Revanchist Russia? Russian Perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian Sovereignty, 1990-2008

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I, Rasmus Nilsson, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

The theme of this thesis concerns post-Soviet Russian foreign policy perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty between 1990 and 2008. In the thesis I argue that Russian perceptions became increasingly revanchist in nature during this period, and that we may distinguish between two different types of revanchism, the consequences of which for Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty are quite different. I argue that all Russian perceptions of international affairs are constituted by perceptions of Russia. Thus, perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty may be divided into three categories, or paradigms, each of which centres on a specific concept that legitimises the existence of Russia, and determines how Belarus and Ukraine are viewed. The three central concepts are the concepts of Law, Power, and Nation, respectively. In the introduction, I outline these paradigms, both in abstract terms and in relation to Russian foreign policy in general, as well as Russian foreign policy towards Belarus and Ukraine. Subsequently, I present my methodology and my literature review, together with a discussion of the theoretical assumptions, which provide the foundation for my argument. Then, I briefly outline Russian foreign policy making during the period relevant for my thesis, before the four main chapters of my thesis outline in roughly chronological fashion how the relative significance of the three paradigms has changed over time. Overall, I find that whereas the paradigm of Power has generally dominated perceptions, the paradigm of Law has gradually lost influence, whereas the influence of the paradigm of Nation has gradually increased. Since I define both the paradigm of Power and the paradigm of Nation as "revanchist," I conclude that Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty between 1990 and 2008 gradually became more revanchist in nature.

Contents

Abbreviations

BSSR: Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic

CRA: Council for Religious Affairs of the Soviet Union

CSCE: Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe

CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States

CSTO: Collective Security Treaty Organisation

FDI: Foreign direct investment

GDP: Gross domestic product

KGB: Committee for State Security of the Soviet Union

LDPR: Liberal Democratic Party of Russia

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

OSCE: Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

RSFSR: Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic

SCO: Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

SES: Single Economic Space

START: Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

UkSSR: Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic

UN: United Nations

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

VAT: Value added tax

WTO: World Trade Organisation

<u>Transliteration</u>

In this thesis, transliteration from Russian follows the United States Library of Congress System. All Russian words, including names of persons and places have been transliterated following this system, apart from the cases where anglicised spelling has become the academic norm; for instance, I write "Moscow" instead of "Moskva."

Names of Belarusian persons and places have mostly, but not exclusively been presented in their Russian forms, since Russian is one of the official languages in Belarus. Names of Ukrainian persons and places, on the contrary, have been presented in their Ukrainian forms, since only Ukrainian is official language in Ukraine. For reasons similar to those described above, a few cases of anglicised spelling have been preserved.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Argument

In this thesis, I argue that Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty between 1990 and 2008 were significantly influenced by what I term "revanchism." Below, I shall elaborate my argument, outlining how I demonstrate that revanchism has or has not been present in specific issues. First, though, I must define "Russians," and "Belarusians" and "Ukrainians," for that matter. In short, I define actors according to their self-definition. Thus, if an actor implicitly or explicitly defines him- or herself as "Russian" in a given text (whether by using *rossiiskii*, *russkii* or some other label) he or she is Russian for my purposes. In themselves, ethnicities or citizenships are therefore not relevant here; thus, if an individual in Ukraine without Ukrainian citizenship defines himself as Ukrainian he is Ukrainian for my purposes. Two caveats are in order, though: first, actors' self-definitions might change over time and within different issues; second, if the above-mentioned self-defined Ukrainian is viewed as Russian by others I cannot ignore their perceptions in favour of his choice. Ultimately, therefore, my analysis seeks to be highly alert to the constitutive development of actors' self-definitions within a social context.

With this in mind, I argue that Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty between 1990 and 2008 were increasingly marked by revanchism. Russian perceptions may be divided into three categories, or paradigms, all constituted by perceptions of Russian sovereignty. Each of these paradigms centres on a specific concept, respectively Law, Power, and Nation. Within each of these paradigms a specific worldview of Russia, of Belarus and Ukraine, and of the international system at large exists. The claim that Russian

perceptions were revanchist implies that they were mostly influenced by the paradigms of Power, that the paradigm of Law had increasingly less ability to challenge the paradigm of Power, and that the paradigm of Nation was increasingly able to do so. Since both the paradigms of Power and of Nation were revanchist in nature Russian perceptions overall became increasingly revanchist. However, by distinguishing between the paradigms of Power and Nation, I argue that two quite different types of revanchism existed, an observation that existing scholarship, in my opinion, has not acknowledged.

I shall now summarise the three paradigms. For each paradigm I shall begin by highlighting its internal logic in abstract terms. Then, I shall relate the paradigm to Russian foreign policy in general, presenting my assumptions of how Russian foreign policy would be conducted if the given paradigm was dominant. Finally, I shall show how Russian foreign policy towards Belarus and Ukraine would be conducted if the given paradigm dominated foreign policy thinking. Subsequently, in the main parts of my thesis I shall analyse developments in Russian foreign policy towards Belarus and Ukraine, evaluating to what extent each paradigm held significance at given times and within given issues.

Paradigm of Law: assumptions

As in the other two paradigms, perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty in the paradigm of Law are constituted by perceptions of Russian sovereignty, of what "Russia" really is. The paradigm of Law equates "Russia" with the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) until 1991, and subsequently with the Russian Federation. Furthermore, just like in the other two paradigms, within the paradigm of Law a specific view of the past, the present, and the future of Russia exists. Here, it is argued that Russia originated as a

deliberate construction; that it should aim for stability at present; and that it should seek to become normal in the future.

I shall now present the assumptions that perceptions within the paradigm of Law would hold regarding aspects of Russian foreign policy. In my thesis, I focus on four groups of issues, of a political, military, economic and cultural nature.[1] Political issues can be divided into issues concerning territory, governance and ideology, respectively. I would assume that if perceptions from the paradigm of Law dominated Russian foreign policy thinking, there would be a general understanding that current borders of Russia were new; that they should nevertheless only be changed through peaceful means; and that all changes should take place within the norms generated by the international, generally Westernised community. For instance, the May, 1997, Russia-Ukraine Friendship Treaty between Russia and Ukraine demonstrated Russian willingness to discuss territorial matters peacefully. Within issues of governance, a dominant paradigm of Law would lead me to assume that Russians would consider Imperial and Soviet governance to have been misguided; that democratisation of Russia should now be pursued; and that a democratic Russia should be the ultimate aim. For example, the extent to which democracy was sometimes an ideal for Russian policy-makers may be gauged from how foreign leaders, such as Aleksandr Lukashenko of Belarus, was officially criticised as undemocratic. Finally, within issues of ideology, a dominant paradigm of Law would lead me to assume that Russians would consider Imperial and Communist ideologies to have been misguided, similarly to what was the case with governance above; that Russians would endeavour to construct a civic identity

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[1] This division is inspired by B. Buzan, *People, States and Fear: an agenda for international security in the post-cold war era (2nd ed.)*, Harlow: Longman, 1991, esp. pp. 19-21

for their state at present; and that the eventual outcome being sought was a civic Russian state marked by loyalty to the post-Soviet entity. For instance, I show how the right of Belarusians and Ukrainians to independently construct their civic statehood was repeatedly acknowledged by leading Russians during Boris El'tsin's presidency.

Following this summary of political issues, I turn to military issues. Military issues can be divided into issues concerning Belarusian and Ukrainian military forces, NATO, and Russian military forces stationed in Belarus and Ukraine, respectively. I would assume that if the paradigm of Law dominated Russian foreign policy thinking, there would be a general understanding that sovereign Belarusian and Ukrainian forces had not existed before the Soviet collapse; that such forces consequently ought to be built now; and that the aim would be to have developed, fully independent military forces in the two states. For example, Russian leaders allowed sovereign Belarusian and Ukrainian forces with some significant capabilities to be constructed following the Soviet collapse. In relation to NATO, a dominant paradigm of Law would indicate that Russians might now view the Western organisation as a security community; that NATO and Russia should work towards mutual friendship; and that Russia, and other post-Soviet states, might seek to eventually join NATO. For example, during the 1990s Russian military elites began to engage in joint exercises with NATO and Ukraine. Finally, concerning Russian troops stationed in Belarus and Ukraine, I would assume that if the paradigm of Law dominated Russian perceptions, Russian troops in the two former Soviet republics would have previously been occupiers; that Russian troops should now mostly return to help policing the Russian Federation; and that a complete remodelling of the Russian forces towards such aims should take place. An example of this is shown with the naval agreements between Russia and Ukraine from May,

1997, in which Russian leaders officially accepted that the Black Sea Fleet had to return to Russia.

Following this summary of military issues, I turn to economic issues. Economic issues can be divided into issues concerning Belarusian and Ukrainian economic actors, concerning energy such as oil and natural gas, and concerning Russian economic actors in Belarus and Ukraine. If the paradigm of Law dominated Russian foreign policy thinking I would assume that Russians would have seen Belarusian and Ukrainian economic actors as having previously been exploited by all-Union structures, and perhaps even by economic actors in the RSFSR; that Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian actors alike should now enter the world market; and that a future ideal would see them all embedded there. Such developments might even happen contrary to Belarusian and Ukrainian wishes. For example, during the 1990s members of the Russian government resigned in protest against further subsidisation of the Belarusian economy. On the issue of energy, I would assume that a dominant paradigm of Law would indicate that Russians accepted Belarusian and Ukrainian actors should be allowed to develop their own resources if possible; that energy relations between Russia and its neighbours should take place on market conditions; and that Belarus and Ukraine should be allowed to gain energy from non-Russian sources if they so wished. As an example, I describe how a bilateral Russo-Ukrainian agreement from 2000 codified mutual principles for energy relations.

Finally, on the issue of Russian economic actors in Belarus and Ukraine I would assume that a dominant paradigm of Law would indicate that Russians accepted that their economic actors had exploited Belarusians and Ukrainians in the past; that interaction now had to

take place on world market conditions; and that Russian actors would eventually have to be operating outside Russia according to internationally recognised rules and norms. For an example, I show how Russian leaders already in 1991 openly recognised the harmful nature of previous economic activity imposed on Belarusians and Ukrainians.

Following this summary of perceptions within the paradigm of Law relating to economic issues, I finally turn to cultural issues. Cultural issues can be divided into issues concerning history, language, and religion, respectively. If the paradigm of Law dominated Russian foreign policy perceptions I would assume that Russians accepted they had previously acted as a colonial power in Belarus and Ukraine; that Russians now sought to make amends for previous transgressions against their neighbours; and that Russians ultimately sought forgiveness. For instance, understanding that Belarusian and Ukrainian nationalism had been provoked by Russians appeared during the 1990s. On the issue of language, I would assume that if the paradigm of Law dominated Russian foreign policy thinking there would be a recognition that imposition of Russian language had previously been overbearing; that the presence of Russian language in Belarus and Ukraine should now be scaled back; and that Russian language should not enjoy any special rights within these states. For instance, Vladimir Putin promised in 2006 to support all languages in Russia, Ukraine, and other post-Soviet states. Finally, on the issue of religion I would assume that Russian perceptions in a dominant paradigm of Law would acknowledge that many religions, and not just the Russian Orthodox Church, had been unnecessarily suppressed in the Soviet Union; that religious liberalisation was now overwhelmingly needed; and that the aim should be that inhabitants of Belarus and Ukraine could freely choose between the Russian Orthodox churches, their indigenous churches, and other options. For instance, I highlight how the right to freedom

of conscience was emphasised by the Russian Orthodox leadership from the outset, in a direct break with Soviet suppression.

Paradigm of Power: assumptions

With the assumptions of the paradigm of Law thus outlined in detail, I shall now summarise the paradigm of Power. This paradigm equates "Russia" with the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Russia is here seen as originating in history; at present Russia should seek to widen its sphere of influence; and the aim should be achieve and retain great power status for Russia again in the future.

If we apply this paradigm to Russian foreign policy in relation to political issues, I would assume that Russians would perceive borders as legitimate or not depending on whether they had existed in the past; that the function of borders at present would be seen as inclusive, facilitating the incorporation of neighbouring areas under Russian sovereignty; and that in future borders should help retain a number of regions together, regions together capable of balancing the capabilities of outside great powers, such as the USA and, potentially, the EU and China. For example, the Russo-Belarusian Union state gradually became enmeshed in opposition to the USA. I would furthermore assume that perceptions within a dominant paradigm of Power would view past, centralised governance as fundamentally correct; that Russians holding such perceptions would aim for increased centralisation again at present; and that the re-establishment of an imperial administration would be the eventual aim. For example, the early Putin administration saw fit to order the removal of leading Ukrainian officials. In the case of ideology, I would similarly assume that Russian perceptions within the paradigm of Power would view ideologies of the past as

fundamentally correct, despite their twentieth century Socialist twist; that such perceptions would want an imperial ideology to reappear; and that the aim would be a multinational state led by the Russian *primus inter pares*. For an instance of this, in the mid-1990s the El'tsin government introduced a strategy for the post-Soviet region displaying imperial ideology.

Moving to military issues, I would assume that Russian perceptions within the paradigm of Power would contend that Belarusian and Ukrainian forces had previously been solidly integrated in Russian-led forces; that Belarusian and Ukrainian forces should now regain their former strength since they were allies of Russia; and that future re-integration of these forces should be the aim. Certainly, during the entire period surveyed bilateral and multilateral formal steps were taken to reintegrate Belarusian forces in a Russian-led military framework. In the case of NATO, I would assume that perceptions within the paradigm of Power would view NATO as having been an adversary during the Cold War; that NATO remained an adversary of Russia and other post-Soviet states; and that the recreation of a balance of power between a Russia-led bloc and NATO should be the aim. Indeed, Russia and Belarus cooperated in the Union Shield-2006 exercise, intended as defence manoeuvres against attacks from NATO. Finally, in the case of Russian forces stationed in Belarus and Ukraine I would assume that they were perceived as previously having been defenders against non-Soviet attacks; that their mission was now to regain former positions of strength in their host states; and that these forces should entrench themselves further in Belarus and Ukraine in future. For example, Putin's government throughout highlighted the importance of retaining the Black Sea Fleet on Crimea as a defence against foreign attacks.

In the case of economic issues, I would assume that perceptions within the paradigm of Power would argue that Belarusian and Ukrainian economic actors had previously been successfully integrated in the Soviet infrastructure; that efforts should now be made to reintegrate such actors in Russia-led infrastructure; and that complete integration in such an infrastructure should be the eventual aim. The inauguration and development of the Single Economic Space is an example of this. In matters of energy I would similarly assume that perceptions within the paradigm of Power looked back to seemingly successful Soviet integration; that they wanted to maintain and re-develop such integration at present, not least through use of subsidies; and that they intended to eventually achieve full integration of the energy sectors in Russia and other post-Soviet states, let alone further abroad. As an example of this, Putin's first term witnessed Russian attempts to acquire energy infrastructure in Belarus and Ukraine. Finally, in matters concerning Russian economic actors abroad in the post-Soviet space I would assume that perceptions within the paradigm of Power argued that Russian actors had previously functioned as integrators within the Imperial and Soviet space; that they should seek to regain this role; and that an integrated economic space was, once more, the aim. I thus discuss the programme of economic cooperation between Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian businessmen in the late 1990s.

Finally, in the case of cultural issues I would assume that perceptions within the paradigm of Power would argue that Russia had historically been a benefactor of Belarus and Ukraine; that its historical mission was to support and guide its neighbours; and that Russia again should become their "elder brother" in future. As an example of such perceptions, I demonstrate how Putin during his second presidential term denounced the Soviet collapse as a catastrophe. Concerning language issues I would assume that perceptions within the

paradigm of Power would argue that Russian language had previously been a practical support to integration between Russia and its neighbours; that Russian language should thus be assisted during the turbulent first post-Soviet years; and that Russian language should eventually regain its prior dominance in neighbouring states. Thus, I show how official Russian programmes to disseminate Russian-language materials within Belarus and Ukraine were introduced by Putin's government. Finally, in relation to issues of religion I would assume that perceptions within the paradigm of Power would argue that religion had historically unified Russia and neighbouring states; that religion could thus help unify the post-Soviet region in the turbulent post-Soviet period; and that religion, including Russian Orthodoxy, could become a motor of integration in the region in future. Indeed, belief in an Orthodox community was overtly present at the inauguration of Russo-Belarusian integration in 1996.

Paradigm of Nation: assumptions

With the assumptions of the paradigm of Power thus outlined in detail I shall now summarise the paradigm of Nation. This paradigm equates "Russia" with the Russian nation, understood partly but not exclusively in an ethnic sense. Russia is here seen as originating in a mythical past; at present Russia should be revanchist, that is delimit sovereign areas perceived as belonging to the Russian nation; while the eventual aim should be to achieve purity, namely a condition in which Russia is populated only by Russians and influenced only by the interests of Russia. Only some international actors are seen as legitimately sovereign; this legitimacy is based on their foundation in a nation. Thus, the sovereign status of Belarus and Ukraine in their current form is perceived to be illegitimate, with parts of the sovereignty of these states to be included in Russian sovereignty, with the rest perceived as

legitimate, sovereign entities. Still, though, even truncated Belarus and Ukraine are enemies of Russia due to the fact that sovereignty claimed by these three actors partly overlap.

If we apply this paradigm to Russian foreign policy in relation to political issues, I would assume that perceptions within the paradigm would view Russian borders as having an ahistorical legitimacy; that Russian borders were to have a primarily exclusive function; and that they were supposed to eventually be returned to their original state. Certainly, Russian statements concerning the Crimean peninsula already from the early 1990s demonstrated this. In regards to issues of governance I would assume that governance in Russia would be seen as having been correct once in a non-specific past; that governance should now focus on defence of the rights of Russians abroad; and that a dictatorship of the nation, discriminating in favour of Russians should be established throughout Russian sovereign lands. As an example of this, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev stated that Russia would defend its people abroad, including in Belarus and Ukraine, with all means necessary. Finally, on issues of ideology I would assume, too, that ideology in Russia would be seen as having been correct in a non-specific past; that a national ideology concerned with Russians only should now be re-introduced; and that the establishment of a Russian nation-state should be aimed for. Thus, Russian commentators following the Ukrainian presidential election in 2004 argued that Russians in Ukraine should repel West Ukrainian attempts to impose their leadership in the state.

If we then apply the paradigm of Nation to Russian foreign policy in relation to military issues, I would assume that Belarusian and Ukrainian forces were thought to have been kept in check by Russians in the past; that these forces now had to be repulsed to prevent them

from preying on Russia; and that their capabilities in future should be diminished. As an example, the Russo-Ukrainian naval treaties from 1997 significantly limited the capabilities of the Ukrainian navy. Concerning NATO, I would assume that perceptions within this paradigm would view the Western organisation as having always presented a dangerously alluring alternative to Russia; that NATO was now used as an excuse by neighbouring states to oppose Russia; and that the aim in future should be to prevent neighbouring states from facilitating the entry of NATO in Russian areas. As an example, the Ukrainian-led organisation GUAM, later GUUAM, was perceived by Russian observers from 1997 onwards as an attempt to introduce NATO to Russian lands. Finally, in relation to Russian forces stationed abroad I would assume that perceptions within the paradigm of Nation would view said forces as having long defended local Russians; that the forces were now supposed to challenge local, anti-Russian administrations; and that their ultimate aim was to defeat such administrations. Notably, the first post-Soviet Russian military doctrine explicitly highlighted discrimination against Russians in Belarus, Ukraine and other neighbouring states, as a threat that could be dealt with by Russian military forces.

Subsequently, if I apply the paradigm of Nation to economic issues, I would assume that economic actors from states neighbouring Russia would be perceived as having exploited Russia in the past; that such actors were now to be challenged by Russia; and that their economies ought eventually to be undermined by Russia. To provide an example of this in relation to Belarus and Ukraine, in Putin's second presidential term punitive import duties were imposed on goods from these states. In relation to energy issues, I would assume that perceptions within this paradigm would similarly argue that neighbouring areas had exploited Russia in the past; that these areas should now be challenged as Russia regained

its energy clout; and that the energy sovereignty of these states ought eventually to be undermined by Russia. In relation to this, a decade and a half after the Soviet collapse the Russian natural gas company Gazprom repeatedly disconnected gas deliveries to Belarus and Ukraine, while simultaneously seeking to charge the latter state higher prices than it charged Western customers. Finally, within the issue concerning Russian economic actors abroad I would assume that perceptions within this paradigm would argue that Russian actors had long been exploited by neighbouring states; that these states should now be challenged by Russian actors; and that these Russian actors should eventually seek to undermine the economies of neighbouring states. In the case of Belarus and Ukraine, El'tsin by 1994 ordered Russian security services to force access for Russian economic actors onto the Ukrainian market.

Finally, in cultural matters I would assume that perceptions within the paradigm of Nation would argue that neighbouring states had historically taken advantage of Russia in general; that Russia should presently aim to publish its version of history; and that the aim would be fulfilled when lies of the past had been disproven. For example, a decade and a half after the Soviet collapse significant Russian actors still claimed that Ukrainian accusations against Russia connected to the famine of the 1930s simply constituted anti-Russian propaganda. In issues of language I would assume that perceptions within this paradigm would argue that Russian-speakers' rights had previously been endangered by neighbouring nations; that Russian-speakers should consequently now be defended; and that the position of the Russian language in areas rightfully belonging to Russian sovereignty should eventually become entrenched. Examples of this were the numerous official Russian complaints of linguistic discrimination directed against Ukraine during the 1990s. Finally, in issues of

religion I would assume that perceptions within the paradigm of Nation would argue that Russian Orthodoxy had previously been undermined by other religions near the outer edges of Russian sovereign territories; that Russian Orthodoxy now had to be defended against the encroachment of other religions; and that the aim should be to ensure total domination for Russian Orthodoxy within the Russian sovereign area. Thus, Russian political commentators saw the Uniate Church in Ukraine as attacking the presence of the Russian Orthodox Church there.

Influence of the paradigms

Having thus summarised the three paradigms that I seek to understand in this thesis, and how they relate to Russian foreign policy in general, and particularly towards Belarus and Ukraine, the final part of my argument is as follows: although all three paradigms had some influence on Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty between 1990 and 2008, and thus on policy derived from these perceptions, their influence overall differed. In general, it may be stated that the paradigm of Power consistently dominated Russian perceptions; that the paradigm of Law had significant influence at first on Russian perceptions, but that this gradually waned, whereas the paradigm of Nation conversely was not very important in the beginning, but grew steadily in influence. Why this difference in the relative influence of the paradigms? The paradigm of Law was weakened due to the fact that it was built only on a foundation of freedom from the Soviet Union; on its negation, but often lacking much positive content of its own. The paradigm of Power, in contrast, benefitted from being built on the foundation of the order of recent and distant history, an order in which not only Russians, but also Belarusians and Ukrainians remained enmeshed. And the fact that the paradigm of Nation retained and in parts even increased its influence

during the period surveyed was due to a lingering feeling of injustice harboured both by Russians and by their neighbours; a feeling that the others had cheated or betrayed them within the Soviet Union and after its demise. Finally, in this context it is important to stress that the persistent influence of the paradigm of Nation cannot solely be attributed to Russians' actions, but that this instead remained and was reinforced due to mutual accusations and suspicions traded between Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians alike.

Methodology

This thesis employs a qualitative methodology, it is primarily concerned with the use of written sources, and it emphasises the need for primary language-sources, primarily but not exclusively in Russian language. Based on these methodological choices, I shall evaluate the relative influence of each of my paradigms in the main chapters of the thesis. Before doing so, though, I shall briefly discuss my methodological choices, using some existing literature to help me explain why I have taken these choices. Most importantly, the thesis is qualitative as opposed to quantitative in its methodology. Thus, I intend to return to a classical, inductive methodology within the discipline of international relations; a methodology out of favour in the discipline for several decades before again being espoused by scholars such as Hedley Bull. It stems from the disciplines of history, law and philosophy and ultimately relies on the ability of the scholar to make qualified judgements, as opposed to finding truth,[2] which beyond Bull has been the quantifiable aim of most scholars within international relations, Kenneth Waltz foremost among them.[3] By choosing against quantitative methods I do not claim that these are of little use; they undoubtedly offer

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[2] H. Bull, "International Theory: the case for a classical approach," *World Politics*, 18 (3), 1966, p. 361

[3] His most seminal work showing this methodological choice clearly: K. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, 1979

many research possibilities within international relations. Indeed, on some occasions my own argument does seek the support of other scholars' quantitative work. But since sound research relies on making the methods fit the subject matter, rather than the reverse,[4] I myself see no choice but to approach perceptions through qualitative studies. The problem in quantitative methods for my purposes lies in their inherent tendency to deductive reasoning and law-like generalisations. It is problematic to apply such deduction to historical developments, no matter how recent, since the use of independent variables risks preventing an understanding of how such variables were themselves products of other variables in their day.[5] Furthermore, since perceptions are by their very nature subjective it is counterproductive to place them a priori within unyielding categories; such categories should appear solely based on my inductive research. Indeed, what is required for the type of research I shall undertake is an analytic narrative, which is capable of including the "stories, accounts and context" of the developments it seeks to understand.[6]

Yet even with qualitative methods chosen, a faultline remains between the use of written and oral sources. In this thesis, I have almost exclusively chosen in favour of the former, even though I conducted a few interviews to assist my research. As far as I can see, the main problem with the use of oral sources concerns researcher bias. In part, nondirective methods can circumvent this problem, making clear to the respondent that he is responsible for whatever he states, and allowing him to approach the matter as he pleases.[7] And

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[4] G. Almond and S. Genco, "Clouds, Clocks, and the Study of Politics," *World Politics*, 29 (4), 1977, pp. 506, 510

[5] P. Schroeder, "Historical Reality vs. Neo-Realist Theory," *International Security*, 19 (1), 1994, p. 148

[6] D. Dessler, "Analytic Narrative: a methodological innovation in Social Science?" *International Studies Review*, 2 (3), 2000, p. 176

[7] C. Rogers, "The Nondirective Method as a Technique for Social Research," *The American Journal of Sociology*, 50 (4), 1945, p. 279

although such precautions can mostly satisfy the worries of many political science scholars, who consequently believe that interviews are almost always an appropriate research method, within international relations practical problems appear. Even more so that in domestic politics, relevant respondents might here be difficult to engage meaningfully with. And at the same time, the so-called transactional nature of the interview process, where interviewer and respondent both have an influence on the interview, remains an inevitable methodological problem.[8] In recognition of this problem, I have primarily used my interviews and other conversations with Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians and others in an indirect fashion, to expand my understanding of the topic and receive feedback on whether my research concerns were academically fruitful. Written sources have been used more directly in the thesis, even though they, too, present their own kind of methodological concerns. Indeed, whenever written materials are chosen for research there is always a risk of unwarranted selectivity and bias. Regarding primary sources it is important to recall that any sample chosen might differ in important respects from the entire body of sources available. This problem is partly overcome by triangulation of different types of primary sources. Secondary sources must similarly be dealt with in a careful fashion, especially when they are uncorroborated by other sources and to the extent they are influenced by the political, organisation and disciplinary culture within which the author of the given source operates.[9] Nevertheless, if such precautions are taken meaningful qualitative research can be conducted.

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[8] R. Peabody, S. Hammond, J. Torcom, L. Brown, C. Thompson, and R. Kolodny, "Interviewing Political Elites," *PS: political science and politics*, 23 (3), 1990, pp. 452, 454

[9] C. Thies, "A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations," *International Studies Perspectives*, 3 (4), 2002, pp. 355, 359, 362

A final methodological issue that deserves mention concerns the use of primary-language sources. In this thesis, such sources would be mainly Russian-language, although Belarusian- and Ukrainian-language sources are relevant, too. I am convinced that when perceptions from the three post-Soviet states are researched, use of such primary-language material is essential. Otherwise, my research could fall prey to flawed translations, and to interpretations by non-Russian speaking observers, and would in general be arbitrarily limited in the sources it could choose from. Nevertheless, even when primary-language sources are used some limitations are necessary, since a topic such as mine would otherwise have an almost innumerable amount of sources to choose from. How broad a range of sources should be consulted? This depends on the argument proposed; for some studies it would be wholly appropriate to consult only official documents or statements by state leaders. This has often been done fruitfully in the case of Russia, with its relatively hierarchical policy-making. Two reasons, however, made me consult sources from a wide array of Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian actors. First, Russian foreign policy making is not as unambiguously hierarchical as it has often been portrayed; something I shall demonstrate below. Second, it appears to me that induction must involve the non-theoretical recording of identities, whenever possible, must contextualise the meanings of identities in given texts and relate them intertextually.[10] Thus, by limiting the choice of consulted texts to those produced by the most powerful policy-makers, the researcher loses a context that is often, if not always, crucial to understanding how identities develop in domestic and international interaction between all types of actors.

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[10] T. Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: identities & foreign policies, Moscow, 1955 & 1999*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2002, pp. 23, 24

I have now summed up the methodological background for my research. But, at a perhaps more practical level, how shall I evaluate the relative influence of my paradigms within the main body of the thesis? I assume that the existence of a specific paradigm may be discerned within each specific text I have chosen; thus, not only are all my chosen texts relevant for the purpose of presenting paradigms, but I assume that only one paradigm is discernible in each text. Given such assumptions, the question remains: what makes a given text, broadly understood, significant for my purposes? It seems to me that three criteria must apply to such an evaluation.[11] First, I must consider the policy-making importance of the Russian actor presenting the text, an importance I shall outline below in the chapter on foreign policy making. Thus, texts presented by El'tsin and Putin are, everything else equal, more important than texts presented by Vladimir Zhirinovskii and Aleksandr Dugin. Second, I must consider the influence the given text has had, or has not had, on other texts relevant to my argument. Such influence is often difficult to perceive, yet could for instance be seen in the mutual and escalating recriminations concerning energy issues between Russians and Belarusians. Third, I must consider the influence the text had on practical policy relevant to my argument. For instance, El'tsin did not just claim that Russia respected Ukrainian territorial integrity; he ensured this respect was formalised in the 1997 Friendship Treaty.

Below, I shall present an entire chapter on Russian foreign policy making, which shall therefore not be detailed here. However, as a rough generalisation Russian foreign policy actors may be said to have been of greater importance between 1990 and 2008 the more closely connected they are to the Russian President of the day. Concentric circles of influence thus emanated from El'tsin, then Putin, empowering members of government,

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[11] See ibid, p. 25 for my inspiration for these three steps

other actors employed by the Russian executive, actors opposed to the executive, and finally Russian actors with no direct political influence on Russian policy, living inside and outside Russia. Such influence was often, but not exclusively, wielded *ex officio*. Thus, when President Putin, for example, in 2008 threatened that the inclusion of Ukraine in NATO might result in Russian territorial demands on Crimea, this carried much more weight than repeated threats to the same effect uttered by Russian academics such as Aleksandr Dugin. Although distribution of influence was often roughly similar in Belarus and Ukraine, this is of less direct importance to my argument, since this only considers Belarusian and Ukrainian texts that constituted Russian perceptions.

The actor presenting the text certainly matters, but it cannot be denied that the same actor might over time have presented texts belonging to different paradigms. El'tsin is a case in point, having vigorously supported post-Soviet democratic developments as commensurate with the paradigm of Law, before he deplored Western interference in post-Soviet governance, as commensurate with the paradigm of Power, or even warned Belarusians and Ukrainians not to infringe on the rights of local Russians, as commensurate with the paradigm of Nation. Therefore, envisaging a more autonomous existence for individual texts is methodologically necessary. Hence I introduce the second criterion on which the relative influence of the paradigms might be evaluated. Whether a given text has influenced other texts relevant to my argument is partly a matter of evaluation. Yet, texts will often, directly or indirectly refer back to texts they agree or disagree with; the more a single text is referred to thus, the greater its influence. My task as a researcher is to highlight such connections between texts, in order to establish inter-textual narratives developing over time. For example, I show the link between Russian scholars and members of the legislature

in mid-1992 advocating the construction of an internationally recognised Russian sphere of influence, or "Monroe Doctrine," and its espousal by El'tsin in the beginning of 1993. In a case such as this, it seems to me reasonable to accept the narrative of text in question almost as an autonomous actor, gaining a life of its own. Yet the appearance of texts within a given paradigm is in itself rarely sufficient reason to claim that the paradigm significantly influenced Russian foreign policy thinking of the day. Indeed, a third criterion is even more important for such an evaluation: whether the text or texts in question influenced Russian foreign policy more materially. For example, it is one indication for Putin to state that Russia might wish to become member of NATO; it is quite a different, ultimately more significant indication when the Russian and Belarusian military conducted several exercises unequivocally directed against a potential future threat from the Western military organisation. I do not argue that Putin's statement here should be ignored, or even necessarily dismissed as less important than the military exercises, which are, after all, a sort of text, too. Nevertheless, I do believe that in order to properly evaluate the significance of the paradigms of Law, Power and Nation on Russian foreign policy at any given time, incorporation of material policies espoused by Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine shall, more often than not, be most fruitful.

Literature review

I have thus presented my methodological assumptions and preferences. Within this introduction it remains for me to outline where I position my thesis in the substantial body of literature on Russian foreign policy. Below, I shall highlight the most significant parts of this literature, and I shall seek to demonstrate how, in my opinion, most scholars have so far

tended to unquestioningly describe Russian foreign policy, towards Belarus, Ukraine and other international actors, within one of the three paradigms I highlight, without acknowledging the significance of these paradigms together. Before doing so, however, I shall begin by highlighting two studies, one mainly theoretical and one mainly empirical, which more than any other works inspired the argument of this thesis, even if this ultimately disagrees with these forebears. The two studies in question are Alexander Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics*,[12] and Margot Light's chapter "Russian Foreign Policy Thinking" in Neil Malcolm, Alex Pravda, Roy Allison and Margot Light's *Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy*.[13] Wendt's seminal book convincingly established the theoretical foundations for a multifaceted international system where quite varied types of interactions were possible between the actors; my work is heavily indebted to Wendt in this regard. However, I also argue that Wendt's categorisation of potential systems is too rigid. Wendt outlines "three...structures at the macro-level" of the international system; structures centred on enmity, rivalry, or amity, which characterises international interaction, and which may be reified through force, material gain, or an inherent belief in its legitimacy.[14] My paradigms do bear a passing resemblance to his structures; nevertheless, fundamental differences persist. While my paradigms of Law and Nation can partly find common ground with Wendt's structures of amity and enmity, respectively, my paradigm of Power has little to do with his structure of rivalry. More fundamentally, my paradigms are much more intertwined than Wendt's structures; although each of my paradigms stands alone complete, all of them can exist within the same polity during the

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[12] A. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: CUP, 1999

[13] M. Light, "Foreign Policy Thinking" in N. Malcolm, A. Pravda, R. Allison and M. Light, *Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy*, Oxford: OUP, 1996, pp. 33-100

[14] Wendt, *Social*, pp. 247, 250

same years, which does not seem to be the case for Wendt. Similarly, my ambition is much more circumscribed than Wendt's; he seeks to explain the international system as such, whereas I seek to understand a specific part of it at a specific time. Ultimately, therefore, I depart from Wendt's work on epistemological grounds; a topic I shall return to in the next chapter.

Margot Light's analysis of Russian foreign policy thinking inspired me differently. Analysing Russian foreign policy thinking during the early 1990s, she refers to a continuum of perspectives held by significant Russian political actors, with extremely pro-Western views at one end of the spectrum and extremely xenophobic, revanchist views at the other. The former group, favouring a market economy, are referred to as Liberal Westernisers, whereas the latter group, "who combined extreme nationalism with antipathy towards economic reform," are labelled Fundamentalist Nationalists. These categories bear a passing resemblance to my paradigms of Law and Nation, respectively, but significant differences persist. First, in the context of Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty a category such as Liberal Westernisation that is primarily Western-centric needs substantial modification to become applicable. Second, I argue that perceptions within the category of Fundamentalist Nationalism were much more widespread in Russia than Light seemingly indicates, both during and after the period she analyses. Nevertheless, these are not fundamental differences between Light and me. Such a difference appears, however, with her category of Pragmatic Nationalism. According to Light, this category contains those Russians who split from the ranks of the Liberal Westernisers in early 1992 and "proposed a more independent policy vis-à-vis the West and a more integrationist stance towards the

other successor states."[15] However, to me this category does not appear to have been fully conceptualised by Light; it almost becomes a residual category for any perceptions that do not fit in elsewhere. It is never clear to me what is meant by "pragmatic," beyond perceptions that are neither friendly, nor overly hostile to the West; that simply disagree with the West/us in a way that is acceptable. Although Light thus frees her analysis from overly constraining categories, a freedom I support in principle, I believe that "pragmatism" is too blurred a concept to be of much analytical use; the basic motivations for "pragmatists" remain unclear. Consequently, as I outlined above in my argument, I believe that introducing categories, or paradigms, which are fundamentally distinct from each other, rather than relative degrees of something mutually comparable (i.e. attitudes towards the West) is more analytically fruitful.

Beyond Wendt and Light my research has drawn on a substantial amount of scholarly works, since Post-Soviet Russian foreign policy has already been the subject of much debate. Robert Donaldson and Joseph Nogee's *The Foreign Policy of Russia*[16] remains perhaps the one work touching on all aspects of the topic, while Nicolai Petro and Alvin Rubinstein's *Russian Foreign Policy*,[17] as well as Bobo Lo's *Russian Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era*[18] and *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy*[19] have been helpful concerning the first half of the period I researched. And although most research focused on Russian policy towards the West, analyses of Russian policy towards post-Soviet states were

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[15] Light, "Foreign Policy Thinking," p. 34

[16] R. Donaldson and J. Nogee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: changing systems, enduring interests (3rd ed.)*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2005

[17] N. Petro and A. Rubinstein, *Russian Foreign Policy: from empire to nation-state*, New York: Longman, 1997

[18] B. Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: reality, illusion and mythmaking*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002

[19] B. Lo, *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy*, London: RIIA, 2003

widespread, too. Apart from the above-mentioned books, this was visible in Martha Olcott, Anders Åslund and Sherman Garnett's *Getting it Wrong*,[20] in Graeme Herd and Jennifer Moroney's edited volume, *Security Dynamics in the Former Soviet Bloc*,[21] and in Bertil Nygren's *The Rebuilding of Greater Russia*.[22] On the question of Russian relations with Belarus and Ukraine, it would also be necessary to recognise the central importance held by Mikhail Molchanov's *Political Culture and National Identity in Russian-Ukrainian Relations*,[23] Ruth Deyermond's "The State of the Union,"[24] as well as her *Security and Sovereignty in the Former Soviet Union*,[25] and, albeit from a slightly more journalistic angle, Anatol Lieven's *Ukraine & Russia*.[26]

Theory and practice

Yet despite the undoubted merits of these works, it would be problematic to view them as simply adding to existing knowledge of the subject, in pursuit of complete understanding of pre-given truth. Indeed, as I demonstrate below existing literature on Russian foreign policy has tended, mostly unwittingly, to argue that Russian perceptions existed solely within one of the three paradigms I identify. And in doing so, such literature has at times even constituted Russian foreign policy through praise or criticism. That academia might

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[20] M. Olcott, A. Aslund and S. Garnett, *Getting it Wrong: regional cooperation and the Commonwealth of Independent States*, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999

[21] G. Herd and J. Moroney, eds., *Security Dynamics in the Former Soviet Bloc*, New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003

[22] B. Nygren, *The Rebuilding of Greater Russia: Putin's foreign policy towards the CIS countries*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2007

[23] M. Molchanov, *Political Culture and National Identity in Russian-Ukrainian Relations*, College Station, TX: Texas A&M, 2002

[24] R. Deyermond, "The State of the Union: military success, economic and political failure in the Russia-Belarus Union," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 56 (8), 2004, pp. 1191-1205

[25] R. Deyermond, *Security and Sovereignty in the Former Soviet Union*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2008

[26] A. Lieven, *Ukraine & Russia: a fraternal rivalry*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1999

indirectly influence policy processes has unnerved some scholars, who fear the erosion of the comparative advantages held by the profession by its insertion in a political process.[27] Some academics openly disagree that even state-funded academia should provide clear-cut advice and training of personnel to state administrations, ministries etc.[28] Most academics are more relaxed, or even wholly supportive of such an influence, though. Sometimes, an input into the policy debate is very hands-on, with scholars attempting to map out precisely the steps their political elite should take.[29] Within international relations Philip Zelikow, for one, outlined a framework for politicians to follow.[30] Certainly, for Zelikow and others such prescription appeared to be an almost moral obligation.[31] Their position was emboldened by the introduction of many academic terms, such as deterrence, balance-of-power, and interdependence in policy-makers' vocabulary during the Cold War,[32] just as the theory of the democratic peace was employed by American President Bill Clinton and others as one justification for supporting democratic developments in the former Soviet region.[33]

I outline this background of the sometimes troubled relations between academia and policy-making in order for the reader to understand the importance and even possible danger of a

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[27] C. Hill, "Academic International Relations: the siren song of policy relevance" in C. Hill and P. Beshoff, eds., *Two Worlds of International Relations: academics, practitioners and the trade in ideas*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 20

[28] S. Smith, "Power and Truth: a reply to William Wallace," *Review of International Studies*¸ 23 (4), 1997, p. 510

[29] See e.g. R. Neustadt and E. May, *Thinking in Time: the uses of history for decision makers*, New York: Free Press, 1986, pp. 273-75

[30] P. Zelikow, "Foreign Policy Engineering: from theory to practice and back again," *International Security*, 18 (4), 1994, p. 144

[31] W. Wallace, "Truth and Power, Monks and Technocrats: theory and practice in international relations," *Review of International Studies*, 22 (3), 1996, p. 301

[32] J. Nye jr., "International Relations: the relevance of theory to practice" in C. Reus-Smit and D. Snidal, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, Oxford: OUP, 2008, p. 651

[33] R. Siverson, "A Glass Half Full? No, but perhaps a glass filling: the contribution of international politics research to policy," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 33 (1), 2000, pp. 60, 61

deficit in existing academic literature. As I mentioned above, this literature has generally tended to view Russian foreign policy perceptions as static in nature, whereas my research intends to highlight the simultaneous existence and varying influence of what I call paradigms. In the following I shall thus outline some of the most prominent scholarly works that have viewed Russian perceptions within paradigms of Law, Power and Nation, respectively (although the scholars in question were mostly unaware of this and seldom if ever wrote of paradigms and the like), stressing as I go along why such approaches are insufficient for the purposes of my research.

Law

I shall first present texts, which implicitly argue that Russian foreign policy perceptions mainly existed within the paradigm of Law. Russia emerged from the ashes of the Soviet Union and a new, Western-dominated law-governed world appeared, or so many wanted to believe. In the early 1990s, academics interested in facilitating Russian cooperation with the West needed a Russian government to support such efforts. And even Russian scholars such as Aleksei Arbatov, who were slightly critical of the West, outlined their own position more efficiently by emphasising a Westernised Russian leadership. Thus, Arbatov categorically stated that "One group, headed by foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev, is characterized by conspicuously pro-Western policies, with a heavy tilt towards economic determinism and universal democratic values...Kozyrev's principal support has come from President Boris Yeltsin..."[34] Western observers were happy to accept Arbatov's claim. Subsequently, during El'tsin's second presidential term, Ustina Markus remained unconvinced that the Russian leadership sought reintegration of former imperial lands, including Belarus. Convinced that

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[34] A. Arbatov, "Russia's Foreign Policy Alternatives," *International Security*, 18 (2), 1993, p. 9

Russians still wanted to adopt Westernised international laws and norms, she wrote in 1997 that "...the Kremlin has often behaved as if integration with Belarus would be more of a liability than a boon...Yeltsin and Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin are known to hold [Lukashenko] personally in disdain. The Belarusian president's repressive domestic policies have made it increasingly difficult for Moscow to stand by its smaller neighbor..."[35] Contemporary and subsequent events did not reflect this, nor did they support Michael McFaul the following year as he stated: "Though challenged at several critical junctures, Russian liberals – defined here most minimally as those committed to markets, free trade, individual rights, and democracy – have defeated their illiberal opponents during most of Russia's volatile regime transition. Their victories, in turn, have ensured that Russia has pursued peaceful, integrationist policies with all democratic states..."[36] The division of Soviet spoils was hardly commensurate with a market economy, and democracy remained mostly elusive, in Russia as well as in Belarus and Ukraine, although Western scholars often appeared unconcerned with conditions in non-Russian post-Soviet states. An overt, even exaggerated focus on Russia became even clearer following the terrorist attacks on the USA in September, 2001, which Putin immediately used to express his support for the West. As a result of this, Oksana Antonenko soon after stated that "...Putin took a major gamble after 11 September, setting aside all outstanding strategic disagreements and offering full Russian support to the [USA]-led coalition against terror...Putin has played his diplomatic game with a great deal of skill, not explicitly linking Russia's support to concessions on other issues."[37] However, Putin's support was certainly indirectly linked to such concessions, many of which

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[35] U. Markus, "Russia and Belarus: elusive integration," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 44 (5), 1997, p. 55

[36] M. McFaul, "A Precarious Peace: domestic politics in the making of Russian foreign policy," *International Security*, 22 (3), 1997-98, p. 6

[37] O. Antonenko, "Putin's Gamble," *Survival*, 43 (4), 2001, pp. 49, 51

concerned the post-Soviet region. But even as this became clear through Putin's increasingly strident tone over the coming years, many Western observers sought succour in the fact that an allegedly vibrant Russian foreign policy debate retained spokespersons for rapprochement with the West. Indeed, several works had previously highlighted how average Russians' foreign policy perceptions often differed from those of their political representatives. For the El'tsin presidency as a whole William Zimmerman had thus found that "Not only were Russian mass publics in the aggregate rational in their foreign policy postures, they were by and large prudent in their policy responses concerning the use of force in general..."[38] And under Putin few Russian experts on foreign policy were more prominent than Dmitrii Trenin, who in his seminal *The End of Eurasia* made clear that "The only rational option is to fully stress Russia's European identity and engineer its gradual integration into a Greater Europe...a clear pro-Europe choice would facilitate the country's modernization, its adjustment to the 21st century world."[39] If this lucid vision had little place in Putin's worldview its usefulness was limited; thus many Western scholars argued that Putin, despite his strident statements to the contrary, had been misunderstood and was really becoming increasingly civilised. Thus, Tor Bukkvoll acknowledged in 2003 that while many Russian interest groups distrusted the West "...Putin...has had a personal revision of thought...it is more a question [for Putin] of occasionally putting aside personal inclinations...there seems to have been a development in Putin's geopolitical thinking...towards a cautious pro-Western position that came into full bloom after

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[38] W. Zimmerman, *The Russian People and Foreign Policy: Russian elite and mass perspectives, 1993-2000*, Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: PUP, 2002, p. 218

[39] D. Trenin, *The End of Eurasia: Russia on the border between geopolitics and globalization*, Washington, DC, and Moscow: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002, p. 311

September 11."[40] Other scholars argued Putin's support for the rule of law had much older

origins. Samuel Charap delved into the President's background within the former mayor of

St Petersburg, Anatolii Sobchak's, administration, since Sobchak had been known for his

Westernised policies: "Putin...eschews ideology in favor of an emphasis on practical results.

He believes that foreign policy should serve the end of modernizing the country...To

advance Russia's economic interests, Putin has stressed the need for Moscow to integrate

itself into Western institutions and to attract Western investment."[41] In his analysis Charap

ignored Russian views of Belarus and Ukraine, the fates of which he seemed to find

irrelevant. Maybe they were irrelevant; other scholars were convinced that Belarusians and

Ukrainians might by now seek law-governed sovereignty by themselves. Grigory Ioffe

certainly thought that Belarus increasingly embraced their full sovereignty and only

temporarily sought assistance from Russia: "...the number of converts to the nationalist

[Belarusian] cause has been growing slowly but steadily...The broad masses *are* in fact

patriotic...Belarusian technocrats value Belarus' sovereignty much more than most

Lukashenka supporters...That these people reach out to Russia for help is not surprising, as

it is the only place where they could possibly count on being helped."[42] On a similar note,

Margarita Balmaceda was convinced that influential members of the Ukrainian energy

sector wanted full Ukrainian sovereignty and distance from Russian competitors, in order to

maximise their income: "...the competition and struggle between economic groups over

energy business and over the distribution of economic gains (and losses) from energy

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[40] T. Bukkvoll, "Putin's Strategic Partnership with the West: the domestic politics of Russian foreign policy," *Comparative Strategy*, 22 (3), 2003, pp. 234, 236

[41] S. Charap, "The Petersburg Experience: Putin's political career and Russian foreign policy," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 51 (1), 2004, p. 57

[42] G. Ioffe, "Understanding Belarus: economy and political landscape," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 56 (1), 2004, pp. 112, 113

trade...played a central role in influencing political elites in Ukraine."[43] Russians might find it costly to openly resist neighbouring states strengthening their sovereignty. Christian Thorun argued that "...the Russian leadership was confronted with a stark choice between confronting the Western states and cooperating with them...the Russian leadership reacted in a risk-averse manner and chose cooperation rather than confrontation."[44] Although Thorun did not focus on Russian relations with Belarus and Ukraine, his understanding that Russian behaviour was constituted by the international environment indicated a Russia slowly becoming enmeshed in a Law-governed world.

Power

Now, I shall present texts, which implicitly argue that Russian foreign policy perceptions mainly existed within the paradigm of Power. Although the above-mentioned optimism concerning Russian international behaviour was not unfounded, it was difficult to ignore the historical heritage encumbering Russia; a heritage centred on empire and on international great power status. Already in 1992 Roman Solchanyk warned that for many Russians in the late Soviet period "'Russianness,' or Russian national identity, is inconceivable outside the imperial context."[45] Solchanyk was certainly correct to note that Russian state-building had a hollow core, yet his defeatist claim risked appearing self-fulfilling. His claim also needed to be more detailed; this problem was recognised but seldom overcome by other scholars. In 1995, David Kerr claimed that: "The rise of geopolitics in Russian foreign policy at present is

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[43] M. Balmaceda, *Energy Dependency, Politics and Corruption in the Former Soviet Union: Russia's power, oligarchs' profits and Ukraine's missing energy policy, 1995-2006*, London: Routledge, 2008, p. 140

[44] C. Thorun, *Explaining Change in Russian Foreign Policy: the role of ideas in post-Soviet Russia's conduct towards the West*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 137

[45] R. Solchanyk, "Ukraine, the (Former) Centre, Russia and 'Russia'," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, 25 (1), 1992, p. 36

being driven partly by the conditions of post-communism...the need to construct a foreign policy consensus around a concept which has deep roots in Russia's political culture and national psyche...For Russians, the concept of Eurasia remains rooted, as it has been historically, in control and defence of territory."[46] Kerr never explained what he meant by "geopolitics," and any claims about "roots in the national psyche" seemed unhelpful. Still, Kerr's arguments were influenced by the theory of Realism in the discipline of international relations, and this theory had a respectable academic pedigree, even though it was unavoidably vague on some issues. In 1997, Stephen Walt highlighted this point in the context of Russia: "...realism is not a theory about the causes of internal decline or disintegration. Put differently, realism simply does not say very much about how a state will behave when it is coming apart at the seams."[47] Walt succeeded in defending Realism as a theory, but by his own admission Realism and claims of great power-thinking was insufficiently relevant for post-Soviet Russian foreign policy, since Russia in many ways continued to come apart at the seams.

Yet with the introduction of Putin's vigorous leadership, some scholars thought this disintegrative process had stopped. In 2000, John Dunlop claimed: "The new imperial project sponsored by the Putin regime will once again witness ethnic Russians seeking to impose their will on non-Russians...The de-facto ideology of the Putin regime seems to be Russian imperial nationalism with accretions of pan-Orthodox Slavism..."[48] Perhaps Dunlop's analysis could be relevant in some contexts, but the non-Russians that would have pan-

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[46] D. Kerr, "The New Eurasianism: the rise of geopolitics in Russia's foreign policy," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 47 (6), 1995, pp. 986, 987

[47] S. Walt, "The Gorbachev Interlude and International Relations Theory," *Diplomatic History*, 21 (3), 1997, p. 476

[48] J. Dunlop, "Reintegrating Post-Soviet Space," *Journal of Democracy*, 11 (3), 2000, p. 46

Orthodox Slavism imposed on them were not Belarusians and Ukrainians, who, in fact, appeared to be ignored by Dunlop in the context of relations between Russia and the West. Flemming Splidsboel-Hansen wrote in 2002: "Post-Soviet Russia...is striving to change the international power distribution and to challenge the present European order...Russia is implementing a foreign policy which is first and foremost designed to support the domestic restructuring..."[49] However, what would the alternative have been? Might Russians have ignored domestic weakness, aggressively promoting international expansion? Splidsboel-Hansen's account might not tell us much in the context of relations between post-Soviet states. A focus on such relations did not necessarily solve the problem. Alex Danilovich stated that "The issue of Russian-Belarusian unification was used by the Russian leadership to promote its domestic agenda."[50] This appeared to promise an analysis delving into motivations for Russian policy. Yet subsequently Danilovich merely offered: "What has been done in the reintegration business has been nothing more than unscrupulous exploitation of the natural attraction of the two closely related peoples to each other."[51] The argument that natural interests facilitated Russo-Belarusian integration was analytically sterile, and left little room for introducing competing Russian foreign policy perspectives. Maybe this was the point; maybe Danilovich and other scholars believed in a natural order of Russian foreign policy? In 2001, Allen Lynch correctly challenged the assertion that Russian foreign policy under Andrei Kozyrev and Evgenii Primakov had been fundamentally different. He argued: "'Liberal Russia' discovered very early, as had the ill-fated Provisional Government of 1917 and the Bolsheviks by 1921, that the structure of the international political system

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[49] F. Splidsboel-Hansen, "Past and Future Meet: Aleksandr Gorchakov and Russian foreign policy," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 54 (3), 2002, p. 378

[50] A. Danilovich, *Russian-Belarusian Integration: playing games behind the Kremlin walls*, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006, p. 163

[51] Ibid, p. 168

tended to undermine the transformative claims of ideology, whether it be liberal or communist."[52] Yet surely the great power aims followed by Russians were ideological, too. In 2005, Robert Donaldson and Joseph Nogee also described great power policy as commonsensical: "...as a general rule of statecraft, Russia has pursued balance-of-power policies...*balance-of-power policies* are the measures taken by governments whose interests or security is threatened, to enhance their power by whatever means are available...The enduring goals pursued by Russia through its foreign policy have placed primary emphasis on ensuring national security, promoting the economic well-being of the country, and enhancing national prestige. In this respect, Russia's behavior is not markedly different from that of most great powers..."[53] Indeed, or from any other conceivable state, for that matter. During the same year, Thomas Ambrosio only marginally expanded such analysis as he examined whether Russian elites had balanced or bandwagoned with the USA following the Cold War. He concluded: "The fundamental question of Russia's post-Soviet foreign policy remains...how can Russia play a great power role despite its overall relative weakness in relation to all the other real or potential great powers?"[54] That Russian aims might be incompatible with great power-status was not considered by Ambrosio. From an economic angle, Andrei Tsygankov provided a similarly incomplete analysis: "Rather than being involved in an empire-building project, the Kremlin seeks stability and security in the former Soviet region...Although the Kremlin's interests do not always coincide with those of the West, Russia's use of soft power may be generally compatible with the objectives of

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[52] A. Lynch, "The Realism of Russia's Foreign Policy," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 53 (1), 2001, p. 23

[53] Donaldson and Nogee, p. 4; emphasis in original

[54] T. Ambrosio, *Challenging America's Global Preeminence: Russia's quest for multipolarity*, Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005, p. 170

Western nations..."[55] However, post-Soviet stability and security implied an empire-building

project, since Russian elites argued that instability had emerged with Soviet disintegration.

