

4-23-2020

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Igor Gretskiy
igor.gretskiy@gmail.com

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Recommended Citation

Igor Gretskiy, *Lukyanov Doctrine: Conceptual Origins of Russia's Hybrid Foreign Policy—The Case of Ukraine.*, 64 St. Louis U. L.J. (2020).

Available at: <https://scholarship.law.slu.edu/lj/vol64/iss1/3>

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LUKYANOV DOCTRINE: CONCEPTUAL ORIGINS OF RUSSIA'S HYBRID FOREIGN POLICY—THE CASE OF UKRAINE.

IGOR GRETSKIY*

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kremlin's assertiveness and unpredictability on the international arena has always provoked enormous attention to its foreign policy tools and tactics. Although there was no shortage of publications on topics related to different aspects of Moscow's foreign policy varying from non-proliferation of nuclear weapons to soft power diplomacy, Russian studies as a discipline found itself deadlocked within the limited number of old dichotomies, (e.g., West/non-West, authoritarianism/democracy, Europe/non-Europe), initially proposed to understand the logic of Russia's domestic and foreign policy transformations.¹ Furthermore, as the decision-making process in Moscow was getting further from being transparent due to the increasingly centralized character of its political system, the emergence of new theoretical frameworks with greater explanatory power was an even more difficult task.

Moreover, by the moment the Russian-Ukrainian military conflict began, Russia studies in the West were gradually plunging into crisis from significant funding cuts both in private and public sectors. For instance, the American Government program supporting advanced research on Russia and Eurasia (Title VIII) was closed in 2013,² while funding for promoting area studies and language education (Title VI) was cut by more than 40% in comparison to the

* Associate professor at the School of International Relations of the St. Petersburg State University. In 2009, he received his PhD degree in History of International Relations and Foreign Policy. In 2012–2014, he headed the Rectorate's International Office for the Smolny Campus. His research and academic interests include Russian foreign policy toward the Central and Eastern Europe; Ukraine's political transformation; theory and practice of post-conflict reconciliation. Dr. Gretskiy has been an op-ed contributor for a variety of print and electronic media both in Russia and abroad.

1. See Michael McFaul, *Choosing Autocracy: Actors, Institutions, and Revolution in the Erosion of Russian Democracy*, 50 COMP. POL. 305, 305–06 (2018); Steven Rosefielde & Romana Hlouskova, *Why Russia is Not a Democracy*, 26 COMP. STRATEGY 215, 221 (2007); Andrei Tsygankov, *Finding a Civilisational Idea: "West," Eurasia," and "Euro-East" in Russia's Foreign Policy*, 12 GEOPOLITICS 375, 387 (2007).

2. Kenneth Yalowitz & Matthew Rojansky, *The Slow Death of Russian and Eurasian Studies*, NAT'L INTEREST (May 23, 2014), <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/the-slow-death-russian-eurasian-studies-10516> [<https://perma.cc/K5XU-QVJE>].

year of 2010.³ Many well-known American professionals and seasoned diplomats acknowledged that the governmental institutions, amid the dramatically deteriorating bilateral relations with Russia, were direly understaffed with qualified experts on that country.⁴

Russia's illegal Crimea annexation spawned a new wave of interest toward the Kremlin's foreign policy, which again was under rigorous scrutiny from the academic and expert community. In the past five years, there has been an increasing number of publications trying to explain the standoff between Russia and Ukraine. Despite some loosely reasoned and controversial attempts⁵ to bill it as "Ukraine's civil war," abundant literature on that matter shows there is a broad consensus among scholars that the conflict was mainly due to the Russian military's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine.⁶ In this regard, there are many issues that continue to bring about debates among academia. It's still unclear whether Russia's intervention came about as a spontaneous decision to capitalize on the political turmoil in Kyiv,⁷ or was it scrupulously planned long before the Euromaidan happened. Besides, there is no generally accepted explanation why Russian leadership decided to invade Ukraine. Some say that the Kremlin's calculations were dominated by concerns over the stability of the political regime in Russia.⁸ As Sergey Guriyev, a former chief economist at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, suggested,⁹ the Crimea annexation was extremely helpful in the government's efforts to distract the public attention from the economic slowdown, since rallies in Kyiv, amidst

3. Stephen E. Hanson, *In Defense of Regional Studies in a Globalized World*, ASEEEES (April 13, 2015), <https://www.aseees.org/news-events/aseees-blog-feed/defense-regional-studies-globalized-world> [<https://perma.cc/T9AZ-VUFT>].

4. Angela Stent, *Why America Doesn't Understand Putin*, WASH. POST (March 14, 2014), https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-america-doesnt-understand-putin/2014/03/14/81bc1cd6-a9f4-11e3-b61e-8051b8b52d06_story.html?utm_term=.fecf83e2c647 [<https://perma.cc/FJZ3-74DC>]; Jason Horowitz, *Russia Experts See Thinning Ranks' Effect on U.S. Policy*, N.Y. TIMES (March 6, 2014), https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/07/world/europe/american-experts-on-russia.html?_r=0 [<https://perma.cc/KY6Y-TL7M>].

5. Jessee Driscoll, *Ukraine's Civil War: Would Accepting This Terminology Help Resolve The Conflict?*, PONARS EURASIA POLICY MEMO, No. 572, Feb. 2019; Ivan Katchanovski, *The Separatist War in Donbas: A Violent Break-up of Ukraine?*, 17 EUROPEAN POL. AND SOC'Y 473, 475 (2016).

6. Anders Åslund, *Kremlin Aggression in Ukraine: The Price Tag*, ATLANTIC COUNCIL 1 (Mar. 19, 2018), https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Kremlin_Aggression_web_040218_revised.pdf.

7. See Michael Kofman et al., *Lessons From Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine*, RAND CORP. 1 (2017); Daniel Treisman, *Why Putin Took Crime*, 95 FOREIGN AFF. 47, 47 (2016).

8. ANDREW WILSON, UKRAINE CRISIS: WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE WEST 185 (2014).

9. Sergei Guriev, *Political Origins and Implications of the Economic Crisis in Russia*, in PUTIN'S RUSSIA: HOW IT ROSE, HOW IT IS MAINTAINED, AND HOW IT MIGHT END 8, 18 (Leon Aron ed., 2015).

Vladimir Putin's slipping approval ratings, might have precipitated protest activity in Russia.

In this Article, we will underscore the meaning of domestic political factors that define the Kremlin's foreign policy design. In fact, they laid the ground for what we call the "Lukyanov Doctrine"—a foreign policy paradigm that inherited and fully embraced two fundamental elements of the preceding Brezhnev Doctrine—a vision based on the concept of limited sovereignty, and the right to intervene within its "sphere of influence." The latter includes direct and indirect support of its proxies to undermine governments of those countries that do not accept Russia's leading role in the region. This Article is aimed at tracing and proving such a continuity in Russian foreign policy based on the example of Ukraine.

