidan and Beyond,” 2014).

It is clear that during the long revolutionary decade, between 1992 to mid-2000s, Russia passed two major shocks, the Soviet collapse and the Colour Revolutions. The Soviet collapse led Russia to pursue engagement within, and with the West, besides committing itself to reassure the post-Cold War liberal status quo order, despite the state’s

occasional assertiveness, at least up to mid-2000s. The major “external shock”,<sup>3</sup> i.e. the Colour Revolutions, caused Russia to move towards adopting a radical revisionist orientation towards the liberal status quo order and its perceived defender, the West. This study attempts to find out the reason behind such a “paradigm change” in post-Soviet, Russian grand strategic orientations, between the two major shocks.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Russia’s grand strategic orientation and foreign policy since the 1990s is a matter of great significance. While it has changed several times in the past decades, the reason behind variations of adoption of reassurance to the post-Cold War status quo and/or revisionism by post-soviet Russia have remained vague. Therefore, the study focuses to identify and analyse the orientations of Russia’s grand strategy and the factors driving its foreign policies. Mainly to identify if the Russian grand strategy orientation is a revisionism, mainly in the post-Colour Revolutions era, why and how. In other words, the puzzle is why Russia’s grand strategy orientation changed to revisionism, anti-status quo, after a phase of pursuing reassurance policies towards the Western dominated order and how Russia become discounted with the “constitutive and normative structure” of the international liberal status quo order after the Colour Revolutions.

By distinguishing the differences between “status quo” and “revisionist” orientations, this study attempts to reason why Russia’s grand strategy orientation changed towards revisionism with the focus on the role of status concern. In line with IR theories, this study argues that rising powers may be dissatisfied with the constitutive and normative structure of status quo, and consequently, they may be unwilling or unable to commit to reassuring the existing order. Alternatively, the study argues that the rising states may opt for

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<sup>3</sup> The term borrowed from Legro (2007).

revisionism due to a matter of status, rather than the rational calculation of power capabilities. Revisionism is rather the domestic political outcome constructed by the perception of status recognition dilemma, the outcome of the failure of status enhancement process.

Mainly derived from Social Identity Theory (SIT), this study hypothesises that status inconsistency may cause rising powers to adopt enhancement strategies; social mobility, creativity and social competition, to gain recognition and hence enhance their status and correct the perceived inconsistency. However, the impermeability of higher status boundaries, the lack of status recognition by higher status states, leaves them no choice but to revise the system of normative structure. This means the process of changing perceptions from status inconsistency to status dilemma, achievable status to unachievable, may cause a rising power to adopt a revisionist preference.

As such, variations and changes in Russia's foreign policy behaviours during the long transitional era after the Soviet collapse, in the 1990s and early 2000s were partially responses to the perceived status inconsistency. Russian leaders adopted different strategic orientations, aimed at attaining the recognition of Russia's aspired status. However, the shift in Russia's grand strategy toward revisionism was in response to the lack of status recognition from the West; in particular, the process of changing perceptions from status inconsistency to status dilemma that caused Russian leaders to adopt a revisionist preference, mainly after the colour revolutions.

Therefore, the Kremlin adopted revisionist orientation not due to conventional wisdoms, the shift in power capability, ideational or ideological distance and domestic political structures or politics, but rather the perception of unachievable status. This was derived from diplomatic failures throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Combined with extensive insights of status dilemma following the Colour Revolution, this led Russia to

reject and challenge the status quo and interfere with the efforts of Russia's moderate political elites to pursue policies oriented toward reassurance.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

- 1) How did the concern on status, impact the post-Soviet Russian grand strategy?
- 2) Why did Russia's strategic orientation change to revisionism after a phase of reassurance policy towards the Western liberal order?
- 3) What theoretical explanation can explicate the Russian grand strategy shift towards revisionism after the Colour Revolution?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

- 1) To find out the impact of status concern on post-Soviet Russian grand strategy.
- 2) To analyse the shift in Russia's grand strategy toward revisionism after a phase of reassurance policy towards the Western liberal order.
- 3) To develop a theoretical explanation for Russia's revisionism after the Colour Revolutions.

### **1.5 Literature Review**

There is substantial literature on Russia's strategic orientations and its foreign policy variations over time after the collapse of the USSR. The literature selected here will assist in comprehending how Russia's grand strategy changed to revisionism - anti-status quo - and why the state became disillusioned with the "constitutive and normative structure" of the international order, with a critical view. Several IR scholars explain the changes in post-Soviet Russia's external policies from different theoretical perspectives. Some take into account rational cost-benefit calculations and others consider non-rational emotional elements of Kremlin behaviour in the international system. Nevertheless, available

rationales do not explain the pattern of Russia's fluctuating grand strategy orientations, or the reason of adopting revisionism by Russian elites.

### **1.5.1 Rational Explanations of Russia's Foreign Policy**

Rational approaches, the radical revisionist schools claim that Russia is a revisionist rational state who pursues revisionism. Nevertheless, proponents of the school do not have a common explanation of why Russia's foreign policy finally stand for anti-status quo orientation, after a phase of fluctuating reassurance policies towards the status quo system. Three discursive factions can be recognised in IR attempting to rationalise the roots of revisionist behaviours that offer three conventional wisdoms; realist, ideational or ideological and domestic political structure. This section presents an overview of each of explanations of why some rising states, in this case, Russia, pursue revisionism, particularly through a critical review of related literature. It brings in these theoretical explanations to understand why some states seek change and subsequently offers a relevant explanation in Russia's case.

#### **1.5.1.1 Realism and Revisionism**

Looking at the international system in material terms, for realism, the question of revisionism is the distribution of goods, whereby power, security and prestige are incentives for adopting revisionism as a grand strategy orientation by some actors in the international system.<sup>4</sup> The review of realist literature reveals two main approaches to explain revisionism. With relative power as a main independent variable to adopt revisionism, offensive realism anticipates that a rising power will maximise its power, which typically causes hostile competition in an international system.

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<sup>4</sup> Taliaferro in his study argued that realism, defensive and offensive, the main realist strands, each attempt to respond to the main questions: Are there incentives for expansion in the world order? Alternatively, does it also offer more pros than cons more aggressiveness? (Taliaferro, 2001)

Hypothesising the consistency of the security dilemma, J.J. Mearsheimer expects the actors in the international system to expand their capabilities to become the hegemon of the system. Such an attempt to maximise power capabilities, implies that an expanding power outlay of other powers would lead to a permanent hostile competition as the “ultimate aim is to be the hegemon, that is, the only great power in the system” (Mearsheimer, 2002, p. 2). The standing that through dominating “the Western Hemisphere”, the US achieved at the dawn of last century, but others like “Nazi Germany” and “Japan” failed as illustrated in *“The Tragedy of Great Power Politics”* (Mearsheimer, 2002). As the approach expects the potential hegemons, powers with the capabilities to adopt revisionist orientation. Consequently, “there are no status quo powers in the international system, save for the occasional hegemon that wants to maintain its dominating position over potential rivals” (Mearsheimer, 2002, p. 2).<sup>5</sup>

Some scholars use realism to explain the shift in Russia’s strategic orientations and its foreign policy behaviours. Accordingly, Russian political elites’ perceptions of the power capabilities are determining variable in the variation of the state’s strategic preferences. In the realist account, Shleifer and Treisman (2011) highlighted the rational revisionist state, “Russian aggressive behaviour” is mainly due to its “objective calculations of national interest”. In this account, the foreign policies under Putin and even later Medvedev were entirely power oriented. Russia sought policies to “boost economic growth” since it learnt that “power in today’s world rests on economic might”. It also pursued “fostering friendly regimes in other former Soviet states” and aimed “to stop”

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<sup>5</sup> Such debate makes Mearsheimer seem closer to the traits of Morgenthau, who particularly asserted an endless conflict of states to maximise their power, rising due to an internal urge, man wish to rule others. However, refusing the origin of causation Mearsheimer highlights the anarchic nature of the international system rather than an appetite for power as the main incentive for power struggle. Revisionism therefore follows an implicit assumption implying that security has the highest value for great power, much higher than defensive realists do as Waltz’s actors do. Mearsheimer’s major power underscored a need for excess “power over appropriateness” in compensate for ambiguities, miscalculations and the unknown future (Glenn H Snyder, 2002) . As he draws, “the best way for a state to survive in an anarchic system is taking advantage of others and gaining power at their expense”. “The best defence is a good offense” (Mearsheimer, 2002, p. 36). Through examining Germany, Japan and Italy during late 19th to mid-20th, and the Soviet Union from 1917 to 1991, Mearsheimer (2002) supported the struggle amongst the revisionists, security maximiser great powers who consistently sought opportunity to maximise their profits, and achieve hegemony.

the West, mainly the US “interfering in the affairs of its neighbours, militarising border states, and attempting to undermine Russia’s position” in the region. With those “purposeful, cautious and even misguided but reasonably consistent” objectives, and “divergent interests”, as the author concludes, “Washington should not expect much help from Moscow”, not because of the Kremlin’s “wounded pride and paranoia” but since “Washington’s priorities are not their priorities and may not be in their interests at all.” Neither could it expect any close relationship at least “in the immediate to medium timeframes” (Shleifer & Treisman, 2011).

On a more pessimistic note, others conclude that Russian grand strategy orientation – mainly in Putin’s terms, is a kind of revisionism, as the Kremlin sought to revise the status quo order established in the era after Soviet collapse to re-establish her stance, her historical greatpowerness and also reaffirm the rule on her previous domain with a modern twist (Bugajski, 2009; Lucas, 2009, 2014). For others, Russia’s aggressiveness is the initiation of much anticipated “balancing” against the West mainly the US’ hegemonic power. Russia’s resistance to the US agenda within UN, according to Layne (2006, p. 6), is a “soft balancing” within governing bodies, pursued through creating alliances with other powers, utilising “diplomacy” and international established norms, “to restrict and illegalise” the hegemon and its acts. Hence, he warned the US about the “leash-slipping” efforts by the major second tier countries, mainly Russia who search for “the end of unipolarity” and the “foundation of US hegemony”. This if accomplished, will effectively end US primacy (Layne, 2006).

Some examine the relationship between Russia and its neighbours by looking at offensive realist terms. Revisionist calculations such as Russia developing national interests aggressively against neighbours (as preparative actions) prior to conflict with the West as a final attempt to strengthen the sources of their physical security and political



influence, was popular even when the Cold War was ending (Jervis & Bialer, 1991; Levy, 1987). According to Fedorov (2013), Russia's strategy reproduces many elements of its historical experiences typically of pre- and post-Soviet Russia. Continued "expansion and building of the empire" shaped the "strategic values" and rules of the state's external affairs. Russia still viewed the independent states located in former Soviet region in its zone of influence. Indeed, due to its past hold on post-Soviets states during imperial Russia and USSR, it sees them as an "object" of Russia's control. It also carries a deep-rooted sentiment of competition with Western powers over these territories (Fedorov, 2013).

From this perspective, NATO and EU expansion towards the Baltic States and some Central Eastern European (CEE) countries may change the region's "strategic situation", but simultaneously, Russia's entrenched view and its lasting "strategic goals" from these regions will remain the same. The Kremlin strives to return its domination over independent states in the former Soviet region and re-establish the traditional zone of influence in Eurasia. Achieving this would see the return of traditional geopolitical rivalries among the great powers and the permanent instabilities radiating far beyond former Soviet region (Fedorov, 2013).

As the prominent offensive realist, Mearsheimer (2014), highlighted Russia's international behaviours, mainly its tough position in the Georgia war of 2008, then in the Ukrainian conflict of 2014, and more recently, in the Syrian case which is a sign of the return of profit maximisation (security and power) struggles in an anarchic world (Mearsheimer, 2014). Russia's immense emphasis on military modernisation, along with exercising military forces against the smaller neighbours and subsequent illegitimate annexation are all the elements of Russian revisionist preferences and its "strategic game"

aiming to achieve absolute security at in the expense of absolute insecurity of its neighbours (Granholt et al., 2014, pp. 10, 25).<sup>6</sup>

Considering the Ukraine crisis, Forsberg and Herd (2015) argue that Russia and the West could not reach an agreement due to Moscow's efforts to find "its way through a strategic trilemma." This trilemma has plagued the philosophy of Russia because Russia seeks to replace the US's "power vertical" and instead, utilise its "own models with a democratic multi-polarity" and its own "version of interdependence." Moreover, Russia sees itself as an independent power centre "in the post-Western global order", evidenced by the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union, bolstered by having Ukraine as its best asset in the state's status revitalisation. Ultimately, Moscow stands for achieving dual strategic objectives i.e. creating a new order in IR and at the same time, maintaining its traditional hegemonic order in its "*Russkiy Mir*, the Russian World", the Eurasian region (Forsberg & Herd, 2015).

Apart from the theoretical and empirical fails of offensive realism,<sup>7</sup> if one accepts the assumption about the rationality of states, can hegemony seeking be a rational choice for states to solve the security dilemma imposed by an anarchic system?<sup>8</sup> Moreover, it is not clear why a rising rational state, such as Russia should adopt the revisionist orientation, "while it is still rising". "There is no logical reason why a state" can adopt revisionism

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<sup>6</sup> According to Granholt et al. (2014), "the current political leadership acts as though the country can go it alone and take advantage of, or even abuse, international economic interdependencies to achieve security" (Granholt et al., 2014). Thus, considering Russia's behaviours in former soviet region, and policy like building multilateral institution, to say Eurasian Customs Union, shows that the main objective in such policy is to create an establishment that allow "Moscow to be in the centre with former Soviet republics as dependent satellites" (Granholt et al., 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Mearsheimer's offensive realism deems very strong explanation for revisionism, but the dilemma is that while it makes sense, it is sometimes pressured to extremes. The claim that all major powers are fixated on gaining more power and security begs the question of whether the world will continue to be at war constantly. Can we assume that these great powers are only selfish, single minded and power hungry, as the hypothesis suggests? In addition, as Snyder, argues, "Granted that security seeking will be natural in such a system, is there any compelling reason why the search must persist *à l'outrance* until the searcher dominates its neighbours?" It is a known fact that many expansionist powers have ruled the world but in the historical and geographical contexts, they have not grown to the extent that Mearsheimer's offensive realism envisages (Glenn H Snyder, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> As history reveals through several examples from Louis XIV to Hitler, rationality cannot be resulted from such a universally unsuccessful and risky policy (Colin Elman, 1996; Walt, 2014, p. 194).

where, according to Copeland (2000, p. 13), it can “achieve its objectives more easily”, pursuing a “less costly manner”, “simply by waiting”. Is it not irrational for a rational rising actor to adopt revisionism when it could diminish the costs and increase the likelihood of success by waiting to go to war until the rise be completed? Furthermore, those rational assumptions are unable to clarify why states, namely Russia behave occasionally contrary to its asserted national interests shaped by a rational calculation. For example, if rational Russia is attempting to maximise its security, through decreasing the presence of the West and its security agenda, mainly NATO in its neighbour area, why does it behave contrary to rational interests by using military force against Georgia, and then intervene in Ukraine that conversely intensified the West presence? (Forsberg, 2014; Larson & Shevchenko, 2014c; Alexander Sergunin, 2016).

The classical realist scholar Gilpin is convinced that the ability to rein in power causes the state to be inclined towards revising the power distribution and this sparks thought about an anti-status quo policy. Contrary to Mersheimer, Gilpin (1981) emphasises on the clash between a rising challenger and the dominant power or the “hegemonic war” is over prestige, “the everyday currency in IR”, rather than a pure security dilemma. As a would be hegemon, “victorious in a hegemonic war” has an opportunity to redraft the rules, norms and principles by which the system is governed (Gilpin, 1981, p. 31).

In light of (neoclassical) realism, Kropatcheva (2012) highlighted Russia’s aim to seek specific goals during the post-Soviet era such as providing security and autonomy while capitalising on material utilities and status (prestige). Russia has sought aggressive policies due to improved domestic power capabilities and restored pride. Sidestepping of Russia’s security and its status concerns by the West, have led to shortcomings in cooperation and confidence from the mid-2000s. In a sense, Russia is “self-assured”, which contributes to its enhanced its material position, making it highly optimistic about

making strides in foreign policy and taking “risky” aggressive steps. While Russia sometimes has contrary opinions that widen its gap between its Western partners,<sup>9</sup> the West has to recognise that: “inclusion into higher-status groups may be a wiser strategy in the long run than containment” (Kropatcheva, 2012).

Gilpin is certainly accurate compared with others in realising which areas affect “the origins of revisionism and status quo”. Nonetheless, the scholar’s insights are somehow flawed (Davidson, 2006). It is akin to Mearsheimer’s offensive realism, as Gilpin does not shed light on why a rising state as Russia would choose the revisionist behaviour, as a costly way to secure its prestige. “Even if rising states have goals than security, such as status and prestige” contrary to Gilpin’s account, Copeland (2000, p. 13) reiterated the old maxim “Waiting until the state has maximised its power ensures the maximum return on its war investment”. There are some other less costly and more advantageous choices to achieve prestige.<sup>10</sup> “After all, even more status and rewards” can only be gained through revisionist action i.e. “fighting when one stands the best chance of winning quickly and at a low cost” (Copeland, 2000, p. 13).

As historical evidence shows, both Soviet and Russia’s behaviours were in contrast to realists’ predictions. Soviet Union unilaterally abandoned influence and power over the former republics leading to the end of the Cold War (Kydd, 2000). Similarly, Russia’s policy during the 1990s was not compatible with offensive realist expectations nor with Gilpin’s hypothesis. Instead of aggressive efforts to preserve its own power and security, in her prestigious area, Russia peacefully abandoned influence and control over its former privileged zone of interests, a greater retrenchment than was necessary during 1990s. The

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<sup>9</sup> Among Russia’s mistakes, the author highlighted for examples the Chechen wars, “violation of human rights, autocratic tendencies, and problems with the rule of law”.

<sup>10</sup> This is discussed comprehensively in the next chapter.

peaceful end of the Cold War and Moscow's cooperative behaviours has been the hardest events for realists to rationalise.

Resource deprivation is the second main hypothesis in realist literature that links systemic constraints and waging revisionist preferences. Accordingly, preventing a rising power to gain capabilities required for securing its survival or further rise by dominant power/s of the system may cause it to adopt a revisionist preference. Defensive realist Copeland (2000), argues that the hegemonic conflict tends to come from declining rather than the rising powers, due to fears of declining power of significant decline. Germany initiated WW I and WW II when the leaders realised the country was declining. Declining powers adopt revisionism, as they fear that if they enable a rising state to expand it may resent them later with superior power or coerce them into concessions that jeopardise their security. Even if the dominants are "confident that the rising state is currently peaceful, they will be uncertain about its future intentions" (Copeland, 2000, p. 4). Therefore, a declining hegemon will likely lead a major war as a means to maintain its future security. This is consistent with Copeland whereby the primary and crucial forces pushing German leaders to WW I included a desire to prevent the rise of Russia (Copeland, 2000).<sup>11</sup>

In light of the hypothesis, some refer to Russia as "a declining power with feet of clay". The state's economic decline and heavy reliance on energy exports led to challenges in modernising its economy and armed forces. Comparing its economic capabilities to the former Soviet Union, this group of scholars are convinced that "Russia does not even have the relative and temporary advantages of the Soviet Union's industrialisation" apart

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<sup>11</sup> By 1914, accordingly, "when the sense of inevitable decline" increased in Germany, the German leaders feared that their country would be first victim of Russia, once it completed its industrialisation process and translated its economic strength into military power (Copeland, 2000, p. 70).

from energy resources, Moscow is “not a major economic power”. Russia also lacked “wide ideological appeal”, although the Kremlin resented the US - such resentment, however, is not exclusive to Russia (Carafano et al., 2015). Russia is also fragile in terms of the competition or conflict of interests with the West over some common areas. Aside from NATO, it needs to recapture trade exclusivity, cease practices such as drug wars, arms and terrorist infiltration in neighbouring zones, as its influence in the traditional sphere of influence is under challenge not only by Western powers but also from its traditional ally, China (Spechler & Spechler, 2013).

However, as the scholars warned, the comparison between what was the former Soviet Union and modern-day Russia is perplexing. “No matter how much Putin’s regime promotes them [the capabilities] to justify its own rule or to project an image of equality with the United States, the gap between appearances and reality is large.” This means that “just because Russia is far weaker than the former Soviet Union, it does not mean that the US should ignore facts” (Carafano et al., 2015). The reality is that while “the risk of a direct US-Russian clash is limited; it is still real”. Russia can play essentially by a weak hand, as it shows, in former Soviet region, that it “can lock in geopolitical advantages by using violence in ways that the West and his victims cannot or will not effectively counter.” If the regime did not adopt the strategy directly against the US, is due to “one implication,” that “Putin correctly assesses that time is not on his side.” This means there is “no guarantee” that the regime will not use such a strategy against the West directly in future. This creates “a dangerous position, not very different from the position of Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1914, states that were willing even more to use force in the short run to solve problems that they feared would be more intractable in the long run”. In such an environment, the proponents of the explanations warned the West that “one mistake could easily lead to another” (Carafano et al., 2015).

The resource deprivation hypothesis cannot adequately explain Russia's revisionism for two reasons. Firstly, if Russia is a kind of declining power, it is unclear why such a state facing goods deprivation would adopt a risky and costly orientation to challenge the system hegemonic leadership. There is the likelihood of finding an affordable and safer means of altering the flow of goods within the state (Glaser, 2010, pp. 7, 66).<sup>12</sup> Secondly, while the literature argues that Russia is unable to maintain its sphere of influence, lesser so in preventing the Western powers or institutions such as NATO to penetrate into the region, it is problematic to rationalise the state's wish to challenge the international system or its hegemon. In other words, it is difficult to explain why the state encountering resistance to limited change in the distribution system should rationally expect a hegemonic challenge to be succeed.

#### **1.5.1.2 Domestic Politics and Revisionism**

The second common explanation for increasing revisionism is domestic interest groups and coalitions (Zionts, 2006). In that sense, shifting orientation in states is a subject of comprehending the relative interests and/or power of groups that permit one or another to preside over the national reins (Legro, 2007). As Davidson explains, this includes the variation of the preferences of groups that control policymaking influences on states' foreign behaviours (Davidson, 2002, 2006).<sup>13</sup> J. Snyder (1991) hypothesised "imperial overexpansion" by emphasising on the role of the "logrolling and coalition" formation. He was convinced that great powers pursue an "extreme overexpansion"

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<sup>12</sup> According to Glaser (2010, p. 65) a state just may be capable to accept a less hazardous and less expensive policy when it comes to shifting the distribution of powers/resources than "costly signal" policy - revisionist challenge.

<sup>13</sup> "The preferences of politically relevant groups are important in the policymaking process because they offer their resources in exchange for policy they desire" (Davidson, 2002, p. 31). Accordingly, various groups with divergent views over the foreign strategy, to say, nationalists "externally oriented group" may favour expansion, whereas "internally oriented" would oppose such the preference. Based on the hypothesise a state governed by political leaders who stand to benefit from expansionist foreign policies should be expected to have revisionist tendency, to say, Italian and Japanese revisionism during WWII. For example, Davidson (2006) explains "Italian revisionism" during 1930s was result of "nationalists" appealing the "revisionists" objective. The group and their goals were welcomed by "Mussolini" regime to overcome the domestic legitimacy crisis.

mainly to justify “the policies of domestic political coalitions” and the groups with “parochial interests in imperial expansion, military perceptions or economic autarky”(J. Snyder, 1991, pp. 1-2). Overexpansion in this case, is a reflection of the interests of the coalition rather than nations as “rational choice theories” (J. Snyder, 1991, p. 17).<sup>14</sup>

In this account of revisionism, scholars explain the shift in Russia’s grand strategy, considering the role of domestic groups and their interests. Accordingly, decentralised political structures and a de-monopolised economic system in post-Soviet Russia led to a greater role of new political coalition of oligarchs who dominated Yeltsin’s administration during the 1990s. Profiting from a de-monopolised economy, the coalition attempted to maximise the benefits by influencing the state’s policy in following economic reforms within Russia. This led to a more domestically oriented policy rather than expansion in an external environment (Bilgin, 2011; Kasymov, 2012). However, in Putin’s era, previous oligarchs were substituted by new “silovarchs”, the “little-known cohort of executive” group of intelligence networks, state prosecutors, and the armed forces (Bilgin, 2011; Shlapentokh, 2007; Treisman, 2008). Regarding the real and significant role of *siloviki* in Putin’s administration, quantitatively or qualitatively,<sup>15</sup> Russian foreign policy turned more externally oriented through adopting aggressive and revisionist preferences (Lucas, 2009).

Reflecting the change, Bilgin (2011) detailed the shift from oligarchs to *silovarchs*, through which the position of statist and hardliners due to “recentralisation” of political

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<sup>14</sup> Such the coalitions including economic interest groups, official bureaucrats, logrolling their diverse interests of expansionism, imperialism or military, justified ‘their self-serving politics’ thorough “myth” made around the state security and “national survival” (J. Snyder, 1991, pp. 1-2). “German overexpansion” according to Snyder, was preference of “centralised” economic interest groups controlling “logrolling process” and benefited from expansionism (J. Snyder, 1991, pp. 108-111).

<sup>15</sup> Some went further and hinted the predominant role of the group in policymaking process and hence, talked about a gradual process of “emerging of militocracy” in Putin’s era (Kryshtanovskaya & White, 2003) whatever, the role and influence of *Siloviki* seems real and significant. (Fred, 2015, February 2; D. W. Rivera & Rivera, 2014; S. W. Rivera & Rivera, 2006; Sakwa, 2007, 2014).



power within the Kremlin, pushed Moscow forward for implementing “state-centric policies” within the country and expansionism externally. Russian state-owned energy giant “Gazprom” was a pioneer in such alteration. It pursued the Kremlin’s geopolitical attitude towards foreign affairs and engaging in “corporate expansionism”. One of the main goals was controlling energy sources in countries within the regions of Central Asia, West Asia and the continent of Africa. The joint interests created between the state and national gas entity i.e. the Kremlin and Gazprom, led to expansionist policies under *Siloviki*, evidenced successfully in relations with neighbouring states (Bilgin, 2011).

Similarly, Kasymov (2012) argues that the rise of hardliners led to a great change in the country’s external politics during Putin’s presidency. The centralised or “vertical power” propagated by Putin, followed by the return to traditional “authoritarianism” resulted in increasing of the relative influence of statist and hardliners and decreasing the role of proponents of cooperation between Russia and the US, from Yeltsin to Putin. The shift manifested in “rhetoric and policy actions” of Putin and members of his administration overlapped with the “statist paradigm” linked with the “civilisationist” worldview in addressing Russia as a global power, “neither a Western, nor an Eastern power” in the modern world (Kasymov, 2012). Therefore, based on this account of revisionism, while the rise of oligarchs led to cooperation with the West, the rise of hardliners, civilisationist/nationalists groups similarly caused more expansionist orientations towards the West thereafter (Barbashin & Thoburn, 2014b; Filippov, 2009; Laruelle, 2008, 2015; March, 2012; T. Snyder, 2014a).

Literature on the role of Russian domestic interest groups is convincing but does not explain how groups interested in aggressive policy were able to dominate policymaking

in the Putin era but not during Yeltsin's term.<sup>16</sup> Also, if one accepts that the rise of coalition of military and security, siloviki and civilizationists in Putin's era led Russia to adopt revisionism, how can the approach justify the Kremlin's rapprochement policy particularly towards the West, at least up to the mid-2000s? Moreover, if we accept J. Snyder's (1991) argument that overexpansion is the outcome of rising "coalition" proponents of expansionism in a centralised policymaking processes, who legitimates their favoured preferences through rhetorical commonplaces, a by-product of "propaganda" and "mythmaking". However, it is not clear why resonance of the revisionist, aggressive rhetoric appears to be more important and dominant in Russian society in Putin's tenure but not in Yeltsin's era.

#### **1.5.1.3 Ideas, Ideologies and Revisionism**

Ultimately, different approaches explain the role of ideologies and ideational variables in moulding the revisionist grand strategy. They hypothesise a relationship between political elites, collective ideas and ideologies, and a kind of grand strategy orientation.<sup>17</sup> As the prominent explanation in these categories, "content" of ideologies define primary goals of foreign policy and preferences over tools to deploy the policy, of political elites dominated in states.<sup>18</sup> There are certain features of "collective ideas" and "legitimizing principles" that override a state or group of elites' behaviour and may lead states to adopt anti-status quo policies or vice versa (Legro, 2007).<sup>19</sup> Other explanations underscore the

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<sup>16</sup> As well, the literature revolving around domestic interest groups do not explain how hardliner groups, the proponents of revisionism who are seeking to question the status quo and may influence policymaking in some cases (Ward, 2013).

<sup>17</sup> Core of "ideology is a set of causal beliefs about how the world functions", as well as "the principles upon which a particular leadership group attempts to legitimate its claim to rule and the primary institutional, economic, and social goals to which it swears allegiance" influences a state's orientation toward the status quo (Haas, 2005, p. 5).

<sup>18</sup> As liberalism emphasises on peaceful methods of conflict resolutions, communism refer to perpetual revolutions of workers around the world, Fascism insisted on domination of superior race over inferior (Haas, 2005, p. 1).

<sup>19</sup> Legro (2007) particularly looks at "content" describes the impacts of ideologies in international relations and seeks to explain the effects of specific behavioural perceptions of a certain content of ideologies. In Legro's view any kinds of a state's grand strategy orientation; "integrationsism, separatism, and revisionism" relies on the collective idea. Accordingly, some ideologies may push states to reformulate the status quo. "External shocks" combined with domestic politics and the pre-existing ideas about the world determine whether the change would happen and whether the change would stick. The Soviet Union's strategy changed radically from "cut itself off" to "normal involvement in the international community in late 20<sup>th</sup>". The change was not due to its declined power or economic

role of “ideological distance”; the level of “ideological differences” or dissimilarities as a driving force on states and their foreign policy. Accordingly, a state governed by leaders dedicated to ideologically dissimilar, “rival legitimating principles” from the states protecting the status quo may be more probable to negate, or defy the current situation (Haas, 2005).<sup>20</sup>

In a radical version of the revisionist approach, Russian policy towards the liberal international order changed as the content of collective ideas forming the state strategy changed during Putin’s term, something reflecting the first hypothesis. Accordingly, the world politics shaped gradually after 1990s embodying “a new ideological rivalry”, where “the liberal world” was contrary to “an authoritarian, state capitalistic model”. Defining itself against the “Western order” and its hegemon, namely the US, Russia “openly and avowedly” made such a “rivalry” unavoidable. The new Russia borne in Putin’s era is an “incorrigible spoiler” or even a “rogue” power whose behaviour contradicts the liberal-centred status quo normative order. Under Putin, Russia pursues rhetorically and actively a “harshly anti-American ideology” within Russia and outside. The rise of Putin’s regime, is “simply another moment in Russian history when the pendulum has swung away from the West”, when integrating post-Soviet Russia in Western normative order failed (Carafano et al., 2015, p. 3).

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capabilities, otherwise it would change even in the earlier decade, even the power could continue with similarly system even longer. Instead, the Soviet Union changed its grand strategy orientation to engage in international society since the content driving, or collective ideas shaping Soviet foreign policy was changed. In this account, changing of “pre-existing ideas”, shaping foreign policy was “cause not consequence” of Soviet disintegration (Legro, 2007, pp. 16-17).

<sup>20</sup> Considering the relationship between perception and ideology, Haas argued that the level of ideological “distance” among great powers is crucial in terms of how their leaders interpret interests and realise the threat. According to Haas, the ideological affinities or differences observed between states is the main influencing factor for reassurance or revisionism. Accordingly, having similar ideological assumptions, “legitimizing principles”, by the political leaders of different powers, would create a “sympathy” amongst the leaders about their partners in other states, hence lead the powers to persuade status quo friendly strategy. For example, Russia, Prussia and Austria pursued cooperative preferences during much of the 19th century. While, different leaders of different states, dedicated to different ideological principles, or “rival legitimating ideas”, the prosperity of one group probably threaten the other leaders’ domestic legitimacy. The larger ideological distance, splitting powers’ leaders, “the more pressing these fears of subversion are likely to be”. Consequently, the fear of ideological subversion may increase “mistrust” of “mistrust of ideological rivals’ international objectives”, hence increase the probability of adopting conflictual preferences, the more anti-status quo orientations. The situation ruled Europe in 1790s and 1930s (Haas, 2005, pp. 12-15).

Regarding the role of the external threat in shaping domestic and foreign policies from Stalin to Putin, Shlapentokh (2009) argues that, Putin's foreign policy was affected intensely by the conviction that the Western counterparts attempted to overthrow the Russian government and promote democratisation through the Colour Revolutions in some former Soviet republics including Ukraine and Georgia. Accordingly, anti-Americanism, the prevalent narrative of Cold War became an important part of Putin's official ideology mainly from mid-2000s, and enthusiastically welcomed by the Russian military and political elites as it evokes Russian nostalgia for restoring its empire and eases their envy of the West military and economic capability. Highlighting the geopolitical conflict between Russia and the US however, this anti-Westernism diverted attention from the rising recentralisation of political power and the change towards "authoritarianism" under the banner of the distinct Russian "sovereign democracy". Sovereign democracy as the Kremlin's powerful offensive ideology against the Western liberal democracy has connected with distinct ideational foundations striving for challenging the Western liberal values (Shlapentokh, 2007, 2009).

Russian anti-Western nationalism under Putin influencing Russia's foreign behaviours through intensification of the political rhetoric implied a cognitive dissonance between Russia and the Western powers (Herspring, 2003; Kasymov, 2012; Malinova, 2014; March, 2012). The "ethnocentric civilisational nationalism" as an instrument for "domestic legitimacy" and power consolidation have exploited assertive and violent foreign behaviours. From the late 2000s, March (2012) underscores civilisationist nationalism and the Russian grand strategy which has experienced a dialectical relationship. The war in Georgia in 2008 showed that "manipulation of nationalism domestically stoked it to a degree that raised public expectations and risked driving elite responses". The more recent example of Kremlin's utilising a manipulated ideological narrative of distinctiveness against the "Western repugnant liberalism" was the Ukraine

crisis, where Russia “followed with an all-out rhetorical assault combined with determined steps to use the full spectrum of Russian power to counter the EU influence in Ukraine” (Haukkala, 2015, p. 13). In this account, the Georgian war and then the Ukraine crisis were to some extent a proxy ideological conflict between Russia and the West.

Whatever, using dichotomy of ideological distance or content, the proponents of the radical account of revisionist school portrayed world shaped from mid-2000s as ground for “the ideological conflict of the New Cold War” between two adverse ideational systems; “between lawless Russian nationalism and law-governed Western multilateralism” (Lucas, 2009, p. 18). In such a revisionist account, “Russia is important, hostile, and active enough to take seriously” if one look at “how seriously” Putin “takes his regime’s ideology” as even to murder, expel “domestic opposition” (Carafano et al., 2015, p. 5). Even Moscow’s revisionist actions against Kiev and Tiflis is not due to Russia’s fear that “the possibility of a Western-aligned Georgia or Ukraine” could provide “the avenue for a Western attack”, neither providing the states a military capability threatening Moscow. Instead, Putin’s regime fears that such alignment in the region led to domination of Western liberal ideas and values that could even transfer within Russia’s society (Carafano et al., 2015, pp. 5-6).

Yet, ideological approaches of revisionism suffer some pitfalls too. They cannot explain where alternative strategic ideas originate, why a shift arises in one direction rather than another. It also dismisses the process by which politicians that entertain distinctive grand strategic orientations endorse and use discursive changes to go further with their policy preferences (Ward, 2013). In Russia’s case, it is not clear why extreme nationalism was on the rise in Putin’s era but not in Yeltsin’s time. In addition, it is unclear why, despite its anti-American rhetoric and an extreme nationalist idea, Putin’s Russia

allied with the US in areas like the Afghanistan war, fight against terrorism in Central Asia, and cooperated in other geopolitically fundamental issues including “removing chemical weapons from Syria and negotiating the future of Iran’s nuclear program” (Larson & Shevchenko, 2014c, p. 270).

Similarly, an ideological distance approach also appears to be insufficient since ideologies are intersubjective and cognitive. The characters made ideologies difficult to observe and evaluate (Jackson, 2006). Finally, the hypothesis cannot accurately describe the way shifts toward revisionism often take place (Ward, 2013). The approach also suffers from historical empirical anomaly. For example, the former Soviet Union was ideologically distant while its leader and political elites pursued “peaceful coexistence” with the capitalist world (Jackson, 2006). Even in real time, in Primakov and Putin’s first term, the emphasis was on Russian distinctiveness while the state followed collaboration with the West and liberal order.

Rationalist wisdoms explain the cost-beneficial dimensions of Russia’s foreign policies, but they do not capture the complexity of the objective of this study. Apart from the theoretical doubt and empirical shortcomings in dealing with Russia’s question, notably, defining Russian grand strategic orientations as linear predetermined, hence, portraying the state as a status quo or revisionist by the rational approaches cannot explain the major swings in the state’s preferences mainly its relations with the West. In other words, the approaches cannot explain the pattern of changes and variation in post-Soviet Russia’s strategic orientations. As analysed in this research, Russian relations mainly with the West had oscillated from Yeltsin to Putin’s presidency. In each of these terms, Russia experienced interactions with the Western partners that was not linear; it swung from, partnership with the West in Yeltsin- Kozyrev term, to a more balanced relation in Yeltsin-Yevgeny Primakov era. The trend can be realized regarding Putin’s cooperation

with the US in first term, mainly after 9/11, to a more assertive stance during the Iraq conflict, and the state's aggressive stance during the Colour Revolutions and after that.

### **1.5.2 Non-rational Explanations of Russian Foreign Policy**

The alternative approaches attempt to explain the irrational, emotional and unpredictable elements of Russia's foreign behaviours. In these approaches, national interest is more ambiguous and problematic as it is characterised by not only material capabilities, but also the inter-subjective irrational characteristics including national identity and status. Considering the role of status and identity in world politics, several scholars examine state foreign policies to understand the rationale behind the variation in its behaviours after the Soviet collapse and oscillations between cooperation and confrontation, as well as aggressive policies.<sup>21</sup> The literature suggests that no other issue overshadows the post-Soviet Russia's foreign policy approaches except the understanding that the state's main objective of restoring and reinforcing the great power status in the international system (Forsberg, Heller, & Wolf, 2014). Simply put, the "Russia problem" in modern world politics, mainly the state's interactions with the Western world, is not the subject of power capabilities, economic and security matters, rather, it is a "question of status" (Neumann, 2014, pp. 24-25; Sakwa, 2008).

Rutland (2012) argues that the peripheral status may be a normal issue for most states in the international system, but for Russia, it is unsettling. Rather than security, status is the main factor of Russian leaders' legitimacy; therefore, this peripheral position is a source of instability in domestic political affairs. This is not very new; the close relationship between Russia's domestic political stability and its international status is a

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<sup>21</sup> Several scholars considered the role of the state's status and identity in analysing Russian foreign policy (Clunan, 2009, 2014a; Kanet, 2010; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, 2014c; I. B. Neumann, 2008; Rutland, 2012; Alexander Sergunin, 2014; Trenin, 2009, 2011; Andrei P Tsygankov, 2012, 2014)

historical issue. It is also problematic for the international normative order, because other powers may fear that Russia will take radical policies toward changing the order to achieve or restore what it perceives as its own rightful position. This means that there is a constant risk surrounding the Russia's aggressive behaviour to foreign powers to bolster domestic legitimacy and status.<sup>22</sup>

In a constructivist view, status is of lesser importance under a prioritised list of identities and norms (Onuf, 2013; Shannon & Kowert, 2012). In line with social psychology, aspirational constructivism goes further, highlighting that the proper status would emerge in the process of identification. Clunan in her work, emphasises that through the process of national identification during years after the Soviet's collapse, political elites in Russia generated and regenerated the state's proper status domestically and internationally along with its national interests. Accordingly, the oscillation in the state's policies and behaviours particularly versus the West should be considered as an outcome of domestic political elites' competition around defining national identity, and proper status of the state (Clunan, 2009, 2014a).

Using propositions of social psychology linking "power", "status", and "emotions", several IR scholars typified Russian foreign policy as fully emotional driven over status concern. However, the problem is how status concerns affects Russian foreign policy's formation, priorities and preferences. The scholars highlighted the perception of the "lack of genuine recognition" of Russia's aspired status that caused "status inconsistency" along with the sense of inferiority and humiliation and hence, changed the state's foreign policy preferences. The shortcoming in terms of acknowledgment of Russia in the view

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<sup>22</sup> Post structuralists and mainly constructivists view the aggressive turn in Russia's grand strategy orientation through focus on the role of state's identity and its internal politics. Based on the view, Russia's concern over losing the greatpowerness as the historical status of the state is a main motivation of its behaviour mainly in crisis in Russian neighbour area (Clunan, 2009, 2014a; Forsberg, 2014; Forsberg, Heller, & Wolf, 2014; Heller, 2014; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, 2014c; Malinova, 2014; H. Smith, 2014).



of the West and differing perceptions on status is often viewed as the main contributing factor that led to Russia shying away from cooperation with its Western counterparts. That has been revealed occasionally in Russian political elites on a number of issues; whether in Chechnya, NATO enlargements or the Kosovo Crisis (Clunan, 2009, 2014; Forsberg et al., 2014; Heller, 2014; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, 2014; Smith, 2014; Tsygankov, 2014, 2016).

Status inconsistency not necessarily causes radical revisionist preferences. Findings in social psychology and proponents of behavioural approaches highlight that rising powers like Russia have different strategic choices, from assimilation, creativity or even social competition, to gain recognition and hence, enhance their relative status within the status quo framework, through requesting limited change rather than taking radically revisionist preferences (Larson & Shevchenko, 2003, 2010, 2014c).<sup>23</sup>

Hanna H. Smith (2014) highlights that for Russians, post-Soviet Russia is a kind of “underachiever”, that is not recognized as an equal power by the West. The perception of the status inconsistency causes mutual misunderstanding and misperceptions between Russia and the West and hence leads to strains. Accordingly, Russia has aimed to pursue cooperation with international Western centred institutions such as in the first Chechen war when the norms and requests of the institutions were compatible with Russia’s status. But then, Russia was uncompromising in the second Chechnya crisis when the state perceived the norms and arrangements as infringement of its status (H. Smith, 2014). Regarding the Kosovo conflict 1999, Heller (2014) reveals how Russia’s perceptions of the “misrecognition” of the state’s “self-defined status”, the “self-determined great

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<sup>23</sup> The strategies mentioned above derived from social psychology was frequently used recently in IR studies. Will be further discussed in next chapter.

power” and self-perceived equality provoked the assertive action of Russia “unleashing (over-) emotionalized rhetoric and hyperbolic reactions” (Heller, 2014).

Referring to the gap in the perception of Russia and the West on the state’s international position, Forsberg (2014) concludes that the issue is not that the West intentionally discounts Russia but rather that the two parties experience “diverging conceptions and perceptions of status”. Russian elites feel that the country deprived from gaining recognition of higher position. In contrast, Western powers believe they have already recognised Russia (Forsberg, 2014). Hence, cooperation is more likely when Russia perceives its relative aspired status, for example in economic or military issues. High on its agenda is Russia’s need for status recognition especially if the dispute deals with emotionally charged issues, including “NATO enlargement” and the “Kosovo War” (Forsberg, 2014).

With such theoretical propositions, the scholars believe all variations of Russian foreign policy preferences in the post-Cold War era are in response to the perceived status inconsistency. The scholars contend that it is comprehensible why Russia has had a bittersweet relationship with its Western counterparts and why Russia continues to be at loggerheads on certain issues with the US, the EU and NATO (Clunan, 2009, 2014a; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, 2014c). It is not clear, however, if the suggested strategies are the answer to the perception of status inconsistency and the lack of status recognition. What if Russia could not achieve its aspired status even after applying those enhancement strategies or diplomatic methods? In other words, while the success of the strategies still relies on the recognition of the aspired status by the main higher status group, will the states continue to operate within the status quo or wish to revise it?

To some extent, it can be said that Russia’s uncooperative manner or resistance against NATO’s enlargements or the West’s military interventions in Kosovo and then Iraq, as

the diplomatic efforts within the status quo framework. However, how can the approaches justify using military force in Georgia or in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea as reassurance actions towards and/or within the framework of the status quo order? Therefore, the non-rational behavioural approaches may explain variations of Russia's behaviours and its policy preferences mainly in the 1990s, and early 2000s, when status enhancement seemed to be possible at least from the Russian side, as they still believed that recognition of the aspired status from the West is achievable. However, the approaches are ambiguous to explain Russian aggressiveness in years from the mid-2000s, when the status enhancement and gaining the recognition of aspired status seemed impossible. Simply put, apart from theoretical shortcomings of lack of enough attention to status recognition, that will be explained in next chapter, the emotional behavioural approaches lack logical justification to explain the main shifts in Russia's foreign policies that occurred during the years after the Colour Revolutions in the former soviet region.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This is derived from theoretical and empirical dimensions. From a theoretical viewpoint, it presents a critical overview of each existing theoretical approaches, to develop an explanation for the adoption of a revisionist orientation by rising great powers, namely Russia. It seeks to advance the current evidence for unravelling a key puzzle: why rising powers like Russia, adopt revisionist grand strategy orientation when there is a logical rationale to behave moderately and pursue reassurance.

The main theoretical explanations of revisionism tend to characterise the strategic orientation as a functional opportunity. In this instance, realism as a prominent IR theory rationalized revisionism under the structure of an international system, implying any alteration of distribution of material capabilities; power, security or prestige is the main incentive for adopting revisionism. For other rationalists, the shift in states' grand strategy

towards revisionism is linked to domestic political transitions, whether it relates to interests of domestic interest's coalition or dominant ideological approaches. Accordingly, the reason for adopting revisionist preferences by states, as the most likely case of rationalist approaches, is that the utility maximiser actors adopt revisionism under certain conditions. Therefore, revisionism is a function of cost beneficial calculation combined with an opportunity seeking practice by revisionist rational, opportunity seekers and utility maximiser actors.

Revisionism, for those conventional rational approaches suffer from weaknesses. Assuming the state as a rational actor, along with dichotomisation of revisionist/ status quo led the approach to portray states' behaviours entirely rational, predetermined and fixed. Therefore, intellectuals utilising those rational theories to explain revisionism have limited core variables to explain why states move towards revisionism, as intersubjective ideational factors influencing states' behaviours remained outside of that rational core. Simply put, this does not explain what apart from those material capabilities influence states' national interests and grand strategic orientations. Moreover, ignoring the role of non-rational intersubjective factors influencing states' behaviours not only constrains the predictions of state behaviours and the strategic preferences out of status quo or revisionism, but also relies on limited core rational variables that cause anomalies in those approaches too.

This study argues that ideational intersubjective variable such as status concern, would provide an alternative explanation of revisionism, defining revisionist actor who may have an incentive for such the preference, in the nature of national collective self-esteem (status). Based on this, the status recognition dilemma as an outcome of a changing perception of status inconsistency to status dilemma provides impetus for rising states to adopt revisionist preferences in response. Adding the intersubjective variable that state

dissatisfaction in international system is based upon, this alternative account also contributes to an existing explanation for variation of state foreign behaviours and grand strategic orientations out of status quo revisionism. It also helps to understand why rational states behave non-rationally and emotionally and what causes anomalies in conventional approaches.

Rather than explaining the state grand strategy orientations as an outcome of prolonged, and perhaps gradually unfolding process, the existing behavioural explanations favour proximate causes (Chan, 2004, 2015). Narrowing the explanation and only depending on temporary changes in actors' constraints or opportunities dictated by the structure of an international system would lead to neglecting the actual causes and underlying dynamic of revisionism that perhaps is rooted in a long-term past experience. Assuming revisionism is an outcome of a deep-rooted, self-reinforcing process, and then what the existing approaches describe as the causes of revisionism may be only symptoms of a long-term dynamic procedure that took place over a span of time. This research also stipulates a long-term process and mechanism that the intersubjective matter may gradually influence states' foreign policy preferences and how status concern shapes states' propensity to move from status quo towards revisionism over time.

Ultimately, narrowly focusing on a situational stimulus and defining states grand strategy as a fixed linear and predetermined, conventional rational wisdoms of revisionism ignore how indigenous ideational factors, such as status concern may impact on state grand strategy. Accounting intersubjective matter of status that links domestic nature of national ideational factors with foreign policy outcome would explain why the rising states occasionally avoid following the revisionists preferences by persuading strategies committed to reassuring the status quo. Essentially, the new accounts explain the fall of revisionism. The alternative account of grand strategy would explain that rising

status inconsistent powers adopt reassurance preferences even if it may have capabilities to ruin the current order, with the goal of correcting inconsistencies. However, the inconsistent status state would turn to revisionism when faced with status recognition dilemma; even it may have more incentives, like a further rising or economic achievement and others to adopt more status quo friendly preferences.

As this research will show, revisionism is best explained as a status driven process, as an outcome of a path dependent, long terms process once domestically defined collective self-esteems is unachievable. Therefore, an intersubjective, ideational factor, the national collective self-esteem drives a rational actor to adopt revisionism. Hence, it also contributes to those post positivist approaches that attempt to explain states' foreign policy via intersubjective emotional behavioural factors. The approach sees status quo orientations as the most likely case. This research argues a raising power may be dissatisfied with a constitutive and normative structure of status quo order, hence unwilling or unable to commit the order. Regarding the impact recognition in interstate relations, this research explains the outcomes of recognition dilemma on states' international behaviours. It also argues how intersubjective factors and the status recognition dilemma may influence foreign behaviours and preferences of states and lead them to adopt revisionism. Therefore, the alternative account would explain the demise of status quo orientations as well.

The argument can contribute to existing literature and provides useful tools for politicians and decision makers especially Western powers to manage and prevent the danger of rising revisionist tendencies among rising powers. Obviously, the threats of rising China and Russia, as well as rising some middle states or regional powers are the main issue of the international order and mainly for the US foreign policy (Randall L

Schweller, 1999). The modified theory in this dissertation can provide policy makers with a way to deal with rising powers and avoid their anti-status quo tendencies.

In addition, empirically studying the foreign policy of Russia is significant in looking at the state's importance in contemporary world politics. This research attempts to contribute some of the current knowledge of Russia, the state's interests, its preferences as well as its position of different foreign policy issues. While the collapse of the Soviet Union decreased Russia's capabilities, it remains a significant power in global politics. Apart from its strength, size, population, military might and weaknesses, as different rounds of energy cut offs in the Eurasian region namely Estonia, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgian war, Ukraine crisis, and the Syrian case shows, there is no doubt that the Kremlin is "more than capable of playing the role of spoiler" in the world order (Govella & Aggarwal, 2012). The Russian Federation, as one of permanent power of the UNSC can play a key role, in blocking or supporting any efforts on wide-ranging issues. Moreover, the state is a main actor in several areas, mainly in the neighbouring Eurasian region, in Arctic region, in Middle East. This means Russia has or wishes to have, influence not only within the neighbouring region, but also on a global scale. Therefore, understanding Russia's grand strategy preferences and key constitutive elements, is essential for current international relations, its prioritised collaborates mainly the states within the neighbouring region, and the West about how to deal with Russia.

### **1.7 Research Methodology**

The qualitative method is adopted to gain an in-depth understanding of the subject of inquiry using a descriptive and analytical method. Therefore, behaviours and interactions are understood "in the context of meaning systems employed by a particular group or society" and the focus is mainly on "discovering novel or unanticipated findings" and by examining the social world from the participants' perspective (Aspers & Corte, 2019, p.

3; Giddens, 1991; Seymour, 2001). Accordingly, this research analyses the “patterns and commonalities of knowledge and structures” in the discourses of Russian leaders, who engaged in the foreign policy making process, the elites that may influence particular policy options.

As a method, the study uses the qualitative content analysis as “a systematic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic matter, not necessary from an author’s or user’s perspective” (Krippendorff, 2004; Schreier, 2012, p. 1). The method allows us to generate an interpretation which can be corroborated using other methods of data collection (Stemler, 2001). Primary and secondary sources were selected and analysed related to objective of the research, with a specific focus on Russian external affairs; authorship, the main actors of such policy making, apparent significance; and genre preference given to speeches and public statements. The research interpreted data inductively. The primary sources include:

The decrees, annual messages and official documents by main governmental agencies involving the foreign policy making; the Annual Presidential Addresses to the Federal Assembly, coupled with official documents by main governmental agencies that participate in foreign affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID), the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Security Council, among others. The Foreign Policy Concept (FPC), National Security Concept (the Blueprint), the Military Doctrine of Russian Federation (MD), that were in effect from 1992 to 2008.

Also, there are numerous supplementary documents, articles, speeches, statements, declarations, comments and press conferences of Russian top officials that dealt with foreign, security or military policies or the issues relating to Russia’s international interactions with the US, Europe and other nations. These sources are crucial as they provide valuable data on the shift in the state’s foreign policy orientations at the top



policymaking level, although these documents may deliver less about the behind-the-scene activities.

The documents of the main international organisations and institutions, United Nation Security Council (UNSC), World Trade Organisation (WTO), EU, NATO, and regional and sub-regional organisations including, but not limited to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and others relevant to Russia's foreign and security matters. Documents such as press releases, declarations, speeches, statements, articles published during summits by Russian presidents, foreign ministers such as the Russia-EU summits, Russia- US, Russia-China, Russia- India, or forums like Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) would help re-construct the international context, globally, regionally and sub-regionally.

Similarly, secondary data collated from previous studies by Russian and Western scholars including books, journal articles, reports, summaries and memos by leading academics on Russian foreign policies, Russia-West and Russia-non-Western powers bilateral or multilateral relationships. This would help overcome a lack of archival resources.

Qualitative interviews, by focusing on the technic of open ended and semi-structural expert interviews, such as face-to-face interaction and Skype, have been adopted in this study. The research uses purposive sampling on the professional background and expertise on IR, mainly Russian foreign policy. Apart from cross verification and completion of data, through analysis of official documents and other sources, the interviews provide in-depth insights on the subject. In-depth interviews conducted with Russian and non-Russian scholars and advisors affiliated with Russian and Western research institutions, think tanks, and independent NGOs in Russia's foreign policy, in particular and international politics, in general. This included the Moscow State Institute

of International Relations (MGIMO), Moscow University; Institute of World Economy and International Relations, St. Petersburg State University; Centre for Russian, European and Eurasian Studies, University of Birmingham; School of Media, Curtin University, Australia; Faculty of Political Science, Skenderija University of Sarajevo; School of Social Sciences, University of New South Wales, Australia; Department of Government Studies, Lazarski University, Poland. Think tanks, institutions, and NGOs including the Royal Institute of International Affairs, the Chatham House; the Valdai Discussion Club, PIR Centre.

### **1.8 Scope of the Study**

This research seeks to rationale the shift in Russia's grand strategy orientations in the post-Cold War. The period of 1992-2008 was selected for analysis, as it appeared most suitable for tracing the development of Russian views over foreign policy between two main significant events from the Soviet collapse to the Georgian war when as a newly born Russian Federation attempts to forms her own version of foreign policy. The period can be divided into four dominant political discourses namely; the Westernism (1992-1994/5); the Eurasian Statism (1995-2000); Developmentalist Statism (2000-2004/05) and; Civilisationism (2005-2008).

This research traces the process of Russia's grand strategy formation to figure out the impact of status concern in variations of the state's foreign policy behaviours. In addition, it traces the change in Russia's grand strategy orientation from the reassurance toward the status quo to revisionism or anti status quo orientation after the colour revolution to developing an alternative explanation of revisionism. Furthermore, there is a detailed study that explores the changes in Russian grand strategy discourses shaped around the state's proper status, national interests by analysing Russian political leaders' rhetoric, and official doctrines. It also examines the state foreign policy actions and its diplomatic

behaviours as well official rhetoric explaining the action and behaviours. For example, how Russia acted in voting pro or against any UNSC resolution over the case in question, or how Russia acted in a certain agreement and what Russian policy makers stated to justify their actions.

The analysis of Russian grand strategy thinking is limited to the top political elites, the foreign and security policy makers not generally elites. The group includes mainly Russian presidents, Foreign Ministers, Defence Ministers, official spokespersons, as well as relevant Russian Federation representatives. While the status concern relies on the dichotomy of self/others, and the recognition of status relies on the behaviours of the *other*, in analysing outcome of the status concern, the focus is limited mainly to Russia's *self* and the perceived main *Other*, the West.

## **1.9 Organisation of the Study**

This research is divided into seven chapters. Chapter one is an overview of this study, introducing a short review of the background, identifying the problem statement, research objectives, questions and the significance of the study. This chapter also discusses the methodology used in this research, literature review, scope and limitations of the study.

Chapter two outlines the theoretical framework of the study. It attempts to conceptualise revisionism, identify revisionist/status quo through a brief review of prevailing theoretical explanations. It also attempts to develop an alternative explanation of why a rising power may adopt revisionism with focus on the role of status concern on rising great powers' grand strategy orientations. Conceptualising "status inconsistency" and "status recognition dilemma", that this study argues has been subject of confusion in IR; it explains how the process of changing perception from status inconsistency to status dilemma may cause rising states to adopt revisionism.

Chapter three discusses the grand strategy of Russian Federation immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, (1992-1994/05), to find out the influence of status concern on Russia's grand strategy making process. The chapter analyses Westernism as a prominent grand strategy thinking which conceptualized a pro-Western version of Russia's status and national interests and adopted strategic partnership with the West. It finally analyses the likely strategy to determine if the pursued strategy helped in gaining recognition of the aspired status. It provides insights on Russia's relations with Western institutions particularly NATO, as well the Serbia crisis where Russia sought to gain the recognition of the aspired status from the West through diplomatic efforts.

Chapter four traces the main changes and continuities of Russian grand strategic thinking from the mid-1990s to 1999/2000. It focuses on Eurasian statism as the prominent strategic thinking, with an emphasis on the state's historical and geopolitical potentials and adopted social creativity strategy counterbalancing the West through strategic partnership with non-Western great powers, China and India, and integration within the neighbouring Eurasian region. Finally, the chapter examines the likely strategy to find out whether it succeeded in establishing the aspired status. Other issues were Russia and the West's relations with NATO and the enlargement plan, the Kosovo and Iraq crisis as cases where Russia sought an aspired status and played a greater role as an equal to the West by adopting a more active foreign policy and diplomatic efforts.

Chapter five focuses on status concern in Russia's grand strategy from 2000 to the mid-2004/05. It analyses the dominant political discourse, Statists Developmentalism and the version of state's status involved changes and continuities of emphasis on Russia's historical values along with the standards of the modern world, and the adopted social competition strategy implying pragmatic cooperation with the West and pragmatic integration within Eurasian region. Beyond the state's relations with NATO and EU, the

failure or success of the strategic orientation was analysed particularly in the Iraq crisis and the colour revolutions in the former Soviet region were cases, which seriously tested post-Soviet Russia's grand strategies and the state's status aspiration.

Chapter six looks at changes in Russia's grand strategic orientation from the mid-2000s, particularly after the colour revolutions. This chapter briefly explains how the state's grand strategic orientation changed from reassurance of status quo to revisionism particularly after the colour revolutions. It outlines the main changes in Russian foreign policy, by explaining the mechanism that influenced the status dilemma. It then traces the shift in Russian foreign policy thinking through analysing the leaders' conceptualisation of Russia's status and the state's grand strategy orientation towards the international system.

Chapter seven summarises the main findings of the study. It offers an assessment of the issues analysed in the previous chapter and the impact of the ongoing concern of status (inconsistency and recognition dilemma) on post-Soviet Russia's grand strategy.

## CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Introduction

The history of world politics is full of revisionist powers who attempt to challenge what they perceived as an undesirable status quo order. It is not surprising that such states are still in existence even today. There is a continuous debate over the threat of Russia's revisionism and resurgence of its imperial past, particularly from the mid-2000s. It is worrying that the state's aggressive policies were directed towards its neighbours but mainly in the direction of the Western powers and Western liberal agenda. Compounded by the threat of "rising China" and other fast-growing powers, like India, Brazil this has intensified the significance of the study of revisionism. The importance would be greater if one regards the emergence of regional powers that are challenging the international order. Even though revisionism carries an important role in this scenario, very few studies have been conducted.

Particularly in the case of Russia, (as mentioned in Chapter 1), explaining its grand strategic orientations and its foreign behaviours continuously remind of the existence of a problematic issue for IR scholars, as the theories were used for the study worked defectively (Forsberg et al., 2014; Alexander Sergunin, 2016). Neither the conventional wisdoms of status quo revisionism duality, nor the non-rational approaches were enough to explain the state's grand strategic orientations and its foreign behaviours within the Cold War order. While, the non-rational approaches properly suggest that the question of the post-Soviet Russia's fluctuating strategic orientation is the irrational, emotional and ideational elements, in particular, the status concern, rather merely the power capabilities. Accordingly, scholars applying the approach and also politicians believe that beyond any other alternative goals, the question of Russian status concern became more important, and should be taken more seriously. Therefore, whilst there is a need to examine what the

new insights of the current theoretical rationales on the status and the international relations can bring to the analysis of Russia's foreign policy, alternatively, there is a need to explain what meaning the Russian concern over status would bring for IR theories.

Intellectuals recruiting certain theories mainly derived from Western speculations to explain grand strategy of Russia should regularly rationalize this versus assertions "that Russia is *sui generis*", and that empirically wisdom of historically, culturally background of Russia along with contemporary practical context are rather significant to comprehend Russia's international behaviours than any theoretical sophistication. Nevertheless, shown by the history of science contraposing theory versus empirically knowledge is fruitless (Forsberg et al., 2014; Alexander Sergunin, 2016). Highlighted by a Western scholar, "Without theoretical reflection, research on Russian foreign policy risks remain a branch of area studies that relies on descriptive approaches but at the same time is full of hidden commitments to dubious theoretical assumptions" (Forsberg et al., 2014, p. 262). As well, the lack of theoretical foundations would possibly risk research for missing either the critical edge or credibility. Strong claims over the role of status concern in Russian grand strategy orientations and foreign policy practices are made publicly or privately by diplomats and politicians, scholars, and journalists, nevertheless, such claims usually lack any closer theoretically and/or empirically rationalization, and even inconsistent each other's. Therefore, fruitful is that both theoretically and empirically approaches "should go hand in hand, and support each other" (Forsberg et al., 2014; Alexander Sergunin, 2016).

In contemporary world politics, gaining recognition of the higher status, hence being realized as a great power became a main goal of Russian foreign policy, and perhaps "more attractive than ever" for Russian politicians and elites. Notably, the concern is not incentive belonging to an archaic social system, losing its significance over time; neither

it is a factor applying only for power like Russia who is struggling for rise. Instead, concern over status or prestige, as an “everyday currency” of the world politics, is the concern of all actors and powers in one way or others in international system (Giplin, 1981, p.31; Neumann, 2014; Forsberg et al., 2014, p. 262). Therefore, properly examining the concern over status and its recognition, would help to comprehend the contemporary world politics and the transformation underlying them in wider sense. This means, concentrating on status concern would come up with new study agenda, in Russia’s grand strategy in particular and importantly in the study of IR in a wider scene.

This study examines studies covering revisionism and seeks to determine why rising powers opt for revisionism as their preferred choice instead of moderate political agendas. It would appear that some of these rising powers were averse to the constitutive structure. The states rather adopt revisionism due to the ideational attribute, a domestic political outcome of collective concern constructed around the state’s international status, than go through the process of change based on capability. This status concern indicates that the states aim to enhance their relative status to correct the perceived status inconsistency. However, failure to enhance the status or correct the inconsistency due to lack of recognition, this resulted the status recognition dilemma that caused the state to opt for more challenging ways of revisionism. This means recognition dilemma, as an outcome of failure of the status enhancement process, pursued through status enhancement strategies within status quo framework, led some states with no choice but to revise the status quo. As such, revisionism is ultimately a result of a domestic political consensus that is created from the status recognition dilemma.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first attempts to identify revisionist/ status quo, conceptualises revisionism through a critical review of prevailing conceptualizations and theoretical explanations. It also provides different types of grand strategy orientations



which rising states may adopt in international system, with regard to existing normative and constructive order. The second part develops an alternative explanation for adopting revisionism by rising powers.

## **2.2 Identification of Revisionist and status quo**

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Russia has been increasingly characterized as an anti-status quo revisionist power that has been working beyond, or partially within a global society under an international normative system within the Western academic and political sphere. The expanding aggressiveness and assertiveness in Russia's policies within and outside its borders was evidenced of its revisionist intentions against the international liberal centred status quo order. Beyond Russia's aggressiveness and harsh stance against the Western political security institutions, and challenging the Eurasian neighbours, particularly military operation against Georgia, later the state's interference in Ukraine and takeover of Crimean Peninsula, and support of Syrian regime were enough to prove their thoughts.

It was assumed that there are "values" or "goods" that dissatisfied state driven by cost beneficial calculations attempts to maximize their shares by challenging the status quo system. Dissatisfied utility maximiser Russia has been promoting revisionism to gain "strategic values" and "norm", power, security or prestige (status). It is reflected in its attempt to "build the Empire" based on their past inheritance from its Soviet past, through infringing on weaker states in neighbouring region, and other areas as evidenced by involvement in the Syrian conflict (Carafano et al., 2015; Fedorov, 2013; Spechler & Spechler, 2013; Mearsheimer, 2014).

There is also a latent hypothesis that the post-Cold War international status quo order, is well defined with norms and principles derived from liberal values shared by international society that "define who is within who is outside the order" (Ikenberry,

2009; Johnston, 2003). “The global liberal world order”, has been accordingly challenged by the dissatisfied rising “authoritarian” regime of Russia and its “anti-universalistic” orientation (Carafano et al., 2015; Sakwa, 2007; Speck, 2015, August 13).

The Western powers, mainly the US, are defenders maintaining the status quo but have been presented with challenges. Condoleezza Rice, the ex- US Secretary of states, alerted the US along with its allies of different “challenges”, rising from the anti-status quo China and Russia, would have for “the future of international peace” and most importantly for “the character of the international political system”. “The most daunting task” for the Western allies “is to find the right balance in ... policy toward Russia and China” (Rice, 2000, p. 56). While Russia’s socio-economic situation declined, its identity was threatened after Soviet collapse compounded by the institutionalised fragmented democracy, pseudo market economy and corruption. However, Russia is “determined to assert itself in the world and often does so in ways that are haphazard and threatening to American interests” (Rice, 2000, p. 57). As Rice reminds the West, with a massive territory, large military arsenal, nuclear weaponry Russia “still has many attributes of a great power”. Hence, she urged the West and the US to recognize that Moscow “will always have interests that will conflict as well as coincide” (Rice, 2000, pp. 59-60).

However, what can we understand from this? Who is revisionist and who is status quo? How can they be defined in the new century? Even with supremacy of the terms in IR theories and in discourse of global politicians, the status quo and revisionist remained vague and untheorized accurately (Jaschob, Rauch, Wolf, & Wurm, 2014; Johnston, 2003). A primary review underlines the reintroduction of revisionism to international relations provides a variety of theoretic assumptions. Nevertheless, the debate over the lack of systemic conceptualisation of revisionism has marginally changed from its classical realist roots. Still more surprisingly, there is less agreement over what the

revisionism is, what are the revisionist behaviours and orientations. Less surprisingly, the concepts of status quo/revisionism remained “somewhat nebulous and difficult to operationalise”, hence “it is necessary to define them as precisely as possible” (Schweller, 1994, pp. 104-105).

The dichotomisation of “revisionists”, “dissatisfied” and “status quo” or “satisfied” states as the common terms of IR are mainly backed to classical and neo classical realism. Prominent neo/classical realists portrayed a continuous struggle over values. Although with different labels, initial attempts to define revisionism and recognising revisionist/status quo states were more focused on material distribution; power or security seeking behaviours (Carr, 1946; Davidson, 2002, 2006; Kissinger, 1957; Morgenthau, 1978; Schweller, 1994, 1998; Randall L Schweller, 1999; Wolfers, 1962).<sup>24</sup>

The emphasis on the distribution of power weighted on Morgenthau’s definition of “imperialist”, “a nation whose foreign policy is aimed at acquiring more power than it actually has, through a reversal of existing power relations between two nations” versus a status quo nation which “tends to keep power and not change the distribution of power” (Morgenthau, 1978, pp. 52-53). However, he cautioned that not all changes are revisionism, instead the changes that are crucial. As he distinguishes it from the status quo policies of maintaining power distribution “as it exists at a particular moment in history” by opposing to “any change” imposing “a reversal of the power relations among

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<sup>24</sup> In his well-known work, “The Twenty Years’ Crisis”, Carr (1946) made a distinction between “nations desirous of maintaining the status quo and nations desirous of changing it”. Regarding, the struggle between nations for equality, he distinguished it amongst the “privileged and unprivileged, the champions of an existing order and the revolutionaries” (Carr, 1946, p. 227). In such characterization, Carr reminds that the battle of satisfied actors with dissatisfied is totally over power capabilities not struggle based on morality. According to Carr, “it is profoundly misleading to represent the struggle between satisfied and dissatisfied powers as a struggle between morality on one side and power on the other. It is a clash in which, whatever the moral issue, power politics are equally predominant on both sides” (Carr, 1946, pp. 105-106) Wolfers (1962), characterises the revisionist who aims to “self-extension”, demanding, “values not already enjoyed” hence, seeks “to change the status quo”, whereas status quo power encourages “self-preservation” demanding protection of an established distribution of the values. The scholar concludes that the consistently self-extension powers seek to gain more power; they would be the initiators of a “power competition” (Wolfers, 1962, pp. 90-92).

two or more nations”.<sup>25</sup> He also distinguishes revisionism from “minor adjustments” that in final analysis “are fully compatible with a policy of the status quo”, since the minor changes “leave intact the relative power positions of the nations concerned” (Morgenthau, 1978, p. 46). While Morgenthau’s account added new dimension in typology of policy behaviours, and the change in international order but his account was similarly rested on power distribution as a core value. As well, the account did not clear how such status quo, minor adjustment or major revisionism would be determined (Johnston, 2003).

Notably, some neoclassical realists also concentrated on the realist legacy of dichotomisation of a “preference” over change of some facet of the global goods distribution at the expenses of status-quo states. Considering the range of states interests,<sup>26</sup> from those demanding revisionist orientations, versus others reflecting status quo preferences, in his various studies, the neoclassical realist Schweller formulates different types of states (Schweller, 1994, 1998, 1999). Using a metaphor, he presents a typology of powers and preferences, from limited and unlimited revisionists based on the degree to which they can or will to “pay costs” to change the current system rather than maintaining it. In comparison to status quo states, weak or extreme, are willing to pay more for preserving the status quo rather changing the order (Schweller, 1994, pp. 100-104; 1998, pp. 23-24; 1999).<sup>27</sup> Status-quo can create more “self-preservation” and protect

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<sup>25</sup> The change according to Morgenthau can be reducing for example, A from a first-rate to a second-rate power and raising B to the eminent position A formerly held”.

<sup>26</sup> According to, Rynning and Ringsmose (2008, p. 28), as a neoclassical realist Randall Schweller, reintroduced “state interests”, more clearly “as a variable between structure and behaviour, or: power and policy”.

<sup>27</sup> Limited revisionists, “Jackals” are the powers willing to “pay high costs” to preserve what they have, even more “to extend their values”. In other words, limited revisionists are willing to pay slightly more for altering the status quo rather maintaining. While unlimited revisionists, “Wolves” are those “predatory” powers who “value what they covet far more than what they possess”. With no “fear of loss”, these powers persuade “reckless expansion”. The history is full of stories of actors that pursued to maximize their power, and bet on their survival to enhance –not merely upholding– own standing stances in the interstate system. Thus, unlimited revisionists are willing to pay much more altering the status quo than expending resources to maintain it. Status quo states are willing to pay for preserving the status quo rather changing the order. As “extremely satisfied” status quo states, Lions persuade “self-preservation” means they will hire “high cost costs to protect what they possess but only a small price to increase what they value”. Consistent with realist assumption, this group of powers are “defensive positionalists and security-maximizers”. The final group, “Lambs”, are “the weak states” persuading “self-abnegation” as they are willing to “pay low” cost for defending or extending their values (Schweller, 1994, pp. 100-104; 1998, pp. 23-24).

“values they already possess”. The powers are “security-maximisers” rather than “power-maximisers”, whereas revisionists, dissatisfied powers represent power, “profit”, maximisers seek self-extensions and “covets more than what they currently possess”. Even on a different scale, “they will employ military force to change the status quo and to extend their values” (Schweller, 1994, pp. 104-105).<sup>28</sup>

J. W. Davidson characterises revisionists as “those states that seek to change the distribution of goods -territory, status, markets, expansion of ideology, and the creation or change of international law and institutions” (Davidson, 2006, p. 13). While the latest factors of international laws and institutions adds novelty of his definition, the conceptualisation remains in the realist mainstream as it was based on goods distribution and the quantity the actors can or will to wage for the change. The scholar characterises revisionist states considering their revisionist objective, as well as inclination and readiness giving to attain the objective. He realises that there are states with “minor revisionist aims” and “states with professed revisionist aims.”(Davidson, 2002, p. 126).<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, the neo/classical realist attempts to conceptualise revisionism by measuring goals and grouping revisionist states considering their will or capability to giving expenses of revisionism that may lead to the “risk of tautology”. By measuring dissatisfaction/ revisionism, these approaches focus on outcome and symptoms, ignores the process of “what causes powers to be dissatisfied or satisfied” (Chan, 2004; 2015, p. 6). If revisionism is the “preference over outcomes” then what causes such preference? More importantly, this leads to oversimplifying revisionism/ dissatisfaction upon

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<sup>28</sup> While self- extension as a synonym of revisionism is for both limited and unlimited revisionism, self-preservation term to define the extreme status quo powers, the weak state according to Schweller are status quo whose aim is to “self-abnegation”.

<sup>29</sup> The expected change must be “an element of some magnitude in the foreign policy of revisionist power”, according to the scholar, it “would be theoretically and empirically useless to categorize states with minor revisionist aims (for example, Japan and the Northern Territories) as revisionist or to categorize all states with professed revisionist aims as revisionists” (Davidson, 2002, p. 126). Going further he attempts to recognize the origins of revisionism in his account, is mainly domestic politics, security maximizing or autonomy wishes and opportunities to persuade such the revisionist goals” (Davidson, 2002, p. 126).

undergoing changes linked to material capabilities in the global system that may cause lack of knowledge on qualitative crucial challenges that may rise in future (Davidson, 2002, p. 126).<sup>30</sup>

In fact, it was found that the current neo/classical realist account of revisionist status quo, which gauges the dissatisfaction and resulting willingness to revise status quo is too simplistic to account for the preferences that states may exhibit (Chan, 2015). The approaches do not clarify any attempt to modify in the system is a radical revisionism. It was argued that a Russian attempt to maximise security interests through refining the “sphere of influence” is not unique; it is business as usual for great powers. If the account is true, then “do US officials believe that China’s actions in the South China Sea, Turkey’s policies towards Iraq and Syria, and Saudi Arabia’s actions in Bahrain and Yemen do not involve such a consideration?” (Carpenter, 2017, January 19). Moreover, as seen over the centuries, a state may pursue different goals and preferences simultaneously. Some states may not like some aspects of the distribution system and might want to change it. They may take over certain areas that used to belong to the neighbours in the past, while at the same time, they may remain satisfied with other dimensions of the system which provide them with opportunities to rise further, hence they resist changing the dimensions (Chan, 2015).<sup>31</sup> For example, Russia was dissatisfied with the Western security agenda, the NATO enlargement to the Balkan and the West military operation in Kosovo but, at the same time it allowed to US to access Central Asia and even provide intelligence aids during the Afghanistan War.

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<sup>30</sup> Davidson highlighted the fact, however his account still suffered the issue. For example, regard footnote 29.

<sup>31</sup> Revealed by Chan (2015, p. 13) state can attempt to maintain their “sphere of influence such as in the Western Hemisphere (the Monroe Doctrine) while criticizing and resisting similar efforts by others (the Brezhnev Doctrine in Russia’s near abroad)”.

In addition, revisionism in realist accounts may carry the risk of “false positives and negatives” judgments of states’ behaviours. Classifying such an actor as a revisionist state that may have “profound consequences” (Chan, 2004, p4).<sup>32</sup> Is Russia’s symbolic action in planting flag under the ice cap at the North Pole was threatening status quo order, as Canadian foreign minister claimed, that should be responded immediately? (RFE/RL, 2007, August 3).<sup>33</sup> Alternatively, while the US missile deployment in Poland is defined as a defensive action against North Korea or Iran, should Russia’s similar plan for missile deployment “in Kozelsk” or to “deploy the Iskandar missile system in the Kaliningrad Region to neutralize the [US] missile defence system [in Europe]” be interpreted as a revisionist action? (Medvedev, 2008, November 5). Indeed, it is not clear in realism which major state is satisfied with the current distribution system in the international order.

Eschew using the term of revisionism, in his notorious work, “A World Restored”, Kissinger (1957), utilizes the term “legitimacy” as a new dimension in the definition of revisionism. The scholar identified legitimacy as the centre of an enduring conflict between the satisfied status quo states who accept the existing order and its legitimacy versus those “revolutionary” actors who see “the international order or the manner of legitimising it as oppressive” (Kissinger, 1957, p. 2). Legitimacy is the recognition and approval of the status quo structure by every great power; at degree, no state is as discontented as “Germany after the Treaty of Versailles”.<sup>34</sup> Adding the variable, in Kissinger’s view, neither all dissatisfied states are revisionists, nor are all changes

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<sup>32</sup> Should a possible China’s missile installation in Taiwan “a geostrategic parallel to Cuba” be interpreted by the US as a “revisionist challenge”? (Chan, 2015, p. 15).

<sup>33</sup> Refer to the action, The Canadian Foreign Minister said Russia is “going around the world and just plant flags and say ‘We’re claiming this territory’”.

<sup>34</sup> The terms of legitimacy here never mean justice or morality. As Kissinger (1957, p. 1) defines legitimacy “means no more than an international agreement about the nature of workable arrangements and about the permissible aims and methods of foreign policy”.

revisionism, since accepting the legitimacy of the status quo order, dissatisfied states can still pursue “adjustments”. Indeed, those states pursue changes merely within the perceived legitimate framework of the status quo order, not change of the system itself.

Even wars, in that account, are not necessarily meant to be revolutionary, since “they will be fought in the name of the existing structure and the peace which follows will be justified as a better expression of the ‘legitimate’ general consensus”. Conversely, for a revolutionary state, “it is not the adjustment of differences within a given system which will be at issue, but the system itself” (Kissinger, 1957, pp. 1-2). Hence, revisionism as Kissinger characterizes, most importantly, is a vital shift in the international status quo system, a revolutionary fundamental change of the system itself rather within the system, as the legitimacy of the system is questioned by dissatisfied states.

Kissinger’s account of revisionism was different, as he saw the change more essentially, however in the final analysis, the dis/satisfaction of states depends on their assumption of il/legitimacy of the distribution of a good system. Also, it is not clear how the status quo framework and the distribution system gain legitimacy themselves that revolutionary dissatisfied wish to challenging? What or who will legitimate or de-legitimate other actors in terms of what to be and how to act? The questions were posed by Russian elite in response to Colin Powell’s, (the then US Secretary of State) criticisms of Moscow for its policy “toward neighbours” and its imperfect democracy with a “political power that is not yet fully tethered to law”. The Russian scholar asked, “Why do the Americans think it’s alright for them to plant bases all around our borders, while they feel free to criticise every Russian military movement in the former Soviet Union?” Why do they think that they have the right, according to Alexander Kononov, “to impose their views of democracy and strategic necessity in every situation?” (Independent, 2004, January 24).



The well-known power transition scholars, Oraganski and Kugler, distinguished actors in terms of how they looked at “the rules of the game”. Status quo states who benefit from the existing rules hence defend the rules, while revisionists, “challengers” challenge the rules, as they plan “to redraft the rules by which relations among nations work”. The new rules would bring “new place for themselves in international society” in line with their increased capability (Oraganski & Kugler, 1980, pp. 19-23).<sup>35</sup> The rule of the game inspired recently, Daase and Deitelhoff (2014) who defines “resistance”, *Widerstand*, read revisionism, strategies against the global rule, *globaler Herrschaft*. Accordingly, resistance is form of opposition that remains through conventional boundaries of global rule. Dissidence, however, refers to rejecting or bringing radical change to the rules of the game imposed by the status quo. Highlighting the legitimacy of the rules, the study argues that dissidence questions the legitimacy of international order, hence, the actor wishes to play out against it. While the categorization of strategic orientations is somehow similar to Schweller’s un/limited aims revisionism, it also has a similar weakness, as it based on actual behaviour, not preferences over outcomes. Yet the account does not clarify what the “rules” are? How they are legitimised? How do states convince themselves that the rules of the games should be changed? Or what process caused them to prefer such an outcome?

Any answer to the questions begins with the factor/s shaping the status quo order, along with the essential principle/s that the system is based upon. In a more convincing way, the neoclassical realists Gilpin (1981, p. 34) characterise the international system by considering the main components: distribution of power capabilities (resources) and prestige hierarchy, and in line with Hedley Bull, a set of rules and rights governing or influencing actors’ interactions within the system. In their view, rules and norms is a basic

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<sup>35</sup> From this view, revisionists are displeased of their status, “the position in the system”.

prerequisite of any human society hence any interaction system including and not limited to the “domestic political system” and “international system” (Gilpin, 1981, p. 28). The latest component, norms and rules became the “process variables” in defining the international order, as they institutionalise and legitimise operations and dynamics of the system (Glenn H. Snyder, 1996). Regarding those main components, the status quo/revisionist actors would be identifiable.

The English school particularly emphasises on the normative system including norms, rules and principles, that legitimise the international system; governs the states, as the member of international community, recognises legitimate states, and their behaviours within a specific territory and in their interactions with others within the international system (Bukovansky, 2002; Bull, 1977; Ikenberry, 2001; Krasner, 2001; Reus-Smit, 1997). According to Bukovansky, international systems establish various political culture, a set of implicit or explicit propositions, norms and principles, the “common denominator” legitimatising the system authority amongst actors (Bukovansky, 2002, pp. 7-12).<sup>36</sup>

Therefore, every international status quo order has a system of norms and rules for the distribution of goods and prestige. The normative system comprising a set of intersubjective ideas, also outlines type of states, recognise legitimate states, as a member of the international society and distinguishes from de-legitimises, and appropriate actions of states (Krasner, 2001; Reus-Smit, 1997).<sup>37</sup> In this sense, variation in international order is not limited to the distribution of goods, but also the normative system legitimising it.

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<sup>36</sup> The concept of culture here means the common understanding of norms and rules as the constitutive component of international system.

<sup>37</sup> Krasner (2001, p. 173) underlines the significance of collective rules and norms in “every international system or society” that “define actors and appropriate behaviour”. Reus-Smit (1997, p. 577) highlights the significance of “elementary rules of practice that states formulate to solve the coordination and collaboration problems associated with coexistence under anarchy.”

Bukovansky (2002) typifies “sovereignty” as the “constitutive principle” in international political culture for eras with a set of principles and norms legitimize and regulate the appropriate actions of sovereign states. Sovereignty, however, was “quite elastic” during the centuries. It was constant during the mid-18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup>, but the “modes and sources” of sovereignty have been contested (Bukovansky, 2002, p. 23). Mainly after the French Revolution with the emergence of “popular sovereignty”, the claim to represent the will of people within a specific territory became alternative principle of legitimising actor and their acts. While previously the rule of monarchs was legitimated through referencing the “blood and divine sanction”, the realm of sovereign was looked upon as patriarchal (Bukovansky, 2002, pp. 110-165). Today, “human rights” and “sovereignty” are coded as a core of political culture of international system (Bukovansky, 2002, p. 16; Sakwa, 2007, p. 212).

This normative system is primarily self-legitimising. The norms and principles in each era validates the system authority and its hegemony amongst the actors, by institutionalising the distribution of goods and prestige among different states.<sup>38</sup> The normative system also recognises who is legitimate to carry out certain role by examining the typology of states as a hegemon, super or great, middle or regional power even weaker and “rouge states”. While the hierarchical hegemonic system or “social order,” is not entirely contingent on a hierarchical distribution of power-wealth and prestige, it is not neutral, as it has implications for the distributive system and actors. This means it legitimates special status and the role for the hegemonic state/s as leader/s or great

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<sup>38</sup> Hegemony in the English schools means both “power configuration” and “a certain culture” as a “shared knowledge structure, which reinforces that power configuration”. The system authority in English schools are not derived from the hegemonic powers rather the powers partly constituted by, the very orders that presumably depend on their power. Essentially, the hegemon “does not stand outside the hegemonic order” rather they are, “subject to it” (Bukovansky, 2002, p. 46).

power/s. Other states desire to have such a role, as no one wishes to be a rogue (Bukovansky, 2002).<sup>39</sup>

The political culture establishes series of shared “rules of the game”, under which any claims of legitimacy, moving from one status to other, usually the higher, within the order are validated. The mechanism would say how states can act and what they should have to be legitimised (Krasner, 2001; Reus-Smit, 1997). For example, in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Japan planned to enhance its standing among global powers, but it failed since the rules legitimating the standing was based on racial hierarchy (Ward, 2013). States like North Korea, Iran and Vietnam used to be examples delegitimised by the normative system, as the “outlaw” or “rogue states”. Since they possess attributes and act in ways that are not acknowledged by the contemporary normative system of international order; possessing or attempting to possess nuclear weapon or supporting terrorism (Simpson, 2004, pp. 227-253).

What constitutes the international status quo order from ideal-typical methodologies where one emphasizes on distribution system of goods, power, wealth, and prestige and others is that it relies on constitutive and normative structure.

### **2.2.1 Re-conceptualisation and Typology of Grand Strategy Orientations**

Based on this background, this research argues that revisionism is an evolutionary process moving from systemic status quo, which mean “maximum affirmation” of existing order, to revolutionary revisionism, as a “maximum rejection”, of the order. History shows that most actors can pursue a strategy between status quo and radical

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<sup>39</sup> In the approach, a political culture of the system constitutes leadership roles for great powers hence it allows to see a system of several great powers as hegemon, for example the European concert of great powers was hegemonic system but without single hegemon. This of course never mean to ignore the single hegemon, as Bukovansky referred the contemporary international order as a hegemonic order with single hegemon (Bukovansky, 2002, p. 47).

revisionism in between radical conjunctures.<sup>40</sup> Regarding the components of international order, this research suggests ideally grand strategic orientations, ranging from the *Status quo*, *Adjustive Reassurance* and finally *Revolutionary Revisionism*.

#### **2.2.1.1 Status quo**

The term “status quo” implies an affirmation of the existing order at its most basic level, the distribution system, along with the normative system including rules, norms validating the order, its systemic hegemony. Simply put, the status quo is satisfied with the distribution system and normative structure of international order legitimising the distribution system. The state, which adopts the status quo, does not seek to change and challenge, instead it commits to the existing order. This definition is somehow similar with “maximum affirmation” or “affirmative” status quo, an acceptance of and commitment to the international “rule”, “order” or “society” introduced by some previous studies (Daase & Deitelhoff, 2014; Jaschob et al., 2014; Legro, 2007; Ward, 2013). However, it is distinguished from those works that characterise status quo orientation as limited and having a one-dimensional orientation. Instead, this research highlights satisfaction that varies over two- dimensions.<sup>41</sup>

#### **2.2.1.2 Adjustive Reassurance**

The orientation stresses the dissatisfaction of states merely on the goods distribution system. In other words, there is a level of dissatisfaction over one dimension, the distributive system, while there is some satisfaction of the normative system, which would lead the state to adopt *Adjustive Reassurance*. States adopting this orientation seek

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<sup>40</sup> Davidson (2006) highlights, typifying states based on oversimplified dichotomization between two radical point of satisfied, status quo/ revisionists, how one can discern “Weimar Imperial from Nazi Germany”, similarly “Cuba from the Soviet Union”.

<sup>41</sup> The status quo orientation is an ideal type of small states, and dominant powers. The first adopts the orientation more because of its inability to challenge the order and the second group persuades it due to satisfaction of the existing order. As Organski (1968) highlights “World peace is guaranteed when the nations satisfied with the existing international order enjoy an unchallenged supremacy of power” (Organski, 1968).

to adjustment,<sup>42</sup> a change in dissatisfaction dimension, gaining more sources from the distribution system but more importantly, without challenging and/or at least attempting to commit or reassure the basic, fundamental norms, rules and normative dimension of international order.<sup>43</sup> In other words, attempting to limited change in existing power sources but through following “the rules of the game” validated by the status quo normative system (Daase & Deitelhoff, 2014; Jaschob et al., 2014; Ward, 2013). So long as the first dimension, limited and partial altering of distributive system, in aspect causing dissatisfaction make the orientation close to revisionism, the second, reassuring the constitutive order and the fundamental rules and norm close it to status quo, in its broader definition.

Reassurance, here suggests using “a broad set of strategies”, the “less risky” and “less costly” ways, by a state to assure or convince others, “adversaries”, “of the limits of its objectives, the benefits of negotiation, and the importance of acceptable limits of competition”, to decrease miscalculation between adversaries or competitors that usually causes war (Stein, 1991, p. 432). Stein (1991) introduces a range of strategies of less risky and less costly ways for reassurance “that might reduce risks in the management of a relationship among adversaries”. “Restraint” emphasizes on “not exacerbating the pressures and constraints that operate on their adversary to use force”; informal development of “norms of competition to regulate their conflict”; “irrevocable commitments”, and limited security “informal or formal regimes” that “designed

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<sup>42</sup> The term was borrowed from neoclassical realists; (Kissinger, 1957; Morgenthau, 1978).

<sup>43</sup> In line with classical realists, Ward (2013, p. 609) called it as a limited revisionism different from systemic revisionism. Daase and Deitelhoff (2014) and Jaschob et al. (2014) called “opposition” as a commonly less radical and more limited aim towards international order. Discerning from radical systemic revisionism, what Jaschob et al. (2014, p. 10) calls “dissidence” the limit revisionism, read adjustive reassurance, “is not ready to break the fundamental rules of the international order neither in word nor in deed” (Jaschob et al., 2014, p. 10).

specifically to build confidence, reduce uncertainty, and establish acceptable limits of competition” (Stein, 1991, p. 432).

The rationalist theory, mainly rational choice associated with security dilemma, highlights sending “costly signalling” as a way to reassurance. The strategies here are rationally answer to the “problems of mistrust in potential conflict situations”. Accordingly, “reassurance through costly signals” can “reduce mistrust” hence it would ultimately lead “to full cooperation” (Kydd, 2000, pp. 326-327). Relatedly, states pursue reassurance through sending costly signal, a certain sort of information to other/s that their intentions are benign rather aggressive. This can include a wide range of issues.

Kydd (2000), for example highlights Mikhail Gorbachev used new thinking as a “strategy of reassuring concessions”. As the author interprets “the decisive events” stand out in the years 1985 to 1990, “as costly signals in the framework of the reassurance game” sent by Soviet leaders “to radically change Western perceptions” of their “intentions and motivations” hence “build trust”. The events included “the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty; “the 1988 withdrawal from Afghanistan”, “announcement of conventional force reductions”, and “the 1989 non-interference in Eastern Europe revolutions” were particular examples of the costly signals sent by Soviet’ leaders (Kydd, 2000, pp. 327-341).<sup>44</sup>

The *adjustive reassurances* depends highly on the later aspect, the reassurance by which, a state, “would-be challenger”, assure other powers, particularly the dominant powers that its intention is limited to change in a marginal dimension not the hegemonic hierarchy or the legitimacy of status quo normative order itself. The reassurance “may be useful” mainly “to a would-be challenger in a deterrence relationship who, while actively

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<sup>44</sup> Compare to previous approach, in rational choice theory the signal must be “adequately costly” not “cheap talk”.

considering the option of a resort to force, nevertheless attempts to persuade a defender of the limits of its objectives, the benefits of negotiation, and the importance of acceptable limits of competition” (Stein, 1991, p. 432). Hence, reassurance is a likely orientation of a rising power who seeks to adjust the distribution dimension but through a less risky, less costly way, as through reassurance, any further suspicion and hence forming any countervailing alliances may be prevented.

The orientation is also contingent to play under the rules of the game legitimated by status quo normative order. It implies acceptance of the overall validity of the political culture, its norms legitimating the distribution system, and the acts of different actors within the order. Reassurance is the ability of state to pursue change to ameliorate its dissatisfaction, with convincing others of its general satisfaction of normative dimension of status quo. A state is “aiming for changes” within the status quo order, while “most importantly it will follow the rules of the game” and “norms of competition” imposed by the existing normative system (Jaschob et al., 2014, p. 10; Stein, 1991, pp. 432-433).

The strategies to enhance the states’ status, in IR derived from social psychology, (discussed in next part) can be categorized as the *adjustive reassurance*. For example, as analysed in this research, after the Soviet collapse, Russia had pursued strategies to enhance its status, adjusting the distribution system, simultaneously, it sought to reassure the Western powers and its institutional arrangements that the state’s intention is benign and its objective is limited through signalling the West or confirming the accepted Western liberal normative order.

The strategies pursued by post-soviet Russia were up to the mid-2000s. Besides her occasional and dimensional dissatisfaction of the West and Western political security or socio-economic institutions, Russia pursued strategies committed to reassuring the status quo order. For example, apart from rhetorical request of membership in the initial years



after the Soviet collapse, Russia signed the Funding Act in 1997, joined “the NATO-Russia Council (NRC)” in 2002, participated in operations within the EU “European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)”, and ratified CFE in 1999 and so on.<sup>45</sup> In line with Stein (1991) through joining in such limited security “informal or formal regimes” Russia signalled the West to make “confidence” and reduce uncertainty, misperception and miscalculation over her intentions and policies.

Similarly, in line with Kydd (2000) Russia stood for reassurance in “the decisive events” of international relations at least up to the mid-2000s. In different rounds of NATO and EU Eastward enlargements, Russian leaders signalled the West that they committed to the rules of the game and norms of the status quo, via respecting the decision taken by “the sovereign” states in neighbour states while asking for “special relations” within the organisation over certain issues. Russia pursued its objective of gaining equal standing by competing strongly in main security issues, in Balkan and Iraq, at the same time Russia pursued its objectives with diplomatic efforts either within the UNSC, or within the Western initiatives for example the Contact Group in Balkan crisis in the 1990s.

### **2.2.1.3 Revolutionary Revisionism**

Based on the ideal-typical methodologies, the unsatisfactory position of an actor with the distributive system and more importantly, the normative structures of status quo order legitimising such an unsatisfactory distribution system would lead to adopt a radical or *revolutionary revisionism*. An orientation challenges the international status quo fundamentally, its distribution system, “hegemonic leadership” and its “constructive principles, norms and rules that reinforce the “hierarchic and normative structure” of the

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<sup>45</sup> It was signed in signed in 1990.

system.<sup>46</sup> This is the opposite pole of the status quo of “maximum affirmation” as it pursues the “maximum” or “systemic” rejection and “revolutionary” challenges of status quo order, desire to eliminate the existing order, “break the fundamental rules” and replace it with a new one (Daase & Deitelhoff, 2014; Jaschob et al., 2014; Legro, 2007; Ward, 2013).

The latest crucial factor also moves the revolutionary revisionism beyond the second category or *adjustive reassurance*.<sup>47</sup> In fact, the normative and constitutive dimensions validate the hegemonic hierarchy and domination of the status quo order itself, which is then challenged. This makes it harder to develop a grand strategy of reconciliation or accommodation. Therefore, contrary to a more limited one, the revolutionary revisionists are reluctant or incapable to go forward to demonstrate the restraint and commitment to reassurance (Daase & Deitelhoff, 2014; Jaschob et al., 2014; Legro, 2007; Ward, 2013). As they believe “active involvement in overturning that order serves national interests” (Legro, 2007, p. 9).

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of fully-fledged revisionism is that it is more threatening and high risk. Adopting this strategy may probably lead to different actions hence generating risk for others within the status quo order. In line with Stein (1991), while in reassurance policy, the “would-be challenger” sends signals to persuade the defender/s of its limit objectives that would be appeased through negotiation, or “acceptable limits of competition”. In revolutionary revisionism, a revisionist state

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<sup>46</sup> Such conceptualization of revisionism is what mainly realists called as the “revolutionary” change of status quo order (Chan, 2004, 2015; Kissinger, 1957; Morgenthau, 1978; Schweller, 1994, 1998; Randall L Schweller, 1999; Ward, 2013). Legro (2007, p. 9) proposed, “Revisionism refers to states that reject the dominant norms of interaction in a given international society”.

<sup>47</sup> While the limited version stresses altering the marginal dimension of existing order, (by enhancing status in system hierarchy, regaining part of a territory, or to increase the economic share) it is more compatible with the wider reassurance towards status quo order, and its defender/s.

instead send inappeasable signal/s.<sup>48</sup> In other words, in radical revisionism, a state prefers a revolutionary change of the status quo “with preparedness to break existing norms and rules” and its hierarchical hegemony (Jaschob et al., 2014, p. 11).<sup>49</sup> Altogether, the proposed unwillingness or incapability to reassure other powers is the main difference between revolutionary and limited revisionism (Wards, 2013).