Tsygankov's book on Russian foreign policy and national identity suffered from similar

contradictions. Tsygankov began by outlining that "In the field of international relations, the

perspective that begins the analysis by asking what 'national' is and that exposes the

'nation' to various meanings and interpretations is called social constructivism..."[56]

However, such a perceptive did not inform his book, which instead depicted a simple,

power-focused Russian foreign policy during most of the post-Soviet period. Tsygankov

distinguished between "great power balancing" and "great power pragmatism," but the

distinction remained artificial in relation to other post-Soviet states: "In the former Soviet

Union...Great Power Pragmatism implied an abandonment of [Great Power Balancing's]

integration project in favour of less costly and mutually advantageous bilateral relations. In

re-establishing bilateral ties consistent with his belief in economic modernization, Putin

reasserted control over many of the ex-republics' strategic property and transportation,

particularly electricity and energy pipeline facilities."[57] Thus, Putin's political strategy was

only "mutually advantageous" for Belarus and Ukraine given the assumption that Putin

knew best what would benefit the economies of these neighbouring states. That Russians

might disagree with developments in neighbouring states was subsequently understood in

Ambrosio's book from 2009, *Authoritarian Backlash*, which concluded: "The Kremlin clearly

absorbed the lessons of the color revolutions [in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan] and took

preventive steps to weaken internal democratic forces and undermine external democracy

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[55] A. Tsygankov, "If Not by Tanks, then by Banks? The role of soft power in Putin's foreign policy," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 58 (7), 2006, pp. 1097, 1098

[56] A. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: change and continuity in national identity*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006, p. 14

[57] Ibid, p. 171

promotion [in Russia]."[58] Nevertheless, again the account was focused on consequences for the West. Russian hostility towards Belarusians and Ukrainians might have been implied, but it was not highlighted.

Nation

Finally, I shall present texts, which implicitly argue that Russian foreign policy perceptions mainly existed within the paradigm of Nation. Above, I mentioned how some Western observers implied hostility between Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians. Sometimes, these observers might inadvertently increase post-Soviet tensions. This was certainly a risk carried by John Mearsheimer's statement from 1993 that: "A nuclear Ukraine makes sense...it is imperative to maintain peace between Russia and Ukraine. That means ensuring that the Russians, who have a history of bad relations with Ukraine do not move to reconquer it."[59] Mearsheimer's logic was almost irresponsible, and it was obvious that he did not live in either Russia or Ukraine. Similarly, the Ukrainian and Polish diaspora in the West happily chided Russia from afar: "Ukraine watches the nationalist turn in neighboring Russia with unease bordering on alarm. Much of the Russian political spectrum, obsessed with reclaiming great power status and reuniting the former Soviet republics, recognizes that Ukraine is the key to its plans and openly espouses reabsorption. President Boris Yeltsin...has, in his quest for votes, absorbed much of the nationalist agenda..."[60] This strong allegation was never properly supported in Jonathan Mroz and Oleksandr Pavliuk's article. In 1998, A. James Gregor was more meticulous as he outlined diverse Russian nationalist

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[58] T. Ambrosio, *Authoritarian Backlash: Russian resistance to democratization in the former Soviet Union*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2009, p. 203

[59] J. Mearsheimer, "The Case for a Ukrainian Nuclear Deterrent," *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (3), 1993, p. 50

[60] J. Mroz and O. Pavliuk, "Ukraine: Europe's linchpin," *Foreign Affairs*, 75 (3), 1996, p. 52

groupings. Still, depicting the leader of the oppositional Communist Party Gennadii Ziuganov as spokesman for Russian great power status in the Soviet mould sat uneasily with observations that Ziuganov "...has called upon the nation's sons and daughters to restore and protect the spiritual and cultural heritage of the Russian empire."[61] What Gregor discerned here and elsewhere was the substantial influence that nation-centred revanchism had on Ziuganov's policies. Other scholars emphasised that such a focus on nation, and even race, had been latent in Soviet Russia, especially among the opposition, whose writings influenced post-Soviet Russian identity. Thus, Nathan Larson claimed that "...most shades of Russian nationalism are not readily imbued with tolerance for Jews...because many Jews are seen as refusing to assimilate into the ethnic community of a given nation."[62] Although the Jewish question is not central to Russo-Belarusian or Russo-Ukrainian relations Larson's stress on a fixed, pure Russian nation certainly is. Similarly, an article by Meredith Roman on Russian perceptions of the Caucasus understood how "Moscow was able so quickly to portray and conceive their former little brothers [in the Caucasus] as criminals and parasites because, according to the logic of the official Soviet script, non-Russians' foolish secession from the system in which they were the chief beneficiaries simply meant their degeneration to their uncivilized pre-Soviet existence."[63]

Such comments were certainly relevant, too, for Belarusians and Ukrainians, who sought to distance their newly sovereign states from Russia, even if Russia officially had accepted

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[61] A. Gregor, "Fascism and the New Russian Nationalism," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 31 (1), 1998, p. 9

[62] N. Larson, *Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and the Modern Russo-Jewish Question*, Stuttgart: ibidem, 2005, p. 138

[63] M. Roman, "Making Caucasians Black: Moscow since the fall of Communism and the racialization of non-Russians," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 18 (2), 2002, p. 8

disintegration of an overarching Soviet sovereignty. Indeed, as Thomas Parland warned in 2005: "In Putin's Russia...Officially, rightist extremism has been banned by law. On the other hand, certain state structures, in particular the repressive ones, are still perceived as hotbeds of racism..."[64] Parland also noted "...the general tendency of a steadily growing conservative mood against Westernisation. Pure nationalism seems to get the upper hand in state and society. The changed political climate improves Putin's possibility to be re-elected President in 2004."[65] Nevertheless, Ziuganov, Putin and other members of the Russian elite underestimated the extent to which nationalist rhetoric complicated bilateral post-Soviet relations, a development identified by Jan Adams already in 2002: "The relations between Russia and Ukraine reveal...Ukraine's resentment of Russia [was] rooted in the conviction that the nation was viciously exploited by the Soviet regime and that Russia's policies are still dominated by an imperialistic mindset."[66] Thus, relations were complicated by increased Ukrainian, as well as Russian hostility. The Russo-Belarusian relationship was similarly troubled and discord was detected by Ruth Deyermond in 2004: "Russian-Belarusian relations have experienced periodic cooling throughout the period since the break-up of the USSR, particularly since Putin became President of Russia. Even allowing for this cycle of warming and cooling relations, however, it appears clear that relations between the two states have become distinctly strained...it appears that the close linkage of the [Russo-Belarusian] union with Lukashenka...is viewed as an obstacle, even an embarrassment by the Russian administration and its supporters."[67] Conversely, David Marples noted how Belarusians might also be losing faith in the goodwill of the Russian

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[64] T. Parland, *The Extreme Nationalist Threat in Russia: the growing influence of Western Rightist ideas*, London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005, p. 202

[65] Ibid, p. 204

[66] J. Adams, "Russia's Gas Diplomacy," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 49 (3), 2002, pp. 16, 17

[67] Deyermond, "State," p. 1201

leadership: "Subjected to a barrage of official propaganda for the past thirteen years, Belarusians seem to have concluded that their quiet backwater with a strategically important location must be preserved as a sovereign and independent entity...Alyaksandr Lukashenka began his presidency by advocating a return to the Russian fold, but his image of Russia did not correspond with the reality of a rapidly changing quasi-capitalist state with a booming economy."[68] Similarly, the fact that relations between Russia and Ukraine also deteriorated following the election of Viktor Iushchenko as Ukrainian President in 2004 was emphasised by some Western observers. Yet accusations against Russians were often unsubstantiated. After Iushchenko had been controversially poisoned before his election, Taras Kuzio noted: "The dioxin probably came from laboratories in Russia once controlled by the Soviet KGB and now by the [FSB]. The timing of the poisoning suggests an element of panic on the part of [Ukrainian President Leonid] Kuchma's supporters."[69] Kuzio's article did not further support the charge, and thus seemed to unnecessarily poison Russo-Ukrainian relations. And poisoned they were, as Ruth Deyermond later pointed out, partly due to "...two distinct models of sovereignty, Soviet and Western [which] can be identified in the bilateral and multilateral interactions between the states of the CIS. Soviet understanding of the term...which is...constrained to the point where it ceases to have any practical meaning...In contrast, significant sections of the Ukrainian...elites have...[proceeded] from a Western understanding of the term *sovereignty*..."[70] Deyermond's distinction between freedom-seeking Ukraine and encroaching Russia was perhaps insufficiently nuanced, but

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[68] D. Marples, "Is the Russia-Belarus Union Obsolete?" *Problems of Post-Communism*, 55 (1), 2008, pp. 33, 34

[69] T. Kuzio, "From Kuchma to Yushchenko: Ukraine's 2004 presidential election and the Orange Revolution," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 52 (2), 2005, p. 38

[70] Deyermond, *Security*, pp. 198, 199

highlighting different Russian perceptions of sovereignty significantly advanced the academic debate.

As I have sought to demonstrate, existing literature has mainly focused on Russian foreign policy relating to the West. Thus, existing literature failed to fully illuminate how strands of foreign policy thinking constantly interacted with each other, with material circumstances, and with developments in Belarusian and Ukrainian perspectives. Thus, what this thesis adds to existing knowledge is an elaboration of the understanding that many types of Russian behaviour exists; that, "Russian" behaviour is what Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, and other international actors make of it. On the one hand, this is an optimistic message: when tension rises in the post-Soviet region it will not inevitably escalate. Nor, for that matter, can we be certain that tension will reappear in future. However, the paradigm of Nation, as I have labelled it, has proven very persistent and not substantially weaker towards the end of Putin's presidency, compared to the late Soviet period, no matter the issue area. This is worrisome, for the Russian paradigm of Nation has no plans for coexisting peacefully with a sovereign Belarus or a sovereign Ukraine in their current form; and it may well grow more significant in future.

Chapter 2: Theory: assumptions of the argument

Before I present the main parts of my thesis, however, I must present the theoretical assumptions that support my argument. As I outlined in the introduction, I argue that significant Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty between 1990 and 2008 may broadly be divided into three paradigms, centred on the concepts of Law, Power, and Nation, respectively. Furthermore, I argue that perceptions within the paradigm of Power were generally most prominent; that perceptions within the paradigm of Law became gradually less important over time.

With this in mind, I now intend to demonstrate the epistemological, ontological and levels-of-analysis assumptions that support my argument. These three types of assumptions exist in any analysis of international relations, although, as my literature review indicated, most existing analyses of Russian foreign policy have presented their assumptions in insufficient detail. In this thesis, on the contrary, I shall not only make my theoretical assumptions explicit, but I shall demonstrate that synthesis between seemingly opposed standpoints is both possible and fruitful in the context of my argument. I show that the paradigms may be read as narratives, each with its past, present and future as I previously stated; I demonstrate that Russian foreign policy perceptions cannot be satisfactorily understood by changes in either the ideational environment, or in material circumstances, but must be viewed within the context of both. Finally, I argue that neither Russians, nor Belarusians and Ukrainians, can be held exclusively responsible for the influence of various paradigms, but that such influence waxed and waned due to changes both within Russia and within its

international environment, particularly Belarus and Ukraine. Thus, I contend that developments in perception and policy were due to constitutive, not causal effects.

Epistemology: narrative as synthesis

Epistemology is the study of how we can claim to know something; it concerns our theories of knowledge. Traditionally, epistemological disagreements relate to whether the aim of research should be explanation or understanding. However, as I shall demonstrate in the following, a narrative epistemology can overcome such disagreement and in the process significantly enrich my argument.

Explanation: the ideal of objective knowledge

An explanatory, or positivist, epistemology aims to establish objective knowledge, aims to establish truth.[71] Thus, it is problematic to explain perceptions of any sort, since such perceptions are by their very nature subjective. When dealing with articulated perceptions, and their influence on policy, as I do in this thesis, objective categorisation is not impossible a priori. Yet it is difficult to argue that such categories are facts that can be observed.[72] And such an argument appears to be necessary for an epistemological position that has aims similar to those of natural science, which only ascribes objective meanings to the world.[73] Thus, positivist epistemology mostly appears in theories concerned with the influence of material, measureable factors. However, theories concerned with perceptions, such as

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[71] T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (3rd ed.)*, Chicago, Il: UCP, 1996, pp. 25-27

[72] M. Hollis and S. Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1990, pp. 61-63

[73] M. Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research: meaning and perspective in the research process*, London: Sage, 2003, p. 27

constructivism, sometimes employ positivism. The argument goes that even the most influential subjective perceptions cannot change some objective, material parameters of the world within which all actors exist.[74] Certainly, Russians would have had no choice but to take notice if Belarus and Ukraine had aimed nuclear-armed missiles at Moscow. But this does not mean that epistemological issues can be ignored;[75] the futile search for an objective Russian national interest has shown this.

Understanding: the ideal of subjective knowledge

Therefore, an epistemology focused on understanding, so-called post-positivism, might be expected to be more fruitful for my purposes. Notably, such an epistemology enables debate of how perceptions appear and how they change,[76] issues of direct relevance to my argument. It also provides a helpful reminder that analytical categorisation of perceptions must be postponed for as long as possible since imposed categorisation means perceptions stop having their previous meaning, while perceptions that cannot be categorised may be needlessly ignored.[77] As I showed previously, such caution has had important methodological consequences for my research. Yet there is a tendency for post-positivist epistemologies to exaggerate the autonomy of perceptions from external social and material circumstances,[78] which can in practice become ossified and highly constraining.

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[74] T. Christiansen, K. Jørgensen and A. Wiener, "The Social Construction of Europe," *Journal of European Public Policy*, 6 (4), 1999, pp. 530, 531

[75] R. Jepperson, A. Wendt and P. Katzenstein, "Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security" in P. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: norms and identity in world politics*, New York: Columbia UP, 1996, pp. 67, 68

[76] R. Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: beyond international relations theory," *Millennium*, 10 (2), 1981, pp. 128, 129

[77] Hopf, *Social*, p. 25

[78] M. Bevir and R. Rhodes, "Interpretive Theory" in D. Marsh and G. Stoker, eds., *Theory and Methods in Political Science (2nd ed.)*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, pp. 132-34

Such constraints are often unintentional, though, and therefore difficult to categorise. Indeed, I argue that post-Soviet Russian foreign policy perceptions cannot be viewed as mere instruments of elites, who had hidden, unchanging agendas, for such agendas were constantly in flux, too.[79] Eventually, though, my argument has to be able to categorise following some unquestioned assumptions; if any Russian perception is relevant, none is relevant. Here meta-perceptions, or paradigms, become useful. In the course of my research, a number of meta-perceptions were both outlined and discarded by me, but others eventually turned into coherent, enduring narratives. Potentially, innumerable narratives could have been found. Yet, within each of these narratives a strict logic operates, which prevents them from being free in the sense that anything goes.[80]

Narrative

Thus, narrative combines different epistemologies. Indeed, volitional acts must by necessity be viewed in connection with some degree of mechanistic processes.[81] Russian perceptions may have changed and developed between 1990 and 2008, but they followed specific, internally consistent trajectories. Thus, perceptions within the paradigm of Law were mostly tolerant of Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty because of underlying assumptions that sovereignty as an attribute was constantly in flux. The Law narrative did not assume sovereignty was legitimised through existence in ancient history; therefore, Belarusian and

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[79] N. Inayatullah and D. Blaney, "Knowing Encounters: beyond parochialism in international relations theory" in Y. Lapid and F. Kratochwil, eds., *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory*, Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner, 1996, p. 82; D. Campbell, *Writing Security: United States foreign policy and the politics of identity*, Manchester: MUP, 1998, pp. 9-13

[80] F. Kratochwil, "Constructing a New Orthodoxy? Wendt's 'Social Theory of International Politics' and the constructivist challenge," *Millennium*, 29 (1), 2000, pp. 97, 98, 100, 101

[81] H. Suganami, "Agents, Structures, Narratives," *European Journal of International Relations*, 5 (3), 1999, pp. 371, 372

Ukrainian sovereignty could be accepted. This example indicates the central components of a narrative. First, there must be a central character; in my thesis this is sovereign Russia. Second, there must be a plot relating to this character with a beginning, middle and end. Here the plot concerns the development of Russian sovereignty: where it came from, how it is best supported at present, and what it should eventually become. The resulting logic and dynamic of the narrative is furthermore constituted by Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty.[82] This implies that Russians' perceptions of the world depend on the perception of Russians held among Belarusians, Ukrainians, and others, including Western actors.[83] And the heterogeneity and malleability of narratives is visible during so-called formative moments, when old identities break down and new ones are created in their place. At this time, meanings are disputed and fought over by different actors, who attempt to fundamentally change the nature of the narratives and thus of the characters, too,[84] even if these actors are not always clear on the narratives they themselves would like to establish. I contend that this is exactly what happened in post-Soviet Russia, Belarus and Ukraine; with the Soviet Union in ruins the field was open for protracted fundamental debate between arguments relating to ultimately incompatible narratives. And in order to analyse the significance of narratives my use of texts links my epistemological argument in favour of narrative to my ontological argument highlighting the importance of both material and ideational factors. Texts present ideas; thus we may conclude a preference for empire through Russian governmental texts extolling the virtues of unification with Belarus.

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[82] F. Ciută, "Narratives of Security: strategy and identity in the European context" in R. Mole, ed., *Discursive Constructions of Identity in European Politics*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 194

[83] D. Campbell, *National Deconstruction: violence, identity, and justice in Bosnia*, Minneapolis, MN: UMP, 1998, pp. 43, 81

[84] E. Ringmar, *Identity, Interest and Action: a cultural explanation of Sweden's intervention in the Thirty Years War*, Cambridge: CUP, 1996, pp. 83, 85

However, such texts also constitute material fact in the shape of practice, for by simply appearing they reify the narrative they favour.[85] I shall expand on this topic in the following section.

Ontology: ideas in a material world

Ontology is the study of what the world consists of; it is the study of the nature of being. Traditionally, ontological disagreements relate to whether events are primarily influenced by material factors or by ideas, and thus to whether material factors or ideas should be the subject of research. However, as I shall demonstrate in the following it might be possible to combine the two ontological approaches and in the process significantly enrich my argument.

Material factors

It would seemingly be problematic to focus on the influence of material factors in an analysis concerned with perceptions, which are certainly non-material in nature. Indeed, I could only employ a materialist ontology if I argued that Russians' perceptions had remained unchanged, constantly aiming for international power, for instance. Even this might not have paved the way for a materialist ontology, since "power" remains a nebulous concept.[86] And even if this ambiguity was overcome, other values, perhaps motivated by a search for legitimacy, could still motivate Russian elites as long as relative international

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[85] M. Kuus, "European Integration in Identity Narratives in Estonia: a quest for security," *Journal of Peace Research*, 39 (1), 2002, p. 94

[86] H. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: the struggle for power and peace (5th ed.)*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978, pp. 4-15

power, and perhaps security, had been obtained.[87] Yet, maybe these aims could never be reached. In an anarchic international system, with no governing structure existing above the sovereign state, it could conceivably be argued that the constant possibility of interstate violence might motivate Russian elites to constantly focus on how the power of their state could be increased.[88] Indeed, given the traumatic Soviet collapse, Russians might be expected to prefer the simplification that follows categorisation into friend and enemy. The need to create an in-group identity might be so fundamental to leaders of Russia that their overwhelming focus in foreign policy would be on a few, fundamental interests.[89] Still, there is no inherent reason why Russians should count Belarusians and Ukrainians within the in-group or outside it for that matter. Thus, assuming that material factors motivated Russian foreign policy, with interests being fixed, does not tell us much about Russian foreign policy in this context. Nevertheless, scholars focusing on material factors are correct in arguing that a focus on ideas ought not to ignore material factors;[90] as mentioned before, Russian political and military leaders could not have ignored the build-up of Belarusian and Ukrainian nuclear forces, for instance.

Ideas

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[87] R. Gilpin, "The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism," *International Organization*, 38 (2), 1984, pp. 290, 291

[88] S. Krasner, "Wars, Hotel Fires, and Plane Crashes," *Review of International Studies*, 26 (1), 2000, pp. 131, 134

[89] J. Mercer "Anarchy and Identity," *International Organization*, 49 (2), 1995, pp. 236, 241, 242

[90] R. Palan, "A World of Their Making: an evaluation of the constructivist critique in international relations," *Review of International Studies*, 26 (4), 2000, pp. 589, 590

Yet most scholars focusing on the influence of ideas would not disregard material factors, but simply demand that the role of ideas in international relations be taken seriously;[91] would insist that a given actor's interest was not fixed, but determined by intangible norms. And, indeed, as I already indicated it is unfruitful to view Russian perceptions as motivated simply by power or security, since post-Soviet Russia was never under imminent, existential threat. In order to understand Russian foreign policy perceptions any analysis would therefore have to engage with the formation of interests, with the mutual constitution of interests and identities.[92] At the same time, it is also noteworthy which interests remained mostly absent, and why they did so;[93] thus, I analyse how each of the paradigms I identified waxed and waned in relative influence. Why they did so is again dependent on developments appearing in the interaction between Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, rather than in domestic factors within either of these states; in other words, perceptions were interpellated rather than articulated.[94] And whereas a materialist ontology would have had to understand developments through logics of consequence, according to which Russia subsidised energy deliveries to Belarus in order to retain its political loyalty, for instance, interpellation could only be understood through logics of appropriateness, for instance emphasising that Russians subsidised their neighbours because this was appropriate to the role in which they saw themselves.[95]

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[91] M. Barnett, "Social Constructivism" in J. Baylis, S. Smith and P. Owens, eds., *The Globalization of World Politics (4th ed.)*, Oxford: OUP, 2008, pp. 162, 163

[92] J. Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the social constructivist challenge," *International Organization*, 52 (4), 1998, pp. 856, 867

[93] T. Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," *International Security*, 23 (1), 1998, p. 176

[94] J. Weldes, "Constructing National Interests," *European Journal of International Relations*, 2 (3), 1996, pp. 284, 287, 289

[95] T. Risse, "'Let's Argue!' Communicative action in world politics," *International Organization*, 54 (1), 2000, p. 6

Ideas in a material world

However, it can be difficult for a study focusing on ideas to demonstrate that policies are followed due to logics of appropriateness, as opposed to logics of consequence.[96] Especially if Russians assumed that it was their duty to subsidise Belarusians, they might not even consider openly espousing advocating subsidisation. If so, only the facts of subsidisation would remain, which could just as well be explained through materialist ontology. And yet, Russian interests changed over time; while subsidisation could hardly be explained by an interest in gaining economic wealth, decisions to terminate monetary cooperation with Belarus were motivated by interest in economic gains. With material circumstances remaining relatively similar, materialist ontology would find it difficult to explain these observable policy differences. Nevertheless, materialist ontology might help to show the tactics by which formulated interests could be advanced; how networks and resources were employed by actors to reach their objectives.[97] It therefore seems appropriate to say that intangible ideas and norms are constituted by tangible environments; that they do not "exist in a material vacuum."[98] Furthermore, processes of social construction do not necessarily appear earlier in time than processes of strategic bargaining.[99] Post-Soviet Russian elites might well have subsidised the Belarusian economy out of a sense of obligation, but this feeling only appeared after leaders in Moscow during years of empire and Soviet centralisation subsidised Belarusians and other Soviet peoples for instrumental

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[96] M. Pollack, "International Relations Theory and European Integration," *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 39 (2), 2001, p. 235

[97] E. Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: constructivism in world politics," *European Journal of International Relations*, 3 (3), 1997, pp. 332, 333

[98] P. Kowert and J. Legro, "Norms, Identity, and Their Limits: a theoretical reprise" in P. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: norms and identity in world politics*, New York: Columbia UP, 1996, pp. 490, 491

[99] M. Finnemore and K. Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization*, 52 (4), 1998, p. 911

reasons, such as ensuring domestic stability. Conversely, after El'tsin decided for various reasons to preserve a Russian naval presence in Sevastopol', many of his actions to accomplish this could well be analysed through theories of rational choice. It must therefore be admitted that no unidirectional relationship existed between preferences and outcomes, which instead constituted each other in an ever-changing context.[100] Hence, throughout this thesis material as well as ideational factors will be relevant for my analysis.

Levels of analysis: constitution, not causation

The issue of levels of analysis relate to how events may be analysed most profitably; whether events should be understood through a structural, top-down approach, or through an agent-centred, bottom-up approach. Do the properties of agents cause a specific structure to form, or does a specific structure constrain agents, causing them to behave in specific ways? However, as I shall demonstrate below, the opposition of these levels is less analytically fruitful than their combination, just as causation is less analytically fruitful than constitution.

Agent

Agent-centred analyses of international affairs argue that the actions of states, or other international actors, are motivated by developments in their domestic politics, such as bargaining between various interest groups in society.[101] For example, Russian attempts to entrench the Russian Orthodox Church abroad might be viewed as the result of domestic

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[100] K. Fierke and A. Wiener, "Constructing Institutional Interests: EU and NATO enlargement," *Journal of European Public Policy*, 6 (5), 1999, p. 725

[101] A. Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: a liberal theory of international politics," *International Organization*, 51 (4), 1997, pp. 516, 518

lobbying by church representatives. The influence of domestic interest groups could in principle cover all issues, apart perhaps from when the state was under imminent threat of war. And rational calculations are not the only medium through which domestic influences may have international influence. As the above discussion on ontology indicated, apart from rational bargaining domestic social conventions and other ideational constraints might also influence state behaviour; thus, Russian resistance to democratisation in Belarus and Ukraine might stem more from perceived illegitimacy of such governance than from international consequences of democratisation. Furthermore, leaders' psychology could also come into play.[102] For instance, Russian attempts to retain territorial unification between Russia, Belarus and Ukraine could be understood through reference to El'tsin's and Putin's experience in the political and security structures of the Soviet Union, with the implicit assumption that leaders reaching maturity after the Soviet collapse might have conducted a different policy. Finally, an agent-centred analysis might focus not on society as whole, or on leaders' psychology, but on the in-between, the society that is a given government[103] and, perhaps, its accompanying bureaucracy. Indeed, during the early 1990s turf wars between the Russian Foreign and Defence ministries might explain rapid foreign policy changes veering between international accommodation and aggression. To sum up, therefore, agent-centred approaches contain the belief that domestic tangible and intangible structures create the framework within which foreign policy may be conducted.[104]

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[102] R. Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, Princeton, NJ: PUP, 1976, pp. 28, 29

[103] G. Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *The American Political Science Review*, 63 (3), 1969, p. 698

[104] T. Risse-Kappen, "Ideas Do Not Flow Freely: transnational coalitions, domestic structures, and the end of the Cold War," *International Organization*, 48 (2), 1994, p. 212

Structure

Yet even though my examples have shown how a focus on agents can explain parts of Russian foreign policy, many of its aspects would be more fruitfully explained by a focus on the structure of the international system, and the influence of this structure on agents embedded in it. The analytical advantage of such an approach is one of parsimony, allowing researchers to highlight useful generalisations and comparisons.[105] In this way, Russian opposition to NATO-enlargement into the former Soviet space might be viewed through the prism of great power balancing with the USA; balancing induced by an anarchically structured system that, as mentioned earlier, induces all states to be wary of other states gaining too much relative power.[106] Such simplified analysis is not unproblematic. Structural analysis of international relations normally includes an a priori claim that states are the main international actors. However, although this assertion may be challenged states undoubtedly continue to exert a dominating international influence, even given an increasing array of significant non-state actors.[107] And the assumption that a state is a unitary actor often seems apposite for Russia, the foreign policy making of which was quite centralised, as I shall expand on in the next chapter. Certainly, the classical definition of the state as the only legitimate exerciser of violence[108] would often fit Russia, and thus be relevant for analysing its military policy. Indeed, within military issues the scope of action for non-state Russian actors was often negligible, with the government and president largely handling the stationing of Russian troops in Belarus and Ukraine, for instance. Extrapolating from a statist monopoly on legitimate violence might not be similarly relevant for economic

[105] J. Singer, "The Level-of-analysis Problem in International Relations," *World Politics*, 14 (1), 1961, p. 80

[106] K. Waltz, *Man, the State and War: a theoretical analysis*, New York: Columbia UP, 2001, p. 160

[107] A. Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: the social construction of power politics," *International Organization*, 46 (2), 1992, p. 424

[108] E. Kolodziej, *Security and International Relations*, Cambridge: CUP, 2005, p. 26

issues. But it is important to remember that a structural analysis of international relations does not necessarily have to keep states as the unitary actors in question.[109] Thus, for instance, to the extent that all significant Russian energy companies might be seen as having similar interests in dealings with other post-Soviet states, they together could constitute a unit relative to the EU and the USA.

Constitution, not causation

Overall, therefore, it seems that persuasive arguments favouring structural, as well as agent-centred analyses of international relations exist. Such analyses need not be mutually exclusive, however. Post-Soviet Russian international behaviour was long constrained by the need to rebuild a shattered economy, but the need to please international investors and minimise Western pressure on a weakened military also influenced Russian perceptions and behaviour.[110] So rather than favouring one level of analysis it seems more useful to analyse how different levels may be understood as part of all Russian foreign policy activities.[111] This is done, as indicated earlier, by focusing on constitution instead of causation. When Putin in 2008 threatened Ukrainian territory in case of Ukrainian membership of NATO, he did not do so due to innate Russian aggressiveness, or to Ukrainian betrayal of Russian goodwill, but because of the constitutive repercussions of prior Russian and Ukrainian actions. An analysis of this provides a picture encompassing the dynamism and change of the bilateral

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[109] B. Buzan, O. Wæver and J. de Wilde, *Security: a new framework for analysis*, Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner, 1998, pp. 6, 7

[110] P. Gourevitch, "The Second Image Reversed: the international sources of domestic politics," *International Organization*, 32 (4), 1978, p. 911

[111] B. Buzan, "The Level of Analysis Problem in International Relations Reconsidered" in K. Booth and S. Smith, eds., *International Relations Theory Today*, Cambridge: Polity, 1995, p. 213

relationship;[112] a relationship shaped by changing individual and collective identities, which constituted state interaction.[113] Should such constitution be overlooked, analyses of post-Soviet relations risk becoming blame games, as I highlighted in the previous chapter. Yet such blame games presuppose inherent, immutable natures of the states concerned, and such assumptions are both unrealistic and analytically useless. What is instead necessary is recognition of how social environments, outside and inside states, and agency, by states and other actors, constantly created, reproduced and changed each other.[114]

Conclusion

My theoretical assumptions are therefore as follows: (1) although I do not believe that any truth concerning Russian foreign policy perceptions may be found, nor that a search for generalisable laws would be fruitful, I believe it is worthwhile to identify groups of perceptions, or paradigms, which each contain an internally coherent narrative that is fundamentally different from those of the other paradigms; (2) although I do not believe that Russian foreign policy perceptions had a constant focus, and that their development might thus be understood exclusively through changes in material circumstances, I do believe that such material changes cannot be excluded as part of the constraints that ensured some of the paradigms were more important at some times than at others; (3) although I do not believe that Russian foreign policy perceptions may be understood solely through the changing configuration of domestic conditions, nor exclusively through the

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[112] A. Ba and M. Hoffmann, "Making and Remaking the World for IR 101: a resource for teaching social constructivism in introductory classes," *International Studies Perspectives*, 4 (1), 2003, p. 21

[113] R. Koslowski and F. Kratochwil, "Understanding Change in International Politics: the Soviet empire's demise and the international system," *International Organization*, 48 (2), 1994, p. 224

[114] T. Risse "Social Constructivism and European Integration" in A. Wiener and T. Diez, eds., *European Integration Theory*, Oxford: OUP, 2004, pp. 160, 161

anarchically structured international system, I do believe that both these levels of analysis had significant influence on the development of Russian foreign policy perceptions concerning Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty. Yet even with these theoretical assumptions in place, I still have to explain how I define "sovereignty" itself, as this will be of central importance to my argument. It should perhaps be expected from my other assumptions that I do not consider the nature of sovereignty as either fixed or constant, but instead see it as constantly reinterpreted.[115] Yet it is necessary to have a core around which this reinterpretation can take place; thus, sovereignty always has to do with the recognised right of a political entity to be the ultimately authoritative entity concerning its own affairs.[116] No doubt this is a minimal definition, but nothing more precise can be stated before my research has been carried out. This is because knowledge of and practice exercised through sovereignty are mutually reinforceable;[117] by defining the concept in more detail, I would not be able to completely analyse the ways in which Russian understandings of Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty changed between 1990 and 2008.

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[115] J. Barkin and B. Cronin, "The State and the Nation: changing norms and rules of sovereignty in international relations," *International Organization*, 48 (1), 1994, pp. 107, 108

[116] T. Biersteker and C. Weber, "The Social Construction of State Sovereignty" in T. Biersteker and C. Weber, eds., *State Sovereignty as Social Construct*, Cambridge: CUP, 1996, pp. 12, 13

[117] J. Bartelson, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty*, Cambridge: CUP, 1995, pp. 50-52

Chapter 3: Russian Foreign Policy Making, 1990-2008

As I have now presented the theoretical assumptions guiding my research in this thesis, I am almost ready to engage with the main parts of my analysis. Before doing so, however, my methodology, as outlined in chapter 1, requires me to identify the main Russian foreign policy makers between 1990 and 2008. On the whole, I contend that many different domestic actors influenced Russian foreign policy during this period. I only highlight the most important actors in this chapter, but I shall demonstrate the diffusion of influence throughout my analysis, making clear that an exclusive focus on the Russian Presidents' influence or even on the influence of the executive in general would be overly simplistic.

1990-93

Yet, it is certainly possible to argue that El'tsin was the most significant Russian foreign policy-maker from the outset. During the first part of 1990, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev remained sufficiently powerful to dominate relations between the Soviet republics, and between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world, but this changed not least after El'tsin's political capital increased with the RSFSR declaration of sovereignty in mid-1990. During late 1990, El'tsin then became outspoken concerning Russian relations with other Soviet peoples, before he used the failed Soviet coup in August, 1991 to seize the policy-making initiative on behalf of the RSFSR, especially by advocating a much looser structure to supplant the now moribund Soviet Union. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), appearing in December, was much less ambitious in its policies of integration than El'tsin would have preferred, but still represented the final collapse of the Soviet Union and the

triumph of his personal diplomacy and connections with other post-Soviet leaders.[118]

Throughout 1992, El'tsin remained determined to be involved in the foreign policy of his

new state, and already in February he made certain that members of the presidential

administration would closely monitor the Foreign Ministry,[119] a policy that gradually became

institutionalised.[120] El'tsin subsequently took important foreign policy decisions, including

the withdrawal of troops from the Baltic States in October, 1992, and the sanctioning of

NATO expansion into Central Europe in August, 1993, without consulting his government.[121]

Throughout 1993, as domestic dispute with the Russian parliament sharpened, El'tsin was

careful not to relinquish control of foreign policy to any rivals, and continued to effectively

employ members of the presidential administration to determine foreign policy.[122]

But it would nevertheless be mistaken to ignore the input into Russian foreign policy that

was provided by El'tsin's government. Two actors, having directly opposed political agendas,

dominated the scene: Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and Vice-President Aleksandr

Rutskoi. Kozyrev was particularly important until the end of 1992; during the first half of

1992 he ensured that formal and informal consultations had been held with all neighbouring

states and partners of Russia. At the same time, Kozyrev was instrumental in the

formulation of many ambitious principles and guidelines for Russian foreign policy more

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[118] M. Galeotti, *The Age of Anxiety: security and politics in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia*, London: Longman, 1995, p. 150

[119] N. Malcolm, "Russian Foreign Policy Decision-making" in P. Shearman, ed., *Russian Foreign Policy since 1990*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995, pp. 28, 31

[120] J. Adams, "The Russian National Security Council," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 43 (1), 1996, p. 36

[121] Malcolm, "Russian," pp. 28, 31

[122] J. Checkel, "Structure, Institutions, and Process: Russia's changing foreign policy" in A. Dawisha and K. Dawisha, eds., *The Making of Foreign Policy in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995, p. 50; V. Elagin, "Povod dlia bespokoistva," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 26.11.1992; A. Shal'nev, "Andrei Kozyrev: 'Prezident El'tsin i ia otvechaem za vneshniuiu politiku Rossii," *Izvestiia*, 5.1.1993

generally, thus helping to establish the state on the international scene.[123] Most of these policies, however, suffered from persistent opponents,[124] often including Rutskoi. The highly decorated military man, renowned for his exploits in Afghanistan, had originally been co-opted by El'tsin, who strove to gather members of the Russian military and security services behind his struggle with the Soviet centre. After the latter had de facto collapsed in August, 1991, however, Rutskoi swiftly used the opportunity to promote his belligerent foreign policy agenda, often directly contradicting El'tsin and Kozyrev. As I shall demonstrate in the next chapter, during 1992 animosity between Russia and other post-Soviet states was often due to Rutskoi's aggressive rhetoric, although Rutskoi's prominence abated as he gradually became just one of many politicians opposed to El'tsin. Still, by the second half of 1993 the nationalist rhetoric that Rutskoi had promoted more than anyone continued to influence Russian foreign policy to the extent that high-profile negotiations with Japan concerning territorial disagreements and a potential peace treaty formally concluding the Second World War were scuppered,[125] despite the best efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which remained loyal to El'tsin. A couple of other members of government had also shown some influence on foreign policy: acting Prime Minister Egor' Gaidar sometimes moulded economic foreign policy in the months after his appointment in June, 1992, while Defence Minister Pavel Grachev in the second half of 1993 remained one of the few prominent politicians still strongly supportive of El'tsin, and supported by the President in turn.

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[123] V. Matveyev, "The New Russian Diplomacy: the first months," *International Relations*, 11 (2), 1992, p. 93

[124] See also Lo, *Russian*, pp. 31, 32

[125] M. Skak, *From Empire to Anarchy: post-Communist foreign policy and international relations*, London: Hurst, 1996, pp. 184-86; G. Mekhov, "Voennyi aspekt 'territorial'noi problemy'," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 22.7.1992

The legislature of the newly sovereign Russia did not change with the collapse of the Soviet Union, but still retained formal power to challenge the executive at home and abroad.[126] The inability of parliamentarians to organise in unison limited their collective influence on foreign policy, though, while El'tsin openly rewarded his parliamentary supporters with good positions in his administration,[127] thus co-opting some potential challengers and, at first, partly succeeding in dividing the parliament. Mostly, therefore, it was left to individual parliamentarians to make their foreign policy mark. Vladimir Lukin, an experienced Soviet scholar and former Ministry of Foreign Affairs official, headed the parliamentary Committee for International Affairs and Foreign Economic Relations from June, 1990, and from the outset of 1992 used this platform to advocate Russian international prominence, not least in the post-Soviet region. His posting from February, 1992, to September, 1993, as ambassador to the USA could be seen as both recognition of Lukin's political skill, and as a means to prevent him from challenging executive control over Russian foreign policy. With Lukin gone, other parliamentarians were either mostly interested in domestic politics or found it difficult to distinguish their foreign policy messages from those of the legislature as a whole. A partial exception was Evgenii Ambartsumov, member of the parliamentary Committee for Interrepublican Relations and the successor to Lukin's Committee chair. Ambartsumov gained particular prominence during the second half of 1992, but subsequently his individual standpoints disappeared in the context of executive-legislative strife, as we also saw above concerning Rutskoi.

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[126] C. Wallander, "Ideas, Interests, and Institutions in Russian Foreign Policy" in C. Wallander, ed., *The Sources of Russian Foreign Policy after the Cold War*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996, pp. 208, 209, 211

[127] K. Dawisha and B. Parrott, *Russia and the New States of Eurasia: the politics of upheaval*, Cambridge: CUP, 1994, pp. 34, 204

Away from state-level politics few politicians marked themselves as important in the foreign policy debate, although the Mayor of Leningrad (and subsequently St Petersburg), Anatolii Sobchak, was among the most active, and best known, Russian politicians on the international scene in the immediate aftermath of the failed Soviet coup in August, 1991. Yet actors more formally embedded in a centralised state structure had better possibilities, in the longer run, to make their opinions count. In economic affairs, the state-owned natural gas company Gazprom became the main case in point. During 1993, leaders of the company began to exploit its dominant position within the post-Soviet energy market to influence developments that, in the longer term, would consolidate the control of Gazprom in the region. In political and military affairs, some organisations, such as the Council for Foreign and Defence Policy, were ostensibly not part of the state, but still contained members from the presidential administration.[128] Although the Council did not immediately benefit from this, it would gain influence as the 1990s progressed. Other Russian actors hoped to benefit in a similar fashion from connections to the Russian state. During 1990, the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Aleksii II, deftly exploited widening freedoms of expression without overtly siding either with the Soviet centre or the Russian challenge, leaving the Patriarch free to subsequently ally with the Russian victors. A number of individual commentators also achieved or regained prominence in the foreign policy debate. Aleksei Arbatov was active in both Russian and Western media, while Kseniia Mialo became one of the first advocates for a new Russian ideology. More traditionalist arguments came from the famous novelist Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who had been expelled from the Soviet Union two decades before, but whose writings were now officially allowed to re-enter Russia in one of

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[128] J. Checkel, "Russian Foreign Policy: back to the future?" *RFE/RL Research Report*, 1 (41), 1992, pp. 23, 24

the most prominent examples of Gorbachev's policy of openness. Aleksandr Tsipko, on the other hand, was notable for having been able to both be published in the late Soviet years and remain important to the foreign policy debate after 1991. Finally, even though Russian public opinion never acquired decisive influence on foreign policy it still contributed to constructing the framework, within which policy perceptions existed, particularly during and immediately after the Soviet collapse in December, 1991, while the Russian elites remained uncertain of the post-Soviet international position they sought for Russia. Subsequently, however, in the context of a worsening economic crisis public opinion gradually became moulded by political elites, who had understood how to respond to public dissatisfaction with post-Soviet reality.[129]

1993-99

Following his violent dispersal of the Russian parliament in October, 1993, El'tsin soon ensured that his policy-making powers would be formally strengthened. Thus, when a popular referendum in December, 1993, formally approved the President's new constitution, El'tsin's position was strengthened by an unprecedented amount of formal responsibilities and powers. Article 86 simply stated: "The President of [Russia]: (a) will lead the foreign policy of [Russia]; (b) will conduct the negotiations and sign the international treaties of [Russia]; (v) will sign documents of ratification..." Furthermore, article 87 installed the President as Head of the Russian Armed Forces.[130] To specify and solidify his powers, El'tsin then, in January, 1994, issued a decree stating that the Foreign Ministry, Defence Ministry, Foreign Intelligence Service and Federal Border Service would all be

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[129] H. Adomeit, "Russian National Security Interests" in R. Allison and C. Bluth, eds., *Security Dilemmas in Russia and Eurasia*¸ London: RIIA, 1998, pp. 41, 42

[130] *Konstitutsiia Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, Moscow: Iurist'', 2001, p. 33

subordinated directly to him, not reporting to the president via the prime minister, as was the case with other ministries. Furthermore, the new constitution had made the government as a whole primarily accountable to the president, since the latter could dismiss the prime minister or any other cabinet member without risking his own office.[131] Subsequently, it became clear that El'tsin intended to take full advantage of these powers, particularly concerning political and military issues. He refused to allow the introduction of a supra-ministry that might coordinate activities of the government at its discretion, and instead ensured that individuals, whom he trusted, liaised for him with the other executive bodies,[132] which he also controlled through the Security Council.[133] Nevertheless, during 1996, the year of his presidential re-election, it became clear that El'tsin's control was diminishing in practice, not least due to his increasing health problems. Power struggles formed within his entourage, and it was not until 1997 before El'tsin regained a modicum of foreign policy control thanks to the support of a few, trusted individuals.[134]

One of these was Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, who never indicated any displeasure with the decrease of his formal powers over foreign policy that El'tsin, as mentioned above, ensured in 1994. Indeed, while Chernomyrdin's remit was formally centred on economic issues, during the first half of this period he showed a remarkable ability to go beyond this brief in relation to other post-Soviet states. Chernomyrdin benefitted from his Soviet background as manager of Gazprom, a post that had provided him with vital insight into

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[131] S. Parrish, "Chaos in Foreign-policy Decision-making," *Transition*, 2 (10), 1996, p. 31

[132] N. Malcolm, "Foreign Policy Making" in N. Malcolm, A. Pravda, R. Allison and M. Light, *Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy*, Oxford: OUP, 1996, pp. 107, 109, 110

[133] J. Derleth, "The Evolution of the Russian Polity: the case of the Security Council," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 29 (1), 1996, pp. 55, 57

[134] N. Simonia, "Domestic Developments in Russia" in G. Chufrin, ed., *Russia and Asia: the emerging security agenda*, Oxford: OUP, 1999, p. 53

policy-making in the entire region and had provided him with useful contacts within as well as beyond Russian borders. That the Prime Minister's foreign policy influence waned after mid-1997, culminating in his sacking in early 1998, was due to a number of reason, not least the fact that Chernomyrdin seemed an increasingly unlikely heir to El'tsin, unable as he seemed to recreate Russian strength at home and abroad. Other members of government had already been dismissed, despite having previously served El'tsin well. Gaidar never overcame his connections with the highly unpopular economic reforms in 1992 and, after his relative failure at the 1993 parliamentary elections soon disappeared from the political scene. Grachev was another case in point. The Defence Minister had staunchly supported El'tsin during the 1991 as well as 1993 armed challenges to the latter, and until being sacked in the middle of 1996 Grachev's political influence was significant. However, it was his ill-fated support for the first military operation in Chechnia, beginning in December, 1994, and his inability to defeat Chechen resistance thereafter, that saw Grachev's policy-making power plummet. Kozyrev was not similarly compromised by the Caucasus, and until the middle of 1995 he remained at the centre of foreign policy. Subsequently, though, his perceived submissive stance towards the West became derided among both supporters and opponents of El'tsin to the extent that the President in January, 1996, could sacrifice him in an attempt to gain momentum for a then seemingly hopeless re-election campaign. Kozyrev's political demise did not spell the end of influence for his Ministry, however, which for at least a couple of years remained central to foreign policy decisions. This was not least due to the capabilities of Kozyrev's successors, Evgenii Primakov and Igor' Ivanov. Primakov came from a background as head of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service, having previously been prominent in Soviet academic, secret service and political circles. Primakov had by 1995 helped to ensure that the Foreign Intelligence Service regained a prominent

position in the former Soviet region,[135] and as Foreign Minister Primakov's influence on Russian foreign policy was prominent during late 1996 and 1997, while El'tsin recovered from his election campaign.[136] After Primakov became Prime Minister in September, 1998, he increasingly focused on domestic politics and the struggle to succeed El'tsin. His replacement, Igor' Ivanov, did not have Primakov's abilities or prominence, but during late 1998 he still managed to consolidate Russian international importance in the chaotic aftermath of the economic collapse that initiated his tenure. However, Ivanov had to contend with significant competition from inside the executive. Even after Grachev's dismissal, the Ministry of Defence continued to have a substantial influence on military issues right until El'tsin's final year as president. Statements from members of the presidential administration, such as presidential spokesman Sergei Iastrzhembskii and Human Rights Commissioner Oleg Mironov, also became more important during the late 1990s that would have been the case with a vigorous president, while Putin during a short tenure as Prime Minister in the second half of 1999 exploited policy successes and an upsurge in public support to speak authoritatively on foreign policy.

The legislature, at the same time, had unexpectedly regained a prominent place in foreign policy debates. In December, 1993, following the violent dissolution of the Soviet-era parliament, a parliament critical of the executive and its policies had nonetheless been victorious. Yet the fact that the tenure of this parliament was only two years, at the same time as memories of the executive clampdown on the legislature remained fresh, at first

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[135] J. Sherr, "The New Russian Intelligence Empire," *Problems of Post-Communism* 42 (6), 1995, p. 14

[136] On Primakov's influence in Russian policy-making, see J. Surovell, "Yevgenii Primakov: 'hard-liner' or casualty of the conventional wisdom?" *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 21 (2), 2005, pp. 223-47

prevented the new parliament from dominating the foreign policy debate. However, as the Duma elections in late 1995 again resulted in a parliamentary majority critical of El'tsin, the scene was set for harsh debates on domestic and foreign policy both before and after the unsuccessful attempt to dethrone El'tsin in mid-1996. With formal powers so unequivocally residing with the executive, parliamentarians, freed from policy responsibility became increasingly outspoken in their foreign policy suggestions from mid-1997 onwards. Nobody exemplified this better than Konstantin Zatulin, who until electoral defeat in 1995 exploited his position as parliamentary chairman of the Committee for the CIS to promote highly assertive, even aggressive policies towards neighbouring post-Soviet states, not least Ukraine as I shall show later. Outside parliament, Zatulin did not cease his foreign policy activism and eventually in 1998 became a co-founder of the prominent Fatherland party bloc. While still in parliament Zatulin employed scholar Andranik Migranian as an adviser to his committee; subsequently Zatulin and Migranian collaborated on articles highly critical of Russian foreign policy. Finally, special mention must be reserved for the leader of the Russian Communist Party, Gennadii Ziuganov.[137] Although Ziuganov in his serious challenge to El'tsin during the 1996 presidential campaign mainly focused on domestic affairs, he had for years advocated Russian international prominence vis-à-vis the United States, in his efforts to re-introduce his party to the centre of political debate. That Ziuganov's tactics were quite successful is indicated not only by his ability to force El'tsin to a second presidential election round in 1996, but also by the way in which the executive co-opted many Communist foreign priorities, up to and including hiring Primakov as Foreign Minister in a move intended to placate Communist parliamentarians.

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[137] V. Matveyev, "Russian Foreign Policy: historical and international repercussions," *International Relations*, 12 (4), 1995, pp. 30, 31

Beyond the central executive and legislative institutions a substantial number of actors now influenced foreign policy debates and activities. The Mayor of Moscow, Iurii Luzhkov, was particularly important. He had been appointed by El'tsin in June, 1992, but it was only after his popular election, when he officially achieved almost unanimous support, four years later that he began to make his mark in the foreign policy debate. Subsequently, as leaders of other Russian regions were appointed by the presidential administration, Luzhkov was able to portray himself as having a unique legitimacy among politicians outside the central executive and legislature. Concerning economic issues, the leadership of Gazprom continued to strengthen its position in the decision-making process. Especially in the years following El'tsin's presidential re-election, with its assurance that a Communist purge of state companies would not take place, actors within Gazprom felt sufficiently emboldened to directly influence most international energy agreements involving Russia. On a smaller scale such policies were pursued by private energy companies, too, with Vagit Alekperov's LUKoil especially prominent. Some individual businessmen benefitted from the fact that they had ensured El'tsin's re-election through financial and logistical support. The leader of these so-called "oligarchs," Boris Berezovskii, wanted not only benefits for his companies, but to become directly involved in politics. For a short time he was deputy secretary of the Security Council,[138] and then executive secretary of the CIS, involving him formally in the state foreign policy process, before he entered the Duma in December, 1999. Other people's foreign policy influence was narrower, but still important to my topic; people such as Admiral Viktor Kravchenko, commander of the Black Sea Fleet stationed in Ukraine.