This Article consists of five sections. After providing readers with a critical analysis of academic literature on the matter and explaining the methodology chosen, in the *second* section we formulate the hypothesis to explain the deep roots of Russia's aggression toward Ukraine. Notwithstanding the differences between the Brezhnev Doctrine and the new Russian foreign policy paradigm, denoted here as "Lukyanov Doctrine," both have two basic components: the concept of limited sovereignty, and the unilaterally assumed right to intervene within the territories perceived as the Kremlin's exclusive sphere of influence. As demonstrated in the *third* section, back in the end of the 1980s, Russian and Ukrainian political establishments attributed completely divergent meanings to sovereignty. At the moment the new Russian state resurfaced on the world political map, among the Russian political elites there was a broad consensus about Ukraine as a part of the Kremlin's sphere of influence. Since then this consensus remains unchanged, as it is shown in section *four* analyzing the views and narratives of prominent Russian politicians. Of course, Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea would have been hardly possible without wide consent of the Russian population. In section *five*, we draw arguments to prove that Russian society's post-imperial syndrome was among fundamental premises for the Lukyanov Doctrine. The *final* section offers concluding remarks and some considerations on Russian-Ukrainian relations for the future.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL REMARKS

At the moment, there is a long record of attempts to explain Russia's aggression in Ukraine within the broader theoretical framework. Scholars delivered several argument-based approaches. The first one,¹⁰ by prioritizing the geographical factor and Russia's deeply rooted expansionist tradition, considers the Kremlin's aggression toward Ukraine to be something natural and, hence, quite predictable. Such a view describes post-Soviet Russia as a neo-imperial

10. OSTAP KUSHNIR, UKRAINE AND RUSSIAN NEO-IMPERIALISM: THE DIVERGENT BREAK 92 (2018); AGNIA GRIGAS, BEYOND CRIMEA: THE NEW RUSSIA EMPIRE 4-5 (2016).

power with many features inherited from its predecessors, i.e. the Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union. In this context, expansionism is regarded as Russia's *modus operandi* that makes it predisposed to occupying new territories, which is assumed to be the end of Moscow's international efforts. As Van Herpen put it, colonizing neighbors is "part of Russia's genetic makeup."¹¹ This kind of historicism admits that every Russian imperial project rested on fundamental ideological platforms. Nevertheless, it has no clear response to what ideology underpins the new Russian imperialism. More importantly, history, of course, could be a generous source for meaningful information to be used by politicians to justify current political practices, but it can in no way define either the fate of nations or the future transformations of political regimes. Otherwise, post-Soviet republics, doomed to merely be Russian colonies, would have never gained independence and sovereignty.

At the same time, quite a few researchers have addressed the Russia-Ukraine war issue through the lens of "realism," as they call it, assuming that international relations is a field for eternal competition between the great powers over regional and global influence. Among the proponents of such a vision, it is common to follow John Mearsheimer's argumentation based on the conviction that the Ukrainian crisis was another round of a longstanding East-West geopolitical confrontation sparked by the eastward enlargement of the EU and NATO, which forced Putin to "defend" Russia's backyard from "dangerous encroachment by Western nations."¹² They deem, therefore, the Kremlin's policy was a reaction to the process of Ukraine's drift westwards to the Euro-Atlantic community, which allegedly violated the integrity of Russia's "sphere of interests." In this case, Ukraine is pictured not as a victim suffering from Kremlin's aggression, but rather as a rule-breaker, which, along with the West, fully shares all the responsibility for the conflict. This, in fact, fully corresponds with the Russian elites' take on the situation in Ukraine.

Sometimes, when "realists" justify Moscow's hostile efforts to tackle Ukraine's "geopolitical disloyalty" over "geopolitical concerns,"¹³ one can even find their theoretical paradigm very much alike to primitive geopolitics, which neglects internal aspects of the decision-making process and, eventually, oversimplifies the general picture of Russian-Ukrainian conflict. But what is most confusing about it is that some points made by "realists" echo the official Russian narrative, literally. For instance, Richard Sakwa accuses the West and Kyiv authorities for being blinded by "Russophobia," confusing the latter with

11. MARCEL H. VAN HERPEN, *PUTIN'S WARS: THE RISE OF RUSSIA'S NEW IMPERIALISM* 2 (2014).

12. Andrei Tsygankov, *Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy*, 31 *POST-SOVIET AFF.* 295, 297 (2015).

13. Elias Götz, *Neorealism and Russia's Ukraine Policy, 1991–Present*, 22 *CONTEMPOR. POL.* 307, 307–308 (2016).

explicit disapproval of Putin's politics.¹⁴ Besides, without doing a thorough analysis of the Soviet laws himself, Sakwa contested¹⁵ the legality of the 1954 cession of Crimea to Ukraine, referring to highly manipulative, sophisticated and fallacious argumentation by Sergey Baburin, a prominent leader of Russian radical nationalists, who—disregarding international law, as well as Soviet and Russian legislation—always considered the peninsula to be “Russia’s sovereign territory.”¹⁶ Apparently, today “realists” sympathies are with Putin’s Russia desperately resisting “Atlanticist hegemony and global dominance.”¹⁷ But, highly likely, it’s not only about their ideological preferences, but rather their practical aim, despite evident deficits in argumentation, to fill a certain niche on the market, being aware that among different political groupings (extreme leftists, anarchists, alter-globalists, Putin fans, etc.) there exists a largely unmet demand for a “more balanced” view on the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Not surprisingly, “realist” theoretical insights are constantly subjected to overt criticism over selective interpretation of data concerning the Kremlin’s military involvement in Ukraine, as well as over their downplay of Russia’s blunt violations of its sovereign commitments to follow the international law. As Kuzio and D’Anieri noted correctly, “[T]he ‘realist’ analysis of the Ukraine-Russia conflict . . . contradicts fundamental tenets of realist theory,” and “in many respects . . . [it] is not realist at all.”¹⁸ Different branches of realism consider anarchy to be natural to international relations and, hence, the first thing the states seek is survival, which is an essential prerequisite to other ends and goals that a state may have.¹⁹ That is, every state is wired to exist in a highly competitive environment with great powers prone to domination. As Mearsheimer himself wrote, “[s]ince no state is likely to achieve global hegemony . . . the world is condemned to perpetual great-power competition.”²⁰ Oddly, this contrasts sharply with how he perceives the Ukraine crisis, blaming Washington for attempts “to turn Ukraine into a Western stronghold.”²¹ According to Mearsheimer’s offensive realism, it’s not about Washington but the very nature of the international relations that makes states relentlessly seek power. For example, “[g]reat powers behave aggressively not because they want

14. RICHARD SAKWA, *FRONTLINE UKRAINE: CRISIS IN THE BORDERLANDS* 233 (2015); Richard Sakwa, ‘*New Cold War*’ or *Twenty Years’ Crisis? Russia and International Politics*, 84 *INT’L AFF.* 241, 253 (2008).

15. SAKWA, *FRONTLINE UKRAINE*, *supra* note 14, at 108.

16. Leonid Terentyev, *Objedenitel’nyj sjezd russkikh w Krymu*, *KOMMERS.*, Apr. 1, 1997, at 3.

17. SAKWA, *FRONTLINE UKRAINE*, *supra* note 14, at 234.

18. TARAS KUZIO & PAUL D’ANIERI, *THE SOURCES OF RUSSIA’S GREAT POWER POLITICS: UKRAINE AND THE CHALLENGE TO THE EUROPEAN ORDER* 8 (2018).