As explained in chapter 6, withdrawing from CFE, OSCE, and ODIHR, revising arm racing and militarisation, indicated that Russia withdrew from post-Soviet commitment to limited informal or formal political security regimes with the West. Additionally, with interference in sovereignty of some former soviet republics; using different offensive tactics particularly rounds of energy cut offs against Estonia, Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus, and finally military aggression in Georgia indicated that Russia did not “restraint” anymore, and violated “norms of competition”, and the “rule of the game”. In other words, Russia signalled the West and status quo order, if any, that Russia withdrew from post-soviet reassurance commitments instead it pursued radical revision of the international liberal status quo.

Revisionism is hence, a preference of a dissatisfied state who attempt to challenge the status order, questioning the legitimacy of established political culture of the order its normative system, and the distribution of goods system. In this sense, it is an “orthodoxy”, “revolutionary”, “maximum” and a “systemic” change of the status quo order persuaded pursued by dissatisfied revisionist power in a high “costly” and “risky” ways to challenge

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<sup>48</sup> Least willingness to “participate” in “international institutions”; least “involvement in regulating policymaking process in the institutions, or breaking the role legitimized by institutions and accepted during membership, or even “contemporary” acceptance of rules but attempt to “break” them; behaviours signalling at realizing the redistribution of power, mainly “to this end military power” as a “critical tool, are amongst the sings moving towards revolutionary revisionism (Johnston, 2003, pp. 11-12). Similarly, Chan (2004b) convinces membership and participation in international governmental institutions (IGO’s), and Ward (2013) hinted the membership in existing institutions as a marker of satisfied states, and hence withdraw from the institutions as an indicator dissatisfied revisionist.

<sup>49</sup> Jaschob et al. (2014, p. 11) indicated how “Imperial Japan” moved from “an affirmative” power committed to reassurance to a “full-scale revisionist” one in mid-late 1930s. Particularly after July 1937, according to the authors, Japan used “the Marco Polo bridge incident” as a pretext” of waging war with “Kuomintang government”, thereafter Tokyo “was fully committed to overthrow the existing regional order and ready to pay almost any price” (Jaschob et al., 2014, p. 21).

the order. Therefore, synonymising with “scientific revolutions”, that happened in scientific communities, what Thomas Kuhn (1970) called as a “paradigm shift”, revisionism is a paradigm shift in an international system to a new constitutive and normative order with its core norms, principles legitimizing the order, its hegemonic hierarchy, and its distribution system. Of course, with a great difference with science that revisionism is “a neutral word for innovative work”, here is more “pejorative word”, using “risky” and “costly” way of challenging the conventional wisdoms (Fitzpatrick, 2007).

There is a daunting task to identify grand strategic moves toward revolutionary revisionism. Besides conceptualizing an actor, as revisionist does not necessarily predict conflict or war. Revisionist objectives are only preferences through outcomes. They do not say much about what particular strategies or actions will be or should be followed to attain the goals intended (Chan, 2004; Powell, 1994). However, the specific markers is located in aggressive rhetorical and official criticising of status quo order, and challenging the existing normative system and rules and openly aspire to establishing a new, different international order with new normative principles (Legro, 2007). Added by indicators including “internalised preference” of, and an increased influence of domestic actors publicly committed to rejecting the status quo; Withdrawal from international institutions;<sup>50</sup> or general unwillingness or incapability to collaborate with states that ensure the status quo;<sup>51</sup> and willingness to realizing radical redistribution of sources that

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<sup>50</sup> This Withdrawal from international institutions; a general unwillingness or incapability to collaborate with the status quo including range of behaviours. To see more footnote 48, p. 83.

<sup>51</sup> Regarding the internal influence of domestic actors’ proponents of revisionism, as indicator, noted earlier Davidson (2002) explained how Mussolini utilizes nationalism resonated by nationalist groups in persuading a revisionist goal at the end of 1930s. Similarly, overexpansion of Germany was indicated “by a logrolling process controlled by the cartelized elites” typifies of rising developing society and “the strategic ideologies that were the by-product of this coalition making” (Snyder, 1991, p. 111). The scholar concludes revisionism and aggression of Germany because of a deep-seated “pathological domestic structures”. In Japan, Snyder shows how “domestic pathologies” connected with industrialization pushed Japan on the way “towards militarism and imperialism”, a path that further consolidated by, “not dictated”, other powers’ policies and international conditions and stimulus (Snyder, 1991, p. 152). In an earlier study, Chan highlighting membership in International Governmental Organization as criteria for evaluating the degree of rising states’ satisfaction systematically, Chan shows how membership in IGO tends to increase after each about of severing international conflict. He confirmed that as the frequency of war declines, the number of IGOs rise over time; and there is a tendency for states that were about to start wars to reduce their membership in IGOs, or at least, not to join IGOs as much as other states. Hence Chan emphasized, satisfied are more likely to belong IGOs (Chan, 2004a). The end of the cold war, he shows that the quantity of “revisionist states” declined. Adopting liberal democracy and market-oriented economy, many of rising states, particularly Eastern Central European countries increasingly took participation in IGOs. China also shows a remarkable tendency in membership in

the state then acts upon with military force (Chan, 2004, 2015; Davidson, 2002; Johnston, 2003; Kim, 1989; Ward, 2013).

This study shows (in Chapter 6) how changing perception from inconsistency to recognition dilemma left Russia no choice except revisionism. That particularly indicated in Russian official doctrines, leaders and political elites' aggressive rhetoric stand against liberal status quo and their emphasis on creating a new polycentric international order with new normative system based on sovereign democracy, and new political security and economic architectures. As well, the chapter shows how humiliation and resentment towards the West within Russia's political landscape caused to develop Russian hardliner coalition (military hawkish and civilizationists nationalists) influence and resonate their revisionist preference for rejecting the status quo spill over in Russian grand strategy in the year following the colour revolutions.

Russian revisionist orientation also translated in aggressive foreign policies and behaviours illustrated by withdraw from the West and Western political security institutions, from CFE, OSCE, harsh opposition to NATO enlargement particularly over Ukraine and Georgia membership and intensification of militarization and arm race. The state further challenged the status quo and particularly the West by aggressions against new members of Atlantic political and security system, its Eurasian neighbours, that finally lead to wage of war against Georgia 2008.

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different IGO's. Hence, rising temptations in joining the IGO's by the states, Chan (2004a, p. 234) concludes "one can infer that they are more satisfied now than perhaps at any other time in the precedent half-century". Regarding the indicators, Ward (2013, pp. 633-639) explained qualitatively how perception identity inferiority and realization of Japan's request of higher position created humiliation and resentment within the state towards the Western powers. Mainly, during the mid-late 1930s, Japan was incapable or unwilling to continue cooperation with the Western great powers. The result according to the author was Japan's withdrawal from the League that indicated Japanese' revisionist preference to move to wage war against the Western powers (Will be discussed next).

### 2.3 Revolutionary Revisionism and Russia

Several approaches scrutinize why states occasionally adopt revisionism. As mentioned in Chapter 1 the conventional wisdoms convince rising states may adopt revisionism because of the relative capabilities whether declining or rising, being under the influence of domestic interest groups, or as a result of ideologies and collective ideas. However, none of those rational explanations sufficiently explain the cause of adopting revisionism by Russia. Particularly, the rational cost beneficial approaches fail to examine the elements of status quo/ revisionism in Russian grand strategies after the Soviet collapse. Briefly, still no clear whether identifying Russian grand strategy orientation as a revisionism mainly in post colour revolutions era is accurate, if yes, why and how.

Rather, this research explains the revolutionary revisionism by an alternative explanation implying rising powers may adopt the grand strategy orientation as an outcome of process, out of status concern, mainly the process of changing perception of status inconsistency to recognition dilemma. The revisionism in this account is an outcome of failure process of status enhancement by rising status seekers, rather the conventional rationales. This research argues changing perceptions from status inconsistency to recognition dilemma cause a rising power to adopt such the revolutionary grand strategy orientation.

This part first conceptualizes status and explain why status is important for individual and groups by summarizing findings from sociology and social psychology. Then, it briefly reviews literature on status in IR, and argues that status recognition dilemma has been subject of confusion. Next, it defines the relationship between status concern and revisionism through developing of an explanation on a process from changing perception of status inconsistency to recognition dilemma, which may lead revisionism. To do so, thereafter characterizes status inconsistency; draws a taxonomy of potential responses to the inconsistency by critical review of existing literature and explain how the process of

status enhancement may lead to recognition dilemma. Finally, the revolutionary revisionism as the most likely response of status inconsistent state facing recognition dilemma will be discussed.

### **2.3.1 Status Conceptualisation**

The position of an actor within a collectively understood or publicly recognised social hierarchy is usually known as status. Status is defined “roughly” as a rank, which an actor has within a social group or society in general (Forsberg et al., 2014; Renshon, 2015).<sup>52</sup> If the status is considered the actors’ or groups’ rank in a certain group or society, and groups grading from “lower” to “higher”, such grades depend on the agreement that the latter has reached (Dafoe, Renshon, & Huth, 2014; Paul, Larson, & Wohlforth, 2014). Social status implies the position inside hierarchical orders that are collective, intersubjective and contingent upon the recognition of relevant others.

Social status is collective. It should be gained within the community, as “a function of community” is based on “common knowledge” and “collective judgement” (Dafoe et al., 2014, p. 379; O’Neill, 2001, p. 193; Paul et al., 2014, p. 8). If an actor wish to gain recognition of its status in hierarchy, it needs to reckon the collective beliefs of relevant other actors.<sup>53</sup> The status is not merely subjective, based on self-perception and self-believe about own position, but most importantly it is an “intersubjective and relational ascription”. It cannot be reduced to one side’s belief for existence, instead, as well as self-perception it would be attributed through “intersubjectively” by others, the beholders through relationally negotiation (Pouliot, 2014, p. 196). Finally, status is relative,

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<sup>52</sup> Status is similar to rank not synonym. Rank is merely important so long as it defines rights and role or responsibility, indeed rank discerns “patterns” “the actor should expect from others, as well as how the actor is expected to behave with respect to others of higher or lower rank” (Renshon, 2015, p. 520).

<sup>53</sup> Similarly any change in a given state’ status relies on changing the belief of other state or group of states (Dafoe et al., 2014; Larson & Shevchenko, 2014a; T. V. Paul et al., 2014; Renshon, 2015; White, McAllister, Light, & Lowenhardt, 2002).

positional and can be measured through comparison with other/s. Positionality, and relativeness implies, due to the finiteness and scarcity of status, improvement of status is possible at the expense of other (Dafoe et al., 2014; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010; Renshon, 2015). “If everyone has high status”, “no one does” (Schweller, 1999, p. 29).<sup>54</sup>

Individuals and groups vie for and appreciate social status, either as a means to other material ends or perhaps more importantly, for it stands strong as an end in itself (Frank, 1985; Goethals & Darley, 1987; Katzenstein, 1996). Similarly, IR scholars confirm importance of status for states, their leaders and elites. However, opinions deviate about why this is the case. While, rationalist and realists often define status as an objective resource; hence, the motivation for a status seeking behaviour is instrumental (Gilpin, 1981, p. 85; Morgenthau, 1978). In this account, the higher status means superior social influence, hence, the vaster access to varieties of collectively allocated resources.<sup>55</sup> The post-positivist approaches notwithstanding, convince that status-seeking behaviour obsesses with non-instrumental intrinsic values. Status has a strong emotional component, and higher status in the approaches maintains a “positive self-image”, so it is essential for higher degree of self-esteem.<sup>56</sup> Then less surprisingly, international actors mainly states compete over their status and attempt to defend or improve it like a martial source

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<sup>54</sup> A change in an individual or actor position means a change of other/s’ position, but the change not necessarily means declining other/s position, as the change may occur in the meaning of group’s membership. In this sense, an actor can enhance its position to higher with no diminishing the other/s as the meaning of club will change. The latest lessened status zero-sum quality (Lake, 2014; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, 2014c; Volgy et al., 2014). According to Lake (2014, p. 247)) “status is a club good that, to some limit, can be held equally by some number of states. Although a club to which everyone belongs confers no special recognition, membership below some threshold is not necessarily zero-sum in nature”.

<sup>55</sup> For some classical realists status, or what Gilpin called prestige, mentioned above, primarily as a goods or capability which states are seeking in international system (Gilpin, 1981) . Morgenthau similarly emphasizes on the significance of prestige for states, while concluding it is seldom the main goal of states’ foreign policy and cannot be a primary interest (Morgenthau, 1978, p. 85). While realists (mainly classical) stressed on significance and role of status, prestige and other similar terms, the theoretical gap remains in the account yet (Forsberg, 2014).

<sup>56</sup> Recently literature in IR more emphasized on status seeking for self-esteem, rather instrumental material gains (Clunan, 2009, 2014a; Forsberg et al., 2014; Honneth, 1996; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, 2014c; Lebow, 2008, 2010; Ringmar, 2002, 2012, 2015; Wolf, 2011, 2015).



regarding the intrinsic and instrumental values of status (Dafoe et al., 2014; Lebow, 2010; Paul et al., 2014).

The instrumental and intrinsic values attached to status plus the attributes of intersubjectivity, collectively and positionality make it a “social construction”, that is different from other resources, either from positional- objective sources, like prestige, wealth and security or non-positional- subjective like honour or reputation. At the same time, those attributes make status as a rare source that competition over the source may be more complex rather others. While relativeness and positionality of status “engenders a relative gains problem for cooperation”, intersubjectivity of status may mean that the probability of cooperation is close to zero (Grieco, 1988; Onea, 2014).<sup>57</sup> The latest attribute, implies any enhancement from lower to higher position is eventually relies on recognition by other/s. Hence, the belief that the other/s, often the higher status, dominate actor/s, discriminatorily suspended or refused to recognise a lower status seeker’s status concern, would cause the latter, to challenge the status distribution structure (Grieco, 1988; Onea, 2014).<sup>58</sup>

### **2.3.2 Conceptualisation of Status Inconsistency**

In theory, if an actor generously gives status to another actor, this either will promote the gratitude and appreciation or will increase “trust and solidarity”. When an actor’s status does not tally with the status level, it deserves or desires, a real status conflict appears. The status inconsistency refers to the perception of divergence or “inconsistency between the subjective self-perception and the intersubjective status position established

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<sup>57</sup> Regarding states as a status maximisers, and status as a relative gain, Grieco (1988, pp. 498-499) highlights that “a state will decline to join, will leave, or will sharply limit its commitment to a cooperative arrangement if it believes that partners are achieving, or are likely to achieve, relatively greater gains”. Onea (2014, p. 128) characterizes “positional rivalries” as the “more likely to be lasting because intangible stakes are harder to divide equitably”.

<sup>58</sup>As “status anxiety accounts especially for positional rivalry” mainly between the status seeker/s who wish improve its position, hence challenging dominant status holder/s, the higher status actor/s, the more pronounced” this anxiety means according to (Onea, 2014) “the higher the likelihood of conflict”.

in the group” (Forsberg, 2014, p. 325). In international politics, the status inconsistent power whose aspiration for having status to the degree that it deserves or believes to deserve remained unrecognized from higher status power/s behave differently, compared with status-consistent power. Unsurprisingly, if he acts aggressively as its attempt pursue a more visible, and more pronounced role was denied, or weakened by the absence of recognition, respect and legitimacy (Forsberg, 2014; Smith, 2014; Volgy, Corbetta, Grant, & Baird, 2011).

The terms have been transferred in IR recently, from a hypothesis developed mainly by sociologists and social psychologists. In particular, the “frustration-aggression” hypothesis assumes the perception of unjustly denial of individuals’ status or improperly low status will cause social frustration leading to aggressive behaviour towards the realized resource.<sup>59</sup> Mainly relative deprivation theory (RDT) focuses on the relationship between status inconsistency and emotional responses, resentment and aggressive behaviours (Schulze & Krätschmer-Hahn, 2014, p. 5443). Initiated by Lenski (1954) individuals suffering from “a low degree” of status “crystallization”, behave politically “significantly” different from “highly crystallized status”, as they are more willing to support “social changes” (Lenski, 1954).<sup>60</sup> Supported by E. F. Jackson (1962), “psychologically disturbing” inconsistency causing “stress symptom”, led frustrated individuals to wish to change the social system. Receiving lower benefits than what individuals expected as a “fair share” is in such an account as a rationale behind

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<sup>59</sup> “Frustration- aggression” hypothesis individuals suffering from status inconsistency, the threat or threat of losing individuals’ self-esteem would cause frustration that eventually may lead to aggressive and even hostile position against the source cause the feeling (Allison & Hunt, 1959; Leonard Berkowitz, 1960; Leonard Berkowitz, 1989; Feshbach, 1964; Geen, 1968).

<sup>60</sup> “The more frequently acute status inconsistencies occur within a population” according to Lenski (1954, p. 411) “the greater would be the proportion of that population willing to support programs of social change”.

“dissatisfaction”, and “violent conflict” (Folger, 1986; Folger, Rosenfield, & Robinson, 1983).

Political scientists in research on revolution similarly postulates that a considerable divergence, between the expected outcome and prevailing conditions generates discontentedness of people and motivates them to aggressive behaviour. Davies (1962) argues, “The continued, even habitual but dynamic expectation of greater opportunity to satisfy basic needs, which may range from merely physical”, “to social” and ultimately “to the need for equal dignity and justice” is what “a revolutionary state of mind requires”. However, the crucial “additional ingredient” for such a revolutionary change is “a persistent, unrelenting threat to the satisfaction of these needs” (Davies, 1962, p. 8). Inconsistency between actors’ expectations and ambitions, or disparity between current situations and long-term performance, suggested by Tanter and Midlarsky (1967) may potentially lead to aggressive revolution. The scholars share that dissatisfaction that is derived from “the perception of relative deprivation” would create an “instigating condition” for perceived deprived actors to participate “in collective violence” (Gurr, 2015).

### **2.3.3 Status Inconsistency in International Relations**

In fact, the most frequently encountered modern frameworks in IR studies such as Neo/liberalism, and Neo/realism have been constantly focused on self-interest, wealth or security as state interests rather the question status concern. Nevertheless, some tracing status inconsistency and the frustration-aggression hypothesis, derived from literatures on individual behaviours in social psychology, employ status concern as a model of state behaviours in international system. The perception of status inconsistency, as the disjuncture perceived from comparing an ascribed position by status community with that aspired by aspiring power, leads to frustration and hence, states who are perceived as

“humiliated, hampered, and oppressed by the status quo”, pursue modification and alteration of the order (Elman & Jensen, 2014, p. 64; Schuman, 1948, p. 279).

The hypothesis interprets status inconsistency as a cause of interstate conflict and war in IR. This was very popular for the earliest scholars, thanks to Galtung who stressed on top/underdog conflict, as a way to gain higher status. Accordingly, perceiving “status inconsistency” between aspired or that of really “deserved” and ascribed status by the international society would lead to conflict (Galtung, 1964). “Status seeking and dominance behaviours” were crucial as “raw aggression in affecting the likelihood of international conflict”. Similar quantitative studies were devoted to evaluate the “relationship between status inconsistency and conflict” in the 1960s -70s (Horowitz, McDermott, & Stam, 2005, p. 667). While some reflect on the relationship connecting an inconsistency of status and growth of interstates’ conflict, positively (Midlarsky, 1975; Wallace, 1971, 1973),<sup>61</sup> other evidences are seen as negative (East, 1972; Ray, 1974).<sup>62</sup> Some from those groups, reflect a mixed relationship between variables, and status inconsistency may cause a state to move in conflict in certain conditions (Gochman, 1980; Volgy & Mayhall, 1995).<sup>63</sup>

Amongst the more recent studies, Maoz (2010), measures status concern, through applying the diplomatic exchange. It shows that the perception of status inconsistency increased during states’ involvement in war in the international system in the years

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<sup>61</sup> Wallace, (1971, 1973) through different studies of the years between 1820-1964 found a positive link between perceived discrepancy of standing and the amount of war in “international system” what he called “central system”. Measuring the status inconsistency and “war involvement” during 1970-1945, Midlarsky (1975) similarly concluded a positive relationship between variables.

<sup>62</sup> Ray (1974) however; in the study of European powers find a negative relation between status inconsistency and quantity of conflict involvement during 1816-1970. Similarly, East (1972) concluded by East in measuring the relation between “aggregated inconsistency” and conflict in the international system during 1946-1965.

<sup>63</sup> Volgy and Mayhall (1995), for example, found an overly positive relation between the level of inconsistency in interstate system and conflict during the time between 1950 to 1964, while the relation shows negative trend during the years between 1964 to 1980. Gochman’s study similarly found a mixed link between inconsistency of status and international conflict, positively merely for some stats in some periods (Gochman, 1980).

between 1816–2000. With regards to network-based measures, Renshon (2015), concludes that status deficit inconsistency significantly increased the possibility of war initiation. In a recent quantitative study, Volgy et al. (2014) using realist and quantifiable measures to determine status, argue that achieving major power status requires recognition, as a “community attribution” that highly relies on not merely capability but also compliance to act as such. They find evidence that status underachievers “are more likely to intervene in conflicts” than “overachievers”, those who gain “more status than they deserve” (Volgy et al., 2014, pp. 58-85).

Related qualitative works mainly located in the “causes of war” studies. Gilpin (1981) argues that states who suffer from status inconsistency face incentives to improve their standing, and this is the dynamic reason for hegemonic wars. Wohlforth (1999) claims that status competition is likely to be most severe in situations of equality of distribution of goods in international. Accordingly, he suggests that a multipolar system is more prone to “status conflict” because of more ambiguities in the status hierarchy of the system. The lack of conflict amongst major states during the years after the Cold War goes back to the lack of status ambiguity under unipolar system, not the factors such as democracy, institutions, or nuclear weapons. More recently, Wohlforth (2014) concludes that status dilemma overlaps security dilemma to create unpredictably and high levels of conflict among primarily satisfied and secure actors. Suffering from inconsistency, status inconsistent powers are willing to settle through competition with others “whose portfolios of capabilities are not only close but also mismatched” (Wohlforth, 2014).

In brief, actors acting out of negative feelings or frustration provides a dilute procedure on how status concern may raise challenges (Renshon, 2015, p. 515). As conflict or aggression is one way to gain recognition of aspired higher, rather a last alternative after failing doing so (Gilpin, 1981). However, those explanations do not clear if any other

alternatives to again recognition and solve inconsistency except war. Moreover, if status inconsistency lead negative feelings, or if frustration is an outcome of status inconsistency what is the process itself, how state perceive such inconsistency hence they may wish change the status system by resorting to force and violence (Renshon, 2015, p. 515).

In line with realism, a recent study scrutinizes the role of status concern in Japan “throughout the 1920s and early 1930s”, which is called “status immobility” i.e. the situation within which “successful status competition is impossible” due to denial of recognition of aspired status by the higher group. Accordingly, it was not the perception of inconsistency, the situation within which the state still hope to correct its status, but perception of immobility by Japanese leaders that accordingly led them to pursue their objective through adopting “a fundamentally anti-status quo” strategy, after withdrawing from the League of Nations (Ward, 2013). The more convincing approach but still suffers some pitfalls.

The study introduces a mechanism through which the perception of status immobility may lead a rising state to adopt aggressive policies. However, it fails to answer how or through which mechanism status inconsistency can influence the state and its foreign policy behaviours. Otherwise, grouping the status concern and jumping from the term of inconsistency to immobility is meaningless, especially if in both situations, the question is still the need for recognition of status. It is oversimplification to argue that the failure of “diplomatic efforts” led political leaders to believe gaining the aspired status is impossible, with no clear answer to how can political elites form a consensus over certain diplomacy no other/s.

In addition, while it suggested the likely strategy for states responding to status immobility, strategies for achieving aspired status in a situation of inconsistency remained unanswered. It is discussed next, status inconsistent states have, although still limited but

different strategic choices, the “status enhancement strategies”, to correct their perceived inconsistency. Compared to other IR literature using “frustration-aggression”, the hypothesis in the study offers a mechanism by which immobility affects state foreign policies. Accordingly, the sense motivates domestic players “to develop preferences” over “challenging the status quo” or resonating the tone of proponents of revisionism at the expense of “moderates” within the state (Ward, 2013). It explains why a certain proponent of a revisionist group (“Japanese ultra-right” in the study) and revisionist preferences may come to power.<sup>64</sup>

However, it is not clear through which mechanism status inconsistency can influence domestic political elites? It is pointless to argue that the domestic political groups were only relevant in the state’s grand strategy preferences only after perceptions of status immobility. As social status is intersubjective and ideational and dynamic, it is shaped through social context hence it is not fixed and linear. Yet it is unclear how the ideational status inconsistency is conceptualised and altered by leaders, and how the alteration from status inconsistency to immobility influenced the state’s foreign behaviours, as the study considers the role of status in Japan’s foreign policy during long term “throughout the 1920s and early 1930s”.

Recent studies in IR have broadened the theoretical explanations of status concern beyond the war and violence. Moving from different theoretical assumptions scholars highlight that inconsistency cannot always bring about status seekers to adopting a fundamentally anti-status quo orientation. Instead, achieving recognition of aspired status

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<sup>64</sup> The study is indeed complementary to similar studies on the relation of domestic groups and revisionism (Davidson, 2002; Snyder, 1991)

can be pursued peacefully and without discarding reassurance of international status quo order.<sup>65</sup>

Mainly adopting Social identity theory (SIT) from social psychology, there is a growing number of studies in IR characterizing status as a group or collective positive identity, where a range of scholars defined status as identically as state international identity. Implicitly, they offer a process within which the status inconsistency influences states behaviours domestically and internationally. As SIT hypothesizes, a range of status enhancement strategies available to group to gains aspired status recognition from the main other/s hence solve perceived status inconsistency (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1979;1986). Utilizing those strategies in IR, scholars convinces states as other social group, can pursue its status aspirations through more peaceful ways to achieve conspicuous endorsed by higher status powers, through status enhancement strategies available to inconsistent states including social mobility, creativity, and social competition.<sup>66</sup>

Social mobility refers to emulating high-status actors to pass into the high-status group. Social creativity entails pursuing recognition of status beside alternative or new dimensions of status attribution; it means finding a new ground in order for one to become greater. The success of the first two strategies depends on the recognition/acceptance by other major powers or the dominant group, what the literature called permeability of higher status group boundaries. In the case of rejection or impermeability of dominant group, status-aspirant states may resort to using the third option: social competition as a means of enhancing their status, through changing negative rankings dimension, and

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<sup>65</sup> Status seeking behaviours can be principally differentiated from the actions aimed at the quest for resources and material power, because it can be mainly symbolic aimed to influence other's perceptions (Clunan, 2009, 2014b; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, 2014c; T. Paul & Shankar, 2014; Pouliot, 2014; Ward, 2013).

<sup>66</sup> Similar argument (Clunan, 2009, 2014b; Forsberg, 2014; Forsberg et al., 2014; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, 2014a).



strive to be better on some comparative dimension (Clunan, 2009, 2014a; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, 2014a, 2014c; Malinova, 2014; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Those accounts of status provide a variety of strategic responses to the perception of status inconsistency out of merely frustration and aggression. However, the account seems similarly problematic, as the recognition dilemma and states responses to the perceived dilemma in IR remains obscure. While SIT proponents conditioned the prosperity of that social mobility and creativity or the successes or failure of those strategies to the possibility of recognition by higher groups. However, it is not clear; why state suffering from perceived unjust impermeability of higher group should accept that adopting social competition make the higher group boundaries permeable? Why status inconsistent should compete harder, when it perceives that gaining recognition from the higher status others are impossible.

Moreover, if one accepts that social competition is an answer to the perceptions that status enhancement by means of other strategies; mobility and creativity, is impossible, what is the solution to the perceptions that successful social competition is impossible? As the enhancement strategies are the responses to status inconsistency, what should be the answer to the situations that gaining the recognition of aspired status from the main other/s, is impossible even after applying such status quo-oriented strategies. It is not enough to say for example, refusing or rejecting the aspired status by the superior status actor is humiliating and that would probably lead “to exhibit intense emotions” and “an escalation of inter-group competition” (Larson & Shevchenko, 2014c). I It is not clear how durable such social competition is over status recognition. Is it infinite social competition over status recognition?

Additionally, the literature highlights that social competition is different from realistic competition over objective; accordingly, they suggest a range of policies, from having

economic prosperity, to arms race, having the most destructive weapons, to even to using military force a weaker powers (Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, 2014c). However, what is different between war and improving economic prosperity if all are considered social competition? If military intervention or war is simply a social competition, a kind merely emotionally answer to unachieved recognition from higher status group, thus any behaviour of states can be labelled social, non-rational emotional and ultimately status quo oriented. It is again oversimplification of status concern to merely subjective emotional and non-rational. Hence, while the literature on SIT can answer partially to the question of status and its recognition however, it is not sufficient to explain the status recognition dilemma.

#### **2.4 Argument: The Process from Status Inconsistency to Revolutionary Revisionism**

To fill the gap this research, begin by assumption that in the argument between revisionism and status quo orientations, the domestic actors and their perception are greatly relevant. Since the government's preferences reflect the dominant group's preferences that have become prevalent in political contestation, the politically related group's preferences are essential in the policy making stage (Davidson, 2002; Zions, 2006). Foreign policy can be abstracted as the outcome of various domestic elements that affect a state's capability to answer the structural incentives. Domestic political groups often have different preferences over foreign policy; hence, the result should partly be the outcome of domestic political contestation.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> The regime type matters in particular, in the way that the state's institutions permit political contestation over the foreign policy orientation. Of course, this never meant that the political contestation would only be reached in a democratic system, as in other regime type domestic groups may have divergent view over the state's foreign policy preferences. As a study recently found that domestic political elites and their "preferences over foreign policy" is still matter in nondemocracies as well as democracies, although they "may vary systematically across nondemocracies" (Weeks, J. L, 2008; p.68).

A reason that one group may have certain preferences over the foreign policy direction would be status. Considering the role of status in international relations suggests that concerns over states' international status as "a more serious challenge" and influential aspect in rising powers may have a very important role in the contestation of a specific group over foreign policy (Doran, 2012; Ward, 2013). The status claim plays a crucial role in rising powers' grand strategy either by changing individual preferences or by changing the discursive environment in ways that would go for the advocates of revisionism (Ward, 2013). Changes in the principles encourage shifts in foreign policy performance, which in turn influence how states determine their interests and more importantly their international identity (Doran, 2012). However, primarily, how and through which process those principles and preferences over state's status is formed is crucial. How and why status concern may change states' grand strategy preferences.

To delve into the role of status concern and its recognition in IR, this research moves from SIT that present drives and needs to positively distinct self-esteem by individuals and groups. Through perceptions of *self* and *others*, SIT focuses on clarifying group self-esteem, or status along with prescribing behavioural orientations towards others to gain recognition of such the perceived collective self-esteem. It moves from human psychological deep-rooted motivations and needs for positive self-esteem that fulfilled when individual perceived self as a member of a distinctively positive group, or "social category". As membership in a positive social category or identification with a distinct group reflecting back on the self, individual desires their group or social category have a positively distinct self-esteem. Having different traits, individuals derive their self-esteem

by identification with different social groupings, multiple in/out group to which belongs or wish to be belonged (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1978; Turner, 1975).<sup>68</sup>

Moving from self-esteem aspiration, status seeking process begin with group's self-evaluation, in-group comparison with, not all, but those references that are "similar or proximal" higher in status, "a relevant comparison" out-group. This relevant reference is a selected group that individual aspire the group association or preserve the respective association (Brown, 2000; Brown & Ross, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Depending on the outcome, favourable comparison, enhance members' self-esteem, the "positive social identity", otherwise, perception of inferiority or disadvantaged standing of in-group cause a "negative social identity". Hypothesized out-group, the reference, is superior on important dimension/s, the lower-status group may pursue a status enhancement strategy to cope with such an unsatisfactory inferior status position and overcome it. This means perception of status inconsistency, not necessarily causes aggressive behaviours, as the negative social status can be overcome via adopting enhancement strategies; social mobility, social creativity and social competition (Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986).

The selection of relevant reference group/s and each of those enhancement strategies is highly determined through the process of status aspiration. As the status concept is a determining factor that help an actor understand itself and differentiate with main other, its own interests and its behaviours and interactions towards the main reference, relevant other/s. Identification with the in-group conveys values and principles derived from the group's own collective experiences to its members. Aspiring of distinct positive collective self-esteem similarly conveys attached norms and values. This would altogether define a

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<sup>68</sup> That can be included but not limited to religious, ethnicity, gender, or occasion or nation etc.

collective self-concept that includes the group's identity and self-esteem and at the same time, its behavioural preference. In other words, through process of status formation, individuals define which in-group they belong, (who they are), what the group would like to be (who they would like to be regarding other/s) or which out-group they wish to be belonged, and how the groups can be as such, (how they should behave to have the aspired self-esteem). The values and norm in this sense are both descriptive and prescriptive (Clunan, 2009, p. 23; Tajfel, 1981, p. 251).

Similarly, states as collective self, are induced by deep-rooted collective psychological need and motivations for collective self-esteem, status. State's status aspiration process, similar to other social actors, initiates with formation or conceptualization of status. The process that would determine the state as a collective self, distinguishes it from others and its own interests, behaviours and interactions towards the main other/s. The conceptualization of state status is influenced by a set of collective ideas related to identification of state as a collective self. The ideas partially derive from national historical experiences that define its proper conceptual, historical or geographical and physical boundaries and distinguish the state from outsiders. This set of ideas defines national collective self, as distinct social category, and distinguishes it from other/s, out-group. Along with convictions and ideas related to the proper position and role in international order and ideas related to international environment, play into a process of state status aspiration in the international society (Clunan, 2009, pp. 22-53; Stolte, 2015, pp. 30-31; Thies, 2010, p. 704). Altogether, define national collective self-esteem, as the state status aspiration in international system. What the state is, what she would like to be.

According to conceptualised status, states initiate status-seeking process through self-evaluation comparing with a reference, state or group of states, one that is approximately

similar or higher in status attributes. This implies rising great powers compete over status with a set of particular somehow similar counterparts in their social vicinity, means other great powers, not all states. For example, India compares itself to China because both achieved independence at roughly the same time, and were populous, underdeveloped countries. Similarly, China assesses its achievements with Japan, or Russia relatively to that of the US (Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, 2014b). Depends on the outcome of comparison, perception of inferiority, states may adopt different status enhancement strategies, to gain desired higher status recognition, hence solve inconsistency (how it should behave to be as such). As well as values and norms attached to collective self-concept derived from with status conception and those from an international normative system, a state power capability is an important factor for status seeker power to select a status enhancement strategy too (Stolte, 2015; Wohlforth, 2014).

Before further argument of status seeking process, the state's collective self-concept requires further explanation. What is clear is that each collective self-concept is derived from the collective convictions, ideas, and values of political groups that are generally accepted by political elites and leaders as the members of groups. Each self-concept is descriptive and prescriptive. Meanwhile it represents and legitimates a version of proper status of state based on what political groups aspired or conceptualized collectively, it also offers preferences or policies to gain the aspired status in international system. This simply implies each national self-concept involves sets of collective ideas related to states' status and ideas related to strategy/ies to pursue the conceptualized status.

The self-concept is hence based on collective ideas related to the state's status involving ideas related to international environment (the group's worldview), the ideas about the state's identity and its proper grouping (may be conceptually, politically or historically, or geographically, distinguishing the state from outsiders) the ideas related

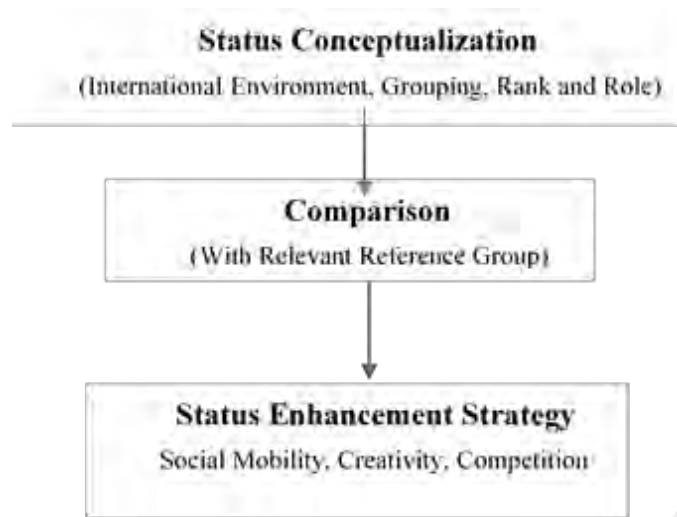
to state's rank (great, middle, small) and its role (function of the state within international system; globally or regionally). Defining proper status and distinguishing the relevant reference (usually the higher status), determining the state's interests, the self-concept prescribes or offers a proper strategy to gain such the aspired status too.<sup>69</sup> As society is not homogenous, there are multiple competing collective self-concepts, over state status and foreign policy preferences in domestic political sphere offered by various groups of politicians. In terms of dominance on the process of decision-making, a prevalent group's self-concept may offer a version of proper status; define status interest, and strategies to gain aspired status from the main other, the higher status power/s.<sup>70</sup>

In brief, states' status aspiration process evolves with formation of status, through knowledge of self, comparison with relevant others, out-group, and/or how others view it as a member of social status group and evaluation of whether their actual social status- is consistent with the aspired one. Perception of discrepancy or inconsistency may lead states to quest of recognition by though adopting status enhancement strategies to enhance to a favourable image. The process of status formation and aspiration is influenced a set of collective ideas and convictions of political leaders related to international environment, implying how the group perceive the nature of world politics, ideas on the state's identity and its proper grouping, and ideas related to state's rank and role, and ideas related to status enhancement strategies.

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<sup>69</sup> The variables derived directly or indirectly from similar literature in IR (Clunan, 2009, pp. 22-53; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, 2014c; Thies, 2010; Andrei P Tsygankov, 2016).

<sup>70</sup> This is what aforementioned a rising power aspired status and it foreign policy output in a certain time, partially reflect the dominant political discourse and its preferences that have become prevalent in political contestation.



**Figure 2.1: Process of Status Enhancement**

Source: modified from (Stolte, 2015, p. 32)

*(a) Social Mobility*<sup>71</sup>

Social mobility emulates the norms, practices and values of the elite group by lower status to attain admission into higher status group. In IR a lower status state attempt to enhance its relative position by emulating principles, norms of the higher status group, to gain recognition as an associate of the higher community (Larson & Shevchenko, 2014c). Emulation or assimilation of international normative order or political, economic norms of the higher status power by lower status are markers of the strategy. During 19<sup>th</sup> century, for example, the social mobility factor entailed adopting civilization norms of European powers. During the post-Cold War era, it has required adopting Western norms; liberal democracy and capitalism as some former Soviet states adopted the strategy hope to enter in Western organisations; NATO and EU (Larson & Shevchenko, 2014b). The prosperity

<sup>71</sup> These strategies were derived from social psychology including not limited to (Abrams & Hogg, 2006; Tajfel, 1981, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986), and IR literature (Clunan, 2009, 2014b; Larson & Shevchenko, 2003, 2010, 2014a, 2014c).



of this strategy relies on “permeability” of the higher status community’s borders, simply recognition of aspired status by the higher status group.

In the initial years after the Soviet Union collapse (1992-1994/95) the adopted strategy by Russian Westernist, particularly foreign minister Kozyrev, can be categorised as a social mobility. As the leaders conceptualized Russia’s status as “a normal great power” and defined the state’s interests in transition of domestic socio-political and economic system based on Western Liberal values; democratisation and privatisation of the economy. The terms of normalcy hence led pursuing close partnership with the Western great powers, and integration within the Western institutions.

Nevertheless, social mobility is problematic, mainly for powers with a long history of great power status, such as Russia, as it involves a humiliating relationship of “tutelage”. Therefore, there can be a permanent tension within rising great powers about either to emulate the higher status powers, or to preserve their own distinctive cultures (Clunan, 2009; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010). For example, Russian Westernists’ strategy of mobility was gradually being questioned by a range of Russian political elites from the Eurasian Statist to hardliners and nationalists for belittling Russia’s historical status and ignoring the state tradition role in its rational zone of influence, the Eurasian neighbour region.

#### ***(b) Social Creativity***

Social creativity implies re-evaluation of negative characteristic affecting undesirable self-esteem to a positive. “Black is beautiful”, for example, illustrates re-evaluation of negatively attributed self-esteem of “the African American” to positive dimension during 1960s (Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, p. 73). Alternatively, the re-evaluation also can be devaluating of positive dimension of evaluation. Russia’s relative economic backwardness for example, re-evaluated positively by Russian leaders that Russia’s

economy is moral and humane, comparing the Western heartless capitalist system (Clunan, 2014a). Social creativity strategy also implies defining an alternative dimension on which the group is superior (Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, 2014c). Simply displaying excellence through finding new dimension for comparison of self and other/s who “may be better at reasoning, but ours is more creative” (Brown & Ross, 1982, p. 156).

In IR, a state may adopt social creativity to gain a higher status based on different dimension for evaluation, than those criteria attached with greatpowerness conventionally such as power (military or economy) capabilities, for example “cultural achievements”, “diplomatic influence” or “regional leadership” and even a model of development. For example, Eurasianist self-concept in Russia highlights Russian distinctive cultural values versus Western liberalism, rationalism and materialism. Those alternative dimensions are indicators of social creativity strategy, for example “diplomatic initiatives or activism by charismatic leaders such as Nehru, de Gaulle” (Larson & Shevchenko, 2010; 2014a, p. 41).

However, creativity particularly the latest dimension, never meant to alter the international normative and constitutive order, or the status hierarchy legitimised by the order, instead it is merely an attempt to gain supremacy on different level, within the status hierarchic system that legitimised by status quo order. Analysed in chapter 4, the Eurasian statism as the dominant self-concept from mid-1990s emphasised on Russia’s historical greatpowerness, its cultural distinctiveness and the country’s geopolitical uniqueness as alternative criteria. Emphasising on Eurasian dimension of Russian status, alternatively they define the national interests in cooperation mainly with the non-Western Asian great powers (China and India), and stand for integration within its neighbour Eurasian states. By creativity, Russia hoped to be recognized as a pole in the perceived multipolar world, by the Western great powers.

To succeed the strategy needs the dominant higher status to recognize the alternative proposed criteria positively, not questioning the legitimacy of status hierarchy also realizing status aspirant actor really stick out the alternative criteria (Tajfel, 1978, pp. 90-99). The latest fact reinforced that social creativity is strategy still within the international order as it creative or alternative dimension should be recognized.

*(c) Social Competition*

Nevertheless, in the case of rejection or impermeability dominant group boundaries, the states aspiring for greater status may resort to using the third option: social competition as a means to enhance their status. Adopting this strategy, may help them gain a higher standing within the status quo status hierarchy, through achieving “the characteristics that constitute the set of commonly understood status markers” hope to gain recognition of aspired status from the higher status actor/s (Ward, 2013, p. 614). Instead of challenging or reinventing the normative foundation on which made ranking, social competition strategy reassures the existing order and its criteria for status recognition, but it aims to alter negative dimension of its standing, and strive to be better on some comparative dimension (Clunan, 2009, 2014a; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010; Turner, 1975). Indeed, the goal of the social competition strategy is to gain recognition of the distinctive and positive characteristics that make the rising power a leading member of existing word normative order. Thus, whatever form the status competition takes, the act of competing itself will solidify the status quo – and endorse social institutions and commonly understood status markers (Lebow, 2008).

Certainly, the social competition strategy is different from a zero-sum “realistic”, “objective” or “instrumental competition” (Clunan, 2009). Realistic competition is a struggle to achieve further resources or goods distribution out of the status quo normative system, irrespective of the impact of those resources on the actor’s status. Abrams and

Hogg (2006) characterised “battle over territory”, “bidding for a franchise”, “arms race” between Eastern and Western powers in the Cold War period as zero-sum objective competition. Therefore, while realistic competition would challenge both the goods distribution and legitimising the normative, constitutive order of the status quo, social competition is merely an attempt to enhance relative status by competing harder. The space race between the US and USSR in the 1960s and 1970s were rather like a form of social competition around the national prestige and pride (Abrams & Hogg, 2006). Social competition now appears not as a response to recognition-denial dilemma, but rather as a strategy oriented toward achieving recognition by competing harder, means it is response to status inconsistency. In fact, the promise of ultimate success (and therefore perceptions of ultimately permeable status boundaries) seems, to be a condition of sustained social competition.

Vladimir Putin and his statist developmentalist supporters adopted a social competition strategy. The elites saw the economy as a dimension of competition within the modern world politics and perceived it as a main criterion in which states status was based upon. National interest was hence defined in modernisation and economic development within and persuading pragmatic cooperation with the Western developed great powers and integration within the world economic mainstream, the Western centred economic and political institutions.

Prosperity of each social strategy ultimately relies on recognition of aspired status by other higher status group, rather having status markers. In other words, recognition and acceptance of status by reference group, is critical to enhance the group’s status (Ward, 2013).<sup>72</sup> As having achieved status markers by status seeker, or not, also should be judged

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<sup>72</sup> While status seeker power enjoys more commonly status markers of any particular time, but it must be ultimately recognized or accepted by other higher status states, to be a great power (Ward, 2013).

by the status community. In a nutshell, any status aspiration should be attributed by the recognition of the main others, status elite group. During 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (1810 to 1940), “even at the apex of its material power” what Russian perceived as the criteria of *greatpowerness*, Russia remained “a great power *manqué*” and its claim to join European club of powers were rejected by European counterparts. The legitimacy of claimed status was doubted because Russia’s system of government and governability was seen incompatible with the legitimised “standard of civilisation” at the time (Neumann, 2008). In brief, not only status but also the status criteria are intersubjective, the self-perception of criteria is not sufficient; instead it should be recognised by the status community. That is why a rising state may have perceived to have the status sources, but it fails to gain recognition by status community. Thus, this recognition/denial of other/s would eventually clear effectiveness of any status aspiration in international order.<sup>73</sup>

However, what is the solution for rising inconsistent status states where successful status enhancement, through adopting status enhancement strategies, the mobility, creativity and even social competition, is impossible, due to the impermeability of high-status group boundaries.

#### ***(d) Recognition Dilemma and Revolutionary Revisionism***

While the enhancement strategies are a response to status inconsistency, the recognition dilemma, the situation in which an aspirant state facing status inconsistency perceives that successful status enhancement via social competition is impossible mainly due to lack of recognition has some flaws. This implies power capabilities or other status markers a rising inconsistent state desires recognition from the major players the higher

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<sup>73</sup> Several scholars who applies SIT in IR highlights the acceptance and recognition of the main others as criteria to test the effectiveness of particular status aspiration and strategies depends on recognition by the main other (Forsberg, 2014; Forsberg et al., 2014; Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, 2014a, 2014c; Malinova, 2014; Smith, 2014).

status community or actor/s, to achieve the aspired status. Failure to do so through enhancement strategies can become the precursor to recognition dilemma. Hence, when political leaders and mass in a rising power consider that the status attribution structure is settled against them, in which effective status seeking via different strategies is inconceivable, conviction of recognition dilemma arises within the state. The general attribution of the unfairness, “injustice”, or hypocrisy of various features of the status attribution system shows that the status dilemma perception is existence (Geschwender, 1967; Ward, 2013; Wolf, 2011).

Amongst two possibly answers proposed by social psychology and IR scholars to uncorrectable status inconsistency or perception of the recognition dilemma, one implying “revolution” against social system,<sup>74</sup> is the most likely case for a great rising inconsistent power, turning to rejecting or challenging the status quo order, the Revolutionary Revisionism. As “downward adjustment” the alternative answer is a less likely scenario for a rising power facing a recognition dilemma since it implies “to give up” the status claim, meaning it is no longer a possibility to claim a “super”, “great power” status. Even hypothetically how it can be the case that a rational aspirant state to accept “an alternative self-description” and “re-brand itself as something else” than great, after all her attempts to achieve such the position (Ringmar, 2015, p. 8). In reality, accomplishing such adjustment policy orientation is close to zero and a “painful exercise” especially for rising power who historically experiences higher status. It could be due to the fear of political elites from the domestic consequences of downward adjustment, or due to inflexibility of state institutions that prevent the leaders from adopting adjustment policy (Wolf, 2015, p. 48).

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<sup>74</sup> The “revolution” was argued by Geschwender (1967).

The most likely answer is challenging and rejecting the status quo at its fundamental level and turning it in to a *Revolutionary Revisionism*. Unverifiable and lasting status inconsistency may result to various serious social psychological irritations. Social interactions in such the situation as well as creating “dissonance” concerning anticipated and real status, it would strengthen those socially interactions which are causing the dissonance. Consequently, encountering the recognition dilemma, the status seekers may “withdraw from the interaction or the condition” in order to “alleviate the discomfort” associated with “dissonance” (Jun & Armstrong, 1997). It means there is no better option than to control the social and psychological costs by refusing to have or entertain specific kinds of interaction/s. According to Wolf (2011, p. 127) “being denied social confirmation of one’s rights, faculties, or merits ... can threaten an actor’s self-esteem,” and the central values attached with it resulting to pressure to act, to diminish the discomfort felt. In international system this may take form of a commitment to challenging or rejecting the assurance and the “inability or unwillingness” to follow strategies concerned with reassuring the status quo.<sup>75</sup> Such commitments to challenge extensively can include a range of policies termed revolutionary revisionism.

To sum up, status seeking is a story of a recognition game. It means that gaining higher standing position in the international order depends on the recognition and acceptance of relative status by others. Thus, when rising states suffer from status inconsistency, they can adopt different strategies -mobility, creativity, social competition- either to gain or to

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<sup>75</sup> Worth to note that that, revolutionary revisionism may be adopted here is completely different from strategies responding to status inconsistency as they were categorized in *adjustive* reassurance. As, the status enhancement strategies were adjustive as they wanted alteration realized inconsistency, simultaneously reassurance as they persuade within the international normative system. Hence, revolutionary revisionism is a response to the recognition dilemma, challenging both the distributive system and normative constitutive order legitimizing status hierarchy. It distinguishes from creativity, because in creativity the aims are to enhance the relative status or adjustment of the dimension causing negative self-esteem and defining an alternative dimension on which the group is superior in the framework of existing normative order. The creativity is not striving to challenge the system’s status hierarchy or change the normative system in which existing status hierarchy is based, but rather to gain supremacy on a different standing dimension within the existing normative system. The revisionism also is different from the social competition, because the latest is a strategy to achieve higher status by competing harder in a legitimized dimension of status competition, a response to the status inconsistency that promised on achievable permeable status category boundaries not a response to status immobility – as an un-correctable inconsistency situation. The revolutionary revisionism as mention previously can include a range of anti-status quo policies, is more similar to the realistic competition.

maintain their desired status. Prosperity, the success or failure of these strategies depend on permeability of dominant status group boundaries, the recognition by higher status group as well as having status criteria. However, the process of changing perception from status inconsistency to status recognition dilemma may cause no choice except revolutionary revisionism; withdraw from interactions, which legitimate the existing normative order. The revolutionary revisionism is a response to perceived recognition dilemma, the unachievable recognition. It is somehow similar to realistic competition<sup>76</sup> however; it is different fundamentally with the strategies of status enhancement strategies of social mobility, creativity and social competition that aims to the way of correcting inconsistency when the higher status recognition is perceived to be achievable.

Inconsistent states are under pressure of their domestic audiences to adopt strategies to enhance the state's relative status, thereby resolve the discomfort associated with dissonance and to avoid revisionism, as there is no contradiction between status enhancement strategies and reassurance orientation. It is just an outcome of process of changing perception from the status inconsistency to status dilemma. In such a situation, inability or unwillingness of the status aspirant states lead to adopt revolutionary revisionism. The perception of recognition dilemma may influence rising states grand strategy through one or two potential ways.

It may stimulate some domestic players to compete against any reassurance orientations and develop preferences for challenging and rejecting the status quo (Ward, 2013) Some may behave aggressively for different reason, as J. Snyder (1991) links the aggressiveness directly to the idea of state's security and parochial interests of domestic

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<sup>76</sup> If status seeking through the social competition strategy did not work, due to impermeable status category boundaries - or lack of recognition by others- the response is "revolution" of social system if "under awarded" actor has "power" if does not have, the response can be "social isolation and/or exhibition of psychosomatic symptoms" (Geschwender, 1967). However, revolutionary revisionism is not synonym with realistic competition as aforementioned revolutionary revisionism seek to change and challenge the status quo order fundamentally its distribution of goods, normative and constitutive order and hierarchic hegemony of the order.



political coalitions. While players interested in economic enlargement or limited territorial may find working with other actors useful to achieve their purposes. However, those annoyed by a perceived recognition dilemma are less prone to cooperate with defenders of existing normative order, as such interactions consolidate the existing order, and status hierarchy that threaten aspirant actors' desired status and its attached central values further (Wolf, 2011). In short, humiliation perceived from status denial causes ontological insecurity hence may encourage and help some revisionism advocates who prefer to pursue national interests via revisionist behaviours rejecting and challenging existing normative system, against moderates who favour any sort of reassurance orientations

The perception may also affect the grand strategy of rising inconsistent status power by making political and rhetorical means benefit pro-revisionist and their preferences at the expense of moderates (Ward, 2013). To the extent that the perception of illegitimately or injustice denial of status may causes extreme anger and resentment, then objective motivations, such security or wealth do not.<sup>77</sup> As the emotional invocations can construct any issue as volatile and more sensitive, that goes beyond the "realm of standard cost-benefit calculations" (Hall, 2011, p. 521). In other words, the perception of humiliation, resentment derived from recognition dilemma would create ontological insecurity (Clunan, 2009; Ringmar, 2002). The importance of rhetorical also goes back to the "epideictic" nature of status claims that deals with "the audience's key values and beliefs" (Krebs & Lobasz, 2007, p. 433; Wolf, 2011).<sup>78</sup> Providing re-narrations of society's

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<sup>77</sup> Even simply perception of inconsistency may not cause such the resentment than the changing perception to recognition dilemma. As the perception of illegitimately or injustice denial of state's relative status may "provoke hostility" and "offensive action" of lower status seeker against the dominant group (Forsberg et al., 2014; Larson & Shevchenko, 2014c; Malinova, 2014; Mummendey et al., 1999; Tajfel, 1981).

<sup>78</sup> The epideictic discourse is hired "to explain a social world," to comprehend certain "confusing or troubling" events, persons, or objects "in terms of the audience's key values and beliefs" (Krebs & Lobasz, 2007, p. 433).

collective self-conceptions, identity and status can evokes shared values and strengthens unifying norms of the society. Hence, the epideictic origin of claim over standing causes it more complicated (Krebs & Lobasz, 2007).<sup>79</sup> Less surprisingly, if status denial, attached with rhetoric assist the pro-revisionists versus their moderates, then the leadership may need to opt for moderate conciliatory preferences.

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<sup>79</sup> As Krebs and Lobasz (2007) highlights deliberative discourse related to rational (cost- benefit) is simpler than dealing with the epideictic discourses. As the latest claim necessitates policies that are essential, hence failing to pursue those policies and consequently reformulate the claim is inconsistent with the state's status and its central values (Ward, 2013).

## CHAPTER 3: WESTERNISM AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

### 3.1 Introduction

The key to understanding post-Soviet Russian grand strategic orientations is based on the operating attached with the term of grand strategy. There is not yet a comprehensive understanding of the term of grand strategy,<sup>80</sup> considerably less understanding of Russian grand strategy thinking within the modest amount of literature on the state's grand strategy. Besides the lack of consensus, the literature shared common dominators. If there is a grand strategy in modern Russia, it should go beyond traditional military and security terms, in its limited or a more inclusive meaning. This also led to an assumption that Russia's strategy was actually "grand" as it was aimed at developing a global vision implying gain or the need to regain its status in global politics amongst the hierarchy of the international system, as well as a limited objective of maintain its "hegemony within the heartland" (LeDonne, 2003; Monaghan, 2013; Wallander, 2007; Heikka, 2000; Lipman & Petrov, 2011; Moran, 1999; Ellison, 2011; Stepanova, 2016; Tellis, 2007). Hence, the Russian grand strategy would be understood within and in relation to the international system. The assumption therefore is that the centre of the proposed grand strategy of Russia was national ideas over the state's status concern, having great power with a global role in the world's hegemonic hierarchy. This assumption is also commonly shared by literature consider specifically Russia's foreign policy. This would define how Russia acts within and/or versus the system, how it is oriented towards the West, East or South.

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<sup>80</sup> It had traditionally focused mainly on military, security and political concerns (Posen 1984, pp. 13, 220; Walt, 1989, p. 6). Posen (1984, p. 13) defined the term as a "politico-military means to an end chain, a state's theory about how it can best use security for itself". Robert Art agrees with this and states that the strategy of using military power to get the possible policy objective (Art, 2003).

The assumptions would make it clearer in terms of what the grand strategy is. Moving beyond the old narrative of strategy in military-political terms, Legro (2007, p. 8) highlighted the significant role played by “national ideas” in defining a state strategy. In that sense, a “grand strategy” refers to “national ideas about how to approach international society” in terms of “the desirability of joining and sustaining the extant international order”. The nation’s collective attitude towards the world order, “obviously” affects the foreign policy orientation, “the degree of consensus versus conflict” in international politics, particularly “when great powers are involved” (Legro, 2007, p. 8). This also implies that the grand strategy acted as a “framework for foreign policy or at the level of fundamental assumptions.” Hence, it is a broader and upper level of foreign policy, that defines the state’s “interactions” within the international system and, “the outside world” (Milevski, 2016, pp. 1-2).

The broader meaning of the grand strategy overlaps with what was mentioned earlier in this study as the grand strategic orientations (chapter 2). The strategy as an outcome of the state attitudes that dictates whether or not a status quo order, its distributive system, and its legitimise constitutive and normative system is acceptable. Derived from social psychological and IR theories, the centre of collective idea reflected by political leaders of a rising power is concern over the state’s international status. Particularly for great powers, the status concern is crucial in determining its satisfaction or dissatisfaction, hence the degree of willingness or unwillingness to “supporting and sustaining” or rejecting and challenging the status quo order.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, grand strategies are an outcome of a long, deep-seated process shaped by the national collective self-esteem within the state, and status seeking within the international order. However, the grand

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<sup>81</sup> The fact was reflected several scholars mainly more recently (Clunan, 2014; Dafoe, Renshon, & Huth, 2014; Doran, 2012; Forsberg, 2014; Larson & Shevchenko, 2014; Malinova, 2014; Paul, Larson, & Wohlforth, 2014; Urnov, 2014; Volgy, Corbetta, Grant, & Baird, 2011; Ward, 2013).

strategies are not linear or predetermined; instead, they are dynamic process, as the collective self-concepts over the status are dynamic and change over time. As domestic political groups usually have verity of attitudes or preferences over the state's policies, the result is partially the outcome of political consensus outlined through political contestation.

Therefore, the shift in the state's grand strategy orientations ranged from status quo to revolutionary revisionism is due to different attitudes that are reflected in political collective self-concepts. While the perception of status consistency may resonate with the existing order and status quo strategies, the perception of inconsistency may cause dissatisfaction and willingness to adjust the dimension, here the status through reassuring the normative system of status quo order. However, the perception of status (recognition) dilemma leads to adopting a revolutionary challenge of the perceived unjust status quo order in its basic level.

Russia's grand strategy process initiated after the Soviet collapse and it experienced continuities and changes over time. The major objective of the grand strategy in the aftermath of Soviet collapse is to be seen as a great power by the liberal order and its hegemonic hierarchy. This belief had a lasting effect on the feeling of national identity, the political attitudes of Russian citizens, and the Russian government's political decisions (Urnov, 2014). The traditionally deep-seated implications endure and form the moral evaluations on Russia's role in the world politics (Malinova, 2014).

Even those who are convinced that Russia is an "overachiever" that has received great power status in the post-Soviet era, do not deny that Russians and Russia's foreign policy remained ambitious over the state's international position (Adomeit, 1995; Volgy et al., 2014). Adomeit (1995) are convinced that despite real weaknesses, "Russian officials" seldom "to proclaim Russia to be a great power" even during initial phase after Soviet

collapse, when Russia was yet “in trouble”. While according to Adomeit (1995, p. 35) “true greatness” never requires “advertising,” instead it “should be evident”. The Russian perception of status laid well on a number of Russia’s resource attributes and material capabilities inherited from the Soviet Union, all came down to it being a great power. The permanent seat of UNSC, nuclear arsenal and vast natural resources, as well as its cultural historical critical factors, along with the role in the former Soviet region, suggest that Russia is still considered an influential power. However, Russians increasingly perceive an inconsistency of status in contrast to the Western counterparts. The source of this perception is placed in the kind of Western powers’ dealing with Russia’s transition, as well the shift in the security setting in continental Europe (Heller, 2014, p. 335).

Using qualitative content analysis, this study attempts to figure out the impact of the intersubjective matter of status in shaping the continuity or change Russian grand strategic orientations. Dealing with the process of contestation over grand strategy preference, this research employs ideal types as indicators to construct a typology of Russian collective self-concepts shaped over the state’s international status during a given time. Following Russia’s foreign policy during the 1990s to mid-2000s, this study identifies dominant collective self-concepts existed in Russian foreign policy thinking; Westernism, Statism; Eurasian and Developmentalist, Civilisationism.<sup>82</sup>

Each collective self-concept is derived from components of the dominant group’s ideas related to the state’s status including leaders and political elites’ ideas over the international environment, ideas on the state’s identification (in/out grouping), and ideas related to the state’s rank and role. The ideas are interpreted by analysing official documents, statements and declarations of leaders and political elites. Considering the

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<sup>82</sup> Similar to different studies, this research identifies the ideal types (Clunan, 2014; Kasymov, 2012; Larson & Shevchenko, 2014; A. P. Tsygankov, 2003).

changes in Russia's grand strategy orientations, the research provides detailed analysis of the emergence and dearth of several strategic preferences shaped around the state's status, including strategies of *adjustive reassurance* (social mobility, creativity, and social competition) and *revolutionary revisionism*. To consider which of these strategic orientations was employed by advocates self-concept; this study analysed Russian official documents, the rhetoric of leaders involved in foreign policy making regarding the indicators of each strategy. The outcomes were verified by academic expert interviews.

### **3.2 Westernism and Russia's Status**

After the Soviet breakdown, Russia's so-called Westernists took the first step and launched a "quest" for the reconstruction of the state's status and national identity to deal with the perception of inferiority and inconsistency, from 1992 to the mid-1990s. Based on their ideas over Russia's proper status, a powerful group of prominent government officials and think tanks reinforced the main Westernist self-concept. They defined national interests and adopted a strategic orientation to gain recognition of the aspired status. This chapter explores the dynamic transformation of the grand strategy formation of post-soviet Russia in the early 1990s. It aims to analyse how Westernists perceived Russia's status and defined the state's grand strategy, and finally whether or not the strategy was effective to gain recognition of such the status.

#### **3.2.1 Westernism and Worldview**

The collapse of the Soviet Union and fall of the bipolar system, an idealistic view about the prospect cooperation and non-confrontational era in interstate relations dominate Russia's foreign policy sphere. This new "non-confrontation" era, with the obsolescence of geopolitical rivalry, block policies and enmities, and with no security military threats, led to the establishment of a "favourable external back ground" where there is "room" neither for "political confrontation" nor "for longer enemy" (Kozyrev, 1992c, 1993;

MDR, 1993, November, 2). Such a perception of the existence of “favourable external conditions” reflected by Yeltsin (1994, February 24) in the first message to national assembly, that, “global confrontation is a thing of the past. For the first time in many years, Russia has no military opponents”. The assumption directed Westernists to hypothesise the shift from previous confrontational unpredictable interstate relations to the “new global relations” grounded on “cooperation”, “stability and predictability” (Kozyrev, 1992c, p. 8). Russia’s place, therefore, was not “in a hostile environment as it had been in earlier dramatic stages; rather, it encountered friendly and positive external surroundings” (Kozyrev, 1992c, p. 8).

Notably, Russian Westernists grounded their view toward the “new stage of civilisation” on “lofty idealism” added to “the most prosaic type of materialism” which, they claimed, would cause “the best minds of all times and nations” to strive for “the triumph” of humanity, jointly and cooperatively (Kozyrev, 1992b, p. 287). This was contrary to the previous rigid materialist view that had led to the division and adversity amongst the states. Logically, the new non-confrontational era, with the disappeared “threat of military conflict”, was “an opportunity” and “solid” ground for the “East and West” to cooperate jointly “in areas useful to mankind”, based on the shared values and joint interests (Kozyrev, 1992b, 1993). “For Russian liberals, the West was not an enemy any more” (Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019).

Yeltsin propounded the view at least in the initial phase. After “many years” that “the destinies of the world” had been tragically “shaken by the storms of confrontation” derived by “two nations”, “poles” and “opposites”, accordingly, “Russia and the US” were ready to cooperate and create a new era of prosperity and “peace” more than any time before. Highlighting Russia’s readiness to cooperate, Yeltsin concluded, “It is Russia that once and for all has done away with double standards in foreign policy. We are firmly



resolved not to lie any more, either to our negotiating partners, or to the Russians, Americans or any other people” (Yeltsin, 1992, June 18).

The West and the US, from the Westernists’ perspective, was a potential partner, and more importantly a potential ally. Reemphasising on the “ideological vacuum” and common understanding the “fruitless” of “disputes over certain isms”, along with fall of the “symbols of confrontation and hatred, signs of trouble”, the president concluded that “the first task [of Russia] is to establish cooperation” with “all others” in particular “the West” (Yeltsin, 1994, February 24). Therefore, in a new non-confrontations era with no ideological competition, the idealist view with positive sum calculations of the world politics and the West became a common denominator of the Russian political landscape at the time (Muraviev, Personal Interview, 10 December 2018).

Russian Westernists were “optimistic in the international sense”, yet at the same time, they were “quite pessimistic about Russian domestic conditions”. The main sources of threats were not international but domestic. As Alexander Sergunin (Personal Interview, 12 October 2018) highlights, Russian liberals were convinced “that all security threats are inside of Russia because of Russia’s grave economic, financial social situations; the rise of separatism, nationalism, religious extremism”. Accordingly, IR expert concludes “under Yeltsin, the existence of the Russian federation was at risk” (Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018).

Analysing the annual address of Yeltsin (1994, February 24) obviously determines different dimensions of that pessimistic view of domestic conditions. Those domestic sources of threats can be classified in the main social, economic and political aspects. Politically the president pointed to the “forming the potential for Russia’s disintegration” due to “increasing gaps between different regions”; that would be “intolerable” especially when transformed to the “conflict with the constitution, the authorities of the regions”. The

situation was even worse, “especially in some of the republics of the Federation in borders areas that made them zones of interethnic conflicts”. In the social sphere, he listed long social problems that ranged from “civil confrontation”; “the powering of bureaucracy, which reduces the growth of new economic relations, distorts the social policy of the state, and depresses the social wellbeing of people”.<sup>83</sup> Added by “crime” in any forms of “organised crime”, “corruption”, “economic crimes” and “the laundering of money”; budget deficit; that altogether created “serious threats to the state and society, life, health and property of citizens” and shapes major foundations of “threat[s] to Russia’s national security”.

Domestic economic conditions were similar due to a range of economic issues that made “an unfavourable starting position” and “extremely difficult situation” in the early 1990s. The actual failure of the mechanism of the totalitarian system coincided with the Soviet collapse and the disruption of economic ties. A range of economic issues including devastated “consumer market”, exhausted “foreign exchange”; “deeper decline in production”<sup>84</sup>; washed out “Ruble”; all problems exacerbated [by the totalitarian regime] to the extreme”. The lists can be even longer if adding the monopoly, raw material orientation of exports by the military-industrial complex; Inflation,<sup>85</sup> and the economic recession (Yeltsin, 1994, February 24).

The Westernism benign view of the world politics dominated in the state’s official documents too. The Foreign Policy Concept (FPC) and the Military Doctrine of the

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<sup>83</sup> Inclusion of a part of the bureaucracy at different levels of government in the political struggle, according to the president, leads to sabotage of state decisions; Corruption, penetrated the state and municipal apparatus; dangerously low level of performing discipline; mismatch in the work of ministries, departments, other state bodies. Uncontrolled growth of management personnel in all spheres, which reduces the effectiveness of power, disfigures the entire management system.

<sup>84</sup> As Yeltsin pointed out “in a number of industries, there is a real degradation and destruction of production with a drop in output in 1993 by 25% or more”.

<sup>85</sup> Referring to the message “inflation began much earlier than 1992. This disease has plagued our economy for many years, turned into a general commodity deficit, a card distribution, and kilometre queues. When the liberalisation of prices unfolded, the accumulated years of inflationary energy burst outward”.

Russian Federation (MD) reemphasised such a favourable international environment. The earlier document by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID) in April 1993, the post-blocked international system was secure and favourable with no serious military and security threats. However, the main sources of threat of Russia were largely domestic. The document listed some “potential and real” threats rooted in Russian socioeconomic and political internal condition.<sup>86</sup> The FPC referred to the potential threats towards Russia’s territorial integrity that stem from the “violation of the integrity of the defence system”, deriving from “uncertainty” of Russia’s “borders regime”, mainly “in the Southern and Western directions”, by “the states of the near abroad”. It regarded domestic dimensions as the greatest threats for Russia that would be “neutralised or weakened” through “strengthening the state, institutions, economic and defence potential, as well as via the effective use of foreign policy means” (MID, 1993, April 23).

With a similar idealistic, optimistic view, the Military Doctrine characterized the post-Cold War transitional period with no “confrontation generated by ideological antagonism”, instead with progressive “partnership and all around cooperation” along with increasing “confidence in military strengthening”, and reducing “nuclear and conventional armaments”.<sup>87</sup> Logically, it highlights domestic, mainly socio-economic and political issues as the key sources of security threat for Russia. “Where the threat of world war, both nuclear and conventional, is considerably reduced, even if not entirely

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<sup>86</sup> Politically, the document remarked the main threats to the state’s “vital interests”, the issues mostly related to Russia’s territorial integrations including “actions aimed at undermining the integrity of the Russian Federation... with the use of interethnic and interfaith contradictions; nomination by some states of territorial claims”. Economically but the major potential threat was related to transition domestic economy. The threat lied “in the fact that a positive and necessary process of “opening up” the state’ economy could be “accompanied by a weakening of the economic independence” of the state, “a degradation of its technological and industrial potential, and consolidation of fuel and raw materials specialisation in the global economy”. The danger would be worsened regarding the country’s “ineffective system of state protection” of its economic interests along with internal “unfavourable investment climate (MID, 1993, April 23). .

<sup>87</sup> Regarding such definition of “the contemporary stage of development of the international situation” the document emphasized on “paramount importance” of the “political-diplomatic, international legal, economic, and other non-military methods and collective actions by the world community” in preventing any kinds of “threats to peace, violations of peace, and acts of aggression... wars and armed conflicts” .

eliminated”, the main sources of external threats were “the likelihood” of “local and regional conflicts”, especially in Russia’s immediate neighbourhood region,<sup>88</sup> as well as some new threats related to the “international terrorism”.<sup>89</sup> Overall, in a more revolutionary turn, MD indicates that the West and its main security and military arrangements were no longer sources of threat in post-Soviet Russia (MDR, 1993, November, 2).

In brief, Soviet’s peaceful disintegration and end of the bipolar system, the liberal idealist worldview reflecting the non-confrontational character of World politics dominated in grand strategy thinking of Russia, from 1991 to 1994/5. This idealism was based on the assumptions reflecting the favourable international order with the absence of security threats and obsolescence of geopolitical and ideological rivalry, common interests, joint values system, and finally the prospect of a positive sum cooperative era.

### 3.2.2 Westernism and National Identification

In fact, the Soviet’s dissolution, as one of two pillars of international system ended the bipolar system, and its main character, the ideological confrontation; also ended the Soviet vision of national identity. This was at the first hand problematic for Russian elites. As Alexander Sergunin (Personal Interview, 12 October 2018) underscored finding a proper answer to Russia’s identity; who is Russian or what Russia is. It was problematic, since Russians have a multi-dimensional national historical self.<sup>90</sup> This

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<sup>88</sup> The threats includes “the potential local wars and armed conflicts, particularly those in the immediate vicinity of the Russian borders”; “the territorial claims of other states on the Russian Federation and its allies”; “the suppression of the rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests of citizens of the Russian Federation in foreign states”; and “attacks on military installations of the Russian Federation Armed Forces sited on the territory of foreign states” (MDR, 1993, November, 2).

<sup>89</sup> “The proliferation of nuclear”, “weapons of mass destruction”; along with the “possibility” of the production, transition, with potential utilization of those weapons “by certain countries, organizations, and terrorist groups to realize their military and political aspirations” (MDR, 1993, November, 2).

<sup>90</sup> Multi-dimensionality and multi-faceted roots of national identity made a definition of Russia’s national identity complex and problematic. As the scholar highlights Russia has about two hundred, more or less, different nations, nationalities, and ethnic groups. Regarding two main terms used in Russia; *Russi* and *Russiani* as two different concepts with different meanings in the Russian context. By the earlier term “we mean”, the scholar, adds “As Russians we have a Russian national identity, with a reach history; reach literature and traditional culture”. Accordingly, “*Russi* refers to Russian as a Slavic group”. By the later, *Russiani*, “we mean all Russia’s citizens

multidimensionality of the national identity gives the political elites an opportunity to define the version of national identity based on their priority, the proper version that they think would best provide their objectives. Reflected by a Russian scholar, “it was a historical, centuries problem” since the identity was a “split”, “incoherent identity” and associated “with double-headed eagle, looking towards the West and the East”. Such a “multifaceted, multidimensional” national self, gave a means to political elites to “interpret and apply and present national identity instrumentally” consistent with their objectives. As he concluded, “because of such the cauterizations of Russia’s identity preferring each dimension, “deems depend on the geopolitical circumstances”, and hence “the elites emphasized on certain aspects of identity” (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018).

What is clear, however, is that the vacuum of ideology after the Soviet collapse sparked the re-establishment of national identity. Loyal to the traditional intellectual philosophy of Westernism, the new leadership argued that country was a natural part of the civilised West that the Bolsheviks and Soviet Union have seized her “genuine” Western self. “The totalitarian ideology of the Russian Bolsheviks”, Kozyrev argued, “which came to supplant totalitarian attitudes of the Russian tsars, ... not only was the erstwhile empire reinstated under new ideological colours, it became more despotic and repressive, trampling upon the freedom and very existence of human beings” (Kozyrev, 1992c, p. 3). The collapse was perceived as an indication of the inappropriateness of Russian historical national identity in its previous forms, the “five long centuries of absolutism from Ivan the Terrible to the Soviet 1970s” as they humiliate and unpleasantly “tamed the Russian masses into the habits of submission” (Kozyrev, 1992c, p. 3). Hence, it was a great chance

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people who populate the Russian federation”. *Russiani*, hence, refers to the practical issue of citizenship (Alexander Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).

for Russians who “having lived through all the suffering associated with despotism”, to “compare” themselves with others, “undoing of the system” with its ahistorical “humility” and inferiority, instead choose their “own version” (Kozyrev, 1992c, pp. 1-5).<sup>91</sup>

What Russian liberals did not desire to be, became clear, but now, doubt remained what they like Russia to be, as Kozyrev asked, when “all some kind of ideological nostalgia” was distorted “what will come in its wake”? (Kozyrev, 1992c, p. 5). To answer, the Westernism stand for re-establish Russia’s own image as a Western liberal state. Indicated by Yeltsin (1992, June 18), “the first ever over one thousand years of history” Russians, “as a citizen[s] of the great country” have their “choice in favour of liberty and democracy”. Russia in this sense completely belonged to the “alliance” and “family” of the Western “democratic states”. Identifying Russia as a member of “the Western democracies” implies that, the US and other democratic Westerns were “natural friends and eventual allies of the democratic Russia” as they were enemies of the “totalitarian Soviet Union” (Kozyrev, 1992b, 1993, 1994a). Simply put, Russia belonged to the Western civilization in-group.

The Westernists’ version developed initially from the perception of socio-economic backwardness of the Soviet’s system compared with the West economic prosperity and socio-political stability that contributed to the perceived superiority of Western values and institutions.<sup>92</sup> Looking at domestic situations, the main question of Russian elites was

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<sup>91</sup> Concluded by the foreign minister, the collapse of Soviet’s system demonstrated any efforts “at simple cosmetic facelift or at building Socialism with a Human Face”, are unable to avoid Russian aspiration to “profound changes” undoing of the system (Kozyrev, 1992c, pp. 1-5). Similarly Yeltsin (1992, June 18) argued “The idol of Communism, which spread everywhere social strife, animosity, and unparalleled brutality, which instilled fear in humanity, has collapsed. It has collapsed never to rise again. I am here to assure you; we will not let it rise again in our land”.

<sup>92</sup> Economically the new-born Russian Federation suffered severely from the legacy of Soviet’s era. As an example one can refer to the dramatic decrease of the USSR GDP at the end of 80s and very first years of 1990s - around 60% from the 1985-1992 (Leonid Gordon and Leonid Fridman, 1995).

how “the state should act to bring back the order in political and economic conditions of society” otherwise, the disorder “would be sort of a threat to domestic structures” (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019). The new wave of Western democratic triumphalism raised in the world mainstream intellectual discourses additionally strengthened the perception of universal superiority of Western liberal values. While Soviet’s system was declining, the “winners” in the US and Europe celebrated the “victory” and defended the new world order dominated by the liberal values the capitalism, civil society, and democracy at “the end of history” (Fukuyama, 1989). The winners, “the West ‘won’ because of what the democracies were”, “they were free, prosperous and successful”, what the Soviet was not (Pfaff, 1991, p. 48).

That conviction of ascendancy affected Yeltsin and Kozyrev who believed that at “the end of history”, there was no alternative but pro-Western development. Hence, Russia should follow the West’s capitalism and its model of development instead of the Soviet messianic version. The logic was simple. With “the spirit of Gorbachev thinking intact in Russian political landscape in the new era”, and as an outcome of comparison with the West “there was an understanding that the Soviet Union collapsed because there was something wrong that could be improved through thinking like and taking examples from the West”. This implies searching “the political and economic and social solutions which worked for the West from the West” (Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019). Therefore, as concluded by Russian expert “the extremely optimistic view” of the world politics and particularly the West, was the outcome of Liberals’ “pessimistic” view of the “uncomfortable communist past and the sort for human beings” (Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).

Consequently, in the post-Soviet Russia, the Westernists coalition presented a democratic and anti-communism version of a national idea in which the West was the

sole symbol of civilisation and prosperity. Dividing the world between Western civilised countries with universal democratic values and those transferring to democracy, versus authoritarian, non-democratic states, the Westernists were convinced that not only domestic backwardness but also the state's interconnectedness with non-democratic states particularly the former republics located in Eurasian region, rather the West, were threatening Russia and its identity (Kozyrev, 1992b). This meant the Russian Westernists no longer recognised the Eurasian dimension of Russian national identity; hence, the region remained out-group in the vision.

### **3.2.3 Westernism and Russia's Rank and Role**

With the collapse of Soviet Union, Russia's perception of its international standing and role experienced similar changes. Russian Westernists convicted, as Kozyrev (1994a, p. 62) stated "Russia is predestined to be a great power. It remained as such for centuries in spite of repeated internal upheavals".<sup>93</sup> While the insight continued, Westernists' conceptualisation of the proper standing was, however, completely different from the traditional aspiration of greatpowerness, mainly in Soviet' term that was perceived as the source of inferiority in modern world.

Indeed, for the leaders, the recognition and legitimacy of the state's international status would be gained through modern meaning and criteria that are legitimised by the status quo order. Hence, instead of the previous definition of the proper rank based on realistic measurements such as military strength, balance of power,<sup>94</sup> Russian liberals stressed the economic, cultural, social and historical factors as the criteria of great power status in the modern world. Greatpowerness in this sense was no longer dependent on the territorial

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<sup>93</sup> Similar argument (Kozyrev, 1992c; Kozyrev, 1993, 1994a; RFE/RL, 1992, April 8).

<sup>94</sup> Regarding Russia's great power status, Kozyrev (1993) argued that military might is no longer the source of status as "the military is converted from an instrument of confrontation into a factor of stability".



size or geographical and geopolitical locations but more on economic prosperity and well-being (Kozyrev, 1992c, 1992d). Emphasising the “necessary conditions” for the state to gain such “a worthy place” in the world politics, Yeltsin (1994, February 24) similarly argued that;

“Our strategic goal is to make Russia a prosperous country in which free people live, proud of their ancient history and boldly looking to the future; a country in which power is based on law and does not suppress a citizen; a country with an efficient economy that combines national characteristics and world achievements.”

Therefore, in Westernists’ self-concept, the post-soviet Russia had been still a great power, but in a new sense of the term.

Declining the Soviet “messianic” ideology and focusing on the state’s rank on the terms of normalcy was the other aspect of the new sense of greatpowerness. This implied that while there was “no doubt” that “Russia will not cease to be a great power” however, “it will be a normal great power, and its national interests will be priority” (Kozyrev, 1992c, p. 4).<sup>95</sup> This normal status could be sought not “through confrontation” or coercive means, what Soviet did, instead it could be gained “through interaction with partners” in a way that was “understandable to democratic countries” (Kozyrev, 1992c, p. 10; 1994b; Yeltsin, 1992, June 18). Therefore, the acknowledgement of Russia’s aspired status must be gained through following democratic values and implementing liberal development methods. Only then, would the state be seen as part of the West’s democratic great powers club (Kozyrev, 1992c, 1992f, 1993, 1994a). Later, the FM Kozyrev distinguished the new normal status from the Soviet version. “Russia is destined to be a great power” accordingly “Under Communist or nationalist regimes, it would be an aggressive and

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<sup>95</sup> Similarly, Kozyrev (1994b) stated, “Russia, while in a period of transitional difficulties, retains the inherent characteristics of a great power (technology, resources, weaponry)”.

threatening power, while under democratic rule it would be peaceful and prosperous. But in either case it would be a great power” (Kozyrev, 1994, March 18).

The Westernists’ version of status and role reflected by Russian official documents too. The FPC highlighted “in the emerging system” of world order “despite the crisis that is undergoing” Russia “remains one of the great powers both in its potential, and in influencing the course of affairs in the world, and in the related responsibility”. The document defends Russia’s global role, functioning through an “active” and “full participation as a great power in creating such a world order” under the “democratic values, and universal principles”. These principles are included, not limited to, the “respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of states, democratic choice, compliance with international obligations, protection of human rights, mutually beneficial economic cooperation” (MID, 1993, April 23). Reiterating, the MD implicitly stressed the state’s global role together with “the World community and various collective security organisations”. It highlights the state’s participation, as a global power “in the further development of international law”, in “the drafting, adoption, and implementation”, and other “effective measures to prevent wars and armed conflicts” and to “eliminate the danger of nuclear war” against the country’s own territory and “its allies (MDR, 1993, November, 2).

Normal greatpowerness in the Westernists self-concept also implies no longer a belief in the Russian traditional hegemonic role in the Eurasian region. The disappearance of “both a classical metropolis in the Russian Empire and severe ethnic repression”, that led everybody “to live an equally miserable life”, presented “opportunities” to not only Russia and Russians, but also to “all the newly liberated nations” to engage freely in their affairs, in a “search for a better democratic future for their crumbling country” (Kozyrev, 1992c, p. 3). Russia’s “commitment” to civilizational “democratic values” dictates

avoiding the Soviet type of hegemonic role in the region. As it, simultaneously, prescribes the state to enter within the Eurasian region based “on the principle of full equality with the other independent states”. This implied both rejecting the so-called Eurasian line in foreign policy and avoiding further attempt to “humiliate other CIS states” as Kozyrev highlighted (RFE/RL, 05 August 1992). Verified by foreign policy scholar, “even the liberals like the Kozyrev convinced maintaining Russia’ global great power standing as an absolute priority. It might be a pro-Western or a more Western style great power, but it is a priority”. However, in the new version, Russia was “a normal noninterventionist major power”. Greatpowerness hence was a clear departure from the Soviet status aspiration (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

In brief from 1992 to 1994/5, the evidence shows that the status concern influenced Russian grand strategic thinking. Russian leaders were enthusiastic to rebuilt Russia’s great power status, but in a new sense. The Westernists self-concept viewed world politics as favourable, non-confrontational and having a basis for positive sum cooperation. As a normal great power, Russia identified itself with the Western civilized in-group with no messianic mission and regional hegemonic role. Indeed, Westernists accepted the legitimacy of international normative and constitutive order, its status hierarchy based on liberal values as criteria for status seeking behaviours.

### **3.3 Westerism and Social Mobility Strategy**

From 1992, in response to perceived status asymmetry Yeltsin, Kozyrev and their supporters, had outlined the deep-seated Westerniser status enhancement strategy, social mobility to become a normal great power and gain equality. By the strategy, Russian leaders attempted gain recognition through implementing the criteria that was perceived as a standard of status in modern word.

Normalcy, as the central guideline of Russian Westernists in conceptualising status, influenced greatly on the definition of national interests. It defined the interests on “internal transformation” based on the Western values implying the “renaissance of Russia as a free and [open] democratic state” through the “democratisation and respect for human rights” and reestablishment of “society based on justice and prosperity for all, [that] would guarantee full enjoyment of natural rights to all” (Kozyrev, 1992b, p. 287). It also refers to creating a “civilised” “free-market economy”, based on “privatisation and liberalisation of the entire economy” (Kozyrev, 1992b, p. 290; 1992c, p. 8).<sup>96</sup> Yeltsin (1994, February 24) argued, as a democratic power, Russia “must strengthen the state”, and “economic processes”. It also must create efficacious “mechanisms to ensure and protect the rights and freedoms” of individuals, irrespective of “nationality, faith and social status”. This would bring “confidence and tranquillity” for all Russian citizens in their country, and more importantly would lead the state to gain the “worthy” desired standing in the global politics (Yeltsin, 1994, February 24).

As well, Russia could realise those interests by joining the West’s modernized, socio-political and economic orders. The “affinity” with the Western “family of democratic, developed” allies, and the priority of “the formation of a democratic, open state”, dictated “partnership” as “the best strategic choice for Russia”. The strategic partnership could be “a historic opportunity” for the West, the US and the world in general, since under the term “the transformation of an unstable, post-confrontational world into a stable and democratic one” could be possible. The partnership in this sense, was an “understandable”

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<sup>96</sup> It was civilised economy, since according to Kozyrev (1992b, p. 290), it safeguarded by democratic values and principles that “enables people to think and act on their own and which generates economic freedom”.

and “achievable” way of persuading the state’s aspired status, the normalcy and hence its interests (Kozyrev, 1992c, 1992f, 1993, 1994a).<sup>97</sup>

Together, transforming the state through democratic values domestically, and a strategic partnership with Western powers, and integration with the West were the main components of the Russian liberal’s grand strategy, the social mobility. The “super task of Russian, diplomacy” was “creating favourable conditions for the transformation of Russia” and “main guidelines in achieving this aim” was “to join the club of recognised democratic states with market economies, on a basis of equality” (Kozyrev, 1992c, p. 10; 1993). It was hoped that through such the strategic choices, Russia could ultimately be able to gain normalcy “which we dropped out for 70 years” and gain the worthy place within the post-Cold War normative and constitutive status quo (Kozyrev, 1991, 1992c; Yeltsin, 1994, February 24).

Yeltsin and his Westernists fellows pursued “shock therapy” to transform Russian economic system to the Western model, through “privatization and liberalisation”. The economic liberalisation through the “measures” was “irreversible” and “realistic”, according to the Westernists, “to save the country” although it may be pursued by extremely unpopular methods. There were no alternatives except returning to the previous “centralised planning” economic system, “which spells death for the economy”. The shock therapy in this sense was to transform the Russian economic system from a state centric economy to the new liberal market oriented and privatised system. The leaders hoped Russia’s economy, “which was once artificially cut off” from the global economic mainstream, would be restored to “the rest of the world” (Kozyrev, 1992c, pp. 8-9).

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<sup>97</sup> Similarly, in his article “Russia and Human Rights”, Kozyrev (1992b, p. 289) stated “Promotion of political interactions between Russia and the leading countries of the world, the development of partnerships and major progress in disarmament will be the foundation for new global relations characterised by stability and predictability”.

Regarding the system of international relations with no superpower except the US, Russian leaderships needed a partner to provide them with finance and the required resources for domestic transformation. As a scholar argued as “the predominant view” after Soviet collapse, the “cooperation was the way ahead for Russia. Even for the political elite, Russia’s international status was not a prime concern in the early 1990s, compared with securing Western assistance to recover from its transition recession” (Hanson, Personal interview, 5 January 2018). Thus, linking domestic reform to the strategic partnership with the Western counterparts, Russian liberals hoped the strategy could provide a means to achieve these objectives and maximise Russia’s interests. Kozyrev stated, “A properly organised political partnership between Russia and the West can greatly contribute to ensuring the success of Russian economic reform, especially through integrating Russia into the world economy” (Kozyrev, 1994b, p. 70).

The hope was that the Western community would ultimately accept Russia as a member of its own, hence provide investments and other sources required by the state’s socio-political and economic transition. As Russian experts argued,

“There was probably an over-optimistic view of Russia’s future relations with the West which started from the Gorbachev era. Russian liberals were expecting that now Russia ... could be accepted into the West and Western institutions. ...the background was really this sort of obsession with joining the bigger West and joining even the military infrastructure of the West. Russian political elites foresaw optimistically about joining the West, hoped that the Western institutions would embrace Russia” (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018).

Comparing the post-Soviet Russia’s situation with the Western Europe after WWII, Kozyrev requested “unified joint strategy” support from the West, to address the challenges of the period. As “The Marshall Plan played a key role in the economic rebirth of Western Europe”, similarly “the adequate response to the present-day challenges should be the joint strategy of partnership between the democratic nations of East and West” (Kozyrev, 1994a, p. 64).

Otherwise, for Russian liberals, the hesitancy of the Western partners to support the state's reforms could be a threat for Russia, and also for the new post-Cold war order. As Yeltsin warned, the West and the US' hesitance for supporting Russia's transmission would lead to the failure of the reforms, as the only chance for Russia to survive. As well as Russia's collapse, the failure of reforms would bring back a new round of lavish spending for militarisation (RFE/RL, 1992, April 8). Similarly, pointing to intensifying the role of radical nationalist groups within Russia, Kozyrev cautioned the Western partners to be aware that they had no choice except supporting Russia's reforms since;

“Partnership opponents within Russia gather not so much under communism's red flag as under the brown banner of ultranationalism. They reject cooperation with the West as inseparable from the democratising of Russia, and view democratisation itself as an obstacle to renewed authoritarianism and the forceful establishment of ‘order’ within the territory of the former Soviet Union”(Kozyrev, 1994b)

Therefore, the Westernists urged the West and the US “that no one give up on Russia” and “be pragmatic” when “there are still some who are for reform and a market economy” (Kozyrev, 1996, March 10).

Integration in the Western centred international order, structures and organizations was other critical element of Westernists' mobility strategy in “practical terms”. Through integration, Russia was “undertaking concrete steps” toward realising its main objective, of “Russia as a great but normal power”, “by exploring an area that for decades has been a ‘diplomatic virgin land’” for the state (Kozyrev, 1992c, p. 9). It was also natural element of partnership too. Logically, “if partnership means a full scale scheme” which Kremlin sought, it should not merely “include mutual recognition as like-minded nations” but also, more practically, “such a recognition implies closing institutional gaps between Russia and the West” (Kozyrev, 1994a, p. 65). Reflected by Yeltsin (1994, February 24) the integration was “an opportunity to enter a qualitatively new level of cooperation”.

Overall, as Russian experts comment, during the initial years, “the major agenda background of Russia’s foreign policy was integration into the West”. Since, for Russian liberals, the state’s status and role was “really an extension of the West and Western civilization”, integration with Western institutions was logical outcome of “that extension”. The integration was, according to scholar, “tricky at the same time.”

“Russia wanted to integrate into the Western geopolitical space on its own terms. This means while it perceived itself as part of West, but it really did not perceive itself, its role as just another European country join the European Union and NATO, just as a regular member with no difference with for example Denmark. So [Russians] said we were joining the West ...but we have to be like a major, a kind of the first violin in orchestra ” (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018).

Essentially, a key mission of Russia’s grand strategy was to form a cooperation with the Western counterparts in all dimensions, the main priority of the state’s diplomacy was to join Western institutions. Altogether it would “make the utmost, concrete contribution to the improvement of the everyday life of Russian citizens” (Kozyrev, 1992c, p. 10). Accordingly, the state was to join the main Western socioeconomic and strategic structures – “the European Commission (EC)”, “the European Bank”, “NATO”, “International Monetary Fund (IMF)”, “the World Bank”, “Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)”, “General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)”, “the Group of Seven industrial nation (G-7)” (Kozyrev, 1992c).

Analysing the Foreign Policy Concept clearly illustrates the impact of liberals’ pro-Western preferences. Perceiving the favourable international environment, the FPC, emphasised continuity of Russia’s greatpowerness and its global role with a joint responsibility. “The possibilities” of gaining such standing and playing a role “to influence the course of events in the world” fully and actively, was subjected “to the successful” transformation of Russia to “an open, free democratic power with a competitive market-oriented economy.” The “vital interests” were to preserve the standing through domestic transformation to a liberal democratic power. Simultaneously,



“Russia’s standing, that would most closely correspond to its geopolitical significance, economic and intellectual potential, military-political and foreign economic interests”, must be pursued through creating a “mutual beneficial partnership” with its Western developed democratic allies (MID, 1993, April 23).

The FPC remarks about the former Soviet region seemed to be more in response to domestic Eurasianists and hardliners Civilisationists’ criticism of Kozyrev and his supporters for neglecting the area, than any concrete policy toward the region.<sup>98</sup> While the concept highlighted the priority of relations with the Eurasian states and necessity of “maximum preservation and development on a new basis of economic, political, military, cultural and other ties between the former union republics”, it was not clear how such a policy should be forged practically. Such stress on the CIS states was more under the shadow of Russia’s main priority than that of transforming domestic situation of the state and priority of partnership with the West and gradual integration within the Western constitutive order (MID, 1993, April 23).

In brief, from 1992-1994/5, the concern over status inconsistency influenced the Westernist grand strategy orientation. Russian liberals pursued an unprecedented strategic orientation, the social mobility; implying the close partnership with the Western powers, integration into the Western institutions along with radical domestic transformation to democratisation and marketization.

The strategy was largely due to the influence of the status concern than merely declining the power capabilities of Russia in realist terms. For Westernists the only way to enhance the state’s status and distance from the perceived inferiority, was adopting those distinctive and positive characteristics from the West and reducing Soviet messianic

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<sup>98</sup>- It discussed later in this chapter.

aspirations as the negative element of identity. Indeed, the West was the end in itself, rather merely means to gain capacities or support for domestic transition. Russia, in that sense, naturally belonged to the Western civilization; hence, the state's status and its interests should be defined in affinity with the West and Western values. The "interests of Russian diplomacy", according to Kozyrev (1992c, p. 12) were "commitment to democratic values of the civilized world".<sup>99</sup> That strategy in that sense, was not merely rational; regarding the communality between Russia and the Western civilization, but it was also "prudential", justified by Kozyrev (1992c, p. 12).

To sum up, post-Soviet grand strategy orientation changed as the state's collective ideas, shaped over its status concern, changed. While Russia's orientation was to enhance its position in the international hierarchy, by adjusting status dimension of the order, at the same time it was pursued through reassuring the order, its normative system via following "the rule of the game", and competing over status enhancement based on the legitimised criteria.

### **3.4 Social Mobility in Practice**

It seems that the Westernist self-concept, its grand strategy and view of national interests gained the political consensus in Russia, at least for a while after the Soviet collapse. Although one should not exaggerate the role of a failed coup in the 1991 by Soviet hardliners, the event however, provided a period of respite for the liberals. Because, the coup had not only accelerated the dissolution of the Soviet Union but also it delegitimised some criticism of the deep-seated domestic reforms over democratisation and liberal marketization and privatisation (Clunum, 2014).

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<sup>99</sup> Similar argument (Kozyrev, 1992b; Kozyrev, 1994a)

This is based on surveys conducted by VTsIOM “general support of Yeltsin’s policies” and especially concerning economic reforms, marketization and privatization. Whatever the reason, there was a political consensus in Russian political sphere among different elite groups around the liberals’ mobility strategy (VTsIOM, 1993, 1994). As a survey conducted in 1993, the overwhelming majority of elites (87%), convinced “the economic and not military potential of a country determines the place and role of a country in the world” versus merely 13% who believed that “military force will always ultimately decide everything in international relations” (Hamilton College Levitt Poll, 2016).

To be accomplished an assimilation strategy requires the permeability of higher group boundaries for the aspirant actor.<sup>100</sup> Simply put, the failure of success of the social mobility, as the likely strategy of the Westernists, rests on whether or not the West recognized the Russians’ aspired status. The cases below examine whether or not it succeeded.