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[138] L. Aron, "The Foreign Policy Doctrine of Postcommunist Russia and its Domestic Context" in M. Mandelbaum, ed., *The New Russian Foreign Policy*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1998, pp. 44, 45

Kravchenko's importance was linked to his position, rather than his person, but he also benefitted from membership of a military to which El'tsin continued to owe loyalty after its support in 1991 and 1993,[139] while the think-tanks that it supported were highly active in asserting the rights of Russia abroad.[140] In religious affairs the President still had the support of Aleksii II, whose endorsement of El'tsin's foreign and domestic policies in early 1996 provided important assistance to the President. Among political think-tanks the above-mentioned Council for Foreign and Defence Policy had the executive's attention throughout this period and helped detailing El'tsin's broader visions. Particularly important in this process was the head of the Council, Sergei Karaganov, who used the turbulent political situation just before and after El'tsin's re-election to forward his agenda together with Primakov. Among other scholars, Solzhenitsyn did not command the audience of the past, yet he retained a core audience to his frequent sojourns into foreign policy matters; as did Aleksandr Dugin, who became a leader among so-called Eurasianists, seeking to re-grow the strength of a Russian-centred Eurasia, "geopolitically" opposed to an American Atlanticist bloc. In the beginning of this period, Arbatov was able to counter such visions through advocacy of dialogue with the West, but apart from a subsequent position as adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs he failed to set the debating agenda as he had previously done. To a large extent the same happened for general public opinion, although the deflation of political hostilities between El'tsin and the legislature from 1997 onwards allowed for a more permissive, wide-ranging discussion in society of the international place of Russia. And although direct foreign policy-making influence from the public was difficult to see, it can be

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[139] B. Lambeth, "Russia's Wounded Military," *Foreign Affairs*, 74 (2), 1995, pp. 86, 87, 94, 95

[140] R. Staar, "Moscow's Plans to Restore its Power," *Orbis*, 40 (3), 1996, pp. 377-80

argued that the government often ignored belligerent parliamentary advice in the knowledge that the Russian public supported peace.[141]

2000-04

El'tsin had gradually regained much of his policy-making influence towards the end of his second presidential term, but after Putin became acting President from the onset of 2000 all policy making seemed to centre on him throughout this period. Putin quickly embarked on a number of international visits, including within the CIS. The President used his significant control over the legislature to pursue several aims, notably ratification of the Strategic Arms Reduction (START) II treaty, previously agreed with the USA.[142] Indeed, Putin quickly became Russian foreign policy, not least because he took a keen interest in foreign policy details, making sure policy was implemented as part of a strategic whole. The influence of the President was visible on several occasions, not least in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the USA in September, 2001, when Putin unequivocally offered the support of Russia in the battle against terror. It is important to note, though, that while the President controlled foreign policy, he also delegated responsibility to a number of trusted individuals,[143] many of whom had years of political experience.

One of the most important of these, at least in relation to Ukraine, was perhaps surprisingly Chernomyrdin, called back from the political exile his dismissal in 1998 had constituted.

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[141] N. Malcolm and A. Pravda, "Democratisation and Russian Foreign Policy," *International Affairs*, 72 (3), 1996, pp. 540, 543

[142] P. Duncan, "Westernism, Eurasianism and Pragmatism: the foreign policies of the post-Soviet states, 1991-2001" in W. Slater and A. Wilson, eds., *The Legacy of the Soviet Union*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 241

[143] Lo, *Vladimir*, pp. 43, 44

After he was appointed as Ukrainian ambassador in May, 2001, Chernomyrdin soon found use for his ability to negotiate post-Soviet politics, and not only in the economic sphere that had been his remit at Gazprom and, formally at least, as Prime Minister. Foreign Minister Igor' Ivanov, on the other hand, often found himself sidelined by the presidential administration and especially by Putin himself, but at times Ivanov's diplomatic experience and contacts were still called upon, just as was the case for his Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This ministry no longer suffered overly from competition by the Ministry of Defence, per se, yet the Minister of Defence himself was a different matter. Sergei Ivanov had been appointed Deputy Director of the Federal Security Service by Putin in August, 1998, and it was therefore hardly a surprise that he was promoted again by the President in March, 2001, to Defence Minister. Already he had used his position as Secretary of the Security Council to advocate an assertive Russian foreign policy, which showed in the national security concept and military doctrine of 2000,[144] and from 2001 Sergei Ivanov seemed to become the somewhat hard-line alternative to his namesake Igor', the two of whom formed acceptable opposites for governmental foreign policy. In the middle of this stood Mikhail Kas'ianov, who had replaced Putin as Prime Minister from May, 2000, and partly continued the tradition begun by Chernomyrdin and Primakov of a Prime Minister active in foreign policy, although Kas'ianov's remit was mostly economic in nature until his dismissal in February, 2004. Another notably active individual at the outset of Putin's term was Pavel Borodin. As State Secretary of the Russia-Belarus Union, Borodin was highly active from the beginning of Putin's presidency in his quest to promote integration in the post-Soviet region whenever possible. Certainly, Borodin's aim was shared by Putin, but already in 2001 the

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[144] "Kontseptsiia natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii," *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie*, 14.1.2000; "Voennaia doktrina Rossiiskoi Federatsii," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 25.4.2000

State Secretary was arrested in the USA on suspicions of money-laundering that sidelined Borodin in the struggle for influence within the Russian executive. Ironically, it was precisely law officials of the state, in the form of the Russian State Prosecutor's office that during the following years gained prominence in foreign policy making, being especially useful as a tool to challenge foreign political actors critical of Russia. A similar instrumental role continued to be held by Mironov, whose duties seemed to be increasingly intertwined with interests of the Russian state, despite his official status as ombudsman.

Russian parliamentarians' foreign policy activities, on the other hand, were much less noticed than they had previously been, for two main reasons. On the one hand, the upper chamber, or Federation Council, still consisted of representatives of local governments, which were increasingly dependent on the goodwill of the central state administration. This followed legal amendments in July, 2000, which forced governors to abandon their double mandate encompassing their home seats as well as seats in the Federation Council, enabling Putin to gradually ensure the election of parliamentarians loyal to him. One might assume that the parliamentary lower chamber, or Duma, would have become more actively involved in the foreign policy debate. Not only had this previously been the case, but at the elections in December, 1999, the oppositional Communist Party once more acquired the largest number of votes. Yet, although Duma members showed some foreign policy activity during the first half of this period, the sudden rise of the executive-supported party "Unity," which acquired almost as many votes as the Communists, ensured that the possibility of a coherent policy challenge by the legislature was much diminished. Outside parliament,

Putin's reforms ensured that only a few republics, such as Tatarstan,[145] retained any foreign policy significance, while even Luzhkov was somewhat quiet in the foreign policy debate during Putin's first term, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the parliamentary and presidential elections. Luzhkov's problem was that he had supported Primakov's aborted attempt to participate in the presidential campaign, and he now needed to keep a low profile for a time in order to avert executive wrath.

In the sphere of economics, the leadership of Gazprom could feel much more confident following Putin's election. The new President was willing and able to empower the state-controlled energy company a strong say in Russian international economic resurrection and expansion, and the opinions and actions of Gazprom were visible throughout this period in relation to the post-Soviet region. As one Russian scholar put it to me in May, 2007, Gazprom still remembered being "a state within the state" during Soviet times, and continued to interpret sheer size and market control as intrinsic goals.[146] Private energy companies including LUKoil also benefitted from the relative strengthening of the Russian economy and at times used their clout abroad, sometimes in cooperation with Gazprom such as in the Caucasus in the first half of 2000,[147] even while no private energy company dared challenge the state directly following Mikhail Khodorkovskii's arrest in 2003 and the dismantling of his oil company.[148] A similar tendency to state control could be seen in other

[145] G. Sharafutdinova, "Paradiplomacy in the Russian Regions: Tatarstan's search for statehood," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 55 (4), 2003, pp. 620, 625

[146] *Interview with Russian political economist*, Moscow, May 2007

[147] J. Black, *Vladimir Putin and the New World Order: looking east, looking west?*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004, p. 285

[148] V. Shlapentokh, "Wealth vs Political Power: The Russian Case," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 37, 2, June 2004, 135-60; also V. Shlykov, "The Anti-Oligarchy Campaign and its Implications for Russian Security," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 17, 1, March 2004, 111-28

economic spheres, not least relating to the defence industry,[149] which benefitted

substantially from state goodwill concerning arms sales to states such as Iran.[150] Finally, a

surprising actor influencing foreign economic policy was Anatolii Chubais, who had

previously been widely vilified as responsible for the harsh and corrupted Russian economic

reforms during the 1990s. But from 1998, when he became head of the state-owned

electrical power monopoly Unified Energy Systems, Chubais was again allowed a significant

say in domestic and foreign policy debate. From the religious sphere, Putin proved just as

apt as El'tsin in retaining and exploiting Aleksii II's support. Although the new President's

daughter had been baptised in 1985, Putin could hardly claim a background as an Orthodox

believer. Nevertheless, he seemed to have no problem combining a centralised state

ideology with a religious element in a step not too different from Imperial policies in the

19th century. Certainly, Aleksii II only remained outspoken because Putin could trust the

Patriarch; within the media sphere, too, it became increasingly noticeable that only sources

controlled by the executive could be noticeable in the foreign policy debate. This was the

case for state television channel ORT, as well as the formerly highly independent NTV, after

it became formally controlled by Gazprom from April, 2001. A few, isolated foreign policy

observers were still capable of influencing the foreign policy debate, but even the most

ardent of these such as the resilient Aleksandr Tsipko were unable or unwilling to directly

contradict official policy. This did not mean that no foreign policy debate took place; Putin's

administration remained determined to build up support for domestic and foreign policy

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[149] R. Stowe, "Foreign Policy Preferences of the New Russian Business Elite," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 48 (3), 2001, pp. 53-56

[150] T. Bukkvoll, "Arming the Ayatollahs: economic lobbies in Russia's Iran Policy," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 49 (6), 2002, p. 38

initiatives from the general public, the indirect influence of which could therefore not be dismissed.

2004-08

During Putin's second presidential term the mechanisms of policy-making mostly remained as they had developed during the first term. If anything, policy making seemed to be even more controlled by the President than had previously been the case. This was first indicated by the parliamentary election in December, 2003, which was won by Kremlin-supporting parties. Putin's re-election the following spring bore the marks of a coronation, and the President finally took advantage of the hostage-taking crisis in Beslan in September, 2004, to introduce presidentially appointed regional governors and exclusively national party-list competitors for the legislature.[151] Moreover, Putin ensured more streamlined, effective governance than El'tsin by building better personal relations with his government and the parliament. This advantage increased during Putin's second term when the El'tsin period had eventually moved so far into the past that personnel from his time had been replaced by Putin's own people. Furthermore, Putin had by now convinced his domestic audience of the viability of his strategic plans for Russia and of the fact that internal dissent might damage the new-found strength shown by the Russian state.[152]

Away from the President's direct control, Sergei Ivanov became even more active than previously on the domestic and foreign policy scenes. It was now openly debated that the

[151] S. White, "The Domestic Management of Russia's Foreign and Security Policy" in R. Allison, M. Light and S. White *Putin's Russia and the Enlarged Europe*, London: RIIA, 2006, pp. 24-28; "Ofitsial'nyi vtornik," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 14.9.2004

[152] M. Light, "Foreign Policy" in S. White, Z. Gitelman and R. Sakwa, eds., *Developments in Russian Politics 6*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 229

Defence Minister was one of the frontrunners to succeed Putin; particularly during the first half of this period Sergei Ivanov conducted a vigorous defence of an assertive, security-conscious Russian foreign policy with clear support from large parts of the military and the security services. Nobody assumed that Igor' Ivanov might become President, and on the whole his transfer from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Secretary of the Security Council in March, 2004, appeared to many as a demotion. Still, Ivanov tried to remain relevant in the foreign policy debate until his resignation in July, 2007. On the whole, however, Igor' Ivanov's successor as Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, benefitted from being Putin's appointee and from the experience gathered during his decade-long tenure as Russian representative to the United Nations. Finally, although his influence was increasingly felt in an indirect manner, Chernomyrdin remained pivotal in the increasingly complex Russo-Ukrainian relations, where he repeatedly showed himself as loyal towards the Russian central leadership.

As mentioned above, Duma elections in December, 2003, had been convincingly won by the Kremlin-supported "United Russia" party, with its 38% of votes representing more than three times as many as those gathered by the next party, the Communists. Consequently, the Duma now seemed completely unwilling to challenge policy presented by the executive, and the only function of the lower parliamentary chamber was now as presenter of potentially contentious policies that the executive might not wish to be directly associated with. As for the upper chamber, as I also mentioned above, direct appointments of governors by the President diminished the incentive for almost any local challenge. Nevertheless, one exception to this rule was Luzhkov who seemed to have regained his belief that the central leadership would not, or perhaps could not, dismiss him. For sure, the

Moscow Mayor never challenged the state executive directly, yet Luzhkov seemed perfectly willing to stir up trouble abroad, such as in relation to Ukraine, even when Putin might have wished for bilateral reconciliation. Although such initiatives could not directly challenge major objectives of Russian state foreign policy, they could direct the latter on issues where it was still unclear.[153]

In the business world the leadership of Gazprom was buoyed by its increasing dominance of the natural gas market at home and abroad, and from the knowledge that the Kremlin would support it against any domestic or foreign competition. Indeed, clear signs appeared that Gazprom was becoming an increasingly important means by which Putin could force post-Soviet and even Western states closer to Russia, and any foreign policy statements presented by leaders of Gazprom thus became noteworthy. Another state company that retained a place in the foreign policy debate was ORT as the Russian leadership increasingly appeared to favour the use of television in its media campaign to control domestic and foreign policy debates. In this campaign private assistance was also accepted, however, and one of the most effective PR managers used in the process was Marat Gel'man, whose activities in Ukraine became quite important for the bilateral relationship. Of the relatively independent foreign policy observers that remained, few were important, with Tsipko again being one of the few scholars to be noted in the debate. More generally, it may be argued that members of Russian academic circles retained a little significance in foreign policy debates, but mostly in the fashion seen with the Duma above; as advocates for embryonic state policies.

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[153] R. Huber and I. Kurilla, "A Regional Approach to International Research: Russian CASE studies," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 54 (2), 2007, p. 5

As I have intended to show in this short chapter, Russian foreign policy making was influenced by a number of actors throughout El'tsin's and Putin's presidencies. It cannot be denied that the presidents and other members of the executive mostly dominated foreign policy making, partly due to their vigorous attempts to retain control, and partly due to the quite hierarchical institutional framework for Russian policy making inaugurated with the constitution of December, 1993. Consequently, these actors' perceptions will be the focus of much of my attention in this thesis. However, the specific permutations of the foreign policy making mechanism at a given point in time was perhaps not so important overall as the fact that neither presidents, nor governments or other state-affiliated actors, nor even non-state actors could be dismissed as wholly insignificant at any point during the four periods covered by this thesis. Thus, I have chosen in the following to consult sources from a large amount of highly different actors.

Chapter 4: Imagining sovereignty (1990-1993)

Imagining political sovereignty

Territory

Law: Treaty on inviolable borders

With the founding treaty between the RSFSR and UkSSR from November, 1990, Russians for the first time accepted Ukrainian territorial inviolability. The two republics pledged to: "...recognise and respect the territorial integrity of [each other] within their currently existing borders..."[154] A similar treaty was unnecessary between the RSFSR and the BSSR. A study of the RSFSR borders in March, 1991, concluded that the BSSR was the only republic with which a sovereign Russia could have no territorial disagreements.[155] This did not change with the Soviet collapse. Although the CIS was formed as a successor organisation to the Soviet Union in December, 1991, Russian governmental Deputy Chairman Gennadii Burbulis' immediately sought to dilute the organisation by inviting Bulgaria, Poland and other interested states to join,[156] even though such a widened union would never be capable of deepened territorial integration. Burbulis' and his Russian colleagues knew that forced integration would not be widely approved. In mid-1992, 65% of respondents in a survey opposed Russian-sponsored violence even in the most controversial territorial issue of Crimea, while only 19% felt otherwise.[157] More importantly in July, 1993, El'tsin professed

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[154] "Dogovor mezhdu Rossiiskoi Sovetskoi Federativnoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respublikoi i Ukrainskoi Sovetskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respublikoi (19.11.1990)" in G. Berdennikov and A. Chalyi, eds., *Rossiia-Ukraina 1990-2000 (kniga 1)*, Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2001, p. 20

[155] O. Glezer, V. Kolosov, N. Petrov, V. Streletskii and A. Treivish, "Kto na chto pretenduet?" *Moskovskie novosti*, 17.3.1991, p. 8

[156] N. Malcolm, "New Thinking and after: debate in Moscow about Europe" in N. Malcolm, ed., *Russia and Europe: an end to confrontation?* London: Pinter, 1994, p. 170

[157] Dawisha and Parrott, p. 65

to be ashamed over claims by the Russian parliament on Ukrainian territory,[158] while he also refused to veto a formal Ukrainian appeal against Russian pretentions to the UN Security Council.[159] El'tsin appreciated that the Ukrainians had responded to Russian threats not by threats of their own, but by seeking recourse to international law.

Power: A Russian Union and joint stabilisation of borders

Yet, territorial integration and expansion traditionally characterised the Russian state, which successfully integrated Belarusians and Ukrainians. In the all-Soviet census of 1989, 22% in the UkSSR had declared themselves Russians, who constituted 80% of all non-titulars in the republic and constituted the largest number of Russians in any republic bar the RSFSR.[160] And Russian leaders equated Russian and Soviet greatness. In April, 1990, the Russian-born Soviet leader Gorbachev contested Lithuanian independence, stressing that Russia, not the Soviet Union, had advanced for centuries towards the Lithuanian port of Klaipeda for centuries.[161] From the political opposition, Solzhenitsyn in September suggested forming a Russian Union (in a multinational, *rossiiskii* form), uniting the territories of the RSFSR, the BSSR and the UkSSR based on popular referendums.[162] It was likely that El'tsin and his supporters might also equate Soviet and Russian territory. Despite the importance of the November, 1990, treaty, it only supported territorial inviolability "...within the framework of the USSR."[163] This suited many inhabitants of the UkSSR well, and of the BSSR, too. Traditionally, some of the most loyal Soviet subjects lived here. In an all-Union referendum

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[158] "Oborona Sevastopolia," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 13.7.1993, p. 1

[159] B. Nahaylo, *The Ukrainian Resurgence*, London: Hurst, 1999, pp. 460, 461

[160] Goskomstat RSFSR, *Natsional'nyi sostav naseleniia RSFSR*, Moscow: Respublikanskii-informatsionno-izdatel'skii tsentr, 1990, pp. 78-80; P. Kolstoe, *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics*, London: Hurst, 1995, p. 170

[161] "Otkrovennyi razgovor s komsomol'skimi delegatami," *Pravda*, 12.4.1990, p. 2

[162] A. Solzhenitsyn, "Kak nam obustroit' Rossiiu?" *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 18.9.1990, pp. 5, 6

[163] "Dogovor mezhdu," p. 20

of March, 1991, 83% of voters supported the continued existence of the Soviet Union; the highest proportion of any republic.[164] Territorial sovereignty was reluctantly embraced by the BSSR leadership after the failed Soviet coup in August. Belarusian leader Stanislav Shushkevich remained so eager to reintegrate with Russia that Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk eventually complained that a Russo-Belarusian alliance was pushing Ukraine into a new union.[165] The Russian government broadly supported this. Even Kozyrev, generally promoting post-Soviet Russia, in late 1991 advocated continued territorial unity to non-Russian republican leaders.[166] However, Ukrainian independence had broad domestic support, and Kozyrev was rather echoing concern felt by many in the RSFSR regarding Ukrainian independence.[167] Yet soon such concern spread to inhabitants of economically troubled Ukraine. By March, 1992, 35% condemned the Soviet liquidation, as did 60% late in that year.[168] Popular opinion could not reverse the declaration of independence, but it confirmed for Russians that reintegration would be a natural development. By June, 1992, Kozyrev still predicted that Belarus, Ukraine and other post-Soviet states would soon return to Russia, despite a slight delay.[169] The CIS could facilitate this. In October, 1992, Belarus joined the CIS agreement on cooperation on stability along borders with non-participating states, which stated: "In order to support stable relations along external border the Parties

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[164] R. Clem, "Belarus and the Belarusians" in G. Smith, ed., *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States (2nd ed.)*, New York: Longman, 1996, p. 219

[165] J. Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the Soviet Empire*, Princeton, NJ: PUP, 1993, p. 274

[166] *Chernomorskii flot, gorod Sevastopol' i nekotorye problemy rossiisko-ukrainskikh otnoshenii*, Moscow: Nezavisimaia gazeta, 1997, p. 23

[167] Kuzio, "Russia," p. 160

[168] I. Kliamkin, "Russian Statehood, the CIS and the Problem of Security" in L. Aron and K. Jensen, eds., *The Emergence of Russian Foreign Policy*, Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1994, p. 113

[169] T. Kuzio, "Russia – Crimea – Ukraine: triangle of conflict" in M. Beloff, ed., *Beyond the Soviet Union: the fragmentation of power*, Aldershot and Brookfield, VT: Dartmouth, 1997, p. 165

will conduct all-round cooperation..."[170] This allowed Russian security services to control

Belarusian borders. El'tsin approved of this. While the domestic parliamentary challenge

persisted he had rarely advocated reintegration, to avoid providing support for his

opponents' arguments. By October, 1993, though, El'tsin had prevailed in Russia and in the

ancient Russian city of Iaroslavl openly called for a gathering of all Russian lands.[171]

Nation: Recent territorial transfer

Such a gathering was not meant to endanger Ukrainian sovereignty, although a potential

dispute might concern Crimea. The peninsula had been transferred from the RSFSR to the

UkSSR in 1954, despite connections to Russia through history and population.[172] In 1989,

Gorbachev had warned that a territorially sovereign Ukraine might lose Crimea,[173] yet few

listened to him, or to other fading elites such as the Russian Colonel Dmitrii Volkogonov who

in late 1990 threatened Ukrainians with territorial revanchism.[174] When 93% of Crimeans in

January, 1991, supported "reinstating" a status of union republic for Crimea, which it had

never had,[175] the gesture was also without influence on power struggles in Moscow.

Following the failed Soviet coup in August, 1991, El'tsin's spokesman Pavel Voshchanov

stressed that the RSFSR reserved the right to renegotiate existing borders through all means

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[170] *Soglashenie o sotrudnichestve gosudarstv-uchastnikov Sodruzhestva po obespecheniiu stabil'nogo polozheniia na ikh vneshnikh granitzakh*, article 4, on http://pravo.kulichki.com/zak/megd/meg03637.htm (accessed on 2.7.2009)

[171] V. Glebov, "The Black Sea Region, European Security and Ukraine" in D. Albright and S. Appatov, eds., *Ukraine and European Security*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999, p. 186

[172] R. Solchanyk, "Crimea: between Ukraine and Russia" in M. Drohobycky, ed., *Crimea: dynamics, challenges and prospects*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995, p. 4

[173] M. Gorbachev, "Perestroika – delo vsekh narodov strany," *Pravda*, 24.2.1989, pp. 1-3

[174] Nahaylo, p. 331

[175] G. Sasse, "The 'New' Ukraine: a state of regions" in J. Hughes and G. Sasse, eds., *Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union: regions in conflict*, Portland, OR, and London: Frank Cass, 2001, pp. 87, 88, 97

necessary if neighbouring republics pursued full sovereignty.[176] But this was only a precaution to avoid chaotic belligerence from neighbouring states. Furthermore, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Borys Tarasiuk and his colleagues soon called the Russian bluff, when they mentioned they might ask for RSFSR territories, including Kuban.[177] This never happened, and the Belarusian Popular Front was ultimately also unwilling to pursue claims for Briansk, Pskov and Smolensk in the RSFSR.[178] In January, 1992, Russian Foreign Ministry officials allegedly challenged Ukrainian sovereignty over Crimea, but this and reputed Ukrainian protests remained unconfirmed.[179] In January, 1992, Vladimir Lukin's Supreme Soviet Committee for International Affairs declared the Crimean transfer to the UkSSR null and void, as did the entire chamber in May.[180] But that forced El'tsin to defend Ukrainian territorial sovereignty against his parliamentary enemies.

Governance

Law: Democratic sovereignty

During 1990, several republican leaders, including El'tsin, challenged Soviet central governance by openly calling for democratisation. In November, 1990, his joint statement with Kravchuk suggested gradual democratisation replacing outdated Soviet totalitarian structures.[181] Similarly, after the provisional declaration of independence in Ukraine in August, 1991, Mayor of Leningrad Anatolii Sobchak visited Kyiv and afterwards told the

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[176] Molchanov, p. 251

[177] Ibid, p. 220

[178] D. Trenin, "The Changing Geopolitical Realities in Europe" in A. Arbatov, K. Kaiser and R. Legvold, eds., *Russia and the West: the 21st century security environment*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999, p. 164

[179] Kuzio, "Russia," p. 171

[180] Ambrosio, *Challenging*, p. 56

[181] Nahaylo, p. 329

USSR Supreme Soviet that Ukrainians had a right to choose independence.[182] When that was completed in December, 1991, El'tsin's stated: "The Russian leadership declares it recognises the independence of Ukraine in correspondence with its people's democratic expression of its will."[183] In return, Ukrainians had to uphold new demands for good governance, but they accepted this. In January, 1993, Russian offers to relieve Ukraine of governing responsibility were rejected with the message that a supra-state "drill sergeant" was not required.[184]

Power: Absorbed by the Soviet Union

Still, Russians had traditionally offered supranational, centralised Eurasian governance. Unlike the case in other Soviet republics, many institutions did not exist in the RSFSR separately from all-Union institutions. This included the Communist Party (until 1990), the KGB, and the Academy of Sciences,[185] while Moscow was both republican and union capital. Also, Russian interference might not imply complete Belarusian and Ukrainian lack of control, for these three nations had been overrepresented within Soviet state as well as Communist party structures.[186] Ukrainian elites supported Muscovite rule under long-reigning CPUk First Secretary Volodymyr Shcherbyts'kyi and his replacement, Leonid Ivashko. Even Rukh, the UkSSR nationalist party battling for power devolution, only

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[182] V. Savichev, "24 avgusta Ukraina provozglasila sebia nezavisimym demokraticheskim gosudarstvom," *Argumenty i fakty*, 5.9.1991

[183] "Zaiavlenie prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsi B.N. El'tsina o priznanii Rossiei nezavisimosti Ukrainy," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 4.12.1991

[184] P. Kubicek, "End of the Line for the Commonwealth of Independent States," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 46 (2), 1999, p. 17

[185] M. Mendras, "Towards a Post-imperial Identity" in V. Baranovsky, ed., *Russia and Europe: the emerging security agenda*, Stockholm and Oxford: SIPRI and OUP, 1997, p. 99

[186] S. Birgerson, *After the Breakup of a Multi-Ethnic Empire: Russia, successor states, and Eurasian security*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002, p. 109

appeared in 1989.[187] Rukh became established in Ukrainian politics, yet suffered from poor,

mismanaged post-independence Ukrainian realities. Belarusians, too, hardly benefitted

from the Soviet collapse. Belarusians reluctantly declared independence only after the failed

Soviet coup in August, 1991.[188] Afterwards, Russians unsurprisingly took Belarusian

compliance for granted. Similarly, in August, 1991, Sobchak, as already mentioned, might

have accepted Ukrainian independence, but only after failing to convince Ukrainian

parliamentarians to remain united with Russia.[189] By July, 1992, El'tsin was using tension

between Ukraine and Crimea to discuss possible dual citizenship for Crimeans, with him as

inter-ethnic protector.[190] Inhabitants of Ukraine, having been told independence would be a

panacea, considered this option; in June, 1993, striking Russian miners in Donbas even

advocated increased governance from Moscow.[191]

Nation: Russian nomenklatura

The miners did not want to join Russia, though, and the danger of other Russians in Ukraine

seeking this was remote. During 1990-91, some Russians in twelve eastern and southern

UkSSR regions constructed Interfront movements, accusing west Ukrainians of mistreating

Russians, drawing them away from Russia.[192] However, the post-1991 context was wholly

different. Most Russians advocating that Russia take control in eastern and southern

Ukraine were inconsequential. Rutskoi might have been the exception; in May, 1992, he

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[187] Kolstoe, p. 174

[188] J. Chinn and R. Kaiser, *Russians as the New Minority: ethnicity and nationalism in the Soviet successor states*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996, p. 139

[189] Savichev

[190] L. Barrington, "The Domestic and International Consequences of Citizenship in the Soviet Successor States," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 47 (5), 1995, p. 742

[191] P. Duncan, "Ukraine and the Ukrainians" in G. Smith, ed., *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States (2nd ed.)*, New York: Longman, 1996, p. 203

[192] Sasse, p. 84

dismissed Ukrainian independence as local Communists' attempt to stay in power. Nevertheless, he was not suggesting just Russians in Ukraine might be ruled from Moscow; he wanted Moscow to rule everyone in Ukraine.[193] Allegedly, in mid-1992, a report by the Institute of Europe in Moscow advised spreading the image of an authoritarian-nationalist, neo-Communist Ukraine, which might become internationally isolated and allow Russian governance over its mistreated Russians.[194] Still, even if this report really existed, nobody heeded it. Apparently, domestic Ukrainian strife had little impact, either. In January, 1993, when Kravchuk unilaterally extended presidential rule over Crimea,[195] El'tsin answered local protests by merely asking Kravchuk to stay out of Crimean affairs.[196] When the above-mentioned Donbas miners then appealed to Russia,[197] they knew El'tsin's assistance would be limited.

Ideology

Law: Ukrainian statehood congratulated

El'tsin promoted a multinational ideology, using *rossiiskii* and not the ethnically determined *russkii* for Russians, who were thus identified with the new Russian Federation, rather than the Russian nation or empire. Correspondingly, Russian and Ukrainian sovereign ideologies might co-exist, and in August, 1990, RSFSR and UkSSR parliamentarians issued a joint

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[193] S. Pravdenko, "Taky spravdi," *Holos Ukraiiny*, 27.5.1992, p. 7

[194] Kuzio, "Russia," p. 161

[195] L. Kravchuk, "Pro predstavnitstvo prezidenta Ukraiiny v Respublitsi Krym," *Holos Ukraiiny*, 27.1.1993, p. 8

[196] Barrington, p. 757

[197] N. Lakiza-Sachuk and N. Melnyczuk, "Ukraine after Empire: ethnicities and democracy" in L. Drobizheva, R. Gottemoeller, C. Kelleher and L. Walker, eds., *Ethnic Conflict in the post-Soviet World: case studies and analysis*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996, p. 112

statement supporting new, harmonious Russo-Ukrainian interactions.[198] And in December, 1991, El'tsin swiftly congratulated Ukraine on its independence, stressing that Russians wanted to inaugurate a bilateral relationship based on mutually agreed principles.[199] He used such a relationship to stabilise the region; in July, 1992, Russia and Ukraine became joint guarantors of the Moldovan-Transnistrian ceasefire.[200] Some Ukrainians still feared Russian intentions, but Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister, Fedor Shelov-Kovediaev, plausibly argued that Russia had assisted Ukrainian statehood and that Ukrainians should stop seeking the "image of Russia as an enemy."[201] Agreeing, Ukrainian Culture Minister Ivan Dziuba emphasised late that year how the new Ukrainian nation should centre on citizenship, not ethnicity; a welcome message for Russians.[202] Internationally, Dziuba's colleagues, and the Belarusian government, too, understood they could no longer hide as Russian appendages, but had to promote their states as fully sovereign and European.[203]

Power: Imperial law

However, official ideologies had hitherto united Russians and their neighbours. Before the Soviet Union, the Russian Empire centred on a core nation of legally equal Great Russians, White Russians, and Little Russians.[204] Here, though, and within the Soviet Union, too, Russians were portrayed as first among equals. Witness a text from 1979 stating that the blossoming of a nation in the Union was especially achieved by "the Russian people, who by

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[198] "Zaiava pro pryntsypy mizhderzhavnykh vidnosyn Ukraiiny ta RRFSR na osnovi deklaratsii pro derzhavnyi suverenitet," *Literaturna Ukraiina*, 6.9.1990, p. 1

[199] "Zaiavlenie"

[200] J. Gow, "Independent Ukraine: the politics of security," *International Relations*, 11 (3), 1992, p. 259

[201] A. Gagua, "V kritike vneshnei politiki Rossii my stalkivaemsia s opasnym neprofessionalizmom," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 30.7.1992, p. 5

[202] I. Dziuba, "Ukraiina na shliakhakh derzhavotvorennia," *Viche*, 7, 1992, p. 59

[203] Chinn and Kaiser, p. 140

[204] Molchanov, p. 174

right occupy first place among equals in the Soviet community of nationalities."[205] The Soviet leadership also never hesitated to evoke imperial ideologies to gain inter-republican cohesiveness. In 1985, Gorbachev mentioned that the Soviet Union covered the territory of Imperial Russia,[206] emphasising a supranational link between the two states. The link between stability and supra-nationalism was often used against El'tsin's separatism; in May, 1990, Tsipko warned that a sovereign Russian ideology might prompt sovereign ideologies in other republics, too.[207] At the time, this seemed questionable, though. In the BSSR, the nationalist Belarusian Popular Front was founded only in 1989 and won a mere 11%, or 37 of 345 seats, in the 1990 republican legislature.[208] In Ukraine, nationalist Rukh fared little better, and loyalty to empire remained among ordinary Ukrainians. Thus, in November, 1990, when El'tsin arrived in Kyiv to sign the RSFSR-UkSSR treaty, Ukrainians shouted "Glory be to El'tsin!" imitating past greetings to the emperor.[209] El'tsin believed a sovereign Russia would be the centre for Belarusians and Ukrainians, too, and even by November, 1991, he could "not envisage a future Union on post-Soviet territory without the participation of Ukraine."[210] Subsequent confirmations of Ukrainian and Belarusian independence undoubtedly disappointed El'tsin, who nonetheless had grounds for hoping such independence would be a temporary phenomenon. As Ukrainian Prime Minister Kuchma said early in 1992, Belarus and Ukraine were not awaited in the West, and prosperity seemed only possible through participation in a Russia-dominated CIS.[211] In Russia, Rutskoi

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[205] V. Sherstobitov, ed., *Natsional'nye otnosheniia v SSSR na sovremennom etape*, Moscow: Nauka, 1979, p. 41

[206] Solchanyk, "Ukraine," p. 35

[207] A. Tsipko, "Russkie iskhodiat iz Rossii?" *Izvestiia*, 26.5.1990, p. 1

[208] A. Wilson, *Virtual Politics: faking democracy in the post-Soviet world*, New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 2005, pp. 152, 153

[209] Kuzio, "Russia," p. 169

[210] A. Lugovskaia, "Boris El'tsin," *Izvestiia*, 29.11.1991, p. 3

[211] L. Buszynski, *Russian Foreign Policy after the Cold War*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996, p. 129

wanted to encourage such opinions, and in 1992 he formed the Civic Union party, aiming to regain Belarus and Ukraine;[212] the party soon dominated Russian debate. During the following year, economic turmoil convinced many ordinary Ukrainians and Belarusians, too, that attachment to Russia would be beneficial. Thus, by April, 1993, impoverished inhabitants of Belarus were ready to ally with Russia and forget constructing a sovereign state ideology if this could improve material conditions.[213]

Nation: Subversive ideologies

Conversely, Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian ideologies were seldom opposed to each other. In the 1930s, Ukrainian nationalism had been vilified and combated in the Russia-dominated Soviet Union,[214] while Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968 might partly have been motivated by fears that Ukrainians there could transfer the subversive "Socialism with a human face" into the UkSSR and beyond.[215] Still, by the 1980s Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians were consistently presented as friends, central to the Soviet Union. This meant that the Belarusian Popular Front and other republican dissident movements sought some distance from Russia,[216] yet there was little hostility towards Russians in the BSSR. Following the Soviet collapse, a few Belarusians denounced Russians as cultural occupiers, while some Russian organisations in Belarus denied the existence of a separate Belarusian nation,[217] yet they gained no support from significant actors. The situation in western Ukraine might become more contentious. By 1991, 59% of Russians in Galicia claimed

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[212] Stowe, p. 54

[213] Chinn and Kaiser, p. 132

[214] A. Rieber, "How Persistent Are Persistent Factors?" in R. Legvold, ed., *Russian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century & the Shadow of the Past*, New York: Columbia UP, 2007, p. 241

[215] Ibid, pp. 234, 235

[216] L. Hagendoorn, H. Linssen and S. Tumanov, *Intergroup Relations in States of the Former Soviet Union: the perception of Russians*, London: Psychology Press, 2001, p. 65

[217] Kolstoe, p. 169

Ukrainians' attitudes towards them had worsened, while 82% daily witnessed ethnic enmity. Ominously, 38% believed such enmity was the policy aim of Kravchuk's republican leadership.[218] Yet there was little basis for the latter allegation. In April, 1992, Rukh did advocate both the immediate termination of Ukrainian membership in the CIS, allegedly aimed to resurrect the Russian empire to the detriment of Ukraine, and the establishment of Ukrainian citizenship around the Ukrainian nation,[219] yet Rukh spoke from the opposition. Rukh might gain power, and in December, 1992, Kozyrev stressed that Russia might defend the rights and lives of ethnic Russians living in non-Russian post-Soviet states with any means necessary.[220] Yet his aim was primarily to pacify belligerent Russian parliamentary deputies, who sometimes accused Ukrainians of treason,[221] but who ultimately had little influence on Russian international affairs.

Conclusion

Between 1990 and 1993, the paradigm of Power dominated Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian political sovereignty. In territorial matters, the Soviet Union united the RSFSR, BSSR and UkSSR until 1992. Afterwards, Russia and Belarus agreed on joint border protection. El'tsin advocated the gathering of Russian lands, while Kozyrev predicted the return of Belarus and Ukraine. Rhetorically, Soviet and post-Soviet documents distinguished between unimportant internal borders between Russia and its neighbours, and external borders to the rest of the world. In matters of governance, the RSFSR was institutionally intertwined with the Soviet Union, while governance in the BSSR and UkSSR

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[218] Molchanov, p. 214

[219] Ibid, p. 263

[220] A. Kozyrev, "Vneshniaia politika Rossii," *Rossiiskie vesti*, 3.12.1992, p. 2

[221] A. Tuminez, "Russian Nationalism and the National Interest in Russian Foreign Policy" in C. Wallander, ed., *The Sources of Russian Foreign Policy after the Cold War*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996, p. 59

was subservient to central Muscovite institutions. Subsequently, Russo-Ukrainian negotiations contemplated dual citizenship for Russians in Ukraine, which would partly have subordinated Ukrainian governance to Russia. Both members of the Russian executive, such as Rutskoi, and members of the opposition, such as Sobchak, supported Russian governance of Belarus and Ukraine, while Belarusians and Ukrainians had good memories of relative overrepresentation among Soviet elites. In matters of ideology, both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union centred on a core nation consisting of Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians, but with Russians as "first among equals." Furthermore, Gorbachev referred to Soviet and Imperial borders as essentially Russian borders, while El'tsin wanted Ukraine in any conceivable union. Rhetorically, there was a link between Soviet rhetoric naming Russians as "first among equals" and the Ukrainian shout of "Glory be to El'tsin!" which greeted the visiting Russian leader like an emperor.

The paradigm of Law also significantly influenced Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian political sovereignty. In territorial issues, the 1990 RSFSR-UkSSR treaty existed within a Soviet framework, but still contained the first territorial guarantees shared by these republics. Russians did not expect Belarusian and Ukrainian independence to last, yet they still congratulated their neighbours, just as El'tsin allowed the UN to help Ukrainians against Russian territorial revanchism. Throughout this period, "recognition and respect" for existing borders was mentioned. In issues of governance, the joint RSFSR-UkSSR statement from November, 1990, was a democratic challenge to the allegedly totalitarian Soviet Union. And even if El'tsin did not wish that democracy might take Russians and their neighbours apart, he still explicitly recognised Ukrainians' choice of independence. References to the democratic will were present, if not dominant, in Russian and Ukrainian rhetoric throughout

this period. Finally, although the Russian government hardly invited sovereign Belarusian and Ukrainian ideologies, these were co-opted to establish and preserve regional peace, notably in Moldova. El'tsin championed the idea of "rossiiskii" statehood; this did not necessarily preclude incorporation of Belarusians and Ukrainians, but it did preclude their alienation. Rhetorically, Russians stressed Belarusians and Ukrainians should not have the "image as an enemy" of them.

The paradigm of Nation was insignificant. In territorial matters, even Crimea was not contested. In matters of governance, the Russian government was unwilling to defend Russians abroad, despite rhetoric to the contrary. Finally, in matters of ideology El'tsin championed the concept of "rossiiskii," which was anything but directed against Belarusians and Ukrainians.

Imagining military sovereignty

Forces of Belarus and Ukraine

Law: Creating new forces

As RSFSR leader, El'tsin understood that the republics could not take sovereignty from the Soviet centre without securing the support of troops in the republics. In November, 1990, he admired the decision by the UkSSR leadership to retain local military recruits within the republic, and El'tsin noted that the RSFSR would have to keep up with this display of sovereignty.[222] This might mean decreased RSFSR-UkSSR military cooperation, too. In October, 1991, El'tsin cut ties with research and development establishments in other

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[222] Nahaylo, p. 329

Soviet republics, including the Ukrainian Iuzhnoe missile production facility, to avoid technical dependency on non-Russian actors.[223] Maybe Ukraine did not need to cooperate, though, for it retained many Soviet military assets, including 25-30% of heavy Soviet armaments west of the Urals, 700,000 personnel, over 6,300 modern tanks, between 1,100 and 1,900 airplanes, and more than 300 helicopters, together constituting the second-largest European army and the third-largest air force in the world.[224] El'tsin could only abandon all this equipment given respect for sovereign Ukrainian forces. The Black Sea Fleet and nuclear arms were not so easily surrendered. However, on the former question Russia and Ukraine agreed to disagree, while on the latter Kravchuk and Shushkevich accepted that nuclear arms could be in Russia, if inter-governmental control of their use was established.[225] By 1993, all tactical nuclear weapons had been transported from Belarus and Ukraine to Russia. Russian commentators such as Aleksei Arbatov applauded this development as it prevented uncontrolled nuclear proliferation. Otherwise, Arbatov had no wish to obstruct the formation of sovereign Belarusian and Ukrainian forces, let alone to see Russia pay for such forces.[226] Belarusian legislators concurred, and in February, 1993, ratified the START I treaty on nuclear disarmament and the accompanying Lisbon Protocol from 1992 without preconditions while endorsing the accession of Belarus to the Non-proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear state, an accession subsequently completed in July.[227] With this status confirmed, Belarusian forces might finally be constructed.

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[223] C. Bluth, *The Nuclear Challenge: US-Russian strategic relations after the Cold War*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000, p. 106

[224] V. Krylov, "Poletiat li 'Tomagavki' na Moskvu?" *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 15.4.1999; see also Molchanov, p. 232

[225] A. Luzin, "Sodruzhestvo – eto poka embrional'noe obrazovanie," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 15.2.1992

[226] A. Arbatov, "Rossiiskie strategicheskie dilemmy," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 28.8.1992, p. 4; "El'tsin, Kravchuk i ballisticheskie rakety," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 6.8.1992, p. 4

[227] M. Ponomarev, "Paspolzaniiu iadernoi smerti po svetu dolzhen byt' polozhen predel," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 6.8.1993

Power: Dispersed nuclear arms in a joint strategic space

Whether Belarusians wanted wholly sovereign forces remained doubtful, though, as the BSSR benefitted from Soviet military infrastructure. The Belorussian Military District, the territory of which corresponded to the BSSR, consistently received some of the best Soviet military units and equipment.[228] Furthermore, the BSSR, the UkSSR and the RSFSR were all enmeshed in the nuclear infrastructure. Short-ranged tactical weapons were placed in nine different republics, including these three. The BSSR also held 54 warheads for strategic weapons, while the UkSSR held more than 1,500 such, deployed in silos, road- and rail-mobile vehicles and aircrafts.[229] Establishing complete sovereignty of Belarusian and Ukrainian forces would necessarily take time and be poorly understood by Russians in the Soviet military. In December, 1990, the chief of the Soviet general staff, General Mikhail Moiseev, equalled Soviet and Russian military aims, arguing in the UkSSR that a centralised Soviet army was necessitated by the interests of the Russian (*rossiiskogo*) state.[230] As indicated above, El'tsin agreed, at least concerning nuclear weapons. In August, 1991, he announced that Ukraine could not keep control over nuclear arms, since they had officially declared the UkSSR and Ukraine as non-nuclear. Control of nuclear weapons should thus transfer to Russia straightaway.[231] In December, El'tsin did allow CIS-accords to confirm that: "[The participants] of the [CIS] shall preserve and support a joint military-strategic

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[228] J. Hedenskog, "Filling 'the Gap': Russian security policy towards Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova under Putin" in J. Hedenskog, V. Konnander, B. Nygren, I. Oldberg and C. Pursiainen, eds., *Russia as a Great Power: dimensions of security under Putin*, London: Routledge, 2005, p. 133

[229] Bluth, p. 72

[230] V. Kyryliuk, "Iak na brannomu poli," *Literaturna Ukraiina*, 6.12.1990, p. 1

[231] Nahaylo, p. 395

space under unified command…"[232] but Russians intended to control such a joint space. And whereas Ukraine might disagree, Belarus happily agreed if Russia paid the bill. In November, 1992, Shushkevich thus declared that nuclear weapons were under Russian jurisdiction, should be returned to Russia, and, effectively, were the problem of a military union financed by Russia.[233] Shushkevich had no hope of Western military assistance. In early 1993 both he and Kravchuk tacitly accepted warnings from senior Russian governmental officials to representatives of the Central European Visegrad organisation against forming any sort of military union with Belarus and Ukraine, since the latter states allegedly fell within the Russian sphere of influence.[234] Arbatov and other liberal Russian commentators, including Grigorii Berdennikov and Vladimir Dvorkin, would generally not go so far concerning Belarusian and Ukrainian forces, but certainly did so in the case of nuclear weapons. The extent to which all Russian commentators failed to consider Ukrainian wishes on nuclear disarmament was remarkable.[235] Yet eventually Ukrainians became convinced that the Russian government effectively offered to take a problem off their hands. By April, 1993, most members of Kravchuk's administration understood that retaining sovereign nuclear forces was a costly business, which their rapidly impoverished state could hardly afford.[236]

Nation: Incompatible understandings of "strategic"

Ukraine and Belarus could certainly not afford military tension or conflict, either. In 1990, Rukh parliamentarian Serhii Holovaty had admittedly stated that European security was

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[232] "Soglashenie o sozdanii Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv," *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, 1, 1992, pp. 3-6, article 6

[233] I. Siniakevich, "Iadernoe razoruzhenie: besplatno ili za den'gi?" *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 26.11.1992, p. 1

[234] Skak, p. 163

[235] "SNV-2 i natsional'nye interesy Rossii," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 23.3.1993, p. 5; V. Litovkin, "SNV-2 ukrepliaet bezopasnost' Rossii, schitaiut krupneishie otechestvennye spetsialisty," *Izvestiia*, 10.4.1993, p. 15

[236] V. Skachko, "Slishkom mnogo protivorechii," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 27.4.1993, p. 3

threatened by the retention of totalitarian, Russian-led Soviet forces,[237] but this argument withered after 1991. Any remaining tension was latent; existing for instance in the December, 1991, founding treaty of the CIS, which stated: "[Russia, Belarus and Ukraine] will jointly guarantee...the preservation of strategic armed forces"[238] without agreeing what "strategic" meant. Ukraine and even Belarus did temporarily refuse to transfer nuclear arms to Russia,[239] and later sought financial compensation, but they could hardly have retained the weapons. Similarly, Ukraine was unprepared to maintain the Black Sea Fleet, and Lukin's January, 1992, threat of territorial and economic sanctions if the Fleet was not returned to Russian control[240] seemed redundant. El'tsin had to take the initiative back from parliament and in April, 1992, demanded "The transfer of the Black Sea Fleet under the jurisdiction of [Russia]..." from Kravchuk.[241] Yet El'tsin had been pushed into this position by parliamentary activity and his own prior inactivity; not by hostility to Ukrainian forces. Kravchuk soon called the bluff, warning CIS leaders that: "Lately, the situation in Crimea and concerning the Black Sea Fleet has significantly worsened [due to] continued interference in the domestic affairs of Ukraine by...the leadership of [Russia]."[242] El'tsin, wanting Russia to be the responsible post-Soviet leader, retreated and subsequently kept disputes over the Fleet to a minimum. Nuclear weapons could not be similarly abandoned, given the fear of nuclear proliferation. Yet on this issue, Russia had Western opinion on its side. By September, 1993,

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[237] Bluth, p. 83

[238] "Soglashenie sozdanii," pp. 3-6

[239] J. Sharp, "Dismantling the Military Confrontation" in N. Malcolm, ed., *Russia and Europe: an end to confrontation?*, London: Pinter, 1994, p. 84

[240] I. Sichka, "Luchshe otkryt' kingstony, chem Ukrainskii front," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 22.1.1992, p. 1

[241] "Ukaz prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii o perekhode pod iurisdiktsiiu Rossiiskoi Federatsii Chernomorskogo flota" in G. Berdennikov and A. Chalyi, eds., *Rossiia-Ukraina 1990-2000 (kniga 1)*, Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2001, p. 57

[242] "Telegramma prezidenta Ukrainy 'Vsem rukovoditeliam gosudarstv Sodruzhestva'" in G. Berdennikov and A. Chalyi, eds., *Rossiia-Ukraina 1990-2000 (kniga 1)*, Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2001, p. 56

when strategic nuclear weapons remained in Ukraine and Belarus, despite official transfer agreements, Russian Defence Minister Grachev demanded that Ukrainians act responsibly and respect previous agreements to abandon their SS-24 strategic missiles.[243] Grachev knew this challenge was a temporary, but necessary step that might embarrass Ukrainians internationally, but would soon be forgotten.

NATO

Law: Cordon sanitaire

Immediately before and after the Soviet collapse, Soviet-NATO detente became increasingly obvious. While no Soviet republican leaders contemplated closer relations with NATO, they could advocate neutrality between the two blocs. In July, 1990, the UkSSR parliament thus declared the "intention [of the UkSSR] to become a permanently neutral state..."[244] El'tsin did not protest against this or a similar BSSR declaration the following year. By January, 1993, though, the continued existence of NATO as a military organisation did worry Russians. To reduce tension, the leader of the Belarusian Popular Front, Zianon Pazniak, suggested forming an association of neutral states, including Belarus and Ukraine, between the Baltic and Black seas to keep Russia and NATO at bay.[245] That summer, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Anatolii Zlenko presented a similar suggestion, albeit with Ukraine as the

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[243] J. Morrison, "Pereyaslav and after: the Russian-Ukrainian relationship," *International Affairs*, 69 (4), 1993, p. 701

[244] "Deklaratsiia o gosudarstvennom suverenitete Ukrainy" in G. Berdennikov and A. Chalyi, eds., *Rossiia-Ukraina 1990-2000 (kniga 1)*, Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2001, p. 17

[245] S. Burant, "Foreign Policy and National Identity: a comparison of Ukraine and Belarus," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 47 (7), 1995, p. 1134

lynchpin of the association.[246] The Russian government did not comment on these suggestions, but might have welcomed the chance to keep NATO at a distance.

Power: Collective defence

Yet Russian elites needed Belarusian and Ukrainian military assistance to counter NATO. By 1992, Belarus alone hosted 23 missile bases and 42 military airfields, leaving 10% of the state under military jurisdiction.[247] If Russia allowed Belarus to remain neutral, NATO might take Belarus by force. Thus, in May, 1992, Russia and Belarus were among the founders of the Collective Security Treaty, where article 4 stated: "If one of the state-parties suffers aggression by any state or group of states, it will be perceived as aggression against all state-parties to this Treaty." This deliberately mirrored NATO statutes[248] and signalled that renewed divisions were taking place, with Belarus firmly entrenched on the Russian side.

Nation: Foreign peacekeepers

Although Ukraine did not join the Collective Security Treaty, Russians did not consider that Ukraine or Belarus might ally with NATO. Any worries came from third parties, such as Poland, where commentators in October, 1991, and again in February, 1992, argued that Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania could resolve an old Polish security problem by blocking Russian access to Central Europe.[249] Nothing indicated Belarusians and Ukrainians listened to this, though. It did annoy Russians when Zlenko in August, 1992, suggested that NATO

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[246] A. Zlenko, "Vnesok u budivnytstvo bezpeky dlia vsikh," *Holos Ukraiiny*, 10.7.1993, p. 3

[247] J. Zaprudnik and M. Urban, "Belarus: from statehood to empire?" in I. Bremmer and R. Taras, eds., *New States, New Politics: building the post-Soviet nations*, Cambridge: CUP, 1997, p. 294

[248] *Dogovor o kollektivnoi bezopasnosti dogovor Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv (15.5.1992)* on www.allbusiness.ru/BPravo/DocumShow_DocumID_40703.html (accessed on 3.7.2009)

[249] S. Burant, "International Relations in a Regional Context: Poland and its eastern neighbours. Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 45 (3), 1993, p. 395

and other Western international organisations could provide peacekeeping forces throughout Eurasia, without any participation by the CIS or Russia,[250] but Russians accepted that Zlenko wished Russia no harm and did not see NATO as an ally against Russia.