19. See KENNETH N. WALTZ, *THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS* 91–92 (1979).

20. JOHN J. MEARSHEIMER, *THE TRAGEDY OF GREAT POWER POLITICS* 2 (2001).

21. John J. Mearsheimer, *Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West’s Fault*, 93 *FOREIGN AFFAIRS* 77, 77 (2014).

to or because they possess some inner drive to dominate, but because they have to seek more power if they want to maximize their odds of survival.”²² In this context, Mearsheimer’s calling upon Washington to reverse its policy in the region by halting democracy promotion and EU and NATO enlargement, in order not to compete with Russia for influence in Ukraine, means he wants the United States to leave the eternal battle for survival. Rather oddly, the Bill Clinton administration, excoriated by Mearsheimer over its “liberal imperialism,” seems to be a much more earnest protagonist of the “offensive realism,” than Mearsheimer himself.²³

In this Article, I reject historicism and proceed from the assumption that foreign policy is not a straight concrete tunnel with no opportunity to turn right or left. That is, the state’s behavior on international arena is not entirely dictated by its historical experience. Likewise, I do not anthropomorphize either the state (like realism does) or entities of states (like geopolitics do). Instead, I come from the point that the state’s behavior in the international arena strongly depends on political elites’ beliefs about international relations, perceptions of a country’s role in it, as well as rational calculations about the use of those ideas for sustaining, or gaining more, power and influence within the socio-political hierarchy. A peculiarly concentrated form of those beliefs and perceptions constitute a foreign policy doctrine. The latter, for the purposes of this Article, is understood as a set of certain ideas—not as an officially codified compendium of instruments and goals to achieve on the international arena, which is periodically published by the government.

In the case of Russia, I deliberately exclude from this analysis official Foreign Policy Concepts, and there are two reasons for that. First, this type of document traditionally does not reflect all the specificity of political elites’ way of thinking. It would be a bit naïve to expect Moscow to overtly acknowledge its adherence to the limited sovereignty concept. Second, the Kremlin’s “Concepts” always lag behind its real foreign policy activities. Such documents are, to a large extent, a description of measures already taken and implemented, and not a strategic plan for the future. For instance, the Kremlin began focusing on increasing its propaganda potential by establishing *Russia Today*, *Sputnik*, *Russkiy Mir Foundation*, as well as reforming the *Rosstrudnichestvo* agency with its tremendously increased budget, long before the term “soft power” was mentioned for the first time ever in the 2013 Russian Foreign Policy Concept.²⁴ As Bobo Lo put it precisely, Russia’s Foreign Policy Concept is “*the post-Soviet*

22. MEARSHEIMER, *supra* note 20, at 21.

23. John J. Mearsheimer, *Imperial by Design*, THE NAT’ INT., Jan/Feb, 2011, at 16–34.

24. Kontseptsija Vneshnei Politiki Rossiiskoy Federatsii, President of the Russian Federation Decree, 251 (Feb. 12, 2013), <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d447a0ce9f5a96bd c3.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/GWK5-PPC6>].

spiritual successor to the USSR's Five-Year Plan . . . meant to create an alternative reality that is largely divorced from the true state of affairs."²⁵

THE HYPOTHESIS: "LUKYANOV DOCTRINE"

Since the very beginning of the Cold War, the Kremlin's leadership regarded the Central and East European countries as a kind of "near abroad" of the Soviet empire, which constituted a zone of its special interests. To consolidate Soviet influence in the region, Stalin made sure all disloyal political forces were removed from power, giving way to totally compliant and dependent Communist governments. With the exception, perhaps, of Tito's Yugoslavia, "people's democracies" enjoyed a very limited sovereignty, as they were under full political control from Moscow. Deviations from the Soviet interpretation of Socialism, at that time, were severely punished by repression and purges of the party apparatus.

After Stalin's death, Moscow was seemingly weakening its grasp on its satellites, which was reflected in the Belgrade Declaration of 1955.²⁶ This document was not only about reducing tensions in the Soviet-Yugoslav relations. In fact, it purported a start of a new, although extremely short, period of Soviet foreign policy towards the CEE countries, based on the principle of recognition that "the differences in specific forms of the development of socialism are exclusively a matter of the peoples of individual countries."²⁷ However, the suppressed Hungarian uprising of 1956 clearly demonstrated that the Kremlin perceived profound economic transformations as a threat both to political stability, and the Soviet preponderance in the region. Later, in 1968, such a vision laid the basis for the Brezhnev Doctrine, which dominated the Kremlin's foreign policy until the Soviet empire eventually collapsed. According to it, a threat to Socialism in a single country was a threat to the whole "Socialist community" and a reason for providing "military assistance to fraternal countries."²⁸

In the end of the 1980s, a deteriorating economic situation made the Soviet government reshape its foreign policy agenda regarding its client states. Moscow was no longer able to provide sufficient economic assistance to them, as well as guarantee the stability of loyal political regimes by military means. Besides, what was happening in the CEE countries had been placed on the back burner, as centrifugal trends were gathering momentum within the Soviet state. In most Soviet republics, real power and influence were gradually passing to the hands

25. BOBO LO, *RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE POST-SOVIET ERA: REALITY, ILLUSION AND MYTHMAKING* 67–68 (2002).

26. *Deklaratsiia pravitel'stv Soyuzu Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik i Federativnoi Narodnoi Respubliki Yugoslaviia*, PRAVDA, June 3, 1955, at 1–2.

27. *Id.*

28. *Rech tovarischa L. I. Brezhneva*, PRAVDA, Nov. 13, 1968, at 1–2.

of first secretaries, chairmen of the Supreme Soviets and local party elites. While the distance between the Kremlin and the Union republics was rapidly increasing, Mikhail Gorbachev was desperately seeking solutions to reform relations with the them. The way the “Novo-Ogarevo process” took place suggests that the USSR was no longer a country with a monolithic political system with strictly vertical decision-making. And the Soviet leadership’s key task was to keep the republics within a single state. The problem was, however, that the bankrupt government in Moscow had very limited resources to get the republican elites interested in such a project.

However, there remained tools of negative motivation at the Kremlin’s disposal. The key goal was to actively oppose the sovereignization of Soviet republics through provoking or aggravating security threats, undermining their territorial integrity, as well as discrediting ideas of independence and democracy. To reach this goal, the Kremlin applied such tools as incitement of separatism, economic blackmailing, initiating territorial claims, covert military operations, etc. Likewise, when Moscow selectively escalates its tough rhetoric in condemning the government in Kyiv for alleged violations of the rights of the Russian-speaking population, it seeks to aggravate political tensions within Ukraine through fomenting separatist sentiments among the population.