### **3.4.1 Integration in Western International Organisations**

A key mission of the Russian grand strategy was joining into the Western socio-economic, political, and strategic structures and organisations. For Kozyrev and his liberal supporters, the integration in the Western constitutive order was crucial for survival, it was a guarantee of Russia’s success especially in domestic economic reforms and also the state’s main objective to gain recognition of being a normal developed country with a prosperous free market state (Kozyrev, 1994a).<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Explained in theoretical chapter two.

<sup>101</sup> Verified by IR experts too (Hanson, Personal interview, 5 January 2018; Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018; Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018; Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019; Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019; Muraviev, Personal Interview, 10 December 2018; Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019; Alexander Sergunin, 12 October 2018; Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019; Victor Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018).

Russian attitudes towards accession into the West's organisations was accompanied by a highly optimistic view, particularly in the economic realm. As well as "early admission into international trade organisations", they expected "non-discriminatory access to European and world markets for its goods and technologies" (Kozyrev, 1994a, p. 70). The effective integration within the Western constitutive order, besides the "political solidarity, humanitarian aid and uncoordinated credits" would lead to "vital providing stable financial, technical and organisational support for the economic reforms in Russia, including the encouragement of investment for our process of conversion" (Kozyrev, 1993). Any type of economic assistance, whether financial assistance, advice on debt restructuring, currency stabilisation and loans and more importantly, a flow of massive foreign investments, as the "potential persuasive areas" were "vital for the state's survival" (Yeltsin, 1994, February 24).

Designing an ambitious plan for economic reforms in 1992, Yeltsin and the liberal elites, mainly Yegor Gaidar, hoped to gain financial assistance of the IMF and World Bank (WB) and other Western institutions. The first step was crucial for creating a market economy and Russia joined IMF and WB, in June 1992. The IMF financial assistance was critical for Russia's macroeconomic stabilisation and in reducing its budget deficit. The Russian leaders expected financial assistance comparable to the Marshall Plan or the "500 Days" plan including billions of dollars in financial aid for a four-year reform under IMF's orthodox programme (Kozyrev, 1992a).

However, the assumptions about gaining the West's assistance were not realised whether due to the West's unwillingness or its inability to provide similar aid than that of Marshall Plan type for post-Soviet Russia. What the Western power could provide was "practical" advice to improve Russia's domestic economic structural reforms (Kapadizic,

Personal Interview, 15 September 2018).<sup>102</sup> Most importantly, the main supporter Western powers suffered difficulty themselves in the given time too. The US underwent economic recession, similarly Germans were involved in the reintegration plan that was quite “costly” (Rosenthal, 1992, April 2).<sup>103</sup> Whatever the reasons, the West was neither able nor desired to do much more for Russia.

Kremlin joined G-7 in 1992, despite opposition of some of the Western leaders like John Major, British prime minister and Helmut Kohl, German chancellor. Russia’s membership did not bring much more for the state’s status despite initially being a success. While Russia aimed to achieve “a qualitatively new level of cooperation” within the group. However, in reality, it was never accepted as a member of its own group, like Western powers, due to a lack of real “strategy of cooperation” between Russia and G-7, in both dimensions, economically and politically, that “should clearly outline the prospect of turning the ‘seven’ into a G8” (Yeltsin, 1994, February 24). Adding the fact that Russia reached formal association in the group only later in July 1994.

Regarding financial support, the group’s attempts seemed unsatisfactory for Russia too. In April 1992, G7 provided \$24 billion to Russia, offered by the US and Germany to avoid Moscow’ “economic collapse” and to “stop new authoritarianism rising from the rubble of the former Soviet Union” (Rosenthal, 1992, April 2).<sup>104</sup> However, the economic

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<sup>102</sup> This policy also could be regarded as a realistic calculation of the West, “especially the financial institutions including the IMF, the WB or trade organisation, even the G7”. As IR expert argued “there was sort of a perception that Russia as a future partner, have to get the policies in order to be able [to the extent that] be accepted as a member of the club”. The experts continued “it was very practical relationship, because Russia was a flash with money there was a lot sort of potential investments,...this is something that you could also make use of, also to their advantage” (Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018).

<sup>103</sup> Similarly experts hinted to inability of Western world to provide enough financial assistance to Moscow because of its conditional situation at the end of the cold war (Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019; Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).

<sup>104</sup> The support was more politically important as George Bush argued, “Our adversary for 45 years, the one nation that posed a worldwide threat to freedom and peace, is now seeking to join the community of free nations”. “If this democratic revolution is defeated, it could plunge us into a world more dangerous in some respects than the dark years of the cold war.” Similarly, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl argued, “We have agreed to send a decisive signal of political and economic support to President Yeltsin and the forces of reform in Russia and the other republics”. “The offer is also an incentive to successfully implement this brave reform program, especially in Russia” (Rosenthal, 1992, April 2).

support was “not enough”, what Yeltsin and his supporters expected, “in terms of scale, those measures were rather small than several hundred billion in direct investment [needed] to survive” (Rosenthal, 1992, April 2). Later during the Russian domestic struggle, when Yeltsin’s reforms faced adversaries, mainly from Russian hardliners in parliament, the Tokyo G-7 conference announced a “\$43.4” plan of financial assistance for Moscow. The plan was mainly due the US efforts under the banner of making a universal alliance for democracy and avoiding the world plunge in a “more dangerous”, even in a number of dimensions darker than the previous era (Bush, 1992, APRIL 2). Despite this, the Western great powers could not satisfy Kremlin leaders, as after Tokyo declaration, Yeltsin stated, “Of course, the assistance given by the Group of Seven is not all of an equal level or nature. This does not necessarily mean all problems will be resolved” (Yeltsin, 1993, July 9).

Moreover, treating the Kremlin as a recipient not donor by the members of the group had more devastating psychological effects on Russians, as they perceived the behaviour of the powers more humiliating. This was not very unrealistic compared to the rate of foreign financial assistance and investment in Russia with that received by some former Soviet republics (Fish, 1997, p. 38).<sup>105</sup> The emotional effects were added by a sense of “discriminatory attitudes towards Russia” regarding the issue of “trade barriers” between Russia and the Group’s participants (Yeltsin, 1993, July 9). Overall, the integration into G7 could not provide Russia’s expectation, to the extent of “consideration of Russian interests”, instead it caused “more and more noticeable damage” mainly “to Russia” and its interests (Yeltsin, 1994, February 24).

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<sup>105</sup> Comparing with the former Soviet republics, Fish (1997, p. 38), shows in his study that Russia was the least amongst the former Soviet states receiving lending from the World Bank. Russia received the least lending from the World Bank by merely 0.8% of GDP, comparing to for example the Czech Republic and Poland by 6.6% and 2% during 1990-1995. Similarly, in foreign direct investment (FDI) per GDP, Russia received only 0.6% compared to the Czech Republic with 12.6%, Poland with 11% or even Turkmenistan with 7.7%, during 1988-1995 (Fish, 1997, p. 38).

The integration into the Western economic organisations and structures were deemed to fail. Neither did they provide economic assistance at the level that was expected, nor did they accept Russia as a one of their own. While Russia stepped towards vitally and essentially “integrating with the world system” the West seemed reluctance to fully accept Russia and its aspirations to provide the state’ demands more than political rhetoric. “It is easier to talk about things than to move ahead”, criticizing the Western partners, Yeltsin stated “We need material assistance, be it on a bilateral or multilateral basis. We must coordinate our actions and bring our political understanding and our action into line at a high level” (Yeltsin, 1993, July 9). Highlighted by Russian expert, “instead of realising Russia’s equality, the Western dominated institutions obviously have been treating Russia as country that lost geopolitical competition during the Cold War or as defeated nation not as a great power” (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018).

The denial of Russia’s aspired standing as a member of Western community, in such the high quality as they expected, and its interests in providing support of the state’s domestic political and economic transition was humiliating and delegitimising Westernism, its aspired status, and pursued grand strategy. Kozyrev lamented “sadly” that Russia was “neither understood nor adequately supported by our natural friends and allies in the West. Even at this critical moment in Moscow, when democracy needs all the help it can get, we hear Western threats to reduce economic cooperation with Russia” (Kozyrev, 1994, March 18). Going further, Kozyrev even doubted the debate of the “short-sighted visionaries” in the West who reasoned, “That the Western countries’ economic problems prevent them from providing Russia access to markets” (Kozyrev, 1994, March 18).

While gaining such support from the Western partners was important, Russia’s aspired status remained unrecognised by the West, and it was humiliating. As Kozyrev obviously

pointed “Yet frankly, it appears that some Western politicians, in Washington and elsewhere, envision Russia not as an equal partner but as a junior partner. In this view a “good Russian” is always a follower, never a leader” (Kozyrev, 1994, March 18). Such the “junior” status was not only humiliating, as “Russia is destined to be a great power, not a junior one”, but also more delegitimising Russian Westernism, its aspired status and the pursued grand strategic orientation within Russia. Reflected by Kozyrev, “What should Russian democrats do about the chauvinistic new banners that flap in the Washington wind? Russia cannot agree to a subordinate global role. It would be unjustified and politically dangerous. Extreme nationalists and other reactionaries would soon capitalise on such deference” (Kozyrev, 1994, March 18).

### **3.4.2 Russia and NATO**

The liberal foreign policy concerning the Western security policies and organisations was a part of broader sense of national interest shaped over the state’s status during the time. Seeking to recreate a positive image, the liberal leaders hoped that Russia gain a much-aspired higher status in the West. The leaders, as well as the economic and political institutions, maintained a favourable attitude toward the Western security agenda and its main structures, at least until the mid-1990s. Russia ceased to oppose NATO’s enlargement plan, and even went for membership in the organisation. Russia wished to be accepted by the West’s security system.

Those positive attitudes seemed to be against the main realist assumptions about the post-Cold War era. In line with realism, the analysts predicted the revisionist behaviour of post-Soviet Russia versus the Western security agenda and organisations like NATO. While offensive realism expected declining Russia to pursue risky policy in order to maintain her stance in Europe or at least in the former Soviet region against the Western security agenda (Jervis & Bialer, 1991; Jervis & Snyder, 1991; Mearsheimer, 1990,



1993).<sup>106</sup> In defensive realism, it was expected that NATO enlargement would provoked Russia to adopt an aggressive policy in response to the West security agenda (Mandelbaum, 1995).<sup>107</sup> However, as forthcoming events show neither offensive, nor defensive realism could predict the cooperative behaviour of the Russia versus the West and particularly the NATO. In other words, such a risky policy was absent in the state's stance especially regarding NATO, at least during initial years of 1990s.

Russia however, neither perceived a threat from the West, nor rejected to cooperate with Western security agenda. For those liberal leaders, NATO was an important means that could provide security of emergent order and in particular, the Wider Europe that included Russia. Highlighted by IR scholar, "In the early 1990s, there was a common understating in Russia about the importance of NATO for the global peace". Accordingly, Russia wished "to cooperate with NATO in the matters of the national security ...even if it was NATO, the former Soviet's major evil and rival" (Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019). Summarising Russian liberals' strategic orientation towards the West and NATO, foreign policy analyst argues:

"Kozyrev had the idea that Russia must become the normal great power and cooperate with the West as an equal ...it was more in terms of dialogue with the West and within the concept of what they hope would become a security mechanism encompassing Europe. The idea of Europe from the Atlantic to the Euro zone. Russia would be incorporated into the security mechanisms that was employed by the West besides having some kind of different arrangement between NATO and Russia" (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

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<sup>106</sup> As mentioned, realists predicted the revisionist behaviour (including but not limited) major war by the rising and declining power. Based on offensive realism "when the political status quo in a key region is ambiguous or fluid, great powers can easily conclude that their only viable strategic options are either expanding or accepting geopolitical losses" (J. Snyder, 1991, p. 219). Accordingly, "when the status quo is unstable, the security dilemma is tight: policies that enhance one's own position necessarily jeopardise that of one's opponent. Under such conditions, aggressiveness is at a premium, and errors of overextension should be common" (J. Snyder, 1991, p. 219).

<sup>107</sup> For both sets of reason, realists argued that NATO enlargement would lead to a severe battle between Russia and the Western partners after the cold war (Mandelbaum, 1995). Considering the decline of military capabilities and strategic depth of post-Soviet Russia, and NATO's enlargement, realists expected that the West and its alliances would be perceived as the main threat in the Russian political sphere. Accordingly, it was expected Russia's aggressive policy in response to the West security agenda.

Observing Russian leaderships' statements and behaviours confirmed its position toward the Western security agenda. According to Yeltsin, Russia was ready to contribute in "creating a climate of mutual understanding and trust, strengthening stability and cooperation on the European continent". Accordingly, it was natural for Russians to "consider these relations [between Russia and NATO] to be very serious and wish to develop this dialogue in each and every direction, both on the political and military levels" (Friedman, 1991, December 21). Logically, Russia's top officials occasionally brought up the possibility of Moscow's membership in NATO. The first attempt was in November 1991, Russia joined "the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC)" (NATO, 1991, November 8), and then in December, Yeltsin in a more dramatic voice asked for association with NATO as the "long-term political aim" (Friedman, 1991, December 21). Similarly, Kozyrev highlighted that the cooperation with this organisation will be "an effective mechanism for overcoming the division of Europe" (Kozyrev, 1992c, 1993). The positive view about the NATO seems a common dominator in Russia's political landscape.<sup>108</sup>

Therefore, those observing Kremlin's initial positive behaviour towards NATO's enlargement plan in some Eastern European states were not surprised. While, some European powers including England, France and Germany criticised the NATO expansion plan in 1993. In contrast, Russia took a friendlier approach, at least for a while. For opponents within the organisation, accepting new members through the NATO enlargement plan would be bound for the alliance's established decision-making processes (Asmus, 2004; M. Smith, 2006).<sup>109</sup> Accordingly, the main European members

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<sup>108</sup> In contrast to realist's prediction, until approximately mid-1993, considering the West as a "saviour" the new Russia's leader and elites desired to cooperate in Western security agenda as a guarantee for Moscow's external security, as Populi (1993) found for 50% of Russian elites NATO was "still necessary for guaranteeing European security" and around the same rate reasoned "NATO preserves peace in Europe".

<sup>109</sup> For them achieving members' consensus around the decision-making in the organisation would become more difficult, since the candidate states were unexperienced to such technique. Moreover, each opponent had its particular reason too. For England, the enlargement plan of NATO meant deluding the alliance and the U.S. commitment in European security while for France such

of alliances voiced critically to NATO enlargement plan, such criticisms created a favourable condition for Kremlin's objections. Yet, Kremlin liberal leaderships adopted, "an unnecessary", according to Russian scholars, Westward attitude (Alexander Sergunin, 12 October 2018; Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018).

The positive attitudes towards the Western security agenda, in particular the NATO, should be explained regarding the state's strategic orientation at the time. Indeed, the strategy was an outcome of the Westernists' conceptualisation of the state's status and defining the national interests around it. In the security realm, Russia's leadership assumed that the state's interests rested on cooperating, and/or association with the West, particularly European security arrangements. The strategy also dictated that as a normal power, Russia should not strive to impose its willingness on other states, particularly in its "near abroad". Yeltsin's early policy toward the so-called Visegrad countries - Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary- when they appealed for NATO to provide them the alliance membership was an illustrative example of such friendly behaviour. In summer 1993, during a visit to Czechoslovakia and Poland, Yeltsin stated that there is no objection about the policy "taken by a sovereign" states to associate with NATO from Moscow (UPI, 1993, August 25).

Nevertheless, the positive atmosphere in Russia-NATO relationship became murkier when Russian leaders perceived the NATO enlargement against Russia's desired status. While, the political elites in the West suggested that Kremlin had simply agreed the plan with no objection, however that they overlooked the conditions latent in the Yeltsin's words. Indeed, in the Walesa, Yeltsin determined that the Russia's agreement with the Visegrad membership in NATO, was conditioned to if it "is not contrary with the interests

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enlargement meant strengthen of NATO's position, which would undermine Paris' desire to develop the European independent role in strategic and security matters (Asmus, 2004, pp. 46-47).

of other countries, Russia included” nor that of the pan-European integration (UPI, 1993, August 25). “It’s up to Poland to decide and up to NATO to decide” however, as highlighted by Kozyrev if the enlargement is “not aggressive” against Moscow (NYT, 1993, August 26).

Yeltsin sent a letter to some Western powers, e.g. the US, England and France, suggesting Russian vision on the future European security, in mid-September 1993. The letter was widely perceived as an effort to turn back from his initial ostensible confirmation of NATO’s enlargement towards CEE. The core message was very clear; “indivisibility” of the “pan European security structures” otherwise, as Yeltsin warned, would change Russian domestic political sphere in favour of opposition groups who see the event “as a sort of neo-isolation of the country as opposed to its natural introduction into the Euro-Atlantic space” (Yeltsin, 1993, September 15). The views embodied in the letter thereafter constituted Russia’s official stance on the subject of NATO enlargement,<sup>110</sup> in particular, when the leaders perceived the enlargement is real.

During the Germany summit in late October 1993, the US proposal offering “Partnership for Peace” was endorsed “unanimously” by NATO member states. The members ruled out “rapid” enlargement to the CEE states, but they emphasised on “open door policy” and consideration of new memberships “in the distance future” (RFE/RL, 1993, October 22). The milestone was the Brussels Summit on 11 January 1994, when NATO members endorsed to “launch an immediate and practical programme ... to forage a real partnership - a Partnership for Peace”, then so called “PfP” (NATO, 1994, January

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<sup>110</sup> The military doctrine similarly pointed “the expansion of military blocs and alliances to the detriment of the interests of the Russian Federation’s military security” as one of “the potential sources of military danger” to Russia” (MDR, 1993, November, 2).

11) While the plan was, open for “all partners” and the CEE states immediately joint the plan, Russia initially rejected to join.

Pursuing integration with the Western structures like NATO, Russian leaders aimed to gain acceptance as a member the Western great powers club. However, the West downplayed the request and instead acted seriously upon Yeltsin’s initial signal in December 1991. This caused a sense of humiliation and disappointment amongst the political elites in Russia, as they expected a suitable response from NATO. Assenting the absolute right of newly independent CEE states to associate with “whatever alliance they want”, Sergei Karaganov, Yeltsin’s advisor asked, “why not Russia [sic]”. While the state had “asked for membership two years ago” (M. Smith, 2006, p. 56). The disappointment was clearly pointed in Yeltsin’s next letter to Clinton, that Russia expected her relationship “with NATO would be by several degrees warmer than those between the Alliance and Eastern Europe” (Yeltsin, 1994, June 12).

Rather than strategic calculation or perceiving threat, the NATO expansion increased sense of “psychological” uneasiness for Russia.<sup>111</sup> This since the Kremlin expected to participate equally with Western powers in the decision-making process of world affairs, and have special place within Western security agenda, mainly over the issues related to the former clients. That practically meant to have “a special relationship” with the NATO above other Eastern interlocutors. Pointed by Yeltsin, Moscow was ready to work with the alliance “to offer official security guarantees” to the CEE states over their “sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of frontiers, and maintenance of peace in the region”. Yet again reminded, the “guarantees could be stipulated in a political

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<sup>111</sup> This was observed by different opinion surveys too. As Zimmerman 2002 concluded NATO’s enlargement as a prominent issue for political elites in Russia, from the very early stages of the post-Soviet era, it merely transformed to a main political issue for the Russian mass only at the end of the 90s, in particular after NATO’s military actions in Yugoslavia (Zimmerman, 2009).

statement or co-operation agreement between the Russian Federation and NATO” (Yeltsin, 1994, June 12). Simply, for Russian leaders the issue could be solved merely as a part of Russia-NATO rapprochement, beyond willingness and role of the CEE states.

More clearly, Kozyrev emphasised on Moscow’s involvement in NATO’s decision-making process, as the only case that would “actually turn [the alliance] into a new institution with the goal of maintaining security and stability”. However, “an interim solution”, was establishing institutionalized “special relations” between NATO and Russia through “treaties” determining “the principal guidelines and mechanisms of a joint step-by-step arrangement...for a certain transitional period” (Kozyrev, 1995, p. 13). Only through that special cooperation, NATO-Russia relations could reach to a qualitative “new level”. Either Russia would “withdraw” from its own “objections” against the “entry” of CEE states into the alliance. Simply, by special relations Kremlin wished its desired standing in the main issues, be recognised and respected, especially in those directly related issues in Russia’s immediate neighbourhood. Simultaneously they signalled to the West that such a quest is under the legitimised rule of the game, through respecting the sovereignty of those former clients.

While evidences showed such relations, were never a priority for the West. NATO members rejected Kremlin’s proposal to have “regularised formal consultations” over main security matters, instead they preferred to have “much looser gentlemen’s agreement” implying to have Kremlin’s views on the matters defined by the alliance. In addition, regarding the issue of CEE membership, also the alliance refused to give any commitment to Moscow to discuss over the enlargement plan (RFE/RL, 1994, June 1).<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Moreover, the alliance confirmed its unwillingness to accept Kremlin’s proposal of creating “hierarchical European security structure” implying subordination of “NATO to CSCE”. As members of the alliance, still preferred to hold “NATO’s autonomy” (RFE/RL, 1994, June 1).

The enlargement plan, to compromise the former Soviet clients, regardless of Russians' concern, showed that the West would not accept Russia as a member of its own NATO centred security system.<sup>113</sup> Rather than a direct immediate military threat, the NATO enlargement was perceived as a “negative verdict” on Russia’s ultimate quest for overcoming a historic handicap and re-joining the “civilised world”, when after 75 years of relentless ideological revisionism and subversion, Russia was “playing by the rules” (Aron, 1998). Reflected by IR scholar, Russians’ hope to “integrate in all-encompassing security mechanism of course never happened when NATO stand to expand into CEE countries”. “The enlargement plan showed the way Kozyrev and pro-Western had at the time, would not have preferred outcome” (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

Apart from the enlargement plan, Kremlin’s quest of membership was neglected too. Negotiation for being a NATO associate was protracted by instance that generated by Moscow’s request for special status beyond the former CEE countries. As the organisation established to “consolidating Western democracies against its threat”, Kozyrev lamented, “but in today’s world” NATO “does not have Russia as a member” (Kozyrev, 1994, March 18). Ultimately, as Russian scholar concludes, treating Russia as a “defeated state”, NATO had no intention to include Kremlin even “just as the regular member like Denmark”, let alone the state’ aspired special status, the “tricky policy of

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<sup>113</sup> Despite initial disappointment, as the first member Russia joined the PfP in June 1994. Kozyrev and his supporters saw PfP alternatively to NATO expansion, and as a platform for transformation of the organisation. Moreover, joining the plan was perceived necessary avoiding Russia’s probable isolation, too. While, the opponent elites within Russia, mainly headliners, the “military leaders” within Russia claimed that PfP is essentially a deceiving tactic of the West and NATO enlargement would be a natural consequence of the plan (RFE/RL, 1994, March 2) Accordingly, there were no differences between plans; they were “the propositions” of the “rapist” with “the same result”; regardless of the “girl” decision “oppose or contest” (RFE/RL, 1994, March 18) As the document remarked “active participation in the Partnership for Peace will play an important role in the evolutionary process of the expansion of NATO” (NATO, 1994, January 11). Consequently, opponents concluded that such a statement built little sense for Moscow itself to become involved in an initiative that was thus linked to NATO enlargement.

being integrated based on its own terms”, being as “the first violin in orchestra” (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018).<sup>114</sup>

Accordingly, scholars referred to the lack of recognition from the West’s security arrangement, particularly NATO, as the main reason of the failure of Westernists and the adopted grand strategy. “Yeltsin and Kozyrev basically failed” as their initial hope to be included in a “security mechanism encompassing Europe” did not bring desired outcome.

Reflected by Foreign policy analyst;

“Russian liberals preferred Russia to be integrated in all-encompassing security mechanism that did not happened and Russia remained excluded from NATO. From then onwards, it has declined Russia’s relationship with the West. This is also one reason why Kozyrev and the pro-Western forces were discredited in a first place. Because they were not be able to achieve that all-encompassing security mechanisms which was still in flux up to the mid-90s” (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

Derived from the analysis, Russia’s grand strategy of the partnership with the West, as well as integration with the Western constitutive order could not register the desired outcomes as was expected by Russian liberals. Nor did, the economic political organisations like G8, IMF and so on recognised Russia’s standing and its expectations for gaining support for the domestic transition. Not even cooperation with the military organisations like NATO could bring the special standing for Russia. The Westernists grand strategy was delegitimized for failing to gain the recognition of the aspired status. Russia has been regarded as “a junior” actor by Western powers, instead of being recognised as an equal to powerful Western players (Kozyrev, 1994, March 18).

Reflected by Russian scholars, behaviour of the Western organisations and institutions was a sign of oversimplification of the world politics by Russian liberal elites. It also

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<sup>114</sup> Similar argument Karadzic remarked while Russia was attempting to “actually positioning itself not as threat to NATO countries, but maybe as a partner or at least someone who you can co-exist with question the very purpose of the military alliance, of NATO”, however, “comparing to the alliance’ behaviour with Germany” showed that NATO saw Russia,” even the post-Soviet one, differently” (Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018).



illustrated how “naïve” their strategy of the integration was. Arguing that the structures merely followed their business regardless of Russia’s request for status, even in the issues related directly to the state, the scholars underscored this bring “psychological” uneasiness for Russia.<sup>115</sup> (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018; Muraviev, Personal Interview, 10 December 2018; Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018). Kozyrev reflected the “psychological uneasiness” as follows:

“... I often witness how, after protracted and sometimes tedious negotiation to reconcile positions within Western structures such as NATO and the European Union, my counterpart foremost the US and Western Europe come to the horrible awareness that they have yet to arrange it with a Russia that may (and in most cases does) have an opinion of its own. In those circumstances, the temptation is great to offer Russia a fait accompli a final position of the ‘take it or leave it’ type. ...It is much harder to arrive at meaningful arrangements when Russia does not participate in decision-making within the framework of Western structures” (Kozyrev, 1995, p. 9).

Yet, the final strike on Russian liberals’ partnership strategy and certainly their aspiration to integrate into the Western constitutive order was the bombardment of ex-Yugoslavian region by NATO, in the summer of 1995. This bombardment besides Moscow’s loud disapproval showed that the West and NATO neither recognised Russia’s aspiration for its equality in the emergent world order nor did they realise the special seat and veto right in the organisation over security issues in its traditional sphere of influence.

### **3.2.3 Russia and Serbia Crisis**

The influence of Russian Westernist’ version of national interest, regarding cooperation with Western security agenda evidenced in Serbia too. Regardless of Russia’s historical established relation with the Balkan countries, with a more cooperative behaviour, the Kremlin’s liberal leaders supported the Western security agenda related to the region (Muraviev, Personal Interview, 10 December 2018). The leaders saw the

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<sup>115</sup> Reflected by (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018; Muraviev, Personal Interview, 10 December 2018; Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018)

conflict in Serbia as “local” but not as a ground for a geopolitical competition between Moscow and the West as the previous era. Doing so, they blamed the Serbs rather than their Western partners, claiming that the Serbians denied addressing the anxieties of the international community.

Initially, Russia refused to support the Serbs, instead it accompanied the Western led initiatives, against Serbians. In UNSC, Russia fully supported the West led initiated resolutions. Namely, *Resolution 757*, on economic and military sanctions against Yugoslavia; *Resolution 776*, on the extension of UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to provide humanitarian aid to Bosnia; even later Russian leaders supported the *Resolution 781* on creating a “non-fly zone” that banned military flights above Bosnia. Russia confirms NATO’s role in monitoring and protecting the non-fly zone, insomuch as NATO and UN authorised the genuine exercise of the military power through “dual key command procedure”(UNSC, 1992, May 30 1992, October 9, 1992, September 14).

Russian political elites began to gradually criticise the Kremlin’s policies regarding the Serbia crisis. At the core of that criticism, the elites were convinced that the liberal policies in support of the Western security arrangement in Serbia did not overlap with Russia’s historical aspiration of greatpowerness and the role that Russia historically presumed (Kozhokin, 1992). Notably, some moderates (liberals) questioned the policy too. Regarding the historically strong ties with the region, especially with the Serbians, the group claimed that Russia had a greater interest, domestically and internationally, than other major powers in Serbia. Kozyrev’s Western oriented policy weakened the state’s standing and marginalised Russia in policymaking process on the issue. Accordingly, Kozyrev “passive policy” particularly in support to sanctions against Serbia by the UN and other Western initiatives, led the state to being the “junior partner” of the West, specially the US in Serbia crisis (Arbatov, 1993, p. 32).

In response, the Kremlin gradually moved towards engaging actively in the crisis while continuing the cooperative policy towards the West's initiatives. Escalation the crisis in spring 1993 gave Kremlin an opportunity to do so. Condemning the Serbian offences, Yeltsin insisted on diplomacy instead of taking serious steps against the Serbs (RFE/RL, 1993, April 28). Russia actively supported "the Vance-Owen peace plan" after a harsh confrontation the region. During the two-day negotiation in Athens, "the leaders of Bosnia and Croatia", agreed with the plan, Serbia but conditioned signing the plan to approve by "*Assembly of Republika Srpska*" (RFE/RL, 1993, May 3). While Russia hoped that Serbian leaders accomplish the achieved agreement, Western side was less optimistic and more serious towards Serbians, as US Secretary of State Warren Christopher pointed, "Serbs knew it was either sign or obliteration" (RFE/RL, 1993, May 5).

Rejecting the peace plan on 6 May, the Serbian assembly conditioned the signing of the agreement on the result of the forthcoming referendum on mid-May. Russia-US, in a joint statement, criticised the Serbian assembly's action. Kozyrev warned the Serbs about rejecting the peace plan that would "immediately resume their discussion on new and tougher measures" (RFL/RL, 1993, May 6). "Russia will render firm support to all those honestly following the peace way on the basis of the Vance-Owen plan", Yeltsin yet warned, his state "will not indulge anyone in trying to escape the fulfilment of the plan" (RFE/RL, 1993, May 6). While UNSC adopted *Resolution 824* on implementation of the peace plan declaring extra safe security areas but Serbs rejected the plan through the referendum (UNSC, 1993, May 6). Irrespective of the referendum outcomes, Kozyrev emphasised on accomplishment of the peace plan, and warned the Serbs (RFE/RL, 1993, May 17). Striving to save the peace plan Kozyrev initiated his "diplomatic campaign from Germany", then "Zagreb, Belgrade, Sarajevo" and finally "Rome" to meet with the Western European Union and finally have a discussion with UN representative in the region and US envoy (RFE/RL, 1993, May 18 1993, May 19).

Neither taking a “tougher measures”, a military intervention, nor lifting the Muslims’ military embargo, the US, Russia, UK, France, and Spain established “a joint action plan” in Washington on 22 MAY 1993. The “13-point plan” was mainly to safeguard Muslim population, creating “safer areas” sanctioned by UNSC resolution, and defend “the UN peacekeepers” (RFE/RL, 1993, May 24a, 1993, May 24b). While, the action was welcomed in Russia as a sign of the state’s “reasonable approach” towards the crisis (Arbatov, 1993). Regardless of such overstatement, however, the plan was one that still confirmed the Western agenda and Russia’s cooperative policy. There are some observable reservations to accept that Russian diplomacy did not have much effect just as any other sides in drawing the plan. The US avoided taking tougher actions due more to the “European caution”, than Russian diplomacy, as US Secretary Christopher highlighted (Cruden, 2012, p. 121). Additionally, regarding Russian traditional emotional link with Serbs, Western powers feared that any serious action against Serbia could “jeopardise” Yeltsin’s situation domestically, regarding Russia’s forthcoming national referendum, as then British PM, Margaret Thatcher stated (RFE/RL, 1993, April 15). More importantly as the forthcoming events showed the hope to improve Russia’s position in the crisis was faded very soon. Announcing their “military victory” by gaining “70% of Bosnian territory”, in same day, Serbian leaders rejected any possibility of accomplishment of the peace plan, and the UNSC resolution on safer areas (Cruden, 2012, p. 121). The events in the region in next month show none of the efforts could stop the Serbs from committing more violence.

Russian cooperative stance in the crisis remained until mid-1990s, although occasionally it attempted to play more actively. From early 1994, it was especially noticed, when Kremlin demanded the recognition of its equal status in diplomatic negotiations over the crisis, particularly in February over “NATO ultimatum” to air strikes in Serbia. Condemning Serbian violence, Moscow did not side the NATO on the

in-depth issues and expected any action to be adopted through the UNSC where Russia could play its desired role. Whereas, “some people are trying to solve the problems in Bosnia without Russia”, Yeltsin emphasised, “we shall not allow this to happen”, hence any arrangement “to end the war in Yugoslavia” should consider Russia’s “active part in the negotiations” (RFE/RL, 1994, February 16). Consequently, Yeltsin sent his special envoy, Vitaly Churkin to Serb leaders demanding withdrawal of heavy artillery that encircled Sarajevo.

Having accepted Kremlin’s proposal to withdraw heavy weaponry by Serbs on 17 February, Russia’s initiative was applauded as a “diplomatic victory” (RFE/RL, 1994, February 18). For Kremlin, it indicated symbolically how national interests and the state’s status were gained through the active and initiative foreign policy (Yeltsin, 1994, February 24). It was an important psychological victory for Kremlin, as it could act effectively and more independently from Western initiatives. Russian Westernists could sell it as a prosperity of adopted strategic orientation to domestic opponents whose criticism increased at the time (Kozyrev, 1994a). Ironically criticising the West, Kozyrev stated that the agreement achieved “without recourse to ultimatums”, rather through a “firm and consistent line” by exerting “the necessary influence on the Bosnian government” (RFE/RL, 1994, February 18). More importantly, highlighted by *Krasnaya Zvezda*, published by Ministry of Defence, Russian diplomacy was reaffirmation of the state’s greatpowerness and its role as a main power player in Balkans. Wishing to make peace in the region, the Western sides “must understand” and realise Russia’s standing, see it “as a great power and an equal partner” (RFL/RL, 1994, February 21).

The claim further doubted by Western partners arguing that Serbs withdrew because of NATO’s ultimatum rather than Russia’s influence. However, it would soon be cleared how that diplomatic victory was overstated. Despite all of Russia’s efforts to avoid the

ultimatum, it was nevertheless reinforced in both NATO and UNSC (RFE/RL, 1994, February 15). Additionally, in response to violation of non-fly zone, four Serbian jets were shot down by NATO's airplanes on 28 February. For the first time from beginning of the crisis, the West and NATO conducted a military operation, without consulting the Kremlin, nor recognising its standing in the crisis as well as not acknowledging its diplomacy. The military actions continued for the rest of the month. Russia still reacted cautiously, as one of initiators of non-fly zone plan Kremlin didn't react harshly, but at the same time, it evaded blaming Serbian side (RFE/RL, 1994, March 1). The operation illustrated Russia's limited role, diplomatic influence and means, vis-a-vis the West and within Western security system.

Russian Westernists, and their cooperative policy with the West over the conflict was mainly questioned in the late summer of 1995. This was after the Serbian massacre in UNSC authorised safe area Srebrenica in July, which led NATO to conduct airstrikes in response. Russia distanced itself from the West. Blaming Croats and Muslims, Kozyrev equally criticised NATO for a "senseless", "counterproductive" operation that only would cause "the logic of force gaining the upper hand in Bosnia" (RFL/RL, 1995, July 13). He blamed the Western side for "artificially restraining the political process", rejected "military solutions" and emphasised on finding a diplomatic solution (RFL/RL, 1995, July 24). On the flip side, the US was not the sole power appealing military force anymore since it adopted a full-bodied aligned approach. Western powers, during the London summit, demanded a "massive and unprecedented" airstrike, in the aftermath of further attacks by Serbs mainly in the UN authorised safe areas (RFL/RL, 1995, July 24).

Form mid-August, the situation in Bosnia exacerbated. Washington proposed a peace plan, supported by Moscow, but rejected by Serbs, justifying any proposal of less than "70%" of territory as "painful", but "one below 60%" as "unjust" and unacceptable

(RFE/RL, 1995, August 24; RFL/RL, 1995, August 16). This was followed by their attack of a market place in Sarajevo which killed and wounded 37 and 85 civilians, NATO launched “Operation Deliberate Force” in late August (RFE/RL, 1995, August 30). Condemning the Serbian offense, Russia officially condemned the NATO’s operation threatening Serbs with “genocide” (RFE/RL, 1995, September 12). A Foreign Ministry spokesperson condemned the “barbaric act” of Serbs, and said the West waged “war against only one of the parties”, where “all participants were involved in the conflict” (RFE/RL, 1995, August 31). Yeltsin denounced NATO’s unilateral move, calling it a “judge and executioner” in Bosnia, the “double standard” used by the West in punishing Serbs, while it ignored Muslims and Croats offences. He requested a greater role for Moscow in a new European security system, otherwise he warned it might lead the continent to “return to two camps which are at war with one another” (RFL/RL, 1995, September 7).

The West military action, as a “slap” on Russia’s greatpowerness face, rather delegitimized Westernism and its strategy of partnership with the West that aimed to bring back the state’s status. It was a failure, as the Western partners ignored the standing and role of Russia in the crisis. Highlighted by Russian observer, the operation demonstrated “the complete collapse of the notion of Russian-Western partnership”; and showed “how much the West ignores Russia” (RFE/RL, 1995, September 1). It was de-legitimising Westernists and their adopted strategy, as *Izvestiya* commented, they failed in Bosnian conflict since between ties with the West, mainly the US and Serbians, they ignored the latest, to avoid risking a Russia-US relationship (RFE/RL, 1994, April 13). Regarding “many serious mistakes” of Kozyrev that caused a “humiliating defeat of Russian diplomacy in the Balkans”, Duma asked Yeltsin to replace him (RFE/RL, 1995, September 7, 1995, September 11). Even later, in the Duma’s “special session” over the NATO attack in Serbia, Yeltsin noted his “dissatisfaction” of Foreign Ministry that would

take “the appropriate conclusions” (RFE/RL, 1995, September 11). This cleared by replacing Kozyrev with Yevgeny Primakov as the new foreign minister.

What is evident is that disappointment and humiliation perceived from the West and NATO’s behaviours in Bosnia, discredited Westernists and increased the voice of hardliners within Russia. “The airstrikes hit not only Serb targets”, highlighted by Sergei Shakhrai, then deputy prime minister, “but also the internal political situation in Russia. Nationalists are the only force that stands to gain from them in Russia” (RFE/RL, 1994, April 13). Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the leader of nationalists, offensively saw NATO’s operations in the former Yugoslavian region as directed “against Russia and Slavs”, “Christians and Slavic people”. He was President of Russia, long before he ordered an attack on the alliance’s positions “in Rome”, “They bomb one city, we bomb another city” (RFL/RL, 1994, April 12). Reasoning Moscow’s weak position in the crisis, coupled with the inability to deter West military operation, Communists in Duma requested an impeachment of Yeltsin (RFE/RL, 1995, September 14).

In brief, the Yugoslavian war showed that the Western counterparts did not recognise Russia’s status aspiration and their claim to equal partnership with the West. While Kremlin was more concerned about its involvement in the decision-making process, the military campaign seemed to end such hope, as Russia was excluded from the procedures. After NATO’s previous airstrike, Churkin, the Yeltsin’s special envoy, complained about the West for ignoring Russia’s role, arguing, “If Russia had been invited to tackle this crisis. we could have directed the events in a different channel” (RFE/RL, 1994, April 12). A Russian scholar pointed that the case showed that through the organisations like NATO, the West had the capability to make policies and implement them effectively in the world main issues regardless of Russia’s role (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018).



Overall, the Serbia crises was perceived as a sign of failure of Westernism and its strategy to achieve the acknowledgement of the state's aspired position in a main "prestigious issue" in the international system at the time ( Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018). The issue ended with NATO airstrikes and the Western peace arrangement regardless of Moscow's suggestions and its traditional role in and ties with the region. Underscored by an IR expert, "the crisis in Balkan" showed once again that "the West continued to defend its universal values" regardless of other's desire even "Russia, the country which took the path of democratisation, and the country which is to stick to, communicate to, and listen to [the West]" (Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019). Notwithstanding denying Russian position and role in the crises was not only from the West's side, but also Serbs occasionally ignored Russia. Russian leaders often felt "frustration with the Bosnian Serbs" for ignoring Moscow's advice to avoid offenses (RFE/RL, 1994, April 12, 1994, April 18).

Above all, in the mid-1990s, it seemed that the West got its decision on what is "meant by partnership", the strategy was at best, according to Brzezinski (1994, p. 68) "the premature partnership", "driven by an attractive idealistic optimism". While Russian leaders wished to have a "close and sincere cooperation" in world affairs based on equality of standing, similarity of roles and responsibilities, the strategy seems more "a lopsided relationship in which all rights are on one side and all obligations on the other". In other words, the West never recognised Russia "as a like-minded" nation "committed to democracy, human rights and responsible international behaviour" (Kozyrev, 1994a, p. 65). It soon became obvious that neither economic political institutions nor the Western led security organisations recognised Russia.

In Kozyrev's words, by integration into Western constitutive order, Russia desired to gain recognition, implying "closing institutional gaps between Russia and the West" through coordinating "political and economic approaches". However, the institutions,

"...coordinate political and economic approaches first among its members and then with Russia, NATO acts similarly. The Atlantic alliance was created to block communist expansion. But now that institution, no matter how effective, is inadequate simply because NATO no longer has a military enemy and Russia is not a NATO member.... In fact, they play into the hands of the opposition they fear and, more important, they are being side-tracked from a serious analysis of the problems of European security and a dialogue with Moscow about solutions" (Kozyrev, 1994a, p. 65)

In Kozyrev's words, therefore, the strategy of mobility that of partnership with the West failed because of lack of the "mutual respect to national interests and concerns". "A key lesson" that instead of the Western partners, Russian liberals learnt when "the state left from the decision-making process" in Serbia crisis (Kozyrev, 1994a, p. 66).

In brief, considering the difficult period of "pupilhood" as a failure of Westernists' grand strategy led several elites to separate themselves from the liberal camp. The humiliation perceived from the West behaviours in denying Russia's aspired status was the main criticism of Westernists within Russia. The policy of assimilation had caused a "great deal of damage" of the country's status, discounting "the deep psychological trauma", and "injury" imposed on Russia's elite and hence, extending a split within domestic political sphere (Karaganov, 1993). Accepting "the second-class status" comparing to the West, implies that Westernism and its strategy of mobility failed to effectively enactment the state's historical status. Russian scholar concluded that such an "overtly pro-Western, pro-American orientation" caused an inappropriate "second-class status" for Russia.

"Those years are humiliations I think for the majority of population.... Parting from communism and stepping on the route of democratisation and liberalisation but at the same time, transformed Russia as a second player... when Russia for the first time, in

its history recognised the it is not a great power anymore” (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018).

Criticising such “naïve” and “over optimistic” policies towards the West, Victor Sumsky (Personal Interview, 22 November 2018) summarised while post-Soviet Russia “encountered problems, great as the country itself, as it had fallen into a pit which seemed to be deep.” However, liberals were “mistaken” due to a lack of “understanding that Russia was never stopped to be a great power.., and understanding that the solution was not following the West but instead stand to its knee by using the historical experiences and traditional capabilities” (Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018).

The legitimacy of Westernism was questioned further in domestic political realm for two additional factors. Russian elites accused the liberals and their strategy for neglecting near abroad as a historical base of the state’s greatness in their foreign policy priorities, and failing to deploy Russia’s political and economic reforms (Clunan, 2014a). The critical challenge for the liberal national identity and its grand strategy especially occurred when some political elites ceased to support Kozyrev-Gaidar approaches gradually. Rejecting the liberals’ approaches and criticising the integration into the Western community as the proper national mission, Russian elites instead emphasised on the role of former Soviet region in “Russian idea”. Critics were mainly over Kozyrev’s isolationist, his unsatisfactory “tough” stand for the state’s historical zone of influence (Kozyrev, 1992e). Highlighting the historical, hegemonic role of Russia in its neighbouring region as a benchmark of evaluating the state’s foreign policy and definition of national interests, particularly Sergei Stankevich, State Chancellor rejected the liberals’ strategy of partnership with Western community as a historically invalid and illegitimate way of gaining such the status (Stankevich, 1992, March 28).

Those discursive arguments by Eurasian Statists and national hardliners in a short term caused Russia’s liberals to acknowledge the former soviet region as a priority of the

state's diplomacy. At least in rhetoric, the leaders accepted the state's "responsibility" in the region, which reflected officially in the Foreign Policy Concept (MID, 1993, April 23). Consequently, Moscow pursued conflict resolution in the region. Kremlin stressed on maintaining or re-formalising its military presence in Eurasian heartland; in Central Asia, Caucasus and Eastern European region. Highlighting the region as a zone of special interest and responsibility, Kremlin also requested the UN to recognise Moscow as a regional stabiliser, granting special role to Russian troops in the peacekeeping process within the region.

Moving forward, discursive arguments reflected a turn from liberals' mobility strategy to that of social creativity strategy as the way to gain global greatpowerness. Gradually, following the victory of statist and hardliners in parliamentary election, such emphasis on Russia's special role within former Soviet region gained an even stronger voice in official rhetoric. Following Russian voters, the Westernist leaders took more critical voice against the West, even Kozyrev criticised occasionally the West that it did not adequately listens Russia's voices (Kozyrev, 1994b, 1995). Such evolution in policies towards the region completed from mid 1990s when Yevgeny Primakov, as a committed Eurasianist came to power. Therefore, it can be said that those discursive arguments and critics publicised by opponents further delegitimised Westernism. Altogether cause a turn in the state's strategic thinking from Westernism to Eurasian Statism, and consequently strategic orientation from mobility to that of social creativity by emphasizing on Eurasian alternative as the way to gain global power status and perhaps to modify the liberals' "mistake" in ignoring the region. As a Russian scholar highlights;

"The major mistake also was made during the first Yeltsin's administration was completely neglecting of post-soviet republics. It was a very great mistake, this kind of obsession with turning into West and ignoring of the Eurasian states. While some of them were very forthcoming about keeping special relationship with post-Soviet Russia, and even were talking about maintaining some form of, not Soviet Union, but very special relation. But Moscow was very reluctance, the post-Soviet space was

perceived as sort of backward, especially the Central Asian republics” (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018).

The legitimacy of Westernism and its strategy was further questioned, domestically and internationally, as they failed to achieve the “right” democratic way of sovereignty in domestic affairs. Despite the “attractive idealistic optimism” and the “underlying reinforcing premises” of “prospects for the emergence of a stable and enduring Russian democracy, based on a free-market economy” which could make the “partnership with America feasible”, Brzezinski lamented “Unfortunately, considerable evidence suggests that the near-term prospects for a stable Russian democracy are not very promising” (Brzezinski, 1994, pp. 68-71). From the mid-1990s, it gradually became clear that political and economic system resulted from the Westernists’ reforms, was obviously far away what they hoped and strived for. As Yeltsin (1994, February 24) confirmed, “in many respects, not only the Russian economic mechanism remained costly, political too”. Mainly economically, the transmission was “all shock and no therapy”. While Kremlin defended its plan and believed that “the trajectory was correct”, the results showed the “the cost of reform was high” and accompanied by “serious mistakes” (Yeltsin, 1994, February 24).

The economic situation led to further criticisms of Yeltsin and his liberal policies of transition to marketization and democratisation. Russian political elites generally thought their country was in crisis, over 85% believed that price liberalisation had been the most destabilising reform introduced by the government (VTsIOM, 1993). The Westernists’ coalition was blamed for having the disproportionate and unrealistic vision in economic policy. Political elites challenged the “universal” applicability of the Western economic model, that of liberal capitalism within Russian domestic socio-economic conditions. Liberals policies in implementing Western model was based on “a kind of misperception”, as a Russian scholar emphasised;

“There was a misunderstanding that at the heart of the previous [era] is the different socio economic systems one capitalist, the other socialist and now Russia is taken the capitalist system and major sources of contradictions gone and we may cooperate as an equal partner. I think it took just two or three years to understand how unrealistic that perception was” (Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018).

Added by unskilled, less experienced leaders, the implementation of such the reforms based on liberal values further questioned the applicability of the policy. As Alexander Sergunin (Personal Interview, 12 October 2018), mentioned “we had a strong opposition” to Westernist and their “socioeconomic reforms, not only people but also criticism already in the Yeltsin administration” as they understand that “Russian political elites were quite young, inexperienced, maybe naïve romantics”.

Russian liberals were criticised for their unrealistic calculations and highly dependent on the Western financial support. Western organisations and powers conditioned providing the various promised financial assistance and loans to implement the reforms within Russia’s economic structures.<sup>116</sup> Accordingly, the oppositions argued, the liberal’s unrealistic reliance on the Western financial aids jeopardised Russia’s economic strength as well it would destroy her autonomy and therefore its international status by increasing its debt burden to the West (Soiuz, 1992). As William Zimmerman found that as well as Russian political elites (44%), the majority of Russian mass (75%) convinced that that the nation’s economy was at the hands of foreign (Zimmerman, 2009). Similarly, Sumsky (Personal Interview, 22 November 2018) concluded:

“Although at the governmental level these symbols of a friendly relations with the West and the US was maintained for a while, however, underneath of this surface there was an accumulated understanding that things are not so simple... gradually understanding that there are some geopolitical underpinnings below the socio economic slogans.”

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<sup>116</sup> Despite the fact that American aid alone in 1992–93 reached an impressive \$1.6 billion on paper, it evoked certain perplexities in Russia. Almost half of this amount took the form of old Soviet debt relief and customs and business tariff relief. Direct financial support in this package was actually much less than the Russian administration had hoped for or needed (Cox & Stokes, 2012, p. 243)

Similarly, in the political sphere Russia's transition to democracy "did not get off to the best start", considering two-armed conflict during the very years of Soviet collapse, added by Yeltsin behaviours. The struggles for political power broadened the convergences between Westernists and opponents over the legitimacy of the course. Especially the dramatic political struggle that took place for a new constitution in 1993. The way that the new constitution was approved, was more breakout of "revolutionary constitutionalism" not a result of political elites' consensus (Medushevsky, 2006). The constitution showed that Russia was away from genuine democracy and her path to democracy would not be an easy one. As John Lough (Personal Interview, 1 March 2019) emphasized "strong presidency was the point that I think it become clear that Russia was going to developed probably long different path, the one that we had [in the West]". The ways to pursued Western values deemed ironically produced, optimistically defunct version of Western system of democracy and capitalism if not anti-Western outcomes.

### **3.4 Summary**

From 1992 to 1994/05, as evidenced by analysis, status concern influenced both Russia's grand strategic thinking and orientation. In the state's dominant self-concept, status was highly sought-after amongst Russian leaders. Viewing the world politics idealistically favourable as a ground for positive sum cooperation, defining Russian national identity as belonging to the Western civilisation in-group, Westernists portrayed Russia as a global normal great power. The group adopt a grand strategy -social mobility- implying a partnership with the Western power and integration within the Western institutions, and domestic reform based on liberal values. This shows that Russia sought a higher status through reassuring the international community and plying within the rules of the game.

The legitimacy of Westernism and its grand strategy was however, questioned for the failure to achieve the criteria and gain recognition of the aspired status from the West. Russia's political elites particularly accused the liberals for their policy toward the West. The outcome of domestic transformation, economic and political reforms, was very far from the Western democracies and market economies, as Russian Westernism promised. As well, different cases show, integration in Western political economic institutions did not bring the expected outcomes, as the institution could not provide the expected financial and economic support needed by Russian domestic reforms.

Nor did security, military organisation, as NATO, recognised Russia's aspired standing, not accepted the desired special role over the Eastward enlargement plan. In particular, NATO's airstrikes in Serbia evidenced Russian Westernists' cooperative policies towards the West over the conflict did not register equality with the US. Instead, the Western security system showed it had its own capability through NATO, to make and employ policies, irrespective of the role and priority of Russia. Hence, it is no surprise if Russian leaders accused the Western partners of refusing the state's rightful greatpowerness and denying its role. The lack of recognition from the West, instead realising it as a "junior partner", "follower power" was humiliating and unacceptable for Russian political elites. In brief, while, the status inconsistency remained, failure of Russian Westernists to gain recognition of the state's desired status in the post-Cold War emerging order delegitimised Russian Westernist, the self-concept and the grand strategy.



## CHAPTER 4: EURASIAN STATISM AND SOCIAL CREATIVITY

### 4.1 Introduction

Gradually to the mid-1990s, the failure to achieve Russia's aspired status, and certainly the lack of recognition from the Western counterparts, that led to perception of humiliation by Russian political elites and public, de-legitimated Westernism and its strategy of partnership. The Westernism was questioned due to disregarding of the country's global vision, its historical international standing, dismantling traditional role within neighbour "Eurasian heartland", as well as incapability to realise transition of the domestic conditions. Simply, the Westernism was delegitimized since according to Yeltsin (1994, February 24) "Russia has not yet assumed a worthy place in the world community". The consequence of the failure was the change in Russian grand strategy thinking to a new self-concept, the Eurasian Statism that dominated Russia's foreign policy in place of Westernism with an alternative grand strategy shaped over the state's status concern.<sup>117</sup>

Particularly, in foreign policy landscape appointing Eurasian Statist, Yevgeny Primakov as the foreign minister in place of Kozyrev in 1996, was the main evidence of widespread dissatisfaction with and final strike to Westernist national self-concept. The new national consensus was formed in Russia's domestic sphere around the state's historical status aspiration and proper role in world politics. Coalition of Russian Eurasianist and, advocates "strong state", Statists dominated the centre of political power by emphasising on Russian historical greatpowerness and the role of state or statehood. Through this seemingly "patriotic turn" or "national consensus", Russia moved from a

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<sup>117</sup> The change that was gradually initiated by replacing Egor Gaidar -the founder of "shock therapy" with Viktor Chernomyrdin –associated with national centrists in Civic Union- was a sign of the change in Russia's broader political landscape.

merely “Atlanticist” thinking to more historical terms such as “strategic interests”, “spheres of influence”, geopolitics and geo-strategic strength (Primakov, 1997b). The consensus was indeed a response to the “traumatic experience” of lost status and national “inferiority complex” (Karaganov, 1993). Reflecting the transition, Russia’s foreign policy scholar mentioned,

“Once things start settling down in the second half the 1990s, we had transition which lead marginalisation of the pro-Western group and actually a reassertion of a more traditionally foreign policy. As Soviet diplomats dominated the foreign policy establishment, one like Primakov who came to the forth... and redefined Russian foreign policy in much more rigidly traditional ways, on speech, much more critical and vary of the West” (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).<sup>118</sup>

The new consensus indeed shows that Russia’s dominant elites wished to overcome the difficult period of pupilhood - a partnership based on the mentality of “leaders” and the “led” - hence, they were not ready to abandon the term of “equality” in the relationship with the Western counterparts.<sup>119</sup> Using the terms emphatically by the new dominant elites, certainly by Primakov, was more in response to the Western hesitancy of accepting Russia as one of its own club, and the West’s led constitutive order backtracking “on promise of cooperation” during “the heady days” of relations of two previous enemies. As immediately after appointing as the FM, Primakov firmly defended “the building of equal, mutually beneficial partnership” with the Western counterparts, certainly the US as a main foreign policy objective. Accordingly, “without question” Russia would still seek “having a partner relationship with [the] former Cold War opponents”, but with no doubt, it would be “based on the basis of equal rights”, “a mutually beneficial partnership”

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<sup>118</sup> Similarly, Lough (Personal Interview, 1 March 2019) confirmed that despite some “progressive policy towards the United States and Western countries” from mid 1990s, “we could already see that there was some quite traditional attitudes embodied in the same policy when came countries close to Russia”.

<sup>119</sup> The terms used by Primakov in his article published on *Nezavisim Gazeta*, in defining unwanted relation with the West, that of viewed in initial years (RFE/RL, 1996, October 22). Similar argument: (RFE/RL, 1996, June 26, 1996, November 7, 1996, October 22 1996, September 25).

that “considers the interests of both sides” (RFE/RL, 1996, January 15; UPI, 1996, Jan 12).

## **4.2 Eurasian Statism and Russia’s Status**

To figure out the change in Russian grand strategic orientation and the state foreign policy behaviours, this chapter, first shows the key changes in grand strategy thinking occurred by Eurasian Statism via analysing the conceptualisation of the state’s proper status. Followed by the definition of proper strategic orientation offered by Eurasian Statists to gain such a proper status. Finally, the chapter will evaluate the strategy regarding the main other’s behaviour/s.

### **4.2.1 Eurasian Statism and Worldview**

From mid-1990s, the initial optimistic view about the prospect of new cooperative era in interstates relations at the end of cold war soon dwindled. Primary, Russian leaders saw the new international order still “more secure”, and “non-confrontational”.<sup>120</sup> As Yeltsin (1996, February 23) remarked “for the first time in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Russia has no real military threat”. In particular, in “the military field” the new era was still “characterized by a significant reduction of the immediate threat unleashing a direct military aggression against Russia”. This implies the leaders did “not consider any state as military advances with the largest military powers” threatening Russia mainly “in the field of security” (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16). In the secure system “free from dangerous and exhausting confrontations”, Russia was “open to the world” too (Yeltsin, 1996, February 23). That secure world with no major security and military threats was yet “less predictable”.

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<sup>120</sup> Derived from the Presidential Annual Addresses; (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16, 1996, February 23, 1997, March 3, 1998, February 17)

The unpredictability was a result of the some “potential and real” sources of threats in the contemporary world. Analysis of the Presidential Annual Addresses shows that amongst all, Russia was primarily worried about threats emanating from “terrorism” and “terrorist activity against Russian citizens and the Russian territory”; “illegal proliferation of weapons”; “the spread of weapons of mass destruction”. The addresses frequently referred to threats of “regional” and “local conflict” empowered by “aggressive nationalism and religious extremism”. Amongst all the “conflicts in the post-Soviet space” raised as a “negative consequence of the collapse” were challenging for Russia that made “border areas” as “the zone of potential and real conflicts” (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16, 1996, February 23, 1997, March 3, 1998, February 17, 1999, March 30).<sup>121</sup> Beside the lack of major war, Yeltsin cautiously concluded that “potential military threat to the Russian state is preserved” due to “the emergence of social, political, economic, territorial, regional, national-ethnic and other contradictions, the desire for a number of States and political forces to resolve them using means of armed struggle” (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16).

The unpredictability was more an outcome of some negative trends raised in post-Soviet order. Particularly, Yeltsin referred to the “forces abroad who are afraid of restoration of Russia’s power on the basis of democratic market reform”, and “cope with internal affairs”. Those who still have “the temptation to press it [Russia] with its historical boundaries”, and wish “to belittle” the state’s “international role”, and bid, “to contain the natural aspiration of the CIS countries to integration” with Russia (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16, 1996, February 23). The trends led to unpredictability, in which the “transition from the proclaimed partnership to the real” between Russia and the West being “difficult”, but it also increased “the possibility of unfavourable geopolitical

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<sup>121</sup> Primakov also frequently used similar argument (E. Primakov, 1996; RFE/RL, 1996, September 25; UPI, 1996, Jan 12).

situation for Russia” (The President of Russia, 1997, December 17; Yeltsin, 1998, February 17).

Russian leaders were obviously disappointed over the behaviours of the Western powers and institutions in initial years following the collapse. Indeed, the perception of denial of the central theme of Russian national attitudes, the aspiration to regain the global standing of a great power as equal as the West, even after adopting an unprecedented grand strategy in previous years caused a psychological and ontological insecurity in Russia. Therefore, rather real strategic threats, denial of the state’s aspired status challenged Russian national identity. Logically, the leaders talked about the “negative trends” challenging Russia. Primakov was clearer in talking about the uncertainty that raised by “some in the West”, who wished “domination” of the world emerging order, through “exclusion” of others including Russia from the main international affairs. Those in the West that accordingly, still characterizing the post-Cold War system under duality of “winners” and “losers”, hence “would like Russia to adopt a submissive stance” (REF/RL, 1996 March 9; RFE/RL, 1996, June 26, 1996, May 30, 1996, October 22).

The convictions caused Russian political elites to doubt that communal values would lead to a mutual beneficial and equal cooperation between Russia and the West, contrary to what previous Westernisers believed.<sup>122</sup> The new coalition, Yeltsin-Primakov and Eurasian statist convinced the “real”, “constitutive”, “predictable” and “equal cooperation” is not a logic of interstate system; instead, it must be built through “politico-diplomatic” agenda, the laws and principles on international system and also with

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<sup>122</sup> In the view of Eurasian statist, despite Russian liberals’ positive-sum calculation based on their perception of commonality of civilized values with the West, the Western powers with their realist cost-beneficial calculations of “might are right”, treated Russia objectively as a defeated and hence took advantages from Russia’s weaknesses. Later, in his interview, Primakov defends his view and emphasised “both the perestroika” and “the reforms” initially implemented in post-Soviet Russia besides optimism toward close cooperation with the Western partners failed since the West’s behaviour towards Russia “for reasons that in some cases were quite objective, has led to the multifaceted infringement of our national interests” (Khoros, 2002; Primakov, 2008, p. 318).

cooperation of whole world.<sup>123</sup> IR scholars highlighted the role of the West and its behaviour as deriving force of domination of the new foreign policy thinking with a more dubious worldview particularly in relation to the West. As a Russian scholar remarked;

“Emergence of national consensus around Primakov and his way of thinking was a kind of response to the incentives coming from outside of Russia. When it became clear, and Russian political elites recognised basically that the rosy scenario; the picture of Russia being part of the West, is not going to turn into the reality, not to work, and nor going to happen” (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018).

Similarly, a foreign policy analyst emphasised “of course the West and [its] actions pretty much discredit the liberal elites and Yeltsin leadership himself, and discredited the idea that Russia have equal partnership with or being accepted as an equal within the West” (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

Russia was mainly “disturbed” emotionally by the West’s attempts to the extension of “NATO’s military structures in Russia’s borders and calling several states to ignore, if not to counteract Russia’s legitimate interests in CIS, and especially in Yugoslav settlement”, but shaped an “unfavourable geopolitical changes” for Russian federation (Yeltsin, 1996, February 23). For Russian leaders, such unacceptable attempts by the West, particularly the US, “to regroup influence in the Euro-Atlantic area”, was “a dictate” to establish a new base of interstates relations, in which the kremlin would be isolated from engagement not merely in European but also in global policy making process (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16, 1997, March 3). “The main reason” for Russia’s “negativism” against NATO, as Primakov mentioned, was “the fact that realisation of these plans, objectively, regardless of whether anybody sets this goal or not, will lead to

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<sup>123</sup> The view was emphasized particularly Primakov (REF/RL, 1996 March 9; RFE/RL, 1996, October 22 ; 38 US Department of State Dispatch, 1996 February 12; Yeltsin, 1995, February 16, 1997, March 6).

the establishment of new dividing lines in Europe, [and] deterioration of the entire geopolitical situation globally” (Primakov, 1997a).

Rather than a real geopolitical and/or military threat, NATO enlargement was seen as a potential “psychological” threat. While NATO’s “direct proximity” to Russia’s borders through enlargement “may generate discontent”, Russia was still far to believe that it was “tantamount to expanding a springboard for launching a strike on Russia” (Primakov, 1993).<sup>124</sup> Therefore, the Eurasian statist saw the expansion as policy to secure submissive standing for Russia, hence they convinced that the state should refuse “to be regarded as the losing side”, as Primakov declared (RFE/RL, 1996, May 30). Highlighting Russia’s “psychological” uneasiness”, Sherr (Personal Interview, 19 March 2019) stated “When Yeltsin was in power the West was not seen as a threat, but as an increasing problem, ... an increasing irritation; while it was not really intuit Russia but the great threat for Russia’s right for status”.<sup>125</sup>

In a secure, non-confrontational era, the “real” sources of threat were still internal. The question about Russia’s survival deemed to be more serious. Regarding, the question of the state’s “survival”, later Primakov highlighted “we could not delay using Russia’s last reserves either” since the delay was “not just ‘like’ a death but is death itself” (Khoros, 2002). Certainly, the domestic economic situation was deteriorated by “the crisis [that] began in the pre-reform time quickly deepened and became inexorable” after initial experience of reform as it directed Russia to a “deep deformations economy” with a “prolonged depression” and an inefficient “scientific and technological” requirement of “economic development”. Such unpleasant outcomes made the state’s economy “non-

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<sup>124</sup> The terms of “moral psychological” threat was used by Russian political elites, in particular the Eurasianists and conservatives, gradually from mid- 1990s (Primakov, 1993; RFE/RL, 1997, January 23; Yeltsin, 1996, February 23).

<sup>125</sup> The fact also endorsed by other scholars, as reflected in chapter three.

competitiveness” and pushed it “into a raw material periphery of the world economy” (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16).<sup>126</sup> In the socio-political dimension, the main sources of threat related to the state’s “ability to preserve one’s own integrity, and its sovereignty” (Yeltsin, 1996, February 23).<sup>127</sup> It was more important especially regarding “centrifugal” movements in “Northern Caucasian region”, in particular, “the Chechnya issue” (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16, 1999, March 30).<sup>128</sup> Beyond the fact that Russia’s “survival” was questioned by domestic socioeconomic and mainly political situation,<sup>129</sup> a scholar particularly highlights that “Under Yeltsin, the existence of Russian federation was at stake...as well because of Chechnya and other centrifugal forces driving various components of all the Russian federation, towards potential separatism” (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

Analysing “Russian Federation National Security Blueprint”, published in December 1997, revealed the influence of the new worldview.<sup>130</sup> Generally, the document argued the new world era entails “negative trends” along with “opportunities”. While there was no “threat of large-scale aggression against Russia ...in the foreseeable future”,

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<sup>126</sup> Analysis of Russian presidential annual message shows some of those economic factors includes: “hyperinflation”; “destabilization currency market”; “persisting crisis non-payments”; “crisis in agriculture” sector; “prolonged depression”; “banking crisis”; “strong decline in Production”; low “investments”; “crisis in the agro-industrial complex”; “Poverty”; “unemployment”; “the sharp growth of criminal business”; “the growth of organized crime and corruption”, “criminalization of entrepreneurship”, “the financial system, the budget crisis” were dimensions of such economic crisis in mid 1990s ( Yeltsin, 1994, June 12, 1995, February 16, 1996, February 23).

<sup>127</sup> Weakness of the state’ power that demonstrated in its “inability to cope with the crisis mechanism”, “shortcomings and inefficiencies in management”, “in the work of the government” totally such as “low performing discipline”, “ineffective system of collect taxes and customs duties”, “Legislative gaps”, “the lack of a common legal culture”, “poor quality of state regulation”. Altogether, “led to political, economic, territorial, regional, religious, national-ethnic, armed struggles” including those conflict arising in Russia mainly in “its borders, the zone of potential and real conflicts, aggressive nationalism and religious extremism within Russia and on the territory of the former Soviet republics in a number of directions, separatism and national strife, crimes against identity for selfish motives” (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16, 1998, February 17).

<sup>128</sup> As Yeltsin pointed the Chechen crisis as Russian “common problems”, “the main source of tension on the Northern Caucasus remains national extremism, which not only destroys the basis of interethnic communication, but also carries a direct threat to the destinies of peoples” or called the issues as example of “the recurrences of aggressive nationalism and chauvinism” (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16, 1999, March 30).

<sup>129</sup> Highlighted by scholars; (Hanson, Personal interview, 5 January 2018; Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018; Muraviev, Personal Interview, 10 December 2018; Alexander Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).

<sup>130</sup> The only official document published in the given time. As the “political document”, Blueprint, was to reflect Russia’s official “views, goals and state’ strategy” and formulate the “key directions and principles of state policy”.



nevertheless, the Blueprint did not “rule out attempts at power rivalry with Russia”. “The most real threat” for the state’s security in the international arena was “local wars and armed conflicts” in neighbourhood region, “the proliferation of nuclear, and other types of weapons of mass destruction”, and “international terrorism”. Additionally, it remarked the negative trends emulated from some powers who attempted to “counter” the state’s aspired standing as one “centre of power in the multipolar world” (The President of Russia, 1997, December 17).

The Blueprint hinted to the “considerable difficulties” emulated from the “process of creating a model of general and all-embracing security for Europe”. Particularly, the Eastward expansion plan as means for “transformation” of NATO “into a dominant military, political force in Europe” that was a source of potential challenge for Russia, but also a threat for European security system since it would cause a “dividing line” within the continent. However, the main “direct threat” of national security was internal, the “negative processes in the country’s economy, the deterioration in inter-ethnic relations, and the social polarization of Russian society”. With “analysis of the threats to Russia”, Blueprint concluded; “the main ones right now and in the foreseeable future [the threats] do not have a military orientation and are of a predominantly internal nature concentrate on the domestic political, economic, social, environmental, information, and spiritual spheres” (The President of Russia, 1997, December 17).

Overall, while the document continued viewing world politics safe with no major real security military threat, it still emphasised on domestic sources of threat. The country’s survival was at stake and the main question of how “the order” could be brought back was still dominant in political landscape. Referring to the Blueprint, Alexander Sergunin (Personal Interview, 12 October 2018) mentioned,

“As the first post-soviet Russian national security concept in 1997 shows there was rather optimistic view about international sense, but quite pessimistic about Russian domestic conditions. ... There is no major security threat from outside of Russia. All security threats are inside, because of Russia’s grave economic, financial social situations; and the rise of separatism, nationalism, religious extremism”.

In brief, from mid 1990s, neither the Soviet style of confrontational conflictual calculations or romanticism and severe idealism of Russian Westernists, Eurasian Statists portrayed world politics as a middle course. In fact, a kind of realism ranged from competition (mainly over geopolitics) to cooperation. Variation in Russia’s attitudes towards the world politics and the realistic view was the result of the perceived status inconsistency, the perceived psychological, ontological sense of insecurity over the state status due to lack of recognition by the Western counterparts in the previous years.

#### **4.2.2 Eurasian Statism and National identification**

The Eurasian Statism as a new national consensus dominated Russian political landscape with a new version of national identity. This version was based on distinct dimensions of Russian identity. Amongst them, new coalition offered a national collective *self*, practically based on “geography”, the “geopolitical unique situation” and “unique strategic position” of Russia that makes the state as a unique “Eurasian power” (The President of Russia, 1997, December 17; Yeltsin, 1996, February 23, 1998, February 17). Such the “geopolitical values” as the constant characters according to Primakov, played “a remarkable role” in articulation of national identity, conceptualisation of the state’s status “as a great power” located in “both Europe and Asia”, and also in defining the state’s foreign priorities and objectives (UPI, 1996, Jan 12). As Yeltsin (1994, February 24) addressed “Russia’s relations with the world are determined by its unique Eurasian status”. The emphasise on Eurasian dimension in Russian collective self, came to the fore and find its official position first ever in Russian Federation, but it developed hereafter a permanent factor to define any version of the country’s identity and status

perception (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019; Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018).

Defining national collective self, based on the “Eurasian formula”, the insight of Russia as the Eurasian power prevented the state being identified “entirely” Western as previous elites had emphasised (Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018).<sup>131</sup> This meant that under the influence of Russia’s traditional, cultural distinctiveness and its geopolitical uniqueness, the Eurasian Statists no longer believed that Russia should be as a member of the West, “the club of civilised nations”, at any cost. Simultaneously, it leads to claim that instead of “concentrating on the Western direction”, as a power with a distinct identity, Russia should pursue equality in relation to the West (RFE/RL, 1996, January 15, 1996, June 26; US News and World Report, 1996, January 22). This implies no one could expect that Russia with its unique identity, should “follow the path of post-1945 Germany and Japan, allies of America” which even “their foreign policy determined almost wholly by Washington” (Primakov, 2008).

Therefore, as the Russian scholar emphasised, “Primakov started a much more balanced kind of understanding identity, unlike Kozyrev... a kind of understanding Russia as more than just part of Europe” (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018) The balance that according to Sherr (Personal Interview, 19 March 2019), began;

“Even before Yeltsin’s second term, [when defending] his tone and the people around him towards the West had become much harder. However, ... when Kozyrev was dismissed as foreign minister in favour of Primakov, then the balance really swung in the direction of people who were in think of Russia much more in Eurasian terms and also think of foreign policy in what they like to call balance terms, rather than was based on the exclusively priority on the West”.

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<sup>131</sup> Scholars supported the view. According to Alexander Sergunin (Personal Interview, 12 October 2018) “realist geopolitician” as the dominant schools believe that Russia should be a Eurasian power, so the Eurasian identity was the most important one. The change in identity formation was supported by others including (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018; Muraviev, Personal Interview, 10 December 2018).

As geography presented Russia in a unique position, the historical and cultural factors made Russia a distinct great power. The central element of those cultural factors influencing was the traditional role of state in the country. Consistent with - statist or advocates of state's power,<sup>132</sup> Primakov and his fellows emphasised particularly on the role of state within Russian society as the main dimension of national identity, as well as preservation of the historical aspiration of greatpowerness.<sup>133</sup> The leaders reasoned that the "opposition" with the role of state is ahistorical and "dangerous". Since, the strong state was, what "Russian history ordered" but also "one of the most significant achievements of world history, social culture" that without such the state achieving "a civilised human community" is impossible (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16).

Accordingly, from mid-1990s, the leaderships emphatically pursued strengthening the role of "effective state" within society, in all dimensions of domestic transition, contrary to Westernists' pure and fully support of privatisation and marketization. "Only" the strong state, according to Yeltsin, would take "reasonable decisions" and be "able to ensure their effective implementation", guarantee "the activity of strong and adequately support the weak", and safeguard "the development of culture, education and science, reform the Armed Forces". This state would ultimately be able to "defend Russian national interests" outside (Yeltsin, 1997, March 3).<sup>134</sup> This implied that while the "government will continue the reforms" they must be done "with corrections" through "emphasis on the social aspects of reforms" with "increase the role of the state in the economy where it is indispensable". Indeed what the leaders "think" was a "vertical

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<sup>132</sup> The group of proponents of strong states, *derzhavniki* or the *gosudarstvenniki*.

<sup>133</sup> While in his address, Yeltsin (1996, February 23) talked about "patriotism" but the values was for the president "is a state of mind when you live in pain Fatherland, implicated in his triumphs and defeats, you experience pride in their national traditions, for belonging to the great country". Patriotism in this sense, was perceived as "a personal feeling...it should not be used by the state and by politicians in mercenary purposes". The value but strongly emphasized in next era, will be discussed next chapter.

<sup>134</sup> Similar argument (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16, 1996, February 23, 1998, February 17, 1999, March 30b).

governance” which combines “the possibilities provided by democracy with the possibilities of control” (Primakov, 1999 March 22). Long before, Yeltsin similarly addressed “reforms in Russia cannot take place without a strong state and reliable law and order” but “a democratic state and a market economy the economy allows only one dictate, the dictates of law” (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16).

However despite some similarities, the emphasis on state role was different from Soviet centralised planned economy, as Primakov highlighted “that is neither necessary nor possible” (Inozemtsev & Sibiriakov, 2006). This means neither Liberals’ fully privatized economy nor Soviet state-oriented or planned economy; it was a “mixed economy” (The President of Russia, 1997, December 17). Amongst triples options that Russian had the leaders relied “more on the strength of Russian society, the emerging market relations and democracy” through persuading “social policy”, the protection of “social and economic rights of citizens”.<sup>135</sup> Since, the “Communist experiment” had already lost its credibility “and there was no such force, which could turn the clock back”, the second option “try to reform the strict state control” was similarly no longer possible, as “there was no longer a state in the full sense” not “mechanisms” of such “planned economy” particularly after “what has appeared in the 1992-1995” (Yeltsin, 1996, February 23).<sup>136</sup>

The emphasis on cultural factors implies that while Russia historically is a great power, and nowadays a democratic one therefore similar to the Western great powers, nevertheless, the values like geopolitics, and the role of a strong state make it far from the

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<sup>135</sup> Similarly, in his interview Primakov addressed that “the government must acknowledge as its principal goal guaranteeing a subsistence minimum for all citizens” (Khoros, 2002).

<sup>136</sup> Later in his interview, the ex PM Primakov defending the policy that adopted during his tenure in strengthening the role of the state certainly in economy. “The issue” according to him, was not “one of giving the state an absolute role in national economic life, which is developing according to market rules. That is neither necessary nor possible”, instead “we had to reject a policy that would have catapulted the entire economy—and science and culture, into the bargain—into the market on the assumption that all that would survive on its own” (Inozemtsev & Sibiriakov, 2006).

Western values.<sup>137</sup> In brief, Eurasian Statism as the dominant self-concept characterised Russian national self as partially Western power by emphasise on “the European direction” of Russia, in implementing universal values, and at the same time distinguishing it as a “traditionally” Eurasian power. Such an identification meant both limited competition in some areas (in former soviet region) and cooperation in other, common areas (the issues related to global peace and stability) (Yeltsin, 1998, February 17). “Russian began to find their right way gradually” in the ongoing “huge crisis” being encountered in “definition and applying the definition of national identity within Russia in early years after Soviet collapse”, as foreign policy analyst remarked. Russians based their identity on two significant dimensions;

“They looked into the West because the West’ way of doing things proved workable. As well, they simply understood that Russians were not Western; therefore, they cannot copy everything from the West. Russia actually started experimenting and referring for instance, legacy from the imperial times, the Russian empire. They tried interpreting what was good in Soviet time and what led the system into the collapse, hence tried actually to preserve Soviet positive legacies. So, Russians were opening to the Western civilisation, but emphasising that we are different, in the process of discovering ourselves” (Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019).

One possible explanation of the change in state’s identification is rooted in the shift in national attitudes dominating the centre of Russia’s grand strategy making. Perceiving the lack of recognition of Russia as equal power from the Western powers intensified the sense of national inferiority and of humiliation received after the Soviet collapse. The intensification was primarily as an outcome of Westernism, and its strategic choices in integration within the superior Western civilisation. Claiming the ideology of communism as the source of perceived inferiority, but Westernists failed to postulate Russian with a national identity as superior as the Western civilised one. Westernism hence failed to substitute the vacuum left when, according to a Russian sociologist,

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<sup>137</sup> Regarding the factor, an expert concluded, came to power Primakov shifted the underneath of state’ policy based on redefining national identity via “very traditional Russian geopolitical thinking” (Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019).

“Russian society craves the elaboration of its central purpose, an idea that animates and directs us in the new epoch” (Rosenberger, 1997, January 26, p. 2).

The innate desire to create a new national identity emanated from the deep sense of displeasure with the “imported Western values”, certainly amongst the political elites. Especially, from the mid-1990s Westernists being blamed for ignoring Russian past experiences and historical, cultural achievements. The political elites claimed that such a “junior” stance of Russia and following the Western path and defining Russia as a member of the Western civilisation was contrary to nation as great as Russia with its distinctive traditional cultural values. Denouncing the authoritarian Soviet system, and communist ideology, Russian observer in *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, but emphasised “no less dangerous are the attempts to turn Russia into a commonplace country of the Western type, thrusting upon it Western values and American model capitalism, which are alien to our people”. Vital is to restoration of nation; “Neither ‘humility’ nor the position of a client of the West” instead, according to the elite “We must stop the country’s decline, including by means of foreign policy” (Rosenberger, 1997, January 26, p. 2).

The new sense of identification was an attempt to answer to the perceived inferiority, psychological unease and insecurity by using the language of cultural and geopolitical distinctiveness in defining national self. What obviously addressed by Yeltsin, “We are often intimidated by the loss of Russian identity. I am sure, that will not happen. Russia is a whole world whose identity remained throughout the whole of Russian history” (Yeltsin, 1996, February 23). Therefore, the emphasis on distinctiveness should not be confused with the Soviet communism and its ideological rivalry with the Western capitalism. While, Russians wished to keep their values, simultaneously they attempted to pursue norms of modern world, the universal values, “Russian identity was always characterised by openness”, what Yeltsin emphasised “Russia absorbed all the best from

different cultures and itself enriched humanity with its achievements” (Yeltsin, 1999, March 30). This indicated that, “Following the common path of civilisation”, no longer means becoming completely Western, instead “each country passes it in its own way” the “special way” (Yeltsin, 1996, February 23, 1999, March 30). The language of Russia’s distinctiveness and the special way further evaluated thereafter in Russian political sphere, is discussed in next chapters.

#### **4.2.3 Eurasian Statism and Russia’s Rank and Role**

Re-definition of Russia’s national identity with such the unique characteristics influenced perceiving Russia’s standing with the related role too. Eurasian Statists had no doubt about Russia’s position, the greatpowerness, as Primakov strongly cleared from the first, that no matter how situation the country has, regarding power capability criteria, “Russia was and is a great power” thus “its foreign policy should correspond with that” (UPI, 1996, Jan 12).<sup>138</sup> This means, for the leaders, “despite the present difficulties”, Russia’s standing remained and it still belonged to the World’s major powers club with similar rights and responsibilities (Yeltsin, 1996, February 23). Russia hence was a “pole” in a “multipolar world” with equal role similar to others poles (The President of Russia, 1997, December 17). Highlighting the greatpowerness as an “absolutely central” factor for Eurasian statist, a scholar convinced

“Russia saw itself as a great power at the time. It cannot talk by any other word, because it is very much at the core of its identity. Russia has to be a great power ... Of course, they had difficulties and the enormous problems that existed at the time in terms of economy and military capability. let’s not forget Russia was defeated during first Chechnya war which was of course a major humiliation, but nevertheless Russia was not able to clean up onto that facts....Russia was great power whatever difficulties it had” (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

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<sup>138</sup> Particularly, Primakov was main proponent of the view (RFE/RL, 1996, January 15, 1996, May 30; UPI, 1996, Jan 12).



However, unlike previous liberals, the Eurasian Statists conceptualized such a status based on different criteria.<sup>139</sup> Alternatively, Eurasian Statists defined new dimension for comparing Russia's collective self with the other, the West. They emphasized on positive distinctive characteristics of the state contrary to the main other, instead of comparing in terms of traditional economic, political or military criteria by which the West and the US was superior. Accordingly, "the dignity" and "the wealth of Russia" was based on its "unique spiritual and intellectual potential" and "great centuries-old history" (The President of Russia, 1997, December 17; Yeltsin, 1996, February 23).

The Eurasian factors, cultural distinctiveness gave Russia a unique role too. Highlighting on the alternative, Russia as the pivot of civilisations, the Eurasian statist indeed defined criteria for superiority of the country's role that of harmonizer and stabilizer between the Western and Eastern civilisations. The role that "bearded" the "special responsibility" for Russia in maintaining the "world stability" (Primakov, 1997, September 27; UPI, 1996, Jan 12). Such aspect of Russian identity and an indicator of social creativity was accurately reflected even earlier, by Sergei Stankevich (1992, March 28),<sup>140</sup> when he prioritised initiating a "multilateral cultural dialogue between different civilisations, nations and cultural unites" as the main objective of Russian federation in contemporary global order. Accordingly, he defined what Russia's role should be in a new world, arguing;

"Russia the conciliator, Russia the unifier, Russia the harmoniser. A country that takes in West and East, North and South, and that is uniquely capable; perhaps it uniquely has this capability, of harmoniously unifying many different elements, of achieving a historic symphony" (Stankevich, 1992, March 28).

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<sup>139</sup> Explained in chapter 2.

<sup>140</sup> He was the former state chancellor in political affairs.

However, the cultural-historical factors were not sole sources of Russia's great power, as Eurasian statisticians highlighted the potential geopolitical and geostrategic factors on which the state standing was based. Indeed, they attempted to devalue the state's material weaknesses, instead value the potential capabilities in compare to the Western powers. This meant, unlike the Westernists, the Eurasian Statisticians believed that along with the country's "traditional standing in terms of culture", Russia's "greatness" is basically grounded on its "strategic potential" as a one of the country's "trump card" that is analogous merely to that of the US (Primakov, 1996, September 25). Altogether, Russia's greatness stemmed in its geopolitical, geostrategic factors like geographical location, along with the state's historical and cultural experiences. As Yeltsin concluded,

"Despite the hard trials that Russia brought the twentieth century, our Fatherland survived. Russia has been and remains a great country. Her place in the world for centuries is determined by the special latitude and power: whether it is a question of geographical scales and population, natural resources, cultural or scientific achievements, spirituality or military force" (Yeltsin, 1996, February 23).

Russia deemed to be learning how to overcome the difficulties of regaining the great power status after initial years. This was justified by a Russian scholar;

"History which is in itself telling about genuine great power status of the country and the fact that no matter how its conditions were looked by outsiders in the early 1990s. Russia has accumulated in the process of its long history or incredible material and spiritual resources, which really helped it in conditions which look like no way out, or for people were not familiar whether specifics and what Russia really is" (Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018).

Depicting Russia as the unique Eurasian power that aimed to harmonise the world made the former Soviet region and the state's attitudes towards the region as the main benchmark of such the status. Simply put, for Eurasian statisticians, realisation of the state's global status and role, were less credible, if Moscow were not able to play as the main actor primarily in her neighbouring areas. Therefore, Russia's conventional "sphere of influence" resurfaced once again and became a kind of precondition of its greatpowerness (Stankevich, 1992, March 28). Reflected by Yeltsin (1995, February 16), "the definition

of the position of the Russian state on the world arena in accordance with our national interests much will be determined by the nature of our relations with the states in former Soviet region”.

Logically, Russian leaders were convinced that geopolitical and cultural uniqueness necessitates Russia, as a sole power of Eurasian space should preserve its own geopolitical interests and sphere of influence, as the main priority but not via “restoration” of Soviet Union or confrontation with the Western powers (The President of Russia, 1997, December 17; Yeltsin, 1996, February 23).<sup>141</sup> Therefore, contrary to the Westernists’ who ignored the region as they were not believed to be a “hegemon” in the neighbour region, in Primakov era, the term has been more “vocal”, “there was a sort of doctrine that talks about sphere of influence, ...in a sense that Russia should maintain its sphere of influence” (Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018).

Consequently, contrary to previous qualification of normal great power, in a new term, by definition of new criteria, Russia was a great power “equal” and comparable with the West, with similar responsibilities. While, geopolitics dictated Russia as the permanent Eurasian power to play a “regional role”<sup>142</sup> that should be reinforced by “privileged” partnerships with states within the region. The historical cultural criteria implied as a Eurasian power; Russia has a role globally, too. Therefore, “Due to its global and regional role” Russia should have equal rights and responsibilities that must be exercised “together” with other members of world great powers community (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16, 1996, February 23). Overall, it implied “foreign policy initiatives and steps of Russia”, must “befits as a great power” that means it must “cover all significant

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<sup>141</sup> Similar argument by Primakov (RFE/RL, 1996, February 9; UPI, 1996, Jan 12).

<sup>142</sup> Whether in terms of military security terms that “will bear a significant burden of peacekeeping, space of the former soviet Union or economic that enable Russia to “become a natural and reliable centre of integration for partners in the CIS” (The President of Russia, 1997, December 17; Yeltsin, 1995, February 16).

international problems, and geographically practically the whole world” (Yeltsin, 1998, February 17). Similarly, referring to the state’s “role as a cosponsor in the peace process”, Primakov stated,

“Russia can work in the interest of peace and stability jointly with the US in many regions. In Europe, we can help create the architecture of European security. ... Apparently, we could have done more jointly in the Middle East to stabilise the situation. The conflict on the Korean peninsula and the relationship between India and Pakistan [are possible areas for cooperation]” (Primakov, 1997, September 27).

The Blueprint reflected such the concept as state’s proper status, the criteria and role too. Regarding “strengthening of trends toward the formation of a multi-polar world” it emphasised “Russia’s position as a great power” and “one of the influential centres of the developing multi-polar world”. Yet such standing must be consolidated. Although, this document did not neglect the power capabilities including “economic, political, scientific and technological, ecological, and informational” along with “military force” that still preserved their importance in modern order. Yet as it was emphasized, “Russia has all the preconditions for maintaining and consolidating its position ...and playing an important role in world processes”. It possesses “considerable economic, scientific and technical potential which determines the country’s capacity for stable development”. However, more importantly Russia “occupies a unique strategic position on the Eurasian continent” and is “one of the biggest multinational states and has an age-old history and culture and its own national interests and traditions”. Altogether, along with “powerful nuclear arsenal” gave Russia the capacity to be a great power and play her role globally as well as regionally (The President of Russia, 1997, December 17).

Verified by Philip Hanson, while the “prime concern” was yet forming the state’s “transition recession”, Russians portrayed the state as a great with “both regional and global role” too. As the scholar explained,

“...the Russian political elite who determines foreign policy, sees Russia as a leading world power -one of a small number is a new polycentric world order. Its status should be defined by, amongst other things, an unchallenged power to determine what happens (Janning) in its own ‘sphere of special interests’- roughly, the former USSR. Whether that includes the Baltic States is unclear” (Hanson, Personal interview, 5 January 2018).

To sum up, evidenced here, from mid-1990s to the end of the decade the concern over status was still influencing on Russian grand strategy thinking, but in a new sense and with new conceptualisation. Compared to Westernism, Eurasian statism considers world politics through the lens of realism within which competition mainly over geopolitics, is the base of power interactions, rather than the cooperation that should be built through equal interactions between actors. Different from initial years, the state grouped partially as Western power, since in new self-concept, national identification entailed Russia’s historical, cultural and geopolitical unique characteristics that distinguished it from the West. The factors also closed Russian identification partially with the East or Asia, however, the new version of national identity was completely overlapped with the neighbouring Eurasian region. Russia was the Eurasian pole of power in multipolar order equal to others mainly the West, burdened roles globally as stabiliser and regionally as a harmoniser and the hegemon of neighbouring Eurasian region. Summarised by IR scholar, “Primakov coming to power is kind of return from the normalcy to the emphasise being on the restoring Russia status as a great power, restoring its role in the former Soviet region and pushing back at the Western counterparts” (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

In fact, defining Russia’s status by emphasising on traditional, cultural, and geopolitical characteristics Russians attempted to legitimate the aspired status by devaluating dimension of comparison, the power capabilities that comparing to Western counterparts Russia was inferior. At the same time, accentuating on Russia as the Eurasian

pole of power in multipolar world, the elite was to establish an alternative dimension of comparison within which Russia could be as equally superior as other Western powers.

#### 4.3 Eurasian Statism and Social Creativity Strategy

Conceptualising proper status, the Eurasian statist, began to define the proper strategic orientations to gain the recognition of aspired standing, from mid-1990s to 2000. Hypothesised earlier, the failure of status mobility strategy due to lack of recognition by the main *other*, leads status inconsistent actors to enhance their status through their participation in social movements – creativity and/or competition (Geschwender, 1967, pp. 169-171). From mid-1990s, Eurasian statist led by Primakov adopted a strategy of social creativity, to overcome the difficulty of perceived inferiority and humiliation and to enhance Russia's status by playing more active role in the world politics. In fact, the creative strategy was an occasion for Russian leaders to invert the country's relationships with the West and in particular the US.

Prioritising equality, gaining equal standing as a Eurasian pole in multipolar international order, at the par with others as the state global vision affected Russia's national interests, its grand strategic orientation and foreign policy behaviours. National interests necessitate, according to Primakov to pursue a more "active foreign policy", regardless of Russia's nowadays material weaknesses and limited resources (RFE/RL No. 29, 1996, February 9).<sup>143</sup> While the necessity of domestic transition and development was still prevailed but more importantly, those "internal changes", must be defended by strongly active foreign policy in order to establish the state as an influencing centre of international system (Khoros, 2002; Primakov, 1998; REF/RL, 1996 March 9). This

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<sup>143</sup> Such the *aktivnaya vneshnyaya politika*, or active policy was referring to Alexander M. Gorchakov –Foreign Minister of the Russian Empire- and his achievement of establishing the state's greatpowerness after two wars.

implies, a “noticeable activation in all directions” become “the most characteristic feature of Russia’s foreign policy” in new era (Yeltsin, 1998, February 17).

Particularly in relation with the West, the “primacy of national interest” shaped around the quest of equality, over permanency of enmities or amities perused by Soviet leaders and post-Soviet Westernists, Primakov’s active foreign policy settled for a “multipolar world”.<sup>144</sup> The doctrine, in fact followed the simple rational, playing in alternative dimension, instead of portraying the world as a unipolar system ruled by the US as the hegemon. As such, Russia had an opportunity to be a “pole” with an “independent” voice but “in a multipolar world”. While, in the unipolar order subjugated by unipole who dictates its rules, there would be no space for powers like Russia to have such an independent voice (RFE/RL, 1996, September 25). Therefore, reflected by Yeltsin, the state’s foreign policy should aim to “building a system of international relations, which proceeds from the premise that our world is multipolar, that there should not be a domination of any single centre of power in it” (Yeltsin, 1997, March 3).

Logically, the aspired status and interests shaped around it dictated counterbalancing the West’s unilaterality as the main component of Eurasian Statists’ grand strategy, the social creativity. The elites appealed to Russia to adopt “the counter balance tactics” against “any country’s attempt to monopolise international”, in particular “the US’ unilateralism that was revealing in international affairs”.<sup>145</sup> While balancing avoided full cooperation with the West, that of previous Westernists’ policy, however it never meant confrontational policies against it, what Civilisationist desired, Primakov frequently

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<sup>144</sup> As well as official document, the multipolarity was mainly advocated by foreign minister Primakov; (Primakov, 1997b; Primakov, 1998; REF/RL, 1996 March 9; RFE/RL, 1996, February 9).

<sup>145</sup> Yeltsin also emphasised on the necessity of creating a multipolar world and balancing unipolarity, for example along with his Chinese counterpart, Jiang Zemin issued “Russian-Chinese Joint Declaration on a Multipolar World” (Yeltsin, J. Zemin, 1997, 25 April).

reminded (REF/RL, 1996 March 9; RFE/RL, 1997, January 9). The Kremlin, therefore, took a middle course, a more assertive and strong defending the national interests through mix of cooperation and balancing policy, particularly in relations with “the strongest” power. This meant perusing, according to Primakov, “rational pragmatism”, free from “romanticism and unaffordable sentimentality” (Rubinstein, 2000).<sup>146</sup> Hence, the main task of the state’s foreign policy was,

“To create favourable external conditions for the continuation of Russian reforms and to establish and maintain truly equitable relations with the world’s leading powers that meet the status and potential of the Russian Federation. Our goal is to defend Russia’s national interests, not slipping to confrontation, but strengthening the foundations of stability and cooperation in international relations” (Yeltsin, 1997, March 3).<sup>147</sup>

Russia pursued double track policy to constrain the West, and the US’s unilateral actions. In a more symbolic rhetoric terms, the political elites emphasised on the supremacy of international laws and norms rather than material capabilities, implying the “world order ... should rely less on military force and much more on the power of law” (Boris Yeltsin, 1997, March 3). They also accentuated the primacy of the main international institutions such as UN and the UNSC and their role in “world peace” and “security”. The Article 4 of Russo-Chinese “Joint Declaration”, stressed on strengthen of the role of UN and its main body, UNSC, as the main “universal organisation” that never be replaced by others (Yeltsin & Zemin, 1997, 25 April).<sup>148</sup> Regarding the necessity of “collective actions” via “consensus” within the formwork of the organisations, Moscow

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<sup>146</sup> Russian political elites welcomed such a pragmatic policy too. The chairperson of Duma’s International Affairs Committee, Vladimir Lukin, appreciated Primakov’s appointment, since according to him the new FM “understands what Russia’s real priorities are”. Similarly, others like Andrei Kortunov, a Russian foreign policy analyst welcoming the “pragmatic” Primakov, but emphasised “he is not a liberal in the Kozyrev sense” (REF/RL, 1996, January 10).

<sup>147</sup> Yeltsin commonly reiterated the theme in his annual addresses to national assembly (Yeltsin, 1996, February 23, 1998, February 17).

<sup>148</sup> The article 4 of the joint declaration mentioned that “the Parties [Russia and China] are of the view that the role of the United Nations and the Security Council must be strengthened, and they highly appreciate United Nations efforts to maintain world peace and security. They believe that the United Nations, as the most universal and authoritative organisation of sovereign States, has a place and role in the world that cannot be supplanted by any other international organisation. The Parties are confident that the United Nations will play an important role in the establishment and maintenance of the new international order” (Yeltsin & Zemin, 1997, 25 April). That emphasise on the role of UN was reiterated frequently by Russian leaders (Primakov, 1996; RFE/RL, 1996, October 22 1996, September 25, 1997, September 24).



could legitimately seek to “restrain” the US, along with others great powers. Emphasising on the role of international laws and institutions was opportunity for Kremlin to show the crucial role of Russia as the order stabiliser and upholder and depicting the US as a revisionist power with negative role and destabilising manner in the system that should be restrained. Those objectives overlapped definitely with the multipolarity as the main principle of social creativity strategy as illustrated by Yeltsin,

“Interests of international stability and sustainable development would be a geopolitical reconstruction of the world along the roads of multipolarity. That is why Russia stands for strengthening universal international organisations, primarily the UN and its Council Security, which are now a powerful tool for regulation of international relations, policy containment aggression and intimidation” (Yeltsin, 1999, March 30).

Verifying, IR expert highlights:

“In Primakov terms ... [regarding] a more self-awareness of Russia as an actor on the international stage, there was perception that Russia should not be left out of any multilateral decisions, talks, and agreements. Accordingly, Russia began to sort of participation. Therefore, it was to the preservation of role, international standing by participation through UN and in the UN initiatives for example peacekeeping missions. That was perceived to be enough, because Russia had all of legacies nuclear power of the largest arsenal and the idea was that gives the status” (Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018).