Forces of the Russian Federation in Belarus and Ukraine

Law: Nuclear veto

As already seen, Russian elites did not want nuclear weapons controlled by Belarus and Ukraine. However, by advocating for the return of the weapons to Russia, Russians showed they did not see nuclear weapons as a pretext to strengthen control over facilities outside Russia. In December, 1991, Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, together with Kazakhstan, agreed that: "Until nuclear weapons on the territories of [Belarus] and Ukraine have been completely removed, decisions concerning their use are taken...on the basis of procedures agreed between the participating states."[251] The equal status of these states was confirmed in May, 1992, when El'tsin agreed to establish Russian forces separate from the CIS. He understood it would be futile to impose supranational military solutions on neighbouring states.[252] Elites in Ukraine were mostly pleased with this, wanting to construct military sovereignty without an overbearing Russian presence. In August, 1992, a suggestion by Kozyrev's Foreign Ministry for a friendship treaty was thus dismissed since it allowed Russia to retain military bases in Ukraine within a united framework.[253] Belarusian leaders might have been more receptive, and Belarus hosted proportionally more Russian troops than

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[250] A. Zlenko, "Mizhnarodni obriii bil'noii Ukraiiny," *Holos Ukraiiny*, 26.8.1992, p. 6

[251] "Soglashenie o sovmestnykh merakh v otnoshenii iadernogo oruzhiia," *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, 1, 1992, pp. 9, 10

[252] D. Holloway and M. McFaul, "Demilitarization and Defense Conversion" in G. Lapidus, ed., *The New Russia: troubled transformation*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995, p. 196

[253] Kuzio, "Russia," p. 169

Ukraine did. Yet, public opinion did not want this to continue, as shown by widespread support for Belarusian neutrality in opinion polls from March, 1993.[254]

Power: Russian military succession and the CIS Charter

Notably, though, military personnel in Belarus and Ukraine were often keen to retain Russians in bases near them; unsurprisingly when considering that forces in the RSFSR, BSSR and UkSSR had mixed Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Russians. Thus, in August, 1991, the new pro-Russian Republican Movement of Crimea consisted mainly of former KGB officers and Afghan veterans,[255] who supported local Russian troops. Post-Soviet Russian military forces also had much to offer neighbours. Russia retained all paratroopers, and four out of six fully combat-ready divisions, leaving two divisions to be shared by Belarus and Ukraine.[256] In May, 1992, Shushkevich furthermore admitted that professional training of the Belarusian army would depend on Russian soldiers with whom Belarusian soldiers had used to train and on whose equipment they still relied.[257] Russian parliamentarians hoped that such dependence would allow Russian forces to dominate the region. Following Andranik Migranian, in August, 1992, the head of the Russian parliamentary Commission on International Affairs and Foreign Economic Ties, Evgenii Ambartsumov, called for international recognition of a Russian doctrine, akin to the American Monroe Doctrine, that would designate the post-Soviet region as a sphere of exclusive Russian interest and influence.[258] The CIS Charter from January, 1993, facilitated this, stating: "If threats to the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of one or some of the participants appear...this

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[254] Chinn and Kaiser, p. 143

[255] Ibid, p. 186

[256] Galeotti, p. 169

[257] Dawisha and Parrott, p. 251

[258] K. Eggert, "Rossiia v role 'evraziiskogo zhandarma'?" *Izvestiia*, 7.8.1992, p. 6

will immediately lead to joint consultations [among the parties] with the aim of...taking steps...including peacemaking operations and, if necessary, the employment of Armed Forces...”[259] Having negotiated the Charter, El'tsin could in February, 1993, claim the “Russian Monroe Doctrine” as his own idea, when he sought special powers from the UN to Russia as guarantor of peace and stability in the post-Soviet region.[260] This initiative gained widespread support from the Russian military after recent years of hardship and humiliation. Poignantly, in April, 1993, 80% of the Russian-dominated Black Sea Fleet raised the Tsarist St Andrew's flag, showing allegiance to empire and forcing Kravchuk to seek talks with Moscow and to mollify the sailors.[261]

Nation: Military doctrine

Neither El'tsin nor the Russian sailors intended to threaten Ukraine, though. In October, 1991, El'tsin had clumsily heightened Russo-Ukrainian tension, following rumours that the Russian elite had discussed a potential nuclear strike against Ukraine. Without considering the consequences, El'tsin admitted the discussions; that he mainly wanted to stress such an attack was technically impossible[262] hardly reassured Ukrainians, who in return temporarily withheld Russian funding for the Black Sea Fleet. With this misunderstanding cleared up, Lukin and the Supreme Soviet did, as already mentioned, claim the Black Sea Fleet in January, 1992. The Supreme Soviet hinted of potential violence if Ukrainians did not comply,[263] but without support from the Fleet or the executive. In April, El'tsin's negotiator

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[259] *Ustav Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv (22.1.1993)*, article 12, on
www.cis.minsk.by/main.aspx?uid=180 (accessed on 3.7.2009)

[260] T. Shakleina, *Rossiiskaia vneshnepoliticheskaia mysl'*, Moscow: MONF, 1997, p. 129

[261] Kuzio, ”Russia,” p. 173

[262] S. Kondrashov, “Utki s iadernymi boegolovkami,” *Izvestiia*, 24.10.1991, p. 1; V. Gurevich, “Rossiia vykhodit iz sebia?” *Moskovskie novosti*, 20.10.1991, pp. 4, 5

[263] Sichka, p. 1

on the Fleet, Iurii Dubynin, did complain that "the Ukrainian delegation insists discussing the question without consideration for the agreements that have earlier been reached within the framework of the CIS,"[264] yet no potential repercussions against Ukraine appeared. That the governments of Ukraine and Belarus wanted all Russian troops to leave eventually had less to do with fear of Russian aggression, and more, as declared in August by Belarusian Defence Minister Pavel Kozlovskii, to the fact that the prioritised development of a new army,[265] would only succeed if Belarusians could learn to operate without Russian support.[266] Admittedly, some Ukrainian nationalists impatiently awaited the troop removal. After Fleet commanders invited radical Russian parliamentarians to Sevastopol' in May, 1993, a "Congress of Ukrainians," also held in Sevastopol', demanded immediate division of the Fleet and the withdrawal of the Russian half from Ukraine.[267] Yet neither side in this dispute had governmental support. Few signs indicated such support might be given in future, although the Russian military doctrine from November, 1993, allowed Russian forces to defend Russian citizens abroad, if their rights were infringed on.[268]

Conclusion

Between 1990 and 1993, the paradigm of Power dominated Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian military sovereignty. In matters concerning Belarusian and Ukrainian forces, the CIS established supranational command over nuclear arms and other "strategic" equipment. El'tsin announced immediately after the failed Soviet coup in August,

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[264] V. Mariukha, "Chernomorskii flot na peregovorakh v Odesse delit' ne budut," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 21.4.1992, p. 1

[265] P. Chernenko, "Budet novyi god, budet novaia prisiaga," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 4.8.1992

[266] Deyermond, *Security*, p. 172

[267] "Vershyna tsynizmu i koshchunstva," *Holos Ukraiiny*, 17.4.1993, p. 1; "Poslu Rosii vrucheno notu," *Holos Ukraiiny*, 1.6.1993, p. 3; O. Pilat, "Nas ob''ednue Sevastopol'," *Holos Ukraiiny*, 1.6.1993, pp. 1, 3

[268] "Osnovnye polozheniia voennoi doktriny Rossiiskoi Federatsii," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 19.11.1993

1991, that nuclear weapons should ultimately be controlled from Moscow, while Central European states were subsequently warned by the Russian administration against military alliances with Belarusian and Ukrainian forces. In matters concerning NATO, Belarusian military assets were substantial in both quantity and quality, making their incorporation in Russian-led forces a necessity if Russia was to challenge the regional supremacy of NATO. Furthermore, such a Russo-Belarusian challenge seemed the primary purpose of the Collective Security Treaty from 1992, in which both Russia and Belarus participated, and the provisions of which closely mirrored NATO provisions of collective defence against attacks by third parties against any participating state. Finally, in matters concerning Russian forces in Belarus and Ukraine, the CIS Charter from January, 1993, facilitated multilateral military cooperation, with Russian troops moving to neighbouring states. El'tsin's advocacy for the designation of the post-Soviet region as an UN-recognised Russian sphere of influence and peacekeeping provided a similar impression. Also, the fact that this initiative was compared in Russia to the Monroe Doctrine showed a belief that Russia was an international great power just like the USA had been a century before.

The paradigm of Law also significantly influenced Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian military sovereignty. Belarusian and Ukrainian forces were allowed to retain surprising amounts of military equipment after 1991, even if Russians expected to soon control these forces again. El'tsin admired and emulated Ukrainian attempts to control military forces on its territory, and he cut military research and development links between Russia and Ukraine so that forces in the two states could learn to handle themselves. Concerning NATO, the Russian leadership allowed and supported Belarusian and Ukrainian declarations of neutrality, while subsequent suggestions from Minsk and Kyiv that a belt of

neutral states might be constructed to keep Russia and NATO away from each other were if not embraced then at least accepted in Moscow, showing Russians did not expect Belarusians and Ukrainians to secretly cooperate with NATO. Finally, in matters concerning Russian forces in Belarus and Ukraine, early CIS-accords showed that the Russian government refused to use nuclear and other weapons in these states as a pretext to impose a military presence on neighbouring states. El'tsin confirmed this policy when he established Russian forces separately from the CIS, acknowledging that Russian soldiers would not be accepted abroad as representatives of a multinational force.

The paradigm of Nation was insignificant. Nuclear disputes were solved, while ownership of the Black Sea Fleet was peacefully discussed. Russians disliked that Zlenko invited NATO peacekeepers, but mainly ignored his empty gesture. Finally, although the Russian Military Doctrine allowed Russian troops to fight for Russians in Belarus and Ukraine, nothing indicated this might happen.

Imagining economic sovereignty

Economies of Belarus and Ukraine

Law: Abandoning monetary union

In 1990, Western studies indicated that the UkSSR might be the Soviet republic gaining most economically outside the Soviet Union. Traditionally, the republic had provided many agricultural products for other republics and even foreign states. After 1991 Ukraine inherited 70% of the lucrative Soviet defence industry and 79% of the production of finished

goods.[269] The economy of the BSSR had also been relatively strong, this continued in 1992, when inhabitants of Belarus were better off than those in Russia and Ukraine. Russians in Belarus noticed this tendency and refrained from returning to Russia.[270] Still, leaders in Russia knew the economic capacity of their state would eventually prove much larger than that of other post-Soviet states. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the Russian government soon began to disassociate the Russian economy from that of Belarus and Ukraine. In early 1993 Russia thus abandoned monetary union with Belarus to avoid converting Belarusian to Russian roubles at a ratio of 1:1.[271] This was not done to undermine Belarusian economic sovereignty, per se, but to wean Belarus off economic support.

Power: Dependent republics and economic union

Not all Russians supported this strategy, though, since Belarusian and Ukrainian economic assets could benefit Russia for some years to come. Traditionally, the UkSSR mining industry had been profitable, as had the fact that 20% of all Soviet consumer goods had been produced in the UkSSR.[272] The BSSR had also been one of the most economically developed Soviet republics, even if its manufactured products were often marketable only within the Union and income from inter-republican trade constituted as 29% of its GDP by 1988.[273] Similarly, in 1992, exports to post-Soviet republics constituted a third of Belarusian GDP

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[269] H. Perepelitsa, "Military-Industrial Cooperation between Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia: possibilities, priorities, prospects" in R. Legvold and C. Wallander, eds., *Swords and Sustenance: the economics of security in Belarus and Ukraine*, Cambridge, MASS: MIT, 2004, p. 155

[270] A. Aaslund, "Russians outside Russia" in G. Smith, ed., *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States (2nd ed.)*, New York: Longman, 1996, p. 490

[271] H-H. Höhmann and C. Meier, "Conceptual, Internal, and International Aspects of Russia's Economic Security" in A. Arbatov, K. Kaiser and R. Legvold, eds., *Russia and the West: the 21st century security environment*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999, p. 94

[272] M. Bowker, *Russian Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War*, Aldershot and Brookfield, VT: Dartmouth, 1997, p. 190

[273] Buszynski, p. 110

with Russia being the primary destination.[274] Such dependence on Russia could not end

simply because of unilateral policies from Moscow. This was the case for Ukraine, too. By

mid-1991, inter-republican trade accounted for 84% of UkSSR exports, most of which went

to the RSFSR. The following year, independent Russia financed 22% of the Ukrainian GDP

through subsidised credits,[275] without which the economic crisis facing Kyiv would have

been much worse. Still, for some time Ukrainians continued to believe independence would

bring self-sufficiently, partly based on the Western calculations mentioned above.

Belarusians were less optimistic and in July, 1992, acting Russian Prime Minister Egor'

Gaidar and his Belarusian counterpart Viacheslau Kebich agreed on economic cooperation.

Gaidar described this as a first step toward confederation and an example to follow for

other states.[276] He, as well as Russian commentators, continued to see supranational

economic cooperation as rational, unlike the allegedly emotional foundations of a

nationalist economy.[277] Russians therefore expected that Ukrainians would soon be sensible

and join Russo-Belarusian cooperation. This would necessitate accepting Russian control. In

May, 1993, El'tsin emphasised that Russo-Ukrainian economic alliance required a uniform

economic space, including coordinated strategies for reform, currency union, customs

union, removal of all barriers to economic movements, and an alignment of prices.[278]

Ukrainians mostly accepted this. As Prime Minister Kuchma stated Western markets would

be closed for Ukraine, since no state would abandon market shares in its favour,[279] while

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[274] A. Wilson and C. Rontoyanni, "Security or Prosperity? Belarusian and Ukrainian choices" in R. Legvold
and C. Wallander, eds., *Swords and Sustenance: the economics of security in Belarus and Ukraine*,
Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2004, p. 32

[275] Molchanov, p. 235

[276] V. Portnikov, "Rossiia i Belarus' sozdaet novyi soiuz," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 22.7.1992

[277] T. Bukkvoll, *Ukraine and European Security*, London: RIIA, 1997, p. 6

[278] Morrison, p. 690

[279] V. Drozd, "Leonid Kuchma," *Pravda*, 18.5.1993, p. 2

Russia continued to occupy Western attention and aid. Consequently, a few months later Russia, Belarus and Ukraine agreed in principle to re-establish an economic union.[280]

Nation: Local currencies

However, the Russian leadership had no interest in crudely dominating Ukrainians and Belarusians for this might provide an economically harmful backlash such as the 1989 strike by UkSSR miners, which had contributed to a fall in Soviet GDP of at least 4%.[281] When Russians were subsequently perceived to economically exploit Ukrainians, therefore, this did not reflect intentions in Moscow. During 1992, the Russian government suggested that Russia inherit all Soviet assets and debts. This would almost certainly have benefitted all other post-Soviet states, yet Ukrainians alone refused the offer, demanding Russia inherit the debts, while sharing assets with Ukraine.[282] Although Russians might well feel aggrieved over this, the dispute remained muted if not resolved. Another disagreement seemed possible when Russian attempts to include Belarus and Ukraine in a rouble zone controlled from Moscow frightened Belarusians and Ukrainians, who quickly established their own currencies.[283] However, the Russian government welcomed this, since it meant that Russia would not have to support Belarusian and Ukrainians currencies.

Energy

Law: World market prices

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[280] I. Demchenko, "Glavy pravitel'stv trekh slavianskikh respublik v ocherednoi raz dogovorilis' ob integratsii," *Izvestiia*, 13.7.1993, pp. 1, 2

[281] A. Smith, *Russia and the World Economy: problems of integration*, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 144

[282] A. Sychev, "Kiev otdaet Moskve svoiu doliu vneshnikh dolgov SSSR, no pretenduet na sobstvennost' Soiuza za rubezhom," *Izvestiia*, 24.11.1992, p. 1

[283] R. Ericson, "The Russian Economy since Independence" in G. Lapidus, ed., *The New Russia: troubled transformation*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995, p. 39

The Soviet energy infrastructure had closely connected the republics through deliveries of oil and natural gas. To decentralise such connections, in March, 1992, Ukrainian Prime Minister Vitol'd Fokin travelled to western Siberia to negotiate direct deals with local energy-producers and secured 6 million tonnes of Tiumen' oil to be delivered in the coming months.[284] This oil still had to be transported through pipelines controlled by the Russian state. Yet, Russia, too, depended on Ukraine. By 1992, 94% of all Russian gas exports to Western Europe passed through Ukraine, while an additional 3% passed through Belarus.[285] If Ukraine could furthermore acquire energy supplies outside Russia, complete energy sovereignty might be ensured. During 1992, possibilities of pipelines carrying Middle Eastern oil to Ukraine around Russia were only prevented by its $3 billion price-tag.[286] Russian energy companies did not want to become redundant in Belarus and Ukraine, but leaders of Gazprom were happy if energy subsidisation of neighbouring states could be terminated. Russians did not want to force this through, but wanted to gradually introduce bilateral agreements to this effect. Therefore, when Belarus by 1993 had payment arrears of $100 million Gazprom reduced supplies until repayments had been agreed.[287]

Power: Limited reserves and bilateral transit prices

Nevertheless, it was unlikely that Belarus and Ukraine would become completely independent of Russian energy deliveries. RSFSR natural gas had become the main energy

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[284] O. Smolansky, "Ukraine's Quest for Independence: the fuel factor," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 47 (1), 1995, pp. 68, 69

[285] R. Puglisi, "Clashing Agendas? Economic interests, elite coalitions and prospects for co-operation between Russia and Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 55 (6), 2003, p. 832

[286] M. Balmaceda, "Gas, Oil and the Linkages between Domestic and Foreign Policies: the case of Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 50 (2), 1998, p. 278

[287] R. Götz, "Ukraine and Belarus: their energy dependency on Russia and their roles as transit countries" in D. Hamilton and G. Mangott, eds., *The New Eastern Europe: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova*, Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2007, p. 165

source for the BSSR in the 1970s. By 1990-91, without this gas and UkSSR nuclear energy the BSSR could only cover 10% of its energy consumption.[288] The UkSSR had long subsisted on its large coal deposits. Yet from the 1970s onwards the Soviet regime substituted coal with natural gas, which the UkSSR had to import from the RSFSR and other republics. Eventually, the UkSSR imported approximately 75% of natural gas from outside its borders.[289] Consequently, between 1975 and 1995 the energy production of the UkSSR and Ukraine fell by two-thirds.[290] Neither Belarusians nor Ukrainians were therefore able to quickly escape energy dependence on Russia. Stanislav Bogdankevich, chairman of the Belarusian National Bank, emphasised in 1992 that the Belarusian state was doomed to work in close cooperation with other post-Soviet states given strong dependence on imports of energy from Russia.[291] Similarly, in January, 1993, Ukrainian Prime Minister Kuchma noted the irony that the first year of Ukrainian independence had brought an increased awareness of the energy dependence of Ukraine.[292] Predictably, the following June a Russia-Ukraine agreement on energy deliveries and transit was struck, ensuring that "The parties will take appropriate measures to secure the stable operation of [transit pipelines] crossing their territory."[293] As long as energy subsidisation was necessary, leaders in Gazprom wanted energy assets inside Belarus and Ukraine in return. Thus, during 1993 Gazprom unsuccessfully offered to rent the assets of Beltransgaz in return for guaranteed gas supplies

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[288] Wilson and Rontoyanni, p. 33

[289] Götz, p. 157

[290] Balmaceda, "Gas," p. 258

[291] Wilson and Rontoyanni, p. 43

[292] D. Tabachnik and F. Sizyi, "Leonid Kuchma," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 5.1.1993, pp. 1, 2

[293] "Soglashenie mezhdu pravitel'stvom Rossiiskoi Federatsii i pravitel'stvom Ukrainy o sotrudnichestve v razvitii neftianoi i gazovoi promyshlennosti Rossii (24.6.1993)" in G. Berdennikov and A. Chalyi, eds. *Rossiia-Ukraina 1990-2000 (kniga 1)*, Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2001, p. 229, articles 10, 13, 14

to Belarus, irrespective of Belarusian debts.[294] Russian commentators found it fair that Russian companies would profit most from such arrangements. In 1993, journalist Aleksei Pushkov commented that it was natural if Russia acted as the economic nucleus for states such as Ukraine that depended heavily on its energy resources.[295]

Nation: Reducing deliveries

Belarusians and Ukrainians seldom complained, as they needed to salvage their economies however possible. Previously, one energy initiative originating in Moscow had been hugely damaging, though: the Chornobyl' nuclear power plant that in 1986 caused unprecedented nuclear pollution in the UkSSR and BSSR. Resultant protests in these republics sometimes aimed at the RSFSR[296] and in 1988 the student organisation Hromada and the environmental group Green World Association gathered 10,000 people in Kyiv to form the Ukrainian Popular Front, or Rukh, opposing nuclear power allegedly imposed by Russian-dominated authorities.[297] Nevertheless, these protests primarily aimed at the Soviet Union and could not survive the Soviet collapse. In January, 1992, Lukin's above-mentioned threat of energy pressure against Ukraine[298] might have provoked anger against Russia if the parliamentarian had been able to carry out his threat. As it was, Russian oil companies did only deliver half the amount promised to Ukraine during 1992, but although Ukrainian authorities claimed this was caused by Ukrainian rejection of various CIS agreements[299] the explanation was more likely a chaotic Russian energy sector. In January, 1993, Russians

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[294] Götz, p. 165

[295] A. Pushkov, "Russia and America: the honeymoon's over," *Foreign Policy*, 93, 1993, p. 89

[296] Birgerson, p. 36

[297] P. Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine*, Westport, CT, and London: Greenwood, 2008, p. 125

[298] Sichka, p. 1; Nahaylo, p. 441

[299] J. Bugajski, *Cold Peace: Russia's new imperialism*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004, p. 85

again refused supplying more than half the oil requested by Ukraine, and announced a raise

in gas prices, Ukraine retaliated by raising the gas transit tariff to over twice the average

international level,[300] but this was only reasonable considering that Gazprom charged

Ukrainians more than other foreign customers. By June, 1993, Ukraine had to pay $80 per

1,000 cubic metres of gas; much higher than the $60 to $66 subsequently paid in 1995 by

richer Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, calculated after fees for transit through Ukraine had

been deducted.[301] However, this was not an attack on Ukraine. Gazprom had to gain income

from somewhere, and Central European states would be more able than Ukraine to gain

energy supplies elsewhere, while they also had more of a tendency to mistrust Russia.

Furthermore, Ukraine was not required to pay the requested price, but was allowed to

accrue substantial debts that other customers would not have been permitted. El'tsin did

sometimes seek to trade the debt for Ukrainian assets. In September, 1993, Kravchuk was

told that Russia might forgive the $2.4 billion energy debt in return for concessions on

military equipment.[302] Russians could have done more to prevent Ukraine becoming so

indebted in the first place, but under the circumstances El'tsin's suggestion was a

reasonable quid pro quo.

Economic actors of the Russian Federation in Belarus and Ukraine

Law: Monetary exchange

In December, 1991, El'tsin, Shushkevich and Kravchuk understood that Muscovite

investments had not always been popular in the republics, notably in the above-mentioned

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[300] Nahaylo, p. 449

[301] A. Sverdlov, "Territorial'noe raspredelenie – naimen'shee zlo," *Den'*, 10.4.1997, p. 5

[302] R. De Nevers, *Russia's Strategic Renovation: Russian security strategies and foreign policy in the post-imperial era*, London: Brassey's, 1994, p. 47

case of Chornobyl'. Consequently, while Russians were unwilling to take responsibility for a Soviet-engendered nuclear catastrophe, El'tsin still agreed to: "...recognise the global character of the Chernobyl catastrophe and pledge to unite and coordinate their forces in order to minimise and overcome its consequences."[303] This portrayed Russia as a responsible economic actor. Still, even a responsible actor had to consider its economic fortunes and the Russian executive was unprepared to scupper its investments abroad out of considerations for neighbouring states. In 1993 Russia conducted the above-mentioned monetary exchange, stabilising the rouble, but complicating investments in Belarus and Ukraine and abandoning Ukrainians with rouble savings.[304] This signalled that Russian investments abroad might not focus on Belarus and Ukraine, yet this was not necessarily harmful for these states, where indigenous industries had to be built anyway. Already by late 1993, Ukrainian optimism grew and the Chairman of the Committee on Economic Reform in the Ukrainian parliament, Volodymyr Pylypchuk, expected a future when Ukraine could afford to buy Russian goods at world market prices.[305]

Power: Gateway of trade and closer monetary ties

Pylypchuk's expectations might partly be fulfilled, yet in certain industries the UkSSR had long depended thoroughly on the RSFSR. For instance, the local chemicals industry depended on RSFSR oil to operate.[306] There were also some non-energy requirements from which Ukraine could hardly extract itself; including many industrial components on which

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[303] "Soglashenie sozdanii," pp. 3-6

[304] D. Vydrin, "Ukraine and Russia" in R. Blackwill and S. Karaganov, eds., *Damage Limitation or Crisis? Russia and the outside world*, Washington, DC, and London: Brassey's, 1994, p. 125

[305] Morrison, p. 685

[306] L. Orlowski, "Indirect Transfers in Trade among Former Soviet Union Republics: sources, patterns and policy responses in the post-Soviet period," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 45 (6), 1993, p. 1009

production lines of 80% of UkSSR enterprises depended.[307] The BSSR had been even more

dependent. Consequently, in December, 1991, Russian First Deputy Governmental

Chairman, Gennadii Burbulis', and Belarusian and Ukrainian Prime Ministers Viacheslav

Kebich and Vitol'd Fokin, advocated "...[refraining] from...activity that could lead to

economic losses by each other...construct economic relations based on...the rouble...[and] a

[unified] customs policy..." This helped Russian companies remain the dominant foreign

investors in Ukraine[308] to the particular satisfaction of the Russian military-industrial

complex. As indicated earlier, much of the Soviet defence sector remained in Ukraine and

Russian companies consequently sought cooperation with Ukrainian companies.[309] Russians

also needed Ukraine to trade further abroad; the port of Odesa was a notable gateway to

world markets for Russian goods. Together with Kaliningrad, Odesa and a few other south

Ukrainian cities constituted the only post-Soviet European ports, give and take volatile

Caucasian ones, from where Russian goods could easily move abroad all year round.[310]

Furthermore, as Russian Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Shokhin argued in July, 1993,

successful Russian investments in Belarus and Ukraine could persuade other post-Soviet

states, too, to allow increased Russian access.[311] The Ukrainian government was happy to

comply and in August, 1993, pledged to eliminate all Ukrainian VAT on intra-CIS trade,

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[307] Wilson and Rontoyanni, p. 32

[308] I. Alekseichik, *Kholodnyi dekabr' v Viskuliakh* on
http://7days.belta.by/7days.nsf/last/5766937FE69E9E1242256B1B004D1652?OpenDocument
(accessed on 3.7.2009)

[309] S. Leskov, "Rukovoditeli oboronnykh otraslei Rossii i Ukrainy podtalkivaiut politikov k sblizheniiu,"
Izvestiia, 14.1.1993, pp. 1, 2

[310] Z. Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American primacy and its geostrategic imperatives*, New York:
Basic Books, 1997, p. 92

[311] V. Naumkin, "Russia and the States of Central Asia and the Transcaucasus" in R. Blackwill and S.
Karaganov, eds., *Damage Limitation or Crisis? Russia and the outside world*, Washington, DC, and
London: Brassey's, 1994, p. 208

potentially exposing Ukraine to a large influx of goods either produced in Russia or transferred through that state.[312]

Nation: Demands for hard currency payments

It was unlikely that such Russo-Ukrainian cooperation would be obstructed. In the Soviet Union, a few Ukrainians in the diaspora, had claimed that Russia historically hindered Ukrainian economic development. Russia was allegedly destined to remain a producer of primary goods, as stated in 1941 by Iurii Lypa, who dismissively predicted that the main sources of Russian foreign revenue would always come from raw materials, from "export...of wood and oil."[313] Lypa and others in the diaspora hardly influenced debates in the UkSSR, although their animosity towards Russian investments did gain some supporters in the late 1980s following Chornobyl'.[314] Again, this animosity did not survive the Soviet collapse and new disputes were short-lived. In June, 1992, the head of the Russian Federal Migratory Service, Tatiana Regent, did warn that Russian companies might not want to invest in Ukraine, if Russians there were mistreated.[315] No significant Russian companies agreed, however, and Regent's threat could be easily dismissed. Belarusians and Ukrainians listened much more attentively in November, 1992, when El'tsin declared that any state leaving the rouble zone, and the resultant Russian monetary control, would have to pay for Russian goods in hard currency.[316] However, once more El'tsin's demand was hardly unreasonable, especially to Belarusians and Ukrainians who wanted economic sovereignty.

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[312] R. Abdelal, "Interpreting Interdependence: national security and the energy trade of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus" in R. Legvold and C. Wallander, eds., *Swords and Sustenance: the economics of security in Belarus and Ukraine*, Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2004, pp. 110, 111

[313] I. Lypa, *Rozpodil' Rossii*, L'viv: NAN, 1995, p. 65

[314] Deyermond, *Security*, p. 87

[315] Chinn and Kaiser, p. 279

[316] Nahaylo, pp. 448, 449

Conclusion

Between 1990 and 1993, the paradigm of Power dominated Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian economic sovereignty. The Belarusian and Ukrainian economies remained highly dependent on Russia, not least since this provided the only market for many Belarusian and Ukrainian goods, for which the West showed little interest. This dependence was only set to increase with the economic union that was agreed in principle. El'tsin had long suggested such a union to Ukrainians, while Gaidar had praised Russo-Belarusian economic cooperation as the beginning of Russian control with neighbouring economies. As for energy relations, the Soviet Union had ensured that the BSSR and UkSSR became highly dependent on the RSFSR, and thus the Union, even though the UkSSR, at least, had previously been somewhat self-sufficient. After 1991, dependence on Russia was so pronounced, though, that Ukraine could not even exploit its position as transit land for Russian energy, but signed transit agreements on Russian terms, while in Belarus leaders of Gazprom tried to directly control Beltransgaz. Finally, Russian companies wanted to invest in Belarus and Ukraine not least since these states were gateways to trade elsewhere in the world, most prominently in the case of the port of Odesa. Russian interest only increased when the customs agreement was reached. Shokhin and other members of government saw Russian investments in Belarus and Ukraine as stepping stones to investments elsewhere in Eurasia, for many different Russian companies, especially including the powerful military-industrial complex.

The paradigm of Law also significantly influenced Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian economic sovereignty. The Russian government sent a powerful signal that

Belarusian and Ukrainian economies would not be supported unquestioningly, when it rejected monetary union as long as this was not accompanied by necessary Belarusian and Ukrainian reforms. El'tsin's and his ministers knew that uniting with unreformed Belarusian and Ukrainian economies would be highly damaging for Russia. In energy issues, Russian companies and the Russian state insisted in principle that Belarus and Ukraine pay world market prices. Even if this was not always the case in practice, the demand was a strong signal that unlimited Soviet subsidisation had gone. The refusal in Gazprom to provide gas to Belarus until existing debts had been settled sent a similar signal. Finally, Russians accepted that their investments in Belarus and Ukraine had not always been beneficial and early on showed sympathy, if not quite responsibility for the Chornobyl' disaster. On the other hand, Russian investors insisted they should gain from trade in Belarus and Ukraine as much as locals should; a sentiment that the subsequent monetary exchange was an example of.

The paradigm of Nation was insignificant. Belarusian and Ukrainian currencies were introduced, but this benefitted both these states and Russia. Some Russian energy deliveries were reduced, but for reasons quite consistent with normal business practice. Similarly, it was quite reasonable that El'tsin would ask Belarus and Ukraine to pay for Russian goods in hard currency.

Imagining cultural sovereignty

History

Law: Ukrainian heroes

Soviet authorities sometimes recognised the importance of Ukraine in times of crisis. In 1941, Nikita Khrushchev rallied Ukrainians against German invaders by highlighting Ukrainian historical heroes such as Prince Danylo of Galicia, who founded L'viv, and Bohdan Khmelnitskii's Cossacks.[317] Such heroes were part of the background on which Ukrainians could build their sovereignty from 1990, and El'tsin did his best to help. In November, 1990, he went to Kyiv to sign the treaty on RSFSR-UkSSR relations. Thereby, El'tsin became the first leader from Moscow who had gone to Kyiv in three centuries to explicitly recognise the equal status of Russia and Ukraine.[318] Many Russian commentators were pleased, and tried disentangling Russia further from Kyivan Rus' and Ukraine. In 1992, Kseniia Mialo abandoned Kyiv as the origin of Russia, claiming instead that Russia began in Novgorod and its partial democracy between the 12th and 15th centuries.[319] Belarusians also tried re-discovering their own history, and in January, 1993, Shushkevich stressed that Belarus had to revive local traditions and cultural monuments in order to resurrect its nation, although good relations with neighbouring states should be retained.[320] This pleased local Russians, who in Ukraine were happy to renew Ukrainian historical traditions, even after there appeared other types of tension with Ukrainians and the Ukrainian government.[321]

Power: Motherland and belief in historical union

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[317] H. Kuromiya, "Political Leadership and Ukrainian Nationalism, 1938-1989: the burden of history," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 52 (1), 2005, p. 40

[318] Morrison, p. 678

[319] K. Mialo, "Rozval SSSR i russkii vopros," *Literaturnaia Rossiia*, 14.2.1992, pp. 3, 4; K. Mialo, "Rozval SSSR i russkii vopros," *Literaturnaia Rossiia*, 21.2.1992, pp. 3, 4; K. Mialo, "'Est' li v Evrazii mesto dlia russkikh,'" *Literaturnaia Rossiia*, 7.8.1992, pp. 4, 5

[320] Chinn and Kaiser, p. 133

[321] E. Golovakha, N. Panina and N. Churilov, "Russians in Ukraine" in V. Shlapentokh, M. Sendich and E. Payin, eds, *The New Russian Diaspora: Russian minorities in the former Soviet republics*, Armonk, NY, and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1994, p. 67

Nevertheless, it would be difficult to renew such historical traditions after Soviet attempts to mix its peoples. This was the case with Belarusians. After the Second World War, when Kaliningrad was to be repopulated following expulsion of Germans, Belarusians were chosen as the only non-Russians to widely participate,[322] so that Belarusian and Soviet identity could be intertwined. This worked: in 1979, BSSR and UkSSR opinion polls showed that half of local ethnic Russians considered their republics native land[323] and could not even see them as different to the RSFSR. In 1981, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev reinforced the impression by inaugurating the Kyivan museum complex commemorating the Great Fatherland War, with a metallic statue symbolising the Motherland, meaning Russia and Ukraine,[324] although Russia was the most important part. Dmitrii Likhachev thus argued that although Russian history was intertwined with Belarusian and Ukrainian history, Russia represented a higher unity of the three peoples.[325] BSSR and UkSSR leaders agreed, at least until the failed Soviet coup in August, 1991. As late as July, 1991, Kravchuk even emphasised that Russians in the UkSSR were indigenous residents, who had lived locally for hundreds of years.[326] And when the Soviet Union was dissolved, Soviet interpretations of history proved subversively successful. The founding of the CIS was legitimised in the statement: "We, [Belarus, Russia and Ukraine] as founder-states of the USSR...establish that the

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[322] P. Polian, *Ne po svoei vole*, Moscow: OGI, 2001, pp. 135, 136

[323] R. Abdulatipov, "Russian Minorities: the political dimension" in V. Shlapentokh, M. Sendich and E. Payin, eds, *The New Russian Diaspora: Russian minorities in the former Soviet republics*, Armonk, NY, and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1994, p. 38

[324] R. Serbyn, "Managing Memory in Post-Soviet Ukraine: 'victory day' or 'remembrance day'?" in S. Velychenko, ed., *Ukraine, the EU and Russia: history, culture and international relations*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 118

[325] M. Beisswenger, "Eurasianism Then and Now: a Russian conservative movement and its Ukrainian challenge" in S. Velychenko, ed., *Ukraine, the EU and Russia: history, culture and international relations*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 57, 58

[326] L. Kravchuk, "Rukovodstvuias' volei naroda," *Pravda*, 16.7.1991, p. 2

USSR...ceases to exist."[327] Even in death, the Union legacy was pervasive. And if parts of the Soviet heritage were unpalatable, the imperial heritage could motivate Russians, too. As mentioned previously, in March, 1992, El'tsin decreed the imperial St Andrew's flag hoisted over the Black Sea Fleet, connecting current Russo-Ukrainian disputes with memories of supra-nationalism.[328] El'tsin meant to include Ukrainians in this imperial vision, as did Ambartsumov and others in November, when complaining that the current borders of the Russian Federation had no historical legitimacy and should be replaced with a union.[329] This would be more successfully advanced to inhabitants of Belarus, though. A 1993 opinion poll indicated that one-third of all respondents considered the histories of Belarus and Russia to be the same, while an even higher proportion knew nothing of an indigenous Belarusian history.[330]

Nation: Destroying Cossack history

It was therefore unlikely that Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians would seriously disagree on historical topics. Ukrainians remembered the Holodomor, or forced collectivisation and famine in the early 1930s,[331] yet while a few blamed Russians most accepted that similar crimes had taken place in Russian and Kazakh parts of the Soviet Union and that the culprits included Ukrainians and other non-Russians, too. Further back in history, Russians and Ukrainians had also disagreed on their Cossack past. Notably, in 1970 an unpublished book by UkSSR Communist Party leader, Petro Shelest, glorified the Cossack origins of Ukrainians

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[327] "Soglashenie sozdanii," p. 33

[328] V. Pikhovshek, "Will the Crimean Crisis Explode?" in M. Drohobycky, ed., *Crimea: dynamics, challenges and prospects*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995, p. 53

[329] V. Kedrov, "Khvatit s nas 'b'erskikh intsidentov'," *Rossiia*, 18.11.1992, p. 5

[330] Chinn and Kaiser, p. 133

[331] Birgerson, p. 104

and underlined a difference to an autocratic Russia. Sensing danger, Soviet decision-makers, led by Leonid Brezhnev, born on the territory of what later became the UkSSR, destroyed his book.[332] Still, ordinary Ukrainians never heard of this, and thus did not feel suppressed. In the late 1980s, the Soviet centre allowed Russian Cossacks to display pride over service to the Russian Emperor since the Pereiaslav Treaty of 1654, although this was anathema for Ukrainian Cossacks.[333] Yet while Cossacks might squabble, the vast majority of Russians and Ukrainians found such historical debates peripheral. In the 1980s, Belarusians paid more attention to the discovery of Soviet mass graves, containing Belarusian military officers and suspected traitors from the 1930s-1940s. Nevertheless, although this discovery prompted the foundation of the Martyrology of Belarus, later the Belarusian Popular Front,[334] and distanced the republic from the Union and the RSFSR, mostly Soviet authorities successfully dismissed the mass executions as yet another Stalinist crime, not a Soviet or Russian one. A few Russian nationalists were unwilling to accept even such criticism, though, steadfastly claiming that Russians saved the Soviet Union during the Second World War, despite sabotage from Fascist Belarusians and Ukrainians. National Bolshevik Eduard Limonov argued this in January, 1992. He also argued that just as contemporary German help to Croatians against Serbians was similar to Nazi help to Croatian Fascists during World War Two Germany would soon assist Western Ukrainians, too, who were as fascist as their predecessors had been 50 years before.[335] However, Limonov was a loud-spoken, ultimately peripheral Russian politician that few listened to. El'tsin had no time for Limonov, but El'tsin increasingly needed to deflect blame on someone else for the chaos that had followed

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[332] Kuromiya, p. 42

[333] B. Skinner, "Identity Formation in the Russian Cossack Revival," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 46 (6), 1994, p. 1035

[334] Birgerson, p. 99

[335] E. Limonov, "Serbskii opyt," *Pravda*, 13.1.1992, p. 4

Soviet collapse. Many parliamentarians were blaming El'tsin for the collapse, and by mid-1992 he had to claim that Russia never abandoned the Union, but had been forced to join the CIS by the actions of other Soviet republics, including the BSSR and UkSSR.[336] El'tsin did not want to blame Minsk or Kyiv, but Limonov and some parliamentarians did. This had little impact now, yet Belarusian thoughtlessness could change this. In September, 1992, the military thus pledged allegiance to Belarus on the 500-year anniversary of the battle at Orsha, in which the Lithuanian Grand Duchy had defeated Russian forces.[337] This event was mostly ignored in Russia, but those, who noticed it, found the Belarusians provocative. Two months later, Ukrainian Dmytro Pavlychko provoked even more, when distinguishing civilised Ukraine from allegedly barbaric, Tartar Russia, founded by Genghis Khan. Pavlychko then claimed that Ukraine, but not Russia should be accepted by the West.[338] Russians knew Kravchuk's government did not listen to Pavlychko, and they bore his attack, yet the possibility for future tension existed.

Language

Law: Official rights

Russian was the language of Soviet inter-ethnic communication, yet in the late 1980s Gorbachev's administration understood republican dissidents increasingly criticised this. To partly accommodate them, in 1987 a Moscow conference organised by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and the journal Istoriia SSSR witnessed several, mainly Russian

[336] R. Solchanyk, Roman "The Politics of State Building: centre-periphery relations in post-Soviet Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 46 (1), 1994, p. 58

[337] G. Ioffe, *Understanding Belarus and How Western Foreign Policy Misses Its Mark*, London and Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008, p. 67

[338] D. Pavlychko, "Evropa vidchula shcho vona bilsha nizh zdavalos'," *Viche*, 8, 1992, p. 141

participants re-evaluating linguistic relations between the Soviet peoples.[339] In 1989, the UkSSR witnessed a practical consequence of this, when Volodymyr Ivashko, speaking Russian and Ukrainian equally well, was elected leader of the Ukrainian Communist Party.[340] Ukrainians, conversely, showed tolerance towards Russian language in their 1990 language law, which potentially provided Russian language with official status equal to Ukrainian; the status differing from region to region within the UkSSR, depending on the linguistic preferences of locals.[341] The intention was also visible in the CIS founding treaty from December, 1991, when Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian administrations pledged to "assist the expression, preservation and development of...the linguistic...originality of their national minorities..."[342] This was hardly a problem in Belarus, where the endangered language was Belarusian, not Russian. Nevertheless, although Belarusian in February, 1993, became the only state language, to be introduced in public and educational affairs by 1995 and 2000, free use of Russian was guaranteed by law, as was the right to Russian-language education.[343]

Power: Russian dominance

It would have been difficult for the Belarusian authorities to limit the Russian language, though. As mentioned above, Russian was officially used for Soviet inter-ethnic communication, as First Secretary G. Markov at the plenum of the USSR Union of Writers in 1988 reminded Belarusians.[344] Russian language was certainly prominent in the BSSR. In a

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[339] "Natsional'nye protsessy v SSSR," *Istoriia SSSR*, 6, 1987, pp. 50-120

[340] Wilson, *Virtual*, p. 227

[341] "Zakon o iazykakh v Ukrainskoi SSR," *Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Radi Ukraiini*, 1990, Law no. 631, pp. 59-67

[342] "Soglashenie sozdanii," pp. 3-6

[343] Kolstoe, p. 168

[344] M. Kirkwood, "Glasnost', 'the National Question' and Soviet Language Policy," *Soviet Studies*, 43 (1), 1991, p. 72

1989 census, two-thirds in the BSSR considered Belarusian their mother tongue; however, 83% claimed fluency in Russian, opposed to 78% in Belarusian. Furthermore, in Minsk 20% saw themselves as ethnically Russian, but 53% regarded Russian as their mother tongue.[345] Belarusians in other republics also spoke Russian: in the 1989 census over half of UkSSR Belarusians claimed that Russian, not Ukrainian or Belarusian, was their native tongue.[346] For most Ukrainians in eastern UkSSR the situation was similar. When cooperating in the CIS, post-Soviet leaders therefore wanted to use the language they all spoke, and in January, 1993, article 35 of the new Charter of the CIS stated: "The working language of the Commonwealth shall be Russian."[347] This was popular in Crimea, where, by early 1993 all cultural life, including education, continued to be almost exclusively conducted in Russian[348] with no signs that the Ukrainian leadership in Kyiv could change this. Similarly, Belarus as a whole faced a significant task if Belarusian was to dominate education. By 1993 the great majority of educational textbooks, especially in natural sciences, remained written in Russian. If the Belarusian authorities did not allow use of Russian, they either had to introduce new textbooks in Belarusian very quickly, or suffer a substantial fall in professional standards.[349]

Nation: Rights of Russian-speakers

Under these circumstances, linguistic disputes had barely appeared in Belarus and Ukraine. In principle, it might have been arrogant that only 27% of Russians living in the BSSR claimed

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[345] Kolstoe, p. 168

[346] T. Rudnytska, *Etnichni spil'noty Ukraiiny*, Kyiv: Instytut sotsiolohii NAN Ukraiiny, 1998, pp. 86-90

[347] *Ustav Sodruzhestva*, article 35

[348] Chinn and Kaiser, p. 148

[349] Ibid, p. 170

fluency in Belarusian,[350] even though this language, like Ukrainian, was hardly much different from Russian. Likewise, in the UkSSR only a third of Russians claimed command of a Ukrainian language they still saw as uncouth.[351] Yet, Russians did not intend to insult titulars, and many of the latter primarily spoke Russian, anyway. It did not help when Gorbachev in January, 1990, complained that Ukrainian nationalists had presented the idea of spreading Ukrainian language in their republic without considering the rights of Russian majorities in the east and south of the republic.[352] At the time the spread of Ukrainian was limited, and Gorbachev's worries unnecessary. Following the Soviet collapse, a few Ukrainians did attack Russian language; notoriously, the director of public education in L'viv, Iryna Kalynets, in 1992 decided to close local Russian-language schools and declared that Russian should be taught like any other foreign language.[353] Yet, Kalynets was not supported from Kyiv and even in L'viv her plans were mostly not carried out. Similarly, in 1993 suggestions that Belarusian language development was hampered by the dominance of Russian language remained in obscure academic debates,[354] since Russian language remained a very useful tool for inhabitants in Belarus and Ukraine.

Religion

Law: Freedom of conscience

Having traditionally been denounced by the Communist Party and the Soviet state, religious institutions were still integrated through the Council for Religious Affairs (CRA), which was controlled by the Soviet authorities and generally not represented at republican level.

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[350] *Natsional'nyi sostav naseleniia SSSR*, Moscow: Finansy i statistika, 1991

[351] E. Pain, "Gde russkie zhivut kak doma?" *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 31.7.1992, p. 5

[352] "Zaboty respubliki – zaboty strany," *Pravda*, 12.1.1990, p. 1; also "Otkrovennyi," pp. 1, 2

[353] V. Panov, "'Reformy' pani Kalinets'," *Rossiia*, 31, 1992; Kolstoe, p. 182

[354] Kolstoe, p. 169

However, as exceptions to this, the UkSSR had its own CRA, as did the RSFSR from 1986.[355]

Thus, by the late 1980s religious authorities in these republics were relatively less constrained than in neighbouring republics. The Russian Orthodox Church and the Greek Catholic, or Uniate, Church had competed among Ukrainians in the Russian empire and the early Soviet decades, but they might now become useful allies to each other against the Soviet centre. In June, 1990, the new Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Aleksii II, thus offered that parishioners in western UkSSR should freely choose their allegiance if this could be done in an orderly and legal fashion.[356] In return, by 1991 the UkSSR leadership allowed freedom of conscience by law, while the Uniate Church in May regained recognition as an independent entity, following subordination to the Russian Orthodox Church for half a century.[357]

Power: Common religion

The Russian Empire had strongly furthered the similarity of Orthodoxy among Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians, though. Indeed, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was absorbed into the Russian Orthodox Church by the late seventeenth century,[358] and thus now had little independent tradition to go by. Indeed, the four Soviet republics that had specifically shared Russian Orthodoxy included the RSFSR, BSSR and UkSSR,[359] together with the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, while Armenian Monophysite Orthodoxy and Georgian Orthodoxy followed somewhat different denominations and the other republics

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[355] J. Anderson, "The Council for Religious Affairs and the Shaping of Soviet Religious Policy," *Soviet Studies*, 43 (4), 1991, p. 693

[356] G. Alimov and G. Charodeev, "Sviateishii patriarkh Moskovskii i Vseia Rusi Aleksii Vtoroi," *Izvestiia*, 16.6.1990, p. 3

[357] J. Anderson, *Religion, State and Politics in the Soviet Union and Successor States*, Cambridge: CUP, 1994, p. 189

[358] T. Kuzio, *Ukrainian Security Policy*, Westport, CT, and London: Praeger, 1995, p. 9

[359] Bowker, p. 48

had Muslim, Protestant and Catholic traditions. If religion was to flourish again, most

Russians believed Russian Orthodoxy should dominate among Ukrainians, and Belarusians,

too. In 1988, even the Soviet leadership marked the millennium of the adoption of

Christianity by Kievan Rus' with a focus on Russia, paying little attention to Ukraine.[360] Most

Russians did not even consider religion to be an issue distinguishing Ukrainians from

Russians. By the late 1980s only 9% of Russians distinguished Ukrainians by religion, as

opposed to 36% who distinguished Central Asians.[361] Aleksii II exploited such elite and

popular Russian sentiments in December, 1990, in an open letter to Gorbachev. The

Patriarch called on Gorbachev to clamp down on republican separatism,[362] not least in the

UkSSR, where many more Orthodox churches remained than in the RSFSR. And following

independence, Russians outside the church acknowledged the need to retain religious

bonds, too. In April, 1992, a meeting between prominent Russian and Ukrainian academics

easily identified a common Orthodox Christianity among factors that could reunite their

peoples.[363]

Nation: Property disagreements

By the early 1990s it was therefore unlikely that religion would split Russians from their

neighbours. Admittedly, following centuries of Polish and Habsburg domination in western

Ukraine most west Ukrainians remained Uniates,[364] who were dissatisfied that the Russian

Orthodox Church was well positioned to take advantage of newfound liberties, while the

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[360] Kubicek, *History*, p. 125

[361] N. Dinello, "Religious Attitudes of Russian Minorities and National Identity" in V. Shlapentokh, M. Sendich and E. Payin, eds, *The New Russian Diaspora: Russian minorities in the former Soviet republics*, Armonk, NY, and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1994, p. 199

[362] P. Duncan, *Russian Messianism: third Rome, revolution, communism and after*, London: Routledge, 2000, p. 127

[363] I. Leonov, "Rossiia i Ukraina posle gibeli SNG," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 18.4.1992

[364] Kolstoe, p. 172

Uniate Church had to overcome decades of subjugation.[365] Dissatisfaction did breed a few disputes between the churches, and in January, 1990, the Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Kirill of Leningrad even accused the Uniates of using violence in the context of the numerous property disputes developing between the churches.[366] The Metropolitan exaggerated the problem, and he received little attention from wider society. Yet certainly many Russians would like to use Russian Orthodoxy to promote Russian interests.[367] In early 1992 Rutskoi even used religious terminology against Ukrainian sovereignty, proclaiming that no Russian would ever abandon sacred Russian soil.[368] In theory, such use of religion could hurt Russo-Ukrainian relations, and in July, 1992, the Ukrainian parliament pointedly refused to recognise the Russian-backed deposition of Metropolitan Filaret of Kyiv as head of the Ukrainian branch of the Russian Orthodox Church.[369] However, for most Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians religion remained irrelevant after years of official persecution.

Conclusion

Between 1990 and 1993, the paradigm of Power dominated Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian cultural sovereignty. Concerning perceptions of history, Soviet authorities consistently presented Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians as belonging to the same Motherland. Subsequently, this cohesiveness even showed as the CIS replaced the Soviet Union. Having defeated the Soviet centre, however, El'tsin had to seek legitimacy elsewhere in history and thus chose the Russian Empire and its St Andrew's Flag. Similarly,

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[365] Duncan, *Russian*, p. 58

[366] Anderson, *Religion*, p. 188

[367] O. Bychkova, "Sergei Baburin," *Moskovskie novosti*, 9.2.1992, p. 11; V. Bragin, "Gde front – tam voina," *Izvestiia*, 27.10.1992, p. 3; V. Gribanov, "Trup kommunizma razlagaetsia v natsistskogo upyria," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 6.11.1992, p. 5

[368] Dunlop, *Rise*, p. 65

[369] Anderson, *Religion*, p. 191

Ambartsumov longed for Imperial Russian borders rather than a Soviet union of peoples, but the fundamental idea was similar. Concerning perceptions of language, Russian was wholly dominant within the RSFSR, BSSR and UkSSR, both officially and in practice, and it was unsurprising that Russian was chosen as the official language of the CIS. It was seen almost as a higher form of communication than local languages; a perception enforced by the use of Russian for the sciences and in official contexts. Russian language symbolised inter-ethnic accord, and Russians could thus see nothing wrong in regions such as Crimea where the language dominated. Finally, in matters concerning religion, Imperial practice had united Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians through Russian Orthodoxy for centuries, and Soviet practice, somewhat surprisingly, did this, too, in its institutionalisation of religious affairs, and in historical celebrations. Russian religious leaders such as Aleksii II had a vested interest in retaining joint adherence to Russian Orthodoxy, and he and his church managed to convince Russian scholars similarly, to the extent where religion once more became an element in Russian great power thinking.

The paradigm of Law also significantly influenced Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian cultural sovereignty. Concerning perceptions of history, the Soviet Union had periodically hailed the Ukrainian historical contribution, and El'tsin, too, highlighted the historical importance of Kyiv by visiting it for the 1990 RSFSR-UkSSR treaty. Post-Soviet Russia, however, needed a new beginning and in the widespread nation-building debates some suggested that Russians should look to Novgorod as their ancestral city, just like Belarusians thought of liberation from their Kyivan origins. Concerning linguistic issues, Gorbachev's administration understood that it might be helpful, but not too dangerous to accommodate republican dissidents, while republican leaders for their part ensured that

inter-ethnic disputes would not arise by ensuring expansive legal rights for the various linguistic groups. Although in practice the preservation and spread of titular languages remained limited, the CIS, too, openly promoted such rights. Finally, in matters of religion, all religious communities were united in their struggle against Soviet domination and at times enforced atheism. If anything, the Russian Orthodox and Uniate Churches had less reason to worry about each other than about the widespread religious apathy that was bound to persist after many decades of Soviet rule.

The paradigm of Nation was insignificant. Historical disputes remained obscure for the vast majority of Russians, Belarusians and Ukraine. Linguistic disputes were hardly possible while Russian language so overwhelmingly dominated. Finally, in religious matters the various parties had to reconsolidate their organisations independently of the Soviet Union, before they could truly compete.

Chapter 5: Constructing sovereignty (1993-1999)

Constructing political sovereignty

Territory

Law: The Friendship Treaty

Belarusians and Ukrainians now argued that integration should be mutually beneficial. In September, 1994, Belarusian President Lukashenko insisted that Russo-Belarusian territorial integration depended on Russian economic subsidies.[370] Similarly, the May, 1997, Friendship Treaty between Russia and Ukraine was a treaty between equal parties, which "respect the territorial unity of each other and confirm the inviolability of their mutual borders."[371] This constituted the first post-Soviet territorial confirmation of shared borders. Russian public opinion approved: an opinion poll from that summer showed that only 13% supported recreating the USSR, while 34% directly opposed Russian mergers with any neighbours.[372] The combination of the Friendship Treaty and lack of Russian interest in territorial revanchism allowed Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Hennadii Udovenko, in February, 1998, to state that Russo-Ukrainian territorial disputes could not exist.[373] Russian ministers understood that Ukrainians would not allow territorial disputes to resurface, and in December, 1998, Foreign Minister Igor' Ivanov persuaded the Russian parliament to ratify the Friendship Treaty, warning that failure would strengthen those Ukrainians seeking to

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[370] S. Karaganov, "Russia and the Slav Vicinity" in V. Baranovsky, ed., *Russia and Europe: the emerging security agenda*, Stockholm and Oxford: SIPRI and OUP, 1997, p. 297

[371] "Dogovor o druzhbe, sotrudnichestve i partnerstve mezhdu Rossiiskoi Federatsiei i Ukrainoi (31.5.1997)" in G. Berdennikov and A. Chalyi, eds., *Rossiia-Ukraina 1990-2000 (kniga 2)*, Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2001, p. 146

[372] M. Light, "In Search of an Identity: Russian foreign policy and the end of ideology," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 19 (3), 2003, p. 52

[373] Molchanov, p. 249

move away from Russia.[374] Nevertheless, Ivanov wanted to reintegrate with Ukraine; he just understood that overt pressure would be counterproductive. Similarly, in his subsequent memoirs El'tsin seemed to have lost his principled support for the territorial status quo. While praising the territorial guarantees, El'tsin now did so because this outcome assisted economic and other negotiations between Russia and Ukraine.[375] Territorial guarantees had become a means with which Ukrainians could be appeased in order to acquiesce to what were allegedly more important agreements.