In this Article, such a policy is designated as the “Lukyanov doctrine.” It stems from the traditional Soviet perception of the international relations as an arena for competition and rivalry between “great powers,” “centers of power,” or “poles.” At that time a ‘pole’ was understood to be a fully sovereign subject of international relations, which had an ability to project its interests beyond its territory, thereby forming its special sphere of responsibility with an exclusive right to intervene in the domestic affairs of “supervised” countries. Richard Pipes was absolutely accurate when claiming that post-Soviet Russia’s foreign policy was guided by a “modified Brezhnev Doctrine.”²⁹ Indeed, just like the USSR, the new Russia, although its foreign policy ambitions had been far more modest, kept on trying to create its own “sphere of influence” that covered post-Soviet area only. Still, despite the fact the Lukyanov Doctrine has a lot in common with its conceptual predecessor, there are plenty of differences between them. *First*, the Brezhnev Doctrine has been “defensive” by its nature. It was meant to protect the commonwealth of “Peoples’ Democracies” from any ideological contravention. As soon as within the Social bloc all the Central and East European states were forcibly redesigned to become “miniature models of the Soviet system,”³⁰ any smaller transformation might have undesirable effects for both the Soviet empire, and coherence of its sphere of influence. Conversely, the Lukyanov Doctrine can be seen as an offensive or expansionist concept

29. Richard Pipes, *Is Russia Still An Enemy?*, 76 FOREIGN AFF. 65, 73 (1997).

30. ROBERT A. JONES, THE SOVIET CONCEPT OF ‘LIMITED SOVEREIGNTY’ FROM LENIN TO GORBACHEV: THE BREZHNEV DOCTRINE 2 (1990).

aimed at reestablishing control over “timely independent” territories, but without exporting Russia’s “sovereign democracy” model. *Second*, the Brezhnev Doctrine leaned on Communist ideology and its dogmas to legitimate military interventions, whereas the Lukyanov Doctrine has no clearly defined ideological basis. Today, the Kremlin resorts to a humanitarian narrative to justify its aggressive and virulent behavior on the international arena. *Third*, the Brezhnev doctrine was predominantly focused on Warsaw pact members, while the Lukyanov doctrine was mainly about the post-Soviet area.

As in most cases with foreign policy doctrines, the title of this one is conditional and symbolic. The doctrine is named after Anatoly Lukyanov, the former chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. The peak of his political career came in the years of “perestroika”—a period of significant changes in all spheres of social and political life of the Soviet state. Feeling himself more comfortable with the role of “grey cardinal,” Lukyanov consistently supported economic reforms initiated by Gorbachev, but since the summer of 1990, he began to emerge from the shadow of the Soviet President. He had a rather weak appetite for foreign policy issues, but he proved to be among the most outspoken critics of Gorbachev’s plans to reform the Soviet political and administrative structure. Lukyanov fervently denied the idea of reshaping the USSR into the Union of Sovereign States. This brought him closer to the conservative wing of the *nomenclatura*, and he finally joined the putschists after September 1990, when it became clear that Gorbachev would not use force in his struggle against Boris Yeltsin.

Lukyanov often emphasized that his position on the reform of the Union derived from Gorbachev’s tactics. According to him, to fully control the Novo-Ogaryovo process of negotiations, Gorbachev, aspiring to be an arbiter in all the possible debates, assigned the function of protecting the USSR to Lukyanov.³¹ Nevertheless, there is evidence that Lukyanov’s conservatism had not pragmatic, but ideological foundations. For example, after the collapse of the USSR, he proceeded with politics, being a member of the State Duma and representing the Communist Party. During his election campaigns, he often argued that the most important foreign policy goal of Russia was to “restore the Union of Soviet Peoples.”³² Lukyanov even considered it to be inevitable.³³

Like many other old-line Communist party bosses, Lukyanov upheld traditional views on a Union republic’s sovereignty, according to which the latter was granted by the Bolsheviks since it allegedly had never existed before. For instance, when in the late 1980s Moldovan authorities refused to sign a new agreement establishing the Soviet Union, Lukyanov said in response, “if you do

31. ANATOLY LUKYANOV, PEREVOROT MNIMYI I NASTOIASCHII. 37 (1993).

32. ANATOLY LUKYANOV, V VODOVOROTE ROSSIISKOI SMUTY.: KNIGA I BIZNES 134 (1999).

33. Interview with Anatoly Lukyanov, URAL’SKIJ RABOCHIJ (Nov. 14, 1994).

not sign it, you will get two Moldovas.”³⁴ Of course, he meant Transnistria, which the Soviet leadership used as the main argument to prevent Moldova from leaving the USSR. Moscow insisted that after having left the Union, independent Moldova would not be able to maintain its territorial integrity. The Kremlin used similar argumentation in its policy toward Ukraine. Soviet leadership believed the Ukrainian state could only exist as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic within the Soviet Union.³⁵ This was thought to be the appropriate and only possible form of Ukrainian nationhood.

Lukyanov Doctrine arose due to three factors. The first was the total absence of a positive agenda for the Soviet, and in the not-too-distant-future independent, republics. Moscow failed to devise a new attractive integration project instead of the crashed Communist “bright future” concept. The Soviet and Russian political elites simply had no other arguments to maintain Kremlin’s political preponderance in the region, other than tools of negative motivation. The second was the need to distract people’s attention from bad developments in the economy through demonstrating strength on international arena. After the demise of the USSR, Russians were predominantly hit by the post-imperial syndrome, feeling nostalgia about the “great” Soviet past. Amid the economic slump and lack of clear prospects for increase in living standards, promoting revisionist agenda was the easiest way to rapidly gain political capital. Instead of drawing a clear line between the old Soviet and new Russian values and priorities, the politicians started, in fact, competing with each other to exploit social frustration. That is, Russia’s foreign policy has been driven by political elites’ rational considerations aimed at maximizing the scope and legitimacy of their power. Therefore, as Bukkvoll properly noted, for Russian politicians Ukraine has become a kind of an arena to demonstrate patriotism.³⁶

The third factor was the Kremlin’s inability to openly initiate military intervention regarding (post-) Soviet republics, thereby affecting directly their domestic and foreign policies. By the beginning of Gorbachev’s rule, among the Soviet elite, there was a common understanding that Afghanistan was a grave mistake, and the introduction of troops into countries of the Socialist commonwealth undermined the legitimacy of the Soviet dominance in the region.³⁷ Besides, Gorbachev set a high value on the ongoing negotiations with Washington on critically important issues such as nuclear disarmament and

34. Maxim Sokolov, *Separatizm kak orudie vneshnei politiki: konets lukyanovskoi diplomatii*, KOMMERS., Mar. 22, 1995.

35. VLADIMIR YU. VASILIEV, et al., *POLITICHESKOIE RUKOVODSTVO UKRAINY, 1938–1989* 138–142 (2006).

36. Tor Bukkvoll, *Off the Cuff Politics: Explaining Russia’s Lack of a Ukraine Strategy*, 53 EUR.-ASIA STUD., 1141, 1143 (2001).

37. Dmitry Belanovsky, *O vyvode sovetskikh voisk iz Afganistana - Interview with A.S. Chernyaev*, GORBACHEV FOUND. (Feb. 14, 2019), http://www.gorby.ru/presscenter/news/show_29975 [<https://perma.cc/6E6E-3S5P>].

limits on conventional armed forces in Europe. This was a top priority for the Soviet leadership, since it could allow the Soviet government to simultaneously reduce the burden on the economy and at the same time to leave the arms race without high image costs. Open armed intervention against one of the Soviet republics could endanger the negotiation process. Up until 2014, the traumatic experience of the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, as well as the need for Western investments and technology, made the Kremlin consider a military crackdown in post-Soviet republics to be a risky way of sustaining Russia's status as a "great power." As soon as the costs of open military intervention markedly exceeded possible political advantages, providing military support to separatist movements seemed to be the best available strategy.