Practically, Russia’s creative strategy implied “diversification” of the state’s foreign policy by adopting “multi-vectored” orientations. The policy by such a characteristic was sine qua non of state status. Reflected by Primakov “any great power must have a diversified foreign policy unless it wants to become a junior partner” which means, defending the higher status in world politics dictates Russia to diversify its relations from “concentrate on the Western direction” to other directions (US News and World Report, 1996, January 22).<sup>149</sup> “There is no alternative”, if Russia wished to be a great power, Yeltsin further emphasised, it should pursue a fully-fledged multi-vector orientations

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<sup>149</sup> In his interview, Primakov remarked such policy stating, “Russia must and undoubtedly will develop its cooperation with .... Purposefully and consistently with all other countries” (Khoros, 2002).

towards all “directions” of the world politics, while improving the ties with the Western powers (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16, 1998, February 17). Moscow indeed was to balance the US’ unilaterality, by making constructive partnership with other powers in West, East and even the states in South.<sup>150</sup> As Sergunin (Personal Interview, 12 October 2018) emphasised;

“Under Primakov, [it was] just some kind of manifestation of Eurasianism. .... His message was that Russia should have good relations with everywhere, with the West, with East, with the South. Russia should just defend its own national interests, own geographical Azimuth, there is no difference; Russia should be constructive, should be friendly but at the same time should be assertive if it feels some national interests are under the threat”.

While Russian leaders convinced that adopting multi vector and multilateral foreign policy was a way to balance the state’s relations with both Western and non-Western powers. Nevertheless, in reality the policy translated to establishing “strategic partnership” with the “long-standing and serious partners who has never caved in to Washington”, and shared “a point of view on the post-Cold War world order” that “consists in creating a multi-polar world” (RFE/RL, 1997, March 26). The “strategic partnership” with dissatisfied the non-Western great powers, was in this sense, “not only possible but also urgently necessary” as Primakov believed (Khoros, 2002; RFE/RL, 1996, April 25a). Amongst all vectors; “the Middle East”, “Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)”, “Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)”, “Latin American”, “Central and Eastern Europe”, however, “China” and “India” as two non-Western “great Asian powers” had special place in Russia’s grand strategy landscape (The President of Russia, 1997, December 17; Yeltsin, 1994, February 24, 1995, February 16, 1999, March 30). Referring to Eurasian Statists’ objective in creating alternative dimension in compensation of capability weaknesses, a foreign policy expert remarked,

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<sup>150</sup> Primakov for example stated along with developing its cooperation with all other vector, Russia “must develop cooperation with Islamic countries” too (Khoros, 2002).

“Russia settled for the multipolarity when it was quite weak. Amid to restoring Russia’s status and pushing back the Western counterparts Primakov came up with the idea” (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

Highlighting Eurasian dimension of identity and the state’s status as a Eurasian power implied that Russia as the main hegemon of post-soviet area should preserve its own geopolitical interests. Aimed to re-establish closer relations with the former Soviet states, Primakov emphasised on a “multilateral” “integration and cooperation” within the Eurasian region as a main pillar of social creativity (REF/RL, 1996 March 9). Contrary to national hardliners, the group but decided to act as a great power rather than an aggressive imperial force in the region, at least theoretically and officially. While the earlier would establish a legitimate base to pursue the national interests towards the neighbouring states within international norms and principles, the latter would lead to domination policy out of the normative system. According to Yeltsin, “Russia’s position on this issue is not a cover for some imperial aspirations” instead “the trend towards a significant deepening of the integration of the states, members of the CIS, with full respect for sovereignty, principles voluntariness and mutual benefit surely prevails now over tendency to run-up” (Yeltsin, 1996, February 23, 1997, March 3).<sup>151</sup> Characterising integration in the region, Primakov highlighted that

“... No one was talking about re-establishing the Soviet Union. This simply cannot be, and there is no talk about doing away with the sovereignty, which the various republics have acquired. For the republics of the former Soviet Union, sovereignty is irreversible, and no one is fording or will force its will on these integration processes” (US Department of State Dispatch, 1996, February 12).

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<sup>151</sup> Speaking about necessity of establishing the mechanism that reliably provides “the conditions for mutually beneficial cooperation” in the framework of the Commonwealth as a whole, Yeltsin concluded that “we are obliged in practice resolutely affirm the principle of equality: we are all equal, among us there are neither younger nor older brothers” (Yeltsin, 1999, March 30).

The “Blueprint” also reflected the ascendancy of the Eurasian statist views on the state interests and the grand strategy orientation. The main “interests of the individual, society and state” hinged on the continuous evolution of the economy to a more stable one as well as the “consolidation of democracy” with special place of state in the transition process,<sup>152</sup> especially in economic development.<sup>153</sup> Internationally, the main objective of Russia lies in “the implementation of an active foreign policy” to consolidate the state’s global status through “dialogue” and “cooperation” with all others, “the countries of CEE, America, the Near East, West Asia, Africa, and the Asian- Pacific region”. Amongst all however, the main priorities should be on “the development of equal partnership with the other great powers, the centres of economic and military might”. Additionally, it emphasises on the “strengthening of those mechanisms of collective management of world political and economic processes in which Russia plays an important role”, amongst them it highlighted the role of UN and UNSC. In the Eurasian region, the Blueprint underscores “the priority of the formation of integration” in all dimensions, but “on voluntary base” (The President of Russia, 1997, December 17).<sup>154</sup>

The new assertive policy towards the region was a main character of Primakov’s creativity. While Russian scholar, Sergunin (Personal Interview, 12 October 2018) explains the change as a natural result of prioritisation of national interests in the given

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<sup>152</sup> Politically the national interests lie, according to the document “in ensuring civil peace, national accord, territorial integrity, unity of the legal area, stability of state power and its institutions, and law and order and in completing the process of establishing a democratic society, and also in neutralising the factors and conditions promoting the emergence of social and inter-ethnic conflicts and national and regional separatism”.

<sup>153</sup> “A most important condition for implementing national interests”, the document emphasised on economic transition that should be accompanied “with a certain level of state regulation of economic processes”. Emphasising the role of state in socioeconomic transition, the document remarked the most urgent task that includes “to ensure its expansion, protection of the interests of domestic producers, the enhancement of innovation and investment activity, constant controls over the country’s strategic resources, and the maintenance of a scientific potential capable of asserting Russia’s independence in strategically important spheres of scientific and technical progress.” Internationally also the promotion and enhancement of Russia’s economy is the main urgent task of Russian state (The President of Russia, 1997, December 17).

<sup>154</sup> Gaining those priorities and interests is “largely” depends on “the nature of relations with the leading powers”, developing partnership with them based on equality that accords with the state “status and interest”. Russian diplomacy, according to the document “intended to strengthen global and regional security and create favourable conditions for our country’s [Russia] participation in world trade and in cooperation in the scientific-technical and credit and financial spheres”.

time, remarking that “became as Russia’s foreign minister, Primakov attempted to clearly define Russian national interests, its foreign priorities and objectives that was assertive over one area, in Russian neighbour region”. However, a Western scholar observed that such a policy was the result of a change to Soviet traditional thinking about the region after initial years.

“...there was nothing surprising as time passed Russia started to assert its interests in those countries more forcefully some of which simply did not accept that. When Primakov became foreign minister, already sense of there was a shift on Russian foreign policy underway and some sort of reassertion of some very traditional Russian geopolitical thinking around Soviet approach to things” (Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019).

To sum up the period from mid-1990s to 2000, derived from the analysis, the concern over status, particularly the perception of status inconsistency influenced the state’s grand strategic orientation too. Russian grand strategy was highly oriented to achieve higher status and correct the perceived inconsistency. Depicting the state as a key player in the world, Eurasian statisticians devised a grand strategy that differed from the previous one. They pushed for a more pragmatic and assertive policy towards the West in search for having an “equal partnership”. Russia was keen to constrain the West and the US unilaterality by adhere to international norms and work alongside the UN and UNSC while having strategic partnerships with India and China. Creating the privileged integration with the states located in Eurasian region, instead of previous liberals’ isolationist policy, was an additional component of Russian grand strategy from the mid-1990s.

Eurasian statisticians’ social creativity has demonstrated a meaningful shift from Westernists’ ideal strategy. Once the perception of Russia’s status changed, the strategy also changed. Russia’s grand strategy was status oriented with a more pragmatic and assertive approach than previous era, but there was not enough realistic balancing. It was ideational response to received status inferiority rather balancing in realist term since Russian elites were well aware of the lack of power capabilities, especially when Russia’s

domestic economic situation continued to decline following the “shock therapy” in initial years.

Therefore, the change was inevitable due to the state’s international standing reflected in domination of Eurasian statism rather power capability. As a Western commentator highlighted “in describing Primakov’s vision for Russia’s foreign policy, it is important to establish what it is not”. While he is not turning Russia into Western civilisation, and “Primakov is not a field commander in some Clash of Civilisations” instead he trapped in “traditional” values “only as a means to a secular end: the expansion of Russian power and influence”(Rosenberger, 1997, January 26, p. 7).

#### **4.4 Social Creativity in Practice**

Oftentimes, social creativity depends on the acceptance or recognition of the aspired status by others. The cases below will show whether the Eurasian Statist’ Social creativity was a success.

##### **4.4.1 Social Creativity and the West**

Aiming to gain the state’s traditional standing, the greatpowerness Primakov his supporters pursued a dual track strategy versus the West. Through the first dimension, Moscow, as an upholder of international law and order attempted to counterbalance the West’s unilateral policies, through resist versus the NATO enlargement, and acted as a mediator in the main international crisis such as Kosovo and Iraq. Primakov attempted to resist the US’ unilateralism by establishing a “strategic partnership” with powers outside the West in particular China and India. The multipolarity was a defensive policy inherently, implying it should be pursued by establishing close relationships with the other powers through diplomacy and not necessarily conflict with the West and

particularly the US. Indeed, such a policy spurred on a multipolar system of world politics based on equality between the main great powers.

#### **4.4.1.1 Russia and NATO**

The rise of Eurasian statism and the strategy of social creativity caused re-consideration of Russia's security interests whether in European security environment as a whole or in relation with NATO in particular, in the context of the state's traditional standing. In the new thinking, Russia should have equal participation in any security formulation in European security system. As Primakov emphasised on "special responsibility of stabilising" by two great powers -the US and Russia- in conversation with the US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher (US Department of State Dispatch, 1996, February 12). So, the creativity strategy was aimed at re-establishing the sources for the state's standing as a "co-sponsor" of the world stability and security, set to constraining the US outwitting role and interests at the expense of international order (Primakov, 1997, September 27).

Regarding the psychological threats that perceived over the state's international standing in previous years, one could understand why the state's behaviours changed toward the NATO, from previous cooperative orientation to a more competitive, from the mid-1990s. Through dichotomization of self and others, and in a nineteenth- century style framing of world politics, Russian elites had interpreted any behaviours of the Western counterparts -as the main other- directed against Russia's self-esteem. As social psychology hypothesized any threat to one's own identity and self-esteem would result to an "acute emotional reaction" (Spinner Halev & Theiss Morse, 2003). Therefore, the change in Russian behaviours may be explained as an emotionally response to the threat

perceived over Russian own standing and identity, from the West and NATO's behaviours in the enlargement plan and certainly in Serbia.<sup>155</sup>

Accordingly, NATO enlargement was perceived as the other competitive manner and hence the West as the competitor should be balanced. Yeltsin obviously reflected such the perceived psychological insecurity, when he hinted to "the possibility of promotion military structure of NATO to the Russian borders" as disturbing "problem" that increased potential "unfavourable" change of Russian geopolitics (Yeltsin, 1996, February 23). Reiterating the sense, the Blueprint remarked, "NATO's expansion to the East and its transformation into a dominant military-political force in Europe create the threat of a new split in the continent which would be extremely dangerous", given the "inadequate effectiveness of multilateral mechanisms for maintaining peace" (The President of Russia, 1997, December 17). A NATO's representative in Moscow at the give time, Lough (Personal Interview, 1 March 2019) clearly illustrate such gap in perception, arguing that;

"We had this sort of cultural problem, [that] there were people in Russian security services and defence ministry who had entirely different view from security policy makers in West; about how security can be build, how the West behaves how it conduct its foreign policy, defence policy. The calculation they made, that is a problem when onside does not instinctively understand the reflexes of the other. So, I think that was the huge contributory problem".

In response, from mid-1990s, gradually the Kremlin's policy towards NATO changed. Russia's membership in NATO was no longer the main concern, in contrast to previous era. Russian leaders convinced that even if Moscow was interested to join, the West and the alliances were reluctant to accept that request (RFE/RL, 1996, November 6, 1996, November 21, 1997, May 26b). Refusing the possibility of Russia's membership, Primakov asked, "Who wants that?", as the alliance "isn't really interested" about

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<sup>155</sup> For further discussion on theory see chapter 2 and for NATO and Serbia cases chapter 3.



Moscow's association, and consequently Russia does not want it either (RFE/RL, 1996, November 6). The public opinion surveys conveyed by Levada Centre, in 1997 and 1999, shows the variation in the state security interests, as only a minority of Russians supposed "Russia's accession to NATO" would be "in the interests of Russia", by 10% (Table 4.1). Therefore, as Yurii Baturin, the Secretary of Defence Council claimed, the membership was "unwanted" and "impractical" when there is not sign of invitation to do so (RFE/RL, 1996, November 14).

**Table 4-1: Russian Attitudes towards NATO Membership**

Which of the following is in the interests of Russia, in your opinion?	1997	1999
Russia's accession to NATO	10%	10%
Development of cooperation with NATO	23%	23%
Establishment of a defence pact to counter NATO	13%	19%
Russia's non-participation in any military blocs	25%	25%
Don't know	29%	24%

Source: Russian Public Opinion Survey-2003, (Levada Analytical Centre, 2004, p. 50)

The Kremlin's foreign policy "task" also moved towards taking steps against, "accelerated expansion NATO", along with emphasis on "the development of partnership with the active participation of Russia" (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16). The CEE states and NATO accelerated negotiations for membership under PfP program.<sup>156</sup> In Brussels summit, NATO's members offered recommendations to CEE applicant states in continuity of "the process of opening up NATO to new members". The alliance members also agreed that "the Madrid Summit" in next years NATO will decide inviting the applicant states to open "accession negotiations" (NATO, 1996, December 10)

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<sup>156</sup> In September 1995, NATO members adopted "a Study on enlargement" the emphasised the alliance's approach to invite new members to enter the organization and offered a range of factors for further enlargement.

Initially, Russia took opposition against the organization and its enlargement but most rhetorically and officially. Regarding the “unproductive” behaviour of NATO against “Russia’s interests”; and especially “the motivation behind the plan” implying the West “desire to strategic isolation of Moscow by forcing it out of Europe”, Yeltsin frequently warned the West to take “firmly resist against these plans” that may lead to revise “the whole complex of relations with NATO” (Yeltsin, 1994, February 24, 1995, February 16, 1997, March 3, 1998, February 17).<sup>157</sup> Even in summer 1995, Yeltsin made an alarming statement, that the enlargement plan would “light the fires of war all over Europe” (REF/RL, 1995, September 11).<sup>158</sup> Similarly, Primakov exposed threats to revise Russia’s “relations with NATO entirely”, to adopt “the effective and sufficient military measures”; even withdraw from “a whole series of arms control agreements”; “an essential reconsidering of entirely defensive terms” and “to revise the development of Russia’s armed forces” and taking “retaliatory measures” (Primakov, 1993; Primakov, 1997a). The harsh rhetoric stance was shared by the Russian Duma and parliamentarians too (REF/RL, 1997, April 25).<sup>159</sup>

As the enlargement was deemed to be inevitable, with less choices and limited potential to deter the plan, Moscow changed her rhetoric resistance to practical adaption by creating a distinct “deeper and more substantive” relation with NATO, beyond the

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<sup>157</sup> In his annual messages, Yeltsin referred to the potential “geopolitical struggle for spheres of influence” that had been going “to replace” the previous “ideological confrontations” raised by the Western post-cold war “NATO centrism” security system and manifested in the alliance “inadmissible expansion” (Yeltsin, 1994, February 24, 1995, February 16, 1997, March 3, 1998, February 17).

<sup>158</sup> In a meeting with Javier Solana in March 1996, the president criticized FM Primakov for “too mildly” objections against the NATO expansion and pledging “to more harshly formulate our [Russian] position” (REF/RL, 1996, March 22). On 26 May 1997 a in departing day for participation in the Paris summit to sign the Russia-NATO funding act, the president warned NATO members about the organization Eastward expansion arguing that “NATO would fully undermine” its relations with Moscow in the case of the enlargement (REF/RL, 1997, May 26a).

<sup>159</sup> Addressing the expansion as “the greatest” unprecedented “military threat” to Russia “over the last 50 years”, in a resolution supported by overwhelming members of, 253 to 14, Duma warned the NATO’s members against “slipping toward a new confrontation” (REF/RL, 1997, April 25). Some politicians like Oleg Grinevskii, Russia’s ambassador to Sweden, talked about the danger of nuclear war as an outcome of the alliance policy and warned, “That Russian nuclear forces could destroy Europe and the U.S”. Similarly, Ivan Rybkin, Security Council Secretary and his deputy, Boris Berezovskii repeated such the possibility if Moscow’s consideration about the enlargement plan was “driven into a corner” by the organization. The term that then reflected by Primakov too (REF/RL, 1997, May 26b).

organisational ties with other states (Baranovsky, 2001).<sup>160</sup> Simply put, the Russians pursued NATO to assign them a special place in the NATO decision-making process. The first sign was observed in May 1997, when the aim of achieving this played a main role during negotiations for Russia-NATO “Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security”. The Act founded “the Permanent Joint Council (PJC)” through which Moscow seized opportunity to conduct “consultations, coordination”, and for “joint decisions and joint action” (NATO, 1997, May 27).

For the Kremlin, the Act and the Council were steps to cement its relations with the Western main security body, and “the transformation of the North Atlantic alliance” and more importantly, change NATO centrism and the European security system (Yeltsin, 1998, February 17). Indeed, the leaders, Yeltsin-Primakov presented the Act as the prosperity of Russian diplomacy, “a big”, and “historic victory” that “will serve Russia’s interests”, since Moscow would be able to “settle security issues in Europe on an equal basis” through established the new joint Russia-NATO council (RFE/RL, 1997 May 27, 1997, May 15 1997, May 30).<sup>161</sup> The Funding Act welcomed by the leaders, since, according to Russian scholar, for “the first time Russia’s diplomacy confirmed its status as the great power, because there was dealt with NATO, one more or less equal platform” (Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).

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<sup>160</sup> In the condition that Russian Federation has lost “half the population together with maximum level of the GDP of the former Soviet Union”, Sergei Rogov, Russian scholar argued “diplomacy” was the only “possible art” instead of policies based on “emotions” that was “unlikely” to block the NATO’ further and merely led to more “isolation”. Diplomacy and involvement in the organization policymaking process would provide an opportunity for Russia to gain its own “national interests” and permit the state to engage in transforming the European security system in the upcoming century (RFE/RL, 1997, May 27). Referring to the economically, militarily weakness of Russia at the time, a foreign policy scholar highlighted that “no one can ignore the power of these elements in Moscow’s orientation and its behaviour regarding the West and particularly NATO” (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

<sup>161</sup> In his meeting with Javier Solana, after reaching agreement on the Founding Act Primakov pointed the act as a big victory of diplomacy achieved by cooperation between Russia and NATO (RFE/RL, 1997, May 15). Similarly, On 27 May in Paris, after signing the Act, Yeltsin hailed the act as a historic victory that will “promote stability throughout Europe” (RFE/RL, 1997 May 27). Later on 30 May, in his speech on national radio, Yeltsin justified that by preventing the alliance from deployment of the “nuclear weapons” in upcoming members and increasing military infrastructure in Russia’s border, the act will serve Russia’s security interests (RFE/RL, 1997, May 30)

Nevertheless, in Russian domestic political sphere, the Founding Act was just papered over the cracks and hence unable to remedy the sense of “defeated power”. As Aleksandr Lebed, former Security Council Secretary, claimed at the end Moscow was “the losing side, signing an act on its own capitulation”. Instead of a “legally binding”, accordingly, the document was merely “high-level political assurance”, by which the West and particularly NATO achieved the “moral right to expansion in order to conceal its aggressive intentions”. The Act, as Lebed concluded, did not “in any way protect our country against possible actions of NATO” instead it avoids any permission of Moscow to influence in security and military affairs European continent. It was hence the failure of Yeltsin, since instead of “Russia’s national interest”, the president put his own in “ahead” (RFE/RL, 1997 May 27). Even more pessimistically, Gennady Zyuganov, the leader of Communist party, called the Act as a new Yalta, condemned it as “an act of unconditional surrender” to the Western powers and NATO and “betrayal” of Russia’s national interests (RFE/RL, 1997, May 29). Neither “binding” document, nor preventing the alliances from further enlargement as Russian desired, the founding Act was perceived as sign of Moscow’s “consent” to the West, and NATO expansion, what Duma alarmed earlier (RFE/RL, 1997, May 26a).

Analysing the document would give a clearer picture. While the Act emphasizes on the “equal partnership” but at the same time, it defined the equality by strong stress on mutually “respect for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all states and their inherent right to choose the means to ensure their own security, the inviolability of ...right of self-determination”. Additionally, it provided Russia a mechanism to “joint decisions and joint action” with NATO, through the PJC, yet was limited only to “the extent possible”, “where appropriate”, and “with respect to security issues of common concern”. This means that such cooperation would not “extend” to all issues, including “to internal matters of either NATO, member States”. The Act also clearly denies to

provide “a right of veto” for both NATO and Russia “in any way”, “over the actions of the other”, nor it permit to “infringe upon or restrict the rights of NATO or Russia to independent decision-making and action” (NATO, 1997, May 27).

All shows that the West and NATO neither recognized Russia’s special status over other states including those newly independent states. More broadly, by accepting the terms of “self-determination” and confirming their rights in “internal matters”, Russia deemed corollary accepted to have similar rights with other members. Indeed, NATO gave Russia equality, but similar or equal to all other states, not more. This was in clear contrast to what Russian leaders sought from the term of equality. Verifying the fact, Sherr (Personal Interview, 19 March 2019) argued that “NATO Russia Founding Act” clearly illustrates “what the West meant by the principle of equality” that meant, “each side has no right of the veto on the actions of the other and respects the independency of the other to make their choices”. Equality in this meaning was completely different from what Russia meant by the principle;

“From the beginning, Russian view of equality has emphasized something which is almost opposite to that which is our right to be able to influence your decisions. We should be on the top table not only Russian security structures but Europe’s security structures too. We should not be excluded from any agenda related to security. The fact that NATO was not offering Russia this role was sufficient proof to Russia that NATO was not interested in change. Because real change what of meant giving Russia real decision-making authority” (Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).

Whatever, the Act was discredited very soon in July 1997 when NATO invited Visegrad states “to begin accession talks with NATO” (NATO, 1997, July 8). NATO enlarged on 12 March 1999, and “the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland” joined the organization, few days later, the states officially associated with the alliance (NATO, 1999, March 16). Neither special partnership with the organization, with the veto right, nor avoiding the enlargement plan, Kremlin seems went too far in acquiescing to the West, even by such a practical change in his official policy. Those unpleasant emotional

calculations were escalated mainly after military interference of NATO in Kosovo, which showed the limitations of Russia's influence and inefficacy of mutual mechanisms promised in the Act, the PJC. A foreign policy scholar concluded;

“I think there was a gradual disillusionment with the initial foreign policy ambitions, which was unrealistic that Russia was not suddenly going into this new world order as a country as powerful as the Soviet Union and with a veto power over European security arrangement and such like” (Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019).

#### **4.4.1.2 Russia and Kosovo Crisis**

The Kosovo crisis was one of the main issues of the time where Eurasian statists' demanded the state's position and its equality, similar to other great powers, merited to be engaged in global policymaking process, by playing as a mediator. When Primakov came to power, the Dayton Accords had already been signed. Despite the Kremlin's harsh rhetoric against the NATO military intervention in Serbia, Moscow had signed the Accords in November 1995 (United States Central Intelligence Agency, 1995, November 24). The domestic oppositions, mostly from hardliners criticized the Kremlin for belittling Russia's status and insisted that instead of cooperation with the West, Russia should follow the policy of realignment with Serbia. Coming to power in 1996, Primakov attempted to re-evaluate the role of Russia in the crisis, regarding the domestic criticism but not as far as Russia's hardliner groups desired.

At the time, the Kremlin adopted social creativity that implied as an influential pole, Russia would not let this dilemma be unchallenged.<sup>162</sup> Considering the active policies, Primakov advocated pragmatism instead of both Kozyrev's close commitment and the hardliners preferred confrontation with the West. Therefore, he vigorously acted with the Western counterparts including the US, Britain, Germany and France within the Contact

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<sup>162</sup> Such a policy and role was later reemphasized by the then FM Igor Ivanov, as he remarked as a great power Russia should participate on all major political activities in the world politics including Kosovo (RFE/RL, 1998, March 26).

Group – founded in 1994. Accordingly, Primakov avoided interfering with the UN authorized West's actions in Serbia despite his occasional objections to certain actions of NATO in the region. Therefore, as the mediator who would negotiate with the West and former Yugoslavian leaders, Primakov attempted to circumvent the humiliation of Russia as a major power in the crisis.

While the initial talks in 1998 led to ceasefire from Serbian forces in the territory of Kosovo, further future attempts have failed to achieve similar results. The first attempt to solve the crisis in former Yugoslavia began in early 1998, in response to Serbian police series' violence against the Kosovar Albanians in February and March involving the death of around 60 Kosovar amongst them children and women, particularly in the *Drenica Valley* (RFE/RL, 1998, March 5). As well as condemning the offences of Serbian forces, the Contact Group appealed to the Milosevic regime to cease all military action against the Kosovar Albanian civilians, withdrawing Serbian Special Forces from the region, starting a comprehensive practical negotiation with the Kosovar Albanians.

While agreeing to the demands, the Kremlin had some reservations too. Moscow supported blocking any military deliveries, and the sale of some specific military and security equipment used by Serbs. It however declined the West's demands asking Russia to stop economic investments in the Yugoslavia, demanded by Serbian government, and providing visa for Yugoslavian leaders (RFE/RL, 1998, March 20, 1998, March 20 1998, March 26). Despite all the reservations, Russia along with other permanent members compromised on the UNSC *Resolution 1160*, implying additional sanctions demanded by the US-Britain (UNSC, 1998, March 31).

The West attempted to adopt additional counter measures. To demonstrate NATO's military capabilities and as a message to Serbian side that the alliance was keeping "all options open", NATO defence ministers agreed to undertake an air exercise, then called

“Operation Determined Falcon”, in Albania and Macedonia in mid-Jun 1998 (Solana, 1998, June 13; REF/RL, 1998, June 15). However, it was perceived as another shock in the West’s relations with Russia as Moscow was neither informed nor consulted before the operation. Hence, criticising the operation as an encroachment of the Founding Act, the political elites in Moscow were disappointed. As well as rhetorical objections in response to the West’s action, playing the role of mediator, the Kremlin invited Serbian leaders to visit Moscow on mid-June (15-16) to discuss about Kosovo (REF/RL, 1998, June 12).

Apart from some symbolic rhetoric, in his joint statement with Yeltsin, Milosevic stressed that “security forces will cut back their presence outside bases [in Kosovo]”, and declared his readiness to approve “the return of refugees and freedom of movement for diplomats and humanitarian organisations” and emphasised his willingness to “negotiate with Kosovar leaders” (REF/RL, 1998, June 17b). Kremlin honoured the result as a Russian diplomatic victory over the West’s method of using military power (REF/RL, 1998, June 17b). Calling the deceleration as the best possible agreement in the current situation, and rejecting the West’ assessment, Primakov said the document was a proof to justify Russia’s critical role in solving a main issue in the World politics, the Kosovo crisis in particular (REF/RL, 1998, June 18 1998, June 22).<sup>163</sup> The Western counterparts however doubted the agreement. Besides there was “some progress”, according to Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, the Moscow’s joint statement could not

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<sup>163</sup> Similarly, by criticising the “obviously biased policy of several Western countries” who used “the language of sanctions and threats of using force against Belgrade” that was “in effect to encourage separatism”, Duma praised Kremlin’s diplomatic efforts and expressed its “full support” of such efforts (RFE/RL, 1998, June 18).



“meet the primary points that the Contact Group has repeatedly raised” (REF/RL, 1998, June 17 -a).<sup>164</sup>

Nevertheless, neither NATO’s Operation, nor Yeltsin-Milosevic agreement were successful, as Russian and the Western leaders had expected. The Serbian offensive actions continued, during which many Kosovar Albanians were compelled to either be displaced or expatriated, and the UNSC permanent members agreed to pass *Resolution 1199* on 23 September 1998. “Should the concrete measures demanded in this resolution and previous Resolution 1160” “not be taken”, it warned that there may be “further action and additional measures to maintain or restore peace and stability in the region” (UNSC, 1998, September 23).<sup>165</sup> Indeed, the resolution was no more than a political rhetoric due to Moscow’s opposition “no measures of force” were being recommended (REF/RL, 1998, September 24).<sup>166</sup>

While the situation in Kosovo escalated, the diplomatic attempts were continued during fall 1998.<sup>167</sup> In October, Richard Holbrooke, the US envoy started new round of negotiation with Milosevic.<sup>168</sup> Kremlin backed the negotiation and sent top official negotiators to Belgrade to force Serbian leaders to accept the agreement (RFE/RL, 1998,

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<sup>164</sup> The Kosovar was also “unimpressed with the Moscow declaration”, and asserted that the Serbian president was only “trying to buy time” by those agreements in Moscow (RFE/RL, 1998, June 18).

<sup>165</sup> The resolution demanded a cease-fire and ending the use of force against civilians, withdrawing military and security forces, and using diplomatic method by initiating political negotiations with the Kosovar Albanians under the supervision of international community.

<sup>166</sup> Before his speech at the UN General Assembly on 23 September, Igor Ivanov, Russia’s then Foreign Minister in a press conference stated that Russia would support the resolution while it will continue to its opposition against any kind of military force in the Kosovo crisis by the West and NATO. Reiterated also by Sergay Lavrov, then Russian ambassador to the UN (RFE/RL, 1998, September 24).

<sup>167</sup> In late September, Serbian forces murdered several Kosovar civilians in “Obrinje” and “Golubovac” (RFE/RL, 1998, October 1b).

<sup>168</sup> While the West was determined to take military action, according to Robin Cook, the former British Foreign Minister, as “the only language President Milosevic will listen to”, had Milosevic deny the West’s demand (RFE/RL, 1998, October 1a)

October 6).<sup>169</sup> Finalizing the agreement in mid-October, the UNSC approved through *Resolution 1203* and asked Serbs and Kosovar Albanian to act in accordance with the settlement and launched “Verification Mission in Kosovo” by “the OSCE” (UNSC, 1998, October 24). As a sign of success of Russia’s active diplomacy and its role of mediator, the resolution was welcomed in Moscow, since it avoided the NATO’s military attack.<sup>170</sup> Honouring Moscow’s stance in Kosovo crisis, on Russian TV, Primakov stated that the role played by Moscow “annoys [Western powers] most of all”, going further he added, “Let them get irritated. Russia is a great power” (RFE/RL, 1998, October 26).

Even though there was some hope following the agreement, the tensions however, have remained. In the mid-January 1999, Serbian forces in *Racak* killed several ethnic Kosovar Albanian civilians (RFE/RL, 1998, January 18).<sup>171</sup> To take decisive steps, the *Rambouillet* negotiation was suggested by the Contact Group in 21 January 1999, amongst the representations of different sides of the crisis under supervision of the Group (RFE/RL, 1999, January 22). However, hopes to reach diplomatic solutions for the crisis failed soon. The first round was over with no comprehensive agreement in February 1999. While both sides accepted the “basic principles”, the Kosovar Liberation Army (UCK) rejected to “place its arms under NATO control” and requested the similar “legal status as Serbian army” (RFE/RL, 1999, February 8).

The second round of the negotiations began in the mid-March, and under the pressure of the Western powers, the Kosovar Albanian representations signed agreement, but the

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<sup>169</sup> On 4 October Igor Ivanov, the Foreign Minister, and Igor Sergeev, Russian Defence Minister transferred Yeltsin’s message to Milosevic and forced him to accept immediately the measures for ending the crisis and avoid any risk of military strike from Western sides.

<sup>170</sup> The clauses stressed that NATO could take the “appropriate steps”, in the case of Milosevic; disobedience over implementing the UNSC resolutions, embodied in the initial draft was deleted in response to Moscow and Beijing’s objections.

<sup>171</sup> Meanwhile, The Head of the OSCE Mission called it “an unspeakable atrocity” and “organised crime against humanity”.

Serbian leaders rejected it since for Milosevic the question of “foreign troops” was the main reason for avoiding any agreement. While some in the West criticized Russia for its reluctance to bring adequate pressure on Serbian Side to accept agreement. Kremlin vis versa blamed the Western counterparts to “impose on Belgrade an additional document,” that “overdramatized the situation over the past few days” (RFE/RL, 1999, February 18).<sup>172</sup>

The deadlock of the talks deemed the end of diplomacy too, as the West learnt that it had no choice except using military force (RFL/RL, 1999, February 16).<sup>173</sup> Russia still strongly opposed any military intervention by NATO and West to solve Kosovo crisis. As Yeltsin said to Clinton, even in the case that Serbian sides failed to reach a political agreement with the Kosovars, Moscow never allowed the West “to touch Kosovo”, and NATO’s air strike against Serbian position “won’t happen” (RFE/RL, 1999, February 18).<sup>174</sup> Despite, neither consultation with Russia, nor consent of UNSC, NATO attacked the FRY on 24 March 1999.

The military attack by the alliances was a major shock in Russia and the West relationship. It was perceived refusing Russians’ aspired status and also challenged Primakov’ doctrine of multipolar world in which Russia as an influential pole was to be upholder of international law, principles and norms. The fact was observable considering

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<sup>172</sup> Advocating Yugoslavian territorial integrity and sovereignty, then foreign minister Igor Ivanov noted as the sovereign state, Yugoslavia “should determine the degree of the presence of international forces, civilian or military.” Accordingly, the Foreign Minister was convinced that “the US is trying to impose complicity in blood-letting on its European partners”. Therefore opposing to deploy any foreign troops especially out of the UNSC consent would, he claimed, “nullify all achievements and throw relations between Russia and NATO backward” (REF/RL, 1999, February 22 1999, February 23).

<sup>173</sup> During her visit to Rambouillet at the outset of the second round on 15 February, the US foreign secretary Albright outlined the “possible outcomes” of the negotiation. The first scenario was signing the agreement by both sides, then “to enforce the pact”, NATO’s Troops would be deployed in Kosovo. Refusing to sign “a comprehensive agreement” by Albanian Kosovars, as the second case would lead “to cease all diplomatic support for them seal their borders with Albania and Macedonia”, by the Western powers certainly the US. The final case is “one in which the ethnic Albanians agree to a settlement but the Serbs do not” would lead to “airstrikes against the Serbs and increased US diplomatic backing for the Kosovars” (RFE/RL, 1999, February 16).

<sup>174</sup> Similarly, Igor Sergeev, the then Defence Minister warned the alliance military action in the region would lead to “another Vietnam” in the heart of European continent (RFE/RL, 1999, February 24) .

Russian leaderships' "condemnations and retaliatory rhetoric", from the outset of NATO attack. The leaders intensified rhetoric over "condemn" of an "unacceptable aggression" of laws and the principles accepted internationally by all states, the preservation of sovereignty, and the UN's jurisdiction.<sup>175</sup> The leaders even threatened the West to use practical countermeasures including the military capabilities by independent Russia (RFE/RL, 1999, March 25; Washington Post, 1999, March 25).<sup>176</sup>

In a more symbolic reaction, in a "famous episode", then PM Primakov who was flying to the US ordered his airplane turn back to Moscow, when he already been approaching the US.<sup>177</sup> Primakov warned the West for "not considering all the consequences" that the actions would further destabilize Kosovo situation, but it will also "affect relations between Russian and the US and damage stability in Europe" (RFE/RL, 1999 March 24).<sup>178</sup>

The Kremlin, as well, as well took some diplomatic measures, continued playing as a mediator through the UNSC. Co-sponsored by India and Belarus,<sup>179</sup> two days after NATO's operation, Moscow brought a draft resolution to UNSC, asking for stop the operation and resumption of diplomatic talks between involved parties. It led to diplomatic failure due to overwhelming opposition from majority of UNSC members.

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<sup>175</sup> The FM Ivanov called it "a crude violation of the UN Charter" and "an act of open aggression against a sovereign member state of the UN" (RFE/RL, 1999, March 25).

<sup>176</sup> Condemning NATO's attack Yeltsin warned the West "in the event that the military conflict worsens Russia retains the right to take adequate measures, including military ones, to defend itself and the overall security of Europe". Publicizing quota from Igor Sergeev, Defence Minister, Russian Public TV reported, he went further and talked about the possibility of deploying "tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus" (RFE/RL, 1999, March 25).

<sup>177</sup> The importance of the reaction would be more obvious as the PM was to negotiate with the IMF to get a financial assistance, since Russia's economic situation was worse and Kremlin was still trying to improve the economy and rescuing Ruble from the crash in the given time (Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).

<sup>178</sup> Ordering NATO's representatives to leave Moscow, and withdrawal the military representatives of Russia from Brussels, and "the closure of Moscow's offices at NATO headquarters" ending cooperation in the form of PfP program and deploying a surveillance ship to the Ionian Sea, were some other official reactions of Kremlin to NATO airstrike (RFE/RL, 1999, March 25).

<sup>179</sup> India and Belarus were two non-permanent members of the UNSC at the given time

This failure was critical since as well as the Western powers, the nonaligned members have also opposed the resolution (UNSC, 1999, March 26).<sup>180</sup> In the latest attempt, Primakov listed tough conditions on preserving the Yugoslavian sovereignty, Kosovo's autonomy and stressing on the UN's role in post conflict settlement. It was similarly "unacceptable" for Western powers, as Clinton said, and regardless of Russian interests the peace was reached more on the West terms (RFE/RL, 1999, March 31). Therefore, neither rhetoric, political symbolic actions nor diplomatic action could help Kremlin to force the West to recognize her position in the crisis.

Primakov's foreign policy hit a major shock as Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Kremlin's special envoy replaced him, by the executive presidential order of Boris Yeltsin in April 1997. Chernomyrdin has tried to follow Primakov's diplomacy in conflict resolution, but the result was not what Kremlin expected. It seems that the West did not honour Russia's conditions and Chernomyrdin gave in to nearly all the critical issues. At the end of Kosovo crisis "Russia took part in Yugoslavia's acceptance of the same NATO conditions that it had previously called unacceptable" (Pushkov, 1999, June 11). Therefore, despite all efforts by Russian leaders, the West did not recognize Russia's aspired position and its role in the crisis. In other words, the military operation by NATO delegitimized Eurasian Statists' social creativity, and once again have increased the perception of status inferiority.

At the same time, it consolidated Eurasian statist's presented image of the West as revisionist competitor who wants to impose the unipolarity. Portraying the US as the greatest threat to the world's stability and peace, FM Ivanov emphasised that the main objective of the West and NATO's actions were "to impose a unipolar order on the world

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<sup>180</sup> The oppositions by the nonaligned states including Malaysia, Gambia, Gabon, Bahrain, Brazil and Argentina to Russia's draft indirectly perceived as a legitimization of the military actions of the alliance in the region (Roberts, 1999).

in which peoples' fates should be decided in Washington", through enforcing its military, economic and political order.<sup>181</sup> Similarly, Yeltsin called the military attack as "a gross error by the Americans, American diplomacy, and Clinton" and "NATO's attempt to enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century as global policeman" that "Russia will never agree to it".<sup>182</sup> Vladimir Lukin, Chairman of Duma foreign relations Committee, argued the "US has clearly shown that it does not care one whit about relations with Russia" (RFE/RL, 1999, March 26).

The conflict indeed widened Russian-Western perceptions gap on "the evolution of international relations". While the West emphasised the "humanitarian intervention", Russians were "aliened to these terms" what Max Jakobson, Finland ex-representative to the UN remarked. The "the primacy of human rights" in the West' behaviours and actions "is a function of the profound integration that has taken place between open societies. Russia has not yet been transformed by that process". Instead via old century viewing, Russian elites dismissed the term "as a disguise for America's geopolitical ambitions" (Jakobsonnov, 1999, November 12). As such, Russians were convinced that, the humanitarian intervention could be used against all states, which were not under the control of the West soon or later, and that Russia was no exception.

At an "absolutely critical" moment, those perceptions "moved into the majority position" in the Russian political sphere of the "Kosovo crisis". Verified by IR Scholar;

"...Whether what NATO did was right or not, whether it was essential or not, whether or not [the West] had a real choice about it ... and whatever happen somewhere else... Those people in Russia who said from the beginning as long as NATO survived it continue to be an aggressive anti-Russia ... started to think that we are next by NATO, and they saw Russia itself as very vulnerable. ...They saw the Yugoslavia as a small scale of the Soviet Union, when they look to this state which was used by the West as

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<sup>182</sup> In similar argument, in his speech at extraordinary summit of UNSC, Sergey Lavrov then Russian representative, blame the West and NATO who seek to play a role of "global policeman" (BBC, 1999, March 25).

a laboratory; the way it had experimented with what later they would like to do in Russia” (Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).

Highlighting the old century thinking in Russian security and military environment then NATO representative in Moscow argued,

“Russians were shocked about what happened [in Kosovo]. People had accused the West of having created the situation.... where Russia’s traditional security interests, its definition of what its needs of its long relations with neighbours was going to clash with the Western postmodern understanding of security” (Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019).

In brief, the military attack of the alliances enforced those traditional views towards the World order, or at least in security dimension within the Russian political landscape, once again. After the expansion, as Russian expert highlighted the “NATO again violated this situation, the balance created by a deal [Founding Act] between NATO and Russia in 1997”, and they “didn’t perceive Russia as the key geopolitical player in Europe in case of former Yugoslavia”. This reinforced a “kind of frustration in Yeltsin’s regime when the West did not recognize Russians’ demonstration that Russia should be taken into account in terms of the Yugoslavian question” (Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018). If the West’ security agenda and particularly NATO expansion from mid-1990s was key in continuing Russians national consensus around the necessity of balancing the US unipolarity, NATO air strike to Kosovo was an absolutely critical factor to consolidate such a status-driven definition of national interests (Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).

#### 4.4.1.3 Russia and Iraq Crisis

Primakov and Eurasian statistes perused the same foreign policy preference that of mediator over Iraq crisis too.<sup>183</sup> Primakov pursued a more active policy, implying that the state could no longer endorse the Western and certainly US military intervention and strict sanctions against Iraq, as Russian liberals did in the first years of 1990s. As well as Russia's psychological demand for status, Kremlin also aimed to gain Russia's rational material objectives in Iraq too. Accordingly, the economic interests also influenced Kremlin opposition against the US' unilateral sanctions policies. At first hand, Iraq regime's sizeable debt to Russia –US\$7 billion - could not be repaid unless the UN's sanctions against Iraq were lifted. In addition, as long as the UN's sanctions were permanent, the Russian energy companies - like *Lukoil*- would not be able to invest in the energy market in Iraq (Ismael & Kreutz, 2001).

Russia's diplomatic efforts to mediate between Iraq regime and the West began in the summer and fall 1996 when the US launched its cruise missile against the Iraq military forces, and in response to the Iraqi forces' invasion into the Kurdish area in the North. Regardless of Russia's opposition, the US and Britain bombed Iraq. Kremlin denounced the action as an "inappropriate and unacceptable reaction" and asked for the immediate cessation of the operation, which was threatening Iraq's "sovereignty and territorial integrity" (RFE/RL, 1996, September 4). Condemning the US action, Yeltsin accused the state of attempting to "replace the Security Council, which under the UN Charter holds the exclusive right to authorize the use of force". Similarly, Primakov alarmed that the West that "missile strike" was a "dangerous precedent" leading to "anarchy in

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<sup>183</sup> As Russian observer remarked that by playing as the mediator in the Iraq crisis and persuading "diplomatic solution emphatically", Kremlin was conveying a role "publicly" when "many others were merely thinking about" (Markov, 1998, February 26). The emphasis on political method in Iraq crisis was therefore an opportunity for the state to find an alternative for its power capability weakness by which the Russian leaders could be able to demonstrate that the state still maintained its greatpowerness and its importance in the world politics and despite its material weaknesses Russia had both willingness and ability to oppose the West and American unilateral policies through the diplomatic method.



international relations” (RFL/RL, 1996, September 5).<sup>184</sup> The event was an initiator of intensification of Russo-Iraqi relations, as hereafter the economic and political cooperation between two states began to expand.

Primakov attempted to mediate in the Iraq crisis especially in two main issues in late 1997 and early 1998. The first diplomatic battle ran in October 1997, when Russia together with France opposed to additional sanctions and military attack against the Iraq. Instead, the pro-Iraq lobby proposed that the regime cooperative behaviour and positive steps in relation to disarmament plan should be stated by UNSC resolution. Neither extra sanctions nor mentioning Iraq’s positive cooperation, the *Resolution 1134* was adopted by the majority of UNSC’ members (UNSC, 1997, October 23).<sup>185</sup> In late October, the Iraqi regime aggravated the situation by expelling the American and Israel inspectors, members of the UNSCOM – UN Special Commission. Supported by Great Britain, the US began intensive preparations for a military strike against Iraq (Primakov, 2008, p. 166).

While Moscow still “strongly objects” to use any military force but, as Primakov said, the Iraqi regime puts Russia “in a very difficult position”. Considering the political pressures, Moscow along with Paris began to negotiate a deal by which Iraq allow the inspectors to return for “lifting of the oil embargo and full reintegration of Iraq into the international community” (REF/RL, October 1997 October 31). Given such aims, Primakov met Albright and the representatives of other permanent members of UNSC in Geneva and perused them to adopt the agreement proposed by the Kremlin on 20

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<sup>184</sup> Russian hardliners also supported Kremlin’s positions, as Gennadii Zyuganov, the Communist leader, defended Primakov’s condemnation, and criticized the US for its attempt to being “the world’s policeman” (RFL/RL, 1996, September 5).

<sup>185</sup> Considering the Resolution as “unbalanced and not objective” Russia with China, France, along with two non-permanent fellows of UNSC abstained.

November 1997 (RFE/RL, 1997, November 20).<sup>186</sup> Averting the US strike to Iraq, the agreement gave Kremlin the opportunity to show that in a multipolar world, no issues could be solved without Russia as a great power (RFE/RL, 1997, November 21).<sup>187</sup>

While the agreement temporarily averted the outbreak of a new round of violence, it did not solve the underlying conflict. Since, the UN sanctions were never lifted and the accession of the UNSCOM's inspectors to "presidential palaces" which were suspected for bacteriological and chemical activities related to mass destruction weapons, forbidden by Iraqi regime in mid-January 1998 (NYT, 1998, January 17).<sup>188</sup> For some in Russia it was the "denial of a diplomatic breakthrough" that was reached by Kremlin's diplomacy, hence it was a kind of "loss of face" for Kremlin domestically (RFE/RL, 1998, February 4).<sup>189</sup>

The situation was "very grave" and diplomacy deemed "all but exhausted", the attack on Iraq appeared inevitable and imminent by the US and UK (NYT, 1998, February 3; Primakov, 2008). While, Russia was to continue its diplomatic efforts, in contrast to previous crisis in November 1997, its diplomacy seemed more limited and less jointed in this new round of crisis. Kremlin convinced that "the time is right for Annan", the UN Secretary General, to direct the diplomatic initiative (Primakov, 2008, p. 173). The diplomatic initiative to UN Secretary was indeed a positive move for Primakov, since by

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<sup>186</sup> The Iraqi regime allowed all UN's inspectors to back in Baghdad, substitute for ambiguous words to work on picking up the embargos.

<sup>187</sup> As Igor Ivanov called it a "very serious breakthrough" in solving the crisis that was gained through Moscow diplomatic role-playing. It was the "most spectacular triumph" for Kremlin's diplomacy, as Sergei Yastrzhembskii, the presidential Press Spokesman claimed (RFE/RL, 1997, November 21).

<sup>188</sup> The Iraqi officials claimed that the UNSCOM was used as a cover for Israel and the US's surveillances and intelligence penetration and it did not "respect for the sovereignty and security of Iraq" as it was expected and settled before.

<sup>189</sup> The Iraqi's action "degraded the Foreign Ministry and the Russian president", as *Novye Izvestiya* Russian daily newspaper wrote, since the regime was using Russia's card as an "instrument to create chaos in the UN Security Council". Accordingly, any "attempt to save Baghdad threatens to take away the last vestiges of [Russian] self-respect" (RFE/RL, 1998, February 4).

emphasising the role of UN, the issue would be solved by multilateral actions (RFE/RL, 1998, February 16).

Due to Annan's diplomacy and the Kremlin's support, the *Resolution 1154* was unanimously approved. The Memorandum allowed the UNSCOM inspectors to conduct unconstrained work in return for the recognition of Iraqi sovereignty and a comprehensive review of sanctions. Although it never authorised military operations, it included a threatening clause that asserted any deviation by the Iraq regime could have "severest consequences" (UNSC, 1998, March 2). "While applauding Russian diplomacy for defusing tensions over the Persian Gulf", Kremlin officially stated that the Iraqi regime must "now fulfil its obligations or face the most severe consequences" (RFE/RL, 1998, March 4b).

However, this was not sufficient for the Western powers, as according to Clinton "Iraq has abused its final chance". Consequently, the US initiated a "strong sustained series of air strikes" on Iraq on 17 December 1998 (NYT, 1998, December 17).<sup>190</sup> In Moscow however, circumventing the UNSC where Russia had a veto right and neglecting the state mediating role and its diplomatic activities, was considered as an act of humiliation. The attack was perceived not only as "an action that undermines the entire international security system" but, as Yeltsin highlighted, "flagrantly [violating] the UN Charter and generally accepted principles of international law as well as norms and rules", the UK and US apparently neglected Russia's voice as the upholder of international normative system (RFE/RL, 1998, December 17). Supported by Igor Sergeev, then Defence

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<sup>190</sup> Clinton claimed that, the attack was "to protect the national interests of the United States and indeed the interests of people throughout the Middle East and around the world" (NYT, 1998, December 17).

Minister, “by the attack to Iraq”, “two of NATO members simply ignore[d] Russia’s views” (REF/RL, 1998, December 18).

Along with the Kosovo crisis, Iraq showed that despite the Kremlin’s emphasis on multipolarity, “a new page was opened in a world order in which the dominant role of the US is absolute” as Boris Berezovsky, then CIS Executive Secretary remarked. Echoed by Ruslan Aushev, the President of Ingushetia, by the strike, the “United States has once again showed who is the master in the world, while Russia showed its weakness”.<sup>191</sup> Therefore, according to Russian politicians, in the order dominated by the US as the only hegemon, Russia “joined a number of countries that don’t have to be reckoned with” (RFE/RL, 1998, December 18). Aleksandr Shokhin, Duma deputy, went even further arguing that the action in Iraq showed Moscow failed to act a critical role, not only versus the West but it also failed to “influence the Iraqi regime” (RFE/RL, 1998, December 17). As a setback to Russia’s aspiration of global standing, and above all, Primakov’s doctrine of Multipolarity, the strikes at Iraq therefore increased the perception of status inferiority and marked once again the sense of inconsistency.<sup>192</sup>

At the end of the decade, Primakov’s strategy of creativity could not bring Russia its desired greatpowerness entitling equal rights and role on par with the Western counterparts. As well as the failure of Russian Liberals’ strategy of becoming part of the West, events such as “NATO’s expansion, Kosovo crisis and bombing of Yugoslavia, and military operation in Iraq in Yeltsin second term showed that gaining equality in the

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<sup>191</sup> Similarly, Yegor Stroev Federation Council Chairman argued that the attack showed that “today the United States has assumed the role of an international gendarme, and the consequences of this step will be extremely grave” (RFE/RL, 1998, December 17).

<sup>192</sup> As the Russian elite’ rhetoric directly or indirectly showed, similar to the Kosovo crisis, the attack to Iraq also seems intensified the sense of the US as the revisionist competitor. For example, as well as condemning the attack harshly, Gennadii Zyuganov addressed it as “an act of terror” and “an extreme manifestation of international gangsterism”, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy leader Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) Addressed the US as “a bandit state that staged a barbarous act” (REF/RL, 1998, December, 1998, December 17).

new order was not going to turn into the reality” (Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).

#### **4.4.2 Social Creativity Strategy and Strategic Partnership with non-Western Powers**

A key pillar of Russian grand strategy and Primakov’ multipolarity was to establish close cooperation with non-Western powers to constrain the West and the US unilateral actions. Amongst “all directions”, however, “China” and “India” as the two non-Western, major powers were mainly supported by Russia.<sup>193</sup>

The Sino-Russian rapprochement began years before, following the Soviet collapse.<sup>194</sup> Nevertheless, these relations were not the main priority of Russian Westernists since the state’s grand strategic orientation focused mainly on relation with the West under mobility strategy. Bilateral warming relations had been the base of Russia-China rapprochement. China was viewed as important and strategic for Russia due to their common borders and the fact that Beijing was economically strong with a high development rate. As the main buyer of Russian military equipment, China provided nearly all of its military demands from Russia. Internally, both states suffered from similar security issues; the separatists’ movement in Chechnya pressured Russia, similarly how the Uyghurs Muslims in Xinjiang challenged China.

Yet, despite all these significances, from the mid-1990s, the main priority of relationship between two powers changed in political terms. Upset from the unipolar

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<sup>193</sup> The strategic partnership with non-western power particularly China and India was reiterated nearly in all official documents in the given time (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16, 1996, February 23, 1997, March 3, 1998, February 17, 1999, March 30).

<sup>194</sup> In December 1991, the deputy foreign ministers of Russia and China signed a protocol in which Moscow and Beijing were committed to developing “good neighbourly” ties and a “peaceful coexistence”. In the following year, the two states started a series of meetings. On 18 December 1992 in the China summit, to create a “new epoch” the two states issued “declaration on the Foundation of Mutual Relations” (RFE/LR, 1992, December 17; RFE/RL, 1992, December 18, 1992, December 21). In Moscow summit, in 1994, Russian-Chinese presidents, Yeltsin-Zemin signed a new declaration calling Sino-Russian ties a “constructive partnership” (RFE/RL, 1994, September 4).

system of world politics, Russia and China shared the main concerns about the US hegemonic inclinations. The West and the US policies in the NATO enlargement toward CEE, the military intervention in Balkan, its critical stand versus Russia's war in Chechen and China-US incident over Taiwan, intensified concerns about the West and its unilateral policies and strengthened the need for Sino-Russian cooperation to promote multipolarity. Altogether led Russian leaders to find China as a natural ally to balance the West particularly, the US unilaterality (Tremin, 2012).

Russian leaders were well aware that such close cooperation between two powers was rather a part of an active policy to develop a system of resistance, not confrontation against the US hegemonic unipolarity. Later in his interview, Primakov endorsed his policy of partnership with China that "On no account" was Russia "gravitating toward a union with somebody against China or, on the contrary, with China against somebody else" or similarly it was "not joining Europe against the US or vice versa" (Inozemtsev & Sibiriakov, 2006).

In the mid-1990s, and under the influence of Primakov multipolarity doctrine, Russia-China relations experienced a fundamental change. Indeed, establishing such a relationship with non-Western powers was more a response to the Western reluctance to accept Russia (Coleman, 1996; Khoros, 2002). As scholar pointed out the Eurasianists turned towards "the East, when relations with the US was deteriorated", based on "their narrative they began to reinforce relations with the Eastern powers like China by emphasising that China-Russia relations go back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the US did not exist on the map as a major player" (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018).<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Similar argument (Muraviev, Personal Interview, 10 December 2018; Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018)

Moscow and Beijing began “the development of a comprehensive relationship”, to establish an “example of a kind, trusting partnership of the great powers at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (Yeltsin, 1997, March 3). On 25 April 1996, in Beijing summit, the two powers celebrated the new level of partnership in which, as Yeltsin remarked, there were “no areas of disagreement”. In a joint statement, Primakov and his Chinese counterpart stressed the necessity to form a multipolar world and emphasised that Russia and China “oppose any country’s attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries” (RFE/RL, 1996, April 25a, 1996, April 25b).

Later in April 1997, during the third official China-Russia summit in Beijing, they signed a “Joint Declaration on a Multipolar World and the Formation of a New International Order”, which clearly reflected Primakov’s doctrine. Accordingly, the powers applauded arriving to a new stage of “strategic partnership”, to promote multilateralism against “hegemonism, power politics and repeated imposition of pressures on other countries”. The Sino-Chinese partnership was called as a “work” of “peace-loving countries and peoples” of the world “to establish a just and equitable international political and economic order” (Yeltsin, J. Zemin, 1997, 25 April).

Nevertheless, the Russo-Chinese bilateral relationship never reached the level of Primakov desired except in military exchange whereby Moscow became the main supplier of China’s arms and military technology. As well as close ties between the defence industries of the two states, around 70% of Moscow’s military sales went to Beijing (Ambrosio, 2005b).<sup>196</sup> During Yeltsin’s trip to China in late April 1996, the powers signed 15 bilateral agreements, including agreeing to demarcate the two state’s frontiers. While Yeltsin announced that the relations of two powers had “no areas of

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<sup>196</sup> Military indicators also showed that the rise of China’s military purchase from Russia in first half of 1990s by approximately \$3.8 billion per year continued throughout the rest of decade.

disagreement”, yet there was disagreement over some border areas up to the next decade (RFE/RL, 1996, April 25b).<sup>197</sup>

Moreover, on 26 April 1996, Russia and China plus three Central Asian states namely Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan agreed “confidence building security measures to reduce further military tensions” or “in effect a non-aggression treaty” (RFE/RL, 1996, May 2). Later, in 1997 at the Shanghai summit, then called Shanghai five, countries namely Russia, China Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan agreed to participate in regular summits to discuss regional security, military and economic cooperation (The SCO, 2017, September 10). The summits continued up to the end of the decade, but the main transition in Shanghai five occurred few years later.

Either due to Moscow’s economic weaknesses or Beijing’s orientation towards global market economy, the promised growth of commercial trade between the states was never achieved.<sup>198</sup> If one looks at the volume of trade between Moscow and Beijing, referring to Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng in 1997, the rate was merely US\$6 billion compared with the similar rate between China and the US at US\$150 billion (RFE/RL, 1998, February 19).<sup>199</sup> Therefore, as Yeltsin (1999, March 30) concluded, “further development of strategic partnership with China” is “still” needed to “meet the vital interests of both countries and security challenges for Asia and the world as a whole”.

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<sup>197</sup> It was second after May 1991 borders agreement. During the summit, two powers also signed a series of “economic agreements”, “cooperation in energy”, and “nuclear energy sectors”, “space exploration”. Beijing and Moscow agreed to increase bilateral trade “from \$5.46 billion in 1995 to an annual total of \$20 billion eventually”. Russia agreed to participate “in the construction of a \$4 billion nuclear power plant in northern China”. Moscow expected the right of supplying “turbo generators” to Beijing too. They also agreed “on the protection of intellectual property rights”, “quality controls for exports and imports”, and “the elimination of illegal monopolies and illegal currency operations” (RFE/RL, 1996, 26 April). Yeltsin and Jiang Zemin also agreed to “establish a ‘direct hot-line’ between Moscow and Beijing” (RFE/RL, 1996, April 25b).

<sup>198</sup> Embodied in the declaration of “strategic partnership” in 1996, the rate of trade between two states should be reached at 20 billion dollars by 2002 (RFE/RL, 1996, April 25a).

<sup>199</sup> The rate has increased from \$5.4 billion in 1995 (RFE/RL, 1997, November 21).



At the end, despite some achievements in bilateral relations, Primakov's hope to establish a well-developed political strategic partnership did not come into fruition except occasional rhetoric opposition, for example, over West military campaign in Kosovo and Iraq. Out of the state officials, Russian political elites remained suspicious of strategic partnerships, stating that the "alliance is one of political convenience and has no lasting purpose". As a Russian observer highlighted "They talk about strategic partnership, but that is just talk" as well as being "mutually suspicious." Accordingly, "there are no strategic consideration, it is just posturing" (Virant, 1999, May 27). Perhaps, that is why the Western part never took serious such efforts as American diplomat remarked "from our vantage point we don't see a tremendous bonding and upsetting of balance" (Browne, 2000, December 12).

There were concerns among conservative, civilizationists and liberals about China's potential threats towards Russia's national security. Especially for Russian liberals worrisome was Beijing's domestic authoritarian tendencies, and rising nationalistic environment which could lead towards revisionist foreign policy orientation (Lukin, 1999; Tremin, 2012).<sup>200</sup> For example, Igor Ghaidar, ex-Prime Minister, argued that the thriving and predictable Russia remained entangled between the democratic Western camp and non-democratic China. Defending increasing relationship with Tokyo as the main ally of Moscow rather than Beijing, he was particularly alarmed about China's "threat". Then Moscow should transfer its "containment capabilities" from the Western democrat friends to the Far East for containing China. Ghaidar defends increasing Russia's military and economic capabilities in Far East (Lukin, 1999, p. 8).

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<sup>200</sup> Civilizationist nationalists defends Russo-Chinese strategic partnership against the West and US, at the same time, they were more conservative about Beijing's intentions towards Russia mainly in the Far East region. To see a further review of Russian elites' view of Russo-Chinese (Lukin, 1999)

That perception of China's aggressive foreign policy was high regarding Chinese encroachment in the Far East region. This area was particularly important for Russians, as Yeltsin stated that "We shall not become a prosperous nation and a great power if the Far East and the Trans-Baikal region are neglected" (The Jamestown Monitor, 1996, April 25). The sense of Chinese threats increased regarding disproportion of two states' demographic and economic indicators in the region (Trenin, 2002, p. 209). As a Russian commentator stated that while Moscow had "a very low level of engagement throughout the Far East" because of "economic instability and the tensions that linger from the Soviet Union's policies in the region". In contrast, Beijing continued its old policies of "minimising the Soviet Union's military and political role in the region" "as a sort of reflex action to these days". Worst still, was the "political competition" added by "economic competition" too (Voskressensky, 1994, September 13).<sup>201</sup>

There were worries among Russia's conservatives that China with its constant engagement contest over Taiwan and other contentious regions was loose cannon and could be a potential threat to Russia too. Particularly, the anxiety was that China would "simply freeze" the border arrangements when the Beijing "feels strong enough to present its full demands to Russia". Russian liberals also were concerned about China's "incursion into a neighbouring country" in the Central Asian region, although not "improbable in the medium-term" (Trenin, 2002, p. 203). All revealed a deep-seated mistrust of China among Russian political elites. As a Western commentator concludes, Russian-Chinese bilateral relations, besides a range of "well-timed", "high-level visits" and official rhetoric on "strategic partnership" orchestrating anti-West, anti-US in world affairs, a "deep mutual suspicions and antagonisms suggest the relationship is unlikely to

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<sup>201</sup> Beijing created a main challenge in "Siberia", although Russia has not respond yet and tolerate modus vivendi in bilateral relations, but the continuity of such toleration in future is less clear (Trenin, 2012).

develop to a point where it might threaten US global power” (Browne, 2000, December 12).<sup>202</sup>

Regarding the disparity of power capabilities between the US as the hegemon on one side, and Russia-China diversely, Primakov’s strategy of establishing multipolar world required more than merely two powers. Compared to China, India had no common frontiers with Russia. Moscow-New Delhi were seldom aggressive toward each other, and they were able to cooperate on various political and economic levels when there is a convincing rational to do so. Therefore, Russia viewed India as a perfect partner. From the mid-1990s, Primakov actively sought to improve ties between Moscow and New Delhi as a potential member of the flexible coalitions against Western unipolarity.

Russo-Indian relations began from the Soviet Union collapse, when in January 1993 Yeltsin visited New Delhi. Although during the visit, both sides agreed to have regular annual meetings, but this never occurred and Russia’s president never renewed its visit to New Delhi.<sup>203</sup> Coming to power, Primakov’s first foreign destination was New Delhi, signalling a substantial shift in Kremlin’s strategic orientation towards Asia. Thereafter, Kremlin actively sought to re-establish or improve ties between Moscow and India, “another great Asian power” (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16). Russia, as the main India’s rearmament agent, began to sell its modern weaponries with advanced technology to New Delhi and rapidly prepared major treaties to sell its military industrial productions including “modern tanks”, “artillery systems”, “modern submarines”, “MIG-21’S”,

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<sup>202</sup> Even Russian moderate maintain their sceptical views over China’s intention. Accordingly, they claimed that Chinese intention in entering partnership with Russia is more due to its “fear from the US than of its appreciation for Russia” (Tremin, 2012, pp. 16-17).

<sup>203</sup> Even worth to note that it was Primakov, not Kozyrev, in charge of preparatory work for Yeltsin’s first trip to India. During Yeltsin trip, two states signed a cooperation treaty, as well as the agreements over military cooperation, arms technology transfer and reschedule of Indian debt. Nevertheless, those treaty and agreements rarely improved the Indo-Russia’s bilateral relations. By the mid-1990s, the military cooperation was never reached to the level of Soviet’s era. Russian military technology transfer to India was also suspended by Yeltsin administration, regarding the US reservations in that regard. The Russo-Indian economic relations did register an unsteady growth too, by less than one billion dollars from 1992 to 1994 (The Frontline, 1999, January 2).

“MIG-29”, “SU30-MKI”, “S-300”, “rocket engines”, “anti-stealth radar”.<sup>204</sup> As well Russia also attempted to advance its cooperation with India in energy sector, in constructing an atomic station; and transferring space exploitation technology to New Delhi (RFE/RL, 1997, March 26, 1998, December 22d). Russo-Indians economic trade turnover increased to US\$1.79 billion in 1997, comparing US\$5.5 billion in the year of Soviet collapse at 1991. Moscow expected the trade turnover be increased by 300% by 2005 (The Frontline, 1999, January 2).

In the political dimension, Primakov’s doctrine to establish multipolar world played a key role in improving Russo-Indian relationships especially after nuclear testing by India in 1998. Russian leaderships only verbally criticised such “totally unacceptable”, “short-sighted” action of India that “let Russia down” and caused “deep sorrow” (RFE/RL, 1998, May 12, 1998, May 13b). However, as Yeltsin and Primakov emphasised, Russia did not participate in the US supported “calling for sanctions” or other kind of real “punishment” against India after the experiment (RFE/RL, 1998, May 13a, 1998, May 19a). Since from the Russian side, India “acted correctly”<sup>205</sup> in nuclear testing and even some Russian hardliners saw the Indian nuclear examination as a critical phase in building a multipolar system of international order.<sup>206</sup>

The crucial milestone of new era of Russo-Indian relations came later in December 1998, when Primakov focused on a multipolarity doctrine during the Russia-India summit

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<sup>204</sup> The military cooperation accelerated from the mid-1990s. For example, in 1997 Indian PM declared the state’s military imports from Moscow recorded three billion dollars in two latest years. As the states had agreed about potential deals worth an additional seven billion dollars in the next years. Accomplishing the agreement, New Delhi would overtake Beijing, and be Moscow’s first arms customer (RFE/RL, 1994, July 1, 1994, May 5, 1994, November 7, 1998, December 21). The state traditional dependency on Soviet Union arms and its tactical distance from the United States led the country to accept Russia’s proposal of establishing close cooperation between them (Ambrosio, 2005b).

<sup>205</sup> Indian “acted correctly” in nuclear testing, Gennadii Seleznev, the Duma Speaker mentioned on 16 May 1998 and added, “One can only rejoice at India’s enhanced feeling of national pride. It has not curtailed its nuclear program, despite U.S. pressure” (RFE/RL, 1998, May 19b).

<sup>206</sup> Referring to the Indian nuclear test, Gennadii Zyuganov highlighted that India “once again confirmed that it is a major global power to be reckoned with”. Satisfied with the action, the leader of Communist Party supported a “strategic partnership” with New Delhi (RFE/RL, 1998, May 14).

in New Delhi. The summit improved Indo-Russia's bilateral relations. They signed several agreements, amongst them "the agreement on long term military and technology cooperation until 2010", "on economic, industrial and finance cooperation" mainly in the "energy" sectors (The Frontline, 1999, January 2). They agreed to reorganise India's debt repayment from the Soviet era. Both sides shared a common view about "Afghanistan and the West Asian peace", Moscow certainly warned about the spillover of the "fundamentalist virus" of Islamic extremism from Afghanistan to Central Asian republics. Russia encouraged India to sign a Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and argued doing so would strengthen India's case to gain permanent membership in UNSC, while New Delhi saw joining the treaty meaningless especially after the nuclear test. The powers "agreed on the need to expand the UNSC to make it more representative and increase its effectiveness" (The Frontline, 1999, January 2).

Less surprisingly, the summit was celebrated as a new turning point in bilateral cooperation. India-Russia declared jointly their satisfaction of bilateral relations advancing well in all aspects and hoped to improve actively the cooperation to a "qualitatively new character and long-term perspective" and move to "a strategic partnership" during this century. The Indians offered partnership is against neither any other third, nor it is to create a new bloc, it entailed increased cooperation in main bilateral issues in economy and military supplies (The Frontline, 1999, January 2). While, Russia's leaders had expected the summit being a step towards a more promising multipolar world.

However, Kremlin's strategic partnership with Asian powers was crucially tested at the summit when Primakov stressed the priority of developing a "strategic triangle" of "Russia-China-India" as a means to develop peace and stability through "counterbalance" of the US unilateral policies that was endorsed rhetorically (RFE/RL, 1998, December

22a, 1998, December 29a).<sup>207</sup> In reality however, the proposal was met with sour responses from China and India, the catchy slogan of a strategic triangle was never followed by New Delhi or Beijing. Primakov's proposal failed immediately in the summit, when Chinese diplomat strongly opposed the idea. "China pursues an independent foreign policy while it supports cooperation with Russia and other powers" however, according to a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson "China is not planning to join them in any alliances or blocs" (Piontkovsky, 1998, December 31).

The failure of Primakov's strategy was observable regarding some facts. At the end of 1990s, despite certain improvement of Russo-Chinese and Russo-Indian bilateral relations, none of these countries were eager to enter in Moscow's triangle strategic as a balancing coalition against the US. The lack of interest in this alliance was because Moscow, Beijing and Delhi's relationships with the West and especially the US was the first influencing factor. China and India were convinced that any policy must not cause conflict with the US. Indeed the priority of economic development in the interdependent world economic system dictated such the necessity of creating positive cooperation with the dominant hegemon (Ambrosio, 2005b). Consequently, establishing a "Russian desired strategic triangle" would naturally be interpreted as a threat against the US.

In Primakov's words, establishing a real triangle strategic "a lot depends on the policies of India and China" and their willingness and readiness to do so (RFE/RL, 1998, December 22c). Without such positive relationships, the main dimension of strategy of Primakov would remain unrealised. However, New Delhi and Beijing look at each other as rivals. Particularly, New Delhi was uneasy with Beijing rising power. While bilateral

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<sup>207</sup> Sergei Karaganov, head of Russian foreign and defence Policy Council welcomed Primakov's "triangle strategic" proposal arguing, "We like to use our cooperation to counterbalance the excessive power of the US." Creating such a structure is necessary "to promote stability" particularly at a time when international order was "very rapidly falling apart" (RFE/RL, 1998, December 29b).

relations increased significantly since the war over the frontier areas in Himalaya in 1962, particularly their economic trades, political relations remained murkier. As an Indian diplomat highlighted, “the strong China is frightening anyone except Russia”, and he wondered “are the Russians blind, stupid, or too obsessed with the US?” (Tremin, 2012, p. 19).

In particular, Indian political elites related the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led Government as having considered Beijing as “a potential threat” instead of a strategic partner. Beijing de facto alliance with Islamabad, the New Delhi’s nuclear rival in South Asian region was of concern, coupled with the fact that China meanwhile remained Pakistan’s military supplier. The presence in Central Asian and South sea region would probably intensify the China-India competition too. While India became closer to the US, Sino-American relations experienced more distance. The Indian government was hence less eager to the terms of multipolarity than China and Russia, as claimed by Indian commentator (The Frontline, 1999, January 2).

India kept its distance since it saw any discussion about “strategic triangle” reminiscent of the Cold War language as the Indian government stated at the summit. India instead preferred to improve bilateral relations with Moscow. Reflected by Bihari Vajpayee, after meeting with Primakov, “India’s relations with Russia are time tested. They are relations of traditional friendships. So as far as China is concerned, India is trying to improve its relations and going in the direction of normalising them” (AP, 1998, December 21).

Altogether caused Primakov to rebuff his offer when he faced with less enthusiasm from his counterparts in China and India arguing the triangle strategic partnership was just “a good idea” “not a formal proposal”. He wanted merely “to say a partnership between the three powers could reliably stabilise the situation in the [South Asian] region”. While he was well aware, that such an idea highly depended on China and India.

Regarding the negative reactions of Indo-Chinese diplomats to the proposal, Russian newspaper *Izvestiya*, reasoned it was only an emotional offer raised by “the coincidence of the three states views on the Iraq issue”. Accordingly, the proposal “in no way meant that the formation of such an ‘axis’ is a possibility” (RFE/RL, 1998, December 22b).

Unsurprisingly, as a Russian observer commented in *the Moscow Times*, it was a “diplomatic slap in the face for Russian diplomacy”. It was predicted that the foreign policy of Russia would continue to get “slaps in the face so long as it is defined not by national interests and common sense but by an infantile sense of pique and megalomaniacal complexes about the Cold War these men so unskillfully fought and lost” (Piontkovsky, 1998, December 31). In brief, Russian grand strategy reorientation towards the East and Asia could not achieve the outcome of creating the promised front of dissatisfied non-Western great powers since neither China nor India were as eager as Russia was.

Foreign policy scholar summarised the reason for failure of Primakov that the idea “was wishful thinking at the time, as Russia was quite weak and in trouble, compared to the West”. Comparing “what happened in the late 1990s to what is happening now”, he justified the failure that “In the Primakov era, the rise of China and to a lesser extent, India was at its very first step, and other new centre of powers, ... like BRIC were merely at a very theoretical level”. Altogether implies creating “a multipolar world remained very theoretical since Primakov did not have a means to realise his goal” (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

#### **4.4.3 Social Creativity and Eurasian Alternative**

Regarding the former Soviet region as precondition of Russia’s greatpowerness, the Eurasian Statists focused on “integration” as a main pillar of the state’s grand strategy from the mid-1990s. As Yeltsin frequently emphasised, the “main priority of foreign



policy” and “the long-term national interests of Russia” dictated the state to maintain its “economic and political” superiority through “development and strengthening of integration” within the neighbour area in the aspects. The objectives should be shaped around Russia, as “a natural and reliable centre of integration for partners in the CIS”. In brief, the main concern was “to ensure a full Russia’s entry into the rights and duties of the state successor to the USSR in the international arena”. Simply put, the aim was to maintaining Russia’s standing and role as a constant traditional hegemon of the region. Yeltsin concluded, “Our position [in the region] is unchanged” (The President of Russia, 1997, December 17; Yeltsin, 1994, February 24, 1995, February 16, 1996, February 23, 1997, March 3, 1998, February 17).<sup>208</sup>

#### **4.4.3.1 Eurasian Political and Security Integration**

The integration in the former Soviet region was primarily in political and security terms. Being pressured by the series of new conflicts within the region succeeding the Soviet collapse, Russian Eurasian statist attempted to revise the isolationist policy in initial years after Soviet collapse.<sup>209</sup> Surrounding by an “arch of crisis”, inborn and imposed from others out of the region, Russia was to deal with those military and security threats arose in the near abroad. Considering the security crises with “a destabilizing effect” on Russia’s development, the “national interests” required Russia “military

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<sup>208</sup> Through Decree No. 472; issued on 14 September 1995, Yeltsin outlined “Russian CIS strategy”. In line with Eurasian statist, the document called the region as the main priority for Moscow regarding the state’s “vital interests” in nearly all aspects of “security, economics, and the defence of Russians living abroad”. Accordingly, the decree concluded regarding the vital interests in the CIS area, Russia’s main objective must be “the creation of an integrated political and economic community of states which can aspire to a respected position in the world” as well formation of “military alliance in order to create an effective ‘collective defence’ system” (RFE/RL, 1995, September, 18).

<sup>209</sup> Amongst them, the official documents referred to the conflict in “Transcaucasia” region; “Nagorno – Karabakh”, “Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia”, the Moldova crisis, and “Central Asia” in general, the Islamic extremism in “Tajikistan” particularly at the very first years of soviet collapse (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16, 1997, March 3). The instable borders, illegal immigration and drug trafficking that had raised especially in Russia’s borders with China and Afghan – Tajik borders. As well as such inborn instabilities, Russian leaders perceived the security threats by the attempts of other regional actors such as Iran and Turkey to spread their sphere of influence in Russia’s near abroad (RFE/RL, 1996, January 15, 1996, January, 15, 1996, September 19). As well as the regional actors, Moscow frequently showed its concern about the actions of other powers outside the region, the US and the Western organizations particularly NATO to influence and fill the possible power emptiness in the region was another significant reason that strengthened Russian threat perceptions (Yeltsin, 1996, February 23, 1997, March 3).

presence in some states in the region”, as “the only force capable of dissolving the warring parties” in the region. As well, pursuing “peacekeeping” process together with “the CIS states”,<sup>210</sup> most importantly, Russia advocated “mutual cooperation” and joint activities of the states to create “collective security forces in the region”. That would “neutralise a significant part of the CIS-directed threats” and “cease the armed conflicts in the territories” (Yeltsin, 1995, February 16). Logically, Moscow prioritised the integration in the region primarily in political security and military terms to stabilise the former Soviet region at the one side, and preservation of its power and historical domination within the area.

Nevertheless, Yeltsin-Primakov’s security policies in the former Soviet area had mixed results. The first step was that Kremlin, together with CIS members, adopted “the Collective Security Concept” in a summit in February 1995, by emphasising the right to create regional peacekeeping forces (RFE/RL, 1995, February 13). The concept was a result of Kremlin’s lengthy political negotiation process and bilateral agreements with the CIS states to create “a collective security organisation” on the base of “the Treaty of May 15, 1992” (RFE/RL, 1997, June 9).<sup>211</sup> In Central Asia, the Kremlin showed a widespread military and security presence that Afghan border guards negotiated directly with Russian military commanders.<sup>212</sup> Restoring balance between military and political parties in Kremlin, Primakov led a conflict resolution and peace treaty in Tajikistan on 27 June 1997, after a five-year old civil war (RFE/RL, 1997, June 27b).<sup>213</sup> The peace treaty was celebrated

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<sup>210</sup> Although Moscow supported the peacekeeping efforts on the part of the “United Nations” and “the CSCE - now the OSCE” but merely “on principles of recognition of legitimate interests of Russia and other interested states of the Commonwealth” (The President of Russia, 1997, December 17; Yeltsin, 1994, February 24, 1995, February 16, 1996, February 23, 1997, March 3, 1998, February 17, 1999, March 30b).

<sup>211</sup> Such an ambitious plan for military and security cooperation in the region was primarily around Russia’s role hence could legitimize the state’ security and military attempts in the area.

<sup>212</sup> Even in some cases, Russia directly threatened the Afghan forces to use military actions against any possible incursion in the CIS region. For example on 24 MAY 1997, FM Primakov vigorously warned any invasion in the CIS region by Taliban forces would be responded by activation of the “mechanism of the CIS Collective Security Treaty (Pannier, 1997, May 27).

<sup>213</sup> On 27 June 1997, Imomali Rakhmonov, then Tajik president and Said Abdullo Nuri, the leader of Tajik opposition groups, the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), signed the peace agreement in Moscow. Attending in the meeting, Yeltsin hailed the agreement as historical “bright, memorable page” for Tajik nations. The agreement was, in fact, the end of five years of civil war in Tajikistan. The

as a sign of Kremlin's successful "active contribution" in conflict resolution within the area. Regarding the experience, Russian leaders expected to "promote the settlement of conflicts on the territory of the CIS, the establishment of peace and national harmony" (Yeltsin, 1999, March 30).

In the "Transcaucasian" region, the Kremlin's efforts to end the crisis failed. Primakov's conflict resolution in Nagorno- Karabagh resulted in a mere exchange of prisoners even with active dialogues under "the Minsk Group" supervision. During the crisis in Georgia, Russia's efforts did little to bring peace and stability despite firm control of peacekeeping process and forces.<sup>214</sup> The earlier military support of Russia from the Abkhaz separatist movement backfired and contributed to Moscow's inability to mediate the conflict. It also resulted in Georgia's disappointment in Russia and consequently, declining to support the CIS's collective security efforts (RFE/RL, 1997, June 2).<sup>215</sup> Similarly, in Chechnya, Russia could not accomplish its policy to solve the crisis too. In order to maintain a presence and diminish Chechnya' separatism and secessionism, Moscow intervened in the republic. However, after the first Chechen war (1994–1996), Chechnya continued its slide into an

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opposition groups entailed UTO was legalized as political parties, the militia of both sides were integrated and 30% of governmental official positions were dedicated to opposition groups (RFE/RL, 1997, June 27b).

<sup>214</sup> Georgian leaders occasionally showed their dissatisfaction with Russia's policies by criticizing the state's role in mediating the crisis. For example, on 17 January 1997 Avtandil Ioseliani, Georgian Deputy State Security Minister claimed that there would be no longer requesting Moscow's peacekeeping mission in contested region in Georgia "soon" since two sides of conflict most probably will "find a common language without a mediator" (RFE/RL, 1997, January 20). Eduard Shevardnadze, the president of Georgia event went further stated in the situation that the Western powers wanted to "lure Georgia away" from Moscow's influence; it must help the Tbilisi regime to regain its sovereignty over South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Merely, in that case, Moscow could maintain the Tbilisi under its own "sphere of influence" (RFE/RL, 1997, January 27). Georgian leaders more also accused Moscow of "intentionally or unintentionally", "obstructing Abkhaz settlement" or criticized it for "taking the Abkhaz side" (RFE/RL, 1997, January 30, 1998, January 19). Later, while Russian leaderships, Primakov mainly sought a solution of the crisis for instance on 9 June in Moscow, Georgia sought "alternative mediators" by requesting of participations from "the OSCE, the U.S., France, and Germany" (RFE/RL, 1997, June 11).

<sup>215</sup> For example, in 30 July 1997, Georgian parliament, dismissed an ultimatum and called for withdrawing the CIS peacekeepers from the hotbed areas in the country.

ongoing anarchy that added a sense of humiliation in Russia (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).<sup>216</sup>

In Western borders, Moscow nevertheless pursued security integrative process with different objective. Unable to reject West and NATO's "bloc-based politics" and the alliance Eastward expansion, Russia attempted to neutralise their former Warsaw Pact allies, what called "Finlandization" (Trenin, 2002).<sup>217</sup> Russia attempted weakening the costs of speedily alteration of the power in CEE region. It sought to normalise and develop its military ties with the states in its Western borders, including Ukraine and Belarus.

Regarding its geo-strategic importance, the most pro-Moscow states in the area, Belarus was important in Russia's foreign policy. On 2 April 1996, signing "the Treaty on the Formation of Russia-Belarus Union", Kremlin gained a "significant achievement" that was a key step towards an in depth political military integration as Russians remarked.<sup>218</sup> "Another important task" in that regard was to "establishment of stable, genuinely good-neighbourly relations with Ukraine" that remained "unrealized" (Yeltsin, 1999, March 30). Regarding Kiev, the main issue for Moscow was the Black Sea Fleet that remained unsolved from the Soviet collapse. Ukraine also was attempting to demarcate and legalise its borders with Russia through formal treaty before any normalisation of the relationship.

After nearly six years of negotiations from Soviet collapse finally, "the Big Treaty" was signed on 31 May 1997. Under the agreement, Russia recognised Ukraine's territorial

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<sup>216</sup> Similarly pointed by Kushnir (Personal Interview, 8 February 2019) that "in the first Chechen war, Russian armies were not capability to gain victory".

<sup>217</sup> The term reflects the neutral status of Finland between West and Soviet Union after WWII.

<sup>218</sup> After signing the treaty, Yeltsin called "highly symbolic" agreement that "opens a qualitatively new phase in relations between Russia and Belarus" (RFE/RL, 1996, April 2).

integrity and its sovereignty over Crimea, in exchange for permission for Russian black sea fleet operation on Ukraine territory (RFE/RL, 1997, June 2). While the Kremlin praised the treaty,<sup>219</sup> the opposition hardliners criticised Yeltsin- Primakov for ignorance of Russia's historical claim on Sevastopol, as Yurii Luzhkov Moscow's Mayor said "we will be renting Sevastopol from ourselves" and claimed that "Sevastopol is a Russian city, and it will be Russian regardless of the decisions taken" (RFE/RL, 1997, June 2). Moreover, at the end of the decade, Russians' main objective failed, as discussed next, they could never stop Ukraine's eccentricity of the Kremlin's policy and its tendency towards Western centric order.

#### **4.4.3.2 Eurasian Economic Integration**

Following the dissolution of USSR, it was difficult to proceed without the previous level of economic integration. Moreover, challenges arose from the necessity for marketization and economic reforms in the states intensified the demand for economic integration, too. The states, which desired to chart a fruitful self-sufficient player in the global economic mainstream, stepped toward the market with various uncoordinated paces and "autarchic economic strategies" (Sakwa & Webber, 1999, p. 386). The outcome was nevertheless economic disaster, as until the mid-1990s all post-Soviet states' GNP recorded negative rates (van Selm, 2005, p. 20).<sup>220</sup> The emergence of the disaster in the former republics and Russia, buffeted by criticisms of Western isolationist policy, caused a change in Moscow's orientation toward the region gradually.

Nevertheless, the Eurasian states accelerated the steps towards economic integration in the region with a different approach. In the process, Russia as the dominant power

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<sup>219</sup> During latest message in National Assembly, Yeltsin stated, "Russia consistently pursues a policy of developing relations with Ukraine on the basis of the principle of strategic partnership. ... I'm sure that ratification of the 'Great Treaty' with Kiev will give an additional an impetus to the all-round strengthening of Russian-Ukrainian relations" (Yeltsin, 1999, March 30).

<sup>220</sup> Derived from "the table 2.3 the Post-Soviet Performance", in (van Selm, 2005, p. 20).

could play the main role, reflected by Primakov, it “could indeed be the locomotive for integration for CIS countries” (REF/RL, 1996 March 9). By decree, No. 472. Yeltsin confirmed that all the integration process should follow “Russia’s proposed model”, otherwise, he warned, would affect the scale of Moscow’s politically, militarily and economically support from the states (RFE/RL, 1995, September, 18).<sup>221</sup>

Whatever aimed to enhance “economic integration” or “re-integration” within the region “as a natural a process”, the Kremlin pursued the establishment of “a single economic space” by emphasize on “the principle of freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and labour”. Economic integration practically translated in “the formation of the Economic Union”, “the Customs Union”, and “the formation of a mechanism for payment and settlement relations and the Payment Union” (Yeltsin, 1994, June 12, 1995, February 16, 1997, March 3, 1998, February 17).<sup>222</sup>

Despite all efforts and objectives, the economic integration in the region however did not register the expected outcomes. The former republics attempted to diversify their economic relations with the states outside the region. That can be more obvious referring to a recent study by United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (1998) the intra-states trades in the former Soviet region that experienced a constant decline up to end of 1990s.<sup>223</sup> The dilute economic integration in the region would be more illustrative regarding the rate of the states’ trade with third parties beyond the region. In 1997, 73%

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<sup>221</sup> Notwithstanding, while the previous liberal leaders focused on the role of private sector, in line with statism, in new term the main focus was on the “mixed economy” based on the role of the state’ interests, since as a statists believed that the state interest was superior to those of private sector (Yeltsin, 1997, March 3). Such approach implied that any economic integration and cooperation in the region, Russia’s state rather privet sectors, had the main role and thus should facilitate such a cooperation (McAllister, 1999, March 29).

<sup>222</sup> In summer, 1995 Yeltsin outlined Russian economic integration strategy in the region in a more details through the aforementioned decree, No. 472 (RFE/RL, 1995, September, 27).

<sup>223</sup> In value terms, the intra states trades in the CIS region in 1994 decreased remarkably to 35% of its level in 1991. With a limited recovery in the next two years, however the rate experienced additional decrease by 3.7% in 1997.

of the former republics' exports and 61% of their import was accounted for trade with third partners out of the region. This was a remarkable growth regarding the fact that the average rate of trade turnover of each republics with third counterparts out of the region was only 28.25% in 1991 (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1998). Reflected by Aman Tuleev, Russian CIS Affairs Minister, the West supplanted Moscow as a trading partner in the CIS region, and Russia was "losing CIS market to the West" (RFE/RL, 1997, April 16).

The failure of the economic integration can also be attributed in great extent to inadequate mechanisms for such strategy. For example, despite all Russia's attempts, the Economic Union and its critical features unrealised. Reflected in a meeting of the CIS leaders, the fifth anniversary on 28 March 1997, in which the term of integration was considered in the form of the "Concept of Economic Integration of the CIS states". The meeting and its final document were signs of the failure of entire integrative policies in the given time, much less operation of the integration projects. Referring to inefficiency, Yeltsin felt that "poorly operating mechanisms", the "absence of political will" and lack of mutually firm actions by the member states, besides unanimously agreeing about the CIS integration, the establishment of the Economic Union had halted. Accordingly, each of the states were persuading "its own national interests, priorities and its own vision of future integration". However, the meeting itself was another sign of the failure of economic integration, as the summit ended while only Yeltsin signed the integration concept and other leaders avoided it (RFE/LR, 1997, April 1a).

Similarly, the Customs Union, which was signed initially by Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan in 1995, was not more successful, despite progress on paper. The mutual trade turnover among the members had not registered notable growth. Trade liberalisation and the establishment of a common tariff on mutual trade did not progress

as was expected.<sup>224</sup> Tuleev, CIS Affairs Minister, regretted that even “Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan”, two founders of the Union, were much less like Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan, who “become reoriented to the West or created their own customs union inside the CIS” (RFE/RL, 1997, April 16). Therefore, it could not achieve its main objective as an engine of intra state trade in the region. Tajikistan was only state that wanted to join in the Custom Union in 1999. Yeltsin stated “nevertheless the main task of achieving results” remained since it could be fulfilled “not by number, but by skill” (Yeltsin, 1999, March 30)

Rather than the economic rational calculations, the former Soviet states seems more worried about Kremlin’s intentions from integration. They saw the projects evidence of Kremlin’s reorientation towards Soviet imperial syndrome within the region, hence they logically resisted such integrative tendencies. In October 1997, in the Custom Union summit, Haidar Aliev, the president of Azerbaijan pointed out that his state liked to see “equality of rights, respect for national interest, no attempts to form a new Union, and no privileged status for one particular country” that “Unfortunately, such [characteristics] are not in evidence”. Islam Karimov, the Uzbek president, worried that the Customs Union aimed ultimately “to pull the rest of us [members] by the ears into a [new Soviet] Union”, and warned “We must be independent and not orient ourselves after the Kremlin’s towers” (Eurasian Daily Monitor, 1997, October 23a).<sup>225</sup>

Therefore, less irrelevant to conclude that, at the end of decade Eurasian statists’ strategy of economic integration within the region, as the main pillar of social creativity

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<sup>224</sup>As Yeltsin reported that the rate of common commerce between the costume Union members increased “by 26% in 1996”, nevertheless in following year it gain experienced remarkable decrease by 30% in total turnover (Eurasian Daily Monitor, 1997, October 23b; The Eurasian Daily Monitor, 1997, October 24).

<sup>225</sup> Later in the CIS meeting in 1997, Islam Karimov reiterated to alarm against “forcing processes” by advocates as it would lead “risks devaluing the entire concept of integration” (RFE/LR, 1997, April 1b). Reasoning, “Each country must set its own tempo”, Levon Ter-Petrosian, president of Armenia cautioned Moscow “it is not advisable to accelerate integration” (Eurasian Daily Monitor, 1997, October 23a).



could not achieve the aspired outcomes and objectives. Alexandre Lukashenka, Belarusian President called the CIS “a club for meetings between heads of state” and that “the overwhelming majority of agreements signed remain on paper...the present [level of] cooperation within the CIS represents an imitation of integration” (RFE/LR, 1997, April 1b).

Russia’s bilateral economic policies paradoxically deemed more success in little cases. Moscow used bilateralism to consolidate ties with specific states such as Belarus and Ukraine. Regarding Belarus, aforementioned Russia developed its relation in all various dimensions via “the Charter of the Russia-Belarus union”.<sup>226</sup> The agreement was lauded on both sides, as successful model and example that could attract the others within the area to following same pathway for economic integration. However, it faced some criticism for its “economic” and “political costs” (RFE/RL, 1997, May 27).<sup>227</sup> Moreover, the agreement fuelled the negative perceptions within the region about Russia’s intentions of integration policy as well. Therefore, less attractive the Union could not fulfil its promise to attract the new CIS member although it was open for others to join (RFE/RL, 1997, April 3).<sup>228</sup> Instead, the possibility of Russia-Belarus unification intensified the fear of Russia’s intentions and served to confirm the sense of Russia’s expansionism and imperialism.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> The document did not mention of creating United States, but it was aimed to ally with two states politically, military and economically.

<sup>227</sup> For instance, the Belarusian Popular Front rejects its claims that, according to the front leader Lyavon Barshchevski; the document “threatened the independence gained by Belarus when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991”.

<sup>228</sup> As Nazarbaev, Kazakhstan president addressed such arrangement as an incompatible with the region’s multilateralism and integration, and Leonid Kuchma- Ukraine’s president- called it as “absolute nonsense (RFE/RL, 1997, April 2, 1997, April 3).

<sup>229</sup> Regarding Russians public opinion shows that republics fears and negative reactions towards Russian Belarusian union was not irrelevant. As the public survey published by Public Opinion Foundation in 1997, showed that the vast majority of Russians saw “the Russia-Belarus union as the first step toward the restoration of the USSR” by 75%. The people also saw Ukraine, Kazakstan and Moldova as the “other former Soviet republics they would like to see accede to that union” respectively by 64%, 40% and 14% (RFE/RL, 1997, June 27a).

Regarding Russia-Ukraine relations, since mid-1990s, along with the accord “on the division of the Black Sea Fleet” or “the Big Treaty, the Program of Economic Cooperation” as a comprehensive agreement between two states was signed on 27 February 1998. While 10 years’ program of economic cooperation - 1998-2007- seemed to be an achievement of Kremlin’s economic diplomacy. It would allow Russia to normalise its economic and political relations with the most significant state in the region. It assist Kremlin to resist the nationalist hard-liners’ criticism within the countries with the hope that by the agreement, Ukraine “will never make a choice in favour of NATO” (RFE/RL, 1998, February 27 1998, March 4a). Nevertheless, the hope faded immediately by Kuchma, Ukrainian president, who said, “the direction of Ukraine is integration into the EU, and our close, multifaceted agreement with NATO...remains unchanged” (RFE/RL, 1998, March 4c). The agreement could hardly promote the economic integration aimed by Moscow at the second half of 1990s.

#### **4.4.3.3 Eurasian Cultural integration**

The third dimension was cultural integration in the former Soviet region. Primakov and his supporters faced in response to the necessity of cultural integration and the situation of 25 million Russian diasporas in the region. Calling the “compatriots” “inseparable” from the fatherland and vice versa, Yeltsin (1994, June 12) declared emphatically that “We were and will be together on the basis of law and solidarity, we defend and will defend your and our common interests... we will do this in greater resoluteness”. Therefore, since the mid-1990s, in conceptualising Russia’s international status, definition of its identity, the Russian diaspora became the main priority in the state policy towards the region.

Yeltsin administration perused a more active policy to protect Russian diaspora. The definition of a Russian nation changed towards a more traditional stance. It was defined

in a linguistic course in which Russian nation including all Russian speakers in the region who lived away from their homeland. In practical terms, as an alternative solution to Russian nationalists Civilizationists' direct support of diaspora, Kremlin began to consider the idea of dual citizenship in the former Soviet region.<sup>230</sup> Nevertheless, nearly all former republics, except Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, rejected Russia's policy of dual citizenship (RFE/LR, 1995, September 8 ; RFE/RL, 1993, December 27).

Later, the Kremlin began to promote CIS citizenship to strengthen union and establish common identity of the states in the region from 1996. Accordingly, in the Charter signed by Russia and Belarus, two states committed to "establish a common citizenship" in 1997 (RFE/RL, 1997, May 25). However, other countries within the area showed their reluctance to accept such idea of CIS citizenship. For example, Ukraine rejected the idea and refused to sign a similar agreement with Russia. Ukraine has the highest percentage of Russian diaspora (RFE/RL, 1995, February 2).<sup>231</sup> Thus, neither dual citizenship nor CIS citizenship seemed to be successful.