Power: Formalising Russo-Belarusian cooperation

El'tsin expected Ukraine and Belarus to rejoin Russia in the near future, anyway. By 1994, only about one-third of respondents in Ukraine identified with the state they resided in, while half would have voted for continued union and against Ukrainian independence in a new referendum.[376] Russians understandably remained reluctant to demarcate borders with Ukraine, which might return to Russia at any moment.[377] This might even begin a more widespread process. In October, 1995, military commander and soon-to-be presidential candidate Aleksandr Lebed' stated confidently that: "the nearest future will witness the unification of the former Soviet republics, which will hand over their authority to a central power..."[378] The founding of the CIS signalled this and in April, 1996, territorial reintegration moved decisively forward with the Russo-Belarusian Community, which led to the Charter of the Union of Russia and Belarus. This Charter facilitated developing joint institutions, union citizenship and, especially: "the voluntary unification of the member-states of the

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[374] "Bol'shoi zal," *Gosudarstvennaia Duma: stenogramma zasedanii*, 25.12.1998

[375] B. Yeltsin, *Midnight Diaries*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000, p. 244

[376] Molchanov, p. 242

[377] S. Tikhii, "Kiev tozhe slezam ne verit," *Moskovskie novosti*, 19.3.1995

[378] S. Agafonov, "Lebed' risuet general'skuiu perspektivu dlia Rossii," *Izvestiia*, 12.10.1995

Charter..."[379] Lebed' and other members of the Russian military strongly supported the process, remaining convinced that Belarusian borders should be protected against foreign, Western, incursions.[380] Lukashenko, too, rejoiced in September, 1996, that the Russian government now recognised the western border of Belarus as being the western border of Russia.[381] Importantly, El'tsin agreed. In January, 1997, the re-elected, reinvigorated President even suggested to Lukashenko that their states should hold a referendum on complete reunification.[382] According to El'tsin, as he put it in April, 1997, "The purpose of forming the [Russo-Belarusian] Union was simply to create new conditions for the fruitful rapprochement of the states..."[383] His government concurred. In May, 1997, Chernomyrdin remarked that "the Union agreement] will allow the brotherly [Russian and Belarusian] peoples to begin a new level of intergovernmental relations [including] in the sphere of cooperation on border issues."[384] Soon, Primakov endorsed unification, too: "...the agreement on [a Russo-Belarusian Union]...is an exceptionally important mechanism on the road to unification."[385] Primakov wanted similar unification with Ukraine. Despite the Friendship Treaty, he noted about Russo-Ukrainian border demarcation in August, 1997, that: "To put it mildly, this is not a question for today."[386] Similarly, in one 1997 survey, 44% of Russians in Ukraine and 31% of Ukrainians agreed that the restoration of the USSR was

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[379] "Ustav Soiuza Belarusi i Rossii," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 24.5.1997, article 3

[380] V. Manilov, "Ugrozy natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossii," *Voennaia mysl'*, 1, 1996, p. 9; V. Barin'kin, "Voennye ugrozy Rossii i problemy razvitiia vooruzhennykh sil," *Voennaia mysl'*, 1, 1999, p. 3

[381] Birgerson, p. 115

[382] M. Volkova, "Boris El'tsin predlozhil Aleksandru Lukashenko fakticheskoe ob''edinenie Rossii i Belorussii," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 14.1.1997

[383] "Boris El'tsin," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 3.4.1997

[384] A. Stasovskii, "Soiuz bratskikh narodov," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 24.5.1997

[385] S. Anis'ko, "Moskva-Minsk," *Segodnia*, 14.6.1997

[386] "Rossiia i Ukraina," *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 28.8.1997

possible "in principle."[387] Leaders in Moscow and Minsk agreed and focused on the benefits that unity might bring. In January, 1999, Lukashenko stated to the joint Russo-Belarusian parliamentary assembly that the Russo-Belarusian union might become the core of a Slavic civilisation, counteracting Western international unipolarity.[388] This process seemed to have reached its apex in December, 1999, when the Union State of Russia and Belarus was created; a State in which "The member states shall ensure the unity and inviolability of the territory of the Union State."[389] Integration would most likely continue after El'tsin; in December, 1999, Prime Minister Putin confirmed that relations with Belarus constituted the most important level of integration for Russia within the CIS.[390]

Nation: Unaccepted borders at land and at sea

However, it remained doubtful whether integration with Ukraine would be equally dynamic. Latent potential for trouble remained, exemplified in September, 1994, when the Russian government only pledged to respect mutual borders, while Ukrainians wanted Russians to accept them.[391] Evidently, Russians did not want the borders to become permanent, and this worried the Ukrainian leadership. In May, 1995, Ukrainian President Kuchma referred to Russia when opposing alleged desires to rearrange the political map by force.[392] Presently, the neighbours of Russia had no real cause for concern, but anxiety grew even in Belarus, where the April, 1996, agreement to form a Russo-Belarusian community triggered massive

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[387] A. Wilson, *The Ukrainians: unexpected nation (2nd ed)*, New Haven, CT, and London: Yale UP, 2002, p. 216

[388] "My idem k soiuznomu gosudarstvu..." *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 22.1.1999

[389] *Dogovor o sozdanii Soiuznogo Gosudarstva (8.12.1999)*, article 7 on www.soyuz.by/ru/?guid=10447 (accessed on 3.7.2009)

[390] L. Jonson, "The Security Dimension of Russia's Policy in South Central Asia" in G. Gorodetsky, ed., *Russia between East and West: Russian foreign policy on the threshold of the twenty-first century*, London: Frank Cass, 2003, p. 133

[391] Bukkvoll, *Ukraine*, p. 71

[392] Molchanov, p. 240

street protests in Minsk, quickly and violently suppressed.[393] It would be misleading to state that Russians actively stoked such concerns, yet by October 1996 Chernomyrdin refused to defend Ukrainian territorial integrity against claims advanced by the Russian Duma, arguing that the problem was Ukrainian procrastination in dividing Soviet assets.[394] The territorial guarantees provided by the Friendship Treaty in May, 1997, did not include sea borders, leaving Ukraine unable to drill for undoubtedly significant gas reserves in the Black Sea shelf and thus becoming an energy exporter, instead of remaining dependent on Russia.[395] Ukrainians also noted that El'tsin's domestic opponents continued promoting revanchism. In 1997, Aleksei Mitrofanov, member of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) and Chairman of the Duma committee on geopolitics, thus stated: "...the separation of...Galicia [from the rest of Ukraine] is self-evident...the aspiration of inhabitants of Crimea and Donbas to unite with ethnically related Russia is an objective fact...reunification of Volyn' to the Russo-Belarusian union is an inescapable fact..."[396] These comments were not challenged by El'tsin. Successful, mutually beneficial integration between Russia and Belarus might have allayed Ukrainian fears, but by September, 1998, Igor' Ivanov complained: "I think that neither we nor the Belorussian side are satisfied with what has been achieved. I believe that we have got a long way to go."[397] Did Belarusians want to go that way? Did Russians care what Belarusians wanted? The Ukrainian government was not waiting to find out, but allowed its border troops to cooperate with Azerbaijani and Georgian colleagues,

[393] A. Starikevich, "Ne budet li chrezmernoi nasha plata za druzhbu s nepredskazuemym politikom?" *Izvestiia*, 6.4.1996

[394] J. Sherr, "Russia-Ukraine 'Rapprochement'? The Black Sea Fleet accords," *Survival*, 39 (3), 1997, pp. 37, 48

[395] Balmaceda, "Gas," p. 261

[396] A. Mitrofanov, *Shagi novoi geopolitiki*, Moscow: Russkii vestnik, 1997, pp. 173, 273-75

[397] D. Gornostaev, "Igor' Ivanov," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 30.9.1998, p. 6

the latter contemplating resisting Russian assistance to local, secessionist movements.[398]

Similar assistance seemed impossible in the case of Crimea following Russian parliamentary ratification of the Friendship Treaty in December, 1998, yet Luzhkov claimed that "up to 80% [of Russians] are opposed to this treaty," while other commentators complained: "ratification does not improve relations with Ukraine. Russia will lose Sevastopol', Crimea and the possibility to use the Kerch Strait for free."[399] The treaty did not reflect this, and the Russian government seemed reasonably satisfied with the status quo. But territorial disputes had certainly become a salient issue in Russian politics. In July, 1999, a worried Lukashenko threatened alliance with the West if Russians disagreed with unification on his terms,[400] and in October he complained: "It seems as if it is necessary to play the Belorussian card before the elections in Russia. But nobody will be allowed to treat our state in that fashion."[401] It remained to be seen whether Putin agreed.

Governance

Law: Cooperation and Partnership

The absence of a powerful, authoritarian opponent began to diminish Russian support for Ukrainian democracy, yet most Ukrainians, despite post-independence difficulties, knew that Russia could hardly fundamentally challenge their democratic governance. In February, 1995, the bilateral draft Russo-Ukrainian Cooperation and Partnership treaty worried some Ukrainians seeing the draft as leading to the loss of Ukrainian independence. Yet even the new, Russia-friendly President Kuchma accepted he had been elected President of an

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[398] T. Kuzio, "Promoting Geopolitical Pluralism in the CIS: GUUAM and Western foreign policy," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 47 (3), 2000, p. 33

[399] F. Ioffe, "Neudacha Luzhkova mozhet stat' pobedoi," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 18.2.1999

[400] V. Ustiuzhanin, "Lukashenko meniaet orientatsiiu," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 3.7.1999

[401] S. Pletnev, "Skandal vokrug Soiuza," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 2.10.1999, p. 5

independent state, which he would defend.[402] Russians knew this, and official criticism of

Ukrainian governance on behalf of Russians in Ukraine refrained from challenges to

Ukrainian sovereign governance. For his part, in August, 1995, Kuchma emphasised that

Ukraine was capable of protecting the Russian diaspora and their rights.[403] Increasingly, the

Russian government tried to elicit a similar reaction from Belarus. In March, 1997, Russians

sharply criticised a Belarusian crackdown on local and Russian journalists and opposition

forces, while El'tsin's adviser Sergei Iastrzhembskii expressed deep concern regarding

Belarusian media treatment in general, thus following Western criticism of Lukashenko.[404]

Similarly, when El'tsin criticised Ukrainian and Belarusian governance, he often did so based

on internationally recognised norms. Following the signing of the Union Treaty with Belarus

in May, 1997, El'tsin emphasised provisions on freedom of speech and the press, political

party activity, property rights and a market economy.[405] Unlike Lukashenko, El'tsin's circles

wanted to restore the international reputation of Russia, having suffered deeply during the

first Chechen campaign. Without doing so, as Solzhenitsyn noted in 1998, Russia could not

credibly defend Russian minorities abroad.[406] Lukashenko resented the criticism, but did not

in return attack Russians resident in Belarus. Instead, he attempted to engage with Russian

regional leaders, showing El'tsin that Russia should embark on decentralisation, too.[407]

Power: Presidential backing and parallel centralisations

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[402] I. Sokolovskaia, "Ukraina budet sotrudnichat' s Rossiei, no ne tak, kak Belarus' i Kazakhstan," *Izvestiia*, 10.2.1995

[403] Molchanov, p. 217

[404] Markus, p. 60

[405] M. Polezhaev, "Soiuz usiago," *Kommersant*, 24.5.1997, p. 1

[406] A. Solzhenitsyn, *Rossiia v obvale*, Moscow: Russkii put', 1998, p. 81

[407] N. Petrov, "The Implications of Centre-Region politics for Russia's North-west Border Regions" in O. Antonenko and K. Pinnick, eds., *Russia and the European Union: prospects for a new relationship*, London and New York: Routledge and IISS, 2005, pp. 142, 143

Yet the Russian executive wanted to persuade, but seldom force neighbouring states back to centralised governance. To succeed, Russians had to ensure that administrations in Minsk and Kyiv listened to Russian advice, and here Shushkevich and Kravchuk were sometimes found wanting. Thus, El'tsin allegedly ensured that Lukashenko became Belarusian President in July, 1994, informing Lukashenko: "We congratulate you...Information has already come from the Kremlin. You are President. We are certain about the results. The Kremlin does not want to be mistaken in you."[408] While such blunt intervention was not alleged in Ukraine, El'tsin openly supported Kuchma's campaign and even appeared on Ukrainian television to support Kuchma.[409] After Kuchma's victory, Russians could expect a more Russia-friendly Ukraine, since elites in Ukraine, including Deputy Chairman of parliament Vladimir Grinev, Defence Minister Konstantin Morozov, and Prosecutor General Viktor Shishkin, were often Russian.[410] Belarusian loyalty was further ensured in September, 1996, when Lukashenko visited Moscow and then made exaggerated claims of Russian backing for him and his plans for an extended presidential term. Soon his opponent, Deputy Parliamentary Speaker Henadz Karpenka, was likewise seeking Russian assistance.[411] At the same time, tradition of intervention did not prevent the Russian government from telling third parties to stay away. In January, 1997, when Belarusian membership in the Council of Europe was suspended, a Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman called the decision rash,[412] since only Russians reserved the right to influence Belarusian and Ukrainian politics from the outside. This position was

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[408] V. Matikevich, *Nashestvie*, Moscow: Iauza, 2003, p. 45

[409] A. Kasaev and V. Timoshenko, "Leonid Kuchma makhnul na Rossiiu rukoi," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 12.10.1999

[410] Kolstoe, p. 179

[411] I. Khalip and S. Solodovnik, "Bitva trekh konstitutsii," *Itogi*, 24.9.1996

[412] R. Fawn, "Correcting the Incorrigible?" *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 18 (1), 2002, p. 6

strengthened when the EU introduced sanctions against Belarus and Lukashenko.[413] Yet

Russians hardly cared about Lukashenko and Kuchma as individuals; support was only

provided to them at politically critical junctures, including elections. Otherwise, Russian

interest in perceived provincial politics was limited. By mid-1997 few thought about

corruption scandals surrounding previous Ukrainian Prime Minister, Pavlo Lazarenko, while

some parliamentarians allegedly confused Lazarenko's predecessor, Evhen Marchuk, with

Vitol'd Fokin, Prime Minister between 1990 and 1992.[414] This mostly detached, but

periodically highly active approach served Russia well. Whereas Russia-sceptic political

oppositions in Belarus and Ukraine were disenfranchised, the Russian leadership could still

benefit from their dissatisfaction. The Ukrainian parliamentary election in 1998 witnessed a

70% turnout. However, among those, who voted, 66% professed little trust for the

politicians they voted for.[415] Kuchma thus had limited options of building a domestic popular

coalition loyal to him, possibly allowing Russians to magnify Ukrainian dissatisfaction with

Kuchma, if needed. A similar lack of alternatives to Russian assistance allowed Russians to

ignore promises of assistance to local administrations in Belarus and Ukraine, such as in

October, 1998, when the city council of Sevastopol' complained that Luzhkov had neglected

promises to support the local budget and treated the city as part of an unimportant Russian

province.[416] Lukashenko, too, did not get all the assistance he wanted from Russo-

Belarusian integration. Yet, in 1999, when Lukashenko successfully extended his term until

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[413] H. Haukkala, "The Northern Dimension of EU Foreign Policy" in O. Antonenko and K. Pinnick, eds., *Russia and the European Union: prospects for a new relationship*, London and New York: Routledge and IISS, 2005, p. 49

[414] T. Bukkvoll, "Off the Cuff Politics: explaining Russia's lack of a Ukraine strategy," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 53 (8), 2001, p. 1148

[415] M. Åberg, "Putnam's Social Capital Theory Goes East: a case study of Western Ukraine and L'viv," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 52 (2), 2000, p. 303

[416] M. Pirozhuk, "Real'naia ozabochennost' moskovskogo mera Sevastopolem," *Den'*, 4.11.1998

2001, El'tsin duly met with Lukashenko and supported him.[417] The Russian governmental newspaper, *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, also stated: "In Belarus has appeared a new version of the state Constitution, approved by referendum in 1996 and the legitimacy of this Basic Law does not need to be supported and recognised abroad."[418] At least while the Basic Law corresponded to Russian wishes, including in economic issues. Echoing developments five years before, persistent rumours suggested that Berezovskii was involved in ensuring TV support for Kuchma's presidential re-election campaign in 1999.[419] The Russian government wanted this to continue. Following ratification of the Russo-Belarusian Union Treaty in December, 1999, Prime Minister Putin claimed that integration was inevitable, that interest in integration would increase, and that the Union remained open to Ukraine.[420]

Nation: Defence of diaspora and the danger of Lukashenko

Yet internal disputes in Ukraine might conversely force Russians to intervene. In January, 1994, relations between Kyiv and Crimea worsened when Crimean President Iurii Meshkov partly succeeded in boycotting national elections, while securing a majority of seats in the Crimean parliament.[421] A local referendum two months later approved Crimean autonomy, dual citizenship and widening of Meshkov's powers.[422] Although not openly suggested, Meshkov could potentially promote closer connections with Russia, where parliamentarians contemplated how to protect Russians outside Russia. This prospect frightened neighbouring legislatures and in December 1994 Belarusian Parliament Speaker Miacheslav

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[417] V. Panfilova and N. Pulina, "Rossiia i Ukraina podderzhivaiut belorusskogo prezidenta," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 22.7.1999

[418] "Belorussiia," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 23.7.1999

[419] A. Budberg, "Rokovaia rokirovka," *Moskovskii komsomolets*, 6.3.1999

[420] L. Nazarova, "Rossiisko-belorusskii soiuz," *Moskovskaia pravda*, 14.12.1999

[421] V. Pasiakin, "Inaguratsiia pervogo prezidenta Kryma," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 5.2.1994

[422] Sasse, p. 88; S. Prokopenko, "Novyi parlament na staroi tiage," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 30.3.1994

Hryb protested against a suggestion from the Duma that the parliaments hold a joint session, even deeming the suggestion unconstitutional.[423] However, Lukashenko hardly supported Hryb and bilateral tension was minimised. Russo-Ukrainian relations, conversely, worsened after Kuchma as mentioned imposed presidential rule on Crimea. In March, 1995, El'tsin's aide Dmitrii Riurikov reacted to the annulment of the Crimean constitution with threats: "Moscow views the decision of the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine as a serious legal step, which will...have repercussions for the inhabitants of Crimea....The Russian leadership would prefer that in the aftermath of similar decisions there would not appear...consequences, the regulation of which Russia would...have to become involved in due to well-known circumstances."[424] Such threats would probably not be carried out, but in April El'tsin postponed a visit to Kyiv, declaring this would take place when he was convinced that relations between Kyiv and Simferopol' were not developing in a way detrimental to Crimea, since Russia worried for the Russian majority there.[425] Not too much should be read into this; El'tsin would have discussed the long-mooted Friendship Treaty during the visit, and it might have been embarrassing to acknowledge that limited progress was being made.

Yet El'tsin certainly had domestic support for defending Russians in Ukraine. In May, 1995, a Duma statement denounced the annulment of the Crimean Presidency as violating Crimeans' will. Parliamentary committee chair Zatulin deplored an allegedly imminent

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[423] Z. Brzezinski and P. Sullivan, eds., *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997, pp. 295, 306

[424] V. Kononenko, S. Chugaev and M. Iusin, "Moskva segodnia ne do Kryma, ona slishkom uviazla v Chechne," *Izvestiia*, 21.3.1995

[425] Bukkvoll, "Off," p. 1154; N. Semena, "Rezkoe obostrenie situatsii v Krymu meshaet rossiisko-ukrainskomu dialogu," *Izvestiia*, 4.4.1995

dismantling of the Russian presence on Crimea,[426] while Deputy Speaker Aleksandr Vengerovskii of the LDPR compared the situation to that in Yugoslavia and "longed to teach a lesson" to the Ukrainians.[427] This did not reflect official foreign policy, although in September, 1995, a document concerning the strategic course of Russia towards CIS-states stressed: "In the case of violation of the rights of Russians [*rossiian*] in the CIS-states, possible avenues of pressure...[concern] financial, economic, military-political and other types of cooperation between Russia and the state in question..."[428] The government wanted to be capable of intervening abroad in future, if necessary. El'tsin also wanted to signal to Lukashenko, Kuchma and others that he would be prepared to avenge outside intervention in Russian governance. Although a somewhat remote possibility, by the mid-1990s Russian governance was in turmoil, with a weakening President, a vociferous, somewhat reactionary parliamentary opposition, and a number of pretenders to the presidency among other actors, too. It was thus not impossible that Belarusians and Ukrainians might become involved in domestic Russian politics. Lukashenko had become so popular in the Russian provinces by October, 1997, that the Kremlin at one point took the highly controversial step of banning airports in Iaroslavl and Lipetsk from accepting any plane with Lukashenko on board.[429] No real tension developed, but it was unsurprising that the El'tsin administration suspected Lukashenko of preying on Russian weakness, for this was done by Russian politicians abroad. In August, 1998, the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry openly accused Luzhkov of interfering in the internal affairs of Ukraine, and of lacking

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[426] P. Karapetian, "Strategiia napriazhennosti," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 19.5.1995

[427] Molchanov, p. 255

[428] *Ob utverzhdenii Strategicheskogo kursa Rossiiskoi Federatsii s gosudarstvennami-uchastnikami Sodruzhestva Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv (14.9.1995)*, article 16, on www.mosds.ru/Dokum/dokum_rosUZ940-1995.shtml (accessed on 4.7.2009)

[429] N. Galko, "Lukashenko ne pustili v Lipetsk," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 3.10.1997

respect towards its sovereignty, after he had denied the possibility of Ukrainian governance over Crimeans and, especially, Sevastopol': "...Sevastopol' – that's a special city on the whole...it was always an independent administrative entity...If Ukraine doesn't return Crimea and Sevastopol'...[Russians] will undoubtedly remember that [Ukraine] unjustly rules this territory, these cities..."[430] Belarus was not targeted by such criticism, but in September, 1999, Lukashenko did complain that the Russian media regularly dismissed him and his administration as provincial nobodies, who only wanted to exploit Russian goodwill; Lukashenko's fear that such rhetoric might eventually undermine Belarusian governance was understandable.[431] By October, 1999, the Council for Foreign and Defence Policy feared an authoritarian Belarus formally united with Russia might influence the latter, since "...the Russian elite do not want to take the chance that the exit of B. El'tsin can result in the presidency of A. Lukashenko."[432]

Ideology

Law: Peacemakers

Even after he had lost the Ukrainian presidency, by January and again by October, 1995, Kravchuk continued to highlight that a sovereign Ukrainian state ideology was necessary, not to defend Ukraine against Russian advances, but simply because a post-Soviet Ukraine had to be able to stand on its own in the international environment.[433] And, indeed, if Russian attitudes threatened Belarus and Ukraine they mostly seemed to do so through

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[430] I. Gorbunov, "'Mne nravitsia ukrainskii iazyk,'" *Ekonomika i zhizn'*, 21.3.1998; also T. Kuzio, *Ukraine – Crimea – Russia: triangle of conflict*, Stuttgart: ibidem, 2007, p. 75

[431] S. Eke and T. Kuzio, "Sultanism in Eastern Europe: the socio-political roots of authoritarian populism in Belarus," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 52 (3), 2000, p. 530

[432] "O rossiisko-belorusskoi integratsii," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 1.10.1999

[433] Molchanov, p. 238

neglect. Russian ignorance of Belarusian and Ukrainian affairs became increasingly widespread, leading analysts in Russia to complain about "...the loss of initiative, of the strategic position of Russia not only in the post-Soviet, but in the East European region, as well."[434] But such statements only highlighted that Russian disengagement from the neighbourhood increased. Lukashenko understood this development and was prepared to construct a sovereign ideology for Belarus, too. Already in October, 1995, he stated his intent to loosen CIS integration, arguing that the organisation should take more inspiration from the EU than from state-building measures.[435] At the same time, with the ability of Russian nationalists to challenge El'tsin steadily decreasing, he had little need to favour imperial slogans, but was free to construct a normal state, following prevalent, Western international norms.[436] Additionally, El'tsin had partly bound his legitimacy together with an internationally responsible Russia and often prevented the domestic opposition from scuppering useful cooperation with Ukraine. In November, 1997, he even warned self-ascribed Russian patriots against fomenting strife in this bilateral relationship,[437] when this could damage cooperation on issues such as the continued prevention of civil war in Moldova, which was focused on by Russia and Ukraine during 1998 and 1999.[438]

Power: Strategy for the CIS

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[434] S. Karaganov, "Vspomnim o 'neogollizme'," *Moskovskie novosti*, 47, 9-16.7.1995, p. 5; K. Zatulin and A. Migranian, "SNG posle Kishineva," *Sodruzhestvo NG*, 1, 1997, p. 2

[435] V. Paznyak, "Belarus: civilian control of national security" in R. Allison and C. Bluth, eds., *Security Dilemmas in Russia and Eurasia*, London: RIIA, 1998, p. 160

[436] N. Mekhed, "Rossiisko-ukrainskoe sblizhenie," *Kommersant-Vlast'*, 8, 1997, p. 60

[437] Trenin, "Changing," p. 166

[438] S. Roper, "Regionalism in Moldova: the case of Transnistria and Gagauzia" in J. Hughes and G. Sasse, eds., *Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union: regions in conflict*, Portland, OR, and London: Frank Cass, 2001, p. 113

And yet, El'tsin would find it natural to advocate well-known supranational ideologies. In July, 1994, he certainly used Kuchma's and Lukashenko's elections as Presidents to state that this demonstrated the Russophile aspirations of Ukrainians and Belarusians.[439] The aspect of potential Eurasian unison was wholeheartedly taken up by the Russian political opposition, too. Communist leader Gennadii Ziuganov described "Great," "White" and "Little Russians" as the Slavic core,[440] that could promote a general-Eurasian Russian ideology based on "the tolerance and indifference to ethnicity of the Russian people."[441] That neighbouring peoples should be convinced, not forced to once more ally with Russia was presidential policy, too. In September, 1995, El'tsin's decree outlining the strategic course of Russia towards the CIS emphasised: "Special attention must be given to establishing Russia as the main educational centre on post-Soviet territory with a concern for the necessity of educating the young generation of the CIS-states in a spirit of friendly relations with Russia."[442] From Minsk, Lukashenko wholeheartedly agreed to these aims, perhaps being slightly jealous that his state did not receive the same attention as Russia. In October, 1995, Lukashenko emphasised that his state had to gain wider international influence through Russia, since only Russia could facilitate the building of relations between CIS states.[443] The Russian government did not want foreign interference in Belarus, either. In June, 1997, in the words of ministerial spokesman Gennadii Tarasov, the Russian Foreign Ministry once more highlighted that Ukraine and Belarus were prioritised by Russia and that actors from outside the region therefore had no right to try and usurp Russian influence

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[439] "Boris El'tsin," *Izvestiia*, 21.7.1994, p. 1

[440] G. Ziuganov, *Rossia i sovremennyi mir*, Moscow: Obozrevatel', 1995, p. 20

[441] "Dukhovnyi potentsial natsii – opora vozrozhdeniia" in G. Ziuganov, ed., *Sovremennaia russkaia ideia i gosudarstvo*, Moscow: Obozrevatel', 1995, pp. 27-31

[442] *Ob utverzhdenii*, article 15

[443] Paznyak, p. 167

there.[444] At the same time, Kuchma's and Lukashenko's administration, although intent on constructing some sort of sovereign ideology, could not ignore that many of their citizens were closely linked to Russia. Thus, by 1997, 57% of Russians in Ukraine were born in the UkSSR or Ukraine. The Russian diaspora could therefore champion closer links to Russia, while legitimately demanding recognition as an indigenous people in Ukraine.[445] This helped El'tsin, in November, 1997, to stress that no one could or should set Russia and Ukraine against each other. Both states could rejoice in the successes of each other[446] and, it appeared, could conversely not rejoice in successes that harmed the other state. Certainly, a majority of titulars in Belarus and Ukraine believed Russia would try to gain control of their state; by the late 1990s this was believed by 85% of Belarusians and 91% of Ukrainians.[447] Yet despite El'tsin's efforts, some Russian commentators still feared that the United States could lure Ukraine away from Russia; a development that was seen to spell the end of Russia itself. In 1998, Solzhenitsyn accused America of using independent Ukraine to weaken and eventually "disintegrate" Russia according to plans inspired by old German, geopolitical strategies.[448] Nevertheless, as it turned out, many in Ukraine identified with Russia. As late as during the parliamentary elections of 1998-99, the policy of the Communist Party of Ukraine, easily the political party in Ukraine with the largest membership, still remained "the voluntary creation of an equal Union of fraternal peoples" on formerly Soviet territory.[449]

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[444] "Otvergnut' dvoinoi standart..." *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 28.6.1997

[445] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, p. 215

[446] J. Sherr, "Ukraine's New Time of Troubles" in C. Dick and A. Aldis, eds., *Central and Eastern Europe: problems and prospects*, Camberley: Strategic and Combat Studies Institute, 1998, p. 131

[447] Hagendoorn et al, p. 95

[448] Solzhenitsyn, *Rossiia*, p. 78

[449] I. Shaiihorods'kyii, *Vybory '98*, Kyiv: Fort, 1998, p. 10

Nation: Dual citizenship

It was increasingly possible that Russian action could undermine such prospects, though. El'tsin's government had long resisted vilifying Belarusians and Ukrainians, but following the parliamentary election in December, 1993, which was a partial success for Vladimir Zhirinovskii's strident nationalist rhetoric, and a failure for parties endorsed by the government, Foreign Minister Kozyrev did try to reclaim popular support from the nationalists by taking some of their ideology.[450] Most likely, Kozyrev did not believe in the rhetoric himself, but the Ukrainian government was worried since the Russian citizenship law from November, 1991, still allowed any Soviet citizen to receive Russian citizenship, irrespective of residence. Belatedly, Ukrainian protests managed to have the law modified in June, 1994, thus reducing the risk of hosting disloyal residents,[451] but the success was short-lived. Indeed, in April, 1995, El'tsin threatened that Russia would not be able to sign the long-awaited Friendship Treaty with its various territorial and other guarantees, as long as Ukraine did not allow for dual citizenship.[452] He probably did not intend to undermine Ukraine from within, but he wanted the formal right to protect Russians in Ukraine against official discrimination. By November, 1995, Russians and Russian-speakers in Ukraine feared that the Ukrainian political elite might be on the way to constructing an ethnic state identity in a misguided attempt to disassociate the state from the CIS and Russia.[453] Such fears mostly proved unfounded and were almost absent in relation to Belarus. Yet, some Belarusians continued espousing ideologies distancing Belarus from Russia. Before the signing of the Union Agreement in April, 1996, thousands protested in Minsk, fearing for the

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[450] A. Kozyrev, "Rossiia i SShA," *Izvestiia*, 11.3.1994, p. 3

[451] V. Tolz, "Forging the Nation: national identity and nation building in post-Communist Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 50 (6), 1998, p. 1008

[452] "Rossiia – Ukraina," *Izvestiia*, 7.6.1995

[453] O. Rudakevich, "Chy volodiie suverenitetom Ukrains'ka natsiia?" *Ukrains'ke slovo*, 30.11.1995

political sovereignty of their state. Only violence and mass arrests stopped them.[454] Still, it was clear by now that neither Lukashenko nor Kuchma wanted to alienate Russia. Furthermore, as the political fortunes of the Russian opposition waned after the 1996 presidential election, El'tsin's administration had less reason to criticise ideologies of neighbouring states. However, other prominent politicians continued doing so. In July, 1997, Luzhkov thus appraised the Russo-Ukrainian Friendship Treaty in a negative light, complaining that insufficient regard was given to the interests of mighty Russia by subversive Ukrainian elites.[455] And by the last years of the 1990s, there were signs that Russians and Ukrainians continued to have problems coexisting, not only in the western regions where Ukrainian ideologies had always been prominent, but in central Ukraine, too. Here less than 19% of inhabitants described themselves as ethnic Russians, not much higher than the 10% who did so in the West.[456] This could indicate that previously self-defined Russians had begun to identify with the Ukrainian state, but it was more likely that they felt pressured into doing so; certainly, the proportion of self-ascribed ethnic Russians had fallen dramatically in central Ukraine during the 1990s. Conversely, though, some Russian commentators were equally uncomfortable with Ukrainians openly subscribing to Russian state ideology. For these Ukrainians might really be working for the West, as an "Atlanticist Trojan Horse," in the words of prominent Russian commentator Aleksandr Dugin, willingly assisting the undermining of Russian great power ideology on behalf of the West.[457]

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[454] P. Truscott, *Russia First: breaking with the West*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1997, pp. 60, 61

[455] S. Appatov, "Ukraine and the Atlantic Community: problems of security and development" in D. Albright and S. Appatov, eds., *Ukraine and European Security*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999, p. 235

[456] M. Beletskii and A. Tolpygo, "Natsional'no-kul'turnye i ideologicheskie orientatsii naseleniia Ukrainy," *Polis*, 4, 1998, pp. 76, 77

[457] A. Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki (2nd ed)*, Moscow: Arktogeia, 1999, p. 799

Conclusion

Between 1993 and 1999, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian political sovereignty. In territorial issues, this was visible in relations between Russia and Belarus, which signed a Community Treaty, a Charter of a Union State, and finally a Union State agreement. El'tsin promoted this development strongly, suggesting for instance a referendum on full integration in 1997, and his successor Putin also emphasised the importance of Russo-Belarusian integration. There was a marked sense of inevitability in Russian rhetoric: Lebed' expected neighbouring states to "hand over" their territories, while Primakov talked about a specific "road to" full integration. In matters of governance, Russians were present in the Ukrainian government and helped secure loyalty there towards Russia. Belarusian loyalty was acquired through Russian support for Lukashenko's election and extension of presidential term. Similarly, in Ukraine El'tsin personally supported Kuchma in 1994, while Putin supported increased integration of Russian and Belarusian governing structures. Russian rhetoric emphasised centralisation: officials allegedly told Lukashenko his election had been confirmed in Moscow, while the Russian state newspaper later noted that changes to the Belarusian constitution had "no need for recognition abroad." Finally, in matters of ideology the Strategic Concept for the CIS produced in 1995 centred on the idea that Russia was a great power that should centralise the post-Soviet region around itself. El'tsin repeatedly argued that this was what Belarusians and Ukrainians wanted, too, when they, for instance, elected Lukashenko and Kuchma in 1994, or agreed on Friendship and other treaties that allowed them to rejoice in Russian success. Russian rhetoric emphasised the "tolerance" of a Russian supranational ideology, as opposed to the "disintegration" imposed from the outside.

The paradigm of Law continued to have some influence on Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian political sovereignty. In territorial issues, the Russo-Ukrainian Friendship Treaty provided post-Soviet territorial guarantees, yet the support for this treaty from both El'tsin and Igor' Ivanov was half-hearted, as means to the end of keeping Ukrainians close, so that integration might happen in future. In matters of governance, El'tsin strongly criticised the Belarusian administration for failing to ensure free speech in Belarus, while members of El'tsin's administration expressed their concern for free media in Belarus. Yet such statements seemed short-lived, prompted by the Chechnia debacle, and were not followed by action. Finally, in matters of ideology Russia continued to use sovereign Ukraine to legitimise peacekeeping in Moldova. The themes of peace and stability were also present when El'tsin berated domestic opposition for fomenting strife with Ukraine, yet he took this step only after the opposition had lost the 1996 presidential election using such rhetoric.

The paradigm of Nation remained the least important one, although its influence grew. In territorial matters, Russo-Ukrainian sea borders had still not been agreed and official acceptance of land borders was long obstructed by the parliaments. In matters of governance, protests from the Russian executive on behalf of freedom of speech and media in Belarus barely camouflaged its reality as defence of the Russian diaspora, which could theoretically lead to armed intervention. Finally, in matters of ideology El'tsin advocated dual citizenship for Russians in Ukraine. He did not want to govern part of Ukraine, but to send a signal to Kyiv that Ukrainian state-building was moving in a problematic direction.

Constructing military sovereignty

Forces of Belarus and Ukraine

Law: Freedom to act

In January, 1994, Russian leaders officially accepted the sovereignty of a non-nuclear Ukrainian military. If nuclear weapons were surrendered: "...Russia and the USA are ready to offer Ukraine security guarantees [and confirm] their obligation...to refrain from economic pressure, intended to subordinate [Ukrainian] interests to its own..."[458] Many Ukrainians did not really believe in Russian guarantees, just as Arbatov's opinion in December, 1994, that Russia should simply have close relations with a neutral Ukraine, receiving further security assurance from both East and West and thus abandoning any potential hostility towards Russia,[459] was in a minority. Yet it was undoubtedly true that Russian elites were happy to avoid the financial burden of keeping non-Russian forces up to date, in Ukraine and elsewhere. In February, 1996, the Ministry of Defence cancelled a programme training CIS officers in military colleges, as participating states were unwilling to pay for it, and Russia was unable to do so.[460] At the same time, Kuchma had no need to refuse Russian security guarantees, even if they were feeble. In December, 1996, he stressed how international guarantees for Ukrainian military security provided by the January, 1994, trilateral agreement between Ukraine, Russia and the USA, provided valuable input for a European security system and for constructing Ukrainian military sovereignty specifically and

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[458] "Trekhstoronnee zaiavlenie prezidentov Rossii, SShA i Ukrainy (14.1.1994)" in G. Berdennikov and A. Chalyi, eds. *Rossiia-Ukraina 1990-2000 (kniga 1)*, Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2001, p. 304

[459] A. Arbatov, "Russian National Interests" in R. Blackwill and S. Karaganov, eds., *Damage Limitation or Crisis?*, Washington, DC, and London: Brassey's, 1994, p. 66

[460] Bukkvoll, *Ukraine*, p. 65

Ukrainian sovereignty more generally.[461] With this clever rhetoric, Kuchma had ensured that

any future Russian attempt to challenge Ukrainian security could be seen as dangerous to

Europe as a whole. This was valid in the case of the Black Sea Fleet, which El'tsin now knew

Ukraine would not relinquish without compensation. The naval treaties from May, 1997,

provided this, and El'tsin later admitted that the stability ensured in and around Crimea as a

result of these agreements had been worth the price paid to Ukraine, which among other

boons saw its energy debt to Russia significantly reduced.[462] As for nuclear weapons,

Belarus and Ukraine had returned their last stockpiles to Russia by 1996, not least since

administrations in Minsk and Kyiv had no funds to maintain the missiles. Belarus did retain

some 370kg weapons-grade enriched uranium by the end of the decade,[463] but despite the

poor reputation of the Lukashenko regime neither Russia nor the West disputed that this

uranium was being handled responsibly.

Power: Principles for military construction and a military union

Nevertheless, Russians accepted this containment of uranium since they expected it to

become available to Russia before long. In 1995 Russians managed to include Ukraine in the

CIS Air Defence Agreement. Ukrainians thus secured funds for much-needed upkeep of local

air defence military equipment. However, since they retained some of the best air defence

military equipment from Soviet days, Ukrainian participation was also a significant boon for

Russia.[464] At the same time, any construction of military forces without Russia was only an

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[461] V. Manzhola and S. Galaka, "A Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in Central and Eastern Europe: a Ukrainian perspective" in D. Albright and S. Appatov, eds., *Ukraine and European Security*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999, p. 117

[462] Yeltsin, p. 243

[463] Bluth, p. 165

[464] "Soglashenie o sozdanii ob''edinennoi sistemy protivovozdushnoi oborony gosudarstv-uchastnikov Sodruzhestva Nezavsimykh Gosudarstv," *Vestnik voennoi informatsii*, 1.5.1995

emergency solution for the Lukashenko administration. In May, 1996, Russian and Belarusian Defence Ministers Pavel Grachev and Leonid Maltsau duly agreed "...developing a joint defence policy [and] plan joint initiatives [to establish] military infrastructure in the interest of ensuring regional security..."[465] Russian scholars approved, not least since such infrastructure could be the beginning of more wide-ranging projects to come. In May, 1996, a study under Sergei Karaganov gave military reintegration with Belarus and Ukraine top priority: "From a geopolitical point of view...Belarus...is a 'bridge' between Russia and the West...The outlooks for a Russian-Ukrainian strategic union will to a large extent depend on...our relations with Belarus and Kazakhstan."[466] The Belarusian government was happy with such a place in the integration. In April, 1997, Defence Minister Aleksandr Chumakov rejoiced: "...more than twenty normative-legal documents concerning the area of defence have already been signed by our governments and military services...by creating the Union of Belarus and Russia we will move along the path of even more in-depth cooperation."[467] Ukrainian military assets would be of more use to Russia, though. Russia did receive the lion's share of the May, 1997, naval treaties, yet 37% of former Soviet ship-repairing facilities, which were crucial for the upgrading and development of the Russian navy, remained in Ukraine, at Nikolaev, Kherson, Kyiv and Kerch.[468] Thus, the Russian intent was that upgrading of Belarusian forces would appeal to decision-makers in Kyiv by demonstrating how integration under Russian supremacy was immediately profitable for them and their forces. Russian observers continued to expect imminent Ukrainian

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[465] A. Pel'ts, "Dogovor o Soobshchestve pridal impul's sotrudnichestvu Rossii i Belorussii v voennoi oblasti," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 15.5.1996

[466] *Vozroditsia li soiuz?* Articles 7.15.1 and 7.15.3 on www.nasledie.ru/politvne/18_20/article.php?art=63 (accessed on 13.7.2009)

[467] V. Kovalev, "Vmeste stanem sil'nee," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 23.4.1997

[468] Glebov, p. 181

understanding of this and recommended that Russia began promoting such cooperation straightaway in a voluntary manner.[469] After all, Ukrainians could only look to the Russia-Belarus Union budget from December, 1997, in which ample Russian funds were ensured for Belarusian military and other security forces: "...the largest sum shall be given to the joint activity of the [Interior Ministry], border and tax troops (42.1% of the...budget). Military-technological cooperation shall receive 17.1%..."[470] Belarusian approval of military cooperation might also evoke Russian support in non-military issues. Thus, despite repeated egregious violations of human rights by the Lukashenko regime, in January, 1999, Oleg Mironov, El'tsin's human rights commissioner, underlined how Russia might gain geopolitically and strategically through a Russia-Belarus union;[471] subsequently Mironov argued that an "...almost ideal [regime of] rule-of-law" existed in Belarus.[472] In return, during June and August, 1999, Belarus contributed the largest non-Russian contingent of military personnel to participate first in the West-99, and then the Military Commonwealth-99 exercises in western and southern Russia, respectively. These exercises were of unprecedented size and Belarusian participation showed that its military leadership was prepared to integrate further into the Russian structures in the coming years.[473]

Nation: A decimated Ukrainian navy and dissatisfaction with treaties

However, in the case of Ukraine the Russian military for some time worried that Kyiv might never return its nuclear weapons. In February, 1994, the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian

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[469] A. Zagorski, "Regional Structures of Security Policy within the CIS" in R. Allison and C. Bluth, eds., *Security Dilemmas in Russia and Eurasia*, London: RIIA, 1998, p. 292

[470] "Podschitali svoi biudzhet," *Sankt-peterburgskie vedomosti*, 16.12.1997

[471] Ambrosio, *Challenging*, p. 105

[472] "Rossiiskii ombudsmen Mironov schitaet, chto segodnia v Belorussii pochti ideal'naia pravovaia situatsiia," *Novye izvestiia*, 10.11.1999

[473] S. Babichev, "I prikrytie, i karaiushchii mech," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 25.6.1999; V. Boltikov, "Boevoe sodruzhestvo," *Na boevom postu*, 26.8.1999

Strategic Missile Forces had warned that the unilateral appropriation by Ukraine of local nuclear weapons prevented Russia from ensuring the safety of these and vetoing possibly unsanctioned use[474] thus implying that Ukrainians could not be trusted. Somewhat surprisingly, though, Belarusian forces were not all that reliable, either. Although the remaining nuclear weapons were sent to Russia during 1996, in June the Belarusian authorities had briefly stopped the transfer without explanation. Russian government officials complained: "...all deadlines that had been agreed...were broken...[The Belarusians] did not even answer the note, which was sent to the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the leader of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs."[475] This did not bode well for future military cooperation between the states, and, indeed, Belarus eventually turned out to be slower than Ukraine and Kazakhstan to return nuclear weapons.[476] Ukrainians, on the contrary, had not really proved troublesome since receiving the 1994 security guarantees, but according to Ukrainian National Security Council Secretary Volodymyr Horbulin in February, 1997, this did not prevent Russians from repeatedly deceiving Ukraine: "As soon as [Russia and Ukraine] agreed on something, the [Russian] State Duma or some other state institution in Russia immediately produced a 'smoking gun' after which it began to roll away from already existing Ukrainian-Russian agreements."[477] Maybe Horbulin exaggerated the problem, but certainly the Russian government had only looked out for Russia in the May, 1997, naval treaties. Russia gained most of the Black Sea Fleet; the rump Ukrainian navy was confined to the useless Strilets'ka Bay, and concerning Russian rents for Ukrainian facilities:

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[474] V. Litovkin, "Glavkom RVSN slagaet s sebia otvetstvennost' za bezopasnost' raketno-iadernogo oruzhiia na Ukraine," *Izvestiia*, 22.2.1994, p. 2

[475] V. Litovkin, "Lukashenko ne otpuskaet rossiiskie 'topolia'," *Izvestiia*, 13.6.1996

[476] R. Sakwa and M. Webber, "The Commonwealth of Independent States, 1991-1998: stagnation and survival," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 51 (3), 1999, p. 409

[477] V. Timoshenko, "Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv perspektivy ne imeet," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 5.2.1997, p. 3

"[Russia] shall compensate [Ukraine]...with altogether $526.509 million to be deducted from Ukrainian debts...of $3,074 million..."[478] So the Ukrainian budget did not receive any funds in return for the Fleet. It was neither unusual nor perhaps unreasonable that Russian government ministers looked out for their own state first in these critical negotiations. However, disappointed Ukrainians did consider seeking military support elsewhere. In October, 1997, Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova formed the organisation GUAM, which was led by Ukraine and aimed to "...strengthen international and regional security and stability..." rivalling Russia. Subsequently, in April, 1999, the inclusion of Uzbekistan, arriving from the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty into what now became GUUAM, signalled the wish, if not quite the potential for the Ukrainian military to resist Russian wishes.[479] Ukrainian forces were not about to pose a military threat to Russia, but Ukrainian military personnel and parliamentarians were dissatisfied with the naval treaties of 1997, and wanted to signal this. The Russian Duma in turn used Ukrainian procrastination on the naval treaties as an excuse to postpone Russian ratification of the Friendship Treaty; the connection between the two treaties was made especially clear by members of the Duma in May, 1998.[480] By the end of the year, both treaties had been ratified by both states and Ukrainians mostly let the Russian Black Sea Fleet operate in peace. Yet Kuchma's government still chose to conduct military exercises in April, 1999, within the GUAM forum,

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[478] "Soglashenie mezhdu pravitel'stvom Rossiiskoi Federatsii i pravitel'stvom Ukrainy o vzaimoraschetakh, sviazannykh s razdelom Chernomorskogo Flota i prebyvaniem Chernomorskogo Flota Rossiiskoi Federatsii na territorii Ukrainy (28.5.1997)" in G. Berdennikov and A. Chalyi, eds., *Rossiia-Ukraina 1990-2000 (kniga 2)*, Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2001, p. 138

[479] *Organizatsiia za demokratiiu i ekonomicheskoe razvitie – GUAM (10.10.1997)*, article 3, on http://guam-organization.org/node/240 (accessed on 4.7.2009)

[480] J. Black, *Russia Faces NATO Expansion: bearing gifts or bearing arms?*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000, p. 194

just before Uzbekistan joined, even though this resulted in loud protests from Moscow,[481] where it was well understood that GUAM united several states in the region with a grudge towards Russia. These states could do little direct harm to Russia, but their cooperation did challenge accounts of the region as a "security belt" for Russia.