The fourth factor was the general inertia in the West's perception of Russia. For the Western politicians, it was the Russian government's ability to control both nuclear and conventional weapons to be of critical importance, rather than the pace and the quality of democratic transformations. Some Western intellectuals, in the mid-1990s, were able to discern revanchist ambitions of the re-emerging "normal great power," but their apprehension was not taken into account.³⁸ Instead of providing its foreign policy toward Russia with principle-based foundation, Western leaders bet on personal relations with Boris Yeltsin, which contributed to the legitimization of the Lukyanov Doctrine. Turning a blind eye to Russia's military intervention in Moldova and other post-Soviet countries, as well as its increasingly confrontational rhetoric, Western leaders continued supporting Boris Yeltsin both politically and financially. This not only helped discredit the ideas of democracy within Russian society, but also encouraged the Kremlin to take further aggressive actions in the region.

This Article claims that since the late 1980s these four factors have remained intact. Since then, the Lukyanov Doctrine has been an integral part of foreign policy of both the USSR and Russia, which is explicitly evident in the case of Ukraine.

THE TWO DIVERGENT SOVEREIGNTIES

In the late 1980s, there were several factors that defined the future of the Soviet empire, including the political standoff between Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin. The former, seeking to keep himself in power amid a crumbling economy and growing public frustration, was reliant on support of the Communist party *nomenklatura* and the bureaucracy. Gorbachev announced profound socio-economic changes in the USSR, but with the preservation of the effective political control and external attributes of power. Accordingly, he admitted the need to foster genuine political competition, but only within the Communist party.³⁹ Yeltsin seemed, at that time, to represent a more reformist

38. Henry Kissinger, *Beware: A Threat Abroad*, NEWSWEEK, June 17, 1996, at 42.

39. MIKHAIL GORBACHEV, SOBRANIE SOCHINENII, vol. 18, 72 (2008).

wing of the political establishment, but in many respects his vision was not that different from Gorbachev's. A group of politicians supporting Yeltsin did not seek radical changes that might lead to disintegration of the USSR, they just wanted to squeeze out the decrepit party leaders from the Kremlin cabinets. To this end, Yeltsin, trying to enlist the support of republican elites in a struggle for power against Gorbachev, concluded agreements on cooperation and mutual recognition of sovereignty with Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and other Soviet republics.⁴⁰ At that moment, their sovereignty was seen as a temporary concession to the republican leadership before the conclusion of a new union treaty.

In June 1990, a group of deputies of the Verkhovna Rada, following Russia and Moldova, initiated debates on the need to proclaim national sovereignty.⁴¹ Importantly, the Ukrainian understanding of sovereignty was completely different from the Russian one. Unlike Yeltsin and his entourage, most Ukrainian politicians perceived sovereignty not as a means, but as a real goal. This can be easily verified by comparing texts of the two declarations. The biggest difference was that in the text of the Ukrainian declaration words "independent" or "independently" were used nine times, while the Russian declaration did not mention them at all.⁴² Russia, in every possible way, emphasized that its sovereignty lay strictly within the USSR. Ukraine, on the contrary, promulgated its right to have a national army and internal troops, national currency, as well as independent foreign policy. Additionally, the Verkhovna Rada proclaimed the principle of inviolability of its borders and Ukraine's right to a share of the all-Union property and cultural heritage. In short, the 1990 Ukraine declaration of sovereignty claimed all the attributes of an independent state.

At that moment, after the reform of the Supreme Soviets came into force, granting them real legislative powers, Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada was headed by Vladimir Ivashko. He faced a very difficult dilemma, either support the parliamentary majority and sign the declaration, which might, of course, provoke the Kremlin's anger, or, alternatively, not sign the document, which, in its turn, might trigger a prolonged conflict between the chairman and the deputies. Ivashko picked the second option, remaining completely loyal to Gorbachev. He left for Moscow to be designated to the position of deputy secretary general of the CPSU, which was created for him exclusively. The declaration of sovereignty was eventually adopted and signed by the new

40. *Dogovor mezhdru Rossiiskoi Sovetskoi Federativnoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respublikoi i Ukrainkoi Sovetskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respublikoi*, (Vedomosti S'ezda narodnykh depytatsv RSFSR i Verkhovnogo Soveta RSFSR), Nov. 19, 1990, No. 27 at 482-485.

41. *Deklaratsiia pro derzhavnyi suverenitet Ukrainy*, (Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady URSR), 1990, No. 31 at 429.

42. *Deklaratsiia o gosudarstvennom suverenitete RSFSR*, (Vedomosti S'ezda narodnykh depytatsv RSFSR i Verkhovnogo Soveta RSFSR), July 16, 1990, No. 2 at 44-46.

chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR, Leonid Kravchuk, who later became the first president of Ukraine.⁴³

Such a tough Ukraine declaration of sovereignty was extremely beneficial for Boris Yeltsin at that moment, as it significantly undermined Gorbachev's political clout and the "Novo-Ogaryovo process" that was aimed to preserve the USSR. However, when Ukraine immediately after the coup of 1991 adopted a declaration of independence, Yeltsin's reaction was completely different. Right after the coup of 1991, he sent a delegation to Kyiv to convince Leonid Kravchuk to play the situation back and to abolish the declaration. Meanwhile, Yeltsin's spokesman Pavel Voschanov made a statement that if Ukraine continued its way toward independence, Russia would reserve the right to claim some Ukrainian territories.⁴⁴ This was evidence that Yeltsin did not want the USSR to collapse. Instead, his aim was to be a top politician in the Soviet Union, and the proclamation of Ukraine's independence did not meet his expectations. Subsequently, Yeltsin recognized the independence of Ukraine for pragmatic reasons. As Serhii Plokhly correctly noted, without Ukraine, Yeltsin had no chance to become the next president of the USSR.⁴⁵ In a Union without Ukraine, any Muslim politician (the most likely candidates at that time were the President of Kazakh SSR Nursultan Nazarbayev and the President of Tatarstan Mintimer Shaimiev) could easily surpass him during a hypothetical presidential election, as the non-Slavic electorate would have constituted the majority.

RUSSIA'S POLITICAL ELITES & UKRAINE'S INDEPENDENCE

To what extent were the main provisions of the Lukyanov Doctrine popular among the Russian politicians? What place did it take in Russia's foreign policy toward Ukraine? To answer those questions, it would be worth stratifying the political establishment on several groups and analyzing statements by their key representatives on Russian-Ukrainian border and territorial claims regarding the neighboring country.