In summary, at the end of the 1990s, Yeltsin - Primakov's cultural integrative policy seems fruitless too. In other words, the Eurasian statist's desire to create cultural integration in the region and to conduct congruent diasporic politics did not materialise. Despite all efforts to solve diaspora issue, the dilemma remained unrealised nearly in all hotbed areas, in particular "Baltic" states, in "Estonia and Latvia" that "an important element" of Kremlin's policy related to "the lawful rights of compatriots abroad" remained unrealised (Yeltsin, 1998, February 17). Reflecting Russia's inability "on the protection of

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<sup>230</sup> Dual citizenship would have some advantages for Kremlin. Definition of Russian national hood in civic terms, applying dual citizenship plan would allow Moscow to protect Russian nation without intensifying ethnic conflict in the region. Moreover, regarding Russia's economic weaknesses, dual citizenship could help Kremlin to curb uncontrolled flow of migrants to Russian federation by providing some peace and security for diaspora in the host countries. Additionally, dual citizenship would give a leverage in the hand of Kremlin, either to influence the policy of the host states or to dominate in the former soviet region (Zevelëv, 2001, pp. 133-134).

<sup>231</sup> On 1 February 1997, Dmytro Tabachnyk, chief of the Ukrainian Presidential Staff, warned that "the Russian-Ukrainian friendship treaty" would not be signed by Kiev, "if Moscow insisted on a dual- citizenship clause".

the legitimate rights of ... compatriots”, later, the president regretted that Russia could “not remove the problem of discrimination of the Russian-speaking population” in some CIS states. “Russia will insist that these countries have adjusted their approaches to the problem of human rights in accordance with the requirements set by the UN, the OSCE, and the Council Europe” (Yeltsin, 1999, March 30).

The term of creating multipolar world, could not lead Russia to achieve the desired status and role, while the strategy of pragmatic integration in the Eurasian region as the other pillar of creativity was fruitless. For some, the failure was not “surprising”, since “Russia could not reconcile the fact that in the long term, these countries were going to develop independent foreign and security policy, independent economic policies” (Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019).

Domestically, Russian economic and political conditions worsened the situation at the end of 1990s. The economic reforms did not achieve its aspired objectives and the result was “disappointment and what commonly called syndrome defeat”. Apart from “the global financial crisis and unfavourable conjuncture of foreign markets”, according to Yeltsin (1999, March 30), “one can definitely say; the main causes of the crisis of the Russian economy were internal”. The results of “marketization,” “privatization” and later “mixed economy” were the emergence of extremely rich and influential elites who took control of crucial areas of the Russian economy and used its political influence, to make its businesses as profitable as possible. A number of oligarchs owned banks and bought out state bonds, which the constantly financially desperate government regularly issued.

The so-called oligarchs elevated initially as outcome of economic reform, the “shock therapy” pursued in the very first years following the Soviet collapse, originally with establishment of “entrepreneurs’ political initiative-92”, at the end of 1992 (Schroder, 1999, p 976). They began to take advantages from Russia’s chaotic socioeconomic and

political transformation to form their corporate empires. The oligarchs gained control over the main critical economic sectors, both state-owned and private, and achieved “corporate holdings” and created empires of various sectors. Yet, during the period of economic reform, the oligarchs and their banks and enterprises were merely emerging but with no real politically and economically weight, lesser than that need to influence on the state’s policies (Schroder, 1999).

The situation changed and the influence of the group in political stage strengthened gradually from the mid-1990s, when the growth of newly established financial and business sectors was strongly enough to play an economic and political role. During the following years, particularly from 1995/96, the redistribution of power favoured oligarchs and strengthened their positions. The group benefited mainly from “loan -for-share plan”. In 1995, as a solution to Russian government’s budget deficit, the oligarch banker, Vladimir Potanian, proposed the plan through which private banks provide loans to main state-owned enterprises in turn for shares in the firms. Pushed by Antony Cubias, the Deputy Prime Minister, the government took up the plan during 1995 and 1996 (Schroder, 1999; Schimpfössl, 2018; Clunun, 2009). Loans for share actually sold shares in a dozen major state owned enterprises, some of them were Russia’s largest assets particularly the lucrative energy and material sectors, to the small group of oligarch bankers at a bargaining prices in exchange for loans to the government to finance its bonds and later to the presidential campaign (Schimpfössl, 2018, pp 23-25).

While the rapid privatization of Russian economy, mainly in energy and mineral sectors, prised the plan and made its founder Cubias as “a hero” in the West, but it further delegitimized Yeltsin and the model of economic reform and the privatization within Russia. As well, there have been critical questions about insider deals and un-transparent process of the auctions. Whatever, the plan caused Yeltsin’s government association with

oligarchic capitalism and massive corruption (Clunum, 2009). The link that further reinforced mainly through the presidential election campaign in 1996, when the group of bankers and entrepreneurs were actively involved in relation with political power and events through supporting Yeltsin in presidential election (Schimpfössl, 2018).<sup>232</sup>

During the following years, at least up to the end of the decade, the redistribution of power favoured oligarchs and intensified their influence.<sup>233</sup> Despite the fact, there are some reservations about the role of oligarchs on Russian political sphere. Oligarchs were never a “coherent” and “homogeneous” group considering either their individual structure or interests, as well they were never substantially dominated Russian policy making in any extended period. Oligarchs’ influence was, however, in certain dimensions of economic policy, and in accessing the behind the scene lobbies in Yeltsin’s administration that gave some oligarchs massive competitive benefits over their competitors (Sakwa, 2008; Schroder, 1999; Clunum 2009).

Russian oligarchs’ political role primarily focused on economic interests, simply, their political and economic interests merged. What they shared was maintaining the socio-political status-quo within Russia as a common strong interests of the group. Since, any redistribution of economic properties or revising the privatisations initiated after the Soviet collapse would harm their interests. Accordingly, even in late 1990s, when the oligarchs’ influence seemed increased, they never saw themselves as politicians (Sakwa,

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<sup>232</sup> Regarding the failure of Westernists foreign policy especially in relation it the West to gain financial support from the Western institutions, and failure of Westernist foreign policy in Serbia crisis, as well as the failure of domestic socio- economic reforms, along with the fist Chechen war, all in all decreased Yeltsin popularity. As a poll shows Yeltsin's popularity decreased to less than 5% in early 2006. While all the crisis increased the influence of Russian hardliners group. In such the situation, oligarchs organized election campaign in order to save Yeltsin. With the groups’ financial support, massive propaganda and their media might, Yeltsin re-elected as Russian president, in turn the power and influence of the oligarchs was reinforced (Schimpfössl, 2018, pp 23-25).

<sup>233</sup> Reflected by Schroder (1999, p.962), “in March 1998, 10 leading representatives of banks and business were directly counted as belonging the inner circle of the political elites”.

2008; Schroder, 1999). Instead, their influence on politics was limited only to the areas which directly affected the group's economic interests.<sup>234</sup>

Such a reliance on using the political influence to persuade economic interests by oligarchs at one side, and Yeltsin administration's need economic sources to persuade economic reforms, and also gaining financial and political support especially from mid-90s, created a mutual dependency between oligarchs and the government. The group benefitted largely from the concessions created by Kremlin, similarly, government gained benefit from the support of oligarchs, as indicated by the case of Yeltsin campaign. The mutual dependency, while fuelled the myth that the oligarch, "the power in the background" ran the politics in Russia, it also further delegitimized Russian government within society.

To avoid further disruption of the government image, Russian president supported political campaign under Boris Nemtsov to combat with corruption. Emphasising on the necessity of fight with the "oligarchic capitalism", authored by Chubais, Nemotsov recommend himself as a representative of "people's capitalism" (Schroder, 1999). However, with Nemotsov serving as a deputy prime minister side by side of Cubais further questioned the legitimacy of the efforts and also fuelled the extensive agreement within Russia about the illegitimacy of Russian liberalization if not in principles but at least in practice (Clunuun, 2009).

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<sup>234</sup> Beyond the economic policies, the oligarchs left entire relevant areas of politics to other domestic associations, lobbies, and institutions. Neither in social sphere, nor military or defence policy or domestic politics. For instance, military policies were only of interests if they affect the industrial policies and on the military weaponry exports industries. Regarding the foreign policy, it was important only to the extent that it would affect the foreign trade. the traditional foreign policy, that of under foreign minister Primakov was ignored by the group. The foreign policy was the area of interests of oligarchs only due to its direct effects on the group's economic interests, especially in relations to the CIS states, cooperation with the West and Western institutions. That is the reason to refute the assumption that the oligarch ran the country, as "ruling was not what they were doing" (Schroder, 1999).

Worsened by the Rouble crash, Russia were “struck by the hardest shock of the second half of 1998” (Yeltsin, 1999, March 30).<sup>235</sup> President Yeltsin faced criticism on the home front. His reform programs exhausted his potential to convince those Russians who initially endorsed the reforms. “Jumping over years and decade”, Sumskey (Personal Interview, 22 November 2018) said, “Russia could not overcome many problems encountered during the time, and the state could not yet stand on its knees at the end of the 1990s”.

Democracy and capitalism quickly lost their credits, and both proved to be less compatible with the population’s ideals of their country and life in it. Instead of democracy, the reforms resulted in inconsistent and indecisive political “transformations” and “an acute political confrontation”. Election as the main symbol of democracy changed to a long-term “political instability” that broke “the existing political situation” and most importantly lead to using “dirty technology” as a “real threat to the young Russian democracy” (Yeltsin, 1999, March 30). This was made worst by Yeltsin’s bad health associated with alcohol abuse especially evident during foreign trips and meetings with foreign diplomats. Sadly, this sometimes allowed Western partners, mainly the US politicians to take advantage and gaining concessions from Moscow, as Strobe Talbott the US Deputy Secretary of State, espoused. It could be a symbol for Russo-Americans relationships in the first decade after the Soviet collapse (Larson & Shevchenko, 2014c).

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<sup>235</sup> The causes of this crisis do not fall within the scope of this work, and therefore we will only summarize the most commonly cited reasons for it. As the main reasons can be referred to “a stable budget deficit”; “ineffective tax collection system” that led to growth of “the state’s borrowing rate internally and externally”, “instability in macroeconomic sector” and “non-payments”. As well, “inconsistent and indecisive fiscal policy” that caused “financial explosion” and decrease of “investment, close to the “freezing point”, and most importantly “the devaluation of the Ruble” that led to “rise in prices and tariffs” and re surfaced “the past inflationary”. The situation was fuelled by the spilling the Asian economic crisis over Russia, as well as the departure of foreign investors and plummeting prices of raw materials (Yeltsin, 1999, March 30). While the government, through the Central Bank was attempting to support the value of the currency by investments of billions of dollars, including a \$5 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).



At the end of the decade, Russia could not achieve the aspired standing or gain recognition and solve the perceived inconsistency. Despite all efforts, neither Kozyrev's social mobility, nor Primakov's social creativity strategies could gain recognition of the aspired status from the West and particularly the US. Adding to the range and complexity of socio-political and socio-economic reforms, the failure of the strategies to gain higher status was humiliating. In brief, contrary to Russians' initial optimistic assumption that Russia would assume a coequal status similar with the Western counterparts, mainly the US, it was treated a "defeated power and junior partner". At the end of 1990s, Russian scholar reflected, "Russia for the first time in its history recognised that it is not a great power anymore" and "the status was really dropped dramatically" (Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).

Summarising the transition era, Sergunin emphasised the gap in perception was common in both Russian and the Western sides;

"It is not only on the part of Russia, but also of the West, there was some kind of misunderstanding and illusion. Under Yeltsin's regime, Russia had an illusion about the West; that the West would accept Russia as an equal partner... In the Western part there was an illusion that Russia will be a democratic country, will be transformed, that become a more Western type of democracy and will follow Western political course. However, at the same time, the West did not give Russia some sort of substantial [support] in terms of assistance, in sense of equal treatment and of course, it was wrong policies. Because you cannot humiliate the country and require from [it] following democratic standards, or the same kind of social economic model which you have. That was a mistaken course" (Alexander Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).

#### **4.5 Summary**

The analysis of Russian political elites and leaders evidenced that the status concern mainly inconsistency was still highly prevailed on grand strategic thinking, till the end of 1990s. With a significant change in status conceptualization, the new leaders saw the world politics realistically, as base of competition mainly over geopolitics. They realised that cooperation should be built through equal participation of all states. In Eurasian

Statism, Russia was portrayed as a Eurasian power in a multipolar world, with a global role of stabiliser and regional Eurasian hegemon.

Derived from analysis, the concern over the state's status still influenced Russia's grand strategic orientation. Searching for equality with the West implied national interest should be perused through a more active and independent foreign policy. Particularly, this implies a more rational, and assertive policy towards the Western counterparts and diversified relations in other directions. Eurasian Statists grand strategy aimed to counterbalance the Western, particularly the US unilateralism through active diplomacy within institutions like UN and UNSC, and strategic partnership with the non-Western great powers particularly China and India. Creating the privileged integration with the states locating in Eurasian region, was an additional component of Russian grand strategy from the mid-1990s.

The strategy exposed a change in new era, particularly regarding the West, however the shift should not be exaggerated. First, it was carried out through diplomatic attempts under international norms and within institutions including UN and UNSC, as the cases of Iraq and Kosovo showed. Primakov and his supporters signalled the international order that Russia is playing under the legitimised rule of the game. Russia also signalled the West, by joining a "formal regime" through signing Founding Act with Western Security system to reduce the misperception or mistrust. Second, strategic partnership with non-Westerns was similarly status driven rather realistic calculation, the leaders were well aware that any hegemonic balancing was difficult. Particularly, since balancing in that sense, highly depends on a balancer's capabilities what post-soviet Russia lacked.

Russia's grand strategy was an ideational status driven one, and described as social creativity, playing in alternative dimension of within which the status seeker believed it is superior in that dimension. Accordingly, the leaders attempted to de-emphasise

capability backwardness and instead place importance on cultural historical factors, to gain equality in a multipolar order. Multipolarity was indeed an alternative dimension of comparison by which all powers, including Russia and the Western powers, could enjoy equal standing apart from their power capabilities.

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, neither diplomatic efforts within the UN and UNSC, nor active diplomacy in different issues could realise equality. Russia was still out of the Western security system and the West continued to its unilateral approach. Russia could not stop NATO from further Eastward expansion. The expansion with no special place or rights for Moscow was perceived as a psychological threat, and humiliating act of the Western security system in ignoring or rejecting Russia's status in the region. Inability to constrain the West and the US unilateral actions evidenced by failure to gain Russia's desired role, as a key upholder of international normative order in the main security issues, in Kosovo and Iraq, Primakov's strategy did not attain the status recognition.

Beyond the West, Russia's strategy did not achieve more in other dimensions. Despite improvement in Russo-Chinese and Russo-Indian bilateral relations, none of these powers was eager to enter in Moscow's triangle strategic coalition. The Eurasian statist's integration policy in security, political, economic and cultural dimensions in Eurasian region, did not work out as expected (Yeltsin, 1999, March 30). Whether due to Russia's incapability or unwillingness of the former Soviet states to re-engage further with Moscow, Russia's traditional hegemonic role in the region seems remained more rhetorical. Added by Russian domestic political and socio-economic situations which were worsened by financial crisis at the end of decade, Russian Eurasian statism and its strategy failed either to achieve and/or to gain recognition by the higher status West, hence failed to solve the perceived inconsistency.

## CHAPTER 5: STATIST DEVELOPMENTALISM AND SOCIAL COMPETITION

### 5.1 Introduction

The first decade of post-Soviet era ended while Russia's grand strategy still undergoing uncertainty. Major concerns were observed while tracing Russian grand strategy, but the global vision of gaining the higher standing and role within post-Soviet international order remained intact. Meanwhile, the grand strategy thinking vacillated between proponents of integration within the club of the West and supporters of Russia's distinctiveness who prefer a counterbalance against global dominance of the US and Western unilateral policies. Yet, the state's strategies; neither Kozyrev's social mobility, nor Primakov's creativity were unable to fulfil the pivotal objectives. Although, the West was blamed for refusing to recognise Russia's aspired standing, that brought Russo-Western relations to the lowest point. The strategies to resolve domestic socio-economic and political crisis has failed to achieve the perceived status criteria, as it has escalated the situation within Russia's political landscape at the end of 1990s.

Under the shadow of increasing perception of status inconsistency and inferiority, from 2000, the centre of the grand strategy landscape changed. Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and his statist developmentalist supporters dominated the centre of political power with a new version of Russian national self-concept with emphasis on re-establishing Russian international standing. The self-concept hypothesised proper status emphasised the countries traditional values, the "Russia's ideas" and, but also the criteria and values of the modern world. Restoring the historical standing and gaining recognition through reconstruction and "modernisation" of socio-economic capabilities became the main objective of Putin's strategy "at the dawn of new millennium" (Putin, 1999, December 30). Based on this principle objective, when Putin succeeded Yeltsin, neither denying the

West completely nor declining the importance of Russia's traditional greatness, he pursued a tactic "of offering something for everyone" (Clunan, 2014a, p. 287).<sup>236</sup> Hence, it would be less surprising if the new version of national self-concept and national interests fascinated a large member of Russian elites and mass.

While, the emphasis on the necessity of economic development and modernization, fascinated Westernists, particularly the economic elites, the oligarchs who benefited from market liberalization and privatizations, hence defended the Westernist national self-concept. Perhaps that is why the oligarchs strongly supported Putin in ensuring his rise to power (Schimpfössl, 2018) Similarly, stress on restoring historical status based on the country's traditional values, the Russia's ideas absorbed Statists and Civilizationists, in particular the security and military elites, the siloviki. Accordingly, Putin as well was supported by siloviki, not only due to his security background, but rather due to Putin's convictions of Russian traditional ideas. The new version of national self-concept proposed statist developmentalists, in due course played a major role in creating a national consensus of various political groups with different preferences.

In turn, the consensus was also opportunity for Putin and his statist developmentalist fellows to gain supports and sources of the different spectrum of domestic forces, needed to persuade their political objectives. While, the new self-concept was clearly more favoured by the statists and civilizationists. Particularly, in new term, the security and military elites and hardliners, siloviki, gained much more respected place comparing to the Yeltsin era. Regarding oligarchs, Kremlin still needed in particular the economic sources of the group to persuade economic development and modernization within

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<sup>236</sup> Experts approved the fact, as they convinced up to mid-2000 because of necessity of economic development and modernization, Russia took less assertive but more pragmatic cooperative approach towards the West, at least up to the colour revolutions.

Russia. Simultaneously, Putin and statist developmentalists were to persuade their own model of economic development that seems different from capitalist marketization and privatization pursued particularly during Westernist tenure. This would hit the oligarchs who were main winners of capitalist model pursued mainly by Westernists in previous era. The president did not even hesitate to dictate his authority and new model of political economy even through criticizing publicly of some of the 90s oligarchs and accusing them for having looted Russia's wealth (Sakwa, 2008).<sup>237</sup> At the same time, at least initially Putin attempted to deal with the oligarchs by showing his readiness to respect what the groups achieved during the previous era. Therefore, while assuring the oligarchs that "they could keep what they had already stolen", Putin reinforced the new political economy philosophy warning them that "but now they had to play clean, pay taxes, make investments and stay out of politics" (Tsygankov, 2009).

Gradually moving towards mid-2000s, however, the situation changed. The new philosophy was dictated soon to oligarchs through investigating the major business by state's agencies for tax evasion and privatisation deals, that mainly indicated by the case of Yukos, oil company and its president Mikhail Khodorkovsky. It was from mid-2000s, the Kremlin's position towards oligarch completely changed.<sup>238</sup>

The main distinction between Putin and Primakov's terms, regarding the status-enhancement strategies, was in the competition dimension that changed from gaining emblematic achievements to "domestic development" or "modernisation". As well as at the rhetorical level, where the continuous declarations of Russia's greatpowerness and

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<sup>237</sup> Began few after his election in March 2000, Putin blamed oligarchs those "who fuse power and capital" (Sakwa, R, 2008)

<sup>238</sup> Soon after the colour revolutions, when the widespread perception of status recognition dilemma increased the role and influence of Russian civilizationalists coalitions, the military security hardliners and intensified their voice and their preferences over Russia's political preferences at the expense of other, mainly the moderate political discourses and their preferred moderation and assurance policies (Will be explained next).

privilege continued less assertively and more pragmatically. It seemed that new dominant group led by Putin had learnt that neither rhetoric emphasis on past experiences, nor possession of nuclear arsenals nor the UNSC permanent seat with the veto, as the Soviet status markers, were guarantees for gaining the higher standing in the order that the US with the higher capabilities was able to dictate its dominance. In fact, the creativity adopted by Primakov as a means to constrain the US unipolar actions via the forming a strategic partnership with the non-Western great powers neither brought the higher aspired status nor succeeded in constraining the West and US. Thus, there was a widespread realisation of the futility of social creativity, humiliation and inferiority, which spurred Russian elites to form a new strategy, social competition.

## **5.2 Developmentalist Statism and Russia's Status**

This chapter traces the key changes in Russia's grand strategic orientation, and the state's foreign behaviours brought about by Statist developmentalism as the dominant self-concept, through analysing ideas of Russian leaders and political elites involving in the process. This included analysing the leaders' concept of status and explaining the likely grand strategy orientation suggested by the proponents of self-concept to achieve the aspired status. Finally, this chapter evaluates the strategy in practice, to see whether it managed to gain recognition regarding the behaviour of the main *Other/s*.

### **5.2.1 Developmentalist Statism and Worldview**

The realistic view of the international system still prevailed. The leaders emphatically claimed that there should be no "illusion" that in a "much more complicated world", the "harsh" "intensive" and "bitter competitive struggle" exists (Putin, 2000, July 8, 2003, May 16, 2004, May 26). As Putin (2002, April 18) pointed, "competition has indeed become global". New dominant elites similarly perceived the interstate system through the lens of realism in which actors are in an insensitive competition in all dimensions.

“Yes, the period of confrontation has ended”, the president “however” insistently cleared, “The norm in the international community, in the world today, is also harsh competition” in entire aspects of humanity “for markets, for investment, for political and economic influence” (Putin, 2002, April 18).

The interstates “economic and political parameters” of competition was further characterised “by the size of the tax burden”, “security level of the country and its citizens”, in “guarantees for protecting property rights”, “attractiveness of the business climate”, “the development of economic freedoms” and “the quality of state institutions and the effectiveness of the legal system”. Accordingly, Russian leaders were convinced that in the era which inherited intensive competition, the country’s “ability to compete”, and its “readiness to fight for resources and influence directly determines the situation within the country and Russia’s authority in international affairs” (Putin, 2002, April 18).<sup>239</sup>

However, contrary to Primakov and his fellows, the new leaders accentuated the economy or geo-economy as the base of world competitiveness, rather the military and geopolitical dimensions.<sup>240</sup> Put differently, the leaders felt that in a world with competitive trends in all aspects, “competition in the world economy is as intense ever” raised by “increasing globalization of the economy” (Putin, 2003, May 16). In “Open Letter to Voters”, Putin highlighted the key character of “the new age will not be a battle of ideologies but a fierce competition for life, national wealth and progress” (Putin, 2000,

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<sup>239</sup> In a similar statement, FM Ivanov mentioned, “we are perfectly aware that the competitive struggle is increasing, and that in this struggle the EU countries are not only our partners, but also competitors. This is natural, as one does not contradict the other” (I. Ivanov, 2003, December 10b).

<sup>240</sup> Igor Ivanov convinced that the emergence of “a global economic system does not rule out competition among the various world centres”. Instead, such the competition even “will most likely grow”, in new century, but the foreign minister also convinced that such the competition will not necessarily “always” be in favour of the West (I. Ivanov, 2003, December 10b).



February 25).<sup>241</sup> “In the world today, no one intends to be hostile towards us, no one wants this or needs it”, however the president clarified, “no one is particularly waiting for us either. No one is going to help us, especially. We need to fight for a place in the ‘economic sun’ ourselves” (Putin, 2002, April 18).

Highlighting the geo-economics competition, Russian leaders were convinced that the greatest threat to Russia’s position in world politics is the “exclusion” from the global economic mainstream. Addressed by the president, Russia “is still ‘excluded’ from the process of forming the rules of world trade” that “causes the Russian economy to stand still and its competitiveness to drop” (Putin, 2002, April 18). Exclusion did not happen in a vacuum, instead, it generated by some forces attempting “to exclude” Russia, particularly, the “countries with highly developed economies” surrounding the state. Russians hence, Putin remarked, “need to [realise] that these countries push Russia out of promising world markets when they have the chance” and this is even more dangerous if the “obvious economic advantages” of those countries “serve as fuel for their growing geopolitical ambitions”(Putin, 2003, May 16).

The “most serious challenges” were still internal. While the primary concern in interstate system was competition over economy; logically the state’s internal “economic weakness” was certainly seen as the “most serious problem”, even the “real strategic challenge”, challenging its international standing. Besides “some achievements”, Russia’s economy was “still very weak”, as it could not break with “the problems” having shaped “over previous decades of stagnation and crises”. The state was challenged by the “danger of a growing lag in the economy” due to its “non- modernised”, “raw material exporter” economy embodied with “undeveloped financial market infrastructures”, and

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<sup>241</sup> The article published in Russian media as a part of Putin’s presidential campaign through which he attempts to introduce his “plan”.

the lack of “scientific and technical progress” (Putin, 2000, July 8, 2002, April 18).<sup>242</sup> Hence, apart from the force of advancing powers, it was domestic “conditions of progressing economic lag”, an ongoing serious issue that led to a “growing gap between leading nations and Russia” and pushed the country “towards becoming a third world country” (Putin, 2002, April 18).

In his well-known paper, “*Russia at the dawn of new Millennium*”, Putin lamented the lack of clear “understanding of national objectives and advances, which would ensure Russia’s standing as a developed, prosperous and great country of the world in the previous years, [Russia] is badly felt in the economy” in “one of the most difficult periods in its history”. The economic lag, now threatening Russia’s international standing, as the President highlighted “For the first time in the past 200-300 years, it is facing a real threat of sliding to the second, and possibly even third, echelon of world states” (Putin, 1999, December 30).

Socio-politically, the main challenges derived from the “power vacuum” in the “political system” was that it was “insufficiently developed” and that it had an “ineffective state apparatus”.<sup>243</sup> Moreover, “one of the most serious threats” even for “the survival of the nation” was the demographic crisis that Russia “really do face”; “the threat of becoming an enfeebled nation”(Putin, 2000, July 8, 2003, May 16). The major security threats “to stability and public safety” in Russia’s society was the “growth of extremism” raised primarily from “fascist and nationalist” groups who were “beating and killing

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<sup>242</sup> Detailed by Putin, his country was “not a state symbolizing top standards of economic and social development now”, it faced with socio-economic difficulties. Amongst all, “Russia’s GDP nearly split” during previous decade, in “ten times smaller than in the USA and five times smaller than in China” mainly following the financial crash in 1998, “the per capita GDP dropped to roughly \$ 3,500, which is roughly five times smaller than the average indicator for the G7 states” (Putin, 1999, December 30).

<sup>243</sup> Putin argued, “The power vacuum” caused the “state functions being seized by private corporations and clans” who “acquired their own shadowy groups, groups of influence, dubious security services which use illegal means to receive information”. Accordingly, the dysfunctionality of “the current organization of the state mechanisms” resulted to serious challenges within Russia, as it “enables corruption”, “crime” and even were “the main reason for the long and deep economic crisis” in the country (Putin, 2000, July 8).

people” (Putin, 2002, April 18). Altogether, with an “extreme example of unresolved” situation of “Chechnya” made the main socio-political challenges that Russia faced. Summarised by the President,

“We [Russians] face serious threats. Our economic foundation has become more solid, but it is still not stable enough and still very weak. Our political system remains insufficiently developed and our state apparatus is not very effective. Most sectors of our economy are not competitive. Meanwhile, our population continues to fall and the fight against poverty is progressing far too slowly” (Putin, 2003, May 16).

Highlighting the geo-economics competition and domestic economic backwardness as the main challenge of the state’s standing may help to explain why proponents of developmentalism downplayed the role of geopolitical factors even after the West and NATO military intervention in Iraq and Kosovo. Although the new worldview still hinted at the “attempts to infringe on the sovereign rights of nations in the guise of ‘humanitarian’ operations”, the trends that made “finding a common language in issues which represent a regional or international threat”, more difficult (Putin, 2000, July 8). However, contrary to the previous era, it was seldom and occasional.<sup>244</sup> Even in the case of NATO, Putin was more pragmatic where he called NATO’s behaviour as a “problem” not a threat, arguing, “We think that this organisation often ignores the opinion of the international community and the provisions of international legal documents in its decision-making process, and this is the biggest problem” (Putin, 2001, April 3).<sup>245</sup>

Verified by Russian scholar, while “in Putin’s first term the external challenges were very huge and considerable, and there was an understanding in Russia, particularly after Kosovo, that NATO and the West were no going to work in the way Russian government wanted”, however, “the main emphasis was on domestic development inevitably”. The

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<sup>244</sup> The fact was observed in Presidential annual addresses too. Generally, at least in Putin first administration, the presidential annual addresses more concentrated on Russia’s domestic socio-political and economic conditions, and contrary to Yeltsin era, there were less talk about foreign policy, much less regarding Western Security system and organization like NATO.

<sup>245</sup> As will be shown next, Russian top officials at least initially pointed NATO as a problem.

scholar justified “since, there was a greater danger of further disintegration of Russia... the survival was still the main concern” (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018). The internal situation was rather focused, because, “Putin came to power through the frame of socioeconomic crisis, as a problem solving, a manager, as the person who was to solve one of the biggest crisis of the late 20<sup>th</sup>, he was naturally more oriented on internal affairs” (Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019). Put differently, foreign policy expert argued, “Putin’s first administration was about consolidating at home, making order in the home, and maximising the power capabilities”. Hence, the leaders, “focused on domestic condition not since they saw the external world benign or more secure. Instead, they viewed the world in a sense of pure realpolitik based on a measurement on the assessment on the capabilities” (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

In a more secure era, that “no one is going to war”, Putin however pointed to “a need to overcome” some “difficult consequences” and “serious challenges” that were raised following the fall of the Iron Curtain. Similar to previous era, Russian leaders signified “the existence of serious real and potential threats” which largely shadowed over “the relations between nations” in modern world including “proliferation of weapons of mass destruction” along with “regional and territorial conflicts”. Amongst all, the leaders often reiterated “international terrorism”, as the “evils”, the “potential geopolitical threat” which not only systematically challenges Russia’s “sovereignty and territorial integrity” but attempts “towards a geopolitical reorganisation of the world” too. Accordingly, international system was faced with the “new type of external aggression”, “a different war” that “threatens the world and endangers the security of ... citizens” (Putin, 2000, July 8, 2001, April 3, 2002, April 18, 2003, May 16).<sup>246</sup> The September 11 terrorist attack

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<sup>246</sup> Similarly, FM Ivanov pointed to the “new global threats and challenges of a different order”, that “no longer arising from the nature of relations” great powers like Russia-US, “as was the case during the Cold War”, but from “the terrorism”, “extremism”, and “the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction”, “drug trafficking, and organized crime”. Highlighting such new sources of threat, Ivanov concluded that the “extremely complex” and perhaps unprecedented task of the states in “the present stage of world

perhaps fuelled such threat perceptions, when “many, many people in the world realized”, that in place of “the Cold war”, Putin (2002, April 18) revealed “Now there are different threats that a different war is on, the war with international terrorism”. More emphatically, FM Ivanov claimed the threats reached an unprecedented period in the “history” (I. Ivanov, 2003, December 10b, 2004, July 2004).

The focus on the economic dimension of the world competition however never meant that the new worldview ignored the geopolitical factor, but it deems to have “secondary importance”. According to Alexander Sergunin (Personal Interview, 12 October 2018) “while the West political and military behaviours, particularly the NATO’s military intervention in Kosovo, became a source of threat for Russia. However, it was still a threat just for secondary importance; there are not the primary importance”. Russia was accordingly “still optimistic with regard to the international situation, but more pessimistic on internal one”. The scholar concluded that there was “a kind of a combined version”, “When Putin came to power...started to look at the international system from the mixture of realist and liberal approaches to international relations” (Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).

An analysis of a range of Russian official documents, Blueprint (NSC), MD and FPC reflected more or less similarly. Regarding the fact that the documents were published when Putin was still “acting president” after Yeltsin reassignment. They portrayed the period following Soviet collapse as “the transformation of international relations”, “the end of bipolar confrontation” that had been experiencing “steady elimination of the consequences of the Cold War”. Amongst “the positive changes in international situation”, hinted at vanishing “the direct military threats” and “large scale war”

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development” is to solve “once so many unresolved regional problems, really threatening international security” (I. Ivanov, 2003, November, 18).

“including a nuclear war” amongst the great powers.<sup>247</sup> While “the military power” had still significant place, but “economic, political, scientific and technological factors” played “the greater role” in the new era.<sup>248</sup> Reflecting a realist view, the documents particularly accentuated the competitive root of interstate relations, mainly over economy. Besides all the positive achievements, yet they recognised some destabilising forces, the external challenges and internal sources of threats too (MDR, 2000, April 21; MID, 2000, June 28; The President of Russia, 2000, January 10)

Amongst all, the Blueprint is to realise Russian perceptions of the new challenges and sources of “internal and external threats” to the states “security” interests.<sup>249</sup> Blueprint indicated “a dynamic transformation of the system of international relations” to a “non-confrontational era” but it realistically convinced that the order was based on “competition” between “two mutually exclusive trends”. One including Russia, is attempting “to create a multipolar world”, and “the negative force” led by the US and “developed Western” allies who sought to “unilateral solutions (including the use of military force) to key issues in world politics in circumvention of the fundamental rules of international law”. Externally it referred to, “the desire of some states and international associations to diminish the role of existing mechanisms for ensuring international security, above all the UNSC and the OSCE”. It also hinted at “the danger of a weakening of Russia’s political, economic and military influence in the world”; and “the

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<sup>247</sup> The FPC noted, “The threat of a global nuclear conflict has been reduced to a minimum” (MID, 2008, January 16). Similarly, the MD hinted to “a decline in the threat of the unleashing of a large-scale war, including a nuclear war”, it also emphasized that “Under present-day conditions the threat of direct military aggression in traditional forms against the Russian Federation and its allies has declined thanks to positive changes in the international situation” (MDR, 2000, April 21).

<sup>248</sup> Referring to the ongoing “significance” of “military power”, the FPC claimed that “an ever greater role is being played by economic, political, scientific and technological, ecological, and information factors” (MFAR, 2008, January 16). The Blueprint called the “military force” as a “substantial aspect” of interstate system, while it remarked the role of “economic, scientific, and technological” along with geopolitical potentials as determining factors in the new era (The President of Russia, 2000, January 10).

<sup>249</sup> As a specified security document comprehensively reviewed the main sources of security and military “threats” of the country’s “national security”, internally and externally, while other documents can be used more complementary in that regards. Chronologically also the NSC was the first, that was published the document in January 2000 (The President of Russia, 2000, January 10).

strengthening of military-political blocs and alliances, above all NATO's eastward expansion" as potential sources of external challenges.<sup>250</sup> The main sources of "threats to Russia's national security" and its interests were however domestic, including "weakness of the national economy"; "ineffective political system", the "structure of the authorities of state and of society", "social and political polarisation of society"; "the growth of organized crime", "Corruption" as well as "terrorism" (The President of Russia, 2000, January 10).<sup>251</sup>

In brief, from 2000 to mid-2000s, the Russian statist developmentalism perceived the world politics in line with realism, competitive, with competition mainly over geo-economics. Variation in Russia's attitudes towards world politics was due to fact that the leaders learnt about the lack of recognition from the West, and that it was perceived that Russia lacked the capability mainly economic to be reckoned as an equal great power.

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<sup>250</sup> The NSC also hinted to other sources of external threats including: "the possible emergence of foreign military bases and major military presences in the immediate proximity of Russian borders"; "proliferation of mass destruction weapons and their delivery vehicles"; "the weakening of integrational processes in the Commonwealth of Independent States"; "outbreak and escalation of conflicts near the state border of the Russian Federation and the external borders of CIS member states; territorial claims on Russia" (The President of Russia, 2000, January 10).

<sup>251</sup> While the FPC listed key sources of threats exerting "significant influence on global and regional stability" including; "Military-political rivalry among regional powers", "unregulated or potential regional and local armed conflicts", "the problem of proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction", "the growth of international terrorism", "transnational organized crime", in addition to "illegal trafficking in drugs and weapons". At the same time, it referred to "a growing trend towards the establishment of a unipolar structure of the world with the economic and power domination of the United States" through "weakening the role of the UN Security Council" a new challenge for Russia's interests. Besides, FPC pointed to the "attempts to belittle the role of a sovereign state as the fundamental element of international relations" as the other source threat in the interstate system. Regarding NATO, as well as some reservations about the organization new "guidelines", "Russia retains its negative attitude towards the expansion". As well, it remarked the main domestic socio-political sources of threats such as "the growth of separatism, ethnic-national and religious extremism" (MID, 2008, January 16). The MD listed as "the lawful activities of the extremist national ethnic", "religious and separatist and terrorist movements", "organizations and structures"; "attempts to disrupt the unity and territorial integrity of the state and to destabilize the internal situation"; "attempt to overthrow the constitutional system". Similarly MD listed a range of external challenges of Russian security interests, including; "Interference with Russian Federation internal affairs"; "Attempts to ignore (or infringe on) RF interests in resolving" international security Problems"; "attempts to oppose the interests of influence of the RF on a global level"; "the expansion of foreign troops (without UNSC sanction) to the territory of contiguous states friendly with the RF"; "suppression of the rights of RF citizens abroad" (MDR, 2000, April 21).

### 5.2.2 Developmentalist Statism and National identification

Developmentalist Statism as a new national consensus dominated Russian political landscape with a new version of national identity based on what Putin called the “Russian idea (Putin, 1999, December 30, 2000, July 8).<sup>252</sup> This focused on the country’s “own distinctive character” derived from “basic national values and objectives” as the constant characters determining “Russia’s historic fate over these thousand and more years” and “the way Russia has continuously emerged as a strong nation” (Putin, 1999, December 30, 2000, July 8, 2000, June 28, 2002, April 18, 2003, May 16).

While there was an emphasis on Russia’s “traditional values”, the new version had a close affinity with Statism and Civilizationism, a simultaneous emphasis on some “universal values” relates to the version with Westernism. In his *Millennium Manifesto*, Putin stressed, “The new Russian idea will come about as an alloy or an organic unification of universal general humanitarian values with traditional Russian values”, and stressed that it is crucial that this “process must not be accelerated, discontinued and destroyed” (Putin, 1999, December 30). Whatever, Putin’s version of identity was in fact “a mixed” “selective” version, a “combination of idea” concentrated from different spectrum of Russian domestic political groups, what can be called a kind of “pragmatic” identification.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Worth to note that one of the main sources of new version of Russian national identity is “Russia at the Turn of the Millennium”, wrote by Putin as an electorate when he was still Russian prime minister. Analysing data shows that the version of national identity prevailed on the annual addresses to national assembly too, that would be pointed where it fits in this part.

<sup>253</sup> The term was borrowed from Russian FM Ivanov who called the “balanced” “pragmatic” version of national identity (I. Ivanov, 2001). Foreign policy experts also emphasized that the new identity version was more a balanced one Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018; Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019; Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019). As a scholar remarked “one major thing that Putin certainly did was concentrate on the selection of identity. Putin actually created combination of several elements regarding Russia’s multi-ethnic society” (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019). Sherr (Personal Interview, 19 March 2019) convinced that in Putin’s era particularly in first era “there was a different version of identity for a different type of reason because he was interested in borrowing any sort of experiences and expertise that would make Russia and its institutions more effected more efficient”.



To define national identity statist developmentalists moved from criticising Russian past to convincing people that today's Russia was "reaping the bitter fruit, both materially and mentally, of the past decades". Primarily, "the communists' doctrine" and the "Bolshevist experiment" was frowned upon for its "outrageous price" imposed on Russia and Russians, and most importantly for "its historic futility" after centuries. Similar to Westernists, Putin condemned the "Soviet power" and the communist ideology for failure "to make Russia a prosperous country with a dynamically developing society and free people". Particularly, "communism", was rejected for "vividly ... inability to foster sound self-development", and leading the "country to lagging steady behind economically advanced countries", hence as "a blind alley, far away from the mainstream of civilisation" (Putin, 1999, December 30).<sup>254</sup> Understandably, the leaders convinced that the first step to overcome the difficulties, return Russia to its "golden" era, and regain "its place among the prosperous, developed, strong and respected nations", was "to start living according to normal human logic" and "ensuring normal life" for Russians (Putin, 2003, May 16, 2004, May 26). Accordingly, "the conviction that Russia would be a normal country" came up once again "when the Putin came to power" (Alexander Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).

However, rejecting communism and emphasising on normalisation never meant accepting the Westernists' approach of "renewal" of Russia. According to Putin, besides the "fundamental changes" took place in post-Soviet transitional era, such as "rights and freedoms of the individual", creating a "democratic political system", however, what Russians gained in a paper was "quite different things in the real life". As it was "still hard to find a way out of a false conflict between the values of personal freedom", the

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<sup>254</sup> Similarly, FM Ivanov criticized the "communist ideology" and stated "the new Russia cannot consider itself a successor to the USSR as the champion of the theory of a global 'class struggle', which had once served as an ideological basis for confrontation with the West as well as for the well-known use of force in Europe and Asia". Therefore, as "the main lesson from Russia's foreign policy in recent centuries is that Moscow rejects ideology in favour of national interests" (I. Ivanov, 2001).

“civil liberties” with national traditional values and the state’s interests. Moreover, at the end of the “stormy decade”, the Westernists’ experience led Russia with collapsed economy and “weakened positions on world markets” and collapsed state that forced the country to “restore its statehood”. This means that as the 1990s revealed, the experience neither gained the state’s place amongst the “truly economically advanced and influential nations” nor it guaranteed the survival of the country in the post-industrial world (Putin, 2003, May 16, 2004, May 26).

Consequently, as Putin concluded, “Merely experimenting with abstract models and schemes taken from foreign textbooks”, or “the mechanical copying of other nations’ experience”, the Westernists’ assimilation of the West, could not guarantee Russia a “genuine renewal” while it brought “excessive costs for state” (Putin, 1999, December 30). The result was humiliating “not just because of our national pride”, that was “very important” but also for causing “far more serious and dramatic” issues too (Putin, 2000, July 8). Hence, it was neither desired nor appropriate for Russia, and the Westernists’ normalisation during the transition era was in the same category as the Soviet trial that they wanted to overcome.

While none of Soviet and post-Soviet approaches have been successful, “the only real choice for Russia”, “the strategic choice” was that of creating a “strong and confident country”, through relying “on Russia’s own distinctive character, and own efforts” instead of “rely on others’ advice, aid and loans” (Putin, 2000, July 8). This means, Russia, as if “every country” has to adopt its own distinctive path, “the way of renewal” (Putin, 2000, July 8). Accordingly, for Putin and his supporters, Russia’s great power status rested on the state’s own traditional values “drawn from the past”, rather than the universal values adopted in previous decade. Therefore, in response to the psychological need to demonstrate the state’s distinctiveness, Putin skilfully suggested the “Russian

idea” by emphasizing on traditional values; “patriotism”, “statism”, “social solidarity” along with “the historical Greatpowerness”. The values that accounted as the “footholds” of harmony in Russian community and cores of the new version of Russian identity (Putin, 1999, December 30).<sup>255</sup>

Russia’s idea simultaneously illustrated what Russian Statist developmentalists did not like and what they liked Russia to be.<sup>256</sup> This implies that while the state was to be a normal but the normalcy in the new version was based on Russia’s historical distinct values rather the Western values. Russia in the new term, “will not become a second edition of ... the US or Britain, where liberal values have deep historic traditions” (Putin, 1999, December 30). Complementary argument, Russian president mentioned prevailing the universal values like “the democratic organisation” in Russia, and its “openness to the world” do never “contradict our uniqueness” based on traditional values like “patriotism”, nor would it, according to Putin, “hinder us from finding our own answers to issues of spirituality and morals”. Accordingly, he concluded, “With all the abundance of views, opinions and the diversity of ... platforms, we have had and continue to have common values... which join us and allow us to call ourselves a single people” (Putin, 2000, July 8). Therefore, the definition of Russian identity appeared in close affinity with the Statism and Civilisationism, it was obviously different from what Russian Westernists, particularly, Kozyrev had perceived.

As the key distinguishing character of Russian national identity, in line with Statism, Russian president highlighted the role of “strong state”. Beyond traditional “exceptionally

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<sup>255</sup> The values were common the presidential annual address too (Putin, 2000, July 8, 2001, April 3, 2003, May 16, 2004, May 26)

<sup>256</sup> As in his paper Putin asked, “The question for Russia now is what to do next”, “How to overcome the still deep ideological and political split in society” and “what strategic goals can consolidate Russian society? And what material and spiritual resources do we have now” (Putin, 1999, December 30).

important role of the state in Russian society”, which it was “a source of and guarantor of order and the initiator and main driving force of any change”, Russia’s current situation added extra importance to the value (Putin, 1999, December 30).<sup>257</sup> In that sense, any “move forward into the future” for Russia to stand as a modern being able to adopt in contemporary world is highly possible under the leadership of a “strong and effective state”.<sup>258</sup>

Regarding the critical role given to the state logically implied that the Western universal values like democracy, gained a secondary role or relevancy. This means that while universal values such as “freedoms” and “civil liberties” still occupied a “firm” position in “Russian democracy”, they ensured that merely under “a strong state”. It was revealed by Putin that “only a strong, or effective” leadership can also be “a democratic state”, “is capable of protecting civil, political and economic freedoms, capable of creating conditions for people to lead happy lives and for our country to flourish” (Putin, 2000, July 8).<sup>259</sup> Practically this implies that a “strong state must be where it is needed and as it is needed”, as shown nearly in all socioeconomic and political dimensions of society; then “freedom must be where it is needed and as it is required” (Putin, 1999, December 30). Later, Putin revealed what he meant clearly, that “If by democracy one means the dissolution of the state, then we do not need such democracy” (The Washington Post, 2003, September 26). Reflected by a scholar, in the evolutionary process of

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<sup>257</sup> Putin emphasized that the state within Russian society was never “an anomaly that should be disposed of” (Putin, 1999, December 30). Reflected frequently in the addresses, “a response to challenges” in all dimensions that Russian society was suffering; in political dimension in “different levels of power”, in “security issues”, “in the economy or in the social sphere”, or solving any novel forthcoming “national task”; could be “impossible without strengthening the state” (Putin, 1999, December 30, 2000, July 8, 2001; Putin, 2002, April 18, 2003, May 16; Putin, 2004, May 26).

<sup>258</sup> Similar argument; (Putin, 1999, December 30, 2000, July 8, 2001, April 3, 2002, April 18, 2003, May 16, 2004, May 26)

<sup>259</sup> Ivanov called “balancing the current democratic character of its state and society with its history” (I. Ivanov, 2001).

Russians' identification based on the country's distinctiveness, Putin focused on Russia's "different but original path of development".

"Instead of the Western and liberal cultural emphasis on individualism...Putin was restoring the community thinking through building the strong state up, where every citizen of the state could be proud of it. This implied the re-establishment of Russia as a great, strong power, based on Putin's version of national identity" (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

Consequently, the new leadership emphatically pursued strengthening the state in all dimensions. Apart from creating the "vertical power structure" on a socio-political level, economically Putin highlighted the need "to form a wholesome system of state regulation of the economy and social sphere" as an outcome "of lesson of the 1990s". While rhetorically, the elites still attempt to discern from Soviet planned economic system.<sup>260</sup> Instead, Putin highlighted a model that the state should play as "an efficient coordinator of the country's economic and social forces" by balancing "their interests, optimising the aims and parameters of social development and creates conditions and mechanisms of their attainment". With this definition, the state's function in economic dimension was limited compared with the Soviet system, but "naturally exceeds" from Liberals' market economy "formula" (Putin, 1999, December 30).<sup>261</sup> Hence, "the main task" of the strong, effective state in economy was "to fine-tune the work of state institutions that ensure the work of the market" (Putin, 2000, July 8).

In brief, from 2000s, statist developmentalists offered a version of national identity amalgam of different sets of ideas. Where universal values like democracy, individual freedoms, and the necessity of development and modernisation as a base for today's greatpowerness linked Russia with the Western community. The strong state altogether

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<sup>260</sup> Putin rejected Soviet economic system, "Where the all-pervasive state was regulating all aspects of any factory's work from top to bottom" (Putin, 1999, December 30).

<sup>261</sup> As Putin defined the market-oriented model as "a formula which limits the state's role in the economy to devising rules of the game and controlling their observance" (Putin, 1999, December 30).

with patriotism,<sup>262</sup> social solidarity,<sup>263</sup> and the historical belief in greatpowerness, discussed next, made Russia discerned from others, particularly from the West. As Putin highlighted, Russians “do not need to look for a national idea especially” since “It is already ripening in our society”, hence the only task was “to understand the kind of Russia that we believe in and the kind of Russia we want to see” (Putin, 2000, July 8).

Referring to “Putin’s Millennium” as a “Manifest” of new identification, foreign policy scholar summarised:

“Putin very clearly says that Russia has a kind of equal democracy, while he would not confirm the Western democracies. He says Russia will not become the second US, it does not the same kinds of values, and it will be very distinctive. He raised up a vision with a very clear sense of identity and interests and the following ten, twenty years, have been an application of these ideas, existed from the beginning. Besides all differences he had, and variations that [one may] see in the practical application of those fundamental ideas, but the foundations, the fundamental ideas on identity, his ideas on policy, on Russia’s place in the world had been pretty constant and if back to early 1999” (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

While the focus on Russia’s distinctiveness and its uniqueness made the version similar to Eurasian Statism, but contrary, Putin and his statist developmentalists supporters’ emphasis was more on cultural terms rather geopolitical dimension, at least rhetorically. As the analysis of official documents showed, there was still, but less emphatically, reference to “the geopolitical position”, “Russia as one of the largest Eurasian powers” (MID, 2000, June 28).<sup>264</sup> Downplaying geopolitical factors, in answer to “ideological” belonging to East, West, or Eurasia as the long century essential matter

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<sup>262</sup> Patriotism, as a “source of the courage, staunchness and strength” in Russian society was defined as “a feeling of pride in one’s country, its history and accomplishments...the striving to make one’s country better, richer, stronger and happier”. The psychological sentiment in such “original and positive meaning” was as Putin accentuated “free from the tints of nationalist conceit and imperial ambitions”. Connecting the sentiment with the “national pride and dignity”, Putin warned, “If we lose patriotism ... we will lose ourselves as a nation capable of great achievements” (Putin, 1999, December 30) similarly highlighted in the annual addresses (Putin, 2002, April 18, 2003, May 16).

<sup>263</sup> As a deep-seated value in Russia’s society, the social solidarity was described, “As a striving for corporative forms of activity has always prevailed over individualism” in Russian society”. “Paternalistic sentiments have struck deep roots in Russian society” (Putin, 1999, December 30).

<sup>264</sup> Similarly, the Millennium Manifesto referred the geopolitical factor as the source of Russia’s historic standing, which diminished role in modern era (Will be discussed more in next section) (Putin, 1999, December 30).

in the state's foreign policy landscape, I. Ivanov stated, "Artificially opposing the West with the East as incompatible directions ... contradicts state interests" (I. Ivanov, 2001, 2003, December 10b).<sup>265</sup> Verifying the fact, Sumsky (Personal Interview, 22 November 2018) convinced that during Putin's era instead of question about "geopolitics or geography", "the tendency was obviously towards the understanding that Russia's identity was something different from whatever associate with the West, whatever associate With the East or Asia". Summarizing the new version, Sherr argues:

"What set them [Putin and his supporters] apart from the Yeltsin primarily is that ...Russia's civilisation is something distinctive, something that is not the West. ... Putin gave some hints about what the identity consists. First was the Russian believe, need and respect for strong state. This set him very much against the liberal consensus at the time, that was based on the limited state. Also, conviction that Russians are very conscious and prod of our history, which is not the history of others, Russians are the people who are prepared to sacrifice for the general good, Russians have a strong collective identity, they are religious people, Orthodox, spiritual people. All of these, a some sort of combination were present" (Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).

### **5.2.3 Developmentalist Statism and Russia's rank and Role**

The perception of Russia and its standing and role in the global arena remained relatively the same from 2000 to 2004/05. While the "belief in the greatness of Russia" as a historical unifying element of society, "the indispensable value" remained intact as Putin accentuated "Russia was and will remain a great power", "preconditioned by the inseparable characteristics of its geopolitical, economic and cultural existence" (Putin, 1999, December 30). Nevertheless, those factors determining Russians' "mentality" and "the policy of the government through the history", now deemed less relevant as "they cannot but do so" in the "complex situation" of the contemporary world. Hence, moving from the traditional belief, the question for Russia, according to Putin, was "what to do next" to maintain such the traditional greatness in modern world, "What place" the state

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<sup>265</sup> In similar argument, FM Ivanov remarked that "in the era of globalization the argument over whether Russia is a part of Europe or not has conclusively lost all sense" (I. Ivanov, 2003, December 10b).

wants or can “occupy in the international community in the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (Putin, 1999, December 30).

The first step to answer the need to gain the aspired status was to determine the sources and criteria that the status seeker need to possess to gain social recognition from main other/s. Illustrated by the theoretical proposition, social competition strategy implies that the aspirant state attempts to gain the social recognition through defining a positive and distinctive role and comparable characteristic around the current accepted criteria. In fact, rather than defining new alternative dimension in social creativity, the social competition implies that the status seeker attempts to be comparable in accepted criteria. Accordingly, Putin and his supporters attempted to achieve such a “world standards” and “the most important criteria of success” to gain aspired status recognition (Putin, 2002, April 18).

Regarding the realistic view towards the modern interstate system, particularly with indispensable, severest competition over the economic capabilities, logically the statist developmentalists were convinced that “the situation within the country” and the “authority in international affairs”, “directly” depended on the state’s “ability to compete and readiness to fight for resources and influence” (Putin, 2003, May 16). In his address Putin (2000, July 8) posed “can we hold out as a nation, as a civilization, if our prosperity continually depends on international loans and on the benevolence of leaders of the world economy?”. Consequently, rather military capabilities, possessing “competitive”, “stable”, “self-reliance” economy with “the ability to develop and use advanced high technologies” and “science-intensive commodities”, ensuring social welfare, the “worthy living standard for our citizens” could safeguard the state’ “worthy place” as a “full



member of the international community, a strong competitor” (Putin, 2000, July 8, 2001, April 3, 2003, May 16, 2004, May 26).<sup>266</sup>

Redefining the criteria, Russian elites learnt how to gain status recognition within the modern era as of the Western *others*, through adopting a new approach to achieve comparable capabilities rather merely relying on the ideational historical factors or potentials. “If we [Russians] want to take the lead within today’s complex rules of global competition”, Putin emphasised, Russia “must be ahead of other countries” primarily in economy. This was not merely “a question of our economic survival”, but most importantly it was “a question of ensuring that Russia takes its deserved place in these changing international conditions” (Putin, 2004, May 26).

Simultaneously, changing the perceptions of the status marker brought out the proper status, portraying it as a modern, advanced “great power” with “equal” privileges. Russia will be amongst “the community of most developed nations”.<sup>267</sup> Later, Putin (2003, May 16) discerned the new version of status, “We often talk of the greatness of Russia, but a great Russia is not just a great state. It is above all a modern, developed society”. Based on “the new mentality”, the main “national objective”, the “ultimate goal” of the state thereafter “should be to return Russia to its place among the prosperous, developed, strong and respected nations” (Putin, 1999, December 30, 2003).

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<sup>266</sup> As Putin (2000, July 8) addressed “A stable economy is the main guarantor of a democratic society and the very foundation of a strong nation that is respected in the world”.

<sup>267</sup> In his annual address in particular, Russian president frequently referred to the desired status and hinted that Russia will and must to gain or be as “the ranks of the truly strong, economically advanced and influential nations”; “a country with a flourishing civil society and stable democracy”; “a country with a competitive market economy”; “a country that gives reliable protection to property rights and provides the economic freedoms”; “a strong country, a country with modern, well-equipped and mobile Armed Forces”; “a competitive power”; “a truly strong, economically advanced”; a “developed, prosperous and great country of the world”; “a strong and confident of itself”; “an independent, strong and self-reliant” great power; and so on (Putin, 1999, December 30; Putin, 2002, April 18, 2003, May 16; Putin, 2004, May 26).

Indeed, the stress on economic competitiveness, as a modern marker of status did not necessarily mean ignoring the importance of Russia's distinctive geopolitical and historical cultural characteristics, or its military capabilities in defining its status. Instead, Russian political elites convinced the state's international position could be enhanced if those "potentials" be accompanied with the main criteria; a self-reliance competitive economy, as the "best world standard" in modern world (Putin, 2000, July 8, 2004, May 26). Simply put, neither to "merely survive" nor "to be an empire", Russia should "be a confident power with a great future" "among the greatest on the planet", hence it needed more than merely traditional ideational factors or potentials like a military capabilities as nuclear weapons (Putin, 1999, December 30, 2003, May 16). As "the principle feature of the modern world is the internationalisation of economy and society, in these conditions, the best world standards become the most important criteria of success". Hence, along with meeting Russia's own standards, then implementing "the best standards in the world" would bring really "the chance" to the state "to become rich and strong" (Putin, 2002, April 18).

Considering all those inseparable characteristics, similar to Primakov, Putin and his fellows accentuated Russia's "naturally" preconditioned role in the modern world in global and regional levels. As well, the elites continued to emphasise the state's historical role as a world stabilizer power.<sup>268</sup> Reflected by Putin (2000, July 8) "Strengthening international and regional stability, the search for correct, rather than quicker answers to new challenges of global safety, elimination of recidivism and stereotypes of the period of 'cold war' are inconceivable without the participation of Russia". However, contrary

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<sup>268</sup> Referring to the state's role in world security, in Interview with an Indian Magazine, Putin stated "we pursue our goals on the international arena: stability and modern democratic world order" (Putin, 2000, September 29). Similarly, Alexander Yakovenko, Director of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated, "Today not one significant international problem is being solved without Russia" (Yakovenko, 2003, December 31). To "ensure at the global level both stability and security, help to neutralize the present challenges and prevent the appearance of new", as Ivanov pointed, "Russia will continue to play an active, enterprising role in the formation of that world order" (Ivanov, 2003).

to Primakov's term, in a modified less messianic and more pragmatic way the new leaders portrayed Russia as "one of the most reliable guarantors of international stability", a "joint stabiliser in modern world", along with, not against, the West in particular the US (I. Ivanov, 2003, 2003, December 10b; Putin, 2002, April 18).

The 11 September 2001 gave Kremlin an opportunity to play the role by declaring the state's "joint responsibility" alongside the US in a struggle, conjointly against common threats from international terrorism. Clearly portrayed by Putin:

"Russia is one of the most reliable guarantors of international stability. It is Russia's principled position that has made it possible to form a strong anti-terrorist coalition. ... Our major goal in foreign policy is to ensure strategic stability in the world. To do this, we are participating in the creation of a new system of security; we maintain constant dialogue with the United States, and work on changing the quality of our relations with NATO" (Putin, 2002, April 18).

Statists developmentalists wished to depict a positively distinct role whereby Russia was on a par with the US; but based on characteristics of a reliable stabiliser and accurately responsible of international system. The role was premised on conjointly struggling, "the joint effort" against common challenges threaten security and peace of global community. Referring to "the particular responsibility of Russia and the US for the safeguarding of international security and stability", Igor Ivanov (2003) stressed "The settlement of regional problems, just as stability and predictability in world affairs as a whole, largely depends on the extent of the cooperative effort of Russia and the United States". This implies that while "joint work" with other partners "within the UNSC" was important but Moscow was more "interested in seeking constructive solutions to international problems together with Washington" (I. Ivanov, 2003).<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Similarly, in his speech, the FM Ivanov emphasized, "Russia will continue to be a reliable partner in joint efforts to build a secure, democratic and equitable world." Also in his speech to Russian diplomats and scholars, Ivanov (2003, November 18) stated, "in today's circumstances pooling the efforts and resources of Russia and the United States in countering and neutralizing the challenges [of post-cold war order] bears an imperative character".

Regionally, the statist developmentalists, continued to emphasize maintaining Russia's traditional role in Eurasian region. As FM Ivanov stressed "no matter how deep internal changes may be, the foreign policy of any state cannot begin with a clean slate, but bears the imprint of continuity determined by the country's geopolitics, history, and culture" (I. Ivanov, 2001). The role was preconditioned "by centuries of historical, cultural and economic ties", that made Russia a key player and the "area as the sphere of our [Russia's] strategic interests" (Putin, 2002, April 18). However, contrary to the previous era such a regional role was more pragmatic.

Analyzing the Russia's official documents shows more or less a similar picture. While the documents recognised Russia's greatpower status, the FPC and NSC paid more attention over the state standing, role and responsibilities. The FPC described "Russia as a great power", "one of the most influential centres of the modern world" that "has a real potential for ensuring itself a worthy place in the world". The "firm and prestigious positions"; "the worthy place" in the world politics should be ensured via "further strengthening" of the state's domestic socio-political and especially its "economic conditions".<sup>270</sup> Highlighting Russia's permanent position in UNSC, its "substantial potential and resources in all spheres of vital activity", along with its "intensive relations with the world leading powers", the FPC convinced that "as a great power, Russia exerts significant influence" while playing an important role in the "formation of new world order". FPC also stressed on the "geopolitical position" as the predetermining factor for the state's role and its "responsibility" in "maintaining security in the world both on a global and regional level" (MID, 2000, June 28).

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<sup>270</sup> As FPC pointed to the "strengthening of Russia's statehood, consolidation of civil society and the rapid transition to stable economic growth are of decisive importance in this respect" (MFAR, 2000, June 28).

Similarly, the Blueprint called Russia as “one of the world’s major countries”, with “centuries of history and rich cultural traditions”, and “virtue of its great economic, scientific, technological and military potential and its unique strategic location on the Eurasian continent”, had the capacity of playing “an important role in global processes” (The President of Russia, 2000, January 10). The documents related to Russia’s role in improving global and regional security and stability, as well emphasised on strengthening of the state’s role and participation in the overall global economic mainstream (MDR, 2000, April 21; MID, 2008, January 16; The President of Russia, 2000, January 10).

What is observed is that the states’ greatpowerness and its active role globally and regionally continued emphatically and pragmatically. “Under Putin” Alexander Sergunin (Personal Interview, 12 October 2018) convinces “the kind of status, prestige oriented foreign policies through highlighting on the pragmatic approaches became stronger”. An IR scholar similarly emphasized, “During the Putin era, the ideas of status and role in more international terms, definitely became more relevant” (Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018). Comparing with that of the 1990s, a foreign policy scholar reflected that “while in the Yeltsin era, Russia was comparatively confused [as a great power successor of Soviet Union] about how and what to do with its own potential, the vision changed when Putin came to power, in the early 2000s”. However, “Russia became a global great power, a global player that had potential and knew how to take drastic and powerful global action” (Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019).

Evidenced by the analysis, concern over status inconsistency influenced Russian grand strategy thinking in period of 2000 - 2005. The realist’s view of world politics remained the same but for statist developmentalism the base of competition was on geo-economics rather geopolitics. Using the language of distinctiveness, Russian collective identity was defined based on universal liberal values, with a stronger focus on cultural historical

distinct values and Russian ideas. While the first dimension led to Russia's affinity with its Western counterpart, hence a partially Western in-group, the latter made the state distinct with its own in group with any who shared the values, primarily the Eurasian neighbours. Putin and his supporters finally reconceptualised the historical status of the state in new sense based on standards of the modern world. Russia's status was portrayed as a modern developed great power. Hence, there should room for Russia to play an important role globally as one of the key stabilising forces of the international system and regionally it should continue playing its vital role but differently, with no messianic mission.

The re-conceptualised standing of the state was indeed different, but it was more realistic based on the criteria legitimised by the modern order. The pragmatic turn was indeed a response to the perception of status inconsistency, intensified in the previous era. It was found that neither simply assimilation, "blind copy" of the "Western values", nor self-perception of greatpowerness based on historical experiences or geopolitical factors or military arsenals inherited from the nation's past were sufficient to receive the aspired status in a modern international system. Therefore, Russia in this sense would be finally recognised as a higher status great power by achieving the standard of modern world while maintaining its traditional values. As hypothesised earlier in social competition, a status seeker attempts to be comparable in dimension legitimised by the order as criteria for higher status. Hence, to be a global modern developed great power, the elites believed that Russia should have competitive economic capabilities to gain the higher status.

### **5.3 Statist Developmentalism and Social Competition strategy**

Statist developmentalists coalition began to define the proper strategic orientations to gain the recognition of aspired standing, from 2000 to the mid-2000s. In theory, motivated states may request for a social competition strategy, if both types of social mobility and

social creativity fail to gain recognition of the desired status from others. Social competition can alter a negative perception and strive to be better on a comparative dimension.<sup>271</sup> In other words, the status seeker accepts the current normative order and the criteria for status recognition and attempts to gaining social recognition from other's through "self-improvement", instead of challenging or re-inventing the normative foundation on which made ranking or a zero-sum competition approach for material capabilities.

From 2000, when neither social mobility nor social creativity were enough to gain the aspired status, the developmentalist Statists, led by Putin, outlined a social competition strategy to enhance Russia's national and international standing. Putin and his statist allies attempted to gain status recognition in the criteria that was perceived as a basis for gaining higher standing in the in modern world hierarchical status. Therefore, they did not perceive Russia and Western counterparts, in particular the US, as great powers with unavoidably incommensurable objectives. Instead, the two powers shared a similar objective of upholding order in the international system. Russia's grand strategy, hence, has moved gradually from Primakov's creativity to social competition in Putin's term to enhance status via the positive characteristics that make the rising power a leading member of the existing normative order, rather than a zero-sum or realistic competition.

Modernisation and development were the pivotal factors that heavily influenced the state's national interests and its grand strategy. The aspired standing grounded the national interests primarily on domestic transition, in particular, economic development. This means that "the supremacy of domestic goals over foreign ones" by creating a self-reliant, competitive, advanced economy, under the leadership of the strong effective,

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<sup>271</sup> The strategy is still reassuring the existing order since the rising power requested the change in a dimension of the international order (status distribution). However, such alteration is under the accepted rule of the game. See more in Chapter 2.

protective state as a means to gain a worthy place in the international system. Prioritizing the development and modernization as such, shifted domain and role of the foreign policy as a means to ease the realization of those objectives. Russia should avoid overextending its policies in international issues and must participate and “engage in global ventures” that would be beneficial for the country. As Putin (2000, February 25) revealed, “We shouldn’t join those projects” that “bring no benefit to our people”, “no matter how much they are touted and how fine they sound”. Even “If Russia is being urged to engage in global ventures” that are costly, the state will “have to think twice before joining” them.

In terms of linking national interests and foreign policy, Putin addressed, “Not only is our authority on the international stage but also the political and economic situation in Russia itself depends on how competently and effectively we use our diplomatic possibilities”. Foreign policy in that sense was both “indicator and a major component of domestic affairs” (Putin, 2001, April 3).<sup>272</sup> Improve the role of foreign policy and “economic diplomacy” as a means to pursue internal objectives and national priorities; therefore, the economisation of foreign policy became the main character of Putin’s era. This meant finding ways “to use the tools of foreign policy for a more appreciable practical return in the economy and in the realisation of important national tasks” (Putin, 2004, May 26).<sup>273</sup>

Foreign policy in that sense, contrary to the previous era, should be less assertive. The logic behind this was simple, as the leaders assumed greater viability of geo-economic over the geopolitics, in definition of state’s standing as a modern power, and interests of

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<sup>272</sup> It deems Putin’s followed Yeltsin’s maxim in latest address, implying that diplomatic capabilities would provide the state “a chance of successful competition”; to be success in “internal political stabilization and overcoming economic crisis” and “emergence on the world stage as a respected and an equal partner” (Yeltsin, 1999, March 30).

<sup>273</sup> As Putin revealed, “Only the real interests of our country, including economic interests, should be the law for Russian diplomats” (Yeltsin, 1999, March 30).



establishing a self-reliant developed economy. National interests would be secured via the economisation of its resources. Hence, those objectives must be best achieved by “changing the international attitude” through both “finding an ally” and portraying Russia a “reliable ally for others”, a responsible partner, “a solid and predictable business partner” (Putin, 2002, April 18). Foreign policy in this sense definitely overlaps with the statist developmentalists’ conceptualised role of global stabiliser and a reliable guarantor of world order. As Igor Ivanov noted, “Russia will continue to play an active role” that was dictated by the state interests, as it would “provide external conditions which would reliably guarantee security and prosperity to the Russian citizens and the economic and social development of our country” (I. Ivanov, 2003).

The foreign policy was still unquestionably “independent”, not assertive but “the foundation of this policy is pragmatism, economic effectiveness, and the priority of national tasks” (Putin, 2000, July 8).<sup>274</sup> That “more pragmatic and concrete” foreign policy according to Putin, was “to promote our [Russian] national interests, [thereby] achieving economic growth and improving the standard of living” that “must determine our position in all bilateral and multilateral meetings”. The key aspect of the policy was:

“...to create optimal conditions for the development of the Russian economy, to create an atmosphere contributing to Russia’s active participation in building a new international security infrastructure, in creating that structure and assuring for Russia a place in world politics and economy that matches its potential” (Putin, 2002, May 22).

Russia’s grand strategy, the social competition hence, meant persuading those interests primarily through “further integration of the Russian economy into the international economy”. Practically this implies persuading pragmatic cooperation, particularly “with

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<sup>274</sup> Similarly, in next message, the president argued, “Russia should build its foreign policy on the basis of clearly defined national priorities, pragmatism and economic effectiveness” (Putin, 2001, April 3). Reiterating the terms of “strictly pragmatic way” of foreign policy in all dimension, in his initial messages, (Putin, 2001, April 3, 2002, April 18), in 2004, he claimed, “We have been able to a significant degree to make our foreign policy both dynamic and pragmatic” (Putin, 2004, May 26).

the world's leading industrial countries"; the Western developed powers, and the Western led constitutive order, institutions and organisations (Putin, 2000, July 8, 2002, April 18, 2003, May 16, 2004, May 26). Through "integration in the world economy", and cooperation with the Western developed powers; Russia was to avoid further exclusion and "take part in forming the rules" in the global economy. It was "to build a solid economic foundation", to gain "the best world standards and the most important criteria of success", "to protect" Russia's "economic interests" and "the interests of Russian business and Russian citizens" (Putin, 2001, April 3, 2002, April 18). Altogether, Putin (2003, May 16) concluded, "The biggest success comes to those countries that consciously use their energy and intelligence to integrate themselves into the world economy".

Practically, integration meant, as well as strengthening the state's position in "G-8" and "IMF", "Joining the WTO remains a priority for Russia" as the main step to participate in rulemaking in world trade. Moreover, creating a "partnership with the European Union", and "integration with Europe" became "one of the key areas of Russia's foreign policy" (Putin, 2000, July 8, 2001, April 3, 2002, April 18, 2003, May 16, 2004, May 26). The goal as the common interest of Russia and the "Greater Europe" would be realised, according to Putin "through initiating bilateral relations, developing strategic partnership with the European Union, and active participation in the work of the Council of Europe" (Putin, 2003, May 16).

Highlighting the integration into Western dominated institutions was however different from the initial Westernists' foreign policy. The main distinction was rooted in duality of the means, ends thinking. Integration in the new era, accordingly was "not an end in itself", instead it was a "tool" (Putin, 2000, February 7). Regarding joining in WTO, for example, Putin emphatically stated that Russia did see the institution "not an

absolute evil and not an absolute good... not an award for good behaviour". "The WTO is a tool" by which "those who know how to use it become stronger. Those who cannot or do not want to use it ... are completely doomed strategically". Hence, integration with WTO, as Putin accentuated must be "on conditions that are acceptable" and "beneficial" in favour of Russia (Putin, 2002, April 18).

Such partnership never meant to be a form of subordination to the West; on the contrary, it should be sought without losing face. Particularly, in relation "with international financial institutions" like the "IMF", "it would be very wrong to break off relations with it." However, "it would also be wrong to go begging" especially for "a large and basically self-sufficient country" like Russia. This means that "getting credits is not an end in itself" since again "the ultimate goal" of integration was "the wellbeing of the people" that could "only be based on real growth in the economy", "but it doesn't mean we [Russia] should beg for handouts" (Putin, 2000, February 7). As IR scholar confirmed "while Russia persuade integration [in Putin's first era] but the state did not wanting any major economic assets to fall into foreign hands" (Hanson, Personal interview, 5 January 2018). Therefore, the integration in the Western led institutions adopted by statist developmentalists was completely different from Russian liberals, it was a pragmatic policy; a necessary tool for Russian main national interests, and based on Russia's own values and conditions, not as end that of Westernization through joining in Western civilisation.

Foreign policy scholar saw the strategic orientations in Putin administrations in an evolutionary process, from the "realist" one in early 2000s, to the "pure realpolitik" from the middle of the decade. "On the first", he underscores "Putin was persuading the ideas of bring the house in order, to concentrate on Russia's economy and military capability build up". Regarding the "two main elements economically, militarily; if one looks at the

conventional military and its economy, [Russia] was certainly no longer economic power". Quoted from Putin, the expert reasoned "Russia's economy, was at the size of Italy" not that of global economic powers, "this is one factor that drives Putin to make sure that Russia is not put in that situation again ever, and its great power status could be questioned in that way". Therefore, "the leaders believed there is need to back the change in capabilities first" (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).<sup>275</sup>

Russia's grand strategy included pragmatic integration with the neighbours in the Eurasian region. Russia maintained its traditional function in the region that was preconditioned by historical socio-economic and geopolitical ties. However, unlike Primakov, Putin adopted different approach. The divergence was in the conceptualisation of the state's status. In fact, Moscow's attitude towards its Eurasian neighbour area, in the new era was consistent with the overall philosophy of the state's grand strategic thinking, gaining the aspired standing via modernisation. Thus, differently, Putin placed the greater weight on Eurasian region's "advantages" on a scale of global economic competition. Hence, while "working with CIS countries is Russia's main priority in foreign policy" however, the priority was "connected to receiving specific advantages on world markets" (Putin, 2000, July 8). Therefore, the region remained as a zone of Moscow's strategic interests, but "the strictly pragmatic policy" that followed "above all in the CIS", was based on the state's "capabilities and national interests" (Putin, 2002, April 18, 2003). Thus, instead of previous stress on Eurasia as a new dimension for comparison (social creativity), Putin accentuated the region as means for improving Russia in the accepted dimension (social competition).

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<sup>275</sup> Kushnir (Personal Interview, 8 February 2019) pointed to such an evolutionary process arguing, "Putin comes as the manager after the domestic economic crisis in late 1990s... What Putin does, he builds up the structures which would prevent similar crisis in future, a system that was to the significant extent based on Soviet structures and governance". Accordingly, he concluded, "Putin was initially mainly focused and oriented to domestic issues" and "hence he cooperated with the Western sides, particularly the US, because this may payed off" (Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019).

The assumption influenced the Kremlin's orientations toward Eurasian region in different ways. Instead of a previous fully-fledged multi-dimensional integration, in the new era pragmatically emphasis was on economic and security objectives. "The economic integration" as a main priority of Russia in Eurasian region continued "to encourage further integration in the CIS", with emphasis on Russia as "the nucleus" of the processes in the region (Putin, 2000, July 8). Furthermore, the integration in the region should be consistent with and open to the interests of internal economy and "bound up" with Russia's main objective of "steady integration in the global economy" (Putin, 2003, May 16).<sup>276</sup> This practically meant any economic integration in the region had to be sought pragmatically primarily "with those countries which are genuinely prepared for integration" (Lavrov, 2004, July 23). Revealed by Putin, those states in the region that possess "many opportunities for carrying out large-scale joint projects on infrastructure, transport and energy" (Putin, 2002, April 18).

In security matters, in addition to traditional responsibility in "regional stability" the state's approach was further influenced by the portrayed role of global responsible stabiliser and related responsibilities, that along with other great powers Russia was to establish "a stable and predictable world order". Especially the threat "of the 'den' of terrorism", that was linked with the threat of international terrorism dominant after September 11, made the region "a real factor of stability in a large part of the world" (Putin, 2002, April 18).<sup>277</sup> Therefore, playing a regional role, Russia continued its policies to "provide stability and security" together with partners in the region through multilateral

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<sup>276</sup> Putin (2003, May 16) highlighted "the economic integration process taking place in the CIS is bound up with the integration of our countries into the world economy, and will help us carry out this integration more dynamically and in conditions that are more advantageous for all our partners".

<sup>277</sup> In his speech, Putin remarked Kremlin "should make the best use of the possibility to strengthen the security of Russia and our neighbours and Commonwealth partners, possibilities opening up thanks to the new world situation. That fully vindicates the course for cooperation in the framework of the antiterrorist coalition" (Putin, 2002, May 22).

arrangements, with the priority of “the Collective Security Organisation” (Putin, 2003, May 16).

In brief, with a similar objective of maintaining the state’s traditional hegemony but with a different approach, Putin pursued security integration in the Eurasian neighbouring region. Summarized by Primakov (2008, p 11), “without a doubt he [Putin] considers his top priority to be the preservation and strengthening of...those states that emerged in the territory of the former Soviet Union” however “it is highly unlikely that Putin would overlook Russia’s interests in order to resolve CIS problems at any cost”. Concluded by the ex-Prime Minister, “Putin’s prudence, realism, and pragmatism are most clearly demonstrated here” (Primakov, 2008, p 11).

Looking at Russia’s official documents identifies more or less a similar scenario. The FPC and Blueprint detailed the state’s national interests and foreign policy priorities. Both reflected ascendancy of the “economic development”, where the Blueprint emphasised that Russia’s standing could be secured “only on the basis of sustainable economic development”, hence the state’s “interests in economics are of key importance”, similarly the FPC highlighted “development of the national economy” as “the main priority of Russian foreign policy”. While Blueprint highlighted the “active role” of Russian diplomatic capabilities to gain those interests, the FPC detailed the aims to provide “a system of views on the content and main areas” of Russian foreign policies (MID, 2000, June 28; The President of Russia, 2000, January 10).

The FPC called persuading “an independent and constructive foreign policy” based on “on consistency and predictability, on mutually advantageous pragmatism”. It prioritised economic development, strongly defended the economisation of foreign policy declaring the state must “utilise all its available economic levers and resources for upholding its national interests”. Regarding the ongoing “intensification of the role of international

institutions and mechanisms in world economics and politics”, the FPC is convinced that achieving the objective “is unthinkable without broad integration of Russia in the system of world economic ties”. Through the integration, Russia ensures the “favourable external conditions” necessity to achieve the objective to participate in “the formation of a fair international trade system”, that would ultimately “ensure protection of the national interests” (MID, 2000, June 28).

Meanwhile, regionally, it includes “ensuring the conformity of multilateral and bilateral cooperation,” within the former Soviet region. At the economic dimension, the FPC stressed the priority “of different-speed and different-level integration” mainly “the Customs Union and the Collective Security Treaty”. It also asked for “serious emphasis ... on the development of economic cooperation” especially in relation to trade and energy. In security and military objectives, the FPC prioritised “joint efforts toward settling conflicts in CIS member states” asked for “the development of cooperation” “in the sphere of security particularly in combating international terrorism and extremism”.<sup>278</sup> Preconditioned by geopolitics, and the state’s global and regional role and responsibilities, any “balanced” policy, the document still remarked “the diversification” of foreign policy (MID, 2000, June 28).<sup>279</sup>

Evidenced that the concern over the state’s status influenced Russia’s grand strategy orientation in 2000 to 2004/05. Russia’s strategy was oriented towards achieving the conceptualised higher status, in response to perceived status inconsistency. Since economic competitiveness was perceived as a main standard of states status in modern

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<sup>278</sup> Worth to note that the document was prepared and published in 2000, the time before September terrorist attack to New York.

<sup>279</sup> Particularly, the FPC hinted to strengthening of the state’s relations “primarily with China and India” and participation in other regional structures and forums in “participation in the main integration structures of the Asia-Pacific Region” - the “APEC”, “ASEAN and the Shanghai Five”. Worth to note that the documents prepared in Yeltsin era, less surprisingly if some main components of previous views still prevailed in the documents.

world, the country's modernisation and development took a pivotal place in the state's grand strategy making. The interests shaped over such the global vision confined competition, and avert confrontation, instead dictated a less assertive and more pragmatic foreign policy towards the international system and the perceived hegemon the West. The integration into the international economy via pragmatic cooperation, particularly Western developed powers, and Western institutions and organisations, along with pragmatic integration in the former Soviet region with priority on economy were main components of Russian grand strategy at the given time.

In brief, from 2000s, Russian grand strategy making entered in new era with changes and continuities as the state collective attitudes shaped over the status changed. The strategy is still oriented to reassurance of the status quo order since while Russia requested the alteration in a dimension of the order, but it is both with limited objective (status enhancement) and conditioned to the rule of the competition accepted and legitimized by order (economic self-improvement). Refusing the zero-sum competition, a Russian scholar summarised the state's "pragmatic" foreign policy, highlighting

"In the early 2000s Putin was extremely power oriented, but I don't think that Putin and his team started this [realistic] competitive foreign policy with the Western counterparts. As, the key priority was domestic development, Putin was forthcoming and open in the actual integrating Russia into the Western institutions. To that extent, Putin was a promoter of new liberal kind of foreign policy course... a pro-Western orientation was still dominance in his early years. As well as cooperation with the US, Russian leaders talked about greater Europe, not Asia, the greater Europe from Lisbon to the Vladivostok" (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018).

Summarising the strategic orientation, Sherr (Personal Interview, 19 March 2019) looks cautiously to Russia's pragmatism in Putin's first era. Accordingly, the state's strategy was based on "two promises, first Putin's commitment to rebuild the power of the state...not purely for domestic reasons but also internationally". Accordingly, "it was very important ...to be able to rebuild the basic mechanisms of Russian power, the basic dimensions of Russia's power and turn them into instruments in the state' interest". As



the second “key” promise, was “pragmatism”, while the term was appreciated by the West as evidence of Russia’s attitude towards “reality”, and “adopting realistic view with the status quo, Russia’s gracious acceptance leaving in a world dominated by ego Western economies and multilateral institutions, and acceptance of the role as a junior partner”. For Putin and his fellows, the term “but having two meanings which wrapping the same theme; the strict promotion of Russia’s national interests, and a policy that conforms to the means and resources of the country, meaning we are not going demand things, we have enough power to take or defend” (Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).

#### **5.4 Social Competition in Practice**

The statist developmentalists’ reconceptualised status and social competition strategy and their view of national interests gained the political consensus in Russian society too. In a survey conducted in September 1999, by the Levada centre, a total of 61% of Russians thought “Russia should” strengthen a “mutually beneficial relations with Western Countries” comparing with only 22% who were convinced that Russia must keep its “distance from the West (Levada Analytical Centre, 2004, p. 50).

Similarly, according to the Levada survey, in January 2001, the majority of Russians were convinced that the state’s foreign policy “should seek to cooperate” with the Western developed powers, and “the CIS countries”. Amongst them, 51% approved the cooperation with the US and EU (Germany, France, and UK), followed by 39% who believed in such a policy in relation to “the CIS countries” (including Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan). Finally, only 10% of Russians believed that Russia should continue its cooperation with powers outside the West such as “China and India” (Levada Analytical Centre, 2004, p. 49). As well as the leaders, the status concern was still important to most Russians and Kremlin’s version of Russia’s status welcomed by the Russian public.

The success or failure of the social competition strategy depends on the acceptance by the main group. Whether or not the social competition strategy succeeds to gain the aspired status from the main group would be evaluate here after.

#### **5.4.1 Social Competition Strategy and Pragmatic Partnership with the West**

Statists developmentalists attempted to restore Russia's place through pragmatic partnership and cooperation with the Western developed powers, and integration into the Western led constitutive order, the main economic and political organisations and institutions. The pragmatism would allow Russia to portray itself as a responsible major nation, and to gain economic advantages making it a self-reliant, competitive economy through cooperation with the West and its constitutive order. While, the West, the US and Europe, particularly after some success during 1990s, continued more confidently to focus on transforming the post-Cold War political security agenda, in transforming NATO from anti-communist alliance to adopt new security tasks under the banner of humanitarian intervention, counter terrorism, and averting proliferation of WMD and nuclear sources, in supporting democratic transformation in new independent states in the former soviet region, by enlarging the main security and political institutions of NATO and EU, drawing up a Common or latter the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), in supporting democratization within Russia (Clunun, 2009). Therefore, though still emphasising on restoring Russia's standing as a critical world great power but instead of the previous assertive policy against the West in the main international issues, Russia adopted a more pragmatic cooperative policy by focus on shared interested areas; economy, and fight against terrorism.

#### 5.4.1.1 Russia and the US

Under pragmatism, Putin aimed to promote ties with Western powers, particularly the US. With the “shifted priorities”, through the new pragmatic turn, “Russia no longer views the US as an opponent, let alone an enemy”, instead, according to Putin, “Today, the US, one of the world’s biggest countries, is Russia’s partner” (Putin, 2000, September 29).<sup>280</sup> The US new administration, George W. Bush and his Neo-Conservative team, contrary to the Clinton administration pursued more a critical approach towards Kremlin.<sup>281</sup> For example, considering Russia as a challenging force of global peace, and threatening US interests, Condoleezza Rice, Bush’s national security adviser, strongly advised as a main daunting task of the US and a priority of its interests should be the counterbalance of Russia (Rice, 2000).

The new phase of ties between Russia and the US was initiated on 16 June 2001 in Ljubljana Slovenia, despite some divergences between two powers, Bush called it “the beginning of a very constructive relationship” (BBC, 2001, June 16).<sup>282</sup> Yet, the “turning point” appeared after 9/11 terrorist attacks to the US.<sup>283</sup> Indeed, the event was a genuine opportunity to improve cooperation and the level of reciprocity between the two powers.

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<sup>280</sup> In his interview with an Indian magazine, Putin indeed attempted to distinguish the pragmatic policy from both the Soviet confrontation but also from Primakov’s counterbalancing assertive policy.

<sup>281</sup> As an example, on 18 March 2001, Donald Rumsfeld, the U.S. Secretary of Defense, and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz, in an interview with the Sunday Telegraph accused Russia as “active proliferator”, for proliferating WMD technology and materials. The secretary suggested that the US should deploy a Missile Defense system in response to Russian activities (RFE/RL, 2001, March 21). The deputy Wolfowitz claimed that Moscow seems “to be willing to sell anything to anyone for money” (NYT, 2001, March 22). Colin Powell, the US Secretary ordered 50 Russian diplomats to leave the United States claiming “intelligence officers working undercover as diplomats”. Earlier on February same year, Robert Hanssen, FBI agent, who spied for Russia was arrested. As well, one can hint to the US administration diplomatic contacts with Chechen leadership in the time . The US administration even threatened Russia by ending economic assistance (NYT, 2001, March 22).

<sup>282</sup> While the leaders, Putin and Bush emphasized on promotion of economic ties and their commitment to establish a common security arrangement as “a new approach for a new era”. There were some critical views at the both sides, Russia was worried about the US “unilateral actions” in deployment of Missile defense system and its commitment to ABM treaty, at the other side, Bush was “concerned about some reports of proliferation of weapons” in Russia’s borders areas (RFE/RL, 2001, June 18; RFL/RL, 2001, June 18).

<sup>283</sup> IR scholars verified 9/11 terrorist attack to the US, as the key turning point in Russia-US rapprochements (Muraviev, Personal Interview, 10 December 2018; Alexander Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018; Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018). For example, Kushnir (Personal Interview, 8 February 2019) called it “the turning point” and “key moment in the relationship”. Similarly Russian scholar, Sumsky, (Personal Interview, 22 November 2018) addressed the 9/11 as “another moment when Putin test the west”.

The tragic events revealed a harsh reality of the dangers of new threats emanated from non-state players to contemporary world order and “opened everybody’s eyes”. For Russia particularly, the event presented a “silver lining” that outweighed all difficulties hampering ties with the US during the past revolutionary decade (Putin, 2001, November 7). By having a common cause in an actually global front, the war on terrorism brought about the unlimited possibility by which Russia could show its global role and responsibility on par particularly with the US.

Moscow grabbed the opportunity to reshape Russia’s standing in a partnership with the Western powers, in the “War on Terror”, and to persuade its national interests in alliance with the US. Soon after the terrorist attacks, Putin and Bush announced their relationship as a “strategic partnership”. As the first foreign leader, Putin called Bush and expressed his sympathy (The President of Russia, 2001, September 11). This was of course common sense of Russian political elites from a different spectrum,<sup>284</sup> and mass too.<sup>285</sup> The Russian president offered an entirely unexpected range of aid to Washington in the fight against international terrorism particularly in Afghanistan’s front. Diplomatically, as a permanent member of UNSC, Moscow supported Washington by backing “*Resolution 1373*” (UNSC, 2001, September 28). At the operational level, Russia joined with the US in political and military intelligence cooperation regarding international terrorists; it also allowed US planes to fly over Russian territory for military missions; and surprisingly and benevolently, Kremlin acquiesced to deploy the US

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<sup>284</sup> FM Ivanov, on 13 September emphasized, “Concrete deeds rather than words are required in the fight” (RFE/RL, 2001, September 14). Duma also demanded the UNSC resolution to condemn the terrorist attack. Dmitrii Rogozin the Chairman of Duma International Affairs Committee claimed, that Moscow must jointly work with the US in a counter-terrorist action, Gennadii Zyuganov Communist leader called it the “bestial attack” that demonstrate the US weakness and cautioned, against provoking prejudices against other nations or religions. Similarly, Murtaza Rakhimov, Bashkir President, argued that “terror does not have a nationality”, and while calling creating an international front against terrorism, Grigorii Yavlinsky, Yabloko leader cautioned about “acts of revenge” that would fuel the conflict (RFE/RL, 2001, September 13).

<sup>285</sup> The sympathetic reaction was common among the Russian population too. In a poll published by Levada Centre on 15 September, the vast majority of Russians convicted that the terrorist attacks to the US were actions “concerning all mankind” by 85%, and similarly overwhelming majority of Russians convinced about the necessity of taking military actions by the US against the terrorism by 72% (Levada Analytical Centre, 2001, September 17).

military troops in its unique traditional zone of influence, Central Asia (The president of Russia, 2001, September 24).

Whatever the case, the terrorist attack on 11 September created grounds for Putin to persuade his earlier pragmatic policy to develop cooperation with the US through concentrating on joining to the “coalition against terrorism”. Russia made its choice, as Putin said, “it was brought home to everyone that Russia could, and indeed had to be, a truly strategically of the whole civilized community, not least of the United States”. He reasoned that “the tragic events reminded us that if we want to be effective we have to be together” (Putin, 2001, November 7). Meanwhile, the stark reality of terrorist attack motivated American policy makers to improve the relations besides their initial hesitancy. “Once the dust settled” and “the world entered into an undefined and new period”, reflected by a Western commentator, similar to the way the US’ comparative interactions with the USSR determined the world destiny for long fifty years, so its renewed relationship with Russia will assist to define the future course (Colton & McFaul, 2001).

The event and Russia’s alliance in the anti-terrorist coalition led by the US was significant, in so far as Putin equalled his relationship with the US’ President Bush to be similar to that of Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt during WW II (Putin, 2001, November 7). Entering into the coalition, Putin and his supporters in turn expected equal standing on par with the US by creating a distinctively positive role of the state as an arbiter and responsible power in international issues. Vladimir Zhirinovsky, Duma Deputy Speaker saw the event as a “unique opportunity” for Moscow, which turned the US towards Russia in dealing with terrorism. Reasoning, “Without us, the Americans will not be able to deal with the terrorists”, he said, Russia “must make use of the situation” to improve its influence in international system. As “200 years ago, Russia was the gendarme of Europe” Zhirinovsky concluded, “Today we can increase the role of our

country throughout the entire world, and we ought to do so” (RFE/RL, 2001, September 12). Therefore, Putin’s main objective of such “Roosevelt and Churchill” relation was to accentuate the historical role of Russia as a “joint stabiliser” of the World order that had positioned Russia in parallel with the US through the Cold War era. The 9/11 catastrophe provided the base to persuade the objective (Putin, 2002, April 18).

Nevertheless, the war on terror could pave Moscow’s way to cooperate with the Washington in order to persuade the national interests in a completely pragmatic way.<sup>286</sup> As foreign policy expert argued “after 9/11, Putin presents himself as a partner of the West, proposed all kind of operations, most importantly when it comes in the war on terror, but of course it was because of Russia’s own interests” (Kapadizic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018).<sup>287</sup> Amongst all, according to Russian scholar Moscow’s domestic security was the most important priority influencing in cooperation in war on terror. The terrorist attack provided an opportunity for Kremlin to justify policies in Chechnya and link the domestic dilemma to the international threat of terrorism (Alexander Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).

In May 2002, Bush and Putin committed to develop bilateral ties to improve political and economic cooperation, “based on friendship, cooperation, common values, trust,

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<sup>286</sup> Highlighted by Dmitri Trenin, such a sea change in Kremlin’s foreign policy towards the West was not an instant turn it was not due only to 9/11 attacks, instead Putin utilised the event “as an opportunity to leapfrog in his foreign policy, the outlines of which by that time had been completed”. Ternin concluded, beyond the friendship with the US, Putin “does it for Russia’s sake” (CNN, 2002, September 10). “In return” Putin expected beneficial cooperation that ease Russia’s path to join in the Western institutions, “a new role in NATO”, a place in WTO, and “a pledge of full membership in the G8”, “becoming an alternate energy supplier to the West” also reliable economic partner in order to improve domestic development (CNN, 2002, September 10). Similarly, Gleb Pavlovskii, Kremlin’s media adviser, urged Putin to ask more or less similar expectations from Bush in a forthcoming summit to “give Russia complete freedom to deal with Chechnya, recognize the CIS as a zone of Russian interests, write off all of Russia’s debts to the West, and give Moscow an equal voice in the G-8 and NATO” (RFE/RL, 2001, October 29).

<sup>287</sup> IR scholar convinced that as the “turning point” and “key moment, the war on terror, Russians, and Putin in particular, showed Russia was opened some cautious cooperation with the United States”. However, as he emphasized “Putin sought his national interests too, amongst them the Chechnya”. According to the expert, it was the time that Putin interlinked the domestic issue, the Chechnya to global issue, terrorism. Hence, “Putin corporate with the US quid pro quo diminish the criticism from Russia’s operation Chechnya”. Accordingly Putin desired “win-win” cooperation (Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019). Victor Sumsy highlighted that as September 2001, was another moment [in post-Soviet era] when Putin test the West”. As “the first leader who gave to Bush the first phone call” Putin declared “Russia is full ready to cooperate with America in their entire terrorist crusade” (Sumsy, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018).

openness, and predictability”. Politically two powers committed to continue of their joint efforts “in the global struggle against international terrorism”, “jointly counter global challenges” and “regional conflict” in different parts of the world. They also agreed “to work together to develop a new relationship between NATO and Russia that reflects the new strategic reality in the Euro-Atlantic region” based on equality. Economically, the states committed to “expand the economic ties” and “advance Russia’s integration in the global economic stream as a leading participant, with full rights and responsibilities” above all its “accession to the WTO on standard terms” (The President of Russia, 2002, May 24).

#### **5.4.1.2 Russia and NATO**

Eager to cooperate with the US, Putin also pursued pragmatic cooperation with the Western main security agenda, NATO. Hoped that pursuing such a cooperative policy, would lead to the West recognising Russia’s role in security “decision maker process” and respect its “security interests” (Putin, 2001, April 3). The interests that according to Putin (2002, April 18) “applies completely also to discussion of questions regarding strategic stability, disarmament, NATO expansion and forming the foundations of the world order in the twenty-first century”. Regarding those broad objectives, Russia simply still wished to have an equal role and voice, “Russia’s views” be “taken into account as those of an equal partner” especially in the Euro-Atlantic security system (Putin, 2002, April 18). In his interview with BBC, Putin clearly mentioned, “Russia strives for equitable and candid relations with its partners. The main problem here lies in its attempts to discard previously agreed common decision-making instruments, primarily with regards to international security” (The President of Russia, 2000, March 5).

Under those reservations, the question of relations between Russia and NATO was no longer on membership, as Kozyrev done.<sup>288</sup> Nor it was about the rivalry and geopolitical competition with NATO; hence, the state did not pursue harsh opposition towards NATO's enlargement. Even when Russia was "irritated" by the organisation and its security plans, the case of the enlargement, at least up to mid-2000 (The President of Russia, 2000, March 5).<sup>289</sup> However, it was a question of the state's place and role in decision making process in the main security affairs, particularly within NATO; it was how to change "the quality" of relations to gain such objective (Putin, 2002, April 18).<sup>290</sup> Logically, in a question of rivalry, enmity or partnership, Kremlin was "open to equitable cooperation, to partnership" (The President of Russia, 2000, March 5). This meant, while NATO was still "a serious matter" in Russia, but the matter that should be treated, not via geopolitical competition but pragmatic cooperation, reflected by Konstantin V. Totsky (2003, October 29).<sup>291</sup> As a Russian scholar highlighted "Putin's cooperative stance versus NATO in the first term, besides lots of anxiety and questions in Russia was an attempt to test the water to see what would be the reaction of the West and the NATO members" (Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018).