NATO

Law: Joint naval exercises

By April, 1995, there remained signs that Belarusians did not want to choose sides between Russia and NATO. Mecheslau Hryb, Chairman of the Belarusian Supreme Soviet acknowledged that practical attempts to promote the international neutrality of the state and to seek widespread integration with all military alliances would benefit Belarusian military security.[482] It was furthermore understood in Belarus and Ukraine that these states could not exist in a vacuum, but also had to consider Russian and Western anxieties. In February, 1997, rumours that NATO would soon station nuclear weapons in Poland led Boris Oliinyk, Ukrainian parliamentary committee chair for foreign relations, to prefer a general European security arrangement including all states within NATO and within Russian-led security arrangements, too.[483] Such a scheme would undoubtedly have been favoured by the Russian government, which understood that Russia was presently in no position to challenge NATO outright. An example of this came in the summer of that year, when NATO and Ukraine together conducted the naval exercise Sea Breeze '97 near Crimea. The Russian government did officially protest, but allowed Russian vessels to participate in exercises the

[481] O. Odnokolenko, "Tadzhikistan budet oboroniat'sia sam," *Segodnia*, 17.4.1999; M. Vignanskii and V. Iadukha, "Baku-Tbilisi-Kiev," *Segodnia*, 20.4.1999

[482] Paznyak, p. 158

[483] Black, *Russia*, p. 178

following year in what appeared to be a genuine attempt by Russians and Ukrainians to compromise, while preserving Ukrainian military sovereignty.[484]

Power: Defence against expansion and West-99

Temporary acceptance of Ukrainian neutrality did not imply that Russians did not want Ukraine and Belarus to assist them as soon as possible against NATO. Already in May, 1994, the influential non-governmental Council for Foreign and Defence Policy issued its Strategy for Russia, mentioning NATO expansion as a major threat to the international position of Russia that could only be countered by post-Soviet integration, especially with Ukraine.[485] El'tsin, however, knew that Lukashenko's Belarus would be easier to cooperate with. In September, 1995, El'tsin even threatened the West that tactical nuclear warheads might be deployed in Belarus. This was an attempt to deter decision-makers in NATO from continuing with plans to enlarge eastwards and the threat was regularly reiterated although the process of enlargement continued.[486] Lukashenko agreed with El'tsin, due to alleged NATO plans to position nuclear weapons in Poland; in November, 1996, Lukashenko complained of double standards when the West demanded a non-nuclear Belarus, and he suggested that Russian and Belarusian military forces had to unite since only the latter could secure the western flank of Russia.[487] At the time, NATO enlargement into the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland was debated and before these states could be formally invited in July, 1999, by April plans had been announced for a joint Russo-Belarusian Air Force exercise that was specifically meant to prepare contingency plans related to the eastward movement of

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[484] L. Trilenko, "Sevastopol' otkryli," *Vremia MN*, 31.7.1998

[485] "Strategiia dlia Rossii (2)," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 27.5.1994

[486] Splidsboel-Hansen, p. 386

[487] A. Lukashenko, "Vystuplenie prezidenta Belorusi v Gosdume Rossii," *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 14.11.1996

NATO.[488] Ukraine would not participate in any Russian-dominated forces, but the Russo-Ukrainian Friendship Treaty signed in May nevertheless enabled closer relations between the two states and thus, as acknowledged by Iastrzhembskii, minimised any opportunities for NATO in Ukraine.[489] Russian nationalist parliamentarians were not satisfied, though; Zatulin and Migranian subsequently complained that the actions of their government were weakening the position of Russia: "The May [1997] agreements with NATO in Paris and with Ukraine in Kyiv constituted the largest strategic defeat for Russian foreign policy in recent years."[490] Yet this complaint seemingly overlooked the fact that the Russo-Ukrainian naval agreements, also signed in May, almost constituted a military alliance; a point not lost on Ukrainian parliamentarians, who feared that Ukraine now had to abandon neutrality and closer alliance with NATO, at least until Russia itself might participate in NATO.[491] With such an agreement in place, Lukashenko no longer needed to fear that Belarus might be encroached on by NATO and its allies. However, the border with Poland was still vulnerable and the Belarusian leader had increasingly constructed a Belarusian international image as a staunch ally of Russia. In October, 1997, his former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Sannikov ironically described Lukashenko's self-appointed role as "threatening to defend poor Russia from that monster," i.e. NATO.[492] The Russian government was happy to feed Lukashenko's apprehension. Thus, in December, 1997, Russian Defence Minister Igor' Sergeev denounced the destabilising effect of NATO expansion, which allegedly threatened

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[488] Bluth, p. 118

[489] Lo, *Russian*, p. 80

[490] Zatulin and Migranian, p. 2

[491] Y. Bilinsky, *Endgame in NATO's Enlargement: the Baltic States and Ukraine*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999, pp. 61, 62

[492] M. Balmaceda, "Myth and Reality in the Belarusian-Russian Relationship: what the West should know," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 46 (3), 1999, p. 7

Russian and Belarusian security.[493] Admittedly, the leaders of NATO did partly push Belarus

and Ukraine towards Russia, too. Notably, the 1999 bombings of Yugoslavia were deeply

unpopular in Belarusian and Ukrainian societies. Consequently, in March, 1999, the

Ukrainian parliament summoned up an unexpectedly large majority of 231 to 46

condemning NATO bombings in connection with the Kosovo crisis.[494] Subsequently, when

Belarusian forces in June, 1999, joined the West-99 military exercise, they joined the largest

post-Soviet Russian exercise ever, in what was a response to the recently concluded

bombardments by NATO in Yugoslavia. Unprecedentedly, manoeuvres included unified

Russian-Belarusian forces, which responded to attack from an "unspecified" military alliance

to the west.[495]

Nation: Insidious breezes

It was important for Belarusians and Ukrainians alike to remember, however, that Russians

might easily suspect their neighbours of secretly wanting to cooperate with NATO. The

background to Lukashenko's overt courting of Russia against NATO had been his short-lived

suggestion in April, 1995, of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in Central Europe, separating

Russia and NATO. Undoubtedly, Lukashenko wanted to ally with Russia, but some Russians

still worried this might be a ploy to ease NATO expansion.[496] Such worries were short-lived,

and NATO in general remained distrusted in Belarus. Although a couple of surveys taken in

Belarus in 1996 and 1998 showed an increase from 31% to 62% of respondents viewing

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[493] "Rasshirenie NATO i edinolichnoe liderstvo SShA ugrozhaiut Rossii," *Segodnia*, 20.12.1997

[494] B. Oliinyk, *Khto nastupnyi?*, Kyiv: Oriiany, 1999

[495] O. Antonenko, "Russia, NATO and European Security after Kosovo," *Survival*, 41 (4), 1999, p. 135

[496] Manzhola and Galaka, p. 116

NATO in a positive light,[497] most observations hardly supported this impression. Ukraine was a different matter. Although the Kuchma government mostly favoured Russia, in December, 1996, Oliinyk did say that parliamentarians favoured joining NATO as the most reliable guarantor of European security. More ominously, at an Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) summit Ukrainians supported a NATO expansion that Russia alone opposed.[498] The OSCE would not be able to truly influence NATO-expansion, and El'tsin knew this, thus refraining from overt criticism of the Ukrainian stance. In February, 1997, Russian Security Council Secretary Ivan Rybkin was less forgiving. Following debates in NATO concerning partnership with Ukraine, Rybkin essentially declared that a pre-emptive nuclear strike could be carried out against Ukraine if the latter joined NATO.[499] Rybkin did not receive any support for this stance from the government, yet his anger was mirrored in the Russian navy. In March, 1997, the Russian Black Sea Fleet commander, Admiral Kravchenko, stated: "...it is precisely the Pentagon that is this summer financing "Sea Breeze," the joint exercises of the navies of NATO and Ukraine. Doesn't this appear to be a repeat of the Anglo-French blockade of Sevastopol' in 1854?"[500] Worries that Ukraine might help NATO to occupy what was seen as essentially Russian soil on Crimea only grew in the context of Sea Breeze '97. Protests by governmental and non-governmental Russian actors alike could not halt the exercise and although Russians were allowed to participate in 1998, as mentioned above, they did so simply to keep an eye on the ships of Ukraine and NATO.[501] The Duma strongly opposed the exercises. In a statement from September, 1997: "...the

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[497] C. Haerpfer, C. Milosinski and C. Wallace, "Old and New Security Issues in Post-Communist Eastern Europe: results of an 11 nation study," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 51 (6), 1999, p. 1008

[498] O. Rudiuk, "Mosty ne lyshche spaliuiut', a i zakhopliuiut'," *Holos Ukraiiny*, 7.12.1996, p. 3

[499] M. Balmaceda, "Ukraine, Russia and European Security: thinking beyond NATO expansion," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 45 (1), 1998, p, p. 23

[500] N. Cherkashin, "Chernomorskii flot," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 5.3.1997

[501] Trilenko

State Duma considers the participation of Ukraine and Georgia, as well, in the NATO-exercise "Sea Breeze-97" on the Crimean soil that is sacred to any Russian as a highly unfriendly act toward Russia."[502] For now, the Russian executive did not view Ukrainian cooperation with NATO in such an unflattering light, yet Ukrainian ministers might bring such criticism on their state. In April, 1998, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Tarasiuk thus repeated that NATO was the only security structure capable of creating and ensuring long-lasting peace throughout Europe. The fact that he also pronounced the western alliance to be "good for everyone"[503] hardly calmed his Russian detractors. Officials in the Defence Ministry worried about Ukraine; unsurprisingly so, considering the military stance. In February, 1999, following the announcement that NATO would use testing grounds in western Ukraine, ministerial officials warned: "...the Ukrainian ground...can become the base of the North Atlantic Alliance, which is closest to Russia" even though "The wider Ukrainian public perceives the policy towards closer relations with NATO in a negative light."[504]

Forces of the Russian Federation in Belarus and Ukraine

Law: Naval agreements

As President from mid-1994 Kuchma was on the whole more pro-Russian than his predecessor and was not about to ignite a dispute to force Russian forces out. Nevertheless, the conflict in Chechnia from December, 1994, did place the Russian military in a poor light. Kuchma immediately advocated that troops from the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), not Russia, conducted post-Soviet peacekeeping; while

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[502] "Ob ucheniiakh 'Si Briz-97'," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 10.9.1997

[503] B. Tarasiuk and K. Kleiber, "Ukraiina-NATO," *Uriadovyi kurer*, 18.4.1998

[504] "Natovskie 'smotriny' Iavorovskogo poligona," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 13.2.1999

Ukrainian parliamentarians joined international condemnation of Russian activities in the Caucasus.[505] It was clear, nevertheless, that Ukrainian criticism had been mostly provoked by a belief that Russian forces had not lived up to required standards, not by inherent Ukrainian animosity towards Russia. Only half a year later, in June, 1995, El'tsin and Kuchma amicably discussed the idea of paying for the leasing by Russia of the Sevastopol' base of the Black Sea Fleet with the help of energy supplies and forgiveness of Ukrainian debt; an idea that was agreed to in principle.[506] The Belarusian government also accepted that Russian forces might remain in Belarus for years to come, but wanted the details formally agreed. In April, 1996, Defence Minister Leonid Maltsau thus argued that permitting Russian military bases in Belarus was legally complicated and might escalate tensions with Poland.[507] Such hesitation was meant to send a message to Russian elites, not that Russian bases would not be allowed, but that Russians should not take Belarusian compliance for given if turmoil resulted from the upcoming Russian presidential election. After El'tsin had been successfully re-elected, however, he was mostly willing to detail the provisions for the stationing of Russian forces in Belarus. Concerning Ukraine, with the agreement on the Black Sea Fleet from May, 1997, Russia formally acknowledged the right of Ukraine to the constant right of consultation regarding the stationing of the Russian Black Sea Fleet on Crimea: "In order to solve disputes concerning the interpretation and application of this Agreement a Joint commission shall be established…"[508] This naval treaty appeared to have regulated disagreement concerning the Black Sea Fleet once and for all.

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[505] I. Sokolovskaia, "Boi proigran na pole obshchestvennoi brani," *Izvestiia*, 24.12.1994, p. 4

[506] "Flot ostaetsia v Sevastopole," *Vestnik voennoi informatsii*, 1.7.1995; V. Kononenko, "S chem Boris El'tsin i Leonid Kuchma priekhali v Sochi," *Izvestiia*, 9.6.1995

[507] Paznyak, p. 166

[508] "Soglashenie mezhdu Rossiiskoi Federatsiei i Ukrainoi o statuse i usloviiakh prebyvaniia Chernomorskogo Flota Rossiiskoi Federatsii na territorii Ukrainy" in G. Berdennikov and A. Chalyi, eds., *Rossiia-Ukraina 1990-2000 (kniga 2)*, Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2001, p. 133

Power: Renting military bases and joint military infrastructure

Still, signing military treaties with Belarus and Ukraine hardly meant that the Russian military prepared to leave these states in the near future, for a presence outside Russia was required if El'tsin's great power ambitions in Eurasia were to prosper. In this context, the election of Lukashenko in the summer of 1994 was a boon for Russia. Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev immediately contacted the new President, who afterwards stated contentedly that he had "already spoken on the telephone with...Grachev, who expressed readiness for the closest possible joint activity within all aspects of [military] cooperation."[509] In Minsk, the subsequent Russian debacle in Chechnia was ignored, and in January, 1995, Russia and Belarus signed a 25-year leasing arrangement for the use by Russian troops of the Baranovichi and Vileika military facilities. All this was explained by the Belarusian government within the framework of integration.[510] Ukrainians did not go so far. However, by selling a number of intercontinental missiles and bombers to Russia in 1995, Kuchma's government potentially made it easier for Russian troops to operate within Ukraine and in close cooperation with Ukrainians if this eventually should become necessary.[511] The formalised integration of Russia and Belarus inaugurated in April, 1996, demonstrated to Ukraine the military benefits with which Russia might be able to provide its partners. Lukashenko was certainly pleased to be allied with Russia; by November, 1996, he had (unsuccessfully) offered Russia that their nuclear weapons could remain stationed in Belarus, and Lukashenko had also amended the agreement on the Russian lease of

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[509] V. Kovalev, "Belorusskii prezident sobiraetsia v Moskvu," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 28.7.1994

[510] "Stupeni ratnogo sotrudnichestva," *Vestnik voennoi informatsii*, 1.2.1995

[511] S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Free Press, 2002, p. 187

Belarusian military facilities from the previous year, so that Russia could now use the facilities free of charge.[512] Evidently, Lukashenko expected energy subsidisation and other boons in return, but he was satisfied with the Russian presence. Surprisingly, as military integration proved to be the only real success in Russo-Belarusian integration over the rest of the 1990s, even members of the liberal opposition in Russia joined the project. Former Russian Deputy Prime Minister, Boris Nemtsov, who had earlier been highly critical of any notion that Russia should strengthen its military presence abroad to the detriment of economic modernisation, conceded in January, 1999, that unification with Belarus would provide Russia with important geopolitical advantages.[513] That similar advantages would be even more significant in the case of Ukraine was highlighted a couple of months later, when the Black Sea Fleet reconnoitred in the Balkans contemplating disruptions of NATO bombardments in Yugoslavia. As a further consequence of these events, the above-mentioned West-99 exercise included use of the Fleet in the Balkans while the Caucasus, too, witnessed the Fleet conducting allegedly defensive manoeuvres nearby.[514] In the Russian Duma such manoeuvres provided a template for future naval activities. The Western bombardment of Yugoslavia in connection with the Kosovo crisis had provoked very strong reactions among Russian Communist and Liberal Democrat deputies, who had advocated use of the Black Sea Fleet to attack NATO, as well as the return of nuclear missiles to Belarus.[515] El'tsin had no intention of following this advice, but subsequently

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[512] V. Ermolin, "Aleksandr Lukashenko vystupil v Gosudarstvennoi Dume Rossii," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 14.11.1996; Abdelal, p. 114

[513] Ambrosio, *Challenging*, p. 105

[514] Deyermond, "State," p. 1193; also S. Novoprudskii, "Milliard tuda, milliard siuda," *Izvestiia*, 20.7.1999

[515] M. Iusin, "Rossiiskikh politikov zakhlestnuli emotsii," *Izvestiia*, 26.3.1999, p. 1; also G. Ziuganov, "Ostanovit' agressiiu," *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, 27.3.1999, p. 1

admitted that retaining military facilities in Belarus and, especially, for the Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine had helped project Russian influence abroad, increasing its international prestige.[516]

Nation: Retaining Sevastopol'

For the most part, Belarusian and Ukrainian opposition to a Russian military presence was muted during the 1990s and could normally be solved by Russian payments or subsidisation. Shushkevich had become a very vocal opponent to a Russian military presence in Belarus, yet this had partly been the reason why he had been ousted as Chairman of the Parliament in February, 1994.[517] In Ukraine, on the contrary, Kuchma partly continued objections previously advanced by the Kravchuk administration. As already mentioned, in December, 1994, Kuchma asked that international peacekeepers within Abkhazia in Georgia and Nagorno Karabakh in Azerbaijan should be from the CSCE, not from Russia or the CIS. In itself, this could be seen as a simple rebuke to Russia following the bloody clashes in Chechnia; Kuchma's signal to the Russian government that the Russian military should be reined in. However, Kuchma three years later, after a peace agreement had been struck in Chechnia, Kuchma repeated his support for OSCE peacekeepers in the post-Soviet region.[518] Such peacekeepers would not necessarily oppose Russia, but their presence might make it more difficult for Russia to defend Russians abroad with military means, as Kozyrev had warned in April, 1995.[519] Certainly, Kozyrev's threat had been vague, and he never suggested Russian forces should attack Ukrainians or Belarusians. Nevertheless, for Ukrainians the damage had been done and by October, 1996, the Ukrainian government

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[516] Yeltsin, p. 244

[517] Kuzio, *Ukrainian*, p. 80; V. Kovalev, "Spiker Ushel! Da zdravstvuet spiker!" *Krasnaia zvezda*, 1.2.1994

[518] Kuzio, "Promoting," p. 35

[519] K. Eggert and M. Iusin, "Kozyrev stanovitsia 'silovym' ministrom," *Izvestiia*, 10.4.1995

asked troops from Russia to leave shortly. Russia would only be allowed to rent facilities at

Sevastopol' for five years, which was allegedly sufficient time to construct a replacement

base in Novorossiisk. The Russian government, though, demanded a lease of 99 years, as

well as the use of bases in Feodosia and Kerch.[520] Then, in November, 1996, the commander

of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, Admiral Kravchenko, stated that: "...on May 29 this

year...B.N. El'tsin presented the commander of the Black Sea Fleet with the following task:

'Do not surrender anything in Sevastopol'.'"[521] Even if this was untrue, Kravchenko's threat

was obvious. The naval treaties and the Friendship Treaty from May, 1997, defused the

situation before Kravchenko could garner support in the Russian government. Yet, the

following years would show an increasing amount of ambiguity in these treaties, not least in

relation to Russian payments for the lease. This suddenly became an issue in Belarus, too.

By April, 1998, the Belarusian government claimed that Russia pay $400 million per annum

to site air defence systems there. Lukashenko did not hide the fact that the demands only

appeared in response to what were perceived to be unfair Russian demands that Belarus

began to pay off its substantial, and increasing, energy debts.[522] Retaliation indicated that

the dispute could be solved, but Lukashenko was hardly proving a model partner for Russia.

In the meantime, Russia was having no success extending its lease on Crimea. Despite

Russians repeatedly stressing that they expected the 1997 treaties to be extended, in

February, 1999, Kuchma's presidential aide Oleg Soskin once and for all confirmed that

Ukraine had no interest in an expansion of the Russian presence on Crimea, and that Russia

was still expected to have removed all Russian troops from the peninsula by 2017 as

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[520] "Kuchma pobedil El'tsina," *Argumenty i fakty*, 30.10.1996; Bukkvoll, *Ukraine*, p. 68

[521] "Moskva i Kiev nikak ne dogovoriatsia," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 14.11.1996

[522] V. Paznyak, "The Customs Union of Five and the Russia-Belarus Union" in R. Dwan and O. Pavliuk, eds., *Building Security in the New States of Eurasia*, Armonk, NY, and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2000, p. 72

previously agreed.[523] It was not so much that Kuchma feared that El'tsin might unfairly exploit the naval bases to put pressure on Ukraine, but that Moscow might lose control with its badly paid, badly disciplined troops. To underline this danger, during the same year three Russians tried to smuggle 20 kilograms of processed natural uranium to the West through Ukraine. Even though complicity by Russian military personnel stationed in Ukraine was not proven, such smuggling indicated the danger that rogue military elements could create.[524]

Conclusion

Between 1993 and 1999, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian military sovereignty. In matters concerning Belarusian and Ukrainian military forces, Russian subsidisation of Belarusian forces constituted a central part of the Union budget, while even Ukraine joined a Russian-led air defence agreement. El'tsin's ombudsman Mironov ignored Belarusian human rights violations in favour of Belarusian military assets, which Karaganov's think-tank had previously praised. Russian rhetoric emphasised the benefits of integration for "regional security," and claimed an inevitable "moving along the path" towards military unification. In matters concerning NATO, Russians and Belarusians agreed to oppose the continued existence and expansion of the organisation. When completed in 1999, NATO enlargement was answered with Russo-Belarusian air force exercises, and the Western bombings of Yugoslavia in March, 1999, motivated Russo-Belarusian exercises in the summer against an "unspecified" aggressor from the west. Already in 1995, El'tsin had threatened deployment of nuclear missiles in Belarus in answer to NATO enlargement, and Sergeev, too, later

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[523] Molchanov, p. 269

[524] K. Gonzales, "Good Fences Make Good Neighbors: Ukrainian border security and Western assistance," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 51 (1), 2004, p. 49

highlighted NATO as a threat to Russia and Belarus, alike. Finally, in matters concerning Russian forces stationed in Belarus and Ukraine, the Russian military was given long basing leases for free in Belarus, and also retained a twenty-year lease for the Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine. Russia was even able to use its Ukrainian Fleet bases to conduct reconnaissance in the Balkans during the NATO bombardment there. El'tsin could consequently say that acquiring the Fleet and its base on Crimea would enhance Russian prestige as a great power, to which even liberal Russian Nemtsov had to agree.

The paradigm of Law continued to have some influence on Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian military sovereignty. Russians were willing to trade the return of Belarusian and Ukrainian nuclear weapons for security guarantees not only from Russia, but from the USA, too, thus formally allowing outsiders to become involved in post-Soviet affairs. Concerning NATO, Russians highly opposed NATO-Ukraine exercises in 1997, but in 1998 Russians believed in Ukrainians' non-aggressive intentions to the extent that Russian vessels participated in repeated naval exercises. In return, Ukrainians showed some consideration for Russian concerns regarding NATO and denounced nuclear weapons being placed in former Socialist states. Finally, Russians did consult Kyiv on the bases Russian troops leased in and near Sevastopol', and, importantly, such consultation was promised for the future, too. Regarding the Black Sea Fleet it should also be noted that Russia was prepared to pay Ukrainians quite well for the basing lease, albeit primarily in forgiveness of debt.

The paradigm of Nation remained the least important one, although its influence grew, particularly relating to Ukraine. In the 1997 naval treaties Ukraine lost not just most of the

Fleet, but the useful naval mooring places, too. Russian military elites partly ensured this to prevent Ukrainian ships from letting NATO-vessels moor permanently on the peninsula, just as Russian vessels partly participated in the Ukraine-NATO exercises of 1998 to spy on enemies. Finally, indications existed that Russia was not going to leave Sevastopol' when the 20-year basing lease expired; indeed, increasingly Russians stressed that Sevastopol', being rightfully theirs, would never be abandoned.

Constructing economic sovereignty

Economies of Belarus and Ukraine

Law: Solid foundations for trade

Previously, the Russian government had sought to terminate some of its subsidies for the Belarusian economy. This policy partly continued during 1994. Although by this time a worryingly vague Russo-Belarusian Agreement on Monetary Union without a timetable had been agreed, in April former Prime Minister Egor' Gaidar and Finance Minister Boris Fedorov both resigned in protest. This was a notable sign of dissatisfaction with the dependent Belarusian economy, and even Chernomyrdin subsequently voiced economic concerns to Lukashenko during that summer.[525] Furthermore, in June the Russian government welcomed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Ukraine, indicating that the economic problems of Ukraine, and other post-Soviet states, should in future be dealt with by the EU, with which Russia also signed an agreement.[526] The new

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[525] Markus, p. 56; V. Ermolin, "V Gosdume krepnut dobrye chuvstva – k pravitel'stvu i prezidentu," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 2.4.1994

[526] M. Smith and G. Timmins, "Russia, NATO and the EU in an Era of Enlargement: vulnerability or opportunity?" in A. Dawson and R. Fawn, eds., *The Changing Geopolitics of Eastern Europe*, London: Frank Cass, 2002, p. 81

Belarusian and Ukrainian Presidents would happily tie their economies closer to the EU. In November, 1995, Lukashenko renounced the possibility of monetary union and other integration with the Russian economy. Instead, he claimed that Belarus and Russia were by now simply seeking to establish a payments union similar to that existing within the EU.[527] Many Ukrainians were similarly anxious to diminish their economic dependence on Russia, since the Russian government had repeatedly used this dependence to receive Ukrainian concessions on military and other issues. Partly, this problem was solved for Ukraine through the May, 1997, Friendship Treaty and the treaties concerning the Black Sea Fleet.[528] Subsequently, this foundation was used to pave way for the basic trade agreement that appeared the following year. It seemed, on the other hand, that the Russian government were somewhat reluctant to lose their economic levers on neighbouring states. Maybe, though, a new generation of Russian politicians would accept that the economies of Belarus and Ukraine could not be salvaged by Russia, particularly after the economic crash of August, 1998. Indeed, in July, 1999, prominent opposition politician Grigorii Iavlinskii openly denounced the idea of a Russo-Belarusian union as a "thoughtless political adventure" and was convinced that: "Political integration cannot leave the economic [aspects] behind,"[529] fearing that Russia could simply not afford integration with its neighbour.

Power: Unifying economic systems and drop in production

On the contrary, though, Belarus could hardly afford not integrating its economy with that of Russia, since the Belarusian economy remained relatively unreformed during the 1990s.

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[527] Paznyak, p. 168

[528] "Dogovor o druzhbe"; "Soglashenie mezhdu Rossiiskoi"; "Soglashenie mezhdu pravitel'stvom Rossiiskoi Federatsii i pravitel'stvom Ukrainy o vzaimoraschetakh"

[529] S. Mulin, "'SoBeRus'' ostavlen na osen'," *Segodnia*, 10.7.1999, p. 2

As I mentioned above, in April, 1994, members of the Russian government resigned in protest when the Russian and Belarusian Prime Ministers Chernomyrdin and Kebich signed a treaty unifying the economic and monetary systems of their states.[530] By now, the standard of living was already higher in Russia than in Belarus and Ukraine[531] and this tendency would only increase, thereby undermining one of the most potent arguments for Belarusian and Ukrainian independence. El'tsin knew this, and in February, 1995, argued that the construction of joint enterprises between Russia and Belarus would be a major step on the way to eventual reunification of the two states, and would in the meantime diminish the rise in food prices in Belarus.[532] The leadership of Ukraine could not afford ignoring integration, since their economy, as already indicated, was dependent on Russia, too. By early 1996, Kuchma even had to worry about the defence industry that had traditionally constituted one of their prime assets, but which remained 80% dependent on the supply of Russian components.[533] El'tsin's government worked to provide benefits for Belarus that would entice Ukrainians, too. This was the motive, in December, 1996, when Russian Minister for CIS Affairs Aman Tuleev discussed the need for a single budget and taxation system with Belarus.[534] Then, by May, 1997, the president of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs pointed out that the Ukrainian economy had been relatively reliant on Russia during 1996: the share of Ukraine in the foreign trade turnover of Russia was 13%, but the share of Russia in that of Ukraine was 47%.[535] Decision-makers in

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[530] M. Berger, "Belorussiia obmeniala chast' svoego suvereniteta na rossiiskie rubli," *Izvestiia*, 14.4.1994

[531] V. Nebogenko, "Sotsialna naprugenist," *Viche*, 11, 1994, p. 36

[532] "Yeltsin, Lukashenka Sum up Results (Moscow Radio 22.2.1995)" in Z. Brzezinski and P. Sullivan, eds., *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States: documents, data, and analysis*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997, p. 314

[533] Perepelitsa, p. 132

[534] Ibid

[535] O. Smolansky, "Fuel, Credit and Trade: Ukraine's economic dependence on Russia," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 46 (2), 1999, p. 50

Moscow, Minsk and Kyiv easily began to draw favourable parallels with Soviet economic

centralisation. Market patterns reinforced the impression. By 1997, Russia was buying over

90% of high value-added Ukrainian goods; consequently, when Russian interest slowed

down Ukraine witnessed a 97-99% drop in the production of industrial machines with digital

control systems, televisions, tape recorders, excavators, cars and trucks.[536] Under such

circumstances, the Ukrainian and Belarusian economies could not allow other post-Soviet

states to gain much Russian attention. Lukashenko was particularly jealous at a CIS summit

in 1997: "Many people cannot help but notice that Aleksandr Lukashenko is jealous of his

colleague from Kazakhstan's project [for economic integration]...If you add to this the

Belarusian President's ambition to be the 'prime integrator'..."[537] El'tsin and his ministers

were, self-evidently, pleased to be the object of such competition. In February, 1998,

Belarusians were lured even closer when El'tsin decreed that an expert coordinating council

of Justice Ministry representatives from Russia and Belarus should be set up with a view to

legal unification on tax and customs provision.[538] Unification would be a cornerstone in the

provision of funds to the Belarusian economy, and from Ukraine Kuchma wanted to be part

of the development, too. In April, 1998, after Russia seemed to have weathered a

burgeoning economic crisis, Kuchma sent an open letter to El'tsin: "[The economy] is the

most basic foundation. If we arrange cooperation...based on equality and equal gains in this

sphere, we can take an important step in the direction of extracting our economies from the

crisis."[539] Later that year the Russian economic collapse prevented any sort of integration

with the Belarusian and Ukrainian economies for the time being. This delay was hardly the

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[536] Molchanov, p. 236

[537] G. Alimov, "Nursultan Nazarbaev predlozhil kollegam idti navstrechu prostym liudiam," *Izvestiia*, 24.1.1998, pp. 1, 3

[538] Ambrosio, *Challenging*, p. 107

[539] G. Alimov, "SNG predstoit svoia perestroika," *Izvestiia*, 9.4.1998

fault of the Russian executive; nevertheless, the Communist parliamentary faction blamed the government for not having already completed economic integration. In September, 1999, Oleg Stepanenko even argued that Russian leaders had operated under Western diktat when repeatedly refusing monetary union with Belarus; a sign of unpatriotic, fifth-column activity.[540]

Nation: Tax war and opposed deliveries

Stepanenko might also have accused some Belarusians and Ukrainians for the imperfect economic integration that had taken place. Until late 1993 Belarusians had hardly ever felt the need to defend their economy from Russia. In the run-up to the 1994 presidential election, though, the Belarusian parliamentary opposition claimed that Belarusian economic sovereignty was being undermined by foreign, meaning Russian, intelligence services, a charge which was repeated at the end of the year in a formal, written statement.[541] In the Russian government, such accusations were disliked, but a more substantial worry seemed to be Lukashenko's tireless attempts to gain Russian subsidies, despite periodic rhetoric to the contrary. In 1995, Chernomyrdin notably rejected the idea of monetary union between Russia and Belarus, complaining that Belarus was using its status as partner with Russia to circumvent the need for radical economic changes.[542] At least Belarusians did not actively seek to damage the Russian economy, though. Mostly, Ukrainians did not do so, either, although in 1996 an acrimonious tax war broke out, instigated by the Ukrainian government, which began making exports to Russia tax-free, while VAT was imposed on imports from Russia. El'tsin's government in return placed a 20% VAT on Ukrainian goods

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[540] Hopf, *Social*, p. 229

[541] Zaprudnik and Urban, pp. 294, 295

[542] Balmaceda, "Myth," p. 8

and imposing an import quota on sugar, which was vital for any Ukrainian economic revival.[543] This dispute was relatively quickly solved, yet before that had happened many Ukrainians had taken the opportunity to blame the Russian leadership for provoking the dispute.[544] The economic policies of the two states might also conflict outside the region. In March, 1997, Russia had acquired some economic links with India, whereas Ukraine had promised to sell Soviet-designed tanks to the primary regional rival of India, Pakistan, for a considerable profit. Since the military balance in South Asia was fragile at the time, the Indian government put pressure on El'tsin to prevent the sale to Ukraine of key Russian-made components for the tanks, and El'tsin acquiesced.[545] A parallel situation appeared in Russo-Belarusian relations three months later, when Belarusian elites reportedly grabbed an export contract for MiG-29 jet airplanes to Peru. This inflicted a serious economic blow to the already ailing Russian defence industry, which, in turn, refused to sell necessary spare parts for the aged airplanes.[546] Yet although these examples did challenge the image of increased economic integration between the states, the behaviour of the post-Soviet leaders did not go beyond what might be seen as normal economic competition, which would not do long-term damage. Indeed, already in October, 1997, managed to deliver its tanks to Pakistan, while Russian anti-tank weapons, such as KA-50 Black Shark helicopters, became attractive for India.[547] More ominously, though, the Ukrainian military-industrial complex sought to get back at Russia by increasing cooperation with NATO. By December, 1997, the elite began to explore how the existing Partnership for Peace agreement between

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[543] A. Minchenko and V. Maksimov, "Obshchii rynok luchshe torgovoi voiny," *Ekonomika i zhizn'*, 12.10.1996

[544] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, p. 257

[545] "Rossiia blokiruet ukrainskuiu sdelku po prodazhe tankov," *Logos press*, 15.3.1997

[546] V. Kozlovskii, "Deshevo khorosho ne byvaet – glasit peruanskaia mudrost'," *Segodnia*, 5.6.1997

[547] B. Vinogradov, "Moskva i Deli krepiat 'bratstvo po oruzhiiu,'" *Izvestiia*, 8.10.1997

Ukraine and NATO could form the basis for Ukrainian exports to the Western alliance.[548]

Even if this effort was fruitless, a warning had been sent to Russia. Russo-Belarusian disputes became a little more personal, too, when Russian Deputy Prime Minister Nemtsov in September, 1997, accused Lukashenko of using economic cooperation with Russia as a political game. Allegedly, integration was mooted, but juridical, administrative and economic obstacles were presented whenever the Belarusian economy had received requested benefits without committing to integration.[549] Following Nemtsov and other liberals' ouster from government, they continued their attacks on Lukashenko from the opposition. By January, 1999, they argued that the state-run Belarusian economy would burden the Russian economy and give the authoritarian Lukashenko undue influence in Moscow,[550] something that could damage the Russian state economically.

Energy

Law: Payments and lower consumption

During the early 1990s attempts to lower dependence on Russian energy had been much more prominent in Ukraine than in Belarus. This did not mean that no Belarusians thought it a good idea, but even before Lukashenko's presidency the Belarusian National Front, which advocated market reforms to increase Belarusian energy efficiency, held only 9% of parliamentary seats.[551] Not that some Russian elites would not have welcomed a responsible Belarusian industry. In July, 1997, Russian commentators pointed out that Gazprom was under pressure to contribute to the Russian state budget and thus could not

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[548] "Cherez NATO na Evropeiskii rynok?" *Holos Ukrainy*, 11.12.1997

[549] Ibid

[550] E. Ermolenko, "Soiuz sovetskikh sotsialisticheskikh illiuzii," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 13.1.1999

[551] Wilson and Rontoyanni, p. 43

long afford Belarusian and Ukrainian refusals to pay energy debts.[552] There was little hope

that Belarus would begin doing so, even though continued economic crisis and

corresponding decreased production, did have the unintentional effect of Belarusian oil

consumption falling by 50% during the 1990s.[553] In Ukraine, however, in January, 1998,

Prime Minister Valerii Pustovoitenko did insist that: "We must develop our own oil and gas

industry...The other possibility is to diversify the sources of energy delivery...During one of

the very next meetings of the government we will look at the possibility of cooperation with

Azerbaijan."[554] The problem was that Pustovoitenko's words were not followed by action;

indeed, theft of Russian transit gas increased in Ukraine. Remarkably, however, Gazprom

tried to solve the problem through international law, even though cruder pressure could

easily have been used against Ukraine. In November, 1998, the Russian company thus

signed an insurance policy covering deliveries through Ukraine. Following continued thefts,

the insurance company filed suit in the International Commercial Arbitration Court, which

ordered Ukraine to pay all costs or suffer legal confiscation of assets abroad.[555]

Power: Dominating energy needs and energy-intensive economies

This episode did, nevertheless, prove to something of anomaly during the 1990s, with

energy cooperation increasing. As Prime Minister Kebich explained the situation in April,

1994, before losing the presidential election to Lukashenko, it was rational for Belarusians

to agree to Russian terms, since Russia remained the only source to satisfy Belarusian

energy needs.[556] Russian leaders for their part wanted to keep Belarusians satisfied as an

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[552] "Iazyk ul'timatumov dovel do Kieva," *Novaia gazeta*, 28.7.1997, p. 3

[553] Abdelal, pp. 114, 115

[554] L. Ostrolutskaia, "Obzhigat'sia vovse neobiazatel'no," *Obshchaia gazeta*, 29.1.1998

[555] Balmaceda, "Gas," p. 275

[556] O. Stepanenko, "Viacheslav Kebich," *Pravda*, 29.4.1994

example to the less loyal Ukrainians. In February, 1996, Russia thus wrote off $300 million of

Belarusian energy debts in return for military favours, and furthermore wrote off $470

million, which had become accrued since 1992. Subsequently, the even larger sum of $1

billion of Belarusian debts was written off.[557] Perhaps Russia did not have to be quite so

generous, though, for Belarus did not have other potential providers. By January, 1997,

Ukraine, too, continued to import 90% of its oil and 60% of its natural gas from Russia,

which it owed almost $9 billion, according to official, Ukrainian estimates. $900 million of

this debt was due to Gazprom the following year in March.[558] Yet the majority of the Russian

political and economic elites continued to accept Ukrainian energy debts. By June, 1997,

despite repeated restructuring and forgiveness, these debts to Russia and Turkmenistan still

constituted over $2 billion.[559] What was most interesting was that leniency on these debts

was provided as much from Gazprom as from the Russian state, if not more so. During 1997,

Gazprom even continued shipping low-price gas to Belarus, while Russian non-paying

customers were cut off,[560] a policy that hardly had the official support of the Kremlin. By

February, 1998, Belarus still depended on Russia for about 90% of its energy. Furthermore,

Belarus was often reduced to pay through barter for energy deliveries; barter accounted for

half the amount of the total commodity turnover between the states;[561] something

increasingly untenable in a post-Soviet world. Russian companies wanted the barter to be

gradually reduced, and instead they wanted to take over Belarusian and Ukrainian energy

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[557] I. Selivanova, "Ekonomicheskaia integratsiia Rossii i Belorussii i ee vlianie na razvitie narodnogo khoziaistva Belorussii" in D. Furman, ed., *Belorussiia i Rossiia*, Moscow: Prava cheloveka, 1998, pp. 320, 321

[558] Puglisi, p. 829

[559] V. Panov, "Golovolomka dlia pana Lazarenko v bylye gody v ukrainskikh selakh, ekonomia spichki, gazovye gorelkina noch' ne vykliuchali," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 19.6.1997

[560] K. Yafimava, *Post-Soviet Russian-Belarussian Relationships: the role of gas transit pipelines*, Stuttgart: ibidem, 2007, p. 44

[561] Balmaceda, "Myth," p. 9

infrastructure. This was potentially popular among locals, since Russian companies could insert a large amount of capital in this infrastructure, at the same time as Belarusian and Ukrainian companies during the 1990s remained highly inefficient, being nine to twelve times more energy-intensive than their Western counterparts.[562] By April, 1998, Iukos and Lukoil were competing for the Lisichansk and Odesa oil refineries, while in October that year Gazprom aimed for gas fields in the Carpathians, together with compression plants and gas pipelines.[563] However, the Russian economic crisis had in the meantime prevented this and similar acquisitions from being carried out. Despite the precarious state of the Russian economy, though, in 1999 agreements on energy subsidisation were renewed. Now, Belarusian firms only paid the low Russian domestic gas price, resulting in a reduction from $40 to $30 per 1,000 cubic metres, while the opening of the Iamal pipeline ensured Belarus a place at the centre of Russian energy exports.[564] This was expensive for Gazprom and other companies, but Russian economic elites understood that lower immediate profits might entail increased contacts with Belarusian and Ukrainian elites, and increased success for long-term integration initiatives, including a customs union that might eventually facilitate the operations of Russian firms in these states.[565]

Nation: Excise duties and energy theft

Such relatively amicable Russian-led cooperation was not necessarily a given, though, but depended on who was in charge in Minsk and Kyiv. By March, 1994, Kravchuk had adopted a strongly critical stance towards Russia on most issues in preparation for the Ukrainian

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[562] Wilson and Rontoyanni, p. 33

[563] Puglisi, p. 832; "Dolg neftegazovykh predpriiatii gosbiudzhety vozros," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 29.10.1998, p. 5

[564] Götz, p. 166

[565] Stowe, p. 55

presidential election. For instance, the President signed a pipeline agreement with Turkey to transport Middle Eastern oil to Europe by ship to Odesa, close by the European pipeline system[566] and circumventing Russia completely. When Kravchuk subsequently lost his position nothing came of these plans, but other Ukrainians might follow them in future. In Belarus, too, Parliamentary Speaker Miacheslav Hryb in July, 1994, complained that Russia was charging Belarus oil prices at $80 a ton, opposed to $40 a ton for Russian consumers.[567] These charges were lowered when Lukashenko became President, but if he had been removed Russian energy companies would have been ready to squeeze Belarus again. Conversely, from opposition the Belarusian National Front advocated using control over transit pipelines to strengthen its bargaining power versus Russia.[568] With this party in power, Russian hopes of acquiring Belarusian energy infrastructure would decrease. While this risk was limited, however, the Russian government wanted to bind the energy sector of Ukraine closer to Russia; and through force if necessary. In 1995, Russia imposed excise duties on gas and oil exports to Ukraine, forcing the latter to pay above-market prices. The Russian government asserted that the duties would remain until Ukraine joined the customs union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan,[569] preventing potential energy cooperation with third parties. Throughout the year, El'tsin furthermore constantly used Ukrainian energy debts to pressure the Kyiv elite on a number of non-economic issues, notably concerning the division of Soviet military assets.[570] As his attention was drawn to the presidential election the following year, El'tsin increasingly let his government do the work. In August,

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[566] S. Tikhii, "Chernoe zoloto iz-za moria Chernogo," *Moskovskie novosti*, 5.2.1995

[567] "Parliamentary Speaker Views Integration with Russia (Viktor Kuklov, ITAR-TASS, 29.7.1994)" in Z. Brzezinski and P. Sullivan, eds., *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States: documents, data, and analysis*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997, p. 303

[568] Balmaceda, "Gas," p. 280

[569] Bugajski, pp. 85, 86

[570] M. Berger, "Politicheskie razborki mezhdu Rossiei i Ukrainoi udariat po ekonomike oboikh gosudarstv," *Izvestiia*, 21.4.1995

1996, it threatened to curtail the supply of fuel to Ukrainian power plants because of alleged

non-payments of supplies already provided during the year,[571] ensuring that not even

nuclear power offered a way out of dependency for Ukraine. At this time Ukraine continued

to receive subsidised Russian energy, but the threats might be carried through one day. Yet

when Kuchma's government alleviated dependency through non-Russian resources,

Russians protested. Thus, in April, 1997, as a minimum of oil arrived in Ukraine from

Azerbaijan via Georgia,[572] commentators decried it as uneconomical and politically

incorrect, fearing the weakened impact of Russia relative to other Black Sea states and the

Middle East.[573] Russian energy companies repeated the pattern. In February, 1998, the

director of Gazprom Rem Viakhirev reminded the Ukrainian government that total gas

indebtedness as of 1997 stood at $1.2 billion. Pustovoitenko, however, disagreed,

eventually promising to pay only $750 million.[574] Russian analysts could complain with some

justification that Pustovoitenko was ungrateful for Russian willingness to extend energy

credits to Ukraine, in which theft of Russian energy destined for Central and Western

Europe was also galling: "The problem of the gas debts...has obtained a new

dimension...due to the huge amount of current indebtedness, which in 1997 has exceeded

one billion dollars... there are no real guarantees that Ukraine in future shall not be allowed

to conduct outright theft of gas..."[575] And indeed, Ukrainian authorities did offset debts

through such thefts. By 1998, almost $5 million worth of gas was being pumped out daily in

Ukraine without Russian authorisation, translating into $180 million in Russian losses during

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[571] Smolansky, "Fuel," p. 55

[572] S. Abbasov, "Ukraina ser'ezno interesuetsia Azerbaidzhanskoi neft'iu," *Zerkalo*, 26.4.1997

[573] Smolansky, "Fuel," p. 53

[574] N. Gotova, "Chem zaplatit za gaz Ukraina?" *Moskovskii komsomolets*, 7.3.1998; D. Kuznets, "'Gazprom' soglasilsia s Ukrainoi," *Russkii telegraf*, 7.3.1998

[575] A. Moshes, "Novaia staraia Ukraina i politika Rossii," *NG Sodruzhestvo*, 24.6.1998

January and February, alone.[576] If Russians decided to do something about this in future, a major dispute might break out.

Economic actors of the Russian Federation in Belarus and Ukraine

Law: Market needs

During the early 1990s Belarusians and Ukrainians were perhaps keener on Western than on Russian investments. Indeed, until 1994, Russian companies had hardly been able to expand abroad. In five years, GDP had fallen by half, a development as poor as that of Ukraine and worse than seen in Belarus,[577] where companies retained some ability and interest to remain separate from their Russian counterparts and to seek foreign investments elsewhere. Certainly, Russian companies had many advantages in capital and equipment over Belarusian companies, but the latter increasingly benefitted from having a cheaper labour force, as a Russian commentator noted following the signing of the Russo-Belarusian Union Treaty of April, 1997: "The suggestion [in the Treaty] to 'introduce unified standards for social security' can become the basis for assistance to Belarus by Russia: the average salary in Russia calculated in dollars is much higher."[578] Still, ordinary Russians benefitted from access to the Belarusian economy. In 1998 and 1999, more than three times as many Russians migrated to Belarus than Belarusians to Russia. The regime in Minsk could point to some immediate attractions for Russian economic actors following the economic collapse in Russia in August, 1998.[579] As for Ukraine, resistance to Russian investments generally originated within the host state, the politicians of which claimed to defend Ukrainian

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[576] Molchanov, p. 238

[577] L. Metcalf, "The (Re)Emergence of Regional Economic Integration in the Former Soviet Union," *Political Research Quarterly*, 50 (3), 1997, p. 533

[578] O. Latsis, "My ne znaem, v kakom gosudarstve prosnemsia 3 aprelia," *Izvestiia*, 29.3.1997, p. 2

[579] Ioffe, "Understanding Belarus economy," p. 92

economic sovereignty. Often this defence was rhetorical only, but in December, 1999, Kuchma did state categorically that Ukraine would not join a Russia-Belarus economic union, which, he predicted, would prove harmful for Russian actors.[580] This warning was not ignored in Russia; in his memoirs the following year El'tsin did admit that economic involvement of Russian companies in Belarus might not be beneficial for Russia, while the Belarusian economy remained dependent on outside assistance.[581] If El'tsin's opinion was more widely shared in Russia, Russian investments might therefore still have a reforming influence in Belarus.

Power: Common procurement orders and programme of economic cooperation

Yet, El'tsin had not seemed that dissatisfied with the possibilities for Russian investments in Belarus and Ukraine during the 1990s. Already in October, 1994, he emphasised that establishing the Interstate Economic Committee within the CIS was one of the few uniformly approved acts by the member-states. He even added that the Ukrainian view of integration, of Russian influence in Ukraine, was apparently accepted there, since Kuchma had raised no objections.[582] El'tsin was probably exaggerating how accommodating Ukrainians were, unlike in Belarus where not only Lukashenko, but 80% of the population in a May, 1995, referendum supported increased Russian economic influence in Belarus through integration.[583] Yet by April, 1996, Ukrainian Prime Minister Evhen Marchuk signed the CIS economic integration plan for 1996-97, allowing for easier access for Russian companies

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[580] "Ukraina zaiavila – v litse prezidenta Leonida Kuchmy – o tom, chto ne namerena prisoediniat'sia k soiuzu Rossii i Belorussii," *Ekonomicheskie novosti*, 9.12.1999

[581] Yeltsin, p. 242

[582] V. Portnikov, "Sozdan mezhgosudarstvennyi ekonomicheskii komitet," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 22.10.1994, p. 1

[583] Markus, p. 57

within Ukraine,[584] in a step involving Ukraine in Russian-led multilateral cooperation to a higher degree than at any point since the Soviet collapse. The Council for Foreign and Defence Policy in Russia, including members of the Presidential Council Oleg Kiselev and Sergei Karaganov, wanted to use the momentum and in May maintained that Russia should try getting unlimited access to the market of goods, services and capital of Ukraine.[585] The Council was perhaps not capable of having much effect on investments, and following an exhausting election and health problems neither was El'tsin. However, El'tsin had now gained important domestic allies in the so-called "oligarchs," a group of wealthy businesspeople led by Boris Berezovskii. Russian commentators hoped that these highly successful actors could further the long-expected economic reintegration with Ukraine by taking advantage of the beginning privatisation there.[586] Such optimism was well-founded, judged by the widespread interest in the Ukrainian market that not only Berezovskii, but many of his competitors and colleagues, too, showed during the late 1990s. Whereas Berezovskii mainly pursued his media interests, Vladimir Potanin sought aluminium production, while others went for Ukrainian banks that were established with Russian capital.[587] Belarusian companies were still less sought by Russian investors, since the Belarusian government, despite rhetoric to the contrary, were prone to economic protectionism. Nevertheless, Belarus had few other places to turn for its imports than Russia. It was dependent on Russia for more than half of imports throughout its independent existence until 1998 and imported slightly more towards the end of the 1990s

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[584] Molchanov, p. 266; also S. Maksimov, "Vremia sobirat' kamni," *Ekonomika i zhizn'*, 13.4.1996

[585] V. Tolz, "Rethinking Russian-Ukrainian Relations: a new trend in nation-building in post-Communist Russia?" *Nations and Nationalism*, 8 (2), 2002, p. 240

[586] Puglisi, p. 831

[587] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, p. 269

compared to what it had done half a decade earlier.[588] The military industry was successfully integrated. The May, 1997, Charter of the Russo-Belarusian Union framed the planning and placing of defence procurement orders, creating a common technical service system for the armed forces: "Within the sphere of ensuring security the tasks of the Union include...development and investment in a joint defence order..."[589] Ukraine could use that, too. In February, 1998, Russia and Ukraine signed a ten-year agreement on economic cooperation, according to which Ukrainian privatisation was opened to Russian companies. Apart from the energy sector, defence-industrial related areas of cooperation were highlighted.[590] El'tsin noted how Russian investments in Ukraine would be beneficial for both economies: "...the signed agreement is an event of unparalleled importance both for Russia and for Ukraine....as a result of the implementation of the agreement, bilateral trade between the countries will be doubled."[591] Certainly, Russia still provided half of all Ukrainian imports. Even L'viv region in the west retained Russia as the trade partner for 41% of all accounts.[592] Tellingly, even in the midst of the 1998 Russian economic crisis, neighbouring Ivano-Frankivs'k reported 67% import dependence on Russia.[593] Berezovskii was convinced that a bit of help from the Ukrainian government could make him dominant in the Ukrainian economy, which again would increase his influence in Russia. In 1999, Berezovskii promised $150 million to Ukrainian politicians in return for favours that would help him to privatise the Ukrainian natural gas transport system, thus gaining influence over

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[588] Abdelal, p. 114

[589] "Ustav Soiuza"

[590] "Programma ekonomicheskogo sotrudnichestva mezhdu Rossiiskoi Federatsii i Ukrainoi na 1998-2007 gody," *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, 4, 1998, p. 41

[591] E. Tesemnikova and V. Timoshenko, "Khotia Rossiia i uzhestochila svoiu pozitsiiu, vizit prezidenta Ukrainy v Moskvu ne snial ni odnoi ostroi problemy v rossiisko-ukrainskikh otnosheniiakh," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 28.2.1998

[592] Molchanov, p. 235

[593] Ibid

Gazprom, gain access to Ukrainian media and telecommunications that could voice his case in Russia, as well as the Zaporizhzhia Aluminium Combine.[594]

Nation: Customs barriers

Apparently, Ukrainian and Belarusian markets were well prepared for Russian investments. However, Russian actors had a history of putting slightly too much pressure on the neighbouring states. In April, 1994, El'tsin declared that a main task of the Russian security services was ensuring Russia free access to the markets of other states. Consequently, in Ukraine alone, six Russian security and intelligence bodies were present.[595] For now, Ukrainians and Belarusians had not overly resisted such a policy; and when the Ukrainian government in 1994 tried levying tax on Russian goods the resulting Russian countermeasures were severe.[596] For Russian opposition politicians like Zhirinovskii such insolence was one of many Ukrainian insults. In May, 1995, he complained about Ukrainian exploitation of Russia, through subsidised energy, debt forgiveness and the like. As long as Ukraine allegedly continued to oppress Crimean Russians, Russia should deny economic support to Ukraine.[597] The Russian government did no such thing and accommodation with Kyiv was soon agreed. But if such accommodation mirrored the Russo-Belarusian relationship maybe Russian investors should not be too optimistic. In 1995, Russian companies had agreed with the Belarusian government to buy the Naftan oil refinery, but two years later the agreement was still not honoured by Minsk. Similarly, Belgazprombank was intended to be a Belarusian subsidiary of Gazprom, but until November, 1997, Belarus

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[594] O. Gavrish, "Kievskii pas'ians," *Vedomosti*, 12.10.1999; also Wilson, *Virtual*, p. 116
[595] Sherr, "Ukraine's," p. 133
[596] Smolansky, p. 51
[597] Molchanov, p. 254

blocked its registration.[598] In the meantime, Ukraine again began giving problems for Russian investors, as well. Not only was there the above-mentioned dispute over competing military exports to South Asia, which in February, 1997, led the Russian Minister of Foreign Economic Relations to block the sale of Russian military components to Ukraine, which he accused of having sold tanks to Pakistan without consulting Moscow.[599] The mooted Friendship Treaty was supposed to help preventing such misunderstandings in future, not least as the foundation for a bilateral trade treaty. These treaties did indeed appear during the following year. However, first the Russian authorities proved a little too eager to put pressure on Ukrainians during negotiations over the Friendship Treaty, for instance threatening disruption of energy and other necessary supplies to Ukraine. Furthermore, since goods moving between Russia and Ukraine often moved through Belarus, one measure taken by Russia was the re-opening of customs posts along the Russo-Belarusian border, even though this also damaged Belarusians.[600] The Russian threats were never carried through, bilateral treaties were signed, yet Ukrainian politicians might find it more difficult to trust the Russian leadership to keep the agreements in future. The Ukrainian parliament was not prepared to allow for substantial Russian investments in such a case, and in November, 1997, refused to ratify laws allowing foreign acquisition of blue-chip Ukrainian companies, even though these laws had already been agreed with Russia.[601] Soon Kuchma managed to overcome parliamentary resistance, yet it was easy to see how Russian investments in Ukraine might face increasing difficulties in future.

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[598] Balmaceda, "Myth," p. 8

[599] "Ukraina," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 27.2.1997

[600] "Riski soiuza s Belorussiei ne proschitany," *Segodnia*, 29.3.1997

[601] Puglisi, p. 833

Conclusion

Between 1993 and 1999, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian economic sovereignty. Russia and Belarus agreed to form an economic and monetary union already in 1994, and Belarusians, as well as Ukrainians, were in practice economically dependent on Russia, inside or outside a union. Thus, El'tsin could note in 1995 that Russo-Belarusian economic integration would immediately lower food prices in Belarus, while the Russian Communist opposition found any division between the post-Soviet economies irrational. Concerning energy relations, Belarus and Ukraine likewise continued to be almost completely dependent on oil and natural gas transfers to and through Russia, and their sovereignty was certainly not strengthened by the fact that their companies were still highly energy-intensive. Yet mostly Russian energy companies did not use this dependence against neighbouring states; Gazprom supplied Belarus even to the detriment of Russian customers, repeatedly wrote off its debts, and willingly trusted Belarusian cooperation by opening the Iamal pipeline through Belarus. Finally, in relation to Russian investments in Belarus and Ukraine two notable agreements increased the possibilities for Russian companies. The Charter of the Russo-Belarusian Union was predictably focused on defence procurements, while the subsequent Russo-Ukrainian economic treaty was much wider in scope, reflecting that Ukraine was ultimately the most interesting neighbouring market for Russian investors. On a number of occasions El'tsin praised the mutual benefits for Russians and Ukrainians provided by Russian investments, commentators such as Kiselev and Karaganov agreed, and Berezovskii demonstrated the advantages in practice.

The paradigm of Law continued to have some influence on Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian economic sovereignty. By signing the Friendship and naval treaties, Russia allowed Ukraine to prevent political and military issues from hijacking economic ones, and vice versa. As for the Belarusian economy, Russian resistance to subsidisation was waning but still noticeable. While Belarus and Ukraine remained highly dependent on Russian energy, economic depression lowered their needs for a time. From Russia, at the same time, subsidisation was not always provided without questions. Pressed by needs in a rapidly decentralising domestic economy, Gazprom tried signalling to Belarusians and Ukrainians that they would have to prepare themselves to pay more, and even allowed Western agents to pursue the debts of Ukraine. Finally, Russian investments abroad were temporarily halted by the domestic economic crisis; even after this had seemingly been solved El'tsin and others understood that an unreformed Belarusian economy would not be interesting for Russia.

The paradigm of Nation remained the least important one, although its influence grew. Governments in Minsk and Kyiv tried to steal market shares from Russia through tax measures, and by trading internationally with clients opposed to the clients of Russia, particularly in the arms business. This could be explained as slightly exaggerated competitive spirit, yet in the energy sphere measures were more underhanded, including the sudden unilateral imposition of excise duties by Russia, and consistent energy theft by Belarus and Ukraine. Finally, Russia and Belarus disagreed virulently regarding Russian attempts to take over Belarusian energy infrastructure, indicating that Russian attempts to take over infrastructure in Ukraine would be problematic.