It should be said that all the classifications of political elites that exist today are conditional, and the whole variety of existing ideological paradigms cannot be reduced to them. Nevertheless, differentiating between several influential political groups has been a time-proven and widely used instrument among scholars to better understand Russia's political reality. It is common practice to identify the three most numerous political groups in Russia as to its foreign

43. Later, in August 1991, Vladimir Ivashko was a member of the delegation to accompany Mikhail Gorbachev from his imprisonment in Foros, and with the collapse of the USSR he left politics to become an ordinary pensioner. *Vladimir Ivashko; Gorbachev Aide, Communist Party Leader*, L.A. TIMES (Nov. 20, 1994), <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1994-11-20-mn-65082-story.html> [https://perma.cc/P83Z-6BAB].

44. Pavel Voschanov, *Zaiavlenie press-sekretaria Prezidenta RSFSR*, NEZAVISIMAIA GAZETA, Aug. 27, 1991, at 1.

45. SERHII PLOKHY, THE LAST EMPIRE: THE FINAL DAYS OF THE SOVIET UNION, 359 (2014).

policy priorities: liberals, moderates, and nationalists.⁴⁶ Some authors propose a larger number of groups—four or more. However, these classifications became more sophisticated, as a rule, due to the fragmentation of bigger groupings into smaller fractions, which does not yield new insights into the functioning of Russian political cuisine. Typically, scholars add two more groups: first, proponents of the idea of a great power and, second, geopolitical balancers. Since the great-power rhetoric and passion for geopolitics were, and remain, endemic to the overwhelming majority of the Russian political class, it would not be entirely correct to single out separate groups on that basis—as Mankoff⁴⁷ and Spechler⁴⁸ do, for instance.

In this study, it would be more appropriate to apply the classification proposed by Alexei Arbatov in 1993.⁴⁹ Having analyzed the views of not only politicians, but a wide number of public opinion leaders and prominent academics as well, he distinguished four major groups: 1) westerners, 2) moderate liberals, 3) centrist and moderate conservatives, and 4) neo-communists and nationalists.⁵⁰ Despite a quarter of a century passing since then, Arbatov's approach remains relevant and applicable. Only the proportion of political clout between these groups has changed, not the core ideas that have been dominating the Russian society since the demise of the Soviet Union. Arbatov's classification is particularly useful because each group includes the names of politicians, diplomats, scholars, and journalists. This is helpful in tracing the dynamics of Russian political elites' attitudes regarding Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity through analyzing its representatives' public speeches and publications. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this research, Arbatov's classification needs to be slightly adapted. The difference between the first and the second groups seems to be insignificant, especially when it comes to Russia's "near abroad" policy. Therefore, it makes sense to combine Westerners and moderate liberals into one group called "liberals."

In the early 1990s, the liberals were not an indisputably dominating cohort of the Russian elite; however, they did represent a rather influential force among the Russian President's near circle. During the first year of his presidency, Yeltsin leaned on them heavily. At that time, the liberal group consisted of a motley audience, among which there were many representatives of the Russian diplomatic corps led by Andrey Kozyrev, whom Arbatov described as a pro-

46. Andrew Kuchins & Igor Zevelev, *Russian Foreign Policy: Continuity in Change*, 35 WASH. Q. 147, 148 (2012).

47. Jeffrey Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy and the United States After Putin*, 55 PROBS. OF POST-COMMUNISM 42, 44–50 (2008).

48. Dina Rome Spechler, *Russian Foreign Policy During the Putin Presidency: The Impact of Competing Approaches*, 57 PROBS. OF POST-COMMUNISM 35, 39–41 (2010).

49. Alexei Arbatov, *Russia's Foreign Policy Alternatives*, 18 INT'L SEC. 4–43 (1993).

50. *Id.*

Western politician.⁵¹ The Russian minister really considered the rapprochement between his country and the West to be strategically sound and perspective. In Kozyrev's opinion, by becoming a democratic state, Russia would be gravitating toward the European community of consolidated democracies.⁵²

In the meantime, on the issue of the use of armed forces in relations with Russia's neighbors, the liberals retained considerable flexibility, allowing for the limited use of military measures in foreign policy. Minister Kozyrev and his deputies considered the newly independent states to be the greatest source of threats to Russia's security, which, in his opinion, made Moscow continue its military presence in the region.⁵³ He maintained that Russia's key foreign policy goal was its transformation from a superpower into a "normal great power," which considerably overlapped with the ideas of moderate conservatives and even nationalists.⁵⁴ It is not surprising that Kozyrev was often accused of being sympathetic with pan-Slavism and Slavophilism.⁵⁵ To put it in other words, geopolitics and neo-imperial narratives were deeply immanent to the political philosophy and views of Russian liberals. They believed Russia's political and economic integration with the West was compatible with preserving the sphere of influence, which was supposed to embrace the former Soviet republics, and, first of all, Ukraine.

In literature, it is generally accepted that the end of 1993 was the turning point in Russia's foreign policy, when the Russian government boldly embraced the great-power narrative.⁵⁶ Analysts deem it was due to Yeltsin's reaction to the victory of radical nationalists and neo-Communists in the elections to the State Duma in December 1993.⁵⁷ Others consider it to be brought about by the fact that Yeltsin, after he dissolved the parliament and took over unlimited power in the country, had no further need for post-Soviet leaders' support of his illegal actions regarding Russia's Supreme Soviet.⁵⁸ If anything, those explanations are not enough to regard the change in official rhetoric as a fundamental shift in foreign policy. It is quite the opposite: the essence of Russia's foreign policy

51. *Id.* at 9.

52. *Period pervogo znakomstva s Zapadom proshel'*, KOMMERS., Dec. 5, 1992.

53. *MID izbavliaetsia ot 'bieloviezhskogo sindroma*, KOMMERS., Jan. 19, 1994, at 3.

54. *See, e.g.* Andrei Kozyrev, *Soyuz ostabil Rossii plokhole vneshnepoliticheskole*, NEZAVISIMAIA GAZETA, Apr. 1, 1992; Andrei Kozyrev, *Na ch'ei storone Rossii v Yugoslavskom konflikte*, IZVESTI, June 8, 1992, at 1, 4; *Obsuzhdaetsia kontseptsia vneshniej politiki*, KOMMERS., Nov. 28, 1992, at 11.

55. Marina Pavlova-Silvanskaia, *Novyi pan-slavizm? Diplomatiia v mashinie vremeni*, NEZAVISIMAIA GAZETA, June 25, 1992.

56. Peter Shearman, *Defining the National Interest: Russian Foreign Policy and Domestic Politics*, in *THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION* 1, 1–27 (Roger E. Kanet et al. eds., 1997).

57. Margot Light, *In Search of An Identity: Russian Foreign Policy and The End of Ideology*, 19 J. OF COMMUNIST STUD. & TRANSITION POL. 42, 45–46 (2003).

58. *Id.*

remained the same. What Russian decision-makers previously kept in mind, or expressed behind the scenes, simply went public for reasons of political expediency. This primarily concerned the widespread caustic disparagement and disregard of Ukraine as an independent state, its sovereignty, and its territorial integrity.