Russian public shared the view over NATO. Opinion surveys by Levana Centre, (annual surveys during 1999-2004) revealed overwhelming majority of Russians did not

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<sup>288</sup> Seemingly, the reluctance of the West and NATO to accept Russia as member of its own alliance especially in early 1990, which led to a sense of humiliation, can justify Russian unwillingness to join the NATO. Evident in Putin's statement in meeting with Bush at Ljubljana, he "answered the question whether it was possible for Russia to accede to NATO. I said: why not?" however, "immediately the former US Secretary of State, Ms. Albright who was touring Europe said 'This is not on the agenda'" (The President of Russia, 2002, May 24). Even in the occasion that the Russian elites referred to the possibility of Russian membership in NATO, they conditioned not in the existing situation and nor shortly but up to change of the quality of relationships. In his speech in Munich, FM Ivanov emphasized, "if you ask me about the likelihood of Russia's entry into NATO in the form in which NATO exists today, I can most definitely say that Russia won't join this alliance as a full-fledged member (I. Ivanov, 2003, December 10a).

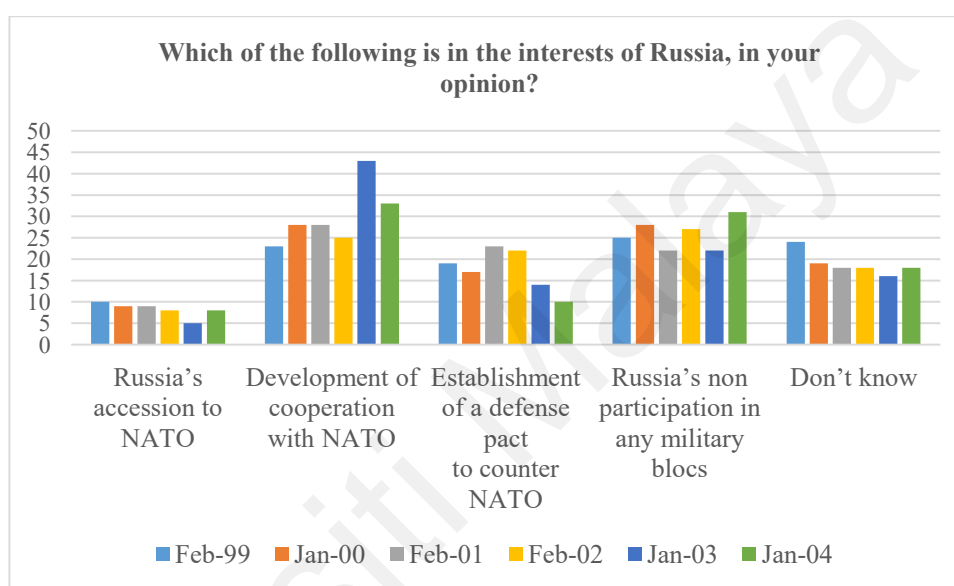
<sup>289</sup> In his interview with BBC, Putin emphasized, "I cannot imagine my own country in isolation from Europe and what we often call the civilised world. So it is hard for me to visualise NATO as an enemy" (Putin, 2000, January 14, 2000, June 28)

<sup>290</sup> In his interview with BBC, Putin emphasized, "I cannot imagine my own country in isolation from Europe and what we often call the civilised world. So it is hard for me to visualise NATO as an enemy" (The President of Russia, 2000, March 5).

<sup>291</sup> Konstantin V. Totsky, was then Russia's ambassador at NATO.



desire Russia's accession to NATO; neither had they defined Russia's national interest in confrontation with the NATO, in any form of "establishment of a defence pact to counter NATO". Instead, the majority believed the state's interests should be gained through the "development of cooperation with NATO" (Levada Analytical Centre, 2005, p. 84).<sup>292</sup> Generally, there was a consensus in Russia over defined national interest and proposed foreign policy orientation that of pragmatic cooperation with NATO.



**Figure 5.1: Russian Attitude towards Relations with NATO**

Source: Russian Public Opinion Survey 2004, modified from (Levada Analytical Centre, 2005, p. 83)

The new era in relations between Russia and NATO was initiated by returning Russia security delegates to the headquarters of NATO which withdrawn in 1999 during Kosovo crisis, and reopening the NATO's Information Office in Moscow (NIO) in 2001

<sup>292</sup> Based on the survey, the proportion of who agreed that Russia's interest is to accession to NATO decreased gradually from 10% in 1999 to the lowest point at 5% in 2003. As the survey showed the rate of individuals, who defined the national interest through the "development of cooperation with NATO" grew by average of 30%, from 23% in 1999 to 33% in 2004. Such a cooperative policy would be more precise if one regards the rate of people who confirmed that Russia's national interest should be gain via establishing any counter NATO bloc decreased gradually from 19% in 1999 to 14% and 10% in 2003 and 2004 respectively. Additionally the people who defined Russia's national interest in following "non-participation in any military blocs" by average of approximately 25% in the given time (Levada Analytical Centre, 2005, p. 84).

(RFE/RL, 2000, May 25a).<sup>293</sup> Yet the rapprochement evidenced further regarding Russia's joining the US led anti-terrorism coalition. In fact, 9/11 appeared as the breakthrough of Russia-US close cooperation, but it also was a milestone in Russia-NATO's ties. Despite Russian harsh resistance at the end of 90s, Putin saw NATO's potential enlargement plan during the stage pragmatically and conditionally. As Putin highlighted "if ... NATO is transforming and is becoming more of a political organisation, we would of course change our position on enlargement if we did not feel side-lined from this process" (Putin, 2001, October 3). During the Prague summit in November 2002, the alliance settled on the "big bang" policy and invited nearly all newly independent republics to join NATO (NATO, 2002, November 21).<sup>294</sup> While Russian political elites exposed displeasures but they reacted mildly.<sup>295</sup>

In turn, the Kremlin's desired structural deepening in NATO to intensify its stance in NATO's decision-making procedures related to the main security issues. Establishment of NATO-Russia joint Council promised in the Founding act 1997, at Rome summit in 2002 evidenced such a new approach. As the FPC earlier conditioned any "substantive and constructive cooperation between Russia and NATO is only possible if it is based on the foundation of a due respect for the interests of the sides and an unconditional fulfilment of mutual obligations assumed in Founding Act" (MID, 2000, June 28). Aimed to bring Moscow into an expanded security community in NATO's decision making,

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<sup>293</sup> Some initial efforts for reopening NATO's information office failed due to Russia's refusing. For example on 15 December 2000, after refusing to sign a deal with NATO, Igor Ivanov postponed "concrete date" to open the office to future negotiations (RFE/RL, 2000, December 21). At the Western side, such opposition was due to the West criticizing of Russia's campaign in "Chechnya" (RFE/RL, 2001, December 18).

<sup>294</sup> NATO members "decided to invite Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia to begin accession talks to join our Alliance" (NATO, 2002, November 21).

<sup>295</sup> In a meeting with Bush, shortly after the summit, referring the expansion Putin stated, "We do not believe that this has been necessitated by the existing pact", however "We hope to have positive development of our relations with all NATO countries" (Putin, 2002, November 22). Followed by FM Ivanov, during the NATO summit in Prague, merely hoped that "Russia will intensify its partnership with NATO" (RFE/RL, 2002, November 22). Sergei Ivanov, Defense Minister stated that Kremlin is "absolutely calm", since Russia was "not a member of NATO or a candidate for membership, and so this is none of our business", at the same time, the minister hoped that before membership, the states approve CFE treaty (RFE/RL, 2002, November 22).

Tony Blair, British Prime Minister, proposed the model of “NATO at 20” rather than the previous the 19+1 model. The final declaration of Rome summit provides “equal” base for Moscow’s participation, it elevated Moscow’s position in the organization not special but just similar to other members (NATO, 2002, May 28a).

The NRC was celebrated as symbol of the recent epoch of relations between Russia and the West. Putin hailed the Rome summit as “an entirely new chapter” in Russia-West relations particularly with NATO. Even very optimistically, he called the document and the NRC as “an absolutely qualitatively new and much higher level of cooperation”, and “one of the decisive factors in shaping a new security framework for the 21<sup>st</sup> century”. Putin hoped the arrangement shape a “truly partner-like relations” between two sides “based on mutual interests”, “with the direct and equal participation” in solving “a whole series of key problems” and more importantly “be guideline for the formation of a common European security space without dividing lines” (The President of Russia, 2002, May 28). Igor Ivanov celebrated the joint council as a “new form of cooperation that has no precedent in European history...in which Russia and the NATO states on an equal basis discuss problems of common interest, jointly work out decisions and then jointly implement them in practice” (I. Ivanov, 2003, December 10a).<sup>296</sup> The Western sides also greeted the summit as Tony Blair said “it marks the end of the Cold War” (RFE/RL, 2002, May 28).

While the Rome declaration was symbolically important for the leaders, however, the reality was different. Russia gained equality as “the Council provides mechanism for consultation, consensus-building, cooperation, joint decision, and joint actions”. But such

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<sup>296</sup> Some elite mainly Russian liberals share that optimistic view. Arguing the new treaty as “golden opportunity” for Moscow to enhance the relations with NATO, as Dimitri Trenin stated, “You use the new relationship with NATO in order to tell your defense planners that they’ve got to stop thinking about NATO as a potential adversary. Now that we have this new arrangement, that is the end of it. From now on, our resources will not be channeled toward the task of repelling a NATO attack, because a NATO attack will not come” (RFE/RL, 2002, May 28; VOA, 2009, October 26).

partnership was confined to a limited range of “areas of common interests” and operation “on the principle of consensus” of all members (NATO, 2002, May 28b). This meant Russia was equal and had a voice but one among and similar to other members not more. Simply, the summit, never gave Moscow a desired special voice in the decision-making process, nor in operational level i.e. using force by NATO.<sup>297</sup>

Criticising the summit, defence minister Sergey Ivanov argued, “The proposals submitted by NATO so far deal only with form and procedure but say nothing about the crux of the matter”. Will the NRC allowed Russia to be involved in the mutual interested matters but with no a veto over the alliance decisions. Accordingly, he concluded “If we really want to go over from the ‘19-Plus-Russia’ format to the ‘twenty,’ it is necessary to assume consensual commitments to fulfil the decisions. We must arrive at jointly adopted decisions and commitments to implement them” (RFE/RL, 2002, March 15). The NRC could improve Russia-NATO’s cooperation to some degree, but it could never realize Moscow’s vision for structural deepening ties with NATO. The Western security system was still divided between NATO members and Russia on the other side. The West preferred to have a more distant bilateral relation, so Moscow felt the odd one out in the West security system and in particular NATO.

Therefore, despite initial celebrations, there were critical views exchanged from both sides based on the fact that the new arrangement was merely a new brand for previous constituted agenda, the Founding Act, “just a masquerade in five years the result will be zero again” (RFE/RL, 2002, May 20).<sup>298</sup> Some Russian military officials maintained their

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<sup>297</sup> The limited range of issues, special cases, the “common areas” included soft security, “including the struggle against terrorism”, “crisis management”, “non-proliferation”, “arms control and confidence-building measures”, “theatre missile defense”, “search and rescue at sea”, “military-to-military cooperation”, and “civil emergencies” Even in such matters, Russia and NATO would hardly reach to a common view, for example on combat with terrorism. Regarding Russia’s actions in Chechnya two sides, have different views, about what could be terrorist and counter terrorist actions (RFE/RL, 2002, May 28)..

<sup>298</sup> While claiming, “Russia and NATO must enjoy the best possible partnership” Vaclav Havel the Czech president, however emphasized Moscow must stay obviously “separate entity” apart from the alliance (RFE/RL, 2002, May 20).

sceptical view on the West and NATO's intentions; even saw the summit's result "more likely, negative". Anatoly Kvashnin, head of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, emphasised, "The relations are, firstly useless from the point of view of European security". As well, "they are dangerous because they create the illusion of cooperation, that Russia is being listened to, when it is not". Then concluded for NATO, Russia was still as an adversary and while it is transforming "increasingly to a more a political organization rather a military one", as "an American political tool". Kvashnin also blamed Putin's pragmatic policy in accepting a treaty that would diminish Russia's "strategic capabilities" only for "economic rationales" (RFE/RL, 2002, May 28; VOA, 2009, October 26).

While Putin's policy in "joining the bigger West and joining even the military structure of the West was puzzling" even today for some in Russia. As Russian scholar emphasised, from the lens of "great power politics", Putin's policy towards the West and NATO, like the Yeltsin initial approach, was "a mistake" and "excessive optimistic since there was no foundation as to why Russian political elites would expect the West in particular, the Western institutions like NATO to embrace Russia equally" (Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).<sup>299</sup>

However, the central ideas or national attitudes of the state's grand strategy shaped over the state's status can be a possible explanation such the cooperative policy towards particularly NATO. The dominant self-concept, Statist developmentalism gave upper hand to geo-economics over geopolitics as the main aspect of competition in interstate system in which a position of each power was mainly depends on economic competitiveness. Accordingly, any enhancement of Russia's international status and the

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<sup>299</sup> Similarly, Alexander Sergunuin (Personal Interview, 2018) called the policy of joining the West and Western institutions as an "illusion" to join the West and Western institutions.

perceived inconsistency during the 1990s was highly dependent on economic development and modernisation.

The interest implied as “tools” to realise the main objectives, the foreign policy should be unassertive compared to previous eras, since the aim was to portray Russia as a “reliable”, “friendly” “predictable”, “business partner” (Ivanov, 2003; Putin, 2002, April 18). Coupled with the fluidity of Primakov’s assertive policy of counterbalancing the Western security agenda through making coalition with non-Western powers, “the theory of global strategic balance preservation in various parts of the world”, lost its currency for new dominant group, instead “a lasting awareness factor” in the new era was “Russia’s domestic developments” (Putin, 2000, September 29). Russian leaders learnt that the state’s capabilities were not developed to the extent that it could openly stand up against NATO and its plans (RFE/RL, 2002, May 17).<sup>300</sup> Most importantly, any improvement of the state’s international standing was highly dependent on recognition by the West, as it was still the main other in statist developmentalists’ status conceptualisation and identification. Therefore, regarding the dominant discourse, its conceptualised status explaining Russia’s reorientation towards the West in general and NATO, particularly, after all challenges at the end of the previous decade, would be less puzzling.<sup>301</sup>

The Russian stance towards NATO deteriorated however, with the new wave of engagement that began with the induction of Baltic and Balkan states in April 2004 NATO also expressed its willingness to expand further in the Eastern European region

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<sup>300</sup> While accepting Russia’s inability to resist versus NATO, chair of Council for Foreign and Defence Policy as Sergei Karaganov hoped that, improve cooperation with NATO “even if Russia cannot prevent the expansion of the alliance”.

<sup>301</sup> Commented by daily *Izvestiya* “as a pragmatist who realises that it is pointless to argue against the inevitable, Putin is seeking to gain maximum benefits from the situation” (RFE/RL, 2002, November 25)

(NATO, 2004, April 2a).<sup>302</sup> Disturbed by the expansion, Russian officials reacted rhetorically and cautioned the organisation to consider Russian interests. Revealing his “disappointment” Putin claimed the expansion was ineffective in today’s world to solve “the threats we face” but added, “every country has the right to choose the option that it considers most effective for ensuring its own security” (The President of Russia, 2004, April 8). Calling the expansion a mistake, Sergey Lavrov, then Foreign Minister, occasionally alarmed about the presence “of the US troops on Russia’s border” that would create “a kind of paranoia in Russia”, and alarmed that NATO must regard the state’s “concern” and its “legitimate security interest” (NYT, 2004, April 3).<sup>303</sup> More harshly, Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov, blamed the West and NATO for “direct and indirect anti-Russian” policies, ignoring Russia’s status and security interests. Ivanov stressed that NATO should remove such “anti-Russian elements from its military and political plans”, otherwise, he warned “Russia will have to adequately revise its military planning and principles regarding the development of its armed forces, including its nuclear forces” (Sergei Ivanov, 2004).

The situation changed dramatically, when Russians perceived that despite Moscow’s pragmatic policies towards the West, and NATO, the organisation neither recognised Russia’s special status with the veto right through the NRC, nor realised its security interests, by the Eastward expansion. The result of Russia’s “test took by cooperation in Putin’s initial years”, according to Russian expert, was “some fundamentally hindrances in front, due to a kind of clannism by NATO and the West. Putin got the message and whatever he was doing hereafter was a development of the theme of Russia as an

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<sup>302</sup> On 29 March, delivering accession documents to the United States by the prime ministers of “new members, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia” accessed NATO formally. On 2 April in a special meeting of NATO, the organization welcomed formally the new members in flag-raising ceremony (NATO, 2004, April 2b).

<sup>303</sup> Lavrov mainly took more critical step regarding the enlargement issues, for example; (Lavrov, 2004, July 23; MID, 2004, June 15; NYT, 2004, April 3; RFE/RL, 2004, March 30a, 2004, March 30b).

independent player in international phase” (Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018). After fifteen years, the Western security system was shaping up in the Euro-Atlantic with Russia still out of the system.

A Western scholar however, was convinced that the question was not really the Baltic and Balkans joining in NATO; instead, it was a perception gap between different sides. Sherr (Personal Interview, 19 March 2019) reasoned even before the enlargement, “the countries were getting the defence requirements from the West, since they were thinking about the Russian threat and they knew Russia had not really accept them to be fully independent”. Accordingly, “the states convinced that their whole dreams are realised in joining NATO” consequently, they gave “any kind of national defence priorities and requirements” to NATO. This was unacceptable for Russians, particularly “the military elites or those at the political level were not interested since they were convinced that in the post-cold war era with no military threat in Europe, there was no need to NATO much less its enlargement”. Although, from the Western perspective “the enlargement proves that NATO is not anti-Russia, or is not designed against Russia but this was a big gap between what Russia perceived and what the West did” (Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).

Whatever, particularly the colour revolutions in the former Soviet region and a range of policies by West and NATO thereafter worsened the situation extremely. Relations worsened with the possibility of membership of two post colour revolutionary states, Georgia and Ukraine.<sup>304</sup> By the revolutions in Russia’s sphere of influence, Kremlin perceived a status recognition dilemma implying that the Western powers especially the US denied its aspired status that nurtured the humiliation and perception of status

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<sup>304</sup> As Dmitry Medvedev warned obviously that any efforts to expand NATO and offer membership to those states, the West would cross Russia’s “red line” (RFE/RL, 2004, March 30c).



inferiority. In such a situation, joining two traditionally Moscow's "sphere of privileged interests", into NATO was more humiliating (Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018).<sup>305</sup>

#### **5.4.1.3 Russia and EU**

So long as the tendency to integrate into the West and the Western institutions and develop the new relations with the US has itself been evolving, Putin put a new emphasis on pragmatic ties with Europe too. Even before as the prime minister, Putin participated activity in preparing the state strategy to the Union that was adopted on June 1999, in the Cologne Summit called "the Common Strategy on Russia" (European Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2000).

This was different from the Kozyrev's integration in civilizational terms; Putin looked at EU more in psychological terms. The need to identify a solution to domestic issues and regarding "reality of Russia's geopolitical position" meant that the state would focus more on "the most important", the Europe (I. Ivanov, 2003, December 10a).<sup>306</sup> The earlier factor implies Europe was Russia's key economic partner particularly in energy field.<sup>307</sup> The economic importance even would increase regarding the potential Eastward expansion of the organization. Occasionally remarked by Putin "the EU was the main trade partner at

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<sup>305</sup> Highlighted by an IR expert that "there was a change gradually from mid-2000, not so much because of Putin, but more because of the effects of the foreign policies of the West on Russia. The wakeup call was the NATO expansion what happened in 2004 in Baltic States, and then moving ever closer towards Russia and towards Russian heartland in Georgia and Ukraine. All these created a sense of acute insecurity when the former enemy the NATO and the West were all of stand at Russia's front door" (Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018).

<sup>306</sup> Similar argument (The President of Russia, 2001, March 3, 2003, June 6)

<sup>307</sup> Europe was the main energy importer of Russia by 25% and 45% of oil and gas respectively in 1999. Vice versa, the European market was significant for Russia too, as 53% and 63% of the state' energy (oil and gas) in 1999 exported to Europe. Overall, the 25% and 35% of Russia's total import and export was with the members of EU (European Commission External Relation, 2003).

35% of total Russia's trade, the interests that will be increased by 50% after the forthcoming enlargement" (The President of Russia, 2003, February 12 2003, June 6).<sup>308</sup>

The forthcoming enlargement added the geopolitical concern to psychological factors influencing Russia's orientation towards NATO. While the Russian elites saw the economic effects of the enlargement "positively" however they were concerned about "some negative consequences of the plan for Russia, too. As well as "technical" problems<sup>309</sup> in the state's trade with the enlarged EU, for example the "antidumping procedures", there were some serious socio-political and security concerns about the further enlargement by Russian sides. Including the "set of humanitarian problems" that Russophobes met in "the Baltic states", also concerns over future situation of "Kaliningrad region" that will be surrounded by enlarged Europe (The President of Russia, 2001, March 3).

Yet, more importantly, the Eastward enlargement would increase the weight of proponents of Russian containment, especially the CEE countries, as Poland hence would balance the role of the "old Europe", the states that traditionally were more cooperative towards Moscow including Germany, France, and Italy. It would also activate those proponents of further Eastward enlargement towards Ukraine and Georgia.<sup>310</sup> Hence, entering the former Soviet clients within EU would increase the role of organization in the Russia's traditional privileged area that never desired by Kremlin. Such anxieties were logical since the proximity of EU to Russia's borders simultaneously would lead to further

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<sup>308</sup> Regarding "the complementarity of the economic interests" between two sides, Russia hoped to create a "favourable basis for their strategic cooperation" particularly in "the energy field" (I. Ivanov, 2003, December 10a).

<sup>309</sup> Amongst the technical problem Putin and his supporters more often, in particular in summit with the EU or the main European powers, referred to "the antidumping procedures" as the "adverse consequences of the enlargement

<sup>310</sup> The members like Poland and Lithuania and Latvia etc. was advocates of Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova's accession in EU.

engagement of Europe in the state's internal socio-political affairs, in particular the situation in North Caucasian borders, Chechen.

Importantly, strategic partnership with Brussels was crucial, since, as a great power Russia desired to have equal voice and role in the "greater Europe" without any "dividing line" between members and non-members states. This means in the "process" of enlargement by EU, it was "crucial" that Russia being at the centre not "side-lined" at the periphery (The President of Russia, 2003, February 12). Accordingly, the "political future of Russia" was "inseparable from the future of united Europe" (I. Ivanov, 2003, December 10a). Consequently, the EU in general, and the expansion in particular was regarded positive but "if" Kremlin "be assured that Russia's interests will not suffer and that new artificial barriers will not be erected to fragment Europe's single political, social and economic space" (The President of Russia, 2001, March 3).

Regarding the reservations, Putin sought to a pragmatic partnership towards EU, outlining in a document then called "the Medium-term Strategy" in 1999.<sup>311</sup> While persuading its interests and advantages in Europe, the document emphasises that Moscow must maintain its "independence", the freedom to choose the path of internal and foreign polities, its standing and its role in international organisations (Putin, 1999). Russia's interest over EU, and the expansion was to be reckoned as "an equal partner" and avoid negative consequences of the enlargement. When, the "European structures" and "the roles of major European organizations and regional forums" were shifting, the question of relation to the organisation, of course, was "not to become a member of the EU"; instead, Moscow-Brussels must seek "a business-like", "effective" high quality "cooperation" (Putin, 2001,

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<sup>311</sup> The document was called, "The Medium-term Strategy for Development of Relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union" (Putin, 1999)

January 26).<sup>312</sup> By doing so, it would allow Russia to act within the EU over the organization's future policies, simultaneously let the state to keep its domestic autonomy and the state sovereignty from the organisation infringement.

Despite initial optimistic negotiations, Moscow was however disappointed very soon, as the enlargement procedure was accelerated. For example, in May 2002, Moscow summit, Putin criticised the EU for ignoring Russia's proposals to solve the issues that besides "a longish history and the discussion" the issues "unfortunately" went to "vicious circle" that must be broken "If our meetings are not to turn into a discussion club". Particularly, he blamed the EU for continuing the "Cold war approach" in ignoring the Kaliningrad situation, particularly Russia's proposal for visa free regime on the region and stated, "reverting to such approaches is absolutely unjustified".<sup>313</sup> Reiterating the proposal "more bluntly" Russia asked for "a real negotiating process" for establishing "a comprehensive" solution to the issue (Putin, 2002, May 29). Moscow was also worried about the main economic issues, the EU trade policies, the anti-dumping rules that remained the main obstacles to further economic integration.<sup>314</sup> Consequently, Putin put forward solutions of those "urgent issues" that affect the state "vital interests" hence they became "an absolute criterion of the quality of interaction" with the EU and a "litmus test" of further interactions (Putin, 2002, May 29; Putin & Bush, 2002, May 24).<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> Russian leaders emphasized the term of having "equal and constructive interaction" instead of membership often (I. Ivanov, 2003; Putin, 2000, June 11; The President of Russia, 2001, March 3, 2003, April 27).

<sup>313</sup> While EU had its own, concerns, for example the threat of organized crime, drug trafficking sources in the region.

<sup>314</sup> In the summit, Putin talked about "about 14 anti-dumping procedures that the European Union currently applies to Russian made goods", that caused Russia to lose "about \$250 million a year". According to president, "The Russian economy loses about \$250 million a year because of them. Worldwide, there are about 100 anti-dumping procedures against Russian goods, and the losses of the Russian economy run into a neat figure of \$1.5 billion" (The President of Russia, 2002, May 29).

<sup>315</sup> While emphasizing on the issues was reiterated often, approximately in every summit before were pointed by Russian elites even in their bilateral meeting with EU members, but the language became more harsh as the enlargement was coming (The President of Russia, 2000, October 30, 2001, March 3, 2002, June 24, 2002, November 11 2002, September 3, 2003, February 11).

Russia's attempts to have a greater role in European security matters were also limited practically. In line with "the Common Strategy" approved in 1999, both sides interested to cooperation in common areas of security issues (The European Parliament, 2000).<sup>316</sup> However such security participation was limited to particular issues and areas, "in crisis management" that weighted especially after 9/11, in area such as "weapons of mass destruction" along with "counter terrorism". Russia welcomed "participation" in crisis management "in Balkans", "in the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)", also in common operation in the "Middle East" (The President of Russia, 2002, November 11 2003, May 31). While, Kremlin sought superior participation within the Europe's security agenda, above all ESDP as the main policy making body of the EU. Beside "substantial incremental changes", Putin lamented "as for common security structures in Europe, those who watch developments will know that while no qualitative breakthrough has occurred" (Putin, 2001, October 3).

Russia simultaneously attempted to change the situation in cooperation with leading powers in the EU, France, Germany and Italy. In late May 2003, in a meeting in St Petersburg, Moscow-Brussels signed a joint declaration "A single Europe for all Europeans" by which two sides planned "to create four new spaces: economic, judicial, education and research space, including cultural aspects" (The President of Russia, 2003, May 31a). Russia hoped the implementation of the tasks would resolve the accumulated "unsolved questions" and minimise "the costs of expansion" before accepting new members. More importantly, through such "a system of common spaces" it was hoped to

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<sup>316</sup> The document emphasised on "strengthen stability and security in Europe and beyond" through "deepen and widen cooperation with Russia" including; "further developing cooperation with Russia in the new European Security Architecture within the framework of the OSCE, in particular in the run-up to the Istanbul Summit"; "continuing cooperation with Russia in the elaboration of aspects of the European Security Charter"; "enhancing EU-Russia cooperation to contribute to conflict prevention, crisis management and conflict resolution, including within the OSCE and the UN"; "promoting arms control and disarmament and the implementation of existing agreements, reinforcing export controls, curbing the proliferation of WMD, and supporting nuclear disarmament and CW destruction" (European Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2000).

create “a truly Greater Europe” including “all the countries of the continent”, “both” the EU members and non-members (I. Ivanov, 2003).

The result was however disappointing. While economically Moscow-Brussels relations remained important,<sup>317</sup> the main arrangements remained merely on paper.<sup>318</sup> The EU enlargement on 1 May 2004 was further shock in Russia-Europe relation; it also remarked the failure of Putin pragmatic cooperation.<sup>319</sup> The EU expanded while it “got down to substantive consultations” with Russia over “the list of Russian concerns” related to the issue even after “four years” of negotiations, the organisation “regrettably” could not “eliminate the difficulties” and “the adverse consequences of the enlargement” (MID, 2004, June 15). More importantly, the enlargement towards Moscow’s traditional zone of interests, underscored the policy of constructing Europe without any meaningful role for Russia. Despite “a lot of fine words”, the “hard reality” was, as Putin highlighted, “the impression that wittingly or unwittingly Russia is being side-lined”. Russia deemed excluded from European order by “new Berlin wall” while at the same time EU infringed in the old order of Moscow’s traditional sphere of influence, the “awful” policy was humiliating and “unacceptable” (The President of Russia, 2003, February 12 2004, November 21, 2005, May 7).

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<sup>317</sup> The EU was still “Russia’s main economic partner with bilateral trade reaching €96.5bn in 2004”. “This represents 50% of Russian trade, although Russia made up only 3.3% of EU trade”. In energy field as the key area of Moscow’s economic interests within the EU accounted for 40%. The EU’ share, the enlarged one that included CRR, plus Switzerland and Norway, of Moscow’s trade reached up to 55% (European Commission External Relation, 2010).

<sup>318</sup> Russian leaders’ rhetorically showed their concerns over a list of grievances and remaining issues (MID, 2004, June 15; Putin, 2003, November 6 ; The President of Russia, 2003, November 6 2005, May 7) Apart from those rhetoric, it would be worth to look at the arrangements too. In common space of freedom, security and Justice; besides Russia’s proposal to implement Visa-free policy in Kaliningrad region, and the EU readiness “to discuss the terms of introducing a visa-free regime” but the organization postponed the objective to a “the long term” process. Since the EU had its own concerns, as Romano Prodi, then president of the European Commission emphasized, “An important aspect of this problem is cooperation with Russia in the field of justice and internal affairs. It is a comprehensive problem that includes several elements, including border control”. Simply, the EU “needs guarantees”, Russia never provided at least in the time in concern (The President of Russia, 2003, May 31). In two less important areas, the Moscow-Brussels cooperation showed some progress. The two sides signed some agreements on common educational space and they agreed to cooperate in limited areas on external security areas, including crisis management, conflict resolutions in Balkans and in cooperate in the Quartet negotiations to settle Israel Palestine conflicts.

<sup>319</sup> The countries include “Cyprus, Hungary, Malta, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia”

Unsurprisingly, the enlargement was perceived as a denial of Russia's traditional standing as a civilizational arbiter, and the state privileged role in former Soviet region. After "nearly twenty years following the formalisation", as an observer concluded, the idea of "common European home" changed to real existence, "but a chagrined Russia finds itself not the architect of this new creation, or even a member, but an outcast relegated to a side-lined role" (Foye, 2004, May 3). Even more humiliating, the EU enlargement followed NATO's Eastward expansion few weeks later; "The two developments" were "a major setback" of Kremlin's policies, but also a sign of Russia's declining "influence in areas it has long seen as vital to its interests". Accordingly, the West's behaviour could "lead to a hardening of Russia's attitudes toward the West" (Foye, 2004, May 3).

It seems that the Post-Soviet Russia-Europe relationship reached at the point where it was at the end of the Cold war. Russia reached a conclusion that it was never seriously considered as a part of European architecture, nor it was ever considered as a part of the West, which was humiliating. The sense fuelled further by a series of revolutions in Russian traditional sphere of influence that intensified the West and its constitutive order presence in the region. Sherr (Personal Interview, 19 March 2019) highlights Russians were disappointed over the Western constitutions but form a point of identity and status concern. Accordingly, as "Russia defined itself today a something other than the West, the West is other" the enlarging of Western institution, "the NATO enlargement and more so then the enlargement of the EU" were threatening, "not just an economic and/or security threats" but more as a "civilizational threat". It was ideational threat since, when;

"Gradually Russians began to understand that the EU really is a system of integration on the bases of rules, laws, norms, a very different from some other norms and values those prevalent on Russia; that Putin is deliberately setting out to strengthen. Therefore, as the EU moves to East it is not only competing with Russia but it is posing a threat. At the end of Ukraine's orange revolution 2004/5, maybe to some extent before, Russian understand that... Russia has to defend itself, it has to demarcate and defend its space, which is the border of Russkiy Mir against this double headed Western entities NATO,

EU which is encroaching Russia and coming ever closer to its borders” (Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).

Russia’s disappointment over the cooperation with the Western powers and organisations were reinforced further by the state’s relations with WTO. As Moscow’s attempts to enter the organisation did not record better. From the beginning, as a way to integrate into and playing law-making role in global economic mainstream, Putin reemphasised on “speed up the work on accession to WTO” as an objective of Russian foreign policy (Putin, 2000, July 8). Particularly after rapprochement with West during conflict against terrorism in Afghanistan, Russia expected the Western powers, mainly the US support to ease the process of accession (The President of Russia, 2002, May 24). At spring 2002, publishing of the first Working Party Report Moscow entered in the final stage of membership process. Hereafter a range of multilateral and bilateral negotiations was held in the framework of the Working Party. However, from mid-2000 it gradually became clear that WTO membership was not as smooth and speedy as the Kremlin desired.

The impasse in Russia’s accession mainly backed to the organisation’s nature as the process of WTO’s membership, unlike other main international institutions such as UN, G8, APEC or else, was less political, more economic and technical. WTO has inflexible requirements and conditions that makes the process “painstaking”, “difficult” and “probably complex work” that cannot be avoided even for powers like Russia. Moreover, adopting those obligations including “commitment to the rule of law, property rights and good governance” need overlooking to some degree of domestic sovereignty and jurisdiction by membership seekers (WTO News, 2001, March 30). It was in contradiction of Putin’s desired vertical power and strong state within Russia. The Western partners could not do more than rhetorical support, over the issue that they had “no direct control” of, even if they were “interested” to do so, as Bush said (The President



of Russia, 2002, May 24). It all implies that there was no any short-cut for Moscow towards a fully-fledged membership as it was not processing according to the organisation's commitments, much less the speedy accession when Russia was not "as quickly as they hoped" (Schwab, 2007, February 23). The disappointment over WTO accession caused the change in Kremlin's policies towards the organisation particularly from mid-2000.

It soon became clear that the attempts for developing the "strategic partnership" with the West, whereby Russia was supposed to treat on equal terms has failed. Russian political elites, particularly the hardliners questioned Putin's rapprochement for providing too much but receiving too little in return. While the rapprochement deemed to fade away gradually, the main dent in Russia's relation with the US appeared over the Washington's plan to military invasion in Iraq.

#### **5.4.1.4 Russia and Iraq War**

The new round of Iraq crises was one of the critical points testing the main pillar of Russian grand strategy adopted by statist developmentalists, the pragmatic cooperation with the West mainly the US.<sup>320</sup> The crisis resurfaced when G. W. Bush (2002, January 29) addressed at the Congress calling "Iraq, Iran and North Korea" as the "axis of evil", emphasised on taking preventive actions against the "regimes that sponsor terror", threatened "America" or its "friends and allies with weapons of mass destruction". Focusing on Iraq, the US hoped to gain support from allies in war in terror.

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<sup>320</sup> Scholars interviewed similarly argued that the critical challenge over Iraq genuinely "tested" and "ended" the Russo-Americans partnership and the legitimacy of Kremlin's rapprochement in the years after 9/11 (Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018; Alexander Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018; Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018).

In immediate reaction, “Russia strongly opposed” against the “black-lists” of “axis of evil”, and any “military action against them”, in particular, Iraq.<sup>321</sup> Neither accepting “US global leadership” nor attempting “to create its own security system in alliance”, the Kremlin perused the middle way; “adapt Russian policy to that of the US while keeping its own interests in mind” through finding a “more political, but not forceful, solutions to international security issues” along with the world community (RFE/RL, 2002, January 31).<sup>322</sup> Hence, unlike the case of Afghanistan, in Iraq Russia decided to join a coalition that opposed the war under terms and leadership of the Americans. Moscow has warned against any action that is not sanctioned by the UN, as the only authority to authorise and legitimise the use of force.

Russia made a different choice from that of Afghanistan, as the case of Iraq was different by itself, at least for Russian elites. First, there was a substantial gap between Russians’ perceptions of the threat, here terrorism with that of the Americans. In Russians’ definition, the terrorism was a non-state phenomenon that challenges the state system. Hence, the Iraq was “a totally different situation” since “in Afghanistan”, the US and international coalition did not target “the legitimate government of Rabbani”, instead, as highlighted Russians, it was against “the Taliban whose regime had not been internationally recognised” (Sergei Ivanov, 2002, February 22; The President of Russia, 2002, February 11).

The case of Afghanistan was more convincing with “a hideous crime” that endangered “the lives of thousands of Americans”, but here in Iraq “nothing like the same situation

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<sup>321</sup> In his interview with, the WSJ, after his meeting with Bush, emphasising on Russia’s readiness to combat against terrorism Putin, however, rejected the axis of evil arguing that “we are against drawing up “black lists” of countries” (The President of Russia, 2002, February 11). Similarly, Sergei Ivanov (2002, February 22), in speech in Munich argued the Bush’s “axis of evil” was alarming, and concluded that Russia neither would accept the list of axis of evil nor participate in any kind of force exercise against the listed states. Reiterating in NATO summit in Rome the defence minister added, “Russia has its own list of countries of concern”. Followed by Lvanov (MID, 2002, February 15, 2002, February 18) .

<sup>322</sup> Reflected by Konstantin Kosachev then deputy head of the Duma Foreign Relations Committee.

exists”. Hence, Russian elites doubted the US claims regarding the Iraqi regime’s attempt to have “nuclear weapons”, or “biological and chemical weapons”, also, they questioned any relations between Iraq’s regime and the terrorist groups like “Al Qaeda”.<sup>323</sup> Finally, similar to a previous crisis, the economic interests stayed as the other important factors in the Russians’ divergence from the US in Iraq, too.<sup>324</sup>

However, as the crucial and “immediate” factor, the case of Iraq was psychologically important for Russia, its international standing and identity. Russia was “trying to save its identity” against “mythical capitalism”. Indeed, Moscow felt threatened by democratisation that covered the main goal of the US regime change pursued after 9/11 (Vremya, 2002, March 2). In particular, Russian Civilisationists, and military security hardliners around Putin had a highly sceptical view regarding the US intentions. Particularly regarding the adverse outcome of Putin’s strategic partnership with the US after 9/11 that led to the US and NATO attendance in the CA area, intensified by the possibility of new round of NATO and EU eastwards enlargement, altogether added to humiliation perceived during the 1990s.

Consequently, Russian elites saw the Iraq case as a test for Russia’s standing, and a new drive to enforce the US global hegemony. According to Igor Rodionov (2003, June 19) the ex-Defence Minister, the US was ultimately “seeking to dominate Russia”.

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<sup>323</sup> Putin said to the US’ journal “at present it is universally recognised that Iraq has no nuclear weapons” (The President of Russia, 2002, February 11). Referring to latest UN inspection mission in Iraq before 1998 crisis, in an interview with Figaro, I. Ivanov similarly claimed, “At the time of the inspection, there were neither nuclear weapons nor elements for their possible production” (MID, 2002, February 18). Then in September, the FM Ivanov harshly criticised the US that the state “only shows historical data when talking about a threat from Iraq” (RFL/RL, 2002, September 23). Relating the Iraqi regime involvement in terrorist activity, Sergey Ivanov, the defence minister argued, “We have no information about the participation of any Iraqi citizen in any terrorist attack” (RFE/RL, 2002, November 15).

<sup>324</sup> The Iraqi debts to Russia remained from Soviet period as well, as well the UN “Oil for Food” plan, enforced by UN after late 90s crisis, provided an opportunity to Iraqi companies to be Iraq main trade partner, during the sanctions time. Russians worried that any forthcoming war and the possibility of changing the Iraq regime may avoid such economic interests. Added by Russians private companies, particularly in energy field, economic contracts and investments in Iraq, as an example, the Lukoil contracted with the Iraqi state-owned companies *Mashinoimport* and *Zarubezhneft* in 1997 to develop Oil fields in Iraqi “West Qurna” (RFE/RL, 2002, November 1) . Even in the eve of the Iraqi war in January 2003, Iraq signed an agreement with Russian oil and gas Construction Company, with Stroitransgaz, worth \$3.4 billion to develop western Desert field (CNN, 2003, January 17).

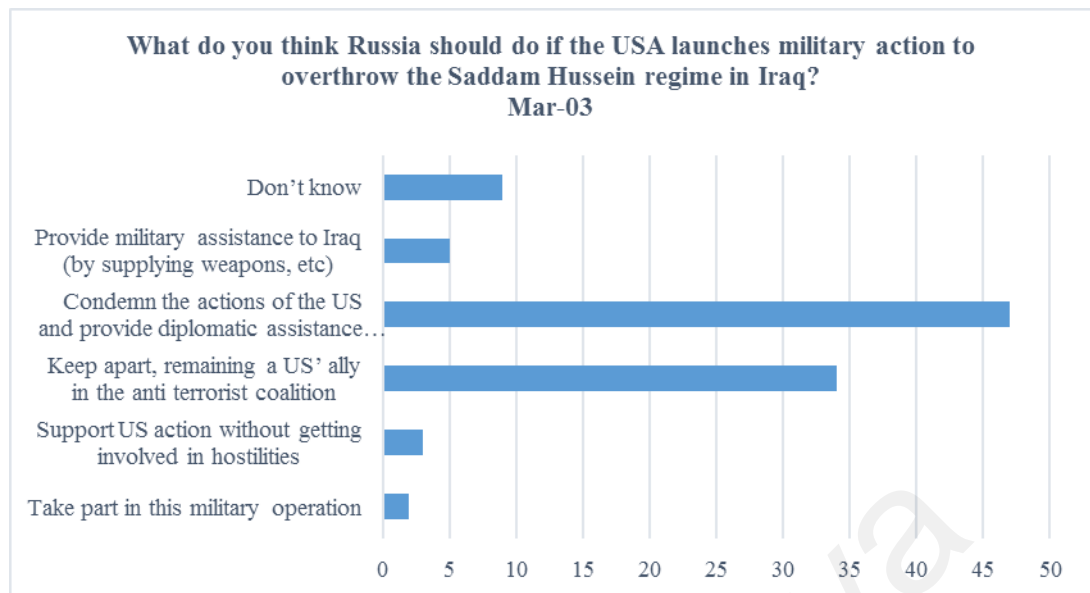
Similarly, the Defence Minister Ivanov called the “axis of evil” as “a very alarming signal” of the US and compared it with “how American politicians viewed Japan after Pearl Harbour, Italy Mussolini and fascist Germany”. He doubted that the US led an anti-terrorism campaign as a means to “arbitrary” expansion, hence “severely warned the Americans that they should not strike the countries whose involvement in the acts of September 11 were not proved” (Sergei Ivanov, 2002, February 22).<sup>325</sup>

As far as the public was concerned, while there was little support for Saddam Hussein, Russian opinion turned sharply against Washington’s intervention in Iraq. As poll by Lavada Centre in March 2003, only 2% of Russians approved the US military action, compared to 83% who opposed the war in Iraq. The trend was reiterated during the war in April 2003.<sup>326</sup> Only the minority felt that Russia should take part in this military operation by 2%, or support US action by 3% comparing to 81% believed that Russia should condemn the US action, and provide diplomatic assistance to Iraq or stay apart from the military operation in Iraq (Levada Analytical Centre, 2004, p. 53).

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<sup>325</sup> Sceptical about the US intention in Iraq and even Afghanistan, the DM Ivanov went further and asked, “From real targets is often called Iraq and, apparently, for good reason, hundreds of planes transferred by the Americans to the region in autumn, which did not participate in the operation in Afghanistan, continue to be based in Kuwait and Turkey”. Accordingly he concluded “It is unlikely that this group is configured to bask in the sun” (Sergei Ivanov, 2002, February 22).

<sup>326</sup> That opposition to the war in Iraq rested on firm support abroad too. As the Pew Global Attitudes survey demonstrated “the anti-war, sentiment and disapproval of the US and its president unilateral actions eroding the state’s “image among the publics of its allies”. According to the survey, the pro-US sentiments fell sharply during latest “six months” before Iraq war amongst Frenchs, Germans and Russians, along with other states members of “the coalition of the willing”. In UK, favourable opinions towards the US have gone down from 75% to 48%, in France the rate halved from 63% to 31%, in Germany, it diminished remarkably from 61% to 25% from March-2002 to March 2003. Instead, the rate for opposition to the US military intervention increased sharply, to say from 39% to 51% in UK, nearly 3 times in France, 20% to 75%, and more than two times in Germany, from 27% to 69% (Pew Research Centre, 2003, March 18).



**Figure 5.2: Russian Attitude towards Iraq War- March 2003**

Source: modified from (Levada Analytical Centre, 2004, p. 53)

This was a matter of anti-American, not pro-Iraqi, feeling. While 45% of Russians sympathised with the Iraqis, merely 5% supported the Americans. Similar to political elites, Russians felt threatened by the US and were afraid of being next on the list of American targets for military intervention by 71%.<sup>327</sup> Only 9% of Russians believed that the US was “the defender of peace, democracy, order throughout the world” and 75% viewed the US as “the aggressor, who seeks to take control of all countries in the world” (Levada Analytical Centre, 2003, March 14).<sup>328</sup>

Taking a divergent decision to oppose the war in Iraq on US terms, and emphasis on the UN’s role and international laws to solve the issue, was face saving for Putin. Perhaps, since the UN and UNSC was the only place remaining in the hands of Russia to show its

<sup>327</sup> While 45%, saw the Iraq as a threat (Levada Analytical Centre, 2004, p. 50).

<sup>328</sup> The overwhelming majority of Russian believed that North Korea and Iraq have no right to possess WMD by 62%, comparing the opposite opinion held by 27% (Levada Analytical Centre, 2003, March 14).

standing as the world's great power equal with the US.<sup>329</sup> Escalating the crisis, Moscow became more active in a coalition with other oppositions like France and China in pressuring the US to solve the case through the UN. Late 2002, the US submitted a draft resolution to UNSC members that authorised “the automatic use of force”, the “all necessary measures” “in the case of Iraq failure to comply with the UNSC resolution”. While the opposing sides demanded “an additional authorisation of force” only under through UNSC (RFE/RL, 2002, November 4). Partly due to Moscow's efforts the moderated version of *Resolution 1441* without the clause merely warned Iraq of a “face serious consequences” if the state fails to comply with all its “obligations” (UNSC, 2002, November 8).

Excluding the “the automatic use of force”, as Putin remarked, made the resolution “a good way to avoid war”, hence “an acceptable compromise for Russia” (The president of Russia, 2002, November 12). It was perceived as a “great success” above all but for Russia which “firmly committed” to advocate “the supremacy” of the UN, and “international law”. Igor Ivanov highlighted “protracted, complicated consultations” was possible, as “Russia has made a principled choice in its support, guided by its special responsibility as a Security Council permanent member for the maintenance of peace and security” (MID, 2002, November 10). With such a hope, the UNMOVIC inspectors backed Iraq. However, the reality was not in favour of Russia neither for Iraq. As a series of reports drafted by Hans Blix, the executive Chairman, with an ambiguous nature added the divergence between cons and pros of military actions.

Russia increased its diplomatic efforts to make a collation against military action in Iraq, within UNSC, from very first days of 2003. On 24 February, Russia and France

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<sup>329</sup> Russian leaders from outset of new round of Iraq crisis emphasized on the role of UN and UNSC in solving the crisis (MID, 2002, October 18; The President of Russia, 2002, February 11).

proposed the gradual stage-by-stage disarmament of Iraq, the US, UK and Spain drafted new resolution authorising using force (CNN, 2003, February 24).<sup>330</sup> While the US confirmed to postpone the vote, up to the next report but the Blix's report on 7 March watered down all the efforts (UNSC, 2003, March 7). The ambiguous report however reinforced the divided line in UNSC.<sup>331</sup> Seen the report as a sign of Iraq's ongoing "catalogue of non-cooperation" and a "material breach" of the UN resolutions, the US, UK and Spain stressed their drafted resolution arguing any successful disarmament of Iraq could be accomplished only with more pressure through adopting a resolution that authorizes military force in the case of Baghdad disobedience. In contrast, perceiving the report as indication of a "notable improvement" of Iraqi cooperation, the oppositions, Russia, France, China and Germany, claimed "no need for a second resolution" very much less "a false choice" the military action, while a "peaceful solution still exists" (CNN, 2003, March 8).

Regarding the deadlock in UNSC, the US and the allies withdrew the offered resolution when Russia and France announced they were ready to veto it. Just few hours after that the US "final ultimatum" on 17 March shows once again that neither Russia and other powers, nor diplomacy through the UN, were able to do more against the hegemon, the war was deemed inevitable (The Economist, 2003, March 18).

The "Operation Iraqi Freedom", identified as "the second Gulf war" began on 20 March 2003 by the US president's order. Justifying the war as the pre-emptive self-defence, to "defend our freedom" and "bring freedom to others", the US claimed that, the

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<sup>330</sup> Before submission the draft by US, Putin sent the ex-foreign minister Primakov to Iraq and Alexander Voloshin, to the US to discuss by Bush. Even after that, Russia continued its efforts. As well as taking European tour, visit in Germany, France, and persuading effort with China, Putin lauded the using veto along with the France and China.

<sup>331</sup> While Blix reported Baghdad cooperation, at the same time pointed the flaws and insufficiencies in Baghdad's responses to "the UNMOVIC" inquiries (UNSC, 2003, March 7).

war aimed to “to disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger” (G. W. Bush, 2003, March 19). In Russia, the operation merely increased the psychological disappointment and frustration against the US (The Economist, 2003, March 18). According to Putin, the action was merely a circumventing the international normative and constitutive order, hence was a “great mistake”. “Unjustifiable and unnecessary” war was accordingly “contrary to the principles and norms of international law and the Charter of the UN”, and even “contrary to the world public opinion”, it was an attack to the “the system of international security” (Putin, 2003, March 21).

The reason for such anxiety was Russia’s main concern about status that was ignored by the hegemon, as it could not avoid the hegemonic temptation of the US. Otherwise, as Russian observer,<sup>332</sup> highlighted, “Washington is paving the way for a resolution of the Iraq situation along the lines of what has been done in Afghanistan in 2001” when the US “also acted without UN authorisation, and that after the Taliban were defeated, the UN was invited to play an appropriate role there” (RFE/RL, 2003, March 18). Russian top officials but perceived differently. Whether or not Russia allowed it, the war was replacing the international norms with “the law of the fist”, which meant, “The stronger is always right and has the right to do anything”, and is unconstrained no way, to choose “its methods to achieve his goals”. Even key norms of international system, “the principle of immutable sovereignty of a state” was questioned by the hegemon, as Putin argued. The war was also ignoring the “resolution 1441 that does not authorise the use of force” adopted through “joint work with the United States”. This implied the US operation was rather perceived as ignoring Moscow’s voice and its role, as co-stabiliser power was

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<sup>332</sup> Highlighted by “Boris Makarenko” then “deputy director of the Moscow-based Centre for Political Technologies”.



portrayed by Putin and his supporters, who wanted to solve the main international issues through “joint work” (Putin, 2003, March 17, 2003, March 21, 2003, March 23).

Russian elites were somewhat less restrained in taking a more anti-American position. Igor Ivanov frequently criticised the US destruction of the interstates norms and UN’s role, warned military action in Iraq might split the coalition of anti-terrorism, even may escalate to civilizational conflicts (MID, 2003, March 20, 2003, March 21). Calling the war as the US “aggression”, Duma adopted a resolution, “condemned” the military action in Iraq (RFE/RL, 2003, March 21).<sup>333</sup> Even few days before the war, Duma asked a more severe action and declared to “suspend consideration” of the US Russia “Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty” signed last year, that was ratified already by the US Senate (RFE/RL, 2003, March 18).<sup>334</sup>

The war increased the sense of failure, that according to Russian political elites, from a different spectrum, was partially the fault of the Kremlin’s grand strategy, which was not able to achieve the national interests. They criticised Putin and his policies, particularly over the crisis, as “naïve” “useless”, “improvised” policies, with lack of clear and “coherent, strategic objectives” and “a host of miscalculations and errors”.<sup>335</sup> The psychological impact of the US invasion intensified the language of revisionism and the

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<sup>333</sup> Duma also asked the Kremlin to call for a UNSC emergency summit.

<sup>334</sup> Even harsher, the hardliners within Duma, particularly the Communists requested a “tougher resolution” in which the US products would be boycotted, as well as “the severance of parliamentary and cultural contacts between the United States and Russia” ought to be banned (RFE/RL, 2003, March 21).

<sup>335</sup> Sergei Karaganov, criticised Kremlin for having “improvised” policies, with lack of clear and “coherent, strategic objectives” regarding the issue, and “a host of miscalculations and errors, including overestimating the Iraq’s ability and will to resist” also overestimating the ability of France and Germany to challenge the US. As well, according to him, making the UNSC as a tool for persuading opposite front against the US and UK and asking “the proof”, Russia merely weakened the organisation and strengthened the front that believed “without the U.S. there is no UN”. “In an increasingly difficult and perilous world that we have entered”, latter Karaganov wrote, Russia should abandon useless opposition to the US in the UN, since “such an approach will doom us sooner or later to defeats, and certainly to missed benefits” (RFE/RL, 2003, April 23). As the time passed, when “the true picture” emerged, in a harsher language, a Russian observer argued, the “complete incompetence in [Kremlin’s] military and political decision-making during the Iraqi crisis that led Russia to spoil relations with Washington and put the nation’s future in serious jeopardy”. Referring the turn in Putin’s policy in reproaching with towards the US after 9/11 then persuading “the anti-American” way in decision-making, the elite questioned Kremlin’s ability to understand “Russia’s basic national interests” and the way “to make it happen” (Pavel Felgenhauer, 2003, April 24).

necessity of power balancing. As neither conciliatory rapprochement during post 9/11, nor pursuing pragmatic competition through making coalition with European powers, could realize the state's desired status. The Russians comprehended that their state was merely the junior in relation with the American partners, that never could overtake Washington's unilaterality in post-Cold War order. As a Russian commentator pointed out, no matter what the result of the Iraq war is, the US would emerge "as the sole real support of the world order" but Russia with "no real role", its "historical great power" and "geopolitical ambitions" would suffer, as the state "won't be able to count on anything" (Kustarev, 2003, March 2).

Simply put, the US attack in Iraq was perceived as an act beyond the recognised normative order questioned further Kremlin's aspired status. The US never recognised the state's role in international main issues, much less its equality. Perhaps that is why Putin called the Iraq war "as the most serious crisis since the end of the Cold war that the world community has encountered", the conflict that underpinned "the foundations of global stability and international law" (Putin, 2003, March 23). The question was indeed neither Iraq nor its regime; it was the international order that was "shaken to its foundations". The Kremlin was "concerned about setting a precedent for resolving similar disputes", as Sergei Ivanov highlighted, in which no one, even UN or UNSC, was "in a position to determine or even play a key role in international affairs", except the hegemon. The question was Russia's role that had no power versus the hegemon, as such DF Ivanov said, "there is no need to have such UN" (RFE/RL, 2003, April 8).

Regarding those psychological effects, the war had strengthened the voice of Russian hardliners coalition advocating revisionist preferences versus the West. Indeed, there were influential military security headlines that seized the chance to improve Russia's defence system, restoring the military capabilities and abandon Kremlin military reforms

that decreased the capabilities. Aleksandr Rutskoi, ex-vice president (from 1991-93), highlighted as the only possible outcome of Iraq war is the fact “that we [Russia] must forget the demagoguery of armed-forces reform and begin to restore our defensive and offensive might” (RFE/RL, 2003, April 8).<sup>336</sup> As Russian expert highlighted hereafter;

“Putin gradually put more emphasis on the military again. ... as it was perceived Russia needs to stay strong, its foreign policy orientations and capabilities should not let the West take over parts or close parts of its sphere of influence. Especially, during the Bush era when the US entered the world on entirely and Russia saw, the US’ willingness to project its power even close to its borders, towards Afghanistan then Iraq. As the invasions definitely create a sense that if Russians are not able and willing to project the strong Russia abroad, not just within its closed borders but also beyond, it might end up with the US and NATO encroaching on its own sovereignty, superiority and military strength” (Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).

In brief, the Iraq case left Russia with intensified sense of status inconsistency and resentment, with revisionist preferences, and increasing voice of hardliners. Verified by an IR scholar, Russia was particularly “uneasy with the US unilateral policies”, “in the 1990s where US supremacy was unquestioned and it was less challenged”. The main challenge however occurred “in the early 2000s when after the invasion in Afghanistan, the US invaded to Iraq that was perceived as a projection of US power over and in contradiction with Russia’s power” (Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018). Russian expert convinced that the “Americans intervention in Iraq after intervention in Afghanistan”, was also the other strike on Putin’s hope, as “the West in general and the US in particular” never realise the state’s desired place and shows “it could not do something together with Russia and there was no base for strong understanding of Russia” (Sumsy, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018).

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<sup>336</sup> General Petr Deinekin Russian Air Force commander emphasised on “enhance preparedness for war” by modernising its defence and military “technology” (RFE/RL, 2003, April 7). Immediately after the US attack, Duma called Russian president to adopt “urgent measures to strengthen [Russia’s] national defence and to modernise the Russian armed forces” and called the Deputies to increase the “defence spending” (RFE/RL, 2003, March 24).

### **5.4.2 Social Competition and Pragmatic Integration in Eurasia**

Consistent with a conceptualized status, regarding geopolitical and geostrategic importance of the Eurasian region, Russia's main objective of maintaining the traditional regional role as the sine qua non of its global standing remained unaffected (I. Ivanov, 2001; Putin, 2000, January 14; Razov, 2003, September 10).<sup>337</sup> However, in line with the general philosophy of statist developmentalism, such priorities sought different approaches from the 2000. Russian leaders reasoned previous efforts to integrate the CIS have imposed extra burden on Russia, economically and politically.<sup>338</sup> Most importantly, perceiving economic competitiveness as the main criteria of global status, consequently defining the national interests on economic development and modernisation dictated that any policy towards the neighbourhood region must be pragmatically advantageous and cost effective (Putin, 2002, April 18, 2003, May 16).

#### **5.4.2.1 Pragmatic Economic Integration in Eurasia**

While, statist developmentalists abandoned the Primakov's approaches to revive the CIS, but they never gave up integration and multilateralism, a policy to reinforce the state's position within the neighbour area. Regarding "the necessity of integration", Putin attempted to reinvigorate the economic integration, pragmatically through establishing multi-level and multi-speed arrangements primarily with some advanced states as the core of integration process hoping that finally comprise other states in the region.

Amongst all initiatives in Putin's era, two were most important. In October 2000, Russia, Belarus and three CA states; Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan signed the treaty

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<sup>337</sup> Similar argument; (MID, 2000, June 28; Putin, 2000, July 8, 2001, April 3, 2002, April 18, 2003, May 16, 2004, May 26; The President of Russia, 2000, January 10).

<sup>338</sup> As Yegor Stroeve, the Chairman of Federation Council remarked "Yeltsin's 'open handed' integration policy towards the former Soviet republics that threatened Russia's own existence" (RFE/RL, 2001, May 31).

“of the Eurasian Economic Community (EEC or EurAsEC)”, in CIS summit in Astana (The president of Russia, 2000, October 10).<sup>339</sup> As the “engine” and “locomotive” of the CIS integration,<sup>340</sup> the EurAsEC was to transition of “Customs Union into a full-fledged international organization” through “the introduction of free trade zones”, and strengthening of “interaction mechanisms in the economic sphere” (Putin, 2000, October 10; The President of Russia, 2001, November 30).<sup>341</sup> Prioritising the objectives, the states began to adopt and implement some institutional arrangements in following years. For example, in Dushanbe summit 2003, the members approved a kind of short- and medium-term strategies, as the “general Blueprint” for integration process under the treaty. They also endorsed a number of institutions such as Integration Committee and “the EurAsEC Court” (The President of Russia, 2003, April 27).<sup>342</sup> Moreover, some non-member states also accessed to the organisation, amongst them Uzbekistan on 25 January 2006, in St. Petersburg summit joined the plan (Putin, 2006, January 25).<sup>343</sup>

However, the result of EAEC, the plan that was expected to be a locomotive of economic integration in the region, was not as optimistic as the expectation.<sup>344</sup> In June

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<sup>339</sup> A “Top priority of the Community” according to Putin was to “achieve necessary conditions for closer contacts between its member countries in the trade, economic, social and legal spheres with the optimum balance of national and common interests” (The president of Russia, 2001, May 31).

<sup>340</sup> Putin used the terms during Moscow and Kazakhstan summits respectively in 2002 and 2004 (Putin, 2002, May 13).

<sup>341</sup> Such interactions were not limited to the region, but as Putin frequently highlighted “with the international economic organizations”, that could include “the WTO”, and the “European Union” (Putin, 2002, May 13; The President of Russia, 2001, November 30).

<sup>342</sup> The “Priority Development Directions for the Eurasian Economic Community for 2003–2006 and the Following Years”, was approved that prioritized “the formation of a common customs space, coordination of the timeframe for accession into the WTO, development of energy cooperation, establishment of a transport union and a common agricultural market, and migration policy” (The President of Russia, 2003, April 27).

<sup>343</sup> Uzbekistan was important case particularly for Russia; since it was a kind of Tashkent’s geopolitical return towards Moscow, after its initial tendency towards Washington mainly after 9/11 and the US war in Afghanistan. Before Moldova in 2002, in Moscow summit applied for observer status in the EurAsEC (Putin, 2002, May 13).

<sup>344</sup> In Moscow summit, Putin argued besides some progress in commercial relation with the states, like Russia- Belarus trade, the relation with other members did not register well. As he pointed, “With Kazakhstan unfortunately we have not yet reached this level of integration on tariffs”. “We have about 53% of coordinated tariffs. And accordingly, the level of trade turnover is so far only about \$9 billion”. The “level of tariff coordination” was “even lower” with Ukraine, as he lamented “despite the fact that the capabilities of the Ukrainian and Russian economies are much greater than the Russian and Belarussian economies, nevertheless we have a lower trade turnover than we do with Belarus” (The President of Russia, 2005, June 25).

2004, in Kazakhstan summit, referring to creating non-tariff zone as the main goal of EAEC, Imomali Rakhmonov, Tajik president lamented that the efforts was “not yet put in place conditions for the free movement of capital, freight, workers, and services” (RFE/RL, 2004, June 21). While Russia attempted to release the members’ anxieties regarding the WTO, but it seems that the main concern remained, and the members still worried about their relations with latter. In Moscow summit in 2005, referring to the members’ anxieties Putin stated, “This movement [EurAsES] should not interfere with our integration into the world economy ...to join the World Trade Organisation”. He cautioned that “We will advance along this path, coordinating our actions, remembering that according to the rules of the WTO nothing stops us from integrating our efforts in future at regional level” (The President of Russia, 2005, June 23).

At the end, however, the EurAsES stand at the point that its processors get before, as predicted by Karimov, Uzbek president (RFE/RL, 2001, June 4). Despite all efforts during “previous years” that were “discussed at length and in considerable detail”, as Putin lamented, “but recently there has not been serious progress on this issue, unfortunately” (The President of Russia, 2005, June 25). The question of “the effectiveness of the integration mechanisms” remained as the “key issue” in such arrangements (Putin, 2006, January 25).

The distinguished effort to create integration in the former Soviet region undertook by Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan in September 2003. The big four signed the treaty to shape a “Common Economic Space (CES), in Yalta summit” (Putin, 2003, September 19). Regarding the members and the concept of CES shows that Putin’s policy of pragmatic integration of most advantageous, was nowhere notable than in the agenda. “The group four” accounted for 94% of GDP and 88% of trade turnover in CIS. The document stressed on integrating “the customs territories of the parties” that must be

formed gradually “step by step” in a “varying-level and various speed integration”. Based on the concept, the parties agreed to a “gradual integration” by which at the final stage, “a free-trade zone” would be created within the CES borders “without confiscations and limitations for free movement of commodities, services, capital and workforce”. Doing so, the CES members agreed to adopt effective economic and legal mechanisms including “unified foreign trade policies”, coordinated monetary and fiscal policies and creating unified regulation mechanism “to an extent necessary for equal competition and macro-economic stability” (The President of Russia, 2003, September 19). Similar to the previous plan, the CES also aimed, as Putin accentuated, to create a common economic space that be enlarged to other states within the region.

Besides some progress, the CES deemed followed the same destination as its predecessors.<sup>345</sup> The lack of consensus within “group of fours” came to the surface very soon. In particular, the Yalta summit, on 23-24 May 2004, exposed the divergences between the members about the way to formulate and proceed practical “regulatory body” and “legal basis” for the CES. While Putin convinced “that the first package of agreements should include, documents on common foreign trade, customs tariffs, and the competitive [economic] environment” (Putin, 2004, May 24; The President of Russia, 2004, May 24).<sup>346</sup> Nazarbaev, Kazakh president but proposed that the development of CES should be began right by creating “a customs union”. Leonid Kuchma, Ukraine president defended the “free trade zone” as the first step for further integration. Kuchma particularly offered the free trade zone through which the tax system would shift to “the

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<sup>345</sup> In 2003, according to Putin the mutual trade of CES states increased “to around 30%”. “The total volume of accumulated investment of group of four” in Russia’s economic sectors grew to “over \$130 million”. Vice versa, Russia’s investment in CES states boosted to “around \$150 million” (Putin, 2004, September 15).

<sup>346</sup> Putin particularly accentuated on gaining immediate agreement to “2005-2006” on the main principles “on pursuing a common foreign trade policy, setting common customs tariffs, forming a unified competitive environment and creating a single regulatory body” (Putin, 2004, May 24).

country-of-destination principle”. Belarus seems less clear than others do. As Alexander Lukashenko declared, it is unlikely to receive further benefits from the CES and its members at the current state (RFE/RL, 2004, May 25a).<sup>347</sup>

It seemed to be too hasty to conclude that the CES would have the brighter destination than the other integration projects in the region, but the coming events did not register any more, at least in the time of question. To avoid the conclusion, Russia adopted steps that was substantially less beneficial at its own side. Amongst them, in January 2004, the CES states “passed the decision to levy value-added tax on the ‘destination country’ principle in mutual trade of goods, fully and without waivers, including on natural gas, oil and stable gas condensate” (The President of Russia, 2004, January 15). The policy was clearly in favour of other members, in particular Kiev and Minsk than Moscow. For instance, the main proponent of the “state-of-origin principle”, Ukraine can save around US\$800 million per year (RFE/RL, 2004, May 25a). Instead, Russia as the key energy provider of Ukraine and Belarus, according to Putin would mainly suffer financially from “the change of tax regimes” (The President of Russia, 2004, January 15).

The Russian president highlighted that such an unbeneficial offer in Russian side was necessary to realize the CES initiative, and hoped “to give real stimulus” for developing economic ties (The President of Russia, 2004, January 15). Apart from the superficial rhetoric, the reason behind was simple. The creation of CES and EurAsEC integration projects deemed to be Moscow’s “last chance” to maintain its tradition role in the region, and hence to keep its strategic sphere of economic and political sphere. Therefore, as a

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<sup>347</sup> Each member had its concern. Kazakhstan emphasised that moving primarily from creating a customs union since it would permit the members pass similar requirements of WTO. Kiev was particularly concerned about Moscow’s “value-added tax” system based on “the state-of-origin principle” that the state implemented on the energy exports, gas and oil. Hence, Kuchma offered the free trade zone through which the tax system would shift to “the country-of-destination principle”. Belarus seems less clear than others do. As Lukashenko declared, it is unlikely to receive further benefits from the CES and its members at the current state. Referring to Minsk-Moscow economic relations, the president revealed that Belarus was “satisfied” from its economic ties with “the major partner”, Russia, more than others did. The president then concluded, “The economic measures that we are taking now in the framework of the four are behind the level that exists between Belarus and Russia(RFE/RL, 2004, May 25b).



Western observer was convinced “Russia may now be ready to make some bolder moves and/or concessions in order not to lose this chance” (RFE/RL, 2004, May 25b).

The hypothesis seems largely relevant regarding the eccentric movements in the region, particularly Ukraine in this case. Kiev frequently showed that it was interested to integrate in European arrangements, either NATO or EU. Even the state saw primarily the membership in the arrangements, here the CES, as a temporary remedy; “under the present conditions, when the European markets are closed for us” as Kuchma accentuated in inaugural CES summit in Yalta 2003, “it’s better to have a real bird in the hand than two in the bush”. With that reservation, the state signed the CES treaty (RFE/RL, 2003, September 22).

The colour revolutions in the region, especially the “orange” one was a further strike to Kremlin’s dream to reinvigorate integration within the neighbour area, generally, and the CES particularly. In August 2005, Russia gained a defunct integration, when all the members signed the CES “basic statutory documents” except Ukraine (RFE/RL, 2005, August 29). As a Western commentator highlighted with Kiev eschew, a “closer integration within the CES framework has brought little substance” (RFE/RL, 2004, May 25b). Ukraine post-orange President, Viktor Yushchenko accentuated that Kiev will join the group “only in so far as it does not obstruct Ukraine’s move toward Europe”, and added the state will not accept any temptation “to create a supranational body [as other CES members desire], and this must be taken into account” (RFE/RL, 2005, August 29).

#### **5.4.2.2 Pragmatic Security and Military Integration in Eurasia**

With regards to the economy, in the security dimension in line with Russia’s traditional role the Kremlin continued to play a securitising and stabilising role in the region. Russia officially emphasized on the necessity “to promote elimination of the existing and prevent

the emergence of potential hotbeds of tension and conflicts”, to develop cooperation in security and military political issues, certainly in fight against terrorists and extremists “in regions adjacent” region. There was also emphasis on strengthening and developing integrative cooperation through “the Collective Security Treaty” (MDR, 2000, April 21; MID, 2000, June 28; The President of Russia, 2000, January 10).

Consequently, Putin began to reinvigorate the collective security treaty, which suffered from difficulties at the end of previous decade, as it could not prove itself as comprehensive security body in the region, regarding the fact that state like Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan never participated or left the treaty. On 24 May 2000, in the Minsk summit, when referring to new security issues such as comprising terrorism and extremism, Putin justified the necessity of transformation of the collective security treaty to an “instrument that could promptly react to a fast-changing world”. He emphasised that “the treaty” should be prioritised “over all other security measures used by the member countries” (The President of Russia, 2000, May 24).<sup>348</sup>

The “breakthrough” in Russia’s attempt to transform CST was a year later in Yerevan, 2001, where the six treaty members declared a joint statement that emphasised on the “necessity of joint resistance to international terrorism and extremism”. The members endorsed the necessity of developing steps “gradually” towards creating “rapid reaction forces”, “a joint army group” (The President of Russia, 2001, May 25a, 2001, May 25b).<sup>349</sup> Later in October, the members approved “a program for the CST forces for 2001–2005” by which they agreed to “the formation of collective security forces and systems”,

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<sup>348</sup> To stimulate the treaty members, Sergei Ivanov, the Russian defence minister offered them “to purchase Russian weapons at prices below market level” (RFE/RL, 2000, May 25b). Those actions show Russia’s willingness paying more to maintain and intensify its influence in her former sphere of influence trough indirect subsidising mainly in security and military aspects.

<sup>349</sup> Nazarbaev, Kazakh President described the summit as a breakthrough in CST for adopting the new objectives (RFE/RL, 2001, May 29).

that be sent to CST members territory “at their request and with their approval” in order to joint “counter military aggression” and “operations or command and troop exercises” (The President of Russia, 2000, October 11). Those activities should be under the control of CST leaders through the Collective Security Council. Regarding the situation in Central Asia and Afghanistan, the states also agreed to provide the necessary “combined” assistance to any member states if encountered “armed attack” “by terrorists and extremists” (The President of Russia, 2000, October 11).

Russia was indeed to create a “CIS Warsaw Pact”, gradually, by creating “a single interstate military control organ” that could response any military attack by non-members against any member state (RFE/RL, 2002, May 14a). The fact that was also reflected in Russia’s military doctrine which emphasis on “the need to consolidate the efforts to create a single defence area and safeguard collective military security” (MDR, 2000, April 21).

The main turning point in CST however occurred in May 2002, in Moscow’s summit when members agreed to transforming the treaty to “a new regional structure”, “the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO)” (The President of Russia, 2002, May 14).<sup>350</sup> During Dushanbe summit in April 2003, Russia gained opportunity to real transform of the CSTO to a “regional defence pact”, when the members approved an ambitious security plan. They agreed to create “joint headquarters and a rapid deployment force” along with a common air defence system “an air base in Kant, Kyrgyzstan” that according to Putin “must ensure the resolution of problems facing the CST” (RFE/RL, 2003, April 29).

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<sup>350</sup> Russia, along with Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Belarus, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan signed the agreement, while Uzbekistan still refused to join the CSTO. The members also emphasized on developing military cooperation through implementing additional measures including “develop interaction in such areas as developments, production and modernization of military products and the training of military personnel” renewing “the activities of the collective Rapid Deployment Force”, “planning further military” developing security cooperation in “the energy sphere”. They also stressed on readiness of CSTO “to cooperate with other organizations”, probably “with NATO and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization” and “similar organizations both in the East and in the West” (Putin, 2002, May 14).

Russia achieved its limited aim as the state gradually changed the CSTO position at least in limited areas, and issues in the CA region. Referring to “CSTO’s zone of responsibility” in the neighbour areas, particularly “in CA and in Afghanistan” in Moscow summit in 2005, Putin hailed that CSTO changed to “an organisation that plays an independent stabilizing role in the global, and above all regional, security system” (The President of Russia, 2005, June 23). However, one should not exaggerate the result, regarding some reservations. First, the CSTO remained limited to its members, other states in former Soviet region, even those who were member of the CIS, never wished to join; instead, some like Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia preferred to cooperate with NATO. Moreover, in the CA, the central subject of CSTO, not all states accepted the role of the organisation or interested to join it. For example, Uzbekistan who left the organisation in 1999 and preferred to work with NATO and the US. While deciding not to return into CSTO, Islam Karimov said occasionally, “that no Russian troops will be deployed on Uzbek territory, nor will Uzbek troops participate in hostilities outside Uzbekistan” (RFE/RL, 2000, May 26).<sup>351</sup>

In Central Asia, Russia also attempted to persuade the security objectives particularly the counter terrorist activities in connection with other agenda too. Accordingly, it began to develop the “Shanghai Five” activities in the area, along with the prominent member China.<sup>352</sup> The main transformation of the organisation occurred in Shanghai, on 15 July 2001 when the forum members admitted Uzbekistan as a full member and changed the

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<sup>351</sup> In 2006, distancing from the US, Uzbekistan took a closer relation with Russia and joint CIS initiative including CSTO. The case of Uzbekistan was very important regarding the state Westward tendencies, particularly after the US and NATO presence in the country. As Anatolii Baranov Russian expert commented on 13 October “the presence of American forces in Uzbekistan is the beginning of a process by which the United States and NATO will seek to ‘oust Russia’ from its influential position” in the CIS region gradually (RFE/RL, 2001, October 15). The prediction deemed realized very soon, as Georgia asked for withdrawal of CIS peacekeeping force from Abkhaz area, intensified by “rose revolution”, then by “the orange” in Kiev (RFE/RL, 2001, October 12)

<sup>352</sup> Aforementioned in Chapter 4; Shanghai five developed from the initial summit between Russia, China, along with CA countries; Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan to “the Shanghai Treaty” on 26 April 1996. Later, in Tajikistan meeting on 5 July 2000, the Shanghai Five changed to Shanghai forum by admitting Uzbekistan as observer.

name to “the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation” (SCO) (RFE/RL, 2001, June 15; The SCO, 2017, September 10). On the summit the members also emphasized the SCO is seeking to consolidate the relationships between member states and to “fight terrorism and international crime” in CA (RFE/RL, 2001, June 15). Hereafter, both Moscow and Beijing attempted to consolidate the SCO as a framework that allows them to coordinate their mutual objectives within the CA, which is for each country a strategically and economically interesting area.

In the SCO summit in St Petersburg, June 2002 the members signed the organisation’s “charter and the Agreement on a Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)”, which has become a SCO permanent body in fight against “terrorism, separatism and extremism” (The President of Russia, 2001, June 7). Later, in Moscow Summit, the SCO members stressed on strengthening of cooperation in other areas like economic matter while they continued to focus on “the priority task” in the main security matters in CA (Putin, 2003, May 29). During the years, the SCO extended its membership and the circle of its objective to a variety of economic, security matters. In 2005, Putin stated, “the SCO has proven itself a sustainable and viable organization and is gaining authority as an important regional international organisation” (The President of Russia, 2005, July 5).

Through the SCO framework, as “special responsibility” two powers could address “terrorism and a security vacuum” within the CA region, while they had special interest including economy, certainly energy sources and transition, too (RFE/RL, 2002, June 7). While the SCO signalled, establishing of a coalition to keep the US and its hegemonic ambitions out of the region, whether the organisation’s founders could achieve such the goal seems to be too hasty to conclude and out of the scope of this study.<sup>353</sup> A glance at

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<sup>353</sup> While the members of the organisation often emphasised that, the SCO “must not be seen as directed against any religion, individual countries or nationalities” (Putin, 2003, May 29; RFE/RL, 2003, May 29b).

the combination of members and their view at the initial years but shows some reservations. For example, Uzbekistan joined as a member to the SCO, while it intensified its relations with the US and the NATO in security, military, and in particular in counter terrorist activities. This meant not all members of the SCO did perceived nor desired the organisation to be an anti-Western block in Central Asia.<sup>354</sup> Even the state preferred to limit the range and scope of the SCO activates. For example, in 2003 summit, Karimov the Uzbek president warned, “against over-hasty expansion” of the SCO (RFE/RL, 2003, May 29a). Whatever, if the integration was a signal to the West and US, it was less costly way to do so.

To sum up, while it was again too soon to evaluate Putin and his supporters’ integrative initiations in the region, the following events showed that those projects were not more promising than the predecessors were. Similarly, the new projects remained more on rhetoric level, with less practical steps forward except regular meetings and endorsing a pile of documents. CSTO deemed more successful than other initiatives in limited areas and issues in practical terms. Most importantly, neither economic initiatives nor the security arrangements were able to avoid the eccentric forces in the region.

In a 2001 Yalta summit, “Georgia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova”, approved “the charter of the GUUAM”, so that the strengthening of “the sovereignty of the member states” could be more visible (GUUAM, 2001, June 7).<sup>355</sup> Beyond the state’s objectives or their abilities, creating such an organisation in the former Soviet region without Russia, was a striking movement, at least symbolically, because first ever from

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<sup>354</sup> This can be more understandable if one regards the fact that Uzbekistan did not join to similar organization the CSTO in the given time.

<sup>355</sup> After initial declaration in late 1997, joining Uzbekistan on April 24 1999, in a summit arranged in NATO meeting in the US the arrangement began to improve its role. In Yalta summit 2001, the members began to improve actively the role of organisation, by signing the multilevel charter (GUUAM, 2001, June 7).

Soviet collapse, some of the independent states in the CIS region established an arrangements to move themselves out of Moscow's direct orbit. The trend that peaked from mid-2000s by a chain of "colour revolutions", with new post-revolutionary states within the region that were neither desired nor able to resist pro-Western tendencies, and Western alternative models of integration.<sup>356</sup>

#### **5.4.2.3 Pragmatic Bilateralism**

In order to maintain its traditional predominant presence, Putin took a pragmatic bilateral cooperation by prioritising the most economically advantageous states in the region. Based on the assumptions, the Kremlin pursued bilateral economic, security and political cooperation with the states in its neighbourhood, regardless of their regime types, as the main pillar of "fundamental change" in Kremlin policies towards the region.<sup>357</sup> Economically, the objective was to control the main strategic assets of the states, particularly in energy and transportation what the FPC meant as a necessity of persuading "implementation of programs of joint rational use of natural resources" (MID, 2000, June 28). Politically Kremlin was to avoid the intensification of the Western security and political presence within the region.

The Caucasus and Caspian Sea (CS) states were more attractive and "specifically" important for Kremlin to pursue such strong relations, as the FPC highlighted. Aside from economic factors, the role of energy sources, transportation, the legal "status of the Caspian Sea", the pro-Western tendencies in states like Azerbaijan and Georgia added the region values for Russia. Moscow improved its relations with Yerevan and Baku

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<sup>356</sup> In 2006, the name of the organization changed to "the Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development-GUAM", regarding the fact that two of the main founders, Ukraine and Georgia experienced the pro-democratic revolutions.

<sup>357</sup> Criticising the previous strategy of costly integration in the region, in his speech in Munich, Sergey Ivanov summarized such a "fundamental change" in Kremlin policies towards the region. While Russia "does not want to be tied down any multilateral arrangements" in the region, but it "welcomes increased bilateral arrangements with Commonwealth of Independent States" (RFE/RL, 2001, February 7; RFL/RL, 2001, February 8).

simultaneously. Putin supported the status quo regimes regardless of whether they were democratic or authoritarian regimes. He was among the first foreign heads who acknowledged Robert Kocharian's re-elected President of Armenia and then Azeri President Ilham Aliyev, respectively on 5 March and 15 September 2003. This was important as they had won controversial and disputed elections (RFE/RL, 2003, March 7, 2003, October 20).<sup>358</sup>

At the economic level, Moscow focused on energy and "strategic assets". In Armenia, its "economic and structural" dependency on Russia had intensified, leading to the mid-2000s, "90% of the Armenian energy sector, including the management of its sole nuclear-power plant, as well as many of the country's most important strategic enterprises" were under Russia's control (RFE/RL, 2003, October 20).<sup>359</sup> Regarding Baku, two main issues were critical; the Caspian Sea legal status and energy. In September 2002, Putin and his counterpart Heidar Aliyev signed "a bilateral agreement" in Baku "on the demarcation of adjacent sectors of the Caspian seabed" (The President of Russia, 2002, September 22). Beyond economic issues, advancing relations with Azerbaijan was particularly important regarding the state's association with the pro-Western countries within GUUAM, as well its developing ties with the US, and NATO. However, Russia secured the use of the *Gabala* radar station, in Azerbaijan, which Russian media later speculated that Moscow was using to monitor the United States-led war on Iraq.

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<sup>358</sup> Regarding the Armenian presidential election, on 6 March the OSCE Election Observation Mission in Armenia, observing "serious irregularities" on 5 March presidential runoff, concluded "the election process overall fell short of international standards" (RFE/RL, 2003, March 6). Similarly in a day after Azerbaijan election OSCE characterized the poll as "falling short of international standards in several respects" respects (RFE/RL, 2003, October 17).

<sup>359</sup> To offset Armenia's debt of \$40 million, Moscow gained several assets including one atomic electric station.



Georgia's tendency towards the West and the possibility of joining Western organisations such as NATO, and EU made Tiflis the most important case in Caucasus for Russia. Putin intensified the pressure on Georgia by supporting the de facto state, Abkhazia in its struggle for independency from Tiflis. In late 2001 to early 2002, on the likelihood of the US military presence "in counter terrorist operations" in the *Pankisi Gorge*, Duma warned in the case of US military presence, Russia would recognise the independence of "the self-declared Abkhaz republic and South Ossetia" (RFE/RL, 2002, March 1b). Under such pressure, Russia consolidated its military positions in Georgia.<sup>360</sup> In October 2002, Eduard Shevardnadze agreed to "a joint operation in Pankisi" with Russian forces, the agreement that faced harsh criticism in Tiflis, and was hailed in Moscow as a response to the possibility of Georgia joining NATO (RFE/RL, 2002, October 8a, 2002, October 8b).<sup>361</sup> While Moscow pressured the Tiflis regime to take joint anti-terrorist efforts within Pankisi Gorge, simultaneously, it warned the Georgian state to use a similar method against Abkhazia (The President of Russia, 2002, March 1).<sup>362</sup>

Attempting to keep its political pressure, Russia did not withdraw its military bases, troops and equipment from Georgia, besides its agreement with OSCE in 1999, by which Moscow accepted to withdraw, up to July 2001. Only on 30 May 2005, through the agreement signed by Lavrov and his Georgian counterpart Salome Zourabichvili, Russia

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<sup>360</sup> The Georgian side welcomed the US military aid, presence and involvement in counter terrorist operations in the country's hotbed areas, including to the Pankisi Gorge (RFE/RL, 2002, March 1a). While, Putin showed his disappointment over the US military deployment in Georgian claiming "what is happening in these regions impacts our internal life, we thought we should coordinate our actions" (Putin, 2002, March 1).

<sup>361</sup> Georgian National Movement leader in parliament, Mikhail Saakashvili, stated that similar to previous agreements, "Putin-Shevardnadze agreement is binding only for the Georgian side". "By agreeing to permit Russian forces to enter Georgia in the course of a joint operation in Pankisi" the opposition leader added "Shevardnadze has scored an own goal" (RFE/RL, 2002, October 8a). While Russian sides regarded the agreement as a response to Tiflis parliament recent proposal to join NATO. A day after agreement, Valerii Loshchinin, Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister said while "the Georgian parliament's recent proposal to expedite Georgia's efforts to join NATO" was not surprising for Russia, but he emphasised Moscow reserved its own "right 'to protect its national interests' by taking whatever measures it deems necessary to counter that decision" (RFE/RL, 2002, October 8c).

<sup>362</sup> The Pankisi Gorge is located close to Chechnya, and Moscow believe that "the area sheltered insurgents and terrorists guilty of bloodshed in Russia". Putin often expressed "concern with the threat of more terrorist attacks in Russia" that came from the area. Hence, Putin welcomed the decision, "however" he hoped that "Georgia would not resort to similar means in settling the political problems in Abkhazia" (The President of Russia, 2002, March 1).

accepted timelines to close its military equipment in *Akhalkalaki* and *Batumi*, respectively by the end of 2008 (RFE/RL, 2005, May 31). Russian RAO Unified Energy Systems, led by Anatoly Chubais, obtained the Georgian main power provider company, Telasi, on 18 August 2003. By doing so, Moscow gained the opportunity to be the main electricity power provider of Tiflis and hence wielded great influence over the state's energy infrastructure (Baran, 2003, Aug 18).<sup>363</sup> Even after the "Rose Revolution", Putin attempted to rekindle old relations with the newly elected president, Mikhail Saakashvili, despite his disappointment of the replacing of the ex-President Shevardnadze and his pro Russia regime.

Overall, Putin's policies in South Caucasus registered mixed results. At least, at the given time, Putin's attempts to reassert Russia's political and economic influence were "very successful", "with substantial gains" in the CS region, as a Western observer noted (Baran, 2003, Aug 18). The state's policies towards Georgia, however, could not register the desired result. The Rose in Georgia revealed inability of Russia and its methods to keep the state under her traditional influence, at least from the public side. Simply put, Moscow gained some economic and political advantageous by supporting or putting pressure on the authoritarian regimes in the area, but such tools were deemed inefficient to maintain influence in the long term. Although Russia kept its pressure on the newly post-revolutionary state in Tiflis, even intensified, forthcoming events show that Russia could not avoid the newly state's westwards tendency. This finally led to the war in 2008.

In Central Asia, Russia secured its strategic partnership with Kazakhstan, which was a key member of the main multilateral projects such as the CSTO, SCO, EurAsEC and

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<sup>363</sup> The Telasi, the state-own energy provider sold to the US concern, AES during George's attempt to the privatization of the energy sector in 1998. For some economic operational reasons, the US Company sold to Russian RAO in 2003. On 6 August 2003, Chubais, RAO chairperson verified RAO acquired "75% stake in Georgia's AES-Telasi joint venture from AES Silk Road, a subsidiary of the US-based AES Corp".

CES. The economic cooperation between the two states was “generally positive”, and “mutual trade and investments” in particular “were on the upturn, but no institutional development occurred” as reported by Eurasian Development Bank, (2010, April 27). Russia secured the economic interests in the field of energy in part through the division of Caspian resource, and energy transportation and finance.<sup>364</sup> Russia dictated its economic presence in Turkmenistan, by energy agreement signed in April 2003 through which the state’s natural gas supply was sold to the Gazprom, Russian natural-gas monopoly, for 25 years (RFE/RL, 2003, April 3). In CA, Russia’s relations with Uzbekistan seems less successful. Moving towards the West, in fall 2001, Uzbekistan agreed to host the US military presence on its territory and increased its cooperation with NATO especially in the military security field. The state continued cooperation with Russia but on a “limited” basis.

With Belarus, Putin continued to encourage close cooperation with Lukashenko, “Europe’s sole pariah leader” but on new terms. He rejected Yeltsin Primakov’s initiation of Russia-Belarus union very soon. Refusing harshly the Lukashenko’s proposal, on 10 June 2002, Putin revealed that the Kremlin was no longer interested to be an “extra burden at the expense of Russia’s economic interests”, by unification with the weaker partner (The Guardian, 2002, June 20). Refusing the “supranational organ,” Putin poured “cold water” on Lukashenko, by arguing that Russia could not “guarantee rights of veto, sovereignty, and territorial integrity” for the state whose economy was merely “3% of

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<sup>364</sup> On 13 May 2002, Putin and Kazakh president Nazarbaev signed a protocol in Moscow “on the equal division of three oil fields in the northern Caspian”. Based on the agreement two states, “each have a 50 % stake in developing the Kurmangazy, Tsentralnoe, and Khvalynskoe deposits” (RFE/RL, 2002, May 14; The President of Russia, 2002, May 13). In energy transportation, Russia took advantages from Kazakhstan dependency, at least up to mid-2000s. On June 2002 Russia and Kazakhstan signed agreement on Kazakh energy export through Russian territory (RFE/RL, 2002, June 10) . However, from 2005, Kazakhstan changed its strategy of energy exports aim to diversification of its gas and oil export was “completely in opposition to Russia’s interests and declined to join the energy dialogue Russia and the EU” (Eurasian Development Bank, 2010, April 27).

Russia's economy" (RFE/RL, 2002, June 14).<sup>365</sup> This meant Belarus could only be added as the 90<sup>th</sup> region of Russian federation no more, what Putin offered (The Guardian, 2002, June 20).

Moscow however pursued its relations with Minsk pragmatically by focusing on economic integration (RFE/RL, 2003, September 18). Russia also granted an energy discount occasionally to Minsk and wrote off state debts.<sup>366</sup> While Putin saw "no reason for not carrying out" such generous acts, the reason came to surface very soon that of gaining strategic assets. In April 2002, two states signed an agreement "to apply internal Russian tariffs on energy resources and rail transport to Belarus", in return for creating "a joint stock company for pooling the ownership of the gas pipeline system running through Belarus" (The President of Russia, 2002, April 12).<sup>367</sup> With a similar scenario, in February 2004, Moscow decided to give Minsk a loan to assure gas deliveries by Gazprom. In return, the Russian company wanted to increase its share 50% stake in Belarus' *Beltransgaz*, if Minsk desired to continue using subsidised (RFE/RL, 2004, February 25; RFL/RL, 2004, February 25).<sup>368</sup>

Ukraine was the key test of Russian reassertion of influence in the region. Putin pursued the objective in Kiev through fully support of Kuchma, in particular against his domestic oppositions. In response, Moscow was awarded by economic achievements. In December 2000, during the CIS summit in Minsk, Kuchma signed an agreement with

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<sup>365</sup> Apart from economy weight and size, later in August, Russian president also reasoned his opposition referring different economic system of Russia's market economy versus Belarus planned one (The President of Russia, 2002, August 14).

<sup>366</sup> For example, in August 2002, amongst all CIS states, Putin granted Belarus an energy transport tariff based on "internal Russian gas price". Doing so, Putin claimed, "For Gazprom these prices mean losses because they are below production costs. Nevertheless, we have done it and we will have to support Gazprom with budget money". Moscow also presented Minsk "a \$100 million" loan (The President of Russia, 2002, August 14).

<sup>367</sup> Simply Minsk accepted to sell 25% to 30% share of Belarusian Beltransgaz gas-transportation Company to Gazprom in return for \$80 million debt.

<sup>368</sup> Belarus however refused and in response, Gazprom briefly cut off the gas deliveries to Minsk (RFE/RL, 2004, February 25). The same scenario was used by Russia against Belarus in following year, in particular 2007.

Putin on Ukraine's gas debt (RFE/RL, 2000, December 4a).<sup>369</sup> On October 2002, along with the signing agreement of the "strategic cooperation in the gas industry" between Russia and Ukraine, Russian Gazprom agreed to establish the "International Consortium for the Ukrainian Gas Transmission System Management and Development" with Ukrainian Naftogaz (Gazprom, 2004, October 27). In December, Gazprom signed agreement with Ukraine Naftogaz, which made the Russian company as the main energy operator for gas transit from Turkmenistan to Ukraine. In the summer of 2004, Gazprom signed new agreement with Naftogaz, that along with creating "a debt-repayment mechanism", Russian company also determined Kiev's level of "debt for gas supplied in 1997-2000 at \$1.25 billion". In turn, Gazprom gained in the long-term transition of Central Asian, of mainly Turkmen gas to Ukraine (RFE/RL, 2004, August 12).<sup>370</sup> Russia regained the strategic asset that was lost after Soviet collapse, but under the banner of Gazprom. The assets that used very soon in several energies cut offs during 2006 - 2009.

Politically, however, Ukraine never lost its westward tendencies. It was still interested to join NATO and EU, although initially less active than others like Baltic and Balkans states, mostly due to its domestic power struggle than the Russian factor (RFE/RL, 2002, May 16). Kiev was less interested to join Russia's integrative projects in the region. In political security like CSTO, Kiev never joined, in the economic arena, the EurAsES and CES Ukraine presence was conditional and temporary before joining the Western institutions. This was evident in the case of Iraq, where Kiev joined in the US coalition

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<sup>369</sup> As Mikhail Kasyanov, Russian Prime Minister declared Russia accept to "postpone" the debt refund for "10 years", during the time Kiev can "pay only a low rate of interest on the sum it owes" (RFE/RL, 2000, December 4b). Putin hailed the agreement as "balanced and well-considered," by which according to the president, "now no one will have the right to say that Ukraine is stealing Russian gas like a thief by night"; similarly, Kuchma welcomed the agreement as "breakthrough" in relations between two states (Putin, 2000, December 1).

<sup>370</sup> Beyond economic incentives, the agreement was significant since Gazprom could fulfil its vision to control the Ukraine's transit energy assets. By doing so, the Russian company could maintain Ukraine as the main energy corridor to Europe under its control, as well it did not need to create a costly alternative "pipelines through Belarus and across the Baltic Sea" (RFE/RL, 2002, December 27 2002, October 7).

war that disturbed Moscow (RFE/RL, 2002, May 16). The tendency intensified however, by the “orange revolution”, thereafter Ukraine actively and practically sought to join the West and withdraw from the Russian traditional sphere of influence.

In brief, Russia had used its resources to support Russia-led integration in the neighbouring Eurasian region in 2000. Despite short term achievements, Putin’s efforts to maintain the Eurasia sphere of influence, by “working to restore what was lost with the fall of the Soviet Union”, through creating a “united Eurasia versus to the trans-Atlantic West”, with Russia as “the very centre of Eurasia”, remained at the rhetorical level (RFE/RL, 2004, June 18).<sup>371</sup> Attempts to sending a less costly signal to the states within the region, through rhetoric could not solve the historical mistrust and not convince the states that Russia distanced from its imperial past. Kremlin’s alternative stayed less attractive for independent states who wishes to practice independency out of Russia’s control.

Interestingly enough, in the short term, Russia could dictate its presence within the region by regaining the strategic assets, especially in energy fields, and showed it “did not want any major economic assets to fall into foreign hands” (Hanson, Personal interview, 5 January 2018). Particularly in energy and transportation in CS, Caucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, in CA; in Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan; Belarus and Ukraine Russia could create the Gazprom-orchestrated relationships with these states that kept them under Moscow’s economic presence. The assets were later used to maintain its political pressures upon the republics, as was seen from the mid-2000s. However, in the mid-term, Putin’s pragmatic strategy towards the post-Soviet aimed to establish an

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<sup>371</sup>The idea presented by Gumilev, the founder of neo-Eurasianism that Putin referred in his speech in Astana, on 18 June 2004.

optimal integrated economy aimed to serve Russia's national economic interests did not register well, what Russians desired.

Regarding the changes in the region from mid-2000, neither pragmatic bilateralism nor integration strategies could help Russia to maintain the region on her dominance. Most countries including the authoritarian ones, wanted to be more independent from Moscow, and sought support from the West. The chain of Colour Revolutions in the region and the policies of newly elected leaders highlighted not the usual shift of the ruling elites in those countries but also the nature of relations of the states toward the world order and Russia in particular. The post-revolutionary regimes were attempting to make a new country, based on new norms and principles, the democracy and market economy, different from old Soviet norms, even unlike post-Soviet "pony democracy". The countries reoriented themselves towards the Western normative order and sought to integrate into Western constitutive order. The states looked at the future not to the Soviet past.