Constructing cultural sovereignty

History

Law: Provoked nationalism

When Shushkevich tried to construct a Belarusian history it was still doubtful how that might be done. Yet already from 1994 Belarusian scholars began to outline how a mediaeval "Chronicle names Polatsk as...a city, where there sat knights, who counted their line as older than that of Oleg in Kyiv."[602] That Polatsk was also home to the first printer of the Bible in an East Slavic language, Frantsysk Skaryna, helped separating Belarusians from both Novgorod and Kyiv. Such emphasis on a Belarusian past separate from those of the neighbouring states was one reason why, by the late 1990s, a significant 30% of Russians living in Belarus now viewed Belarus as their homeland, signifying a historical connection and almost equalling the 38% of Russians who similarly identified with Ukraine.[603] The question, though, was whether Lukashenko would prove as enthusiastic a supporter of such a Belarusian history as his predecessor had been. Little help would be forthcoming from Russia, the leaders of which might not disapprove so much of a separate Belarusian history as fail to understand the concept. There might be more of a chance that Russians accepted the need for a separate Ukrainian history. Indeed, in 1995 Dmitrii Furman argued that modern Ukrainian nationalism, attempting to distance Ukraine from Russia, emerged during the nineteenth century as a response to the repressive policies of an autocratic Russian Empire.[604] Nevertheless, while El'tsin and his government had previously showed similar understanding, they failed to respond to Furman's nuanced argument, which did not fit into

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[602] U. Arloŭ, *Taiamnitsy polatskai historyi*, Minsk: Belarus', 1994, p. 27

[603] L. Barrington, E. Herron and B. Silver, "The Motherland is Calling: views of homeland among Russians in the Near Abroad," *World Politics*, 55 (2), 2003, p. 296

[604] D. Furman, "Ukraina i my," *Svobodnaia mysl'*, 1, 1995, pp. 69-83

the focus on the Russian empire as predecessor of the Russian Federation; a focus that El'tsin was increasingly using.

Power: Soviet nostalgia

El'tsin's position was increasingly supported by Russians in Ukraine. The Soviet Union had previously argued in favour of a joint Russo-Ukrainian historical background. Most Russians had believed in this, and the Soviet collapse had only changed perceptions momentarily. By January, 1994, a majority of Russians in Ukraine considered the Soviet breakup a tragic historic accident; two years later, three-quarters of them had problems accepting Ukrainian independence.[605] Even many Ukrainian politicians were forgetting Soviet woes. In June, 1994, the leader of the Ukrainian Socialist Party, Oleksandr Moroz, summed up: "Anybody who does not regret the collapse of the USSR has no heart." True, he also spoke against its restoration,[606] but preference for a supra-national, Russian-led history was clear. Such a preference was even clearer in Belarus, and El'tsin used this to the advantage of an integrationist agenda. In February, 1995, he spoke in Minsk about the common historical roots of Russians and Belarusians and about the centuries-old links between them, the breaking of which would allegedly mock history and violate the two peoples' fates.[607] Three months later, a majority of inhabitants in Belarus duly voted in favour of adopting Soviet symbols and flags for their state.[608] The following April, when Russia and Belarus created their Community of Sovereign Republics it was certainly not a coincidence that the

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[605] P. Rainow, "The Russian-Ukrainian Dimension" in D. Albright and S. Appatov, eds., *Ukraine and European Security*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999, p. 51

[606] O. Ansimova, "Leonid Kravchuk sdelal vse, chtoby pobedit'," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 25.6.1994, p. 3

[607] "Reportage on Russian President Yeltsin's Two-day Visit (Yeltsin's speech at Academy of Sciences, Radio Minsk, 22.2.1995)" in Z. Brzezinski and P. Sullivan, eds., *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States: documents, data, and analysis*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1997, p. 312

[608] V. Kovalev, "Natsionalizm Belorussii chuzhd etom ubezhdaiut itogi respublikanskogo referenduma," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 17.5.1995

abbreviation of this new entity became SSR; the similarity to the Russian-language abbreviation of the Soviet Union, SSSR, served as a reminder of sought similarities between the present and the Soviet past.[609] And Lukashenko added at the time that Russo-Belarusian integration was an ideological project to "'rectify the mistake, committed in 1991' - the dissolution of the Soviet Union."[610] No alternative reading of history seemed to exist in Belarus. In November, 1997, a reinvigorated El'tsin perceived Ukraine in a similar light, declaring: "It is impossible to tear from our hearts that Ukrainians are our own people. That is our destiny – our common destiny."[611] El'tsin thus emphasised that disruption of Russian relations with neighbours was imposed by third parties. Kuchma had no wish to be seen as such a third party. Eventually, in February, 1999, he even acknowledged the historical ties of Ukraine to Russia and the Soviet Union by restoring the public holiday celebrating the victory of the Soviet Red Army in the Second World War, opposing those Ukrainians who argued that German occupation was replaced by a Soviet one.[612] And it seemed prudent for Kuchma to focus on Soviet history, for despite the subordinate position of Ukrainians, they were more visible to Russians than in the imperial narrative. To illustrate the difference, in August, 1999, while discussing partial military withdrawal from Crimea, Russians commentators remembered "...the agreement struck with the legal representatives of Turkey, the Ottoman Empire, in connection with the annexation of Crimea to Russia in 1783....should Russia abandon its claim on Crimea the Ottoman Empire could claim the return of the peninsula under its jurisdiction."[613] If eighteenth century was to be the

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[609] V. Ermolin, "Dogovory ratifitsirovany," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 20.4.1996

[610] I. Drakokhrust and D. Furman, "Peripetii integratsii" in D. Furman, ed., *Belorussiia i Rossiia*, Moscow: Prava Cheloveka, 1998, p. 346

[611] B. El'tsin, "U Rossii s Ukrainoi obshchaia sud'ba," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 22.11.1997

[612] Serbyn, p. 109

[613] V. Balytnikov and D. Zvonenko, "Kvadratura zakoldovannogo kruga," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 25.8.1999

historical ideal for Russia, Ukraine might suddenly be wholly ignored in the relations between regional great powers, not a risk in the strictly demarcated Soviet template.

Nation: Russian Iaroslav

Russian commentators had not really intended to undermine Ukrainian sovereignty with their above-mentioned comments about the rights of Turkey, yet they still failed to consider Ukrainian wishes. Sometimes, however, the actions of the Russian government could not easily be explained as thoughtlessness. In May, 1997, while visiting Ukraine Chernomyrdin placed flowers on Iaroslav the Wise's grave; the grave of a medieval prince seen by Russians as Russian and symbol of empire. Chernomyrdin did not, though, place flowers on Taras Shevchenko's grave; the grave of a Ukrainian nationalist poet and symbol who had written against Russian dominance.[614] This could be seen as a deliberate slight, and, worryingly, some Russians felt such slights were appropriate following past exploitation of Russian goodwill. Sergei Karaganov, for instance, decried how Russia had been treated as an "economic colony" by less developed parts of the empire and the Union, unlike what Ukrainians and other peoples had mistakenly, even maliciously argued.[615] The Russian executive did not go that far, yet Ukrainians from Western Ukraine began to recollect how Soviet troops had entered their formerly Polish region at the end of World War II. This was accompanied by executions of local military personnel, deportation of many to Siberia, and transferral of ethnic Russians, derided by locals as *moskali*, into these provinces.[616] Eventually, an increasing proportion of Ukrainians started complaining that Russians had alienated Ukrainians from their proper, ethnic community through sustained cultural

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[614] Bilinsky, p. 62

[615] Karaganov, "Russia," p. 291

[616] Molchanov, p. 226

repression. This was formulated in a statement presented in March, 1999, by a number of leading Ukrainian nationalists, including the perhaps most prominent of all, Ivan Drach.[617] Although Drach had no formal powers in the Ukrainian polity, and his informal ones had fallen substantially during the 1990s, Russo-Ukrainian disputes over history were apparently not going to go away.

Language

Law: No wish to be defended

Language laws from the last years of the UkSSR had been tolerant of Russian-speakers' rights. This tolerance mostly remained during the 1990s, and legitimised the fact that Russian language slightly retreated in Ukraine. In a 1997 survey only 11% of respondents in Ukraine approved the preservation of a Russian-language Ukrainian culture, and even less claimed a historical and continued existence of such a culture. Even though ideas of a united Slavic culture, closely related to Russia were more popular,[618] Ukrainian language was becoming slightly more widespread in the country. Yet local Russian-speakers in Ukraine seldom sought support from the Russian state, nor did Russian-speakers in Belarus. A survey from the late 1990s showed that only 9% of those Russians in Belarus, who saw Russia as their homeland, wanted the Russian state to defend their linguistic rights. Among Russians perceiving Belarus as their homeland, only 4% wanted to be defended. Similar results taken from Russians in Ukraine were 9% and 3%, respectively.[619] Consequently, although titular languages might become slightly more widespread relative to Russian, local Russian-speakers still did not argue that their rights were being infringed on.

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[617] "Dokumenty – antyukraiins'ki za zmistom," *Literaturna Ukraiina*, 4.3.1999, p. 1

[618] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, pp. 215, 359

[619] Barrington et al, p. 311

Power: Promoting Russian language

Nevertheless, after the Soviet collapse Russian authorities had often found it useful to retain

Russian as the dominant language in the post-Soviet region. That such a policy might hinder

the spreading of Belarusian and Ukrainian languages was often ignored. Symbolically, from

1994 onwards a number of Muscovite newspapers showed this by reverting to Russian

renditions of place-names in Ukraine; similarly, "in Ukraine" became "na Ukraine," not "v

Ukraine."[620] Although the difference between the two expressions was seemingly minor,

"na Ukraine" denoted an image of Ukraine as peripheral to a centrally run empire and not as

a fully sovereign state. Those who were primarily Russian-speakers in Ukraine simply saw

the pejorative preposition as correct grammar; and as of February, 1995, this still accounted

for over half of the population in Ukraine,[621] while in Belarus only 12% spoke Belarusian

fluently at the time.[622] This proportion afterwards remained steady. Surveys carried out

among the Belarusian population in 1999 showed only 10% predominantly spoke

Belarusian. In contrast, 45-50% spoke Russian outright while another 35-40% chose to mix

Belarusian and Russian,[623] but certain that they remained more proficient in the latter

language. Unsurprisingly, the dominant proportion of Russian-speakers prompted titular

language-speakers to be tolerant towards Russian. A Ukrainian survey from 1997 showed

that 83%, including 52% in the western regions, disagreed that a citizen of Ukraine must

speak Ukrainian. Finally, a survey from July, 1998, disclosed that 70% of inhabitants in

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[620] T. Waters, "Language and National Identity" in C. Dick and A. Aldis, eds., *Central and Eastern Europe: problems and prospects*, Camberley: Strategic and Combat Studies Institute, 1998, p. 43

[621] Rainow, p. 54

[622] V. Kremen, "The East Slav Triangle" in V. Baranovsky, ed., *Russia and Europe: the emerging security agenda*, Stockholm and Oxford: SIPRI and OUP, 1997, p. 276

[623] A. Dyn'ko, "Bilorusomovni suproty kvaziderzhavy i kvaziburzhuazii," *Heneza*, special issue, 1999, p. 56

Ukraine favoured official status for Russian language, while 36% favoured introducing Russian as a state language.[624] In Belarus, furthermore, Russian scholar Nikolai Zen'kovich claimed in 1998 that the extent of Russian language being adopted by Belarusians was unmatched among any of the other former Soviet peoples. Allegedly, Belarusians even solicited their authorities en masse to excuse children from studying Belarusian in secondary schools.[625] This did not prevent the Russian leadership from promoting Russian language at the expense of Belarusian and Ukrainian whenever possible. Most notably, in 1995 taxation of the production and export of Russian-language publications was abolished in an attempt to retain and promote Russian language in the former Soviet region. This challenged the Ukrainian-language press in Ukraine[626] although it was welcomed by people used to reading in Russian.

Nation: Complaints of discrimination

The danger was that Ukrainians and Belarusians might resist what they saw as overly aggressive promotion of Russian language; certainly, tendencies of this had existed in the early 1990s. Tension was generally absent in Belarus, especially after Lukashenko gained power. Somewhat perversely, the only problem might appear due to an inability by the Belarusian state to provide sufficient Russian-language education. By 1994, over 230 schools in Minsk officially taught in Belarusian. This was well above the percentage of students whose parents wanted them to attend these schools, but with Russian-language schools being in high demand many pupils were forced into Belarusian-language schools,

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[624] Molchanov, p. 226

[625] Wilson, *Ukraininians*, p. 220

[626] S. Shulman, "Ukrainian Nation-building under Kuchma," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 52 (5), 2005, p. 40

heightening fears of forced Belarusification,[627] even if authorities hardly intended this outcome. Such fears were generally not shared in Russia where Ukraine was less trusted. By August, 1995, Russian commentators lamented official Ukrainian attempts of cultural isolation from Russia and from Ukrainian Russians.[628] And indeed, in early 1996 the popular, Russia-based ORT television channel was ordered by Ukrainian authorities to broadcast on a technically inferior channel, thus losing a third of its audience. The decision was defended openly by the Ukrainian state committee responsible by statements displaying antagonism towards the Russian language.[629] At the time, El'tsin did not become involved in the situation, but it proved ammunition the following year as the details of the naval and Friendship treaties were discussed and the Russian executive wanted to use alleged Ukrainian language discrimination as a bargaining tool. Indeed, in May, 1997, Iastrzhembskii made clear that El'tsin was concerned about the alleged discrimination against Russian language and culture in Ukraine.[630] In voicing such concerns, Iastrzhembskii was only marginally more diplomatic than Chernomyrdin had been earlier that month. While finalising the major Russo-Ukrainian political and military treaties, he openly complained about an alleged Ukrainian policy of squeezing out Russian language and culture.[631] Subsequently, before the treaties were ratified, the Russian Duma also wanted to voice concerns. In November, 1998, its members lambasted Ukraine for linguistic discrimination. Protests were voiced against the official minority status of Ukrainian Russians, and members of the Duma demanded that the Russian language become an official state language of

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[627] Ioffe, *Understanding Belarus Western*, pp. 9, 10

[628] V. Kolin'ko, "Proshchai 'Ostankino'!" *Rossiia*, 9.8.1995, p. 2

[629] Z. Kulyk, "A my taky buduemo svii informatsiinyi prostir," *Holos Ukraiiny*, 6.1.1996, p. 8

[630] Bilinsky, p. 62

[631] Molchanov, p. 258

Ukraine.[632] This demand was not heeded and most Ukrainians still did not worry overly about Russian subversion of their linguistic sovereignty. Still, Ukrainian exceptions to this were becoming increasingly frequent. In 1999, former Ukrainian Deputy Minister of Education Anatolii Pohribnyi made clear that Russification of Ukrainians was pointless and a superficial, temporary phenomenon, since "...on the level of ethnopsychology, deep down [ethnic Ukrainian] Russian-speakers remain Ukrainians."[633]

Religion

Law: Declining religiosity

Previously, religious institutions in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine had supported each other against a common Soviet adversary. With this adversary gone, mutual support predictably lessened, and often apathy took its place. Yet apathy might still increase the willingness of Russians to accept Ukrainian religious sovereignty. By 1994, the failure of religion to gain widespread support was visible in Ukraine, where less than 30% of respondents declared allegiance to any of the traditional churches in the state, the drop being clearest among those respondents who came from an Orthodox background.[634] Under such circumstances, it was hard for Russians to fear Ukrainian cultural assertiveness, or even to notice it.

Power: An Orthodox community

Nevertheless, religion had historically been a prominent part of the strategy of consolidating and expanding Russian central power. Now, during the elaborate ceremony in April, 1996, when the Treaty forming a Russo-Belarusian community was signed, Russian Orthodox

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[632] Molchanov, p. 260

[633] A. Pohribnyi, *Iakby my vchylys' tak, iak treba...*, Kyiv: Prosvita, 2000, p. 252

[634] Lieven, *Ukraine*, p. 74

Patriarch Aleksii II walked between El'tsin and Lukashenko and gave his blessing to the signing of the Treaty.[635] El'tsin needed such support from the church, for his main threat in the upcoming presidential election, Ziuganov, repeatedly emphasised how religion remained a central part of the "organic unity" binding Russia, Belarus and Ukraine to each other.[636] Such rhetoric resonated among Russians not least because many Russians believed Orthodoxy was a shared value to be defended from foreign attacks. Notice historian Sergei Samuilov's claim that Western analysts misunderstood the Pereiaslav agreement between the Russian Emperor and the Ukrainian Cossacks in 1654, as this really was a defence against Polish Catholic intrusion.[637] Although such comments were mainly intended for domestic consumption, they could be used abroad. In 1998, the Party of Regional Revival, officially supported by the Moscow patriarchate, won its highest vote in western regions like Volhynia and especially Chernivtsi,[638] where anti-Russian feeling was otherwise strongest.

Nation: Polonialising church

This did not imply, though, that many Ukrainians in western provinces adhered to Russian Orthodoxy. Previously, Ukrainian parliamentarians had obstructed clerical appointments in Ukraine in retaliation for perceived Russian aggression against the Uniate church. Then as now disputes remained short-lived and, despite the above example, mainly local. That violence could still appear was clear, however, in July, 1995, when the "Ukrainian National Assembly" and its paramilitary wing, the Ukrainian Self-Defence Force, which had previously

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[635] P. Karapetian, "Stremlenie narodov Rossii i Belorussii imet' ne tol'ko obshchuiu istoriiu, no obshchee nastoiashchee i budushchee realizovano," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 3.4.1996

[636] S. Fomin, "Razmyshleniia o budushchem Rossii," *Molodaia gvardiia*, 7, 1996, p. 19

[637] S. Samuilov, "O nekotorykh amerikanskikh stereotipakh v otnoshenii Ukrainy," *SShA-Kanada: ekonomika, politika, ideologiia*, 3, 1997, p. 93

[638] Wilson, *Ukrainians*, p. 244

attempted to storm several Russian Orthodox churches, created mayhem at the funeral of Patriarch Volodymyr of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyiv Patriarchate).[639] Ukrainian authorities ensured that Ukrainian nationalist groups could not repeat the attack later in the decade, but Kuchma could do little about appeals from Russia to combat the Uniates. By 1997 Russian scholars like Dugin believed religious beliefs divided Ukraine and should be acted on: "Here it is most important to build a cultural-denominational border between Central Ukraine...and Western Ukraine, to avoid the discordant Central European Catholic or Uniate influence on Orthodox territory."[640] Dugin might have been easily dismissed if it had not been for the fact that representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine also tended to seek alliance among extremist fringes in Russian politics. In December, 1999, they thus officially supported the challenger to Moscow mayor Luzhkov in the mayoral election, Dmitrii Vasil'ev, the long-time leader of the extremist, at times anti-Semitic Russian movement Pamiat'.[641] Vasil'ev was still without a chance in the election, and not even such negligible political interference took place from the Russian Orthodox Church in Belarus. However, Dugin's and similar comments could still have influence on religious relations here, since local Russians feared the inflow of Polish Catholicism. In 1996, Tatstsiana Mikulich thus claimed "Catholicism, coming from the Polish, was seen as a trait of the Polish nation." Thus, Catholic Belarusians called themselves Polish, although they had nothing in common with Poland apart from their religion.[642] Maybe Mikulich's warning remained a bit

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[639] Wilson, *Virtual*, p. 215

[640] A. Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki*, Moscow: Arktogeia, 1997, p. 382

[641] S. Ryzhova, "Tolerance and Extremism: Russian ethnicity in the Orthodox discourse of the 1990s" in J. Johnson, M. Stepaniants and B. Forest, eds., *Religion and Identity in Modern Russia: the revival of Orthodoxy and Islam*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, p. 83

[642] T. Mikulich, *Mova i etnichnaia samasviadomasts'*, Minsk: Navuka i tekhnika, 1996, p. 48

intangible for now, yet it would be straightforward for Russians to use religious differences against Belarusians in future.

Conclusion

Between 1993 and 1999, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian cultural sovereignty. A number of initiatives were undertaken by the Russian leadership that used historical events as a medium to promote Russia as an international great power. Notably, El'tsin often referred to a common history of Slavs, especially within the Russian Empire, in order to appeal for a recreation of past glory. Given that the Communist Party remained his main domestic opponents El'tsin was understandably loath to employ the Soviet past in a similar fashion. Concerning linguistic issues, state programmes to spread and strengthen Russian language abroad remained prominent, and in Belarus Russian even became an official language again. Conversely, few serious attempts were made by Belarusians and Ukrainians to promote their titular languages, yet this did not prevent the Russian government from constantly trying to convince inhabitants in neighbouring states about the advantages that followed use of the Russian language. For Russians, and many of their neighbours, Russian language was still seen as necessary to retain inter-ethnic equality and peace. Finally, in relation to religious issues the Russian Orthodox Church had become increasingly close to Russian state structures. Indeed, when El'tsin needed public opinion on his side before the 1996 presidential election, he did not just announce unification plans with Belarus, but he ensured that Patriarch Aleksii II was present to bless the agreement. While there was little doubt that Belarus could be retained close to the central Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow, in Ukraine, too, the Uniate Church was still far weaker than Orthodoxy.

The paradigm of Law continued to have some influence on Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian cultural sovereignty. Concerning perceptions of history, some Russian commentators by now recognised that the Russian state, if not the Russian people, historically forced cultural uniformity on Belarusians and Ukrainians. Concerning linguistic issues, no official structures were forcing Belarusians and Ukrainians to speak in Russian, nor did the Russian leadership wish for this to happen, although there was reluctance in Moscow to accept that the Russian diaspora had little wish or need to be defended by Moscow. Finally, concerning religious issues disputes between churches in Ukraine and in Belarus remained scarce, although this was due to lack of interest in religion more than anything else. Nevertheless, the Orthodox Church experienced the most significant drop in membership of all churches in Ukraine, leaving religions less connected to Russia with an advantage.

The paradigm of Nation remained the least important one, although its influence grew. Concerning perceptions of history, some Russians returned to arguments about how the RSFSR had been economically exploited by other republics, while even the Prime Minister churlishly ignored the grave of the man symbolising Ukrainian nationhood. In linguistic matters, several members of the executive, again including Chernomyrdin, worried about highly assertive Ukrainian policies, not least in the media sphere, aimed to reduce the presence of Russian language. Finally, even in religious matters fights broke out between the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyiv patriarchate), Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) and the Uniate Church, although even in Belarus Catholicism and Orthodoxy might be unable to co-exist.

Chapter 6: Consolidating sovereignty (2000-2004)

Consolidating political sovereignty

Territory

Law: Land borders demarcated

Under El'tsin, Ukrainian territorial inviolability had twice been guaranteed through official treaties, just as most Russians had wished to resolve any disputes in a peaceful manner. In January, 2003, Putin and Kuchma continued this development by officially demarcating the Russo-Ukrainian land border in correspondence with the Friendship Treaty.[643] However, Putin provided no further territorial guarantees, and although he made certain to attend the tenth anniversary of Ukrainian independence in August, 2001,[644] this did not necessarily signal respect for Ukrainian territorial sovereignty. Indeed, Putin's visit was more likely a response to Kuchma's outburst two months before. Kuchma swore that Ukraine would remain an independent state and never join the Belarus-Russian Union;[645] and Putin's subsequent visit could therefore be interpreted as a signal that showed he had not let Ukraine out of his sight. Certainly, members of the Russian leadership did not favour territorial integration at any price; in February, 2000, the former Vice-President of Gazprom, Petr Rodionov, had complained: "The problem of [energy] debts is even more difficult to solve in the case of Belarus, since the factor of the strategic union of the two states and

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[643] "Vladimir Putin i Leonid Kuchma podpisali dogovor o rossiisko-ukrainskoi gosudarstvennoi granitse," *Ekonomicheskie novosti*, 28.1.2003

[644] K. Katanian, "Putin pozdravil Prezidenta Ukrainy," *Vremia MN*, 24.8.2001

[645] M. Mihkelson, "Russia's Policy toward Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and the Baltic States" in J. Bugajski, ed., *Toward an Understanding of Russia: new European perspectives*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2002, p. 101

their possible integration is involved."[646] Furthermore, in the summer of 2001 a popular survey showed only 33% support in Belarus for political union with Russia.[647] Putin could therefore still find some reasons to resist territorial unification with neighbouring states, if he so wished.

Power: Union as prioritised task and the constitutional act

It was not clear that Putin wanted to resist unification, though. Members of the Russian government had generally supported territorial integration during the 1990s. And immediately after El'tsin had retired, in January, 2000, the Russian State Secretary of the Russo-Belarusian Union Pavel Borodin noted: "Naturally, the rapprochement of Belarus and Russia requires...common...border protection..."[648] Putin's tenure was going to be marked by territorial reintegration. Such integration might even be used against the West. Although Borodin had not mentioned it, the Russian parliament had been inspired by the NATO bombings of Yugoslavia the previous year: "The State Duma declares its support for the brotherly Yugoslavian people in its aspiration to defend the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of its state...and underlines the high importance of the idea of the inclusion of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the Union of Belarus and Russia."[649] Thus, parliamentarians viewed Belarus as part of a territorial entity opposing Western aggression in the Balkans and elsewhere. Even though Putin did not agree, he and the Russian government had strongly condemned the NATO operation, as well. It was not inconceivable

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[646] P. Rodionov and S. Zhiznin, "'Gazovye' prioritety rossiiskoi diplomatii," *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, 2, 2000, p. 62

[647] S. White, I. McAllister, M. Light and J. Löwenhardt, "A European or a Slavic Choice? Foreign policy and public attitudes in post-Soviet Europe," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 54 (2), 2002, p. 192

[648] N. Pogodin, "U narodov Sodruzhestva est' nadezhda," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 31.3.2000

[649] "O godovshchine nachala agressii Organizatsii Severatlanticheskogo dogovora protiv Soiuznoi Respubliki Iugoslavii," *Parlamentskaia gazeta*, 25.3.2000

that the Russian Acting President in future might see Belarus in a similar light. Furthermore, Putin and Borodin certainly agreed that other states should join Russo-Belarusian cooperation. In April, Borodin stated: "...the [Russo-Belarus Union] is open for other participants that in the nearest future – within 3-4 years...will include Ukraine and Kazakhstan."[650] This suited Lukashenko well. In May, 2000, he denounced the Soviet collapse as "the greatest mistake of the past century"[651] and claimed that "...about 90% of people in Russia, and...in Belarus, are devoted to our unity...if you give people the freedom and the possibility to openly state their opinion in Ukraine...the result will be the same."[652] Lukashenko was heartened by Putin's Foreign Policy Doctrine published the following month. It stated: "The strengthening of the Union of Belarus and Russia as the highest form of integration between two sovereign states during this stage is a task of foremost importance."[653] Putin and Lukashenko were certain that public opinion supported them. Surveys taken among the population of Belarus in 1999 and 2002 showed that while 41.8% of respondents in 1999 had been prepared to unite [with Russia], now that was the case for 53.8%. Conversely, while 40.4% wanted to vote against unification in 1999, not more than 23% wanted that in 2002.[654] For now, similar broad support for reintegration could not be found in Ukraine. Yet, in June, 2002, the Russian Bloc political movement was formed, intending to unite all Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians.[655] The movement even managed demonstrations in dozens of Ukrainian cities to support its cause. And gradually some official Ukrainian support for territorial integration could be found, too. In July, 2002,

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[650] D. Gornostaev, "Pervyi vizit Vladimira Putina v soiuznyi Minsk prines sensatsiiu," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 18.4.2000

[651] L. Romanova, "Stil' politicheskogo simvolizma," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 4.5.2000

[652] I. Averkieva, A. Kasaev and I. Semenov, "Ostryi razgovor ob integratsii," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 25.4.2000

[653] "Kontseptsiia vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 11.7.2000

[654] O. Tomashevskaia, "Lukashenka ostalsia bez opory," *Belorusskaia delovaia gazeta*, 27.8.2002; Ioffe, "Understanding Belarus economy," p. 105

[655] "Ukraina," *Vremia MN*, 3.12.2002

Oleksandr Kupchyshyn, Director of the Treaty and Legal department of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry, stated that border demarcation between Ukraine and Russia would violate historic traditions of living together and of coexistence. This statement was conspicuously similar to the official policy by the Russian Foreign Ministry.[656] Still, what both Ukrainians and Belarusians had to confront was that Putin wanted Russia to be the dominant partner in any integrated structure. In September, 2002, he even suggested that "...Belarus could accede to Russia as one or several of the regional subjects" of the Federation,[657] which would then simply expand. This followed Putin's plan from the previous month to create a unified federal state over eighteen months, complete with popular referenda, and election of a supreme president of the united state.[658] Putin would have won such a referendum handily. It was therefore hardly surprising that popular surveys taken in Russia during the following year showed majority support for Russian rapprochement with Belarus and Ukraine (as well as Kazakhstan and Moldova).[659] Later, in March, 2003, a Russo-Belarusian inter-governmental commission agreed basic provisions for a Union state constitutional act. According to Russian parliamentary speaker Gennadii Seleznev, the Union would have a joint government, parliament, court, a flag, emblems and other attributes of statehood.[660] Considering that the Russian parliament was increasingly controlled by Putin it was not surprising that support for integration came from this angle, too.

Nation: Tuzla

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[656] Kuzio, *Ukraine*, p. 86

[657] "Putin predlagaet v 2003 godu okonchatel'no ob''edinit' Rossiiu i Belorussiiu," *Arsen'evskie vesti*, 12.9.2002

[658] B. Nygren, "Russia's Relations with Ukraine and Belarus" in R. Kanet, ed., *The New Security Environment: the impact on Russia, Central and Eastern Europe*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, p. 157

[659] "Obrazy stran" in Vladimir Kolosov, ed., *Mir glazami rossiian*, Moscow: Obshchestvennoe mnenie, 2003, pp. 266, 267

[660] E. Zherebenkov, "Kadry meshaiut vse," *Itogi*, 25.3.2003

Aggressive territorial demands gained saliency in Russian oppositional politics during the 1990s. As yet, the Russian executive had not really joined this tendency. Nevertheless, Ukraine would have good reason to fear what such a development might entail, particularly regarding Crimea. Ten years after the emergence of independent Ukraine, Crimea stubbornly remained the only region with a majority of self-ascribed ethnic Russians. By 2000, this majority constituted 60% of the local population, against 23% who were Ukrainians.[661] Luzhkov was happy to take advantage. In July, 2001, the Moscow Mayor challenged Ukrainian political sovereignty again, reiterating that Crimea was rightfully Russian territory: "Crimea was, is and will remain for us – Muscovites, Russians [*rossiian*] – an inalienable part of Russia...due to its spirit."[662] No part of Belarus could conceivably be claimed by Russians in a similar fashion, yet this did not mean that territorial disagreement was absent. By June, 2002, Putin began criticising Belarusian interpretations of the constitutional act of the Russia-Belarus Union as "legalistic nonsense" while there were fears in Minsk that Belarus might become a 90th Russian region.[663] And note how Lukashenko two months later feared that "even Lenin and Stalin never thought of dividing Belarus and joining it to the RSFSR or USSR."[664] Suddenly the prospect that Russians might undermine and disintegrate Belarusian statehood was openly discussed. Most likely, Putin's regime did not have such plans, yet Russian observers were increasingly exasperated with Belarusian obstructions of territorial unification. Political Scientist Dmitrii Oreshkin for one began to dismiss widespread Russian public support for reintegration as mostly emotional,

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[661] Sasse, p. 86

[662] V. Korobov, "Knizhnaia polka," *Trud*, 6.7.2001

[663] E. Daneiko, "Lukashenko reshil otvetit' Moskve deistviem," *Izvestiia*, 19.6.2002

[664] C. Wallander, "Economics and Security in Russia's Foreign Policy and the Implications for Ukraine and Belarus" in R. Legvold and C. Wallander, eds., *Swords and Sustenance: the economics of security in Belarus and Ukraine*, Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2004, p. 87

indicating that the Russian leadership would have to overcome Belarusian recalcitrance in a much more calculating manner.[665] But at least reintegration was still on the table in the case of Belarus. Concerning Ukraine, open territorial conflict broke out for the first time after the Soviet collapse in September, 2003, when local authorities in southern Russia began constructing a dam to the Ukrainian island of Tuzla in the Kerch strait. It is inconceivable that the project was begun without direct support, or even orders from the Kremlin, and it was no coincidence, either, that the status of the Kerch Strait had been the centre of harsh disagreement between Russian and Ukrainian negotiators for some years. Eventually, negotiations between Prime Ministers Mikhail Kas'ianov and Viktor Ianukovych terminated the building of the dam,[666] but not before the Ukrainian parliament in October had empowered Kuchma to "...use all means to defend the territorial integrity"[667] of Ukraine, and Kuchma had produced a secret decree outlining unilateral declaration of the Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov as internal Ukrainian waters, directly contrary to the Russian position.[668] The declaration was subsequently not enforced, and it was unclear whether Russian parliamentarians would care much about Ukrainian complaints. The parliamentary party United Russia, closely connected to Putin, had strongly denounced the Ukrainian government during the Tuzla-crisis. Thus, when United Russia had a good result in the parliamentary elections of December, 2003,[669] other Russian political forces might see an incentive to criticise Ukraine in future.

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[665] E. Daneiko and G. Il'ichev, "Slavianofiliia i slavianofobiia," *Izvestiia*, 19.3.2003

[666] T. Bukkvoll, "Private Interests, Public Policy: Ukraine and the Common Economic Space agreement," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 51 (5), 2004, pp. 13, 14

[667] S. Stepanenko and S. Liubimov, "Kerchenskii proryv," *Vremia novostei*, 24.10.2003

[668] Kuzio, *Ukraine*, pp. 79, 80

[669] "Pro novitniu politychnu strategiiu Rosiii shchodo Ukraiiny," *Politychna dumka*, 12.11.2003; Wilson, *Virtual*, pp. 128, 129

Governance

Law: Relatively free Russia

During the 1990s, the Russian leadership had generally respected Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereign governance, although Russian unwillingness to criticise the undemocratic ruling regime in Belarus increasingly earned critique from the West. Partly for this reason, following his retirement El'tsin straightaway suggested that all means must be used to ensure the gradual democratisation of Belarus in order to pre-empt that Lukashenko's increasingly authoritarian rule might provoke an anti-Russian Belarusian political opposition to revolt.[670] Apparently reasoning similarly, in October, 2000, the former head of the Belarusian national bank, Tamara Vinnikova, who claimed to have been forced into exile by the Belarusian authorities, was allowed to present her view on the main Russian state television channel ORT.[671] Vinnikova did not receive Putin's expressed support, however, and it might be expected that Lukashenko's rule would be tolerated as long as it kept Belarus stable. Similarly, although Kuchma's Ukraine was increasingly undemocratic Putin's attempts to democratise Ukrainian governance was limited to a bilateral agreement in February, 2001, including a programme for cooperation between the regions alongside the common borders of these two states.[672] Certainly, by 2001 Putin's Russia retained noticeably freer governance than Belarus on issues concerning civil society, independent media, democratisation and more,[673] and as such might by its very presence condition the neighbouring state to follow its example. Yet on numerous counts Putin's regime was

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[670] Yeltsin, p. 242

[671] K. Matsuzato, "A Populist Island in an Ocean of Clan Politics: the Lukashenka regime as an exception among CIS countries," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 56 (2), 2004, p. 249

[672] Molchanov, p. 243

[673] H. Nemyria, "Civil Society in Russia" in J. Bugajski, ed., *Toward an Understanding of Russia: new European perspectives*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2002, p. 17

already noticeably more authoritarian that El'tsin's had been, and this inspired Lukashenko.

During his re-election in September, 2001, Lukashenko added 20% to his winning total, thus

reaching 76%. This was undoubtedly done in order to best Putin's manipulated winning

result in the Russian presidential election the previous year.[674] The tendency, therefore, was

for increasing Russian authoritarianism to re-enforce similar tendencies in Belarus and

Ukraine, while the Russian political opposition no longer found it likely that democracy

might take root in these states. Arguing that the population of Belarus had to take some of

the blame for Lukashenko, Valeriia Novodvorskaia thus complained in August, 2002, that:

"...Lukashenko would not have become President no matter how he would have

constructed the election results, if no one had voted for him..."[675]

Power: Dismissing Tarasiuk

El'tsin's professed desire to democratise Belarus and Ukraine had mostly been absent since

Lukashenko and Kuchma followed Russian wishes. Putin's first term only reinforced this

impression. That the Belarusian administration would continue to favour Russia was

indicated by its ethnic composition. By 2000, Belarusian local governance in the countryside

remained dominated by self-ascribed ethnic Russians, although they constituted a minority

among the population of Belarus.[676] In Ukraine, some high-ranking politicians openly

opposed to Russia did exist, but Putin quickly persuaded Kuchma to act against them. In

August, 2000, Kyiv launched judicial proceedings against anti-Russian Deputy Prime Minister

Iuliia Tymoshenko according to wishes from the Russian administration, and two months

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[674] Wilson, *Virtual*, p. 78

[675] I. Rabchuk, "Uchites' srazhat'sia za svoiu nezavisimost'!" *Belorusskaia delovaia gazeta*, 29.8.2002

[676] L. Cook, *Postcommunist Welfare States: reform politics in Russia and Eastern Europe*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2007, p. 206

later the pro-Western Foreign Minister Borys Tarasiuk was dismissed after pressure from

Putin.[677] To ensure that people like Tymoshenko and Tarasiuk would not return to power,

Putin then appointed former Prime Minister Chernomyrdin as ambassador to Ukraine in

early 2001. Soon, Chernomyrdin, Ukrainian Prime Minister Ianukovych, and the head of

Kuchma's administration Viktor Medvedchuk, were together attending the opening of the

influential Russian spin-doctor Gleb Pavlovskii's Russian Club in Kyiv,[678] indicating the close

links between the Russian and Ukrainian central administrations. Lukashenko was being

bought off more overtly. Before the September, 2001, Belarusian presidential election,

Russian donors funded large parts of Lukashenko's campaign for re-election and

furthermore provided positive media coverage for him, in return for anticipated favours that

Russian firms operating in Belarus were to subsequently receive from his administration.[679]

Subsequently, Putin quickly congratulated Lukashenko on his re-election, just as the

chairman of the Federation Council, Egor' Stroev saw "...Lukashenko's victory as necessary

and natural,"[680] contrary to the findings of numerous international organisations. The

Russian political opposition mostly agreed with Putin. In November, 2001, Russian

commentator Andrei Okara argued that Lukashenko was popular among self-ascribed

Russian "national patriots," since he fitted their image of the Belarusian-peasant archetype

that could be subordinated from Moscow as a provincial leader.[681] This was an attractive

position for Ukrainians, too. At the Ukrainian parliamentary election in March, 2002, all

political parties with some success, apart from Our Ukraine openly suggested increasing

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[677] A. Persikov, "Kogo posadiat za 'trubu'?" *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 29.8.2000; I. Sokolovskaia, "Zlenko?" *Izvestiia*, 3.10.2000

[678] Kuzio, "Kuchma," p. 37

[679] Wilson, *Virtual*, p. 116

[680] O. Parusnov, "Lukashenko – vnov' prezident," *Strazh Baltiki*, 11.9.2001

[681] A. Okara, "Belarus v otsutstvii tretei al'ternativy," *Russkii zhurnal*, 14.11.2001

cooperation with Russia[682] and even sent candidates to Moscow to display pro-Russian credentials.[683] Putin was prepared to exploit the situation. In August, 2002, he openly suggested that Russia and Belarus might be governed by one parliament by the end of 2003 and by a joint presidency appearing a few months after, just when Putin's Russian tenure would end.[684] In preparation, the Russian political elite expected a joint international facade with Belarusians. In March, 2003, Mikhail Khvastou, just before beginning as Belarusian ambassador to the USA, met with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Georgii Mamedov. From Belarus it was officially confirmed that Khvastou went to Moscow to prepare for Washington.[685] The Belarusian administration was seemingly pleased to be able to use Russian international experience, and a similar attraction in Ukraine to Russian political capital was shown that autumn when the Donetsk-based public relations company Social Dialogue, preparing Ianukovych's presidential campaign for the upcoming presidential election, marketed him as a Ukrainian Putin for Russophone Ukraine, highlighting his image as a strongman to solve the problems in the state.[686] In return for their loyalty, Belarusian and Ukrainian elites could expect Russia to support them internationally. When the EU presented criticism in 2004, it was thus easy for the Belarusian government, including Foreign Minister Sergei Martynov in February, to accuse the EU and the West in general of promoting double standards, and to accept the praise bestowed by Russians.[687]

Nation: Calling the Belarusian bluff

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[682] E. Garanzha, "Oppozitsiia lidiruet, prezidentskii blok prazdnuet," *Molodezh' Estonii*, 2.4.2002

[683] Bugajski, p. 94

[684] "Putin predlozhil Lukashenko sozdat' edinoe gosudarstvo," *Zerkalo*, 16.8.2002

[685] "Mamedov i Khvostov obsudili uglublenie rossiisko-belorusskogo sotrudnichestva v interesakh ukrepleniia mezhdunarodnoi stabil'nosti i bezopasnosti," *Ekonomicheskie novosti*, 27.3.2003

[686] Wilson, *Virtual*, p. 175

[687] N. Leshchenko, "The National Ideology and the Basis of the Lukashenka Regime in Belarus," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60 (8), 2008, p. 1426

And yet, criticism of Belarusian and Ukrainian governance had appeared from increasingly significant Russian policymakers from the mid-1990s onwards. Their fear was not least what would happen in oppositions in Belarus and Ukraine came to power. Indeed, in May, 2001, after Chernomyrdin's appointment as Russian ambassador in Ukraine, Tymoshenko, recently fired as Deputy Prime Minister, was highly critical: "By appointing Chernomyrdin [as Russian ambassador to Ukraine], the Russians have in reality appointed the Prime Minister of Ukraine,"[688] so that Russians did not really have to care about Kuchma's longevity. As indicated above, the Russian state prosecutor was quick to attack her in return; in the summer of 2001 Russia accused Tymoshenko of corruption allegedly amounting to $60 million[689] hoping to have her incarcerated for somewhat longer than the weeks she had been in jail earlier that year. Many in the Belarusian administration were aware that Russian support could not be taken for granted, something that Belarusian opposition politician Leanid Sinitsyn, previously Lukashenko's presidential chief of staff and an outspoken supporter of Russo-Belarusian integration, warned in September, 2001,[690] while he also showed his lack of faith in Lukashenko's willingness to integrate with Russia by founding his own party aiming for Slavic unity.[691] That sort of competition for the favours of Russia were welcome in Moscow, not least since Lukashenko had recently bemoaned that Kuchma had allegedly received more support than him during the Ukrainian parliamentary election in March, 2002, while Lukashenko was supposedly subject to biased election coverage in the

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[688] S. Stepanenko, "Iuliia Timoshenko," *Vremia novostei*, 28.5.2001

[689] A. Kots, "V Moskve na Iuliiu Timoshenko zaveli dva ugolovnykh dela," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 9.8.2001; T. Kuzio, "Oligarchs, Tapes and Oranges: 'Kuchmagate' to the Orange Revolution," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 23 (1), 2007, pp. 48, 49; G. Alimov and I. Sokolovskaia, "Iuliia i tsezari," *Izvestiia*, 9.8.2001; T. Zatevakhina, "Prinadlezhnosti dlia okhoty prezidenta i na prezidenta," *Zerkalo nedeli*, 10.8.2002

[690] Wilson, *Virtual*, p. 197

[691] "Belorussiia," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 19.9.2001

Russian media.[692] It would perhaps be reasonable to dismiss these complaints as somewhat unfair, since concerted efforts by the Russian executive to intervene in Belarusian governance had hitherto favoured Lukashenko. But in the summer of 2002, Putin was exasperated. In June, 2002, he openly accused the Belarusian leader of employing a "muddled legal veneer...inappropriate to [the rule of law]" with the aim of recreating the Soviet Union with Lukashenko at the pinnacle of power.[693] In return, Putin suggested two months later "the construction of a unified state based on the Russian constitution and federal principles...[with] a referendum should be conducted in Russia and Belarus in May, 2003, concerning definitive unification...in December, 2003, elections for a unified parliament could be conducted, and in Spring [2004]...elections of the head of the unified state."[694] Lukashenko's answer was venomous. Allegedly, he was defending Belarus against Russian domination "...since the suggestion now is not even to include Belarus in Russia as a united whole, but...to divide Belarus into seven parts, which will be included in the Russian Federation and to give these parts equal rights to the Russian regions, we shall never accept this suggestion."[695] What little trust had existed between Putin and Lukashenko concerning unified governance now seemed lost. Putin allowed Russian media to operate in Belarus on behalf of the political opposition, and in July, 2003, offices of the Russian television station NTV, owned by Gazprom, in Belarus were closed to prevent this. But such steps united Russian politicians against Lukashenko; Irina Khakamada of the oppositional Union of Rightist Forces complained that "in Belarus firms are actually taken away from [Russian]

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[692] Nygren, "Russia's," p. 159

[693] Daneiko

[694] "Putin predlozhil"

[695] A. Dubnov, "Prezident Putsin," *Vremia novostei*, 15.8.2002, p. 1

businessmen...[such as] with the closure of the offices of NTV..."[696] In August, 2003, Valiantsin Holubeu of the Belarusian Popular Front then claimed that the Russian elite's stance more generally towards Belarusian domestic politics might be changing following a roundtable in Moscow, uniting Russian scholars and deputies and members of the Belarusian opposition.[697] The Ukrainian opposition could expect no such invitation, but continued to be harassed by Russia. Again in September, 2003, Russian prosecutors sought to question Tymoshenko in Moscow over an alleged scam with Gazprom and the Russian Ministry of Defence conducted during the mid-1990s, thereby intending to unsettle challengers of Ianukovych in the presidential election the following year.[698] This was fine for Russians as long as Ianukovych would indeed become president, but contingency plans in case of his defeat were sorely lacking.

Ideology

Law: Right to independence

El'tsin's Russia took advantage of sovereign Ukraine to ensure stability in the post-Soviet region. Even in retirement, El'tsin continued to believe that while Belarusians and Ukrainians shared a common identity with Russians wishes for sovereign ideologies in these states had to be respected.[699] Yet El'tsin no longer had a say in the official formulation of Russian state ideology. And in Belarus members of the political opposition worried that Putin's Russia might soon swallow their unsuspecting state. During the 2001 presidential

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[696] "Press-konferentsiia zamestitelia predsedatelia Gosudarstvennoi Dumy i sopredsedatelia Soiuza Pravykh Sil Iriny Khakamady," *Federal News Service*, 21.7.2003

[697] Bugajski, p. 71

[698] For Ukrainian parliamentary support for Tymoshenko, see M. Pavlovs'kyi, "Natsional'ni interesy Ukraiiny, gazovyi rynok i Iuliia Tymoshenko," *Holos Ukraiiny*, 16.9.2003

[699] Yeltsin, p. 243

election campaign exiled politician Zenon Pozniak of the Popular Front warned that "the coalition of democratic forces in Belarus must do everything possible to prevent the country from becoming the north western governorate of [imperial] Russia."[700] It was still possible that Belarus and Ukraine could rescue Russia from its imperial past, as argued by Russian newspaper editor Alan Kasaev in April, 2001: "Independent from Ukraine, Russia is almost an Asian country without serious interests in Europe, without its actually only...ally in Europe, without a place for its military in Europe."[701] Still, this viewpoint was not very common in Russia, and it was not unreasonable for many Ukrainians to believe that Ukraine had come further than Russia in constructing a state ideology separate from empire. Indeed, in the March, 2002, Ukrainian parliamentary elections two openly pro-Russian, East Slavic parties garnered a combined vote of less than 2% throughout the state,[702] but this mattered increasingly less in the face of Putin's imperial momentum.

Power: Limited allies and a Russianised administration

Such a momentum had already existed under El'tsin, and Putin readily continued to consolidate ideology centred on the international power of the Russian state. In June, 2000, he approved the Russian Foreign Policy Doctrine, which clarified that one of the main objectives of Russia was to "form a good-neighbourly belt along the perimeter of the borders of Russia."[703] Belarus was an integral part of such a belt, not least since, following the Kosovo crisis, neither state had many international allies apart from each other,

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[700] S. Anis'ko, "Predvybornaia nota protesta," *Segodnia*, 1.2.2001

[701] A. Kasaev, "Ukraina zolotaia," *Sodruzhestvo NG*, 25.4.2001, p. 9

[702] T. Kuzio, "Neither East nor West: Ukraine's security policy," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 52 (5), 2005, p. 60

[703] "Kontseptsiia vneshnei"; also Hedenskog, p. 132

especially not in Europe where most Russians saw their home and power base.[704] Kuchma, too, was temporarily prompted by domestic scandals to seek Russian support and even, as mentioned above, sacked the pro-Western Tarasiuk in September, 2000, in exchange for Anatolii Zlenko, widely seen as "...a person, who can find a common language with Moscow..."[705] Ukraine, and certainly Belarus could by January, 2001, be used by Russia to oppose Western interference in the post-Soviet region. For so-called Great Russianists such as Sergei Baburin, "...Russia, together with the other Slavic members of the CIS...can be subjected to open interference from NATO...it is possible to prevent this threat" in unison, mirroring the Cold War days.[706] Leaders from other post-Soviet states, too, were inspired by the imperial example set by Russia and Belarus. In February, 2001, Moldovan president Vladimir Voronin sought re-election through the idea that his state could join the Russo-Belarusian union.[707] Members of the Russian executive understood that Ukraine would be a more important prize, though. In July, 2001, Chernomyrdin thus claimed: "Ukraine is not a Western state, but a state of the Slavic civilisation, of the Orthodox culture...No one is particularly awaiting neither Russia, nor Ukraine in the West, we will not be accepted in the "golden billion" – there is no point in hoping for it."[708] And if the West was unlikely to accept Ukraine, Lukashenko knew odds were even less for his Belarus. Consequently, at the independence celebrations in July, 2002, he asserted that Belarusians had rejected foreign, meaning Western, proposals for developing society, instead maintaining law and order,

[704] V. Baranovsky, "Russia: a part of Europe or apart from Europe?" *International Affairs*, 76 (3), 2000, p. 450

[705] Sokolovskaia, "Zlenko?"

[706] S. Baburin, "Slavianskie gosudarstva SNG pered nashestviem 'Atlanticheskikh tsennostei,'" *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 18.1.2001

[707] G. Partos, "Hungarian-Romanian and Romanian-Moldovan Relations" in J. Smith and C. Jenkins, eds., *Through the Paper Curtain: insiders and outsiders in the new Europe*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2003, p. 110

[708] V. Timoshenko, "Ukraina – ne Shveitsariia," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 11.7.2001

peace and creative labour. The Soviet echoes in Lukashenko's rhetoric were marked.[709]

Similarly, it was not difficult to remember Soviet templates when Putin in January, 2003, inaugurated the first ever "Year of Russia in Ukraine,"[710] following the first "Year of Ukraine in Russia" hailed by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as "an internationally unprecedented socio-political project, intended to fill the concrete content of the strategic partnership between Russia and Ukraine."[711] Kuchma was happy for such a partnership to exist; and by April, 2003, Viktor Medvedchuk, head of the Ukrainian presidential administration, also led the most pro-Russian of the centrist parties, the Social Democratic Party – United, which officially viewed Russia thus: "...we have unbreakable bonds of culture, destiny and history with Russia. Therefore, relations with Russia must be our priority in foreign political and foreign economic relations."[712] Russian ministers happily agreed. When Foreign Minister Igor' Ivanov in May, 2003, met with his Ukrainian colleague, he stated that "the meeting was connected to the theme of Russo-Ukrainian strategic partnership."[713] And the following month government policy named Ukraine as a strategic partner of Russia, i.e. one of its closest, long-term friends.[714]

Nation: Putting pressure on Ukraine

It was increasingly clear that official Russian policy did not guarantee friendship with Belarus and Ukraine, though. The construction of a Russian state ideology opposed to Belarusian and Ukrainian statehood was seldom espoused by El'tsin. Putin, on the contrary, quickly

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[709] Ambrosio, *Authoritarian*, p. 126

[710] S. Prokopchuk, "V Kieve vstrechaiut novyi god," *Trud*, 28.1.2003

[711] "Otvet ofitsial'nogo predstavitelia MID Rossii na vopros rossiiskikh SMI ob itogakh provedeniia Goda Ukrainy v Rossii, 9 dekabria," *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, 31.1.2003

[712] S. Zhil'tsov, "Gogolia i Shevchenko prosiat ne bespokoit'sia," *Rossiiskie vesti*, 30.4.2003

[713] "Rossiia i Ukraina na puti intensivnoi ekonomicheskoi integratsii," *Ekonomicheskie novosti*, 20.5.2003

[714] Nygren, "Russia's," p. 153

began bullying leaders of neighbouring states into submission. For instance, during April, 2000, he used his first summit with Kuchma to openly link "Ukrainian debts for Russian gas, excessively 'warm relations between Ukraine and NATO,' [and] the fate of the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol'."[715] At the same time, ordinary Russians increasingly rejected multinational identities, indicating that any ideology appealing to a community including more than Russians might not retain popular support. In April, 2000, a Russia-wide poll showed that 56% of respondents agreed there was "a substantial threat to [the] security of Russia from people of other nationalities living in Russia."[716] Russians had to be protected, also in the Foreign Policy Concept from mid-2000. Here it stated that Russian relations with CIS states depended on the readiness of the latter to guarantee the rights of Russians living there.[717] For Ukraine, and partly Belarus, the document indicated both that the Putin administration could overrule their sovereign governance and that Putin might find it necessary, since he distrusted local treatment of minorities. This had traditionally mostly been the case for Ukraine, but Belarusian elections also indicated the possibility of ideological divides. In the 2001 presidential election, Lukashenko's victory was never in doubt. Yet while the incumbent received 87% of votes in the Gomel' district bordering Russia, he was "only" supported by 57% in Minsk. Conversely, Lukashenko's opponent, Vladimir Goncharik, received 9% of the votes in Gomel', but gained over 30% of votes in Minsk.[718] Ukrainian ideological divisions were more pronounced. In April, 2001, a majority in

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[715] V. Sokolova, "Ne doplyli..." *Izvestiia*, 19.4.2000

[716] "Threat from non-Russians in Russia," *Russia Votes* on http://www.russiavotes.org/president/putin_vote_political.php?PHPSESSID=7464cf5cf5e8c8a4e23ef8a0be43e1b3 (accessed on 9.5.2009)

[717] "Kontseptsiia vneshnei"; see also R. Allison, "Russia and the New States of Eurasia" in A. Brown, ed., *Contemporary Russian Politics: a reader*, Oxford: OUP, 2001, p. 451

[718] D. Marples, "The Prospects for Democracy in Belarus," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 51 (1), 2004, p. 36

seven of eleven Ukrainian regions wanted to prioritise relations with Russia[719] but the rest wanted to prioritise relations with the West. The EU saw a chance to change this in its favour. From September, 2002, the EU began advocating increased relations with Belarus and Ukraine as entities separate from Russia, instead of grouped together with Russia, as had previously been the case.[720] The EU was still mostly interested in relations with Russia, but Belarus and Ukraine had become more of a priority. For Ukrainians this was a welcome change to seeming Russian neglect. Even Kuchma's administration was increasingly becoming annoyed by perceived Russian arrogance, like in November, 2002, when Ianukovych was derided in the Russian governmental newspaper as the "very poorest Prime Minister" with a petty criminal record, and could only reply in frustration: "Russia is our strategic partner [but] relations with it must be mutually beneficial..."[721] Conceivably, Ianukovych's frustrations could damage Russo-Ukrainian relations further in future.