For instance, during negotiations in New York in October 1991, Kozyrev told Ukrainian Foreign Minister Anatolii Zlenko that one of the million-plus population cities in the East of Ukraine, presumably having in mind Donetsk, always was and would remain Russian.⁵⁹ In addition, while preparing the Big Treaty, the Russian delegation tried to insist on vague definitions regarding the Russian-Ukrainian border.⁶⁰ Furthermore, in January 1992, Russia's Supreme Soviet adopted a resolution that put into question the legality of the 1954 transfer of the Crimean Peninsula to Ukraine.⁶¹ Interestingly, among the partisans of asserting territorial claims, there were deputies whom Arbatov assigned to liberals. The initiative group was headed by Yevgeny Kozhokin and Vladimir Lukin, the future co-founder of the liberal Yabloko party. The latter, in his explanatory note to the draft resolution, recommended the Kremlin demonstrate to Ukraine an iron fist, to make Kyiv more pliant and docile in the matter of the Black Sea fleet, as well as to make the whole world respect Russia as a strong power.⁶² Lukin also expected the territorial dispute with Ukraine to generate a patriotic upsurge in Russia, which would provide the government with more room to foster economic reforms.⁶³

Those whom Arbatov classified as moderate conservatives—Alexander Rutsokoi, Ruslan Khazbulatov, Arkady Volsky, Sergey Stankevich, Oleg Rumiantsev, Sergei Karaganov and others—were negative about the very idea of Ukrainian independence.⁶⁴ However, in terms of career growth, most of them benefited from the collapse of the USSR and the elimination of the Communist party monopoly. That is why they were not that critical about the Belovezha Accords.⁶⁵ For instance, tumultuous events of the perestroika turned Oleg Rumiantsev, a Moscow lawyer under the age of 30, into the co-author of the Russian Constitution. Still, representatives of this group were extremely supportive of the territorial claims against Ukraine, as great power rhetoric strengthened their political clout. Rumiantsev, for instance, fully shared the idea

59. ANATOLIY M. ZLENKO, *DIPLOMATIYA I POLITIKA: UKRAINA V PROTSESSE DINAMICHNYKH GEOPOLITICHESKIKH PEREMEN* 380 (2004).

60. *Id.* at 429.

61. *Vedomosti S'ezda narodnykh depytatov RSFSR i Verkhovnogo Soveta RSFSR*, 1992 No. 6 at 242.

62. Maksim Sokolov, *VS RF: Ofigienie v Tavridie*, *KOMMERS.*, Jan. 27, 1992.

63. *Id.*

64. Alexei G. Arbatov, *Russia's Foreign Policy Alternatives*, 18 *INT'L SEC.* 5, 4–43 (1993).

65. See RUSLAN I. KHASBULATOV, *POLURASPAD SSSR: KAK RAZVALILI SVERKHDERZHAVU* 483 (2011).

of holding a referendum in Crimea on its accession to Russia within a ten-year transition period.⁶⁶ In the meantime, Rutskoi and Khasbulatov, Yeltsin's overt antagonists, boldly sponsored the abolishment of the Soviet legislation that enabled the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine calling Kyiv to immediately start.⁶⁷ Both of them were regretting the breakup of the Soviet Union and foretelling a murky future for an independent Ukraine, but at the same time they had no clear solution to propose, except bilateral negotiations. In fact, moderate conservatives didn't seem to be ready to go so far as to extend the conflict with Ukraine beyond verbal squabbling. Rather it was just about cynical tactics of consolidating popular support through profiteering on the post-imperial syndrome of Russian society.

Neo-Communists and nationalists were among the staunchest opponents of Ukraine's sovereignty and independence. They strongly advocated the denunciation of the Belovezha Accords, which they considered to be a "political falsification"⁶⁸ that led to "the greatest tragedy and crime"⁶⁹—the collapse of the USSR. They did not dispute any Soviet legal act concerning the administrative-territorial borders of the Ukrainian SSR, but considered the independence of Ukraine itself illegal and erroneous. Nationalists criticized the Belovezha Accords from slightly different positions. To them, the document was a "self-betrayal,"⁷⁰ and the "illegitimate" dissolution of the Soviet Union constituted a fatal blow to the unity of Slavic peoples, which had existed in the times of both the Russian Empire and the USSR. Nationalists strived to "restore historical justice"⁷¹ through recreating a greater state inhabited by peoples united by a "single common Russian fate,"⁷² and therefore they supported territorial claims against Ukraine.⁷³ Sergei Baburin, for instance, claimed that Crimea is not an intra-Ukrainian affair, "*it's Russia's problem—a problem of reconstruction of the Russian state.*"⁷⁴ In his view, post-Soviet states were merely shards of the "Russian civilization," and Russia's historic mission was to reconsolidate the "Russian superethnos" in an imperial state called "the

66. MIKHAIL KARPOV, *My dolzhny uchastvovat' v priniatii reshenii*, NEZAVISIMAIA GAZETA, May 13, 1992.

67. *Postanovlenie No. 2809-I*, 21 May 1992, (Vedomosti S'ezda narodnykh depytatsv RSFSR i Verkhovnogo Soveta RSFSR), June 4, 1992, No. 22 at 1178.

68. GENNADII A. ZYUGANOV, NA RUBEZHE TYSIACHELETII: SUD'BA ROSSII V SOVREMENNOM MIRE 27 (2001).

69. ANATOLII I. LUKYANOV, V VODOVOROTE ROSSIISKOI SMUTY: RAZMYSHLENIIA, DIALOGI DOKUMENTY 189 (1999).

70. NATAL'IA A. NAROCHNITSKAIA, RUSSKII MIR 145 (2007).

71. *Id.* at 265.

72. *Id.* at 288.

73. *Priamaia rech*, KOMMERS., Mar. 5, 1999, at 12.

74. Transcript of State of Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (Apr. 14, 1995), available at <http://transcript.duma.gov.ru/node/3070/> [<https://perma.cc/C7D6-23VX>] (last visited Nov, 13, 2019).

Russian Union.”⁷⁵ This was very consonant with the nationalistic convictions of Nobel laureate Alexander Solzhenitsin, who believed that the independence of Ukraine was a false historical path, and its post-Soviet borders were factitious.⁷⁶

It is plain to see that an important feature of Russian political elite mindset—whether it comes to Liberals, moderate Conservatives, neo-Communists or Nationalists—is the dominance of an excessively reduced neo-Realist paradigm laced with primitive geopolitics. According to it, there are only six to seven “great powers,” with absolute sovereignty and independence, which are deemed to have their own spheres of influence, or “areas of special responsibility.” Such a philosophy treats other countries to merely be objects of international relations. In this picture, Ukraine is doomed to be a pawn on a global chessboard, as it is perceived by Russian politicians primarily as a country with limited sovereignty, which falls upon the Kremlin’s sphere of influence. Regardless of the affiliation with the above-mentioned groups, Russian politicians have been traditionally perceiving Kyiv’s ability to pursue an independent foreign policy with indulgence and disdain. At the same time, representatives of all three groups, although for different reasons, expressed readiness to violate the territorial integrity of Ukraine for the sake of Russian “national interests.”