## **5.5 Colour Revolutions and Status Recognition Dilemma**

The relationship between post-Soviet Russia and the West, was not seriously damaged until the mid-2000s, not only due to the war in Iraq, as some realists assumed,<sup>372</sup> but due to the revolutions that took precedence in Russia's sphere of influence.<sup>373</sup> Regarding the psychological importance of maintaining the state's traditional stance as the hegemon of

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<sup>372</sup> For example, from realist point of view, Ambrosio (2005a) saw the Iraq war as the most crisis in Russo-American relations that changed post-soviet Russia's orientations towards the West.

<sup>373</sup> IR scholar, Russian and non-Russian, interviewees also endorsed that will be further discussed in continue. While they emphasize on Russia's frustration and disappointment of the West because the West did not realize Russia's status and role, through different cases like Kosovo crisis or Iraqi war. However, the interviewees approved that the colour revolutions were the end of Post-Soviet Russia's cooperative view of the liberal order and the West, since they convinced that the colour revolutions maximized the sense of status dilemma as Russian perceived geopolitical and ideological threat against Russia's status and identity. Thereafter, the elites convinced that Russia took revisionism as the grand strategic orientations, and persuade aggressive, balancing policies towards the West (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019; Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018; Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019; Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018). Some highlighted that the revolutions increased even the sense of psychological insecurity for "Russia's political system", or "regime" (Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018; Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019; Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

Eurasia, the region gain a significant presence in the Russian political landscape, after initial short neglecting period in early 1990s. Accordingly, Russian elites were convinced that Russia should compete with any outgroup power who wants to intensify its influence in the region.<sup>374</sup>

Consequently, it was less surprising if Russian political elites did not welcome Kremlin's agreement to the armed presence of the West, in particular the US in CA during Afghanistan war after 9/11,<sup>375</sup> much less, the intensification of such the presence under banner of democratisation, over Russia's stance. The domino of colourful revolutions in Moscow's traditional zone of influence, in mid-2000s, Georgia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan<sup>376</sup>, perceived as the West attempts to impose its influence, the final strike on Putin's "strategic partnership". It was also the turning point in Post-Soviet Russia's grand strategic orientations towards the liberal status quo order.

Regarding the revolutions, as the outcome of the new Western efforts to reshape the post-Soviet space, at the expense of Moscow, the Kremlin attempted initially, to meddle in those countries by supporting pro-Russian, the status quo regimes when the "domino" of revolutions were not yet completed. Few in Russia were willing to question the

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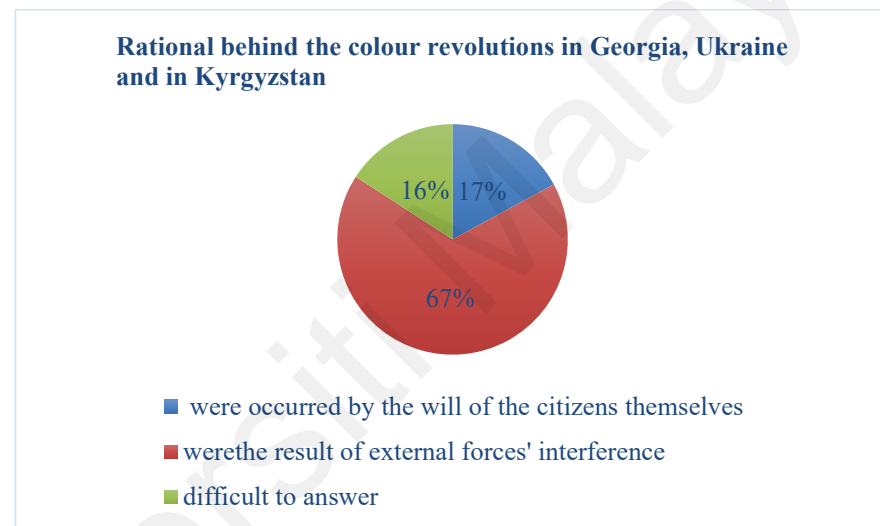
<sup>374</sup> As given in this study, except in short period of very first years of Yeltsin – Kozyrev time, the former soviet region was one pillar of Russian identity definition, the status conceptualization, and foreign policy orientation.

<sup>375</sup> Criticizing Putin's offer to the US military deployment in CA area, was bright most in Russian statist and civilizationist hardliners front. Apart from the political elites like Gennadii Zyuganov Communist Party leader, Gennadii Raikov who questioned Putin's policy in alignment with the US "in the war on terror", in general (RFE/RL, 2001, September 24, 2001, September 25). Some criticized Kremlin's agreement to US presence in CA as a preliminary step for the US and NATO to outset Russia's presence from the region (RFE/RL, 2001, October 15). Accordingly, some elites like Pavel Felgenhauer, Russian military analyst claimed, "Russia will do its best to prevent any American military presence in the area" (Tony Wesolowsky, 2001, September 26). Even in Kremlin amongst the elites around Putin, officials like General Anatolii Kvashnin, the head of the General Staff was against Putin's the benevolence offer, contrary called Putin "to put pressure on the Central Asian countries not to permit an American military presence there" (RFE/RL, 2001, September 26).

<sup>376</sup> Amongst all, Georgia and Ukraine were more important. Apart from the geopolitical and geo-strategic importance and the possibility of integration of those states in Euro Atlantic arrangement, Tiflis and mainly Kiev "as ancestral homeland of the Kievan Rus" were also traditionally and culturally important for Russians. Moreover, through linking the Tulip Revolution to Islamic terrorism, Moscow could control the revolutionary movement in Kazakhstan. The Tulip Revolution was important since it occurred soon after rose and orange; hence, it added and perhaps proved Kremlin's mistrusts in calling all revolutionary movements as a "wave" threatening former Soviet sphere entirely. Hence, while in Russia, the rose was upsetting, the orange was humiliating, but the Tulip was created "a disturbing pattern" that could not be ignored, instead necessitated prevention of further spread (Ortmann, 2008).



Kremlin's reaction towards the West or to lend support for the Pro Russian regimes in the region. The majority of the political class and public remained wary of Western intentions, and this made it easier for the Kremlin to articulate its concerns and pursue the chosen course. The Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) survey in July 2005 showed the majority of respondents (67%) were convinced that the “revolutions” were accomplished mainly because of the interference of external forces, compared to those who believed that the revolutions occurred at the will of the citizens themselves (17%) (Public Opinion Foundation (FOM), 2005, July 14).



**Figure 5.3: Russian Public Attitudes towards the Colour revolutions**

Source: Russian Public Opinion Survey, Public Opinion Foundation (FOM), (2005, July 14)

The domino began by the “Rose” in Georgia, from late 2003, which toppled the old regime led by Edouard Shevardnadze, with widespread protests over rigged parliamentary election. From the outset, Russia attempted to resist the change and support the pro-Russian regime while rhetorically showing its neutrality (MID, 2003, November

14, 2003, November 18).<sup>377</sup> Georgian oppositions and Western powers rejected the parliamentary election result, on 2 November, as an undemocratic, unfair election.<sup>378</sup> Officially accepting “irregularities”, “mistakes” during the election, Kremlin cautioned against “a further whipping-up of tensions in the country” and “calls for forcible action against the President and authority [that] may lead to an explosion”. Going further, Russia warned the Georgian oppositions, “those who are prompting unconstitutional actions, including from abroad”, about “the full responsibility for possible grave consequences” (MID, 2003, November 21).<sup>379</sup>

This was mainly to avoid taking further steps to replace the regime by oppositions, the hope that vanished very soon after Shevardnadze’s resignation, under oppositions’ pressures and Western Support, on 23 November. The Kremlin was obviously disappointed by the action. It was neither “indifferent”, “not entirely satisfied” with the “change of power” and “the way” that occurred that “one can hardly say that it was a fully democratic”, Russia claimed that the ex-President Shevardnadze’s decision to resign was “under very strong pressure of the street” and “external interference” (I. Ivanov, 2003, November 25; MID, 2003, November 25).<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>377</sup> With such hope, Russia practically took steps. During the protest the FM Ivanov offered to solve the crisis cooperation of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan but Shevardnadze rejected the proposal by calling as a “premature” (RFE/RL, 2003, November 18). Also encouraged the south Caucasian authorities to support the Shevardnadze (RFE/RL, 2003, November 19).

<sup>378</sup> The Georgian opposition groups, Western powers, and Western “observers”, the organization as if OSCE saw the elections unfair and undemocratic in all election process, pre preparation, during, and or after. OSCE reported, “Irregularities and delays in the voting process on polling day and in the subsequent counting and tabulation process reflected a lack of political will and administrative capacity for the conduct of free, fair, and transparent elections” (RFE/RL, 2003, November 3, 2003, November 3, 2003, November 4, 2003, November 6, 2003, November 14).

<sup>379</sup> Russia’s acceptance deemed merely to avoid the situation to be worst. As the event after the revolution, particularly after raising Saakashvili as the Georgian president shows neither Russia nor pro-Russian forces within Georgia were satisfied. For example, Aleksandr Veshnyakov the Chairman of Duma, after Georgian presidential election on 8 January blamed the OSCE for its “policy of double standards” and assessments that depends on “whether the elected leaders are to one’s liking or not” (RFE/RL, 2003, January 12).

<sup>380</sup> Besides “serious differences” they had with “President Shevardnadze” either in terms of “the foreign policy orientation of Georgia” or relating to his regime’s occasionally temptation in joining the West, that was opposed to “the geopolitical interests of the region” (I. Ivanov, 2003, November 25).

The disappointment over toppling the pro-Russian Shevardnadze worsened by resentment over electing a Pro-Western Mikhail Saakashvili in January 2004. The Georgian “Rose” was perceived as an undemocratic political coup against the lawful democratic president “Eduard Shevardnadze” who besides all “domestic and economic mistakes” as Putin claimed, “Was never a dictator”. Accordingly, “the change of regime in the republic” was a logical result of a series of foreign pressures particularly from the West, “those who organise such actions and those who encourage them” (Putin, 2003, November 24, 2004, December 23). For the Kremlin, there was “sufficient evidence” to see the Georgian revolution not as “spontaneous” or “overnight” event, instead as the “a scenario devised in advance”, by the West and “the US” that had an “active” role in perpetration.<sup>381</sup> Neither a “democratic bloodless revolution” nor the “velvet revolution” but it was coup d’état, as revealed emphatically by Ivanov, “what occurred in Georgia was a forced removal of the current lawful president from office” (I. Ivanov, 2003, December 6).

Russia was certainly concerned about the geopolitical temptation of those “Western countries”, who wanted “to push some CIS countries onto the course by which the change of leadership in Georgia has occurred” (I. Ivanov, 2003, December 6). Under such a geopolitical threat perception, Russia intensified its pressures on the Pro-Western newly born state in Georgia. Regarding Tiflis, apart from “tactical”, rhetorical approval of new state, Moscow took harsher policies in practical, strategic terms too.<sup>382</sup> Simultaneously,

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<sup>381</sup> As the evidences, the foreign minister hinted to the active role of “the US ambassador”, “The Soros Foundation” and “those emissaries had become frequent visitors to Tbilisi” to “persuade Shevardnadze to leave office” (I. Ivanov, 2003, December 6) .

<sup>382</sup> There are several examples of such short and long terms, policies against pro-Western Post-Revolutionary Georgia. Few days after Shevardnadze’s fall, Russia relaxed “the visa requirement for residents of Georgia’s Adjara Autonomous Republic”, regarding previous exemption of “residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia”, a requirement imposed in 1999, remained merely for Georgians. The act that called “as a crude violation of Georgia’s sovereignty” new state in Tiflis (RFE/RL, 2003, December 10, 2004, January 6). Kremlin also intensified its support from the Adjara Republic in tension with the central government in Tiflis (RFE/RL, 2004, January 9a, 2004, January 21). Moreover, aforementioned Russia insisted strictly on keeping its military equipment in the Georgia and ignored the request of Tiflis newly born state avoid closing the bases, even arguing that such action need long term, “minimum of 11 years” and providing “additional funding” by “external source”, as Russian political and military elites highlighted (RFE/RL, 2003, December 29, 2003, November 19, 2004, January 6, 2004, January 9b).

it continued to support the remaining pro-Russian regimes in the region to maintain its presence and avoid the spill over of the Georgian scenario.

Hoping to avoid the scenario, Russia continued its support from the remaining pro-Russian regimes in the region, while cautioning the West against further action (I. Ivanov, 2003, December 6). The forthcoming presidential election in Ukraine became the main test for post-Soviet Russian status, in particular its traditional standing within the region and competition with the Western powers, especially after the failed experience in Georgia. Ukraine was especially important for Russia. Apart from the historical, cultural and psychological proximity, as the largest, the most populated country within Russia's neighbours, being located between Russia's border with the Europe, Ukraine was the most important state within the region geo-economically, geopolitically, and strategically. Consequently, with similar technics to Georgia case, Russia supported the Pro-Russian candidate but openly and strongly from the beginning when it saw "elements of revolutionary situation in the air" in Ukraine (RFE/RL, 2004, November 22a).<sup>383</sup>

The Russia-West "political war" over Ukraine's "geopolitical destination", intensified by Ukrainians' protest against the rigged election of the pro-Russian, and then Prime Minister Victor Yanukovich, a year after Georgian rose (RFE/RL, 2004, November 22a). Putin hastily congratulated Yanukovich for his "victory" over "a tough fight" but in an "open and honest" election, immediately after second round on 22 November when counting votes was not over yet, let alone the approval by the Ukraine constitutional Court or any international observers (The President of Russia, 2004, November 22).<sup>384</sup> Following Russia, some pro-Russian regimes in the region, Belarus, Kazakh, Kyrgyz,

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<sup>383</sup> Highlighted by Aleksandr Torshin Russia's Council Deputy.

<sup>384</sup> Putin congratulated when, as Ukrainian sources reported that counting was not finished yet, "With 99.14 percent of the vote counted, Yanukovich won 49.42 percent of the vote to Yushchenko's 46.69 percent" (RFE/RL, 2004, November 22b).

Uzbek Leaders recognised the election result and “congratulated Yanukovych” (RFE/RL, 2004, November 24, 2004, November 29a). While, both Ukrainian independent observers and the Western powers, the US and European states, along with international election monitors like OSCE rejected the second round election calling it far from democratic standards (RFE/RL, 2004, November 22a, 2004, November 23a, 2004, November 23b).

The Kremlin strongly defend its position over Ukraine. Putin frequently stressed “to regulate” the crisis in Kiev, “exclusively” “within existing constitution and laws”, “the existing Ukrainian legislation on elections”, and “in the framework of existing political contacts and consultations” (The President of Russia, 2004, November 23, 2004, November 24, 2004, November 25). While the US, EU and NATO, OSCE accompanied Ukrainian oppositions led by Yushchenko in demanding for rejecting the election result and new presidential ballot (RFE/RL, 2004, December 2, 2004, November 29b, 2004, November 29c). Russia harshly condemned the Ukraine’s domestic “radical oppositions” who attempted to “annul” the result of “democratic”, “free”, “transparent and, of course, legitimate” election, and the “outside” radicals those “foreign states” the “transatlantic, and international structures”, and “some representatives of the EU” who called for “illegal”, “antidemocratic”, “actions of disobedience”. Moscow warned both groups “cease anti-constitutional calls and actions” to avoid any “grave consequences” (MID, 2004, November 23).<sup>385</sup>

Invalidating Ukraine’s election commission declaration on Yanukovych victory on the 21 November presidential runoff, and ruling to re-vote the second round by the Ukrainian Supreme Court on 3 December, was a failure of Russia (RFE/RL, 2004, December 6).

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<sup>385</sup> Similarly, Putin openly warned the West, the Western organizations, particularly OSCE observers in Ukraine, who attempt to “to “interfere” in Ukraine, force their “opinions on the Ukrainian people”, and push them “towards mass unrest (The President of Russia, 2004, November 23, 2004, November 25).

Such a failure was completed by the loss of Pro-Russian Yanukovych versus Pro-Western Yushchenko in renewed election. It was a “personal slap”, “humiliating” for Putin himself who put all the efforts to support Yanukovych (Surkov, 2006). It was especially embarrassing, as he was the first leader who confirmed the first round of elections as fair and democratic and congratulated the pro-Russian candidate.

The chain of revolutions in the former Soviet region, especially the “Rose” and “Orange”, was not only the failure of Putin’s policy, but it fuelled the sense of status dilemma within Russian political landscape. The failure in “the greatest foreign policy crisis” from the Soviet collapse, as a Russian observer highlighted, was the end of Post-Soviet “Kremlin’s leaders’ dream of Russia’s greatness” that largely grounded Russia’s “ability” to reinforce its traditional dominance “in the near abroad” (Torbakov, 2004, December 13). The failure imposed by the West who was hoped to recognise Post-Soviet Russia as its own group and realize it’s equally and respect its sphere of influence. Simply put, the revolutions ruined both the regional vision “hegemony within Eurasian Hartland” that was the basis for the state’s global vision of great power status, transferred from soviet *Strategiya* to post-Soviet grand strategies.

The perception of a status dilemma after the revolutions was widespread in Russian political sphere amongst elites and leaders when they perceived the Western liberal order was against them. The sense clearly highlighted by Vladislav Surkov, who received a louder voice especially thereafter.<sup>386</sup> “When the Soviet Union was dissolved”, he stressed, “We [Russians] thought we would continue with our lives as in the past, but as good neighbours. Of course; we also believed that the West loved us and would help us and that we’d be living like the Europeans”. As time passed, the dream “turned out to be more

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<sup>386</sup> He was then deputy director of the Presidential Administration. Some in West introduced him as one of the main ideologue and “the second-most powerful man” in Kremlin.

complicated”, as “the West didn’t love us” but was “so suspicious of us”. Reflecting this in his interview with German media Surkov regretted, “We [Russia and Germany] wrote the darkest chapters in twentieth-century history, you Germans in your way, we in ours” by Soviet collapse (Surkov, 2005, June 20). The sense of status denial became a common dominator of Russian society and resurfaced a sense of Soviet nostalgia amongst the elites and mass.<sup>387</sup>

Those psychological effects, humiliation and frustration, raised by the perception of status dilemma after the colour revolutions caused ontological insecurity amongst Russians that increased the influence of proponents of revisionism by resonating their preferences within the Russian foreign policy landscape. In particular, they talked about the possibility of a geopolitical reorientation of the upcoming “liberated” states. So, the Soviet style of rivalry was resonated by the hardliners who interpreted any issues in international relations under the banner of geopolitical rivalry between Russia and the West (Torbakov, 2004, November 29). Similarly, the current revolutionary movements in the region was interpreted by the group in a continuation of the West’s geopolitical and ideological attempts to re-shape the post-Soviet unipolar world order with diminished Russia.

Russian Civilizationists, nationalists portrayed the revolutionary changes in the region, especially “in Ukraine” as “the biggest geopolitical war between the US and the EU on one side and Russia on the other” (Torbakov, 2004, December 13). Alexandr Dugin, the main right-wing intellectual, claimed that the US’ objective is to create a single geopolitical space that could finally promote the state’s geo-economics and geostrategic interests. Accordingly, the victory of the pro-Western regime in Ukraine was improving

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<sup>387</sup> In an opinion survey conducted by Levada Center, 67% of Russians regretted Soviet collapse, in contrast to 26% who did not regret it (RFE/RL, 2005, January 6).

the US influence in Eurasian space at the expense of a decreasing Russian sphere of influence; the scenario that not merely alienated the region from Russia, but also could be used within Russia itself (Dugin, 2005, January 26). Under such perceptions, it was less surprising even if the “Russian regime”, according to a Russian expert, “saw the threat not only against Russia’s geopolitical dominance in the region but also against Russia’s political system, and regime too” (Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).<sup>388</sup>

Challenging the post-Soviet “phony” democratic systems in the region was perceived a challenge Russia’s identity and its value system too. For Surkov the colour movements “were not revolutions” for democracy, since it happened on the eve of Soviet collapse, “in the 1990s”, when the democracies, including Russia were borne “with fundamental changes in social structures”. Hence, the movements were a counter revolutionary coups against the sovereignty of post-Soviet democratic strong states, by foreign powers and organisations “that would like to see the scenario repeated in Russia” with similar “technologies” that must be fought with Kremlin (Surkov, 2005, June 20).<sup>389</sup> The view was common in the Russian political environment among elites with different approaches. Even moderate elites talked about the necessity of adopting “conservative counter-revolutionaries” policies.<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>388</sup> The emphasis on geopolitical rivalry but was not limited to hardliners thereafter. Referring the term, statist commentator Vitaly Tretyakov, warned the threat that Russia’s failure to reinforce its presence in Ukraine, “within the next two years, velvet revolutions will take place, similar to the Kyiv scenario, in Belarus, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and, possibly, in Armenia”. Hence warned by the analyst, Moscow would fully have lost its “room for manoeuvre in the post-Soviet space” (Torbakov, 2004, December 13). Vyacheslav Nikonov, director of the Politika Foundation think tank, revealed “what is occurring in Ukraine”, that occurred previously in Georgia and going to occur in the region, is the “first large-scale geopolitical ‘special operation’ of the united West aimed at a revolutionary regime change in a CIS country, which is Russia’s [strategically] ally” (Torbakov, 2004, December 17).

<sup>389</sup> The idea then became the term of “sovereign democracy” used by Kremlin as “a core” foundation of its own new ideology and alternative model in the world politics versus the western democracy (Will be discussed more in next section).

<sup>390</sup> As Russian liberal commentator regarded the revolutions as “the revolutions of a new type”, unlike from those against “totalitarianism” in the late of 1980s in CEE, the new type was “revolution against phony democracy”, Lilia Shevtsova of the Carnegie Moscow Centre highlighted after “Ukraine revolution” (Torbakov, 2004, December 13).



The revisionist language dominated Kremlin. Reflecting the re-surfaced ideological threat perception, Putin openly articulated his suspicion of what he addressed a revitalized “theory of permanent revolution”. He called the events not “revolutions”, “for issues of democracy, human rights”, as the countries experienced “14 years ago” with choosing “in favour of democracy”. Instead, they were counter-revolutions against democratic states. The president asked, “If democracy does not work in post-Soviet countries, as some believe, then why does it need to be introduced there?” In addition, “if we introduce it there, these principles of democracy, then why revolutions are needed”. Accordingly, “it is not that democratic events are taking place there”, but the anti-democratic uprising “outside the framework of the existing legislation and constitution” (Putin, 2005, February 22).<sup>391</sup>

Hence, the colour revolutions affected Russian political landscape as they lead to a widespread sense of status dilemma. As a Russian observer revealed, the revolutions affected Russia, “in a much more serious way” than the other cases, to say rounds of “NATO’s expansion”, “Kosovo war”, even recently “the Iraq war”. Since, for Russians the events in Russia’s near abroad, in “Slavic” neighbours were “an open manifestation of the West’s unfriendly position” and its hypocrisy in response to a decade friendly stance of Russia. Accordingly, after the revolutions “a deep rift” in Russian orientation towards the West and Western led order deemed “imminent”, even “the worst fracture since the beginning of the 1980s” (Torbakov, 2004, December 17).

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<sup>391</sup> IR and Russian foreign policy scholars, as well as geopolitical threat, some specifically highlighted the role of ideological threat perceptions raised by the colour revolutions. For example, similar to Russian leaders and politicians, Russian scholar, Sumsky (Personal Interview, 22 November 2018) believed that the colour revolutions were “not a democratization” since “the states were already democratized in transitional era” after Soviet collapse, but different democracy, as the Western states experience different democracies. Hence, the movements were “a symbol of democratization” by which “the West wanted to sell its normative system to the rest of the world as solidified goods for geopolitical intentions”. Kushnir (Personal Interview, 8 February 2019) believed that “Russia was threatened by both the West and by the Western values”. James Sherr (Personal Interview, 19 March 2019), highlighted the revolutions were perceived not just geopolitically but ideologically, as Russian perceived them as threat to its “normative jurisdiction systems and rules”. Russian saw “Russia is different with different normative system” hence here after “Russia has to defend Russian ideas”.

It was imminent as the revolutions raised the sense of status recognition dilemma. Russian elites, leaders, and mass came to believe that they could not achieve an enhanced status from the West and within the liberal status quo. The perception resonated the tone of revisionist hardliners and their preferences to persuade a more aggressive, revisionist policy. Reflected by Dugin that restoration of Russia's greatpowerness could be guaranteed merely through more strengthened policies, that of Soviet style. "Russia should increase its strength as the US will be a friend only of a [state] like the Soviet Union" (RFE/RL, 2004, December 9). Similarly, for Surkov the way to close the darkest chapter of Russian question in the 21<sup>st</sup> century was to change the political naïve thinking and understand that "the romantic days are gone", and "the West doesn't have to love us" (Surkov, 2005, June 20). As Sergei Markov Putin's adviser said, Russia was "gradually slipping into the danger zone of possible conflict" with the West, "a crisis in international relations could come at any moment" (Torbakov, 2004, December 17).

When the "absolute priority", the aspired "status" and its defined "identity" was seen directly challenged, and the hope to gain the equality with the West faded out, Russia's foreign behaviours began to change. "If Russia's greatness is endangered by something", highlighted by IR expert, "she will, fight back, the sense that came with the colour revolutions". In this sense, "the revolutions are major challenges against this idea of great power status, partly because Russian defined the status on encompassing its sphere of special interests in former soviet region". Less surprising if, the revolutions stimulated "Russia toward the reincarnation of an imperial attitude and aggressively claiming of equal rights (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

Briefly "more than 20 years" of Gorbachev's policies led to close the "the Cold War", the terms were renewed by the colour revolutions in mid-2000. Russia perceived the state's standing and identity was denied by the Western counterparts, "as the partners

judged Russia under their values system” (Trenin, 2005). Highlighted by a Russian analyst “Now, Moscow perceives any foreign policy issue as an episode in the global confrontation between Russia and the West” (Torbakov, 2004, November 29). This affected Russia’s grand strategic thinking and led to more revisionist preferences towards the World normative and constitutive order, and within the former Soviet region. Summarising rising the perceptions of status dilemma and revisionist preferences after the revolutions, scholar revealed:

“After Rose in Georgia, then in Ukraine in 2004, there was a deep humiliation, especially after the orange revolution. The Kremlin saw the revolution as a direct intervening of the West in Russia’s backyard. As if Russian has the right to appoint a president with a disregarding attitude within Ukraine in that stage, there might be confrontations that are more serious. The confrontation that was seen then in the War with Georgia in 2008. Thus, what happened then in Georgia 2008, the gas cut off to Europe, the events in Ukraine 2014, have been foreshadowed by what happened in Ukraine in 2004, and before in Georgia” (Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019).

While the social competition strategy could not lead Russia to gain recognition of the desired status from the West, and with no expected outcome that of maintaining traditional hegemony in neighbour heartland area, domestically, however, Russia’s new approaches for development and modernisation achieved more success. Russia’s political and economic conditions stabilised up to the mid-2000s. Putin’s era marked a turning point from the revolutionary destruction of Soviet institutions to stabilization. In contrast to Yeltsin, Putin viewed liberalisation not as an end but a crucial means for strengthening the Russian state and ensuring its global might and authority. He directed passage of a package of liberal economic laws, including stabilization of property rights, reduction of welfare benefits and subsidies, and enforcement of a reformed tax code. The reform was deemed a success relative to 1990s, the country’s economic and social standing enhanced considerably (Putin, 2004, May 26).

Over the years, the Kremlin had “managed to compensate for around 40%” of Russia’s economic potential that were “lost” by “lengthy economic crisis” of the end of 1990.

Russia's economy registered a remarkable growth comparing to previous decade. The "living standards" also raised steadily. "Russians' real incomes" increase "a 1.5-fold", the poverty rate decreased to 2004. The growth continued remarkably in coming years, discussed next, as World Bank espoused Russia's annual GDP increased 6.9% averagely during 1999-2008 (World Bank, 2017; MID, 2005, June 22).<sup>392</sup> The remarkable trend that was reflected in improving Russian living standard; increasing the real wages up to 10.5% annually, growth of "real disposable income" at 7.9%; halving the rate of unemployment to 6.3% in 2008, from 12.6% in 1999. Also, Russia's poverty rate declined sharply from 29% in 2000 to 13.14% by 2007. (Cooper, 2009).<sup>393</sup> Less surprisingly, Putin (2004, May 26) celebrated "that Now, for the first time in a long time, Russia is politically and economically stable. It is also independent, both financially and in international affairs, and this is a good result in itself".

The economic growth was because of increasing Russia's share in global energy market and the oil prices.<sup>394</sup> Data shows energy (gas, oil and other energy sources) accounted around 62% of Russia's total export in 2005/06 the rate that increased from 42% in 1999 (World Bank, 2017). Putin's policies to economic reforms at home, improving the state's economic condition, increasing Russian market share in the world economy, were crucial. As "the world's second biggest oil exporter" and "the number one exporter of hydrocarbons", hence it was less surprising if Russia focus on energy as the main potential economic field to increase its share in global market (Putin & Bush, 2002, May

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<sup>392</sup> The GDP increased to 7.2% (\$591.17 Billion) in 2004 and picked to 8.5% (\$ 1.3 Trillion) in 2007 (World Bank, 2017).

<sup>393</sup> In other economic fields, in finance, according to Lavrov "a stronger, more vibrant Russia has emerged from the rubble of the 1990s"; in foreign investments, Russia's "robust business climate attracts more and more foreign investments" for example "in 2006, net inflow of capital to Russia surpassed \$40 billion" (Lavrov, 2007, February 24)

<sup>394</sup> Reflected in Levada Centre opinion survey 2004, the majority of Russians (52%) believed that "the relatively safe current financial situation in the country" is "the result of high oil prices in the world" rather than "an effective economic policy of Russia's government" by 24% (Levada Analytical Centre, 2004, p. 19).

24; The President of Russia, 2002, May 24).<sup>395</sup> Therefore, capitalizing on economic opportunities, Putin managed to better relations particularly in energy field with the West and renewed activism in winning energy and transportation markets in the former Soviet region that added to the impression the government was serious about economic modernisation as its strategic objective.

Whatsoever the reason, Russians welcomed the economic achievement, although there was still an expectation of greater improvement. They also have backed Putin's emphasis on state-driven modernisation, as a policy that would have preserved independence and avoid a loss of policy autonomy to the West or domestic commercial groups.<sup>396</sup> Evaluating Russia's domestic situation of Putin's first administration, Lough, (Personal Interview, 1 March 2019) highlights;

"Economically liberal reforms set up at the end of 90s, then implemented in Putin's first term were very successful; in stabilising the country's finances; risen taxes after devaluation of Russia's currency following the industrial catastrophe; Russia became more economically viable. But it might be ... around 2003/04 that Putin concluded it was too dangerous to conduct deep structural reforms in Russia, because it would require loosening the Kremlin's level of the centralised control and creating political competition and having effective courts. Creating Western style institutions and ruling a community based on principles, one we commonly find in the rule of law-based countries, was perceived as dangerous for a state like Russia, since it was going to undercut the authority and power".

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<sup>395</sup> Russia was the largest non-OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) exporter, accounted for nearly 10% of the world's oil exports by 2000s. If one includes the country's gas export Moscow could be known "as the number one" hydrocarbons exporter around the world. Together with the Caspian Sea states, Russia had second rank in "undiscovered oil potential after the Persian Gulf, holding about 27 percent of the world's total". In "undiscovered natural gas", the region is the first around the world. Russia had thirds rank after the US and Saudi Arabia in the World's energy production by 13%, at time (The James A Baker III Institute 2003, February).

<sup>396</sup> As polls indicated, many Russians supported Putin's efforts to enhance the state's economic stance in global economy through domestic development. Revealed by Levada Centre the majority of Russians believed that their economic situation is currently experiencing "growth and development or economic stabilisation" rather than "stagnation" (Levada Analytical Center, 2006, p. 44). Consequently, the percentage of those, who believed that the "the economic situation in Russia" improved, increased gradually from 25% in 2000 to 45% 2005 respectively. While those who saw the economic situation as poor, decreased sharply from 63% to 42 % during the same period (Levada Analytical Center, 2006, p. 44). The Russian public believed that Putin was confident about achieving his goals by launching reforms and a development strategy (56%) in 2005 (Levada Analytical Center, 2006, p. 64).

## 5.6 Summary

Evidenced in this chapter, during 2000-2004/05, the deep-seated belief of Russia's status was still a matter of concern in the state's strategic thinking. Derived by analysis, Putin and his statist developmentalist supporters re-conceptualised the state proper status entailed change and continuity. Emphasising economic capabilities as a main dimension of the world competition and the standard of status in modern world, Russia was viewed as a part of a modern, developed great powers group that could equally ensure the global order. As the prominent power in the neighbourhood area, Russia should continue playing the regional role but with no messianic mission.

Derived from analysis, the concern over the state's status still influenced Russia's grand strategic orientation. Regarding the aspired status, there were a more emphasis on economic capabilities in achieving a higher status in the modern era; the economic development and modernisation were put in the centre of national interests from 2000. The interests implied pursuing pragmatic and non-assertive policies in international system. Statist developmentalists adopted social competition implying pragmatic cooperation with the developed and advanced West and Western political economic institutions, and pragmatic cooperation, multilaterally and bilaterally together with the most economically advantageous countries within the former Soviet region.

Due to increase in energy prices, as well as economic and political stability, Russia has gained domestic economic achievements towards mid-2000s, comparing the early years of post-Soviet chaos. However, those achievements were not enough in gaining the desired international status, as it was still highly dependent on the recognition from a higher status group, the West. Events such as 9/11 gave Putin a chance to develop the adopted pragmatic partnership with the Western powers. Russia even tolerated some

American actions in the international arena as he expected to gain the acceptance of the state's aspired status from West, and its constitutive order, NATO, EU and WTO.

The Russian grand strategy was however, questioned due to failure to gain recognition of the higher status from the West. Russia was yet out of the Western centred constitutive order and the West still played unilaterally regardless of roles or interests of others. Neither Western security system, with NATO as its core, nor the political economic institutions like EU and WTO recognized Russia's aspired standing, as was expected by Russians. NATO's Eastward expansion, followed by the EU enlargement later on, and the open-door policy of the institutions allowing Ukraine and Georgia to join, were the main obstacles in Russia-West relations. Altogether this has further undermined Russia's traditional role within its zone of influence. The Atlantic security system had shaped around Russia with no special status and role for the state. Similarly, the EU was faced with the reality of seeing Russia in a diminished, outclassed and side-lined role in the Western constitutive order nearly two decades after the idea of creating the "Common European House" including Russia. The pragmatic partnership similarly failed to avert US military operations in Iraq. Perceived as an act beyond the recognised normative order, the attack challenged Russia's status, and its self-perceived stabilising role and its diplomatic efforts in the world, hence intensified the sense of the status deficit within Russia.

Putin's different approach in persuading pragmatic integration within the neighbouring Eurasian region, as the other pillar of social competition strategy although progressing, did not achieve more than in the previous era. Neither the newly economic integrative projects EurAsEC and CES achieved Russia's expected outcome. Mainly due to the unwillingness of some significant member states to further integration within the region, and their tendency towards joining in the Western institutions, including EU and WTO.

Beyond the economy and in search of geopolitical objectives, Putin pursued security interests in the region by re-institutionalising security through the CSTO and SCO. Beyond some achievements, neither was successful to the extent that Russia desired, as both were limited in objectives and area.

Russia could achieve control over the ex-republics' strategic properties, mainly in the energy field, sources and transportation as well as Caspian Sea's legal status, borders and sources with coastal states bilaterally. In the long-term, this was neither adequate to secure Russia's relations with the traditional partners nor to maintain its traditional hegemony in the region. At least two of main states; Georgia and Ukraine separated from Russia and got close to the Western world closer than ever. Gradually in the mid-2000s, it became clear that neither bilateralism nor integration strategies could help Russia to re-establish the traditional hegemonic stance within the traditional sphere of influence.

The democratic wave in the traditional strategic zone not only worsened Russia-Western relations, but also it led to a final strike for Post-Soviet Russia to regain the recognition of its traditional status aspiration. "Rose", "Orange" and "Tulip" were perceived, as the West attempts to increase its presence at Russia's expense in her privileged zone. This was not only humiliating, but also perceived as an act to reshaping the new geopolitical arrangement with no specific role for Russia, hence it was also threatening. Indeed, after the crisis in the Balkans, Iraq or a different round of NATO and EU Eastward expansion, the revolutions especially threatened Russia's hegemony within the heartland and questioned its international standing, two pivotal factors of post-soviet Russia's grand strategy thinking. In brief, the revolutions changed the question of status to the recognition dilemma when Russian political elites, leaders and the masses came to believe that enhancing status and gaining recognition within current Western liberal order is impossible.



## **CHAPTER 6: CIVILISATIONISM AND REVISIONISM**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Fifteen years on, while the global vision of gaining the aspired status in international system is still unrealised and remained a major concern of the post-Soviet Russia's grand strategy. It was further undermined by the colour revolutions in "the Eurasian Heartland". There was a realisation of the futility of post-Soviet Russia's strategies; social mobility, creativity and no accomplishment of social competition in gaining recognition within the liberal status quo order. Failure to gain recognition from the West changed Russia's perception from status inconsistency to status dilemma that led to revolutionary revisionism and withdrawing from interactions within the status quo and under the existing normative system.

During the years following the colour revolutions, Russia was increasingly incapable of and/or unconcerned to take steps to reassure the Western great powers, and the post-Cold War liberal status quo order. It sought a radical renovation of the existing interactions model with the West and revision of the normative and constitutive status quo order by adopting an aggressive foreign policy. Before further explanation of the key changes, particularly the status dilemma brought about Russia's grand strategic thinking and orientation, here is the explanation that reflects the concern of Russia's foreign behaviours from the mid-2000s.

### **6.2 Status Dilemma and Russia's Foreign Policy after the Colour Revolutions**

The "paradigm shift" in Russian grand strategic orientation toward a revolutionary revisionism was manifested mainly in a dominant self-concept shaped over the state's status. Russian leaders and elites, the national official rhetoric and doctrines aggressively challenged the existing normative and constitutive system and envisioned a new

international order beyond the liberal status quo framework. Thereafter, Russia stands for equality and independency but in a new “balanced” policy centric order. Beyond the official critical harsh rhetoric stance, Russia’s revisionism and its aggressive foreign policy showed a general unwillingness to collaborate with the Western powers and institutions who wanted to ensure the liberal status quo. Russia withdrew from or suspended the activities of the main Western political and security military institutions.

Blaming the Western partners for gaining unilateral advantages of CFE treaty signed in 1990, ratified later in 1999, in his annual message, Putin declared “a moratorium on its [Russia] observance of this treaty until all NATO members without exception ratify it and start strictly observing its provisions”. “If no progress can be made” then Russia will withdraw from the treaty unilaterally and suspend its “commitments (Putin, 2007, April 26). Rejecting Russia’s desired changes by the West, particularly in the “Extraordinary Conference of States Parties” in Vienna, Putin “signed a law” implying Russia’s withdraw from the treaty and “related international agreements including the Budapest Agreements and Flank Agreements along with the CFE Treaty” (The President of Russia, 2007, November 30).<sup>397</sup> Practically, it means withdrawal from all “restrictions”, and “activities for implementing the Treaty and related documents”, according to Lavrov, “at 00:00 hours Moscow time, on December 12, 2007” (MID, 2007, December 12).

In continuity of “systematic” challenging of Western political agenda, Russia restricted the OSCE’s election monitoring first in a Parliamentary session on 2 December

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<sup>397</sup> Russia particularly requested sign ratification or at least applying “the interim Adapted Treaty” by July 2008; by Baltic three, “Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania”; “the reduction of the permissible amounts and stocks of Treaty-limited equipment for NATO countries” compensation of NATO expansion. Removing or reducing the “flank restrictions” on Russian side, particularly in North Caucasian region (The President of Russia, 2007, January 14). Indeed, apart from confining the Baltic’s defense options, Russia sought to gain guarantee for its long desired special standing over new member states of NATO, as it requested any fundamental hardware security issues affecting new “group” be limited to negotiate between Russia and NATO, particularly, “the US military installations in Bulgaria and Romania”.

2007, then in a presidential election a year later which led to a cancellation of the mission by the organization (RFE/RL, 2008, February 07). Election monitoring was a significant activity of the organization and its specified structure “the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)” (Lavrov, 2007, November 29). Blocking the role in Russia and its following states in CIS meant losing a major “*raison d’etre*” the OSCE. Therefore, Moscow’s action paralyzed the organizations position hereafter. Rejecting Russia proposed to define “Basic Principles of ODIHR Monitoring of National Elections” in the Madrid summit, that any activities of the OSCE/ODIHR were subjugated to approval of “inter-governmental bodies”, the domestic authority of members, Russia announced “a point of no return” and declared its readiness to sink ODIHR altogether (Lavrov, 2007, November 29).

Later, Russia obstructed the total budget of the organisation particularly related to the mission in Georgia’s border and imposed extra conditions on its mission in Belarus, South caucuses (Socor, 2007, December 4). As the final shock, Russia blocked the civilian mission of the OSCE in Georgia after 16 years (MID, 2008, December 23, 2008, July 9).<sup>398</sup> The action was another “systematic” effort of Moscow to challenge the post-Cold war European body, this time targeting security, democracy and human rights. Reflected by Julie Finley, the US representative in the OSCE, “It’s an indication that Russia is gaining ground in its goal of destroying the [OSCE] from within” (Sindelar, 2008, December 22).

Russia revitalized the arms race to maintain a “strategic balance” and accused the West of initiating it. In February 2007, Sergey Ivanov revealed “his \$189 billion budget for

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<sup>398</sup> Regarding the fact that all votes in the organization must be endorsed unanimously, hence Russia’s unilateral veto was enough for dismantle the organization mission in Georgia.

2007-2015” with an ambitious package “for modernisation and rearmament”,<sup>399</sup> as well to replace “45% of the equipment in the current arsenal and preparing to fight wars of the future” (RFE/RL, 2007, February 09).<sup>400</sup> Balancing the US missile defence system (MDS), Kremlin intensified plans to enhance its defence system. On November 2008, the new President Dimitri Medvedev announced “measures to effectively counter” the US efforts “to install” the MDS “in Europe”, and ordered to “deploy the Iskander missile system in the Kaliningrad Region”, and “using the resources of the Russian Navy” “to be able, if necessary, to neutralize the missile defence system” (Medvedev, 2008, November 5). As a Russian defence commentator said “Russia seeks to expand its military-political influence across the globe” (RFE/RL, 2007, February 09).

Adding the strong harsh opposition to NATO, its further Eastward activities, and the plan for membership of Ukraine and Georgia, particularly in the Bucharest Summit, that even Putin threatened these two states in the case of membership, later, Medvedev proposed creating new organization in replace of NATO. If Russia was to integrate in Atlantic security and political system after Soviet collapse, nearly fifteen years later, it turned to withdraw totally from the order.

Withdrawing from the post-Soviet cooperation challenged the West, certainly the EU and NATO, via offences against member states in the neighbouring Eurasian region. Russia’s offence against Estonia began by withdrawing from border treaty merely a month after signing it in late June 2005 (MID, 2005, June 21). In May 2007, Russia targeted Estonia in reaction to the state’s decision to relocate the Bronze Soldier, (the red Army Monument). Warning about “serious negative consequences” Russia openly asked

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<sup>399</sup> Amongst other including, “purchasing 17 intercontinental ballistic missiles [and] four military spacecraft with the same number of launch rockets for them”.

<sup>400</sup> This will be more important added to military expenditures dedicated particularly during 6 years of Ivanov ministry that increased “more than three times” comparing to previous decade (Baev, 2007, February 20) .

Estonia to “refrain” from its sovereign decision (MID, 2005, June 21). Russia employed a range of what Urmas Paet, Estonian FM called the “virtual, psychological, and real” attacks against Estonia. The “coordinated actions” included the numerous cyber-attacks, demonstrations and an attack directed by the Kremlin-established “Youth Movement Nashi” to the Estonian embassy, provocative coverage of Russian media and politicians of the violent riots of Russian diaspora in Tallinn, finally an economic embargo. Russia cut off energy supplies, and the oil products to Estonia that most of them were transited North Europe (RFE/RL, 2007, May 3a, 2007, May 3b).<sup>401</sup>

Utilising similar tactics, Kremlin cut energy supplies to Ukraine first in early January 2006, pretexting the gas prices. The “politically motivated” action was not only against the pro-Western government in Ukraine, but also against the Europe (RFL/RL, 2006, January 4a).<sup>402</sup> The action was ironic as it was initiated on the day that Russia gained G8 leadership in the summit focusing on energy security offered by Kremlin. Similarly, pretexting some historical issues Moscow intensified offence against Kiev (MID, 2007, December 14).<sup>403</sup> During the fall 2007, Russia supported the pro-Russian Eurasian Youth Movement, the group who was against Kiev’s pro-Western government that constituted in acts of vandalism.<sup>404</sup> Russia commenced the second “Gas War” against Ukraine,

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<sup>401</sup> The “unacceptable the various attempts” of Russia to intrude the domestic affairs of a sovereign member, particularly violating “the Vienna Convention” via the attack to Estonian embassy in Moscow was condemned unitedly the EU, NATO, the US (European Parliament, 2007, May 21; NATO, 2007, May 3).

<sup>402</sup> Regarding the fact, that Russia was Europe’s main energy supplier as approximately half of gas consumed in EU that 80% was transferred through Ukraine’s pipelines (Washington Post, 2006, January 2).

<sup>403</sup> Utilizing national symbols, introducing new holidays, commemorations based on Ukrainian history fired Russia’s harsh condemnation of what they propagated as a “openly nationalistic, anti-Russian and Russophobic sentiment and manifestations in Ukraine” that according to Lavrov, aimed “to exploit ... joint history to obtain momentary political advantages to suit dubious ideological (MID, 2007, December 14).

<sup>404</sup> Such as destroying national symbols particularly in Western Ukraine for example the symbols in Hoverla Mountain, “cyber-attacks” to the administration’s websites and human rights NGOs; and destroying the 1932-33 famine exhibition in the Ukrainian Embassy in Moscow (Kuzio, 2007, December 17).

precisely Russia-Europe since the natural gas transfer to most European countries were completely blocked for two weeks in January 2009.<sup>405</sup>

Intensifying pressures over the post-Rose regime in Tiflis, Moscow initially used similar tactics, energy cut off and trade sanction, suspending the withdrawal its military forces from Georgia. In late summer 2006, Russia officially reacted harshly to arresting four military officers accused for spying by Georgia, as “an act of state terrorism with hostage-taking”, “an anti-Russian foreign policy” encouraged by unnamed “foreign sponsors” (The President of Russia, 2006, October 1). In reaction, Moscow intensified economic pressures by sanctioning Georgian wine and mineral water import, blocking transportation linkage; “air, road, rail and sea links”, and suspending communications particularly “mail services”, ousting Georgian immigrants and tightening the visa regime (RFE/RL, 2006, October 3). While Russia committed to withdrawal, its military forces bilaterally or through Western multilateral arrangement for example in Istanbul summit in 1999, but she never completed its commitment and continued its presences in Georgia.

The combined offenses of Kremlin against the states in former Soviet region, particularly the newly member of the Atlantic constitutive order, was revitalising old Soviet tactics, examining a strategy of political interfering of the domestic affairs of small neighbours to attack their sovereignty. The use of robust propaganda, calling them fascists was the classical Soviet political-warfare techniques used to isolate a selected adversary as offending it, to inhibit general solidarity with that targeted opponent (Socor, 2007, May 8). Stressing the rights of the “compatriots” within the states and common historical values, mobilizing them was reviving Soviet’s tactic of “liberation of Baltics from fascism”. The securitization of energy and using it as a weapon, Kremlin challenged the

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<sup>405</sup> Transfer to “Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Moldova, Hungary and Greece” was completely cut off and eight other European states suffered gas loss to some degree for two weeks.

sovereignty of those Western oriented states. The methods even used against the most pro-Russian regime in Belarus revealed mainly that there had been an oil transition cut off in early January 2007 (BBC, 2007, January 8).

Most importantly, Russian tactics against its neighbour was indeed challenging the political, security and economic order of European system. Moscow attempted to divide the EU members to “new” and “old” to maintain its interests within the region and over the West. By using the “divide and rule” policy, indeed Russia employed Soviet tactics to ruin the “EU political solidarity”, if successful, the tactic would lead to the acceptance Russian special interests over its special sphere of influence in neighbour region (Socor, 2007, May 8). Russia turned back completely to a 19<sup>th</sup> century view of international order to keep their traditional sphere of influence in their neighbour region using whatever they had and could.

“The New Cold War” initiated after the colour revolutions was a very “real wakeup call” with a war in Georgia on August 2008. This challenged the post-Cold War status quo in its most basic level, direct violation of sovereignty; norm of status quo order whereby Russia portrayed herself as the main defender of the norm, under the pretext of humanitarian intervention that up to the time Moscow was the main antagonist. It also challenged the hegemon or perceived defender of the system, the US, the Western security and political system. “Far beyond the region”, the war with local proxy as Medvedev addressed was against “those who sponsored the current regime in Georgia” (Medvedev, 2008, November 5). “The wake-up call” in Georgia, according to Lavrov (2008, September 19) aimed to “send a signal going well beyond the bounds of the particular situation”.

Domestically, prioritising the state’s sovereign over democracy, Russia took a number of nondemocratic policies that crushed the “dream” of integration within the liberal order

as a normal state with democratic institutions. Elaborating on this, the Kremlin limited the democratic institutions by controlling mass media and political parties and institutions. This included re-monopolising the Russian media through regaining ownership of private media broadcasting official propaganda,<sup>406</sup> creating nationalist restorationist “Nashi Youth Movement” propagating Soviet nostalgia and revising history literature. Democratic institutions were restricted further by the “Federal Law” through which “activities of non-government organisation (NGO)”, and those with “foreign founders” were limited (The President of Russia, 2006 January 17).<sup>407</sup> The activity of political parties were also revealed by issuing a “blacklist of undesirable” parties by revealed in parliamentary election in September 2007 (RFL/RL, 2007, July 27).<sup>408</sup> Russia also was accused of human rights abuses and suppression of domestic political oppositions, human rights activists and journalist, using devious Soviet tactics to eradicate opponents within and outside by imprisoning, poisoning and assassination intensified during the time in question.<sup>409</sup>

All evidenced that during the years following the colour revolutions, there was lack of reassurance from Kremlin towards West and post-Cold war liberal normative and constitutive order. If, according to Kydd (2000, pp. 327-341), Soviet Union used “costly signals” through accommodative policies in decisive movements at the end of Cold war

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<sup>406</sup> Installing for example “Russia Today satellite television”.

<sup>407</sup> “The Federal law that Brought in or Introduced Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation”.

<sup>408</sup> In summer 2007, Kremlin listed political parties for registration in parliament election allowed 15 parties out of 35 who participated in previous election in 2003. As Independent Duma Deputy Vladimir Ryzhkov of the Republican Party highlighted it was indeed the “blacklist of undesirable parties and candidates” (RFL/RL, 2007, July 27).

<sup>409</sup> It was accused of imprisoning the ex-owner of oil giant Yukos, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, in 2005, the assassination of journalists like Anna Politkovskaya, in 2006 (BBC, 2005, May 31; RFE/RL, 2006, October 10). Russia and particularly Putin were critically delegitimised internationally, after the mysterious murder of the ex-spy Alexander Litvinenko poisoned by a radioactive substance. As “the evidence suggests” remarked by Scotland Yard “the only credible explanation is in one way or another the Russian state is involved in Litvinenko’s murder” (Guardian, 2015, July 30). Deteriorating particularly the Russia-West (Britain-EU) relationship, the death portrayed Russia as revisionist violating human rights. Further as an action against a Britain citizen in European territory violated the sovereignty of the state. It was also perceived as a “violation of the Vienna convention on diplomatic relations”, as evidence pointed to the Russian embassy in Britain for involvement in the assassination, that further intensified in Russia’s actions against British diplomats in Moscow (RFE/RL, 2008, August 27).



implying it committed to “the reassurance game”, to change the West’s perceptions radically and building “trust”.<sup>410</sup> Then, what Russia did, after the colour revolutions; was withdraw from CFE, OSCE, ODIHR, and interfere in neighbour independent states and finally, military aggression in Georgia, during 2005-2008/09. These were completely adverse signals, if any. It implied withdrawal from reassurance of the West and liberal status quo order instead persuading a revolutionary strategic orientation to radically challenge the post-Cold War order.

Or, in line with Stein (1991) aggression against the republics, Russia sent a signal that it would withdraw from post-Soviet informal “restraint”, as it was ready “to exacerbate the pressures” and even using force against its adversary. Using the energy cut offs, Moscow indicated persuading objectives out of the “norms of competition”, and the “rule of the game”. In addition, Russia’s behaviours in withdraw from or suspending interaction with the Western security or political system, arms racing and the proxy war in Georgia indicated it would withdraw from “informal or formal security regimes” built after the Soviet Union collapse.

Indeed, widespread perceptions of status dilemma and the associated expectation that Russia was treated unjustly by Western powers played a key role in Russia’s shift toward revisionism, by facilitating the growth of revisionists’ influence in the surge of colour revolutions. The resentment toward the West contributed to development of the ideologies and foreign policy preferences of the hardliners coalition of Civilizationists/nationalist and militarists groups whose agitation against strategic partnerships or even limited cooperation with the “capitalist world” undermined the efforts by the modernists/internationalist leaders to maintain reassurance. This has

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<sup>410</sup> Explained in chapter two, p.79.

brought about the surge in influence of the challengers of reassurance, and dominance of their preferences towards the Western centred status quo order.

### **6.2.1 Status Dilemma and Revisionists Preferences in Russia**

Under the shadow of increasing perception of status dilemma, from the mid-2000s, the centre of grand strategy landscape changed. Its relevance to the Russian political sphere is that Civilizationalism was allowed a relatively free rein in Russian political spheres.<sup>411</sup> For Civilizationists, Russia was not a Western power, nor simply a great power, instead culturally a distinct great civilization an independent unit in a generally hostile world and to some extent even anti-Western. With such a characterisation, while similarly searching to gain the proper standing, but different from the post-Soviet Russia's foreign policy discourses, Civilizationism never believed the recognition could be gained through reassurance to the status quo order. The change that finally led the "paradigm shift" in the state strategic orientation and hence its foreign policy agendas.

Although it is difficult to measure the extent of the status dilemma on the changes in Russia's identity coalition, however, some observations can give a clearer picture. It toughened the position of military and security hawkish and intensified their influence within the policymaking process in domestic and foreign policy orientations. In the coalitions between Yeltsin officials or "family", "oligarch" and "siloviki" formed at the dawn of new millennium, the latest group grabbed the upper hand within Putin's "black Box" or "inner circles" from the mid-2000s.<sup>412</sup> As a commentator observed, "it is not the

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<sup>411</sup> As noted by Russian foreign policy literature; the coalition labeled differently as a civilizationist, civilizationist nationalists and/ or nationalists restorationist included a range of nationalist and ultranationalist groups, pro-communist, pro socialist, communists, national Bolsheviks, in close affinity with Russian Military and security hardliners (Clunan, 2014b; Lucas, 2014; March, 2012; A. P. Tsygankov, 2003)

<sup>412</sup> IR scholars pointed the intensified influence of security and military hawkish, who had raised with Putin in his first administration, according to Lough (Personal Interview, 1 March 2019) "overcoming the domestic issues in Putin's first term gave them a free hand in policymaking sphere and mainly in Kremlin's inner circle to persuade their preferences". Beyond the status dilemma, the scholar convinced that the successful stabilizing efforts in socio-economic terms, along with creating a centralized power let them follow their traditional Soviet-type mind-set, which convinced Russian authority in that stage that they have to run Russia rather in the traditional way. This was inevitably going to lead to friction with the West be that over human rights, or over economical

oligarchs who hold Putin's ear" instead "it is Russia's military, security establishment, collectively known as the Siloviki, who are shaping the Kremlin's foreign policy" (Weir, 2015, January 27).

The change according to Putin's adviser Sergei Markov was a sign of shifting the priorities in policymaking. It was more a reaction to "the challenges" which Russia suffered in previous years, in international areas mainly in relation with the West, when the oligarchs' prescriptions "with the purpose of strengthening Russia" through domestic development and strengthen its standing in Western centred order "hasn't worked out at all". Consequently, "the relevance of those billionaires for Putin has fallen sharply"; instead, "the importance of Siloviki, security people, has grown". "It's a fact" according to the Putin's adviser, siloviki's "more anti-Western" views "obviously" influenced Putin and Russia's foreign policy preferences, even today (Weir, 2015, January 27).

Quantifying the growth of siloviki members in Russian administration, a study shows the group rate "increased dramatically from 4% in Gorbachev time to 11% during Yeltsin's presidency, and picked at 25%" towards ending the Putin's first tenure. Accordingly concluded the group had been dominant to the extent that can be called "emerging of militocracy" (Kryshtanovskaya & White, 2003). The rate further increased to approximately 40% of Russia's top officials in upcoming years to the end of the decade.<sup>413</sup> The siloviki's influence weighted more importantly in quality which the group occupied nearly "all key positions" in Russia's administration, but also the main cultural

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access for Western companies to Russian resources, or the relations with the so-called near abroad states (Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019; Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019; Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019; Similar Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).

<sup>413</sup> While some cautioned about the overestimation of the *Siloviki* and underestimation of the role of the oligarch, however, obviously even those critical views accepted, that the increase of proportion, and hence the role of this military security elites was not only "real" but also more "significant", from mid- 2000s (S. W. Rivera & Rivera, 2006). A recent quantitative study hinted, "with some confidence that military- security representation in the Russian elite increased" gradually during Putin's presidency, if one "examines only Russian officialdom", "perhaps Russia's top political leadership came to be dominated by *Siloviki* during the Putin presidency (D. W. Rivera & Rivera, 2014).

and economic sectors.<sup>414</sup> What is clear is the increase of the role and influence of these military security hardliners in Putin's inner circle and policy making process, particularly the foreign policy was "real" and more "significant" in the given time (Sakwa, 2014, p. 28).<sup>415</sup>

From the mid-2000s, there was a harsh circle of Civilisationist discourse promoted in Russian political landscape, mainly by the marginalising moderates and their voices through the given state control of public and private media. Indeed, there was a ping-pong relation between the Kremlin and the media; it aided to establish a media led by the Civilizationists, which in turn instructed the state's policy. Often the self-concept benefitted the Russian elites by providing means "with the effective discrediting of all Western voices by means of creating a virtual conflict with the West over a third area" (Filippov, 2009, p. 1829). Moreover, a new wave of Civilizationists worldview advanced by interrelated think-tanks and ideologues who were very "young" and "educated" further indicates that political leaders and Civilizationists have a common belief, hence often peripheral discourse come to be more publicized (Laruelle, 2008).<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>414</sup> The Presidential administration is Siloviki's main "locus of power". The DM, Sergey Ivanov later elevated to first deputy PM in 2007, Rashid Nurgaliyev, Minister of Internal Affairs, from December 2003, Andrei Belyaninov head of the Federal Customs Service, from May 2006; Colonel Valentin Sobolev, Acting secretary of Security Council and Konstantin Romodanovsky, chair of the Federal Migration Service, from 2007; Vladimir Yakunin President of Russian Railways from June 2005. Igor Sechin first deputy chief of administration although added later to the circle in 2008, but he was chairman one of Russian main energy giant, the Rosneft, from 2004. The group also dominated in some Russian centered organization in former Soviet region; Nikolai Bordyuzha selected as a Secretary General of the CSTO, Grigory Rapota Secretary of the Eurasian Economic Community (The Financial Times, 2009, December 17; Yasmann, 2007, September 17).

<sup>415</sup> "Like a fish bone in the throat", Sakwa (2014, p. 28) said Siloviki "emerged as a powerful counterweight to the oligarchs", and "pushed for more repressive domestic policies and a more assertive foreign policy".

<sup>416</sup> Various interconnected think tanks were established by support of kremlin created ruling party (United Russia UR) that have been aimed to articulate a distinct ideology and values and also advancing such ideas beyond Russia's borders especially in the Eurasian region. The think tanks created a great opportunity for multiple stream of civilizationist worldviews that shared many ideas, to promulgate their specific versions within the public sphere and even within Kremlin inner circle. Some of those think-tanks includes "the Foundation for Effective Politics", "the Russian Project", "the Centre for Social Conservative Policy", "the Institute for Social Forecasting, the Institute of National Strategy" overlapped with Russian official structures and the Kremlin inner circle and consequently influenced Russia's main priorities both domestically and internationally too (Laruelle, 2008, p. 62).

The potential for Civilizationism to influence Russian political discourse has grown via power centralisation during Putin's tenure that even increased from mid-2000s.<sup>417</sup> Consequently, the policy making process particularly in Putin's Kremlin became "the most obscure realm of all" and the "system is top secret" that no one even top officials, even the prominent ideologue, the "Putin's Braine", Alexandre Dugin was not "sure who or what Putin is listening to" (Weir, 2015, January 27). However, this was an opportunity to hardliners, Civilizationist ideologues to play a greater role via behind-the-scene lobbying or individual connections and other indirect forms of influence.<sup>418</sup>

The presence of several ideologues like Dugin is the sign of change in Putin's "inner circles", and a change mainly in Russia's foreign priorities particularly towards the West, as well as domestic priority (Weir, 2015, January 27). As some concluded, Putin cannot free himself from the imperialist thoughts, voiced through Russian Civilizationists like "Aleksandr Prokhanov", "Dugin" (Barbashin & Thoburn, 2014b; T. Snyder, 2014b; A. Tsygankov, 2015). What is clear, the worldview that those hardliners advocated has become part of mainstream political thinking, both in the Russian political establishment and among the public. As Liverant (2009) argued, Dugin is not the Russian regime's official ideologue, but, all the same, his influence is undoubtedly "immense" and "today's Russia is indeed moving closer and closer to Dugin's vision". Although unverifiable, but it shows how closed policy-making procedure may really advantage Civilizationists with great access.<sup>419</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> IR scholars also emphasized the fact (Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019; Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019; Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019; Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019). Reflecting the centralized political system from the mid-2000s, IR scholar argued, "the system which Putin built up was a kind of reproduction of the Soviet system, a closed and comparatively locked and absolutely leaders centred and hierarchical". In such the closed system, "there was no space for empowerment for new ideas in the system". While according to the scholar, the political system was "comparatively openness in 1990s in embracing new experiences that was very different from the Soviet Union" (Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019).

<sup>418</sup> Similar argument (Kryshtanovskaya & White, 2005; March, 2011; The Financial Times, 2009, December 17).

<sup>419</sup> A study shows how Dugin "slowly but surely" achieved and gradually promoted a position within "inner circle" by creating strong ties "with a hawkish, security-oriented faction of insiders" siloviki. The people included but not limited Igor Sechin, one of Putin's closest adviser and then deputy prime minister; Nikolai Patrushev Security Council secretary; Sergei Ivanov, DM and then

Notably, the central power never meant to ignore the role of domestic discourse within Russian public. Conversely, it often argued that as an assiduously analyst of mass discourses Putin in particular skilfully pursued to combine different spectrums of political views to serve his status as a “father of nation” (Sakwa, 2007, p. 93). At the same time, as explained next, the status dilemma, humiliation, and injury perceived during the last 15 years performed a pivotal role in the way most of Civilizationist nationalist proponents assessed the liberal status quo and Russia’s position within the order. Publicly articulated the nationalists’ ideas would be an umbrella in the hand of Putin that can gather public under a common goal and can inform Kremlin policy too. Accordingly, the dominance of Civilizationist ideas soon after the colour revolutions as a logic consequence of status dilemma, was an opportunity in the hands of the Kremlin to follow the state’s main goal that of recognition of great power status, a means that has popular resonance (Hanson, Personal interview, 5 January 2018).

### **6.2.2 Status Dilemma and Russia’s Politics of Withdrawal from Cooperation**

The second way that the status dilemma had influenced Russia’s foreign policies was rhetorical and political settings within the country, which were far more promising for pro-revisionists, and their preferences at the expense of moderates. This was visible from the state’s withdrawal from cooperation with the Western political security system and its aggressiveness against Eurasian neighbours. Russian moderate politicians and elites

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deputy prime minister, and Security Council member; and Boris Gryzlov, the speaker of the lower house of parliament and chairman of Putin’s ruling United Russia party”(Liverant, 2009). Dugin deepened his influence within the high-level inner circle through establishing the Evraziia, International Eurasian Movement, a group that involved academics, politicians, parliamentarians, journalists, and intellectuals from Russia, its neighbours, and the West (Barbashin & Thoburn, 2014a; Liverant, 2009). Similarly, Alexandre Prokhorov, as a hardliner neo-Eurasianist who gained greater influence on Russian political sphere from the mid-2000s, the editor in chief of right-wing extremist Zaveta (Tomorrow). As a Russian commentators called him as an omnipresent elites who are “now known to all” “frequent guest on the radio”, a “regular participant in TV programs”, “mentioned on the Web every day”(Prokhanov., 2012, Aug 23). Prokhanov is the main proponent of Soviet restoration and presented “the fifth empire” theory during the years, through Zaveta. He defends “the restoration of the great Russian state, the great values of the Russians, and the creation of a powerful civilizational entity”. According to Prokhanov “Russia is either an empire, and today’s insanity Russia is still an empire, or it does not exist, it breaks into pieces, and the Russian people are doomed to extermination”. In political and geopolitical dimension, he emphatically advocated the idea of Eurasian integration. Accordingly, he strongly supported Putin’s project of Eurasian Economic Union, he called the entity as a fifth empire successor of “four such empires; Kyiv and Novgorod, the Moscow kingdom, Romanov, Petersburg and the Stalinist empire”(Prokhanov., 2012, Aug 23).

within administration or outside wished to resolve issues through more moderate policies rather aggression or withdrawal from cooperation. This is critical as it questioned the uniformity of Russian leadership in adopting revisionist orientation. In other words, the strategic orientation was not a consistent choice within the Russian political landscape. It also indicates that adopting a more aggressive policy and turning the state's orientation towards revisionism was a political outcome that resulted from the contestation over the state's strategy that weighted against moderates due to rise of the sense of status dilemma.<sup>420</sup>

When the Kremlin's language turned harshly and the tensions with the West picked up particularly in Duma, liberal Yabloko's chair, Yavlinskii obviously criticized Russia's revisionist orientation towards the West. "The principal mistake of Putin is", accordingly, "he forgets that Russia's [prospects] in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is good only if it becomes integrated into European structures and generally redirects itself towards Europe ... [and] European civilisation in its entirety". However, Russia "is itself trying to pursue some sort of 'third way' [in political development]. In reality, there is no 'third way'; there is only the Third World" (RFL/RL, 2006, January 4b).

Moderates even questioned the Kremlin and the proponents of more aggressive policies against Western security system in particular. Mikhail Margelov head of the International Affairs Committee in the Federation Council denounced Kremlin aggressiveness and its tension over US MDS, CFE treaty and NATO and the state's aggressions against the Eurasian neighbour. Accordingly, "Instead of dwelling on these tensions" with the West "Moscow should focus on strengthening its relations with the alliance". Accordingly,

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<sup>420</sup> The fact can be more obvious regarding different cases explained in this study from Soviet collapse to the colour revolutions, where the hardliners preferred and defended aggressive policies in contrast to Russia's official commitment to reassurance, indicated in different diplomatic efforts during the main international issues.

“Russia should think seriously about why it has so few allies along its borders”. “It seems as if the Kremlin sincerely believes that it can be a global leader all by itself”, Margelov added, “This approach is fundamentally flawed” since, “when the Kremlin applies hard power to relations with its neighbours, it only increases tensions and conflicts”. (Margelov, 2008, April 10).

The struggle for preserving Russia’s strategic orientation within reassurance terms and avoiding further aggressiveness continued although hardliners voices get louder. The fact revealed particularly when the tension over NATO enlargement and accession of Ukraine and Georgia picked high during Bucharest summit. Apart from hardliners, Putin questioned Kiev and Tiflis’s statehood, their sovereignty and “territorial integrity” alarmed them “to act very-very carefully”. Above all, he threatened the states with questioning their sovereignty over the Abkhaz and South Ossetia, and South Ukraine, and Crimea and reminded them “when deciding” over membership, “realize that we have there our interests as well” (Putin, 2008, April 2). Quoting from an unnamed foreign diplomat, Russian and Western news agencies reported on 8 April 2008, that “losing his temper” Putin said to Bush in the summit “Ukraine is not even a state!” and allegedly asserted Moscow would urge separatists in Ukraine and annex Crimea if Kiev insisted on NATO membership (RFE/RL, 2008, April).

Even nationalists like Rogozin, Russia’s representative in NATO, emphasized “there is no need to dramatize” NATO’s expansion, “we have to dramatize only when they do not listen to us or understand us” (RFE/RL, 2008, April 4). Aleksandr Kononov, then Minister of Justice went beyond and criticized Russian military rather NATO. “Threats to Russian security are rooted in the obsolete mentality of its military, not in NATO or elsewhere”, hence, he concludes Kremlin should stop “dislike of NATO” and Russia’s “strategic planning” should concentrated on “bona fide cooperation with NATO, which



will automatically solve a lot of problems including difficulties in the relations with post-Soviet republics” (RFL/RL, 2008 April 8).<sup>421</sup>

Similarly, while the hardliner pro-revisionist group advocated Russia’s aggressive policies in the Eurasian neighbour region, some still wished to resolve issues moderately rather aggression. In Duma, particularly, the members of Russian delegation to negotiation with Estonia asked Estonian assembly “to give an objective appraisal of the Estonian government’s actions and send it into retirement”, or in Russian Federation Council some called Kremlin to take “a whole complex” responses against Estonia (RFE/RL, 2007, April 30, 2007, May 2).<sup>422</sup> Notably even prominent hardliner like Vladimir Zhirinovsky, leader of LDPR,<sup>423</sup> on 27 April 2007 alerted Kremlin for such the harsh criticism and aggression against Estonia who has “the right to take [the statue] down. It is a foreign country” (RFE/RL, 2007, April 27).

In the case of the Belarus gas stoppage in January 2007, PM Mikhail Fradkov and most strongly, German Gref, the Minister of Economy believed that the Kremlin should avoid any aggressive policies as “stoppage of oil deliveries through Belarus”. They justified the action would once again undermine “Russia’s reputation reliable energy suppliers” within the West particularly in Europe as the main consumer of Russia’s energy (Felgenhauer, 2007, January 10).<sup>424</sup> Similarly, during the tension with Ukraine, opposing with the

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<sup>421</sup> Kononov believed that opposition to NATO “is just a trick, a ruse expected to mislead the television audience at best”. Similarly, daily Kommersant commented on 7 April 2008, “Moscow has only one option: improving relations with its neighbours and with NATO, rather than an all-out fight with them. Then the Euro-Atlantic integration of Kyiv and Tbilisi will no longer be perceived as a tragedy in Moscow” (RFL/RL, 2008 April 8).

<sup>422</sup> Leonid Slutsky, First Deputy Chairman of Duma Foreign Affairs Committee, and Nikolai Kovalyov, head of Duma’s Committee of Veterans Affairs were members of Russian delegation to Estonia and Mikhail Margelov, chair of the Federation Council’s International Relations Committee (RFE/RL, 2007, April 30; RFL/RL, 2007, May 2) .

<sup>423</sup> The Liberal Democratic Party of Russia.

<sup>424</sup> Similarly, Vyacheslav Nikonov the head of pro Kremlin think tank of United Russia emphasized, “In such a situation, both Europe and America would probably side with Belarus rather than Russia. They would say that Russia is punishing Minsk for Lukashenka’s refusal to dance to Moscow’s tune” (Felgenhauer, 2007, January 10).

“politically motivated” action of gas cut off, Grigorii Yavlinskii, Yabloko party leader pointed out that “an antagonism between Russia and Ukraine” is a “mistake” of Putin who aims to “unite the people around the government” and his policies. When Ukraine is attempting to join European civilisation and its structures, “instead of helping Ukraine move along and moving along with it” Moscow was “uselessly trying to not let her do so” (RFL/RL, 2006, January 4a).<sup>425</sup>

It is undeniable that a number of moderates in Russia’s central leadership and analysts have also developed a critical view with regard to the Russian military action in Georgia. Condemning “Georgian leadership’s actions in South Ossetia”, Sergei Mitrokhin leader of Yabloko at the same time criticised the Kremlin for its anti-Tiflis policies in the breakaways and added “Russia must finally start playing an active role in regulating the conflict, this means it must become an mediator and stop always being on one side” (RFE/RL, 2008, August 09).<sup>426</sup>

However, these moderate voices advocating reassurance policies had turned to a deaf ear to the political questions. Since, the perception of status dilemma raised from the lack of recognition of Russia’s status by the West, left no place for advocates of reassurance policies and their preferences. Months before the Georgia war, Grigory Yavlinsky, member of Yabloko alerted, “NATO’s military intervention in Kosovo had made it much harder for the country’s liberals to make a pro-Western case”. When “If NATO could bomb Belgrade in a war over human rights why [Russia] could not bomb in Georgia” under rights of Abkhazian or Ossetia” (Rachman, 2008, April 16).

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<sup>425</sup> By the anti-Ukraine “campaign”, Yavlinskii said Kremlin is primarily to divert domestic attention from the main domestic matters, involving “corruption in Russia” and particularly in the government-driven monopoly of Gazprom itself and “where Gazprom’s money is really going” (RFL/RL, 2006, January 4a).

<sup>426</sup> The war was criticized even including a prominent Russian civilizationist Aleksandr Prokhanov, who contended that Moscow had truly lost, at least in the military aspect (March, 2011)

Certainly, this was the case after the colour revolutions, in the situation that those hardliner coalition's anti-Western ideologies gained an upper hand in Russian society. Explained above, the conservative ideologues and military hawkish interpreted the revolutions in the region via using Cold war narratives of geopolitical and ideological rivalry between West and Russia. Hence, the group clearly defends aggressive confrontational policies against the West and its perceived geopolitical temptations.<sup>427</sup>

Under the intensified influence of hardliners, and their lauded preferences over revisionism Russian domestic discourse had increasingly framed the conflict in such a way that the Kremlin felt that there was no option but for it to respond with such a hard way.<sup>428</sup> Particularly relevant to the Georgia's case, based on a survey conducted during the conflict, overwhelming majority believed that "Georgian government" and "the US" policies "to spread its influence in the region" by 81% were "the ultimate cause of the ongoing conflict" contrary to merely 10% who blamed Russia and unrecognized republics (Levada Analytical Centre, 2009). In 2008, 74% of Russians believed that "Georgia and Georgian people" were "hostages" of the US "geopolitical aspiration". Less surprisingly, if the majority supported Russian military intervention "best to prevent escalation of conflict and slaughter" by 70%, contrary to merely 4% who believed that "Russian authorities instigated conflict" to gain "its geopolitical goals". Similarly, 81% of Russians in 2008 believed that the breakaway regions "Should be independent states" or "be part of Russia", increased from 66% in 2005, in contrast the who believed that the regions

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<sup>427</sup> Particularly relevant to Georgia war, Andrei Illarionov, the ex- adviser of Putin strongly criticised Kremlin arguing, "The war was a spectacular provocation that had been long prepared and successfully executed by the Russian siloviki". (Illarionov, 2008, August 13). Also civilizationist ideologies who in or out of the Duma had frequently called for recognition of the unrecognized regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. As the main civilizationist, Dugin was clearly all for escalating the conflict with Georgia, with the argument that the Caucasian region is the mainstay of the U.S. policies to "destroy Russia". Then he pushed Kremlin for steady support of all minorities who fight in Georgia, and called for imperial restoration and integration of Georgia within Russia's sphere of influence: "Georgia should focus on Russia not to return their already irretrievably lost territory, but in order not to lose the rest" (Laruelle, 2008).

<sup>428</sup> Andrei Illarionov, the ex- adviser of Putin strongly criticised Kremlin arguing, "The war was a spectacular provocation that had been long prepared and successfully executed by the Russian siloviki" (Illarionov, 2008, August 13)

should “be part of Georgia” decreased from 12% in 2005 to only 4% in 2008 (Levada Analytical Centre, 2009).<sup>429</sup>

The evidences here show that preferences for revisionism were not harmonious among Russian leaders and perceptions of status dilemma predated Russia’s shift away from moderation. In addition, explaining Russia’s shift toward revisionism involves considering the outcome of a political contest over grand strategy a contest stacked against moderation advocates due to raising sense of status dilemma.

### **6.3 Civilisationism and Russia’s Status**

One method of understanding the influence of status recognition dilemma is to examine the content of dominant grand strategic thinking and its offered strategic orientation. This looks at how status, particularly status dilemma was a matter of concern in Russia’s grand strategic thinking and orientation through analysing the official discourse regarding the worldview, national identification or grouping, proper rank and role of the state, along with proper strategic orientation adopted to establish the proposed status.

#### **6.3.1 Civilisationism and Worldview**

From the mid-2000s, in an evolutionary process, Russia’s dominant worldview turned notably from idealism with emphasis on positive sum cooperation after the Soviet’ collapse towards realism with zero sum game understanding of the World politics in the

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<sup>429</sup> The domination of revisionist preferences in Russian domestic sphere was not limited to Georgia war. Regarding energy cut offs, Russian mass believed that Russia “should” utilize the Europeans “dependency” on the state’s energy “to achieve its foreign policy goals” by averagely by 57% from 2007 to 2009. For example, 61% supported the gas cut off to “to Ukraine and Western Europe via Ukraine” in 2009. Only 3% saw Russia as the “responsible for initiating” the gas war in contrast to majority who saw 56% Ukraine’s administration (56%), or the West (11%) as a responsible for the second gas war (Levada Analytical Centre, 2009). Even in the first gas conflict, only 6% blamed Russian leaders for “gas” conflict between Russia and Ukraine” (levada Analytical Center, 2007). Similarly, “gas conflict with Blares” in 2007, only 9% saw Russia as a “responsible” for the conflict, and 51% approved Russian stance in “doubling the prices”. Similarly, the majority of Russian (50%) supported the Georgia economic ban (Levada Analytical Center, 2008) . Altogether, shows that from the mid-2000, Russian political sphere was obviously in favor of revisionist preferences.

years following the colour revolutions, as Lavrov (2005b) stated “the Cold War experience repeats itself”.

The analysis of Russian officials shows in the new version, the order shaped in the world after the Soviet collapse was not necessarily pleasant. It is no longer secure and safe; instead, the order is extremely “uncertain”, “unpredictable”, but also “more dangerous” and even “hostile”, regarding the growth of the sources of both “the potential” and “real” threat (Putin, 2006, June 27, 2006, May 10, 2007, April 26, 2007, February 10).<sup>430</sup> “In a rapidly changing world” with a “large number problems”, where according to Putin (2006, May 10) those “conflict zones are expanding in the world and, what is especially dangerous is that they are spreading into the area of our vital interests” one should realize “just how dangerous” it is.

The growth of uncertainty left no guarantee even for a major war in the future, reflected by DM Sergey Sergei Ivanov (2006, January 11).<sup>431</sup> Particularly, in security and military fields, the existence of threats of deploying “nuclear weapons” “in outer space”, that “could provoke an inappropriate response”, even by means of “counter measures” and “a full-scale counterattack” and employing “strategic nuclear forces” (Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2004, May 26, 2006, May 10).<sup>432</sup> As Putin (2006, May 10) warned, “the launch of such a missile from one of the nuclear powers could provoke a full-scale counterattack using strategic nuclear forces”. Under the reservations, “no matter what the

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<sup>430</sup> Similar arguments (Sergei Ivanov, 2006, January 11; Lavrov, 2005b; MID, 2006, December 15)

<sup>431</sup> While the Foreign Policy Concept issued 2008, remarked possibility of a major war diminished but what can be interpreted from the annual addresses in the given time, is that they did not deny such probability even using nuclear forces. Besides, Russian leaders occasionally hinted such probability. They particularly emphasized the sense of “direct military threat”, or the potential to such threat that could impose to Russia (Sergei Ivanov, 2006, January 11; MID, 2006, December 15). “Russia is not itching for a future war. War is never by choice” Sergey Ivanov, highlighted neither Russia was “itching for a future war”, however according to him there is no guarantee for future hence, “to ignore the future is irresponsible” (Sergei Ivanov, 2006, January 11).

<sup>432</sup> Regarding the possibility, Putin strongly defends securitization of Russia by modernization military capabilities including the “conventional” weaponry and “the nuclear forces”. The term that was more emphasized particularly with focus on nuclear capabilities in the given time.

scenario” is, Russia must be ready with all capabilities “to simultaneously fight in global, regional and several local conflicts” (Putin, 2004, May 26). Logically in the new worldview there was a room for any possibilities, either “an unavoidable conflict of civilizations” or “a long-term confrontation on the lines of the Cold War” (Putin, 2006, June 27).

The uncertain, dangerous world was an outcome of rising “modern threats” and “new challenges” emulated from “terrorism” that “remains very real” and intensified the possibility of “proliferation of MDW”, and “local conflict”. Russian leaders additionally highlighted “the arms race” which arrived in “a new spiral ... with the achievement of new levels of technology” causing “the danger of the emergence of a whole arsenal of so-called destabilizing weapons” (Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2004, May 26, 2006, May 10). However, different from previous eras, the leaders no longer believed that a common realisation of those threats, necessarily would lead to create a more secure and safer world, as some attempted to response to those modern threats unilaterally.<sup>433</sup> “Unfortunately, very unfortunately”, Medvedev (2008, November 5) lamented, the Western partners, “did not want to listen” to anybody, including Russia, in fight against such common enemies. In new post-revolutionary Russia, even the common threats interpreted from the lens of zero-sum principles.

The confrontational world was the main “relapse of the past”, the threats that raised from the inherited “attempts to act on the zero sum game principles”, an ongoing “Cold War stereotypes”, and the “old bloc mentality” imposed by the West (MID, 2005, June 22). The greatest destabilising force and the main reason behind such zero-sum world was

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<sup>433</sup> Even worse, regarding the situation Chechnya from mid 2000s, Russian leaders doubted the common understanding of those modern threats. Accordingly, the leaders blamed the West for having “double standards” about the terrorism that “lead to double losses, at home and abroad, where terrorists can count on moral support from outside”. Going further, Lavrov claimed that for the West the “life and safety of American citizens is one thing, while life and safety of Russian citizens is quite another” (MID, 2005, September 20).

therefore old. The Munich Conference in 2007 as the “turning point” was the climax of such realistic viewing of the international relations.<sup>434</sup> Emphasizing on the “universal, indivisible character of security”, Putin harshly warned against the danger of “what is happening” under the concept of a “unipolar world that had been proposed after the Cold war” by the proponents of democracy “those who [constantly] teach” others but “do not want to learn themselves”. He directly blamed the US for creating “one type of situation namely one centre of authority, one centre of force, one centre of decision-making ... one master, one sovereign”. Putin complemented by warning the US for, ever expanding its role and national objectives that dominated the World nearly in all dimensions of “humanitarian spheres”. The result of those “frequent unilateral and illegitimate actions” was “new human tragedies” in “extremely dangerous” world in which “no one feels safe” (Putin, 2007, February 10).<sup>435</sup>

The convictions led to conclude that the world politics is characterized by zero-sum game, the realistic competition, in all aspects, over geopolitics, economy and geo-culture. Geopolitically, ending bipolar system and “the collapse of the Soviet Union” as one of two pillar, according to Putin (2005, April 25), “Was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century” for “the country and a genuine drama for Russian nation”.<sup>436</sup> Particularly the rivalry resurfaced when Russian leaders received “a political or military-political conflict or process that has a potential to pose a direct threat to Russia’s security”, that even threatened “the geopolitical reality in a region of Russia’s strategic interest” (Sergei Ivanov, 2006, January 11). From this perspective, the West and its strategic structures

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<sup>434</sup> IR scholars referred to Munich conferences as the symbol the great change in the state’s foreign policy thinking.

<sup>435</sup> Evidenced by “new centres of tension” and “an arms race”, the local, regional and international conflicts and “an almost uncontained hyper use of force, military force.... force that is plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts” (Putin, 2007, February 10).

<sup>436</sup> Lavrov lamented the fall of previous “bipolar system” as a geopolitically disaster since “the order created after that was once without the checks and balances” led to domination of a “geopolitical thinking” imposing “unipolar world”, and “monopolize” the main international issues (MID, 2006, December 15) .

were attempting to “contain” post-Soviet Russia strategically primarily in its own geopolitics.<sup>437</sup>

Emphasising on the geopolitical competition, Russian officials often listed a range of strategic threats under “the arch of containment” imposed by West. Those “real threats”, the “dangerous trends” included, not limited to the NATO, the role that organisation played in modern world, most importantly its Eastward expansion plans,<sup>438</sup> and the deployment of US’ MDS.<sup>439</sup> Accordingly, both the deployment of “a global missile defence system, the installation of military bases around Russia, the unbridled expansion of NATO and other similar ‘presents’ for Russia” as Medvedev concluded, with “every reason” convincing for the West, were “simply testing our [Russia’s] strength” (Medvedev, 2008, November 5).

The geo-economics was the other pillar of the re-surfaced global rivalry when the economy “become weapons in the global competitive battle” (Putin, 2004, May 26). Accordingly, the “system of global economic relations”, shaped in post-Cold war world was extremely “unfair” which never “give everyone the chance and the possibility to develop”, it also increased “the risk of global destabilisation” (Lavrov, 2008, September

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<sup>437</sup> Similar argument (Lavrov, 2005a, 2007, August 15; Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2006, June 27, 2006, May 10, 2007, April 26, 2007, February 10).

<sup>438</sup> NATO enlargement was a key “real threat” and “dangerous trend” that if “continue to hold sway, the world will be doomed to further futile confrontation” (Putin, 2006, June 27). The leaders convinced when the enlargement obviously would not help “the Alliance modernization”, nor it could not solve any “real challenges” that Europe was facing. Instead, it just represented “an illustrative example” of the old bloc policy in containing Russia hence “a serious provocation” that only diminishes the “mutual trust” (Lavrov, 2005a; Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2007, April 26, 2007, February 10).

<sup>439</sup> The geopolitical rivalry and the sense of containment were “fully justified” by deployment of “elements of U.S. strategic weapons systems”, “the missile defence system” in Europe, particularly “in the Czech Republic and Poland” (Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2007, April 26). When there are no missiles “really pose a threat to Europe in any of the so-called problem countries” like North Korea, and Iran, in the Putin’s words, “it would be like using the right hand to reach the left ear”, “what would be the main rationale behind the scene except containing Russia?” (Lavrov, 2007, August 15; Putin, 2007, February 10). Russians were particularly concerned about the balance of military power, as the system would “neutralize Moscow’s “nuclear capabilities” hence “one of the parties, the West will benefit from the feeling of complete security” that implying “its hands will be free not only in local but eventually in global conflicts” (Putin, 2007, February 10). Accordingly, Russian elites warned the West about the “negative global consequences” of the plan “for the disarmament processes” that would lead to an “inevitable arms race” in the world (Lavrov, 2007, August 15; Putin, 2007, April 26). Putin particularly warned adopting “asymmetrical” answer from Moscow that “in one way or another” would affect not just “bilateral Russian-American relations” but “the interests of all European countries, including those in NATO” (Putin, 2007, April 26, 2007, February 10).



1; MID, 2005, September 20; Putin, 2007, February 10). Creating that unfair economic system was mainly due to the West and the US “monopoly” and “instrumentalisation” of the global economic system that is “not merely inadequate for the realities of today’s global economy”, but more importantly a key source of threat, it was “dangerous for all” (Medvedev, 2008, November 5).

The view intensified particularly during the financial crisis. Medvedev blamed the US certainly for causing “serious economic miscalculations” and “errors” in global economic sphere. The collapse of cold war was in that calculation, a geo-economics disaster, as it led to emerge an idea in the US’ “view is the only indisputably correct view” in economic system. These misleading ideas “led the US authorities also into making serious economic miscalculations” that “have caused damage to themselves and to others”, what was reflected in the financial crisis (Medvedev, 2008, November 5). Of course the “economic selfishness and the ongoing attempts to regulate global economic and financial systems unilaterally” was not only the US temptation, but whole the capitalist system (Medvedev, 2008, November 5).

Yet, the emphasis on geo-cultural, ideological competition between different values system was the crucial shift in Russian leaders’ perceptions of world politics. “The object of competition is value system and development models”, according to Lavrov (2007, March 17), determined “the paradigm of contemporary international relations”. Resurfaced narratives reviving “old stereotypes” and “ideologised unilateral” trends “drag[ed] the world back onto the path of ideological confrontation” (Lavrov, 2005a; MID, 2005, October 20). The sense of ideological competition raised mainly as the leaders, in line with Civilizationism, perceived the key threat from the West’s “civilizational exclusiveness”, its “monopolisation over the globalisation”, its temptations to “advancing blindfold attitudes”, and in imposing its own models of “governance and

societal organisation” (Lavrov, 2006, October 18 2007, August 15; Putin, 2007, April 26).

In particular, as mentioned earlier,<sup>440</sup> the political elites felt threatened by the US’ democratisation, analogised the strategy as “democratic imperialism” and “neo-colonialism” (Putin, 2005, February 22). Comparing the West’ role in today’s world with “the civilizing role of colonial powers during the colonial era” Putin concluded “Today, ‘civilization’ has been replaced by democratisation”, however with similar objective “to ensure unilateral gains and one’s own advantage and to pursue one’s own interests” (Putin, 2007, April 26). Going further, the President compared the West to “The wolf knows who to eat, as the saying goes. It knows who to eat and is not about to listen to anyone, it seems” (Putin, 2006, May 10). That ideational threat intensified by the wave of revolutions in the near abroad that were perceived as the West’s “chips for achieving selfish geostrategic interests” (Lavrov, 2005a).

Russians felt threatened particularly, as Putin highlighted, by the West who would like “once again plunder the nation’s resources with impunity and rob the people and the state” or to deprive Russia “of its economic and political independence” under dressed colonial role, the banner of democratisation; “skilful use of pseudo-democratic rhetoric” (Putin, 2007, April 26).<sup>441</sup> Even before, he blamed the West for using democracy “as a tool to achieve foreign policy goals or in order to make Russia amorphous as a state formation, to manipulate such a large and essential country, ... as Russia” (Putin, 2005, February

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<sup>440</sup> See chapter 5.

<sup>441</sup> Condemning West’s support of the revolutions, Putin analogized particularly the US and EU behaviours to that of the British colonist in a “well-intentioned gentlemen in pith helmets” aimed to control native population according to “the notion of the white man’s burden of civilizing non-whites” (Putin, 2004, December 6).

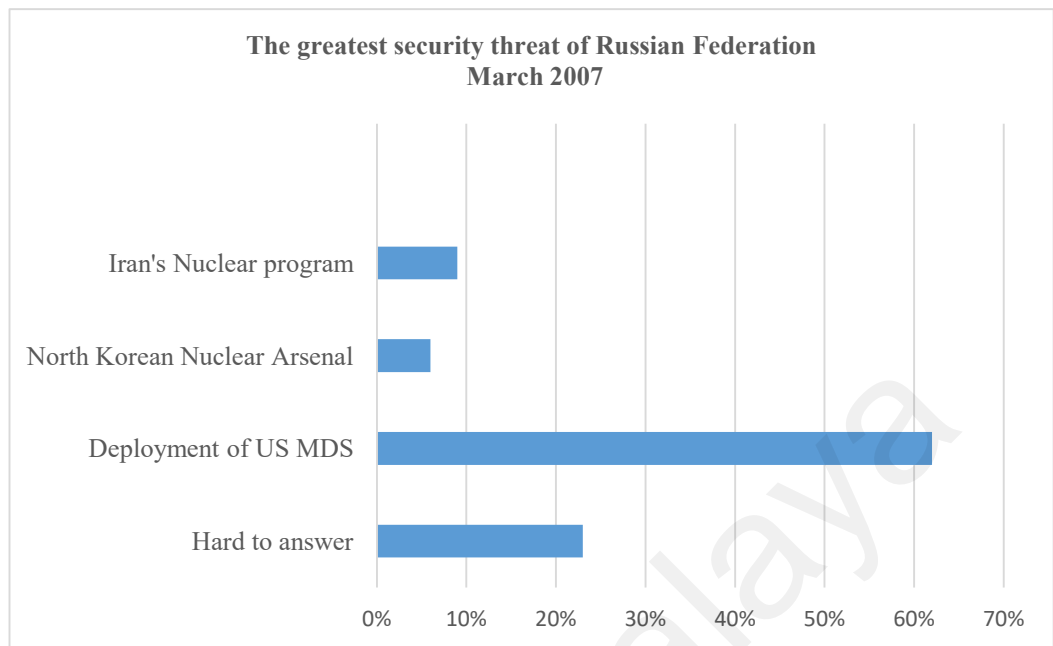
22). Verified by IR scholar, the colour revolutions revived the ideological competition in Russian political sphere, as “Russia looked at the values differently”;

“The democratisation of Russian neighbourhood, in Georgia, Ukraine, even in Central Asia, the more Western ideas of liberal democracy got the ground there ... the closer these values count Russia geographically, the most states within Russia’s closed neighbourhood are being transformed into Western type democracy, the more Russia feels threatened, and contained. Russia was threatened by both the West and by the Western values... the more Russia get concern, up to the point the start to respond in military force” (Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019).

Notably, from the mid-2000s the Civilizationist realistic zero-sum view of the world gained a consensus in Russian society too. As polls, show the perception of threats in Russia increased dramatically. Revealed by opinion survey in 2007, figure 6.1 shows overwhelming majority of Russians believed that the deployment of the US MDS is “the greatest threat of the security of Russia” by 62%. Comparing to only minority of who convinced with the West’s justifications, that either Iran or North Korea were threatening Russia (by 9%- 6% prospectively) (Levada Analytical Centre, 2008, p. 174).<sup>442</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> Similarly, the Lavada Centre survey in 2006 shows that only minority convinced that “threat for international security coming” from Iran and North Korea 9% and 4% (levada Analytical Centre, 2007).



**Figure 6.1: Russian Perception of Threats**

Source: modified from (Levada Analytical Centre, 2008, p. 174)

Regarding the new wave of democratisation, in 2007, a vast majority of Russians (76%) believed that the US is an “aggressor which is trying to establish control over all the countries of the world” while only 8% perceived the US as an “advocate for peace, democracy” (Levada Analytical Centre, 2008, p. 174). Accordingly, Russians perceived an acute threat to the country’s security and power, raised from the colour revolutions and the post-revolutionary pro-Western “unfriendly, hostile” regimes in the region. The perception of threat picked particularly regarding the possibility of Ukraine and Georgia accession to NATO (See Table 6.1).

**Table 6-1: Russian Threat Perception of Ukraine and Georgia Accession to NATO**

	Apr 2006		Apr 2007		Sep 2008	
	Ukraine	Georgia	Ukraine	Georgia	Ukraine	Georgia
Serious Threat	25	27	33	36	36	45
Some Threat	28	27	28	27	32	29
Little threat	15	15	14	14	12	10
No threat	18	16	10	9	8	7
Difficult to answer	15	16	15	14	11	10

Source: modified from Levada Analytical Centre (2009, p. 112)

The analysis of the FPC published in April 2008, reflected such the dominant zero-sum worldview.<sup>443</sup> It remarked an existence of “global competition” in all geo-economics, geopolitical and civilizational dimensions. In geo-economics, it hinted to “contradictory trends” and “dangers” that raised from “the globalization of the world economy”, particularly “threat of largescale financial and economic crises” along with “development imbalances in various regions of the world” threatening the “economic sovereignty” of states. Geopolitically, FPC particularly hinted to continuation “of the political and psychological policy of ‘containing’ Russia by the West”. The policy that was pursued by developing the conventional forces and deploying strategic “weapons such as low yield nuclear warheads, nonnuclear intercontinental ballistic missiles, and strategic antimissile systems”, the threatening attempts of “arm race”. It also pointed to the challenges raising by “the expansion of NATO”, deploying “the military infrastructure closer to the Russian borders” that were not merely violation of “the principle of equal security” leading “to new dividing lines in Europe”, but also destabilizing and threatening (MID, 2008, January 16).

The FPC emphasized the existence of “global competition for the first time in the contemporary history” raising around “civilizational dimension”, that of “competition

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<sup>443</sup> The document published in very first month of Medvedev presidency, before Georgia war in August.

between different value systems and development models”. It defined also civilizational, cultural rivalry by referring to the West’s infringement of “the role of a sovereign state” through “imposing borrowed value systems” and “dividing states into categories with different rights and responsibilities” by using “double standards”. Such “arbitrary interference in internal affairs” are challenging and undermining the basic elements of international rules, the “cultural identity” and onslaught “the overwhelming majority of countries and peoples”. Combining ideational factors with geopolitical dimensions, the FPC concerned the new challenges and destabilizing trends in modern world, that raised from the West’ normative and constitutive, “the Euro-Atlantic” led order that are “selective and restrictive nature” (MID, 2008, January 16).

Altogether, this indicates an evolutionary change in the post-Soviet Russian worldviews and their evaluations of sources of threat raised in contemporary world politics. As Russian scholar pointed that, the years after colour revolutions can be counted as the end of “quite dramatic evolution of Russia’s threat perceptions”. Accordingly, the sense of threats in Russian political discourse evolved dramatically from “no major security threat emulating from outside but inside of Russia” in previous years, to perception that “Russia was able to coup domestic security threats, as the document [FPC] does not see any serious security threats emanating from inside, mostly from beyond” (Alexander Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).<sup>444</sup>

One way or another, the IR scholar verified the drastic shift in Russians’ view of the world politics “during the years after colour revolutions”. For some, the “the zero-sum calculation” revived a mix of Cold War narratives, “the geopolitical” and “ideological

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<sup>444</sup> Some scholars also referred the stabilized domestic socio-economic conditions, and centralized political system reinforced in Putin’s era, as the other reason for change the perception of sources of threats from domestic to international system (Kapadzić, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018; Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018; Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019; Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019; Alexander Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018; Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).

rivalry in values system” in Russian political sphere. Particularly due to perceived threats from the revolutions over Russia’s greatpowerness, normative system and its “identity” (Muraviev, Personal Interview, 10 December 2018). Precisely explaining the “more realist” worldview, a Russian scholar identified it as a “partial outcome of colour revolutions” by which “political elites really were afraid of the spread of the revolutions not because of any equally experiencing, but more the fear that the smaller states around Russia becoming extremely pro-Western”. The view was partially outcome of “kind of threats at the strategical level... perceived from the NATO expansion, which never stopped and still is ongoing, and American missile defence system in Poland and Check” (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018).

Still, some, mainly Western scholars doubted whether the revolutions were “genuinely” threatening or Kremlin used them “deliberately to pursue its imperial objectives”. For example, Hanson (Personal interview, 5 January 2018) highlights “for some” the revolutions conveyed “the Russian leadership genuinely [to] believe that the US and its allies are trying to undermine their nation’s sovereignty”. For others “the revolutions ... made the leadership nervous about their own hold on power in Russia, and that they deliberately chose a conflictual relationship with the West in order to cultivate a patriotic, ‘rally round the flag’ solidarity among their own people” (Hanson, Personal interview, 5 January 2018). Whatever the reason behind it, the scholars emphasized thereafter a zero-sum view towards the world politics and the West dominated in Russian political thinking (Hanson, Personal interview, 5 January 2018; Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019; Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).<sup>445</sup>

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<sup>445</sup> For example, Lough thought that Russian sense of threat perception from the colour revolutions, mainly the ideological threat against their national identity and values system “was much exaggerated” (Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019)..

Other non-Russian and non-Western scholars, believed that such zero-sum calculation prevailed on both the West and Russian sides. IR scholar however cautioned that “while many particularly in the West blamed Russia and Putin’s policies as being unilaterally aggressive”. Yet, it “was not just Russian and Putin who looked at relations with the West as zero sum, rather, the majority in the West, the European countries, the EU and NATO particularly look at the relations with Russia as a zero-sum game” too. In this view, such the change towards “zero-sum realism” was “more because of the effects of the West policies on Russia” (Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018).<sup>446</sup>

To sum up, from 2005 to 2008/09, the Russian leaders’ worldview experienced a great shift. At the end of the evolutionary process from romantic idealism in the very first years after Soviet collapse turned back to zero sum realism and a kind of Cold War languages.<sup>447</sup> The civilizationist’ worldview was based on the assumptions reflecting a realistic zero-sum calculation of the international order entailed competition over the geopolitics, geo-economics, and ideational, cultural systems imposing by the West and Western liberal order over sphere of influence, the benefits of globalizing economy and the values system. Reflected obviously by Lavrov “as it turns out NATO deals with security issues, the EU with economic issues, while the OSCE will only monitor the adoption of these organizations’ values by countries that have remained outside the EU and NATO”. The status quo order dominated by such “state of affairs can hardly be accepted” (Lavrov, 2005a).

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<sup>446</sup> kapadzich highlights the shift was duo of both perception of “security threats as NATO was moving, ever closer towards Russia and Russian heartland” increased by a sense of “political threat” “promoting a liberal democracy” by the West supported in Russia’s neighbour region through creating a “vibrant democracy” (Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018).

<sup>447</sup> Some scholars also referred the stabilized domestic socio-economic conditions, and centralized political system reinforced in Putin’s era, as the other reason for change the perception of sources of threats from domestic to international system (Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018; Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018; Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019; Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019; Alexander Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018; Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).



### 6.3.2 Civilizationism and National Identity

Consistent with the new self-concept, Russian leaders offered a version of national identity based on “civilizational distinctiveness”, and “civilizational uniqueness”. Accordingly, Russia was not Western, neither Eastern but a culturally, it was an independent unit of civilization in a generally hostile world.<sup>448</sup>

Although, the definition of national identity based on civilizational distinctiveness was not very new in Russia’s political sphere. However, questioning Russia’s status and its identity had strengthened the position of advocates of cultural distinctiveness within Russia during the years. While Russia’s identity was defined based on a dimensional distinctiveness over some characters and values, or a distinct path of development, in the final analysis, the identity was portrayed in close affinity with the West or at least partially, Western based common values. However, particularly in the years after the colour revolutions and due to perceiving ontological or cultural insecurity caused the leaders to portray Russia, in line with civilizationism, as a unique civilization, an alternative and somehow against the Western civilization and its value system.

Russian officials moved from the components that made the civilization distinct. They moved from conviction that Russian civilization contains the universal human principles including “democracy”, “human rights”, “liberties of citizens”, “personal, individual freedom”, “economic freedom, freedom of speech and religion, freedom to choose one’s

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<sup>448</sup> Defining national identity based on Russia’s civilizational narrative as a dominant narrative in Russian political sphere during the time was a common theme emphasized by IR experts (Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018; Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019; Muraviev, 10 December 2018; Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019; Alexander Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018; Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019; Sumsy, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018). For example, IR scholar highlighted “in Putin’s second term, there was a stronger narrative of Russian values, of being distinctly Russia”, “the stronger emphasize on Russia and Russian values and identity” (Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018). Russian scholar highlighted “the conviction that Russia is Russia, as a unique, especial civilization” dominated Russian political sphere and “*Russians* became more Soviet step national dignity, national pride under the second Putin’s term”. The Change that resurfaced “in line with some kind of nationalistic group” (Alexander Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018). Referring to such civilizational distinctiveness, other scholar pointed out that after the colour revolutions “the Russian political decision-makers, following old philosophical intellectual movement, consistently stresses that Russia is different from the West. Russia may have even its original path of development, which [means] we are different” (Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019).

place of residence and one's job" "fair society" "justice and legality". For the elites the question of such values, mainly democracy in today's world was irrelevant. "No one disputes" that "Russian democracy has had considerable success in establishing itself" (Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2004, May 26, 2005, April 25, 2006, May 10, 2007, April 26). "There will be no going back on the fundamental principles" since, as Russian president said, "commitment to democratic values is dictated by the will of our people and by the strategic interests of Russia itself" (Putin, 2004, May 26). Accordingly, the question of identity cannot be reduced to the human values like democracy, whether Russia is a democratic or not.

Consequently, there is no doubt among Russian leaders that Russia is a democratic state as the Western or European are, it adopted those universal values as the Western partners did so. However, they believed that so long as the values were universal, they did not exclusively belong to any part, neither Russia nor the West are "inventing anything new", instead they are using the values that the "European civilization and world history has accumulated" (Putin, 2005, April 25). In the "formation" and "development" of those values, Russia had "an invaluable" civilizing role, along with other "branches of European civilization each contributing its own added value" (Lavrov, 2007, August 15). Referring to Russia's civilizing role Putin emphasized;

"For three centuries, we [Russia and European nations] passed hand in hand through reforms of Enlightenment, the difficulties of emerging parliamentarism, municipal and judiciary branches, and the establishment of similar legal systems. Step by step, we moved together toward recognizing and extending human rights, toward universal and equal suffrage, toward understanding the need to look after the weak and the impoverished, toward women's emancipation, and other social gains" (Putin, 2005, April 25).<sup>449</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> Regarding that civilizing role, Russia was, as Russian leaders occasionally and pragmatically, particularly for their Western interlocutors, emphasized, "A natural member", "a major state", and "an integral part" of European family or European civilization (MID, 2005, September 20; Putin, 2005, April 25, 2006a, 2007). Russia was a branch of European civilization or family as it has the main role in the formation and development of the Civilization and its universal democratic values. Similarly, in his article published

When neither the values are “tantamount to confrontation”, nor any side has right to monopolize them, therefore the “split of the world into so called civilized humanity and all the rest” were totally irrelevant (Lavrov, 2007, March 17). Refusing civilizational “disparity” and division of world in terms of the civilized democratic West and uncivilized non-democratic rest, Russian elites discarded any superiority or inferiority of national identities. Indeed, the elites attempted to answer the ontological or cultural insecurity; the inferiority that perceived from the lack of recognition of the post-Soviet Russia’s aspired status and defined identity from the West. Doing so, neither West was a superior civilized model for any others, nor was Russia an inferior uncivilized need to join the superior civilized other. Moreover, emphasizing on “cultural and civilizational diversity”, Russian leaders strongly defends the necessity of preserving national, “cultural”, “spiritual”, and “civilizational distinctiveness” in the world politics .<sup>450</sup>

Russian civilization was based on a “unique cultural criteria”, the “rich spiritual and moral heritage and values”, “principles and ideals” that built during “thousand years of their history”.<sup>451</sup> Amongst them, the core values were “patriotism”, “the welfare and dignity of human life”, “social state that ensures free development for individuals and at the same time provides social protection”. The values made the “foundations” of Russia’s “society”, its “unique cultural and spiritual identity” and “great cultural” system (Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2005, April 25, 2007, April 26).<sup>452</sup>

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in SCO countries, Putin referred to Russia’s civilizing role and “an enormous contribution to universal cultural heritage” (Putin, 2006b).

<sup>450</sup> Particularly Lavrov defended enthusiastically and frequently such the civilizational discourse in defining Russia as a distinct civilization and the necessity maintain such the distinctiveness (Lavrov, 2005b, 2006a, 2006, October 18 2007, March 17, 2008, October 17; MID, 2005, October 20, 2005, September 20).

<sup>451</sup> Among other cultural criteria, the official document addressed the “rich educational, scientific and creative heritage”, Russian “language”.

<sup>452</sup> “Unique cultural and spiritual identity” evident by having a “multi ethnic”, and “the most multi-regional, multi-national and multi-confessional nation in the world” (Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2007, April 26).

Moving from the geo-cultural factors, Russian elites finally speculated the terms of “sovereignty”. Simply, those traditional values were foundations for the greater value, the “country’s unity and sovereignty” what can be translated the national (political) identity as a regulating guideline of Russians’ “everyday life”, and the basis of Russia’s “economic and political relations”, with others (Putin, 2005, April 25, 2007, April 26). The sovereignty in this sense, according to Medvedev (2008, November 5) defines “what make us a single people, what make us Russia”. Consequently, sovereignty is what defined Russia not a simply a society “large in size and population”, rather as a “unique and ancient civilization enormously rich in culture” among other civilizations around the world (Putin, 2007, September 5).

In an evolutionary process, Russian national identification based on civilizational distinctiveness moved from traditional role of the state within Russian society by Eurasian statism in Primakov time, to strong effective state by developmentalist statism in Putin’s first term, expanded into a broader concept of sovereignty by Civilizationism from the mid-2000s. Accordingly, Russia as a national collective self has its own rules and principles shaped by the traditional values, the past self-experiences guaranteed with sovereignty that regulates the relations between the members within society and outside between Russia as a national *self* with others’ *selves*. Sovereignty in that sense, as the core value determining identity and the state’ “place in the modern world”, hence as “an absolute imperative” should be defended (MID, 2006, December 15; Putin, 2005, April 25, 2007, April 26).<sup>453</sup> One way to do so was avoiding any “blindly copying foreign

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<sup>453</sup> According to Lavrov, defending sovereignty implies “defending national identity and a sense of belonging to ancient civilizations, cultures and traditions” that called “a priceless treasure of the human race” hence “it would be disastrous to lose it” (MID, 2005, September 20).

models” that “would inevitably lead to us losing our national identity” (Putin, 2007, April 26).

The question of Russian identity hence was translated how to apply the universal values like democracy while maintaining the country’s distinctiveness, read sovereignty. As Putin (2005, April 25) asked “how to safeguard their own values, not to squander undeniable achievements, and confirm the viability of Russian democracy,” or what Medvedev (2008, November 5) reiterated, “how Russia’s democracy should continue its development”. To answer such question, in line with conservative ideologues and intellectuals, Russian leaders developed the hypotheses of sovereign democracy and economy alternatively versus the Western liberal democracy and market economy models of development politically and economically.<sup>454</sup> The alternative models of governing around the sovereignty is what made the discourse distinct from previous post-Soviet discourses dominated on Russia’s political sphere up to the time.<sup>455</sup>

The term of sovereign democracy is defined as the right of every nation to choose the most appropriate model of governance, of political economic for development based on the national traditional values, and cultural criteria and specific domestic conditions.<sup>456</sup> As far as democracy implies the “freedoms of economic, speech and religion” for individuals it also offers a “general national freedom, the independence and freedom of Russian state” to persuade its own path of governance, and models of “development”, too (Medvedev, 2008, November 5). Accordingly, Russia adopted “democracy through the will of its own

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<sup>454</sup> The term of sovereign democracy was particularly hypothesised by Surkov.

<sup>455</sup> From this point of view, for the first time and different from all post-soviet dominant discourses, the Civilizationist discourse as dominance on Russian political sphere offered an alternative model.

<sup>456</sup> As well as official documents like annual address, approximately in any occasion the leaders repeated the theme during the given time (Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2005, April 25, 2007, April 26). Particularly, Lavrov was one of the main proponents of the term. In his article, Lavrov (2005a) reiterated, “fundamental democratic values are universal, but each country implements them in its own way, taking into account its traditions, culture and national peculiarities”. Similar argument (Lavrov, 2005b, 2005, October 22 2006, October 18 2007, August 15, 2007, March 17, 2008, October 17; MID, 2005, September 20, 2006, December 15).

people”, as Putin highlighted, with taking into account Russians “historic, geopolitical and other particularities and respecting all fundamental democratic norms”. This implies “as a sovereign nation, Russia can and will decide for itself the timeframe and conditions for its progress along this road” (Putin, 2005, April 25).

As the alternative to the market-oriented model of economy of the West, a sovereign economy implies a right and freedom to choose one’s own economic system and the model of development. In Russia, the elites offered a “socially oriented economic development model” which the state has “upper hand” in directing economic system. The model particularly reemphasized during the financial crisis, when Russian elites believed that the crisis was a sign of invalidity and failure of the Western capitalism and its market-oriented economy, hence following such the model was destroying for the World economy, and Russia.<sup>457</sup> The model was a kind of returning the protectionist economy or “government sponsored”, “nationalizing” economy, by which the social state should “ensures free development for individuals with providing a social protection” (Lavrov, 2008, September 1).

Speculating the sovereign democracy an alternative system, Russia was unquestionably democratic and civilized, yet distinct with own alternative models of governance and development, not Western democratic power.<sup>458</sup> Justifying by IR scholar, “the sovereign democracy” aimed to differentiate Russian national identity from the West,

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<sup>457</sup> The leaders went further and even doubted about the West’ economic model. Lavrov pointed out that Washington “has not turned out to be impervious to socialist things like ‘government sponsored’ mortgage associations and corporations”, and similarly “London has taken the path of nationalizing the bank Northern Rock”, the policies “which not so long ago was anathema from the point of view of Anglo-Saxon political economy” (Lavrov, 2008, September 1).

<sup>458</sup> Democracy in such a limited-term, under the shadow of sovereignty, was in fact, a reaction to the perception of threat from the colour revolution Russia. Aforementioned, Moscow saw the revolutions as the Western attempts for intensification of influence in Russia’s traditional zone, and contain the state within its near abroad. Hence, sovereign democracy was used as an alternative of the West’s democratization, means democratization “within the frameworks of law rather than by street rallies, which may provoke violence and the division of society” with respect to “the existing traditions of every country, for the choice of ways to develop democracy”, not through destabilizing “the situation in a given country” (Sergey Lavrov, 2005a).

“Russians emphasize we are democratic, but we are not the Western democracy... the sovereign democracy means we are not taking adverse thing from the West and Western democracy, but at the same time we have its own model with our value, the sovereignty” (Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019).<sup>459</sup>

The emphasis on traditional ideational factors overshadowed other factors like the geopolitics in national identification but in a new sense.<sup>460</sup> Particularly in Russia’s immediate neighbour area, where, as well as the common “geography”, what made Russia and the states in the Eurasian region “united”, was “a common history”, “culture and personal ties”, that as the “diverse bonds” “determine the special character” of the region, “the countries and peoples” and also intertwined “the states and their citizens’ destinies continues” (Lavrov, 2004, June 16, 2005b). The communality of such cultural and ideational factors implies that for Russian leaders, beyond the geopolitics, the area was exclusively belonged to Russian civilization, which no other civilizational discourses would be allowed to enter in such a common cultural and civilizational area. Hence it could not be “chessboard” for any competition from outside. Revealed by Lavrov, “this is a common civilizational area for every people living here, one that keeps our historic and spiritual legacy alive” (Lavrov, 2008, September 1). With such the version of Russia’s identity in a very inclusive term, encompassing former soviet space was a part of “Russian world”, and the greater Russian Civilization.

Consequently, with such the identification, the “West Is West and East Is East” and “these vectors are equal for Russia”, Russia was neither Western, nor Eastern, not European and no Asian, Russia was Russia, a great and “ancient civilization” with distinct

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<sup>459</sup> Similarly, Oskanian (Personal Interview, 25 February 2019) highlighted “Putin very clearly says that Russia has essentially a severing democratic Russia. Russia has a kind of equal democracy, but it would not confirm to Western democracies as its own kinds of values, hence, it will be very distinctive”. Reiterated similar arguments by IR scholars (Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018; Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019; Sumsy, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018)

<sup>460</sup> However, this never meant geopolitics was no longer important. Instead, the factor was still important and it deems having a secondary role. As the elites occasionally referred to geopolitical uniqueness of Russia; the “geopolitical position” and “geographical location” situating, “on the European and Asian continents” that mad the identity unique, as the “largest Eurasian power” (Lavrov, 2004, June 16, 2005b, 2008, September 1; MID, 2005, September 20; Putin, 2006, May 10, 2007, April 26).

traditional cultural values and unique geopolitics. Hence, the question of Russia belonging to the West or East or Eurasia seems meaningless (Lavrov, 2006b; Putin, 2003, October 17). As a Russian scholar highlighted the “prevailing the main feeling that Russia does not have and cannot aspire to have any strong alliances with the West; it also cannot fully associate and identify itself to Asia”. The kind of thinking accordingly “even today’s Russia may still need to consolidate” (Sumskey, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018).

To sum up, from the mid-2000s, Russian leaders offered a version of national identity speculated on civilizational discourse that besides some similarities was different from all post-Soviet versions. Different from Westernism, the Civilizationism portrayed Russia as a democratic civilized power with its own world, not Western nor wished to be. It was also rather comprehensive than both wings of the Statism. In new terms, the leaders offered Russia’s own alternatives, the sovereign democracy that would compete at least hypothetically with the Western models. This implies that the coalition not only rhetorically defined Russia a distinct civilization, but also had alternatively something to offer.

Indeed, the language of Russian civilizational distinctiveness evaluated and consolidated theoretically, in the years. Russian civilization were “reviving” based on all its unique characters (Lavrov, 2005b). What Russian scholar saw as the evolution of “an instrumental identity”, in Putin’s second term “when Russia rising from its knees, its identification turns back to its historical glory and its greatpowerness”. Thereafter “Russia was rising a sort of great power, like restoration of those golden days when Russia was a great, hence re-seek what can be called civilization” (Korolev, Personal Interview , 12 October 2018). IR expert however cautioned about referring the new version as a restoration of Soviet’ identity,



“If Soviet Union identity has been reintroduced to Russians by Putin’s regime, it was a selective. The Soviet Union as the great power, as great industrialized one, as well, the Soviet Union as the winner of the WWII, these themes are repeated and very much promoted by the Putin regime as kind of the common legacy of the former soviet states. Not a Soviet Union at the Bolshevik, since it is not revolutionary” (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

Based on the identification, the East and West were Russia’s outgroup. Russia was a distinct civilization a member of club of civilizations. It would lead the state to adopt a policy from competition within the World order, to confrontation with any others who wanted to decline Russia’s civilization within its exclusive civilization world, the former Soviet region.<sup>461</sup> As an IR scholar highlighted in evolutionary process the definition of post-Soviet Russian identity lead to range of images as its “changed from a belief that Russia’s interests lie with the West to the view that the West is best treated as an enemy” (Hanson, Personal Interview, 2018). Summarizing the change in identification, Sherr argues;

“One obvious point is without belonging to the West, and no join to the West, but relation in terms of equality...on the bases of the mutual respect, with Russia as Russia and the West as West, as Russia is not the West. The second is the conviction that Russian civilization has never been limited by the Russian state’ borders. Instead, it goes beyond Russia’s borders, not just today’s borders with Europe, what it was in 1950s, and 1960s, before the Soviet collapse. Accordingly, the former Soviet areas along with the large number of people who lived there, on the periphery of Russia’s state, are part of Russiki Mir, the Russian world and the Russian civilization. The much clear and more consensual conviction of Russian identity that had very significant implications for the state’s foreign policy, mainly from the mid-2000s” (Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).

### **6.3.3 Civilizationism, Russia’s Rank and Role**

Unlike the post-Soviet era, Russian leaders were obviously more confident to claim about the state’s status. They were convinced that Russia achieved the status markers. For

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<sup>461</sup> In Lavrov’s word s Russia was a civilization amongst others including “India”, “China”, and that of “Asian”, “European” or “Islamic” (Lavrov, 2007, March 17).

the first ever post-Soviet Russia could ultimately tackle “all difficulties” and succeed to “prevent the degradation of state but [also] creates the foundation for development”. Now, in a new stage of “development”, the “independent”, “modern Russia” is “economically and politically strong” with a “free and modern country”, and a “stable” power with a “modern army” (Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2004, May 26, 2005, April 25, 2006, May 10, 2007, April 26).

The positive evaluation meant the change of the question of Russia’s status completely, from achieving status criteria to gaining recognition of such standing. The leaders were convinced the state achieved the status criteria, but it was unjustly remained unrecognised by the West. The perceived unjust treatment of Russia remained no space for playing in existing status hierarchy.<sup>462</sup> Argued in theory, the inconsistent state faced with the status dilemma is less willing to play in the status quo with the current ranking system instead it would attempt to redefine status hierarchy based on realistic criteria. Regarding the propositions, and based on the zero sum calculation of the world embodied with competition over power capabilities and ideational factors logically for the civilizationists, Russia’s status was highly depending on creating new status hierarchy based on what Putin concludes “a realistic sense of our own opportunities and potential in the changing world” (Putin, 2007, February 10).

Military might, was the primary source of status re-emphasized by Russian leaders, logically regarding their perception of the world based on zero-sum strategic competition between Russia and the Western counterparts. The officials highlighted frequently “Russia as one of the world’s leading powers”, whose power derived from a “powerful

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<sup>462</sup> Hypothesised in status literature, when public and political elites in a rising power consider that the status attribution structure (markers and recognition) is settled against them in which effective, status competition is inconceivable the status concern changed from status inconsistency to that of status dilemma.

levers of military and political influence”. Particularly, possessing “leading nuclear, missile capabilities”, made the state “the world’s leading nuclear power” (Ivanov, 2006, January 11; Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2006, May 10). Re-emphasizing the military capability by Russians was indeed a typically returning to a Soviet realistic calculation of international system. As Putin revealed in Munich, the capabilities, like nuclear arsenals were important as they made Russia able “to balance asymmetrically” against any military “asymmetries” imposing particularly by the West (Putin, 2007, February 10).

Consequently, preserving and improving the military might and its “modernization” became an “extremely” important “task” of Russia. Accordingly, Russia’s status would be guaranteed with the “effective”, “well-equipped” and “modern” military capabilities, according to Putin, “So that we can easily solve internal socio-economic tasks”, and “calmly and confidently resolve all the issues” related the “peaceful life”, in the rapidly changing world (Putin, 2004, May 26, 2006, May 10). Hence, whether “just an issue of status” or as the only “reliably” guarantee of the state’s security, “maintaining a robust military capability”, became “a must” in defining Russia’s “national interests” (Sergei Ivanov, 2006, January 11).<sup>463</sup> In this sense, Russian policies in pursuing arm race during the years would be explainable.

The leaders focused on the economic capability as other main source of international status while simultaneously, they confidently emphasised the state’s achievements. Russia “considerably strengthened” its “international position as one of the world’s leading economies”. Such optimism was based on domestic economic achievements, as

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<sup>463</sup> The priority of development of the military-strategic capabilities was indeed the Cold war style of arm racing, pre-emptive capabilities that could make “an adequate response” to “every possibility” and “potential aggression from outside” ranged from “international terrorist attack” or “to attempts from any quarters”. Russia, as Putin (2006, May 10) argued, “Need armed forces that guarantee Russia’s security and territorial integrity no matter what the scenario”. The main proponent of such the priority was the DM Sergey Ivanov who emphasis on the necessity of “maintain and develop a strategic deterrent capability” (Ivanov, 2006, January 11).

compared to the previous shortcomings and backwardness Russia's economic conditions backed to the "normalcy" (Putin, 2004, May 26, 2006, May 10).<sup>464</sup> Later Putin hailed "Not only has Russia now made a full turnaround after years of industrial decline, it has become one of the world's ten-biggest economies" (Putin, 2007, April 26).<sup>465</sup> Such the economically "international prestige and influence of Russia" was not exclusive. Instead it was perceived nearly in all dimensions, in "the economic growth" that Russia was "among the fast growing powers" in "the trade" and particularly in "financial sphere" which Moscow's position changed from "a large debtor into an active creditor" (MID, 2005, June 22).<sup>466</sup> All implied that now, as well as political, military modern state, Russia was economically "also independent", both in finance and world affairs (Putin, 2004, May 26).

Unsurprisingly, energy was one of the main factors of "sustainable" economic development. In Russians' view, Russia achieved all requirement of standing as "the world's biggest oil producer" and "one of the world leading energy resources suppliers".<sup>467</sup> Less surprisingly, the leaders called Russia as "the world's energy superpower" (Lavrov, 2007, March 17). Regarding the achievements, an IR scholar highlighted "As Russia became more powerful economically, regarding the growing importance of the energy sector as a means of geopolitical influence Russia started the securitization of economic". This means utilizing "the mighty energy sector as a major

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<sup>464</sup> Similar argument (Lavrov, 2007, August 15; MID, 2005, June 22; Putin, 2006, June 27).

<sup>465</sup> Similar argument; (Lavrov, 2007, August 15, 2007, March 17; Putin, 2005, April 25).

<sup>466</sup> The optimism is less irrelevant regarding Russia's economic conditions. Amongst other aspects, the state's economic situations improved for the first time after the Soviet collapse, the economic growth reached to the level of 1990 (See more in Chapter five pp. 356-357). Even less if one compares Russia's economic conditions with other rising powers, for example with BRICs as discussed next, pp. 417-422.

<sup>467</sup> The leaders hinted to "the size" of "explored reserves of primary energy resources", the "industrial infrastructure", "the high technological" sectors particularly in "the mining and extraction" as the prerequisites of such the achievement (Sergei Ivanov, 2006, January 11; Putin, 2004, May 26, 2006, November 17, 2007, April 26).

instrument of internal and external policy that to a large extent determines Russia's geopolitical influence abroad" (Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).

Viewing geo-economics in terms of zero-sum competition also implies that the more economically confident Russia requires more economic competitiveness. Hence, to neither stop nor return, "To the backwaters of the world economy" Russia's interests dictated it "must take serious measures" to gain its international deserved place through accomplishing all potentials. Russia hence "must become one of the leaders in the field of nanotechnology", a "major exporter of intellectual services", and must ensure "a leading and stable position on energy markets in the long term". It also must take measures to befit "one of the world's leading financial centres" that guarantee the achieved "financial stability" but also "it should act as the nucleus of an independent and competitive Russian financial system" (Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2006, May 10, 2007, April 26).

Notwithstanding, while the economic and military capabilities made Russia "great", "leading", "major", it also staged the state's role "globally", geo-economically and strategically. As well, geopolitical unique and cultural distinct characters made the state's status and role even greater. The "advantageous" geopolitical location made Russia with the "modern transport and communications", as the world's energy super power, and "a major sea power" with "a fairly well developed sea traffic market" too (Putin, 2007, April 26). This unique geopolitics led Russia to play simultaneously regionally with "quite legitimate" global interests in the "West" and "Europe", "in the East" and "Asia", along with other parts of the world.<sup>468</sup>

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<sup>468</sup> Similar argument (Lavrov, 2004, June 16, 2005b, 2008, September 1; MID, 2005, September 20; Putin, 2006, May 10, 2007, April 26)

The cultural values as the source of status would establish the state's standing domestically and internationally, its "sovereignty" and "independence". More importantly, the ideational characters made the state's role even greater "as never before" particularly in the perceived zero sum ideological competitive world (MID, 2006, December 15; Putin, 2005, April 25, 2007, April 26).<sup>469</sup> The new messianic role implies that Russia as "a junction of civilizations" should play as an intercivilizational harmonizer and stabilizer of the Western and Eastern civilizations. Russia was to establish and promote "dialogue between civilizations" between "both West and East", or even within each of them. It was "to prevent a civilizational breach", and form "the alliance of civilizations" against any "encroachments" particularly by "who push forward ideologized approaches" and their "own political systems and development models" (Lavrov, 2004, 2005b; MID, 2006, December 15; Putin, 2006, June 27, 2007, September 7).

The latest point shows that the role was not only detached from the West but was also somehow against the Western civilization. It was reminiscent of a Soviet role, leading exclusively the socialist world against liberal civilization. Reflected by Lavrov;

"Russia, with its history and geography, has a centuries-old experience in the development of a multiethnic and multifaith society. Essentially, herein lay the guarantee of its survival at the junction of civilizations. On this basis, we are reviving Russia now. As no one else, we are in a position to make a worthy contribution to the maintenance of harmony among civilizations in the world" (Lavrov, 2005b).

The principal test for the role lay in the former Soviet region, where as the regional hegemon, "Russia should continue its civilising mission" (Putin, 2005, April 25). However, such a mission had a different meaning when it comes to the region. Under the

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<sup>469</sup> The role that relied on the state's "geographic" and "geopolitical position", its "cultural and civilizational", "centuries-old experience" in developing "a multiethnic and multifaith society", "the most multi-regional, multi-national and multi-confessional nation in the world" and guarantying "its survival at the junction of civilizations" (Lavrov, 2005b, 2005, October 22 ; Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2004, May 26).

shadow of Civilizationist thinking, the region belonged exclusively to Russian civilization as a part of broader Russian world. In such the exclusive zone of strategic interest no one had privileged right except Russia, as the West has its own “special”, “privileged zone of interest” in “the Euro-Atlantic area” (Lavrov, 2008, October 25). Simply, “the emphasize was much more on respecting of clear cut division between first of all its own zone of interests, from the West’s zone of influence and areas between, where one had to accept Russia’s equal right” (Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).

The mission of Russia in the region meant maintaining the hegemonic role by keeping its cultural system versus any other alternatives including the Western democracy and capitalism. By doing so, cultural factors were tools to persuade the state’s political ambitious in the region through what ladled as “securitizing identity and culture” (Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).<sup>470</sup> Not a coincidence after the wave of democratization in the region, under the banner of “civilizing mission”, Putin offered its alternative sovereign democracy as the most reliable model, “the genuinely useful experience” to the “neighbours”. Russia’s “mission” accordingly “consists in ensuring that democratic values, combined with national interests, enrich and strengthen our [Russia and former Soviet states] historic community” (Putin, 2005, April 25, 2006, May 10).

In attempts to answer the psychological issue of “supremacy” in the world after Soviet, according to Russian scholar, the leaders finally returned to the conviction that the “best answer is turning back to the Soviet type, looking at the state’s standing from point of supremacy of Russia or being a primary superpower”. The supremacy was based

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<sup>470</sup> Korolev (Personal Interview, 12 October 2018) called it “instrumentalization of identity” mainly in Putin’s second term.

primarily in the traditional sphere of influence where “Russia definitely sees itself as a superpower within its neighbourhood as the only power in Central Asia and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus” (Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018). Hence, as Hanson highlighted Russian leaders came to believe that the state’s “status should be defined by, amongst other things, an unchallenged power to determine what happens (broadly) in its own ‘sphere of special interests’, roughly, the former USSR (Hanson, Personal interview, 5 January 2018).<sup>471</sup>

The sense of status dilemma was similarly highlighted by FPC. The document portrayed “Russia as one of influential centres in the modern world”, with “possessing a major potential and significant resources in all spheres of human activities”. The standing was based on the material capabilities; “the military power of states”, “economic, scientific and technological, environmental, demographic and informational factors” as well as ideational “intellectual and spiritual potential”. Consolidation of “the positions of Russia in international affairs”, then “the interests of Russia and its citizens”, dictated “a new Russia”, to acquire “a full-fledged role”, “globally and regionally”. Such the “well-deserved role” should be played in all dimensions of international system, economically, politically and militarily, and civilizational, spiritually. That could be possible merely by “establishment of equal mutually beneficial partnerships with all countries”, and increasing the state’s “political, economic, information and cultural influence”, this means exerting “substantial influence upon the development of a new architecture of international relations” (MID, 2008, January 16).

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<sup>471</sup>A Russian expert saw the re-domination of Eurasianist narratives in its wider term, after colour revolutions. Revealed by the expert “From the mid-2000s, Eurasianism, whether in the limited Eurasian region around Russia, or broader region of Euro-Asia including Asia and the Pacific region is going to be a re-dominant narrative”. “More because” according to the expert “Russia’s relationship with the West, and particularly the US policies and behaviours that were much less desired and more irritating” (Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).



In brief, with such a positive evaluation of the state's capabilities along with emphasis on its historical ideational superiority, Russians were convinced that the state achieved the more common status markers. No matter how one defines the status criteria, for the elites, Russia was comparative in both the material capabilities and normative criteria, as "one of the constant quantities in global politics" (Lavrov, 2005, November 28).

The observable evidences show the status concern was still highly relevant in the centre of Russian grand strategy thinking. However, different from previous eras, the concern changed in essence to status recognition dilemma, from the mid-2000s. Russians, leaders, elites and public came to believe that Russia achieved the status criteria, but its standing remained unrecognized unjustly by the West. The ideational factors along with material capacities achievements established Russia as a military, politically and economically independent, modern great power with a greater role globally and regionally, that should be played in all political, economic, and cultural and civilization dimensions of world politics.

However, having achieved, or perceived to achieve the status markers theoretically is not enough to gain the aspired standing, as it depends on recognition from the main other/s, the higher status power/s. While, the leaders believed Russia achieved status criteria, as it "having established itself as one of the world's leading states", however the Western great powers, according to Lavrov, "hastened to write off our country [Russia] as an equal partner" evident by "the morbid reaction to the strengthening of Russia" (MID, 2006, December 15). Hence, the question of Russia's standing, was no longer about achieving the criteria; instead, it was entirely about gaining the recognition of the main others, the West and the US who denied recognizing such status.

The question of Russia's status recognition however could be solved only by withdrawing from interaction with the current order, which legitimise the existing and its

status hierarchy. From this perspective, the redefinition of criteria based on both material and ideational capabilities, while Russia justified its aspiration; it offered its preferred criteria for new status hierarchy. This also showed that the intensified perception of recognition dilemma during the colour revolutions resonated Russian hardliner's voices and views, and influenced Russian foreign policy sphere, at least rhetorically and officially during the time in question.

#### **6.4 Civilizationism and Revolutionary Revisionism**

A reconsideration of status concern Civilizationists coalition offered the proper strategic orientations from 2005-2008/09. Hypothesized earlier, rising powers are dissatisfied with the constitutive and normative structures of status quo, and consequently, they are unwilling or unable to adjust themselves towards the status quo.<sup>472</sup> After a long revolutionary phase, more than fifteen years of the Soviet' collapse, when neither Kozyrev's mobility nor Primakov's creativity and not Putin's earlier social competition registered Russia as recognized equal great power within the contemporary status hierarchy, Russia seems increasingly incapable of and/or unwilling to take steps to reassure the system dominated by the Western great powers.

Particularly, after the colour revolutions, when Russia achieved or perceived to achieve the status markers of the given time, yet it lacked the recognition from the main others in status quo hierarchy system. The sense of status recognition dilemma consequently caused the "paradigm shift" in Russia's grand strategy orientation from reassurance to status quo to a revolutionary revisionism. Russia has chosen to position

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<sup>472</sup> Explained in chapter two.

itself, as a “revisionist” power on opposite spectrum of US dominated liberal order, as it saw its own objectives and those of higher status members as mutually exclusive.<sup>473</sup>

With an optimistic “evaluations and approaches” over power capabilities and its traditional potentials, as the main status markers Russian leaders portrayed Russia as a reliable economic and military major power deserving play a “much more influential”, “active role” and “equitable participation” on par with the West and the US (Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2007, April 26).<sup>474</sup> The national interests determined by such realistic sense of Russia’s own capabilities as well world opportunities dictated a more independent voice in interstate relations (Putin, 2007, February 10). In the order dominated by zero sum realistic competition with a system led by the West and its “one-size-fits-all” approach, however having equal place, playing the greater role with the independent voice deems impossible (MID, 2005, September 20).

Accordingly, as Putin noted in Munich, that the world including Russia, “reached that decisive moment” that “must seriously think about the architecture” of the order, then “must proceed by searching for a reasonable balance between the interests of all participants in the international dialogue” (Putin, 2007, February 10). Thereafter Russia had no choice except “rethinking” of its priorities in world politics, a “radical revision” of the status quo order and establish a new one based on equality of all great powers including Russia (Lavrov, 2008, September 1; MID, 2008, January 16; Putin, 2007,

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<sup>473</sup> IR scholars and foreign policy analysts overwhelmingly verified that Russia adopted a “revisionism” against the status quo order, the orientation towards the West and in his sphere of influence (Hanson, Personal interview, 5 January 2018; Kapadzic, Personal Interview, 15 September 2018; Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018; Kushnir, Personal Interview, 8 February 2019; Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019; Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019; Philip Hanson OBE 5 January 2018; Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019; Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018). Russian scholars but were more inclined to argue that post colour revolutions Russia was against the unipolar Western-led order, for example, Sergunin (Personal Interview, 12 October 2018) convinced that Russia was “just a reformist in status quo order”. Sumsky emphasized Russia was partially revisionist, in the sense that it persuades “partial revision of international rules” but not “not a revision of whole rules” (Sumsky, Personal Interview, 22 November 2018).

<sup>474</sup> Russian elites increasingly emphasized on the necessity of playing a greater active role, as in his latest annual address Putin referred to “a much more influential role for Russia in world affairs”, and his successor Medvedev in his first message to national assembly pointed to “a key” role-playing by Russia along with the US in world politics (Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2007, April 26). Similar argument (Lavrov, 2005b; 2004, July 23, 2007, March 17; Putin, 2006, June 27, 2007, February 10).

February 10). An order that allow the major, self-confident Russia to have “a real contribution” not only “participation in the implementation”, rather more importantly in the “formation of global agenda” (Putin, 2006, June 27) .<sup>475</sup> Simply put, Russia desired to be a norm maker not norm taker, it preferred to be an active creator rather simply a passive recipient.

Consequently, as a central assumption of the new strategic orientation, the Civilizationist coalition settled for creating a “polycentric world” as the only alternative Western centred order.<sup>476</sup> The order was to replace the post-Cold War status quo shaped by Western liberal thoughts, models and approaches, along with a range of Western centred intuitions that indeed, legitimized the US hegemony (Lavrov, 2005b). The polycentric normative order was based on two main components; national sovereignty and international democracy. Highlighted by Putin (2005, April 25) the supremacy of states’ sovereignty “without attempts to impose development models or to force the natural pace of the historical process” and “the democratization of international life” based on “the principles of freedom, independence and equality between all peoples and nations” construct what he called “the culture of international relations” (Putin, 2007, April 26).<sup>477</sup>

“Systematic change” within the political culture of international system according to Bukovansky (2002, p. 16) depends on “contradiction and complementarity” of core legitimizing norms of the political culture. As the political culture of today’s international

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<sup>475</sup> Similar argument; (Lavrov, 2007, January 29; MID, 2006, December 15; Putin, 2007, February 10). For example, Lavrov reemphasized, “Russia assumes ever-greater responsibility for the state of affairs in the world and participates not only in the implementation but also in the formation of a global and Pan-European agenda” (Lavrov, 2007, January 29).

<sup>476</sup> As well as the term of polycentrism, Russian leaders occasionally used multipolarity in the given time. For example (Lavrov, 2005a, 2005b, 2007, January 29, 2007, March 17, 2008, October 17, 2008, October 25; Medvedev, 2008, November 5; MID, 2008, January 16; Putin, 2005, February 22; 2006, June 27; etc.). Regarding the philosophy and meaning of two concepts perhaps show why the terms of polycentrism got upper hand in the given time, to say in official document, or why can be more likely terms to address what Russian leaders meant during the given time (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

<sup>477</sup> In his latest annual message, Putin highlighted the process of democratization of the international life that would lead to establish “a new ethic in relations between states and peoples particularly important” also “calls for the expansion of economic and humanitarian cooperation between countries” (Putin, 2007, April 26).

order, as the UN codified comprise both “human rights” and “sovereignty”, states “may choose to exploit the potential contradictions between these principles in their strategic struggles”. Considering contradiction, rather complementarity, between two norms, Russia stand “royal” to the latest, emphasize on sovereignty states. Hence, while Russian leaders persuade to create a “international” democratic polycentric system of powers with equal interests, at the same time, no one has right to reduce the sovereignty of others under banner of defending universal human rights.<sup>478</sup>

Such a strategic choice meant that Russia had polarized itself against the international political culture established from WWII that focused on defending human rights. The revisionist Russia in this sense, according to Sakwa (2007, p. 212), “appeared now to stand as the champion of an anti-universalistic agenda”. Hence, while Russia still rhetorically emphasised the international norm, they meant unconditionally of sovereignty of states. All this implied that Russia is a centre of power in an alternative order, albeit a polycentric one with an alternative normative system in place the Western liberal system.

This was a re-articulation of the “Westphalian system” of “intergovernmental relations” dominated by different “centres of power”, each centre with its own special “sphere of influence” that “act in concert” with other centres.<sup>479</sup> Neither unipolar, “an attempt at God’s powers” nor “an anarchy or a chaotic Brownian motion”, the new system was the old European concert of great powers, as Lavrov (2007, August 15) referred, the

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<sup>478</sup> Apart from those rhetorics, Russian emphasize on the sovereignty of states and democratic nature of international order, in practice indeed both norms were frequently violated by Russia particularly at the time in question, as showed in this chapter by intervening in sovereignty of small states in neighbor Eurasian region.

<sup>479</sup> Derived from; (Lavrov, 2005b, 2007, February 20, 2007, February 24, 2008, October 25; MID, 2006, December 15, 2006, December 20). For example, Lavrov talked about “the formation of a new system of international relations” that its stability “has to rest on several poles that reflect the real weight of states and regions in different parts of the world” (Lavrov, 2007, February 20). Similarly In his interview in Brazil, Lavrov hinting the existence of the “Struggle for sphere of influence” between “major powers” in polycentric world but emphasized on the “collective” management of the world politics “through joint efforts” (MID, 2006, December 20). Regarding such the characters, it can be concluded what Russian leaders aimed in the given era was indeed creating a polycentrism, that was a kind of evaluation of for example Primakov’s doctrine of multipolarity (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).

“system run by numerous and diverse actors with a shifting kaleidoscope of associations and dependencies”. Indeed, polycentrism was as an awkward philosophical justification of balancing the Western liberal order, and the US hegemonic system, overcome the perception of inferiority and gain Russia’s historical status aspiration and equality in world politics. Reflected by Lavrov (2008, October 17);

“... a real contribution to efforts to build a polycentric, democratic world order where there will be no complexes of civilizational or any other superiority and where each state, big or small, will live in peace and security with its neighbours and feel itself an equal and respected member of the international community”.

Polycentrism was however different from Primakov’s multipolarity, as the issue of balancing went beyond tactically containing the US and the West as the hegemon/s. It was strategically aimed at revising the liberal order that legitimized such hegemonic interactions. The “success of these efforts” depends on establishment of a constitutive system within which the major powers act in a concert, means “discover” new “platforms”, and “build equitable and multilateral mechanisms for the new world order” on “all topical issues of international life” (Lavrov, 2005a, 2007, February 20).<sup>480</sup> Logically, Russian leaders appealed establishment of new or strengthen of the newly founded socio economic and political military architectures in global scale as a major contribution of Russia in global agenda.

The leaders primarily stressed the necessity of creating new security architecture. Putin for example, highlighted the necessity to revise the Western centred security system, justifying the world “reached a point” that “the entire global security architecture is indeed undergoing modernisation”. Otherwise, he warned, “If we let old views and approaches continue to hold sway, the world will be doomed to further futile

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<sup>480</sup> According to the elites such some constitutive arrangements would make the polycentric order “systemic and governable”. (Lavrov, 2005a)

confrontation. We need to reverse these dangerous trends and this requires new ideas and approaches” (Putin, 2006, June 27). The request was echoed strongly in Munich where Putin declared that world powers, “must seriously” reconsider “the architecture of global security” too (Putin, 2007, February 10). Beyond rhetoric, establishing “a fundamentally new comprehensive security architecture in Europe”, Medvedev proposed creating one, “from Vancouver to Vladivostok”, that would include all-European security agenda (Medvedev, 2008, July 15, 2008, October 8).

Russia aimed to contain Western capitalism as a “one economic system” monopolizing the global economic and financial system, through building new fairer socio-economic system with equal access of all states to possibilities and opportunities of globalization. Mainly during financial crisis, the leaders enthusiastically appealed creating new “more powerful financial centres” that would bring “the greater interdependence, the safer and more sustainable global development” (Lavrov, 2008, October 25; Medvedev, 2008, November 5). While integration in the global economy was still important but it should be pursued in the new context not necessarily in the Western dominated arrangements. Russia was hence, a “revisionist power” who “call for change in the global financial architecture, a revision of the role played by today’s institutions and the creation of new international institutions, institutions that can ensure genuine stability” (Medvedev, 2008, October 8).<sup>481</sup>

When the new architectures were still “in the process of formation”, “the role of UN”, as “the most representative and universal international forum ... remains the backbone of the modern world order” (Putin, 2006, May 10). What made the claim different in the

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<sup>481</sup> Few days later, Lavrov similarly argued “Russia as a ‘revisionist power’ coming out against the status quo” shaped “after the end of the Cold War”. He meant as a revisionist Russia is “against the background of the swift formation of a polycentric international system and the current global financial crisis” (Lavrov, 2008, October 25).

new era, was however conditionality of the supremacy of the organization to the necessity of “reformation” and its “adaptation to the new historical realities” (MID, 2005, October 20, 2006, December 20). According to Putin, (2006, May 10), if the UN wished to maintain its superiority, it must be “undisputedly” reformed since the “foundations of this global organization were laid during an entirely different era”.<sup>482</sup> The “undisputedly necessary reform” must be based on principles of “effectiveness”, and “consensus”, doing so, the UN would “ensure harmony” in the world politics (Putin, 2006, May 10). Otherwise, “if a specific decision is imposed against the will of a large group of member states, and significant states at that, playing a far from the least role in it...the UN will lose its legitimacy” (Lavrov, 2005b).

The strategy dictated taking an active “multifaceted”, “multilateral” “multi-vector” foreign policy. As Medvedev (2008, November 5) pointed “the relevance of strengthening international institutions is heightened by the transition of most countries towards a truly pragmatic multifaceted policy”. So long as the “the centre of gravity of world politics and economy is gradually shifting”, regarding the “economic factors and geopolitical circumstances” the “strategic choice” of Russian shifted from the Western towards that of non-Western powers and organizations (Putin, 2005, November 17, 2007, September 7). This means “diversification” of “diplomatic efforts” towards deepening cooperation with non-Western great powers particularly the “big Asian partners”; “China and India”, “the fast-growing countries” in “Latin America and Africa”. As well close deepening integration within the non-Western and Forums “G20”, “BRIC”, and “further integration

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<sup>482</sup> From this perspective, the reform of major international institutions” was as a complementary movement towards creating a polycentric order was included one of a “range of measures” and multifaceted multilateral foreign policy of Russia (Medvedev, 2008, November 5).



within institutions SCO”, “full-fledged integration in APEC” became the strategic choices of Russia (Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2005, April 25, 2006, May 10).

“When the Western centred organization perceived as closed and inaccessible for countries like Russia, like China” according to a Russian scholar, “Russia unpleasantly found that she had no chance to become associate within them similar the Western countries, hence, the whole trend changed”. Accordingly, “The natural outcome was creation of own club, the alternative non Western organizations” (Alexander Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).<sup>483</sup> “Rather joining as a rule taker in the Western led organizations”, Sumsy (Personal Interview, 22 November 2018) convinces “thereafter Russia desired to join in those formations that led her to have an active rule-making role, whether in its own Eurasian economic union or others forming non-western organizations”.

The partnership with non-Western rising powers was strategic choice of Russia as it was clearly serving the new grand strategic orientation; balancing the post-Cold War liberal status-quo, its hegemon the US and its unilateral policies, and creating a new polycentric system. Turning to reality, the effective system meant Russia required other rising powers mainly the non-Western as China, India who had or perceive to have “common views on the formation of a multipolar system”, deepen their relationship while improving power capabilities at parity with or as enough to balance the West and the US. As the stabilizing nature of polycentric system relies on balance of ability of any one centre to dominate whole system (MID, 2008, October 17). There was “no alternative” for such “fundamental principle”. What Lavrov declared with his Chinese and Indian colleagues that the tringle partners were determined to “send an important signal that there is no alternative to multilateral and equal cooperation in the contemporary world,

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<sup>483</sup> Particularly the scholar hinted to as BRICS, APEC, and SCO.

particularly if we truly want to really respond to the existing threats and challenges” (MID, 2007, October 25).

The options to pursue such a strategic choice were limited to a range of non-Western institutions and organizations as listed above. Amongst the “various available forums”, the BRIC, however, as a club of “fast growing” rising power including Brazil, Russia, India and China could provide such a potential. “A good example” of the new platforms that would allow the rising powers to have a voice and play a role as a rule making powers in “collective leadership” of the system on par with the West and the US. BRIC was perceived as a truly platform either “in geographic terms and in terms of different civilizations”, more importantly, as it becomes “a serious factor in the international economy”, and represented “the rapidly growing economic powers” who were able to assist the “stability of the global economic and financial system” (Medvedev, 2008, July 15). Although it was still in theoretical levels, regarding the fact that the first meeting of BRIC leaderships was at June 2009.

Goldman Sachs founded the term BRIC, first ever in paper published in 2003. The main idea was that BRIC, could become among dominant power in the world economy, if not today, tomorrow. The paper predicted that the BRIC rising powers would collectively exceed the GDP of developed industrial powers of the US, Japan, Germany, the UK, France and Italy by 2050 (Wilson, & Purushothaman, 2003). Beyond the economic factors,<sup>484</sup> particularly, the financial crisis in 2008 made such the prediction more validate, or at least for opposition forces of Western capitalism. Regarding the

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<sup>484</sup> The prediction became more credible very soon, as in 2010, China passed Japan and became the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest economy after the US. As well the collective GD of BRICs summed approximately US\$11trillion and was experiencing a far more rapid rate than that of the united states and industrialized western powers. At the end of 2011, BRICs GDP increased from 11 percent of the global GDP in 1990, to 25 percent, with a prediction of reaching 40 percent at 2050 that means the four BRIC plus the US would constitute the global five largest economies (Michailova, et.al, 2013).

“ineffectiveness” of the “unipolar economic model” and discredited “the pillars of the system” including “the IMF and WTO”, it was a time “for change in the global financial architecture, a revision of the role played by today’s institutions and the creation of new international institutions that can ensure genuine stability”. To do so, there is a “need to get other key world economies engaged in this process” (Medvedev, 2008, October 8). The BRIC could answer such the need, it was a club of rising powers, with divergent economic path and models of development, that would allow the “creditor autocracies” to enjoy superior influence on par and independent from “debtor democracies”, and free from check in their actions in protectionism, resource nationalization, and monopolization of economics and societies under the states’ control (Kanet, 2010).

Despite the fact that the question of Russia’s standing in the world politics was less on power capabilities, considering its historical and traditional aspiration of greatpownness, BRIC could evidence, not only the idea of declining the West and US and rising others, but it was a strong evident of rising Russia. Refereeing to economic criteria, it was strongly defended that there should be no change in BRIC, the “R” rightly “belongs in BRIC” and Russia is “as solid as a BRIC” implying the state could retain its standing as a viable member of the fast growing economies (Michailova, McCarthy, & Puffer, 2013; Gilman, 2009, December 9).

Beyond the fact that different from other rising economies, Russia inherited a highly industrialized country with largest territory endowed with massive natural resources, there were also convincing reasons for such the optimism about Russia’s rising. Highlighted earlier, Russian annual real GDP experienced a remarkable growth, 6.9% averagely to 2008 (Wold Bank, 2017).<sup>485</sup> Consequently, in 2007, Russia’s GDP returned

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<sup>485</sup> See chapter 5 (pp. 356-357).

at the 1990 level, that meant the state had overcome the effects of the economic crisis at the end of previous decade, and Russian leaders hailed the state's entrance in the world's top 10 economies.<sup>486</sup> The economic fact seem strongly enough to convince that rising Russia is comparable as BRIC. Comparing BRIC based on the rate of GDP during 2000 to 2009 (including estimation of 2009, the year of financial crisis) showed that Russia's real GDP grew 5.9% annually per average, far less than that of India and China, but still more than that of Brazil whose rate although faster than the developed countries but still registered 3.2% during the similar period (Gilman, 2009, December 09).<sup>487</sup>

Evaluating BRIC on saving and investment parameters similarly showed that while the rate of China's saving and investment of its GDP were 42% and 39% respectively since 1995 to 2009. The rate for India was 26% for saving and 28% for investment. Russia saved 30% and invested 22% during same period. The corresponding rates for Brazil, however, was low, average by 17% of GDP for saving and investment that was lagged from most developed economies. This brought a higher real cost of capital for Brazil comparing to others in BRIC, made it problematic to generate the same growth. While the financial crisis affected Russia's economic growth, but it was probably no worse off other BRICs. Comparing with Brazil, Russia is approximately 18% below in dollars GDP level in 2009, (due to devaluation vis-a-vis USD during the year of crisis), at the same time, it was predicted by the "IMF World Economic Outlook", that Russia could surpass Brazil by 2014, the trend that assumed to be continued thereafter. Similarly, Russia registered higher than Brazil in power purchasing parity valuation of GDP in 2009, and

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<sup>486</sup> See page 404.

<sup>487</sup> In later report, World Bank (2012) shows that during a decade (from 31 December 2000 to 31 December 2011), Russia's GDP experienced growth at 58.2% comparing to that of Brazil with 45.5%, India by 112.5% and China at 173.6% (World Bank, 2012, March 27). Accordingly, it was suggested Russia's GDP could surpass that of UK and France before 2020, and Germany near 2025 (Michailova, et. al, 2013).

estimated even moving ahead (Gilman, 2009, December, 9).<sup>488</sup> The following years after the economic crisis, Russia's economic rise was as promising as other countries in BRIC, even more, in some dimension. Regarding the economic parameters, it was concluded that the group of BRICs' future is promising, and so does the future of Russia as one of the BRICs. Accordingly, it is rightly to conclude Russia's rising economy is as comparable as other BRICs in various dimensions and "Russia does remain as solid as a BRIC" (Michailova, et.al, 2013; Gilman, 2009, December 9).

Less surprisingly, Russian leaders exaggeratedly hailed the first meeting of BRICs in Yekaterinburg, Russia, where Medvedev victoriously said "Yekaterinburg is currently the epicentre of world politics ... in both the literal and figurative sense" (Medvedev, 2009, June 16).<sup>489</sup> The summit was portrayed as a significant signal of "the new reality: a polycentric world order is forming before our eyes. Its contours are more and more visible". The Yekaterinburg summit, according to Lavrov "became a vivid example of multipolar diplomacy, and convincing evidence that multipolarity is neither chaos nor a programmed showdown among leading states of the world" (MID, 2009, September 1).

Reflected in the "Joint Statement of the BRIC Countries", that beyond economy, the Leaders committed to create new economic architecture or reform the current ones that could give a "greater voice" in global economic affairs, based on principles of "democratic and transparent decision-making and implementation process at the international financial organisations". They reaffirmed their strong "support for a more democratic and a just multi-polar world order based on the rule of international law,

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<sup>488</sup> Gilman, (2009, December 9) concluded that, Russia is not outlier among BRICs, if there is one, it is rather Brazil.

<sup>489</sup> Beyond the fact that the summit was the first the leaders of four states with "a significant weight in the global economy", meet in this format. As well, the summit was perceived as a demonstration of "a significant awareness of the inevitability of joint actions and the counter productiveness of unilateral decisions [that] is increasingly evident in the US establishment", and more importantly invalidity of "liberal capitalism" that "is just a stone's throw away from socialism."

equality, mutual respect, cooperation, coordinated action and collective decision-making of all states” (The President of Russia, 2009, January 16).

Withdrawal from cooperation or limited interaction with the West and Western institutions enjoying status quo, was another pillar of Russian foreign policy. Such the uncooperative approach according to Russian dictated by the reality and logic international relations, the post-cold war West policies and Russia’s situation within the system. Revealed by Putin, “We would not want anyone to suspect any aggressive intentions on our part”, yet if any, it was the mathematical logic of “international relations” that dictated the state to “react”, “by developing an asymmetrical answer”. Neither does Russia look at the US as “opponent or enemy” nor are there “personal dimensions”, but “it is simply a calculation” through which “there are symmetries and asymmetries here” (Putin, 2007, February 10). “If someone intends to counter Russia” Lavrov (2007, August 15) asked, “How could one possibly expect our cooperation in the areas of interest to our partners?”<sup>490</sup>

Any further interaction from Russia conditioned on realization of its equal standing, role and rights by the West. Cooperation based on strict reciprocity, equality, mutuality of interest and benefits, it was “objectively” and “realistic” and “opportunistic”, according to Putin “The principle of ‘I’m allowed to do it, but don’t you try’ is completely unacceptable to Russia” (Putin, 2006, June 27). Logically, it was limited merely to the issues of common interests, perceptions and joint responsibilities; practically areas like “strengthening the anti-terrorist coalition”, non-proliferation measures and “arm control regime” (Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2004, May 26, 2006, May 10, 2007,

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<sup>490</sup> The foreign minister continued, “Regretfully, many of our Western partners tend to treat even such a crystal-clear issue as the necessity to stop re-emerging neo-Nazi trends and the desecration of the memorials to those who defeated fascism, under the influence of the same desire to ‘contain’ Russia” (Lavrov, 2007, August 15).

February 10).<sup>491</sup> Corollary implies least or conditional cooperation also with the old Western centred constitutive order, the NATO, EU, if any.

Reflected by Russian scholar, the “real change in his second term Putin started treating the West whatever we mean, mainly the US by look at it through the more realist lens, and treating from powers position not from a weaker side” (Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018). A Russian scholar summarized delicately that;

“Dominating new paradigm combining the geopolitics and realism asserted by Putin in Munich, a sort of realism that although did not discount potential peaceful cooperation, however any cooperation must be based on respect to Russia’s national interest. The talk about realism never mean to avoid possibility of any cooperative behaviour, instead it is a kind of conditional cooperation, quite pragmatic in this sense that be no longer romantic, naïve idealistic, even sometimes utilitarian or cynical necessitate Russia the first, and Russia’s national interest as the major motivation for the Russian leadership” (Alexander Sergunin, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).

The approach that gradually increased to the point that was no less than confrontation, as illustrated earlier in this chapter, from mid-2000s. As an IR scholar called “growing defiance of Western views and alleged interests, during Putin 2007 Munich speech and the 2008 war in Georgia” (Hanson, Personal interview, 5 January 2018).

Greater priority was awarded to the Eurasian region, as it has become an indispensable part of new grand strategy. (Putin, 2006, May 10). Persuading a revolutionary revisionism to challenge the status quo order and its hegemonic system, Russia paradoxically attempts to reinforce the hegemonic hierarchic order in Eurasian region that would legitimate the Russia centric system and its exclusive leadership. Indeed, the state was revisionist in the region, as it desired to challenge the order shaping by the West, mainly picked by colour revolutions. It was a way to avoid further geopolitical disaster imposed by Soviet’ collapse as Putin said, and to create a “qualitatively new geopolitical situation” what

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<sup>491</sup> Particularly in issues related to Euro Atlantic region the “trilateral interaction” between “the US, Russia and the EU” was Russians “practical formula” in the new term (Lavrov, 2007, August 15).

Medvedev emphasized (Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2004, May 26). Russia was simultaneously a neo-conservative hegemon of the Eurasian heartland reinforcing the Soviet style hegemonic role, by regenerating and re-legitimizing the Russian proposed order in Eurasian landmass. The role that was dictated by “objective commonality and interdependence, economic, cultural-civilizational” factors (Lavrov, 2007, March 17).

Simply put, underscoring the Eurasian region as a member of Russian civilization, added to geo-economic and geopolitical interests and weighted the priority of the region in Kremlin’s policy in the time. Hence, as a pivot of the state’s status and its ideational civilizational existence in international arena, the Eurasian region should remain under Russian dominance. These “givens” should also be “perceived” and “respected” with “no speculations”. Otherwise, “not to understand” the fact and attempt “to destroy what rests on a joint objective history, on the interdependence and intertwining of the economies, infrastructure, culture and the humanitarian spheres of life [in the region] means to go against history”. Such a “false dilemma” as Lavrov warned, “would be unnatural, dangerous and irresponsible” (Lavrov, 2005a, 2008, October 25). Highlighted by Russian scholar

“What is clear in second term, Putin established some rather redlines for the Western countries in the region, implying no more NATO Eastward expansion, not deploying the US or NATO military bases within the post-Soviet region. There were also rather redlines mainly for Eastern countries, by which they should not join NATO, not Ukraine and nor Georgia” (Sergunin, Personal Interview, 2018).<sup>492</sup>

The interests should be pursued with familiar foreign policy tactics, developing the “elements of objective commonality and interdependence, cultural civilizational and other”, through mainly “diverse multilateral formats” within the region (Lavrov, 2007,

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<sup>492</sup> Similarly, Kapadzić (Personal Interview, 15 September 2018) highlighted to “setting some sort of redlines” by Russian leaders particularly in former soviet region underlining “Russia have special rights in the region”. Similarly reemphasized by IR scholars; (Hanson, Personal interview, 5 January 2018; Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018; Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019; Muraviev, 10 December 2018; Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019; Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).



March 17). Simply, Russia was still “open to all forms and models of integration” in the region (Putin, 2007, April 26). Economically “deepening integration” in its all parallels “the Eurasian Economic Community, EurAsEC” and “the Common Economic Space”, as “the natural core of the integration processes” increased. “In the military and political spheres” Russia strongly emphasized on the role of “the CSTO” and “increase the volume and scope of cooperation” within the organization to establish a regional “security complex”. As well, active participation of Russia in regional conflict resolutions and peacekeeping process, like “a settlement in Nagorno-Karabakh and Transdniestria” was further emphasized. Culturally and politically, the necessity of protecting Russia’s “diaspora” and “compatriots” resurfaced as an “issue of major importance” for the state’ foreign policy, “one that cannot be the subject of political and diplomatic bargaining” (Medvedev, 2008, November 5; Putin, 2004, May 26, 2005, April 25, 2006, May 10, 2007, April 26).

Beyond the official rhetoric, to understand the policies towards the region, one should regard the dominant Civilizationist self-concept that determines the context within which those policies be implemented and objectives behind it. Russia was to develop the post-Soviet region achieving, “the standards of civilisation”, in her own terms, that according to Putin “would emerge as a result of common economic, humanitarian and legal space” (Putin, 2005, April 25). Accordingly, “without diminishing the importance of the other aspects”, the president noted “the particularly promising project of strengthening our common humanitarian space, which has not just a rich historical and human foundation but now offers new social and economic opportunities” (Putin, 2006, May 10).

This means, “rewriting the Soviet Union” through using interdependencies between the region states and Russia what can be labelled as a “securitization of the economy, culture and politics”. Accordingly, under the banner of those multilateral or bilateral

arraignments, Russia was to “securitization of business, and economy...using her economic superiority in interdependent region, particularly her mighty energy sector as tools to guarantee her geopolitical influence” (Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019). Amongst “Russia’s economic and commercial instrument”, energy mainly was “a means to expand Russia’s geopolitical interests and a tool to put pressure against countries that wanted to be free of her intervene. As was seen using economic tool generally and energy weapons particularly against Ukraine, Georgia” (Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).

Culturally and politically, the rights of compatriots, to create a common humanitarian space, maintaining the common cultural legacies in the region was rather securitization of the culture to justify geopolitical ambitious. This means stipulating as a civilizer and upholder of the civilizational achievements, “Russia has responsibility for compatriots and right to uphold their interests without specifying what the right is, what their interests are and how they are to be appealed” (Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).<sup>493</sup> Indeed, Russia was to play the compatriots as the bargaining cheap versus the former republics, particularly against those eccentric states, also in relation with the Western institutions.

Unsurprisingly, the self-assumed role, was aimed at protecting “the welfare and dignity of human life”, “interethnic peace and the unity of diverse cultures” provide a ground to Russia to justify her geopolitical objectives against the neighbours, what, noted earlier, practically used frequently against Estonia, Ukraine, and Georgia during the time. The

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<sup>493</sup> The policy strongly followed in Medvedev terms, when he set up tared to set up a commission to correct the distortion of the history”, “sending well-prepared state academic ideologist to third countries, lecturing them about who they are where they belong. As Sherr exemplified, “Russia send lecturer in Ukraine where Russian academicians actually sit in the rooms and tell the Ukrainian who they are and who they are not, where they historically belong and where they do not, what they can do and what they cannot, not only on the political basis just on the basis of historical and cultural determinants. So all of these have been done and still being done, and still, be going done” (Sherr, Personal Interview, 19 March 2019).

“protection for small peoples, and the recognition of South Ossetia’s and Abkhazia’s independence is an example of this protection”, revealed by Medvedev (2008, November 5). Similarly, emphasis on regional military and security arrangements in conflict resolutions and peacekeeping process served Russia’s dominance. Justified by Medvedev,

“...the decision to force the aggressor to make peace and the operation undertaken by our military was not against Georgia, not against the Georgian people, but to save the people of the republic and Russian peacekeepers...[and] to ensure the stable and long-term security of the people of South Ossetia and Abkhazia” (Medvedev, 2008, November 5).

Russia was ready to defend her traditional hegemonic dominance in her exclusive privileged sphere of influence, no matter in what way (Lavrov, 2008, September 1). Even by taking the confrontational way as it was showed “in practice” in “the August crisis”, according to Medvedev “We really proved that we are able to protect our citizens. We are able to effectively defend our national interests and effectively carry out our ... responsibilities” (Medvedev, 2008, November 5). This is the fact that made Civilizationism different from other strategic thinking who emphasized on Eurasian region like Eurasian statism. All, of course overlapped with Russia’s grand strategy to create a polycentrism in Russian term, Russia as a centre of power with its own special zone of interest was to maintain her own sphere of influence around itself (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).<sup>494</sup>

The Foreign Policy Concept also reflected the ascendancy of the Civilizationist views of the state interests and grand strategy orientation, revolutionary revisionism. Regarding the “developments” in world politics, “strengthening of Russia”, having desired standing,

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<sup>494</sup> Regarding the “acknowledged zone of interests” by Russian leaders, John Lough convinced except in short proud in Kozyrev time, “Russia could not reconcile herself to accept truly those formally independent states who were going to develop independent foreign, security and economic policies, if like independent of Russia”. Quoting “Mikhail Kasyanov” Russian ex-prime minister, the scholar claim particularly “Putin strongly disliked this approach because he describes the former Soviet republics according to Kasyanov as non-states that should be treated differently” (Lough, Personal Interview, 1 March 2019).

playing a greater independent role, and responsibilities in “global developments” and “the international agenda”, plus “its development” requires “rethinking” of all “foreign policy priorities” and “reassessment” of the status quo, “the overall situation around Russia”.<sup>495</sup> The main global priority of “Russia to influence global processes” is “to ensure formation of a just and democratic world order”. The FPC convinces “improving the manageability” of the order requires an “establishing a self-regulating international system” based on “a collective leadership by the leading states” who are “representative in geographical and civilizational term”. This means resurfacing the old system of concert of great powers, with their special zone of influence (MID, 2008, January 16).

While “the trend to a polycentric world order growing further” due to emerging powers, regional and sub-regional initiatives, Russia would exercise its “substantial influence” to “strengthening of principles of multilateralism” and developing “a new architecture of international relations”. Gaining such objectives, the foreign policy should use “all available” tools and capabilities. Economically, Russia should pursue “shaping a just and democratic architecture of global trade, economic, monetary and financial relations”. Politically, FPC conditioned “the unique legitimacy” of UN to “rational reform”, and “further improving the effectiveness of the work of the UNSC” by “joint actions” of all powers. Otherwise, FPC warned Russia is ready “to protect” interests even having “act unilaterally” (MID, 2008, January 16).

Those interests, dictates adopting a “balanced and multi-vector”, “multi-lateral”, a diversified foreign policy, “more fully engaged” with non-Western rising powers,

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<sup>495</sup> While the priority of national interests remained unchanged. Ensuring “national security” through consolidation of “its sovereignty and territorial integrity”. Economically, the concept continues to emphasis on “ensuring the competitiveness of the country in a globalizing world”; through creating “favourable external conditions for the modernization of Russia, the transformation of its economy”, “enhancement of the living standards”. Politically it focuses on “consolidation of society”, “strengthening of the foundations of the constitutional system, rule of law and democratic institutions, realization of human rights and freedoms”. Accordingly, a key consistent “task of Russia’s foreign policy is called upon to create favourable conditions for the realization of the historic choice of the peoples of the Russian Federation in favour of rule of law, a democratic society and socially-oriented market economy”. However, the context to achieve the goals changed (MID, 2008, January 16).

whether in the form “strategic partnership” of “the troika; Russia, India and China”,<sup>496</sup> “and the BRIC Four”, along with “more actively using other informal structures and venues for dialogue”. Amongst structures, FPC emphasized on strengthening cooperation in “SCO”, active participation in “the Asia–Pacific Region” and its “integration mechanisms”, “notably the APEC Forum”, “the ASEAN Forum”. The FPC conditioned any further interaction with the Western powers and organizations to “overcome the barriers of strategic principles of the past” through considering equality, mutuality and beneficially and balance of interests (MID, 2008, January 16).

Unsurprisingly, the concept prioritizes continuing “strategic partnerships and alliances” with the “the CIS member States” through “development of bilateral and multilateral”, “multidimensional cooperation” in all economic, political, military and cultural humanitarian dimensions. Russian foreign policy should “actively” pursue additional “strengthen (EurAsEC)” “as a core element of economic integration”, promoting “the CSTO” as the main tools to stabilize and securitize the region, “in every possible way” and transforming it “into a central institution ensuring security” (MID, 2008, January 16).

Analysis of Russian officials during 2005 to 2008/09 evidenced changing the question of status concern from inconsistency to status dilemma played main role in Russia’s grand strategy orientation “paradigm shift” toward revolutionary revisionism. The unprecedented strategic orientation offered by Civilizationism was the radical revision of

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<sup>496</sup> Regarding particularly, the two Asian powers, developing “friendly relations with China and India” refocused as “an important track of Russia’s foreign policy in Asia”. While the document demands “building effective foreign policy and economic interaction in a trilateral format– Russia-India-China”, it defends the bilateral formats too. The FCP emphasized on the necessity of “the Russian–Chinese strategic partnership”, “based on common fundamental approaches to key issues of world politics as a basic constituent part of regional and global stability”. Accordingly, improving “the scope and quality of economic interaction” as well as “the high level of political relations” was a main priority of the bilateral relations. Similarly, “While deepening strategic partnership” with New Delhi, Moscow maintains consolidation cooperation “on topical international issues” and “comprehensive strengthening of the mutually advantageous bilateral ties” in all aspects, mainly “in ensuring a substantial growth in the trade and economic sphere” (MID, 2008, January 16).

the liberal order, balancing existing normative and constitutive system, its status hierarchy and hegemon/s. Instead, it aimed to create a policy centric system of interstate relations with sovereignty and international democracy as a normative or political culture of the order. There were also new political, security, and economic architectures.

The strategic orientation practically implied aggressive foreign policies towards the West and Western liberal values system. Withdraw from interactions with Western powers, and its political, security and economic system, diversification of relations towards the non-Western rising powers, and further integration within the non-Western rising institutions and organizations; strengthening and deepening privileged integration within Russia's civilizational and exclusive zone of interests the former Soviet region were the main components of Russian grand strategy.

While the grand strategy was still status-oriented, but it experienced unprecedented change to revolutionary revisionism due to unparalleled change occurred in status perception. In line with the hypothesis Russia's radical revisionism was a response to ontological insecurity raised from the status dilemma when Russian leaders, elites and public were convinced that gaining recognition of the state's aspired status and equality within the liberal order was impossible. Russia felt that the state had attained a certain marker of status but still unrecognized by the West. This turned into a status dilemma and a need for revisionist changes. If there was competition between Russia and the West hereafter, it was rather realistic one.

Indeed, it was an evolutionary process from searching for the state's standing within the liberal order, from Kozyrev's social mobility, to Primakov's creativity, to Putin's social competition in first term. Russia finally sought status outside the order by challenging the liberal status quo and creating a new order. In other words, Russian strategic thinking turned backed to the Cold war the realistic competition during the years after the colour

revolutions. As a scholar concluded at the end of “an evolutionary process”, Russian foreign policy reached at the point that,

“Putin second administration uses all domestic sources, Russia’s economy and military capabilities to press own interests which always had in the former Soviet Union and around the World. So Russian foreign policy pursued main objectives; maintaining sphere of influence in the former Soviet region, i.e. pushing back the NATO expansion in the region, in addition making sure that Russia’s voice is globally relevant, and this is the major evolutions. Russian foreign policy establishments became much more denying the Western power, Western agenda and their values. Thus, in the way there is a continuity of terms even from Soviet time, traces all the back to Soviet times which Kozyrev was a very much exception, or small interruption in that continuity” (Oskanian, Personal Interview, 25 February 2019).<sup>497</sup>

## 6.5 Summary

Changing perception of status concern from inconsistency to status recognition dilemma caused Russia to adopt radical revision of international status-quo order. In line with hypothesis, the perception of status dilemma played main role in Russia’s paradigm shift toward revisionism from the mid-2000s, through two mechanisms. The widespread realization of status dilemma -the futility of social mobility, creativity, and social competition- and hence perceived humiliation mainly after the colour revolutions, increased the influence of proponents of revisionism, the hardliner Civilizationist coalition, and developed their revisionist preferences over foreign policy within Russian political sphere.

Analysis of dominant self-concept, the Civilizationism, illustrated the sense of status dilemma was highly prevailed in Russia’s grand strategic thinking from mid-2000s. Russian leaders looked at the world in terms of zero-sum game over geopolitics, geo-economics and cultural ideational dimensions. Neither Eastern nor Western, Russia

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<sup>497</sup> Particularly regarding the zero-sum orientation in the new era, Korolev (Personal Interview, 12 October 2018) saw practically translated to adopt a “more assertive” and “more aggressive policy” after colour revolutions. Summarized by the expert, the “real change in his second term Putin started treating the West whatever we mean, mainly the US by the look at it through the more realist lenses, and treating at powers position, not from a weaker side”. Instead, adopting the realist foreign policy, “Russia turned backed to multi-vector policies” with the main emphasis on former soviet region, as well non-Western vectors, “reorientation towards Asia and reorientation towards post-Soviet space” (Korolev, Personal Interview, 12 October 2018).

identified as a distinct civilization with its own cultural world including Eurasian neighbours. Russia was an independent and modern great power, with a greater civilizing role globally and regionally, as it archived or perceived to achieve the modern standard criteria, material and ideational capabilities.

Russian grand strategy oriented towards radical revision of liberal order in response to the perception of status dilemma. The strategy dictated Russia to adopt an aggressive, realistic foreign policy to balance the West, Western normative system, its institutions, and the hegemon the US. Withdraw from interactions with the Western great powers, and Atlantic political security system, cooperation with the non-Western great powers, integration within the non-western institutions, deepening privileged integration within the state civilizational exclusive zone of interests the former soviet region were the main components of Russian grand strategy.

In brief, as an outcome of prolonged and gradually unfolded processes of status seeking, changing the question of Russia's international standing from inconsistency to recognition dilemma, the state stands for radical revisionism. The orientation indicated soon after colour revolutions, through harsh rhetorical and official criticism of existing order and openly declarations of establishing a new, different international order, beyond the liberal framework. It translated to aggressive foreign policies and behaviours in withdraw from or suspending interactions with Western political and security military institutions, like CFE, OSCE and ODIHR, challenging the West certainly the EU and NATO via offenses against member states in neighbor Eurasian region. Several offences conducted against Estonia, Belarus Ukraine and Georgia by means of different tools ranged from different rounds of gas cut off against the states (Ukraine 2006, 2009, Estonia and Belarus 2007) to war in Georgia (2008).



## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

### 7.1 Overview

This study mainly focuses on the role that status plays in IR, particularly a shift in rising powers' grand strategy orientations towards revisionism. Considering that there are several comprehensive theoretical explanations in this field, this study has developed a theoretical rationale that a rising power may adopt revisionism out of status concern, the status recognition dilemma or the lack of genuine recognition as an outcome of failing the status enhancement processes to gain the aspired standing.

Looking at the foreign policy as the outcome of various domestic elements implied in the argument between revisionism and status quo orientations, the domestic actors, their perceptions and ideas about status are highly relevant. Essentially, the variations in raising power's grand strategic orientations reflects the changes in domestic political discourses shaped by different political groups and their preferences over the state's status. The leaders and political elites conceptualise the proper status and offer their preferences over the foreign policy to gain the recognition of the aspired status from other/s.

This study examined the impact of the status concern on the changes and variations in post-Soviet Russian grand strategic orientations, after a period of reassurance in the years following the Soviet collapse to a radical revisionism after the colour revolutions. To fully appreciate this, the study has relied on several sources from Russia, and different players involved in this scenario to give a balanced assessment, as well as the continuity and change for status projection in Russia's grand strategy thinking and its relations with the West. To explain the changes, the study began by analysing the change in different dominant self-concepts within the realm of Russian foreign policy covering the state's proper international status.

## **7.2 The Influence of the Status Concern in Post-Soviet Russian Grand Strategy**

This study found the concern over status did not end after the Cold War in post-Soviet Russian grand strategy thinking and foreign policy practices. Certainly, the problematic issue for Russia in the post-Cold war liberal order and particularly in relations with the West was the state's concern over status, coupled with Russian's self-perception as an equal great power and the West's denial to recognize that concern. The variations in Russia's strategies reflected the changes in the perceptions of the state's status concern perceived by different dominant political groups and their preferences over the state's status. Up to the mid-2000s, the question of post-Soviet Russian grand strategy was status inconsistency, with the hope of gaining higher status within the post-Cold War order, from the West. The concern led Russia to persuade strategic preferences that one way or another were committed to reassurance the liberal order and the West from the post-Cold war era. This has been explained in Chapter 3, 4, and 5.

From 1992-1994/05, Russian Westernism with idealistic vision of the world politics, identifying the state as a member of the Western civilization, perceived the state's status as a global normal great power with no regional role and ideological mission. For the leaders, the status was ultimately based on achieving the criteria that were legitimised by the liberal normative order. With such aspired status, the state's interests depended on the assimilation of Western liberal values by implementing democratic reforms and integration into the Western constitutive system, its structures and organisations. By instilling social mobility, Westernists, Yeltsin and Kozyrev hoped to gain recognition of the aspired status.

From the mid-1990s, changing the centre of Russia's strategic thinking to Eurasian Statism, the perception of the state's status changed. With realist vision of international system, emphasising the state's geopolitical uniqueness and cultural distinctiveness in

definition of the state's identity and as sources of status, Primakov and his proponents portrayed Russia as a Eurasian pole of power in a multipolar world. Russia in this sense should function regionally as a dominant pole and globally as equal as other powers. Conceptualizing the status based on the Eurasian alternative, Russia encouraged social creativity; counterbalancing West unilaterality through relying on international norms and institutions mainly the UN and UNSC, as well creating strategic partnerships with non-Western powers, namely China and India, along with multifaceted integration and bilateral cooperation among new independent states within Eurasian region. The reorientation of the state's strategy to gain equality with the West led to a more assertive and active foreign policy.

By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the developmentalist statism continued to view the world politic realistically, but as a ground for economic competition. Emphasising on Russian traditional values in state's identification and economy as a standard of status in modern world, developmentalist statist depicted Russia status as a member of a global developed modern great power club. Such standing should be achieved by creating economic competitiveness that implies the state's interests should be pursued primarily via the economic measures; modernisation and development. Putin and his coalition moved towards a social competition strategy that included integration in the global economic mainstream through pragmatic cooperation with Western developed powers, Western institutions, multilateral and bilateral pragmatic cooperation with economically advantageous states within the former Soviet region.

This study determined that changing the perception of status, from inconsistency to status recognition dilemma -achievable to unachievable status- particularly from mid-2000s, caused Russia to adopt an anti-status quo strategic orientation towards the post-Cold War liberal order and aggressive foreign policies versus the West and Western

constitutive system. This means that the question of status attributes changed from achieving status marker to gaining recognition from the West. That has been explained in Chapter 6.

From 2005-2008/09, Civilizationism raised in Russian political sphere, with resurfacing some of the Cold War narratives, that viewed the world realistically as the basis of zero-sum game, and revitalizing the civilizational language in defining the state's identity of Russia as a distinctive unique civilization with its own world. Defining status markers based on realistic power capabilities and ideational factors, the coalition believed that Russia achieved the modern status criteria. Russia is an independent modern great power, with a greater civilizing role globally and regionally, that had been unjustly unrecognized by the West.

The strategy changed dramatically as the question of status changed from inconsistency to recognition dilemma in the years after the colour revolutions. When Russian leaders came to believe that gaining recognition of their aspired status and equality with the Western powers was unachievable through the existing status hierarchy, legitimized by liberal status quo normative and constitutive order. The objective implies balance of the Western liberal order, its hegemonic system, and the hegemon the US with a more aggressive foreign policy. The strategy translated practically in withdraw from interactions with the West and the Western constitutive order and strategic partnership with non-Western powers, institutions and organisations. In the Eurasian region, similar foreign policy tactics were adopted with a different objective of "re-Sovietisation" of the region, creating a Russian-centred order, using all available political, economic and military tools.

This study derived implications of the causes of leading status concern –inconsistency, recognition dilemma- in Russian grand strategic thinking. In an evolutionary process, the

post-Soviet Russian views of the world politics evaluated from idealism in initial years after the Soviet collapse, to realism during following years. It turns back to the Cold war zero-sum view of the world from mid-2000s. Initially, Westernism viewed the interstate system idealistically as a basis for positive sum cooperation. This was realism in the Russian Eurasian statism by focusing on the geopolitical dimension of competition. The dimension changed to a focus on the economy as a base of competition in statist developmentalism. Civilisationism worldview contains all aspects of competition, geopolitics, geo-economy and cultural ideational system.

Regarding the collective self-identification and grouping, in all post-Soviet Russian foreign policy self-concepts, Russia was a member of world great power group. The West remained post-Soviet Russia's main *other*, either completely or partially in-group or entirely out-group. Amongst other vectors, except in Westernism, Eurasia was Russia's in-group. This study found that Russia's identification passed an evolutionary process towards civilizational narratives. In initial period in Westernists' era the state was identified completely belonged to the Western civilization. Statism (Eurasian and developmentalism) highlighted Russia's distinctiveness that centred on the role of traditional values mainly by focus on the state. With a continuous emphasis on the universal values, Russia was identified partially as a member of Western in-group. Civilizationalists portrayed Russia as a completely distinct, neither Western nor Eastern, as a great ancient civilization with its own system of values centred on sovereign democracy, and own exclusive world including Eurasian neighbours, in the years after colour revolutions.

Except in Westernism that defined Russia's role globally with no regional role in the Eurasian region, in all other self-concepts, as a Eurasian hegemon Russia as well presumed regional role. In Civilizationism, Russia's role turned back to being defined in

Soviet terms, as an arbitrator of world civilizations, while regionally, the state had civilizing role exclusively as the hegemon of the Eurasian neighbouring region. Altogether implies that continuous from Soviet grand strategies, gaining or restoring great power status within the international system shaped the “global vision” of Russia’s strategic thinking. Except during the initial period of Westernism, maintaining or reinforcing the state’s hegemony in the Eurasia shaped the regional vision of Russia’s strategic thinking.

There were also implications of the causal process linking perceptions of status concern and Russia’s grand strategic orientations. This was aimed at regaining the aspired status from the Soviet collapse that led Russian leaders to adopt different strategies to enhance the state’s standing. Accordingly, social mobility, creativity and social competition by Westernists and Statists (Eurasianists and Developmentalists), respectively were responses to perceived inconsistency, and reflected a commitment to reassuring the status quo, that they were playing under the rules of the game within the framework of normative constitutive order.

These strategies were at the same time divergent, as the status was conceptualised differently. From the mid-1990s, the state’s foreign policy changed gradually from an initial idealistic cooperative orientation towards the West to a more active, independent and realistic one. The assertiveness in the Primakov policy towards the West and the US, of course should not be exaggerated. Eurasian statists wished to play an equal role in global issues along with other great powers; hence, simultaneously they continued to cooperate with the West over the issues. Furthermore, Primakov and his fellows were well aware of Russia’s power capability weaknesses versus the West and the US regarding domestic, socio-political and economic conditions. Cooperation with the West and integration within Western constitutive orders in Putin’s era was essentially different

from Kozyrev's approach. While cooperation in Putin's era was more pragmatic, as a means for economic development and modernisation, for Kozyrev and his Westernist supporters, integration was more idealistic as an end, with the goal of joining the superior civilized West.

Moreover, Russian foreign policy during Putin's era was different from Yeltsin and Primakov. The key difference was rooted in status conceptualisation, where the developmentalists placed emphasis on geo-economics as the main criteria of status in the modern world. Hence, from 2000, Russia encouraged development via a less assertive and more pragmatic foreign policy with the Western developed powers and institutions. It also worth noting that the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks paved the way for pragmatic cooperation with the US. Similarly, under this philosophy, the state's foreign policy changed in the Eurasian region to adopt a pragmatic, bilateral and multilateral cooperation with a smaller group of most advantageous states within the region.

From mid-2000s, mainly after the colour revolutions in the former Soviet region, Russia's grand strategic orientation was different from previous years, as the status concern varied greatly. The widespread perception of the status recognition dilemma played a main role to intensify the role of hardliners and to resonate their anti-status quo preferences, which led the state to adopt *revolutionary revisionism*.

This study found that despite changes, the concern over the state's status remained in the post-Soviet period in Russia's grand strategy. It influenced Russia's grand strategic thinking by defining the state's view of the world politics, its identification, the collective *self*, differentiating from *others* and the state's interests. The status concerns also constantly influenced Russia's strategic orientations and its foreign policy behaviours towards the international order, and particularly its relationship with the West. This led Russia to utilise strategies to enhance the status that besides their variations were to

reassure the framework of status quo. The perception of status dilemma however, pushed the state forward to adopt revisionism against the liberal order, and aggressive foreign policy versus the West, from the mid-2000s.

### **7.3 The Evolution of Post-Soviet Russian Grand Strategic Orientations toward Revisionism**

Another finding reveals Russia's revisionism and its aggressiveness and the reasons that triggered it. Rising powers project status according to the international system and perceptions of others' behaviours. Russia's revisionism was an outcome of failure of the state's grand strategic orientations following the Soviet collapse to gain recognition from the West. In other words, as an outcome of failure of status enhancement process due lack of recognition; the process of changing perception of inconsistency to status recognition dilemma, Russia adopted an anti-status quo orientation.

Turning to the mid-1990s, Westernists' social mobility strategy failed to register the desired status as it neither achieved status markers nor gained recognition from the West. Transitional reforms within Russia based on liberal values resulted in a defunct democracy, and a corrupted economic system with a failed economic reform that was more a "shock" than "therapy". The state also failed to achieve the expected support of domestic transition from the Western economic political organisations like G8 and IMF. Russia did not receive more from cooperation with military organisations, as NATO could not provide a special status for the state. The enlargement plan toward Visegrad states, particularly the NATO bombarding in Serbia was perceived as the failure of Yeltsin-Kozyrev's diplomatic efforts to gain an equal footing in the most prestigious issue of the time.

At the end of the 1990s, the Eurasian statism and its social creativity was unable to register the desired outcomes. In particular, the West's military operations in Kosovo and



Iraq beyond the UNSC, were perceived as rejecting Russia's aspired status and its self-portrayed role of global stabiliser and the state's active diplomatic efforts. The lack of status recognition evidenced further by NATO enlargement towards Visegrad states with no special status for Russia in 1999. The sense of failure worsened with no expected achievement of strategic partnership with non-Western major powers, regarding the fact that neither China nor India were as enthusiastic as Russia to create the "strategic tringle" versus the West and the US. Similarly, Primakov's Eurasian integration projects failed to achieve the expected outcome, whether due to unwillingness of the countries in the CIS region or inability of Russia and its integrative projects, the states focused more on integration into Western institutions than Russian centred projects in the region. The financial crisis, along with a "syndrome of defeat" of domestic reforms further weakened the effectiveness of the social creativity strategy. Eurasian statism and the creativity strategy appeared ineffective to achieve the perceived status criteria and gain social recognition from the West.

Another finding during the years after the Soviet collapse was that Russia achieved or perceived that it had achieved the status criteria of a modern world during 2000-2004/05. Russia under Putin achieved its economic and socio-political objectives; stabilising socio political and economic situations from state centric reforms, economic growth and increased Russia's economic share mainly in the global energy market, which led Russia to redirect its power again. Apart from the self-perceived achievement, the social competition strategy failed to gain social recognition from the West. NATO's expansion and a few latter the EU enlargement intensified Russia's disappointment over the pragmatic cooperation with the West. Added with no accomplishment of Russia's membership in the WTO. More importantly, the US military operation in Iraq, circumventing the role of UN and UNSC, and regardless of Russia's active diplomacy evidenced rejecting the recognition of Russia's aspired status and its role by the West.

Hence it seriously challenged the legitimacy of Putin's foreign policy and its rapprochement and increased the sense of humiliation.

The sense of failure deteriorated with no expected achievement of multilateral integration projects in Eurasian region. Except in limited issue and area, in counterterrorism in Central Asia, Russia's pragmatic integration failed in particular, in economic and political dimensions in the region, due to unwillingness of the significant states towards integration within the region, and instead their willingness towards integration in the Western institutions. Although the state could have achieved some economic successes in bilateral relation with neighbouring states, in gaining the main economic strategic assets, in energy and transportation pipelines.

Yet, the colour revolutions in particular Georgia, Ukraine, directly challenged Russia's absolute priority of great power standing, and its identity in the traditional sphere of influence. The revolutions intensified physiological insecurity, as Russia felt its identity and its value system was threatened by Western liberal values, and also intensified a sense of geopolitical threats within Russia. Therefore, the revolutions were perceived as a failure of social competition strategy that accentuated the sense of humiliation and frustration but also it was perceived as the failure of all post-Soviet grand strategies to gain the recognition of aspired status.

The revolutions were a turning point in Russia's grand strategic orientations from the post-Soviet reassurance to the post-colour revolutions' revisionism. Russia's revisionism was indicated by the state's rhetorical aggression against the post-Cold War liberal order, and a strong demonstration of a radical revision of the order by creating a new, balanced polycentric system with sovereignty and international democracy as the new political culture, and creating new socio-economic, political and security architecture in place of Western system. It was also indicated by Russian withdrawal from interaction with the

West, mainly the US, and the Atlantic security and political institutions, NATO, EU, and its withdrawal from or suspension of the activities of CFE, OSCE and ODIHR. The state also pursued aggressive policies in particular versus the Western oriented states in the neighbouring region, against Estonia, Ukraine and Georgia through rounds of energy cut offs, economic sanctioning and finally military intervention in Georgia 2008.

The status recognition dilemma hence can explain why Russia adopted revisionism after the revolutions, not any time before, even in cases where a geopolitical threat increased such as in Serbia, or Kosovo, or during different rounds of NATO and EU expansion within the region. Even where Russia's role and its diplomatic efforts were ignored by the US and NATO, for example in Iraqi crisis in late 1990s and early 2000s. On this account, Russia did not adopt revisionism in earlier time, since there was still hope that Russia could gain recognition of its aspired status from the West; means the question of status was still inconsistency. However, the failures of all diplomatic efforts, under different strategic orientations, mobility, creativity with no clear result of social competition, increased the sense of recognition dilemma that further intensified during the revolutions in the traditional sphere of influence.

The widespread perception of the dilemma increased the sense of humiliation and frustration within Russia, intensified the influence of hardliners, Civilizationists coalition at the expense of moderate group and resonated their revisionist ideas and preferences over the state's foreign policy. This can explain why the revisionist's preferences of the Russian hardliner coalition resonated in Russia's political sphere and influenced its grand strategy in that certain time not before. The causal process linked the perceptions of status inconsistency to the recognition dilemma by Russian leaders and political elites, which leads to Russia's grand strategic shifts from reassurance orientations in the years after the Soviet collapse to the mid-2000s, toward a revisionist orientation thereafter.

This explains why Russia had pursued reassurance orientations towards the post-Cold War normative and constitutive order and more cooperative foreign policies towards the West after the Soviet collapse. It also explains why and how the state's grand strategic orientation changed to revisionism, particularly after the second major shock of the colour revolutions.

#### **7.4 Implication of the Study**

This study highlighted that the key to understand states grand strategic preference is to see it as an outcome of a prolonged and gradually unfolding process. From this perspective, satisfaction or dissatisfaction of powers, consequently their willingness or unwillingness to persuade grand strategic orientations ranged from status quo to revisionism are outcome of long dynamic procedures. The process begins by the collective ideas of leaders within domestic levels over the state's status and shapes its preferences over foreign policy within the international system. Grand strategic orientations in this sense are outcomes and symptoms of a long dynamic process shaped over time, at the domestic political level, (process of status formation or conceptualization by leaders) link with the foreign policy process within an international level (status seeking behaviours and recognition outcome). Revisionism hence is not a proximate cause as the temporary changes in constraints or opportunities neglects the actual causes and dynamic of adopting the orientations. It is then, what this study had argued, an aggregate effect of a deep-rooted, self-reinforcing process of status seeking at different levels. In this sense, revisionism is a preference over outcome not action.

IR scholars from the modern era to now have established focusing on an ideational variable like status as a cause of dissatisfaction of powers over the international system, hence adopting revisionism. Alternatively, this study has delved into qualitative procedures and mechanisms through which states' status concern is shaped at the

domestic level and impacted foreign policy preferences and move from status quo towards revisionism over time. In this account, revisionism is a probable outcome of a prolonged dynamic process of changing perceptions from status inconsistency to the recognition dilemma. The evolutionary and changing role that status can play in a state's grand strategy orientations.

Identifying the impact of status concern, inconsistency or recognition dilemma, in interstate relations would be more beneficial if one regards the emergence of rising great powers within the post-Cold War system. Evidenced in this study, the concern, and in particular the lack of aspired status recognition, led to Russia's move towards anti-status quo orientation, in the years after the colour revolutions. Being aware of this would help policy makers and academicians better deal with Russia and more broadly other rising powers, like China, India, and Brazil and some middle states or regional powers such as Turkey and Iran. Determining behaviours and policies versus the rising great powers would be possible by determining if they are satisfied with the status quo order. To do so, realising their status request as a variable influencing the state's satisfaction or dissatisfaction and their related behaviour can be an opportunity to find suitable responses.

In addition, recognising the relative status would help to avoid the spoiler behaviour by rising powers, regarding the fact that status can be seen in ways that are more symbolic. This study shows that Russia supported or at least avoided abstaining from the West's diplomatic initiatives, as the state played along with the Western partners in those efforts. Russia's aggressiveness mainly after the colour revolutions versus its Eurasian neighbours or the Atlantic security political system showed that apart from the power capabilities, Moscow was, and is capable to be a "spoiler" in world politics. This is especially important regarding the effects of such the behaviours on security and stability

of smaller states within the neighbouring region, where the clash of great powers would worsen the socio-political situation by intensifying the eccentricity movements within the states and even spill over into other areas. Russia's actions in supporting Abkhazia and south Ossetia, or the state's efforts in urging Russian diaspora in Estonia, Moldova or more recently in Ukraine demonstrates the destabilising effects within the neighbouring states.

The unfolding of Russia's post-Soviet strategic orientations towards the liberal order and its relations particularly with the West, the approach of status will continue be analysed to determine how it takes its course in future.

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