POPULAR DEMAND FOR THE LUKYANOV DOCTRINE

Like the citizens of other post-Soviet states, Russians paid a high price for the bankruptcy of the Soviet planned economy. The drop in real income and rise in mortality rates were enormous. Some estimates suggest that in the 1990s, up to 41.5% of the population lived below the poverty line.⁷⁷ Accustomed to paternalism and public welfare that persisted for decades, many failed to adjust to the new reality. Opinion polls showed that 82% of Russians regretted the fall of the USSR, and merely 16% did not share this attitude.⁷⁸ The more difficult the situation in the economy, the stronger the longing for the past. In fact, public nostalgia for the USSR was a protest against poverty, a manifestation of the dissatisfaction with worsened living conditions. In a sense, the concept of “back in the USSR” became the Russian national idea of the 1990s. Of course, that went hand in hand with the growing demand for an assertive great-power narrative and neo-imperial approach toward the “near abroad” countries.

As a result, the majority of Russians perceived other post-Soviet states not as fully-fledged sovereign and independent countries, but as temporary

75. SERGEI BABURIN, VOZVRASHCHENIE RUSSKOGO KONSERVATIZMA 443 (2012).

76. ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN, ROSSIJA V OBVALE 78–79 (1998).

77. WORLD BANK, SNIZHENIE BEDNOSTI V ROSSII: VLIJANIE EKONOMICHESKOGO ROSTA I SOTSIAL’NYKH REFORM, 117–120 (2006), <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/844271468095342039/pdf/355190RU0Reducing0poverty01OFFICIAL0USE1.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/ZN6U-U2Z9>].

78. VTsIOM, *Opinion poll*, WCIOM (Jan. 30, 2000), https://wciom.ru/zh/print_q.php?s_id=349&q_id=28269&date=30.01.2000 [<https://perma.cc/BDE7-BP3W>].

breakaway territories which would sooner or later be re-incorporated with Russia. Not surprisingly, since 1991, 55–65% of Russians do not consider Ukraine to be a foreign state.⁷⁹ Interestingly, it is clearly evident from the polls that the more complicated the Russo-Ukrainian relations are, the more Russians tend to recognize Ukraine as an independent state. Moreover, such public sentiments were nurturing demand for corresponding political rhetoric. Zyuganov's Communist Party of the Russian Federation and Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party of Russia were always quick to meet that demand, bluntly calling for the restoration of the Soviet empire. For the same purpose, the Kremlin leadership was launching one integration project after another, seeking to convince the electorate that each of the integration projects was a step forward on the way to restoration of political union between "fraternal republics" under Moscow's lead. What the Kremlin really wants from the Ukrainian government is the public demonstration of compliance with Moscow's preponderance. It is extremely important since such behavior meets the expectations of the Russian electorate, especially the elder generation, and, thus, it contributes greatly to the legitimization of the political regime. In fact, playing the card of the great power is the easiest way to gain popular support within a society hit by post-imperial syndrome.

In the early 2010s, sociologists observed controversial trends within the Russian society. On the one hand, about 35% of the population demanded that Russia strengthen its influence on the international affairs and make Russia a more discernible player in the post-Soviet space, striving for the status of a superpower like the USSR.⁸⁰ On the other hand, there was a growing understanding that Russia, in comparison with the Soviet Union, was in many respects a different country, while the post-Soviet states had their own national interests and foreign policy priorities that might not correspond with the Russian ones. Hence, it was obvious that restoration of the USSR was hardly possible in a long-term perspective. Against this background, 48% of Russians preferred Russia to be among the ten most developed economic countries.⁸¹ That led the pollsters to a conclusion that the views of Russians on foreign policy were becoming more pragmatic and less oriented on the model of "besieged fortress."⁸² Nevertheless, despite the growing demand for a foreign policy model that could better contribute to households' well-being, Russians' perception of Ukraine as a semi-sovereign state did not change that much over

79. Levada Centre, '*Rossiianie ob Ukrainie*', LEVADA CTR. (Nov. 12, 2013), <https://www.levada.ru/2013/11/12/rossiyane-ob-ukraine/> [<https://perma.cc/M9JD-MKSM>].

80. Vladimir V. Petukhov, *Foreign Policy Priorities in the Mass Consciousness of Russians*, 51 SOC. RES. 14, 14–31 (2012).

81. *Id.* at 22–23.

82. *Id.* at 30.

the years. Consequently, it is not only economic factors that provoked intensive revitalization of old Soviet foreign policy patterns among Russian society.

CONCLUSION

After the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold war, many falsely believed the Brezhnev Doctrine was no longer relevant. Initially, post-Russia manifested a clear intention to proceed its further development through closer integration with the West, as well as building democratic and market economy institutions. Indeed, such a vision of Russia's future presumed a resolute denial of Soviet diplomatic practices and demanded a totally new foreign policy paradigm built on new principles: adherence to human rights and international commitments; more transparency and predictability; non-interference in the internal affairs of neighboring states, etc.

However, largely unmet public expectations about reforms, widespread frustration with sharply decreased living standards, deficit of political leadership, as well as enduring neo-imperial and nostalgic sentiments prevented Russia from introducing comprehensive changes in its foreign policy. Besides, Russian renewal of elites did not take place as was the case with Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and other Central European countries. It was a common practice, when former Communist party members turned on a dime, to become democrats after decades of glorifying the authoritarian regime. Staying in power, they retained many old convictions and classic Cold war clichés. That is actually why representatives of all political groups spoke the same primitive language of geopolitics when it came to foreign policy issues, in particular, relations with Ukraine, in particular.

All those factors, overlapping with the dramatically changed international situation in the world, gave rise to an altered version of Brezhnev Doctrine, which is labeled in this Article as "Lukyanov Doctrine." The latter represents itself as a Russian foreign policy aimed at restoration of the Kremlin's sphere of influence across the post-Soviet area with the means of negative motivation. Such a policy relies mostly upon the concept of limited sovereignty, treating the "near abroad" states as formally independent objects of international relations. To achieve its aim, the Kremlin implements a wide array of tools of negative motivation: incitement of separatism, economic blackmailing, initiating territorial claims, and even covert military operations.

The Lukyanov Doctrine provides a resolution for the conceptual contradiction of Russian policy outlined within the English school of international relations theory.⁸³ Specifically, the Kremlin repeatedly denied the idea of humanitarian military interventions, sticking traditionally to the *pluralist* approach, which prioritized codified norms of international law, state

83. See ROY ALLISON, *RUSSIA, THE WEST, AND MILITARY INTERVENTION* (2013).

sovereignty, inviolability of national borders, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. Nevertheless, to justify its assertive policy regarding the post-Soviet area, Russia regularly applied a *solidarist* approach, attaching utmost significance to protection of human rights. In fact, the Soviet leadership did the same in relations with its client states of Central and Eastern Europe. In this regard, there is an essential continuity between the Soviet and Russian foreign policy. We may even say that the Lukyanov Doctrine is a conceptual successor to the Brezhnev Doctrine. And, of course, we may see the same type of continuity regarding Ukraine's sovereignty and independence. The Soviets believed Ukraine could only have "Socialist sovereignty" within the USSR, similar to Vladimir Putin who believes Ukraine is not a country at all. The problem is that others share the same view as Putin does. Such an attitude is deeply rooted in the minds of all the Russian political elite and society, who, by inertia, used to treat Ukraine condescendingly as a younger brother. The Lukyanov Doctrine will cease to exist at the moment when Russia finally abandons the concept of limited sovereignty in relations with Ukraine, as well as other post-Soviet states.