Conclusion

Between 2000 and 2004, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian political sovereignty. In territorial issues, the Russia-Belarus Union officially remained highly prioritised, with negotiators from the two states even managing to agree on a Constitutional Act for the future unified state. Putin tried to move the plans for such a state forward, ready to incorporate Belarus as part of Russia, and signs even appeared that members of the Ukrainian government would find participation of their state in such a union natural. In matters of governance, the Russian government was

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[719] Molchanov, p. 244

[720] D. Lynch, "From 'Frontier' Politics to 'Border' Politics between the EU and Russia" in O. Antonenko and K. Pinnick, eds., *Russia and the European Union: prospects for a new relationship*, London and New York: Routledge and IISS, 2005, p. 21

[721] I. Gorina, "Samyi bednyi prem'er," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 22.11.2002

willing to brief ambassadors of Belarus before these were stationed in the West, while decision-makers in Moscow continued to mould the Ukrainian government as they preferred, notably dismissing the Western-friendly Tarasiuk. And on the crucial event that was Lukashenko's re-election as President, Putin's regime continued to have trust in him to the extent that the legitimacy of his victory was not only staunchly supported but defended against seeming intervention from abroad. Finally, in matters of ideology programmatic documents presented by the Russian government, such as the Foreign Policy Concept, as well as government-sponsored events such as the year of Russia in Ukraine, and vice versa, demonstrated Russian willingness to keep the neighbouring states close. At the same time, significant politicians such as Chernomyrdin openly informed leaders of neighbouring states that they would not find allies anywhere else; that nobody awaited them in the West.

By now, however, the paradigm of Nation had become somewhat significant, too, in Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian political sovereignty. In territorial matters, Belarusian territorial concerns of being absorbed into Russia were dismissed by the Kremlin, while the dispute over Tuzla showed more Russo-Ukrainian animosity and government-controlled animosity at that, than anything seen during the 1990s. In matters of governance, Tymoshenko in Ukraine warned against Chernomyrdin's meddling and from Moscow warrants for her arrest were presented. In Belarus, Lukashenko feared his domination of the Belarusian polity was being undermined by Putin and his reunification plans. This perception was strongly enforced by Putin's increasingly virulent attacks on Lukashenko. Finally, in matters concerning ideology Russian threats to the Ukrainian economy showed Kuchma that Russian friendship with Ukraine might quickly vanish. In return, even Prime Minister Ianukovych was beginning to complain of arrogant Russians, something that the Russian

Foreign Policy Concept with its implicit lack of trust in Belarusian and Ukrainian statehood did not dispel.

Finally, the significance of the paradigm of Law gradually weakened in Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian political sovereignty. In territorial matters, Russo-Ukrainian land borders were finally demarcated, but events surrounding Tuzla made this seem irrelevant. In matters concerning governance, Putin's Russia was quickly moving away from democracy, at the same time as Lukashenko's even less democratic Belarus was seen in Moscow as less than a problem for Russo-Belarusian cooperation. Finally, in matters concerning ideology Putin did continue to use the multi-national denominator of "rossiiskii," yet this was not his invention and the right to separate Belarusian and Ukrainian statehood seemed somewhat irrelevant in the face of Putin's interest in reinstating Russia as a great power.

Consolidating military sovereignty

Forces of Belarus and Ukraine

Law: Strategic returns

The El'tsin presidency had been marked by a number of agreements concerning Belarusian and Ukrainian military forces, including nuclear weapons and the Black Sea Fleet. Consequently, when Putin became President not much was left for the post-Soviet states to negotiate over. Nevertheless, in early 2000 Russia and Ukraine did manage to agree the sale of a number of strategic Tu-160 aircraft to Russia, even though the ownership of these

airplanes had been disputed since Soviet times.[722] Beyond this success, however, the Ukrainian forces mostly wanted to cooperate with the West and in June, 2001, received significant recognition as one of the biennial EU summits for heads of state mentioned Ukraine as a potential partner for European Security and Defence Policy peace support operations.[723] Not that Ukrainians should get their hopes up too high, since the European Security and Defence Policy had little significant content at this time. Belarusians were even more limited in the military assistance they might find in the West. By mid-2003 the Belarusian Ministry of Defence still officially stressed that: "Cooperation between the military departments of the Republic of Belarus and Russia...is based on the principles of equality and mutual benefits."[724] What Belarusians would do if Russians did not heed this was unclear, though, as Belarusians could probably find no other military partners.

Power: Military cooperation and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation

Consequently, Russo-Belarusian military cooperation had grown steadily under El'tsin. And even before Putin had been inaugurated as President, in April, 2000, the recently appointed commander of the Moscow military district, Colonel General Igor' Puzanov, announced the intention to fully integrate 300,000 Russian and Belarusian military personnel; apparently, forces from Belarus had already been incorporated in the Russian nuclear forces.[725] Indeed, Minsk was the most active post-Soviet participant in implementing military-technical programmes and agreements under the framework Tashkent Treaty from 1992. As of

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[722] "Na ukrainskom aerodrome priluki spetsialisty VVS RF proveriaiut sostoianie dvukh strategicheskikh bombardirovshchikov Tu-160, peredavaemykh Rossii," *Agenstvo voennykh novostei*, 13.1.2000

[723] C. Rontoyanni, "So Far, So Good? Russia and the ESDP," *International Affairs*, 78 (4), 2002, p. 821

[724] "Deiatel'nost' Ministerstva oborony Respubliki Belarus' v ramkakh mezhdunarodnogo voennogo sotrudnichestva" on *Ministerstvo oborony Respubliki Belarus': ofitsial'nyi sait* at www.mod.mil.by/megd_sotr.html (accessed on 9.5.2009)

[725] V. Georgiev, "Sovmestnaia gruppirovka uzhe sushchestvuet," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 19.4.2000

November, 2001, it had signed 91% of all agreements and treaties reviewed by the CIS

Council of Defence Ministers.[726] Nothing comparable had taken place with Ukraine yet, but

from 2000 onwards the Ukrainian armed forces did significantly increase their participation

in various forms of military exercises conducted together with Russian and Belarusian

forces.[727] Later, in 2002, when the Ukrainian military became embroiled in a scandal over

the sale of Kolchuga radar systems to Saddam Hussein's Iraq that was apparently in

contravention of existing UN sanctions, Western criticism forced Kuchma's administration to

seek succour with Russia once more.[728] In the medium term, Russian military leaders began

to envisage eventual Ukrainian membership in the CIS Collective Security Treaty

Organisation (CSTO), which was established in October, 2002. This organisation was based

on the Collective Security Treaty from 1992, but was much more empowered, although its

founders only included Russia and Belarus, and some post-Soviet states within

Transcaucasia and Central Asia. Military equipment was provided by Russia at domestic

prices, and Moscow agreed to cover half of all running costs.[729] Belarusians remained

interested in promoting military integration whenever possible, especially now when

Russians had again promised economic subsidisation through military equipment. In

October, 2003, the Belarusian parliament ratified an agreement on joint logistical support

for the Russo-Belarusian regional group of forces, including Russian use of Belarusian

military infrastructure and the creation of joint medical support.[730] Putin was certain that

even Ukrainian forces would eventually join such cooperation. As a precursor to this, he

advocated from December, 2003 that warships from third states would only be allowed to

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[726] Perepelitsa, p. 139

[727] Shulman, "Ukrainian," p. 41; see for instance "Bratstvo po oruzhiiu," *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, 15.7.2000

[728] M. Balmaceda, "Ukraine's Persistent Energy Crisis," *Problems of Post-communism*, 51 (4), 2004, p. 45

[729] D. Lynch, "The Enemy is at the Gate: Russia after Beslan," *International Affairs*, 81 (1), 2005, p. 149

[730] "Rossiiskuiu armiiu popolniat Belorusskie dobrovol'tsy," *Izvestiia*, 23.10.2003

pass through the Kerch Strait with the joint permission of Russia and Ukraine.[731] It was certainly possible that Putin in future might ask for such joint supervision to be extended along the Ukrainian coastline, where the Russian Black Sea Fleet still remained.

Nation: Weakened Ukrainian military

Unsurprisingly, though, Ukrainians were not prepared to give Russia veto on the use of the Kerch Strait. Russian and Ukrainian disputes in connection with the 1997 naval treaties had resulted in Ukrainian forces conducting manoeuvres within the anti-Russia GUAM. The Russian authorities had been dissatisfied with this, and in 2001 the subsequent Ukrainian First Deputy Minister of Defence, Leonid Poliakov, observed that Ukrainian problems concerning the building of a strong, reformed military force were more acceptable to Russians than Ukrainian success in this area.[732] This was especially true for Russian parliamentarians, who continued to distrust the Ukrainian military. Just as the early 1990s had witnessed Russian warnings of nuclear proliferation via dishonest Ukrainians, in December, 2001, a deputy in the Russian Duma accused the Ukrainian military of having supplied the Taliban in Afghanistan with weapons through the Ukrainian businessman Vadym Rabinovych and the notorious crime lord Semen Mogilevich.[733] Belarusians were not accused by Russians parliamentarians of endangering international, let alone Russian military security, but this would certainly change should Lukashenko be toppled. Indeed, a leading member of the Belarusian National Front, Zianon Pazniak, suggested in an open letter from August, 2002, "the formation of civilian committees to defend against Russian

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[731] F. Surkov, "Southern Russia's Three Seas: the ABCs of sustainable development," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 54 (2), 2007, p. 31

[732] J. Sherr, "Conclusion" in S. Velychenko, ed., *Ukraine, the EU and Russia: history, culture and international relations*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 176

[733] S. Leshchenko, "Ukraiina postachala zbroiu 'Talibanu'?" *Ukraiinska pravda*, 10.12.2001

[*rossiiskoi*] aggression...”[734] Admittedly, this was a minority view, and Lukashenko seemed

safely enthroned. Yet he might, and Kuchma might certainly seek to integrate more with

Western forces. As I wrote above, chances for this were yet limited, but Ukrainian forces did

their best to persuade Americans of their use in August, 2003, as the first group of Ukrainian

peacekeepers were sent to Iraq from their base in Kuwait.[735] Tellingly, this deployment

ignored Russian complaints that “...the Iraqi crisis is being resolved militarily without

permission from the UN Security Council...”[736] and indicated that Kuchma’s government

now opposed Russian attempts to confine the USA within multilateral international fora.

NATO

Law: NATO through Russia

Belarusian suggestions to become part of a neutral belt between Russia and NATO had

continued to exist under Lukashenko. Indeed, although he seldom personally advocated

thus, in April, 2000, he did stress: “...It is necessary to secure an active dialogue not only

with the European Union, but also with the OSCE, NATO and the Council of Europe...We are

interested in normal relations with the North Atlantic alliance and have presented

commensurate statements in this connection.”[737] In stating this, Lukashenko was mirroring

Putin’s new, business-like attitude in Russia, where renewed cooperation with NATO was

increasingly favoured. In January, 2001, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Zlenko, too, hoped that

“Russo-Ukrainian relations would not be damaged by [relations with the EU and NATO]” and

that Putin’s pragmatism would “assist Moscow in swallowing the pill of a more Westernised

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[734] D. Drigailo, “Lider BNF predlagaet sozdat’ ‘komitety’,” *Belorusskaia delovaia gazeta*, 3.9.2002

[735] “Mezhdu tem,” *Krasnaia zvezda*, 9.8.2003

[736] M. Kas’ianov, “Voina v Irake,” *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 21.3.2003

[737] A. Lukashenko, ”Ot stabil’nosti – k ustoichivomu dinamichnomu razvitiiu,” *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, 12.4.2000, p. 2

Ukrainian policy more easily."[738] Zlenko's hopes might be slightly unrealistic, yet with Russo-American cooperation becoming de rigueur by the end of 2001 in the context of the "war on terror" worries about Belarusian and Ukrainian relations with NATO might be expected to become peripheral. Indeed, even before the terrorist attacks on America, in July, 2001, Russian ambassador to Ukraine Chernomyrdin had quoted Putin in stating: "If you [in NATO] want to [expand], please accept Russia into NATO." Chernomyrdin also insisted NATO was not "seen as an enemy."[739]

Power: Cooperation treaty

Yet Chernomyrdin's reassuring tone hardly concurred with Russian opposition to NATO during the 1990s. Russian military officials certainly continued to obstruct Ukrainian cooperation with NATO whenever possible. In January, 2001, Russian Colonel General and head of the Ministry of Defence Department of International Cooperation Leonid Ivashov claimed Russia and Ukraine "reached agreement on the participation of Russia in the planning of multinational military exercises on the territory of Ukraine." This apparently precluded cooperation between Ukraine and NATO.[740] And even when Putin expressed support for NATO following the terrorist attacks on the USA in 2001, the Russian military disagreed. The chief of the Russian general staff, General Anatolii Kvashnin explicitly stated that NATO continued to consider Russia and Belarus as enemies.[741] Kuchma could not have overlooked this comment, yet in November, 2001, he suddenly stated that he did not

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[738] V. Iadukha, "Rossiia – syr'evoi pridatok Ukrainy," *Segodnia*, 3.2.2001

[739] S. Dolzhikov, "Viktor Chernomyrdin," *Flag rodiny*, 1.8.2001

[740] "V Ukraine," *Flag rodiny*, 24.1.2001

[741] J. O'Loughlin, G. Ó Tuathail and V. Kolossov, "A 'Risky Westward Turn'? Putin's 9-11 script and ordinary Russians," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 56 (1), 2004, p. 13

believe two military blocs existed any more in Europe.[742] Possibly, Kuchma had been convinced by Putin's swift support for the USA following the terrorist attacks in September, but the Ukrainian leader could hardly have missed that Putin's support was strongly opposed in Russia. Thus, it might appear that Kuchma simply sought a pretext to increase military cooperation with Russia and Belarus. Belarusians needed no such pretext; their military doctrine stated: "...fundamental external threats to [Belarusian] military security include...the enlargement of military blocs and unions endangering the military security of...Belarus...The Armed Forces [of Belarus]...ensure the strategic independence of...Belarus; ...together with the Russian Federation they help to support military parity and geostrategic stability in the region."[743] Similarly, Lukashenko complained in November, 2002: "We have always interacted with NATO in correspondence with both El'tsin and Putin, but today [the Russians] are trying to send us in alone with [NATO]..."[744] thus primarily appealing for renewed Russian guidance in the military integration of Belarus within a European security framework.

Nation: GUUAM as pro-NATO bloc

However, whereas Lukashenko had domestic support to oppose NATO, in Ukraine NATO was often viewed more favourably. Many politicians had long argued that increased cooperation with NATO would bring military and other benefits to Ukraine.[745] Now, the government promoted the State Programme for Cooperation, which envisaged

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[742] Nygren "Russia's," p. 153

[743] "Voennaia doktrina Respubliki Belarus'," *Ministerstvo oborony Respubliki Belarus'* on www.mod.mil.by/doktrina.html (accessed on 30.3.2009)

[744] I. Zhegulev, "Lukashenko ugrozhaet zatopit' Evropu," *Novoe vremia*, 16.11.2002

[745] O. Belov et al., *Ukraine 2000 and beyond: geopolitical priorities and scenarios for development*, Kyiv: NISS, 1999, p. 84

interoperability with NATO, allowing for numerous Partnership for Peace exercises in Ukraine, such as that conducted in July, 2001.[746] Worse for Russia, such exercises benefitted the Ukrainian military more than cooperation with Russia could. Whereas Belarusians were mostly not interested in closer cooperation with NATO, as witnessed in the weak showing of Vladimir Goncharik in the September, 2001, presidential election after he had championed Belarusian membership of NATO,[747] by November, 2001, Russian commentators worried that the Ukrainian-led GUUAM might want to interact more with NATO: "Until 1999 major military cooperation in the CIS was planned within the framework of the Treaty on Collective Security, which was signed by ten countries...[including] Russia [and] Belarus...They are now being opposed by the pro-NATO alternative military-political bloc GUUAM, which includes Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova."[748] Certainly, GUUAM in itself could not compete with Russia. Yet in July, 2002, Kuchma showed his preference for NATO in a decree initiated by the Ukrainian Security Council that stated Ukraine should seek to improve cooperation with NATO and eventually join it.[749] With this plan, the President who had gained power as an ally of Russia seemed to have moved wholly into the NATO camp.

Forces of the Russian Federation in Belarus and Ukraine

Law: Peacekeeping forces

During the 1990s, Russian elites had attempted to formally regulate the presence of Russian military forces in Belarus and Ukraine. In the early 2000s the Russian executive saw the

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[746] "Na Ukraine nachalis' voennye ucheniia NATO," *Ekonomicheskie novosti*, 6.7.2001

[747] Matsuzato, p. 246

[748] V. Georgiev, "Klub po raznym interesam," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 22.11.2001, p. 5

[749] "Liubov' bez granits?" *Strazh Baltiki*, 16.7.2002

matter as relatively closed and thus seldom participated in new negotiations on the subject. However, the new administration still wanted to give the impression to the West that Russia was a responsible regional great power, and thus in 2002, when the Collective Security Treaty of 1992 was turned into the CSTO, as mentioned earlier, the Russian government emphasised that the new organisation would be registered with the UN and specifically conduct peacekeeping operations.[750]

Power: Union state troops and leasing of missiles

Yet the Russian executive only neglected to negotiate new treaties for its troops in Belarus and Ukraine since it found existing treaties conducive to future military integration between the states, as had mostly been the case during the 1990s, too. On international military affairs, the Belarusian administration was particularly keen to support Russia against the USA, not least when Putin showed willingness to lead the struggle. Noticeably, in November, 2000, Russia, Belarus and China together presented a resolution supporting the continued existence of the 1972 Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty and winning the approval of the UN General Assembly against American intentions to unilaterally dissolve the Treaty.[751] The USA took little notice of this, yet in Moscow it had been noticed that Lukashenko had been one of only two foreign leaders willing to openly defy the USA. Military integration continued apace when state troops belonging to the Russo-Belarusian Union were established by April, 2001.[752] And in April, 2002, Russian Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov claimed that "the reform and construction of the Russian armed forces is carried out in an increasingly synchronous

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[750] I. Oldberg, "Foreign Policy Priorities under Putin: a tour d'horizon" in J. Hedenskog, V. Konnander, B. Nygren, I. Oldberg and C. Pursiainen, eds., *Russia as a Great Power: dimensions of security under Putin*, London: Routledge, 2005, p. 40

[751] V. Likhovid, "SSha prosili RF ne golosovat' za ee zhe proekt v OON," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 25.11.2000

[752] "Soiuz v voennoi sfere," *Ural'skie voennye vesti*, 24.4.2001

fashion with the Belarusian army."[753] He furthermore foresaw a common regional air-defence system,[754] which would increase Russian personnel on existing bases in Belarus. Ivanov did not have similar hopes for Russian bases in Ukraine, but he seemed oblivious to the fact that the Russians might have to leave Crimea. In July, the Defence Minister claimed: "It is always better when the [Black Sea Fleet] can be based in several places...building of the base [in Novorossiisk] certainly doesn't...mean that the Russian sailors are preparing to leave Crimea. The Treaty on the rental of Sevastopol' runs until 2017. And it will most likely be extended."[755] If this could be accomplished, Russian forces in Ukraine would be able to remain close to the West, an objective also held for Russian troops in Belarus. In October, 2003, a joint exercise, Clear Sky-2003, employing Russian troops on Belarusian territory,[756] was followed in November by an agreement on the leasing of Russian S-300 air defence missile systems to Minsk.[757] Accompanying these events, in October the Belarusian parliament ratified an agreement on joint logistical support for the Russian-Belarusian forces, which included provisions that allowed for "...integration of legislation concerning defence, conscription and social security for servicemen"[758] in a move that would help Russian troops to get an increased international presence.

Nation: Discrimination as military threat

However, during the 1990s the Russian government had retained the possibility that Russian forces could be used not only against the West, but also against post-Soviet states such as

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[753] "Prezident Belarusi Aleksandr Lukashenko i ministr oborony Rossii Sergei Ivanov obsudili sotrudnichestvo v sfere bezopasnosti dvukh stran," *Ekonomicheskie novosti*, 16.4.2002

[754] Nygren, "Russia's" pp. 160, 161

[755] D. Litovkin, "Elementy protivodeistviia," *Izvestiia*, 18.7.2003

[756] O. Mazaeva, "Lukashenko gotovitsia k 'iugoslavskomu stsenariiu,'" *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 8.10.2003

[757] T. Rastorgueva, "Voennoe sotrudnichestvo," *Suvorovskii natisk*, 15.11.2003

[758] "Rossiiskuiu"

Belarus and Ukraine. Putin's new military doctrine from April, 2000, underlined this theme again, when it counted among "The main foreign threats...discrimination [and] suppression of Russian citizens' rights, freedoms and lawful interests in foreign states..."[759] Putin evidently believed more in combating these threats than El'tsin had done. In 2001, in his annual address to the Federal Assembly, the President even widened the term concerning people who might be discriminated against to include not just Russian citizens, but compatriots, too; a much looser term that could include any Russian-speakers.[760] This threat was directed against Ukraine, and maybe Belarus, too. Belarusians could hit back, though. In March, 2004, former Defence Minister Pavel Kozlovskii warned that "Russia would be completely blind on its western front without the Volga radar station [in Belarus]...[Furthermore] If Belarus doesn't agree to the operation of [the radar] on its territory, Russia will be blind within a substantial naval [territory]..."[761] Never before had Russian forces so clearly been threatened in Belarus. While Lukashenko hardly wanted to use such language himself, he had no problem warning the self-confident Putin that Russia would do well not to take Belarus for granted.

Conclusion

Between 2000 and 2004, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian military sovereignty. In matters relating to Belarusian and Ukrainian forces increased military cooperation between Russia and Belarus was particularly visible, not least through the CSTO, even if this organisation was still

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[759] *Voennaia doktrina Rossiiskoi*

[760] E. Lucas, *The New Cold War: how the Kremlin menaces both Russia and the West*, London: Bloomsbury, 2008, p. 192

[761] I. Plugatarev and O. Mazaeva, "Lukashenko grozit ustroit' Putinu defolt," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 22.3.2004

untested. Although Ukrainian forces did not cooperate this closely with Russia for now, Putin was certain that Kuchma's administration would be alienated from the West and was comfortable deciding naval rights in the Kerch Strait together with Kuchma. In matters relating to NATO, the Russian political leadership used the Cooperation Treaty with Ukraine mainly to keep the Western organisation out of Ukraine, an aim that was not changed by the "war on terror." At the same time Belarus was co-opted against NATO to the extent that complaints from Minsk were certain to appear the moment Russia did not fully support and protect its neighbour against the allegedly belligerent NATO. Finally, in matters relating to Russian military forces stationed in Belarus and Ukraine there were numerous signs that Russia was entrenching its position. No signs indicated that Russian vessels or personnel were leaving the bases on Sevastopol', and in Belarus local military forces became so integrated with and dependent on Russian personnel and equipment that Lukashenko's administration could hardly extract itself again, should it wish to do so at some point in the future.

By now, however, the paradigm of Nation had become somewhat significant, too, in Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian military sovereignty. The Russian elite were happy for Ukrainian forces to be weak so that these could not begin assisting the West against Russia, or continue to do so in Iraq and elsewhere. In relation to NATO, Putin's administration might have realised that some cooperation remained possible, but while the accession of Belarus and Ukraine to NATO was unacceptable to Russians, Kuchma suggested that Ukraine could seek membership of NATO in the near future, and this might conceivably entice other GUUAM-states to seek membership, too. Finally, in relation to Russian forces stationed in Belarus and Ukraine, the new Russian military doctrine and Putin's belligerent

interpretation of it was accompanied by Ukrainian and even Belarusian threats to evict military installations vital to Russia; a threat that Russian forces were certain to resist.

Finally, the significance of the paradigm of Law gradually weakened in Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian military sovereignty. In matters relating to Belarusian and Ukrainian forces Soviet-era aircraft might have been returned to Russia, but it became increasingly obvious that Ukrainian forces were of no use to Russia. In matters relating to NATO, Putin's professed support for the organisation after 2001 was certainly not meant to allow Belarus and Ukraine to independently engage with the organisation in any way. And in matters relating to Russian forces abroad, professed goals of peacekeeping espoused by the CSTO were in no way followed by action.

Consolidating Economic Sovereignty

Economies of Belarus and Ukraine

Law: Russian military-technological dependence

Previously, some Russian politicians had warned against supporting the Belarusian economy. The Belarusian economy had not been quite as hopeless during the 1990s as some had thought. Most noticeably, Belarusian wages had tripled in dollar terms between 1994 and 2000, surpassing Ukrainian wages in 1995, and even Russian ones by 1999,[762] although this changed as the Russian economy picked up pace after the 1998 financial crisis. Nevertheless, El'tsin had eventually acknowledged that the Ukrainian economy, too, was increasingly self-sufficient, enabling inhabitants in Ukraine to live better lives and

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[762] Wilson and Rontoyanni, p. 44

strengthen their economic sovereignty[763] without overt Russian help. Putin never stated

something similar, yet he could not ignore that by 2002 Ukrainian economic sovereignty was

buttressed by enduring Russian dependence on Ukrainian manufacture of high-technology

equipment, particularly concerning missiles and aircraft. Indeed, 40% to 60% of components

required in Russia for such equipment continued to come from Ukraine.[764] The Ukrainian

government seldom dared to use such economic importance assertively. One exception

came in August, 2003. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Anatolii Zlenko broke with previous

foreign economic strategy when announcing that "Ukraine doesn't intend to coordinate its

entry into the...[World Trade Organisation, or] WTO with Russia..."[765]

Power: Increased imports by Russia and the Single Economic Space

Yet, Zlenko's announcement directly contradicted Kuchma's previous appeal for Russian

economic support, and it was unlikely that Ukraine would be capable of entering the WTO

anytime soon, no matter what. Already, during 2000 trade turnover between Russia and

Ukraine had continued to rise by 18%. This included a 44% growth of Russian imports of

Ukrainian goods,[766] understandable given the renewed upswing in the Russian economy,

but nevertheless noticeable. Following repeated economic crises Ukrainians were therefore

willing to countenance temporary economic integration with Russia and the CIS for short-

term gains,[767] and Zlenko's announcement did not really challenge this. At first, Putin

focused more on the Belarusian economy, though. In January, 2000, he addressed the

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[763] Yeltsin, p. 250

[764] Perepelitsa, p. 155

[765] "Ukraina budet vstupat' v VTO otdel'no ot Rossii," *Izvestiia*, 27.8.2003

[766] Molchanov, p. 288

[767] T. Kuzio, "European, Eastern Slavic, and Eurasian" in J. Moroney, T. Kuzio and M. Molchanov, eds, *Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policy*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002, p. 197

subject of Russo-Belarusian integration by stating that its "main purpose is...'improving the ordinary citizen's life – ordinary Russians [*rossiiany*] and Belarusians."[768] Belarusians, at the same time, needed to retain access to the Russian market for Belarusian goods. Thus, by 2002, Belarus retained a customs arrangement with its eastern neighbour and was the only former Soviet republic apart from Russia to remain within the rouble zone.[769] Russian attempts to further cooperation continued in August, 2002 during a press conference with Putin and Lukashenko, where the former suggested that a Union rouble be introduced "not from 2005 [as previously agreed], but already from...2004."[770] And to underline that this process should centre on Russia, in February, 2003, Tat'iana Paramonova, Deputy Chairman of the Russian Central Bank, stressed that "while the Russian rouble is legal tender on the territory of Russia or other states, the [Russian] Central Bank will be the only place of issue..."[771] By June, such plans were formally endorsed when the Belarusian government agreed to sign "a package of agreements concerning the introduction of the Russian rouble from...2005 as the only legal tender in the Russo-Belarusian Union State"[772] with the Belarusian National Bank "either losing the right to issue currency...or partly reserving the right, following the model...used by England and Scotland."[773] It was unsurprising that Belarusians were prepared to abandon their economic sovereignty to this extent, for they could not receive assistance from other international actors, such as the EU, which also had little interest in expanding cooperation with an economically and politically unreformed Ukraine. Consequently, Kuchma had to "set the 'European choice' aside for better times and

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[768] P. Borodin, "Druz'ia, prekrasen nash Soiuz!" *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 1.4.2000

[769] Birgerson, p. 31

[770] I. Plugatarev, "Ne ob''edineniem, tak rublem," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 9.6.2002

[771] "TsB ostanetsia emissionnym tsentrom," *Izvestiia*, 20.2.2003

[772] I. Sedykh, "Rubl' s zaiach'imi ushami," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 3.7.2003

[773] A. Khandruev, "Nu, 'zaichik,' pogodi!" *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 25.6.2003

worked on the construction of a market for sale of its goods on the territory of the CIS."[774]

Russians could therefore realistically harbour hopes that Ukrainians might be interested in tying their economy closer to that of Russia, and in September, 2003, the Russian leadership finally convinced the leaders of Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan to enter a Single Economic Space (SES); a plan similar to suggested relations between Russia and the EU, although here between highly unequal parties.[775]

Nation: Monetary postponement

Still, what would happen if Belarusians' and Ukrainians' economic interests were incompatible with those of Russians; a tendency that had gradually become visible during the 1990s? Lukashenko had established an authoritarian, highly centralised business community in Belarus and he was hardly going to approve when the Russian authorities allowed businesspeople opposed to him to establish themselves in Russia. This was the case with Iurii Feoktistov, director of the Belarusian Metallurgical Factory until his arrest in 1999. By early 2000, he moved to Russia, from where he promised to create a new enterprise that would remove his former company from the Russian market.[776] At the same time, Russian authorities were tiring of subsidising the Belarusian economy. The latter had long benefitted from the lack of customs between Russia and Belarus to re-export goods from third states to Russia, but from mid-2000, Russia began applying the origin principle of levying VAT in transactions with Belarusian firms, who consequently lost profits of $150-200 million per

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[774] I. Guzhva, "Proekt chetyrekh prezidentov," *Ekspert*, 3.3.2003; also A. Bekker and O. Gavrish, "Siurpriz iz Kieva," *Vedomosti*, 11.9.2003

[775] K. Barysch, "EU-Russia Economic Relations" in O. Antonenko and K. Pinnick, eds., *Russia and the European Union: prospects for a new relationship*, London and New York: Routledge and IISS, 2005, p. 124

[776] Matsuzato, pp. 249, 250

year.[777] Then, in January, 2001, the Russian State Customs Committee decreed that companies had "lost the right to tax cargo in Belarus and then export it duty-free to Russia." From previous experience it was clear that such a measure would be popular among Russian importers, while Belarusian companies would experience substantially decreased activity.[778] Belarusian retaliation followed. In November, 2001, after Russo-Belarusian discussions regarding monetary union and the introduction of the Russian rouble as the sole currency for the two states, Lukashenko threatened to postpone discussions of a Central Bank, monetary policies and a common currency.[779] Putin would hear nothing of this. In June, 2002, he stated that Russia would no longer bankroll the ineffective Belarusian economy, even if this would speed up efforts at reintegration between the two states.[780] Subsequently, Putin again stated that a union would damage the economically stronger Russia and opposed formal equality between the states since "the Belarusian economy constitutes 3% of the Russian economy and thus Russia should have the right of veto in the construction of the Union."[781] Yet Putin could seemingly not put an end to Lukashenko's procrastination. By July, 2003, the Russian rouble should have been introduced in nominal form in Belarus. However, Lukashenko was furious that Russian companies continued to highlight Belarusian indebtedness and refused to accept the rouble as common currency until the Russian leadership "extended credit [to Belarus] in the amount of 4.5 billion roubles..."[782] At the same time, Russian connections with the Ukrainian economy also faltered, again partly given Putin's belligerence. In 2002, mutual protectionism caused a

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[777] A-M. Gulde, E. Jafarov and V. Prokopenko, "A Common Currency for Belarus and Russia?" in L. de Souza and P. De Lombaerde, eds., *The Periphery of the Euro: monetary and exchange rate policy in CIS countries*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, p. 211

[778] V. Lavitskii, "Import uvodiat ot Belorussii," *Delovoi Peterburg*, 26.1.2001

[779] Nygren, "Russia's" p. 159

[780] R. Sakwa, *Putin: Russia's choice (2nd ed.)*, London: Routledge, 2008, p. 297

[781] "V. Putin," *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 14.6.2002

[782] A. Bekker, "Zhuliki za bestsenok nashi predpriiatiia ne voz'mut," *Vedomosti*, 1.7.2003

setback in trade relations between Russia and Ukraine. During the first half of this year alone, bilateral trade fell by 13%.[783] The problem was not least that Ukrainians increasingly feared that Russia was holding the Ukrainian economy back. After the creation of the SES in 2003, the fear crystallised in the belief that participation in this organisation would deflect Kyiv from what was seen as a much more important economic objective of WTO accession,[784] which eventually led Zlenko to refuse cooperation with Russia here, as described above. It is worth stressing, however, on the background just described that Zlenko's statement should be read less as an announcement of Ukrainian strengths and more as a signal to Russians that they could no longer bully Ukrainians into submission; a resistance seldom registered in the Ukrainian government during the 1990s.

Energy

Law: Mutual principles

During the 1990s Russian authorities had begun attempting to place energy relations with Belarus and Ukraine on a formalised, stable footing. Continuing this policy, in December, 2000, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kas'ianov and his Ukrainian counterpart Iushchenko agreed "...to secure uninterrupted supply to Ukraine of Russian gas, uninterrupted transit of Russian gas to Europe and the necessary settlement of payment for gas by Ukraine."[785] During the following decade, though, it became increasingly clear that Russo-Ukrainian energy disputes had not disappeared for good. This was despite the fact that such normalisation might have benefitted both Russian and Ukrainian economic actors. In Russia, Gazprom Director Rem Viakhirev needed to strengthen his position within Russia, and

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[783] V. Kniazhanskii, "Velikie namiry," *Den'*, 20.8.2002

[784] B. Lo, *Axis of Convenience: Moscow, Beijing, and the new geopolitics*, London: RIIA, 2008, p. 232

[785] "Podpisi pod memorandumom," *Delovaia Ukraina*, 8.12.2000

Gazprom itself needed to rectify lack of payments from Ukraine to increase its own international credit ranking.[786] To achieve this, Ukraine was offered a reasonable deal by Gazprom, which allowed Ukraine to draw off 30 billion cubic metres per year, which, combined with a similar amount of Turkmen gas and 18 billion cubic metres of gas produced domestically, provided Ukraine with the annual amount of 78 billion cubic metres.[787] In Ukraine, elites were able to use such Russian concessions to strengthen their negotiating position. By May, 2002, the Ukrainian government expanded the oil terminal near Odesa, modernising refineries to create a combined processing potential of 20 million tonnes of crude. The new pipeline from Odesa to Brody in western Ukraine also became operational, doubling annual throughput capacity.[788] Putin ostensibly accepted this state of affairs; following a meeting with Kuchma and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in June, 2002, he even claimed that his state really wanted to safeguard European energy security in general: "This will not only ensure energy stability in Europe, it'll promote stable prices for consumers."[789] So, allegedly, energy cooperation between formally equal partners benefitted Russia, Ukraine, and everybody else. Well, almost everybody, since Lukashenko disliked that Ukraine received more Russian attention and decided to emphasise Belarusian economic sovereignty to remind Russians of his existence. In July, 2003, he thus suddenly refused to sell a majority stake in Beltranshaz to Russia, arguing that if Belarus lost control of this company, it would sell control of the state, as well.[790] The President did not accuse

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[786] Bukkvoll, "Off," p. 1144

[787] Adams, "Russia's," p. 18

[788] A. Tutushkin and O. Gavrish, "Razvernut' trubu v Odessu," *Vedomosti*, 31.10.2002; Wilson, *Ukrainians*, p. 277

[789] "Bespereboinyi tranzit," *Narodnoe slovo*, 12.6.2002

[790] B. Nygren, "Putin's Use of Natural Gas to Reintegrate the CIS Region," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 55 (4), 2008, p. 6

Russia of any subversive activity, however, and Lukashenko might simply have been inspired by Ukrainian attempts to secure their energy sovereignty.

Power: Energy dependence and acquiring energy infrastructure

Not that Lukashenko's incessant search for Russian energy subsidies during the 1990s had indicated such sovereignty, however. Members of the Russian executive were certainly sufficiently convinced of Lukashenko's energy dependency, for Borodin in February, 2000, to describe Belarus as the "...bridge between Europe and Asia. If we build this bridge, gas and oil won't be stolen from us in Ukraine [and] the Baltic States won't fleece us."[791] Not that Ukraine had much option to anger Russians on energy questions, though, since Ukrainian energy needs exceeded domestic supply. Even after oil consumption had fallen by 57% during the 1990s, by 2000 only 25% of domestic demand was covered by its 395 million barrels of reserves. Imports came primarily from Russia or through Russia from Kazakhstan.[792] Additionally, between 2000 and 2002 several Russian companies took control over their Ukrainian counterparts. Tatneft and Tatneftprom consolidated their control over the Kremenchug oil refinery with 57% of the shares; Tiumen Oil Company acquired a 67% stake in the Lynos refinery; while 52% of the shares in the Odesa refinery went to Lukoil and Syntez Oil.[793] The deals received formal Russo-Ukrainian backing at the February, 2001, Dnipropetrovs'k bilateral summit, when Anatolii Chubais of the Russian state-owned Unified Energy Systems and Ukrainian Minister for Fuel and Energy Sergei Ermilov signed a memorandum for the unification of the energy infrastructure in the two states, particularly benefitting Russia. Chubais even triumphantly announced that "the unification...in size even

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[791] P. Borodin, "'My zdelaem takoi soiuz, chto NTV pridetsia zakryt'," *Moskovskie novosti*, 1.2.2000
[792] Abdelal, p. 111
[793] Puglisi, p. 839

surpassed the Soviet system."[794] Finally, at the time Putin and Kuchma began to discuss the repair of existing gas pipelines in Ukraine, preparing for the expansion of their capacity to accommodate Russian gas exports to Central and Western Europe.[795] So Ukraine often accepted its dependency on Russian energy, unlike what Borodin had feared. To show their appreciation for this, during 2001 the leadership of Gazprom delivered 78 billion cubic metres of natural gas to Ukraine as payment for the energy transits to the West across Ukraine.[796] This was certainly a profitable arrangement for Ukraine, but one which increased its energy dependence. The tendency continued in October, 2002, when Gazprom and Naftohaz signed new gas transit deals, which for the first time allowed partial Russian ownership of Ukrainian gas infrastructure,[797] allegedly reducing the Ukrainian share to 30%.[798] Subsequently, Ukrainian Prime Minister Anatolii Kinakh was replaced with the "even more pro-Muscovite" Ianukovych in November.[799] Yet Russians were not satisfied with controlling the gas resources moving to Ukraine, but also wanted to ensure their safe transit. In May, 2003, advanced talks thus took place between Putin and Kuchma concerning the construction of a consortium controlling the gas infrastructure in Ukraine.[800] In principle, the two heads of state agreed to sell large parts of the Ukrainian gas transit system to Russia to offset existing debts of approximately $2 billion owed for gas deliveries.[801] Additionally, indirect subsidisation of energy deliveries to Ukraine was provided by the introduction of a new middleman, RosUkrEnergo, between Gazprom and the Ukrainian state gas company.

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[794] V. Sokolova, "Tenevoi vizit," *Izvestiia*, 13.2.2001

[795] Nygren, "Russia's," p. 155

[796] M. Mukhtarova, "Rossiia-Ukraina," *Trud*, 23.11.2001

[797] O. Vasil'ev, "Ukraina pustila 'Gazprom' v svoi seti," *Konservator*, 1.11.2002

[798] Bugajski, p. 87

[799] V. Dzhalagoniia, "Konfiguratsiia po-ukrainski," *Ekho planety*, 29.11.2002

[800] G. Kochuk, "Vladimir Putin v Ialte," *Trud*, 5.5.2003

[801] A. Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Vision of Russia as a Normal Great Power," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 21 (2), 2005, p. 146

RosUkrEnergo was half owned by Gazprom and half by unknown, presumably Ukrainian investors, leaving observers to wonder what the Ukrainian leadership might gain from an arrangement that was increasingly opaque and difficult for Ukraine to extract itself from. Possibly, Kuchma sought personal advantage from tying Ukraine even closer to Russian energy. At least, in late 2005, the head of the Ukrainian Security Services Oleksandr Turchynov alleged that RosUkrEnergo had been installed through "an arrangement between the [Kuchma] leadership and Russian oligarchs" since Kuchma, together with Ukrainian oligarchs Viktor Pinchuk and Rinat Akhmetov, controlled half of the new firm through offshore entities.[802] Were Lukashenko and his Belarusian allies benefitting from similar arrangements? No equivalent of RosUkrEnergo existed for Belarus, yet in April, 2002, the Belarusian government readily signed an intergovernmental agreement with Russia, expanding energy cooperation with Russia. The agreement stated "...by July, 2003, a joint stock company shall be created...on the basis of the Belarusian gas infrastructure."[803] Gazprom was to receive 25-30% of Beltransgaz in return for writing off $80 million Belarusian arrears.[804] It is unclear whether Lukashenko gained personally from this agreement, but even if this was not the case he could hardly have resisted it, since Belarus was certainly among the post-Soviet states most dependent on Russian energy. By 2003, it still depended on its eastern neighbour for 83% of its oil consumption, and as much as 94% of its needs in gas.[805]

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[802] A. Eremenko, "Gazovaia teorema," *Zerkalo nedeli*, 30.12.2005; Balmaceda, *Energy*, p. 125

[803] "O podpisanii Soglasheniia mezhdu Pravitel'stvom Rossiiskoi Federatsii i Pravitel'stvom Respubliki Belorussiia o rasshireniia sotrudnichestva v gazovoi otrasli," *Pravitel'stvo Postanovleniia*, 12.4.2002, article 5

[804] Bugajski, p. 67

[805] Wilson and Rontoyanni, p. 43

Nation: Turning off the gas

Russian observers feared, though, that Belarusian and Ukrainian elites would attempt to escape Russian control whenever possible; this had happened during the 1990s. Consequently, Russian commentators continuously suggested that Belarusians and Ukrainians should be forced to accept ever narrower policy options. A typical example of this tactic from February, 2000, read: "...it is necessary to pay taxes on [oil] exports [outside the Customs Union]. Thus, it is more profitable for Russian oil companies to send oil to [the West]. The solution is for Ukraine to enter the Customs Union..."[806] And Putin readily risked the reputation of Russia as a reliable energy provider to ensure compliance with Russian wishes. After he in May, 2000, had discussed "the transfer of control over Ukrainian gas infrastructure to Russia in return for [the absolution] of [Ukrainian] debts"[807] Putin even allowed Ukraine to be charged slightly more for gas than Western customers were, and over three times more than Belarus.[808] On the other hand, however, at this time Ukrainian energy elites were still illegally tapping more natural gas from the Gazprom pipelines than they received in payments from the transited gas.[809] So when the Russian government highlighted internationally that irresponsible Belarusians and Ukrainians might endanger European energy security it did have a case. Witness Russian Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Khristenko in July, 2000, defending Russian plans to construct gas pipelines circumventing Ukraine: "This is an economic issue, which is connected to the energy security of Europe in the 21st century."[810] However, Russians offered Ukrainians and Belarusians meagre benefits because they expected them to break existing agreements, anyway. By March, 2001,

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[806] S. Babaeva, "Khochetsia deneg zhivykh," *Izvestiia*, 23.2.2000

[807] V. Iadukha, "'Zhivye' den'gi nuzhny vsem," *Segodnia*, 30.5.2000

[808] Dunlop, "Reintegrating," p. 42

[809] Abdelal, p. 111

[810] A. Khodorovskii, "Varshava ne pustit gaz," *Vedomosti*, 25.7.2000

Belarusian oil companies were thus formally only allowed to retain 10% of re-exported

Russian oil, although the remaining profits never returned to Russia.[811] The arrangement

allowed Russian elites the better of two worlds: Belarusians and Ukrainians could be kept

happy by unofficially permitted thefts, which Russians could then complain loudly about

whenever they wanted international opinion on their side. Russians could furthermore use

energy thefts to increasingly force concessions or payments of debts from Ukraine, by

cutting off gas supplies, as was done on several occasions during the first half of 2001.[812]

Third states unfortunate enough to depend on transit of Russian energy through Belarus

and Ukraine were in danger, too, as witnessed in Moldova in early 2004.[813] Yet although

Kuchma understood he could not win the dispute, he did not stop thefts of Russian energy.

Maybe because the existing system of opaque dependency benefitted him personally, as I

mentioned above, and certainly because the illegal export to the West of gas stolen and

imported from Russia continued to be highly profitable for Ukrainian businessmen who

constituted Kuchma's principal domestic supporters. It was estimated that between 2001

and 2004 alone such activities brought Ukrainian groups up to $1.5 billion in net profits.[814]

Similar arrangements were visible in Belarus, but Lukashenko had previously seemed more

accommodating than Kuchma towards Russian wishes. Thus, Khristenko and his colleagues

did not wish to denounce Belarusian energy theft openly if it could be avoided, yet the

Russian leadership wanted concessions in return. A bilateral gas sector agreement in April,

2002, suggested registration of a Russo-Belarusian joint company by the following year.

However, Russians resisted a suggested minority stake, and was only willing to pay a third of

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[811] M. Ignatova, "Neft' dyrochku naidet," *Izvestiia*, 2.3.2001

[812] A. Jaffe and R. Manning, "Russia, Energy and the West," *Survival*, 43 (2), 2001, p. 140

[813] R. Lyne, S. Talbott and K. Watanabe, *Engaging with Russia: the next phase*, Washington, Paris and Tokyo: The Trilateral Commission, 2006, p. 110

[814] Balmaceda, *Energy*, p. 100

Lukashenko's suggested price.[815] For now, Lukashenko continued to agree to these conditions, but it was increasingly clear that his energy promises could not be trusted. In January, 2003, he announced that he had signed a decree providing for the capitalisation, and thus Russification, of Beltransgaz. But five months later, Lukashenko still claimed that the conditions, which had been presented by Russia, were unacceptable.[816] The leadership of Gazprom was not pleased and in September, 2003, reacted to Lukashenko's procrastination regarding energy and monetary union by announcing an end to existing energy subsidisation.[817] Without such subsidisation, though, Russia would have little influence over Lukashenko, and Lukashenko knew this.

Economic actors of the Russian Federation in Belarus and Ukraine

Law: Attempting binding agreements

During the 1990s, the Belarusian economy had held the potential to be attractive to outside investors, including those from Russia, even if this potential had not been realised. Nevertheless, whereas Belarusian exports to Russia by 2000 mostly consisted of value-added products, over 60% of the imports received by Belarus from Russia consisted of raw materials.[818] Still, the Belarusian authorities had long proved reluctant to welcome Russian businessmen. Surprisingly, perhaps, Ukrainians were more welcoming, particularly between March, 2000, and August, 2001, under Prime Minister Iushchenko. Under this supposedly anti-Russian politician, foreign bidders won nearly all privatisation auctions, and in half the

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[815] D. Butrin, N. Grib and P. Sapozhnikov, "Aleksandra Lukashenko travlia gazom ne beret: chto oznachaiut itogi sochinskoi vstrechi dvukh prezidentov dlia Rossii," *Kommersant*, 17.9.2001, p. 1

[816] E. Baikova and O. Mazaeva, "Lukashenko gotovitsia k zime," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 26.6.2003

[817] R. Legvold, "The United States, the European Union, NATO, and the Economics of Ukrainian and Belarusian Security" in R. Legvold and C. Wallander, eds., *Swords and Sustenance: the economics of security in Belarus and Ukraine*, Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2004, p. 223

[818] Ioffe, *Understanding Belarus Western*, p. 116

cases the victors were large Russian enterprises. Interestingly, the opposite tendency was later displayed when supposedly pro-Russian Ianukovych became Ukrainian Prime Minister.[819] Ianukovych was perhaps worried about the two to three million economic migrants leaving Ukraine for Russia during this period.[820] While the Russian authorities might thus be praised for offering work to a number of Ukrainians, as well as Russians, they also damaged Ukraine by withdrawing valuable members of the workforce from a continuously weak economy. Belarus, too, was subject to ambiguous Russian assistance. In January, 2003, Russia and Belarus agreed to introduce the Russian rouble in Belarus from 2005. For Belarus, this would mean decreased inflation and a budget in surplus, yet it would also force the Belarusian government to carry through reforms similar to those in Russia with a freer market open to Russian and other foreign investors.[821]

Power: Subsidising through customs losses and the Single Economic Space

In sum, therefore, Belarusian vulnerability to Russian investors remained as clear as it had been during the 1990s. By April, 2000, Russians continued to accept economic losses to lure Belarusians into providing Russian companies with unlimited access. The customs union alone cost Russia a minimum $600 million annually, and maybe ten times that amount, since it was well-known that the majority of household appliances, technology and similar products arrived in Belarus via Russia.[822] Control of post-Soviet economies was now more important than immediate profit for Russian actors. This did not just relate to the energy

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[819] H. Pleines, "Manipulating Politics: domestic investors in Ukrainian privatisation auctions 2000-2004," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60 (7), 2008, p. 1192

[820] A. Lieven, "The Secret Policemen's Ball: the United States, Russia and the international order after 11 September," *International Affairs*, 78 (2), 2002, p. 255

[821] M. Sokolov, "Edinyi rubl'," *Orenburzh'e*, 25.1.2003

[822] S. Pisarevich, "V poiskakh variantov," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 20.4.2000

sector. In December, 2000, Russian Minister for the Economy German Gref "...announced that agreement had been reached with [Ukrainian authorities] on the conversion of gas debts to securities, which would enable Russia to take part in privatisation...[especially] the aviation industry."[823] Indeed, during 2000 alone, Russian companies invested more than $200 million by buying companies in Ukraine.[824] During following year, imports from Russia still constituted 38% of all imports in Ukraine. Consequently, even ten years after achieving political sovereignty, the economic sovereignty of Belarus and Ukraine relative to Russia remained in question.[825] By 2002, Russian firms were the largest source of foreign direct investment in Ukraine with officially 18% of the total; and probably much more considering the numerous legally Ukrainian firms that were fronts for Russian owners.[826] Yet Putin also wanted to safeguard Russian investors' access to Belarusian and Ukrainian markets in the longer term. Therefore, at a bilateral summit with Kuchma in November, 2001, Putin stated that: "Russia in the very nearest future would agree with...Tajikistan, Ukraine and Belarus on establishing free economic zones."[827] Later, in May, 2003, when meeting Kuchma for an informal summit, the nineteenth in two years, Putin advocated a CIS free trade zone and cooperation between military-industrial complexes: "Yesterday, we talked more about the Common Economic Space, today [we talked] about bilateral economic relations...the necessity of accelerating...agreements that would underline the strategic aspect of our relations."[828] Such economic cooperation would undoubtedly benefit Russian companies the most, but Kuchma and Lukashenko agreed to their establishment if Putin helped them out in

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[823] A. Kasaev and S. Pravosudov, "Putin podderzhal Kuchmu," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 5.12.2000
[824] Mihkelson, p. 103
[825] Puglisi, p. 838
[826] Wallander, p. 94
[827] L. Kalashnikov and A. Malevanyi, "Iubileinyi, no delovoi," *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, 4.12.2001
[828] A. Reut, "Ialtinskaia konferentsiia v galstukakh i bez," *Gazeta*, 5.5.2003

other issues. In a similar trade-off, during 2002 the Russian government and elements of Russian business convinced Lukashenko to privatise several major enterprises in Belarus of interest to them. These enterprises included television manufacturer Gorizont and the Gomel' chemical plant, which would be sold in return for official Russian blessings and support for Lukashenko's presidential re-election.[829] The Belarusian leader had little choice but to accept the offer, since Russia at the time continued to account for two-thirds of Belarusian imports, much more than the 10% coming from the second-largest source, Germany.[830] With Kuchma's and Lukashenko's support thus ensured, in September, 2003, the Russian-led SES appeared. Its provision that "The number of votes to any member state depends on its economic potential" empowered Russia. Aims included ensuring free trade and other financial services as well as coordination of negotiations by member states with the WTO,[831] illustrating how the Ukrainian government had reversed its position on the WTO from a few years earlier. Many Russians rejoiced. Chubais now advocated the construction of a Russian-led "liberal empire,"[832] while parliamentarian Vadim Gustov described the SES as "a new superpower."[833] All this praise appeared for an organisation allegedly without much economic rationale.[834] But maybe that was the wrong way to put it; the SES might not provide immediate economic advantages, but it could help Russian companies to acquire strategically important assets. Ukrainians might have little choice, but to accept the situation. In December, 2003, Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Mykola Azarov realised that Russia through the SES could subsidise Ukraine with tax-free energy; thus,

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[829] "Regional'nyi teletaip," *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, 4.6.2002; Wilson and Rontoyanni, p. 48

[830] Deyermond, "State," p. 1199

[831] *Kontseptsiia formirovaniia edinogo ekonomicheskogo prostranstva (19.9.2003)* on www.kremlin.ru/text/docs/2003/09/52480.shtml (accessed on 17.7.2009)

[832] B. Gorlin, "Anatolii Chubais vystupil s predvybornoi rech'iu," *Kommersant*, 26.9.2003

[833] Bukkvoll, "Private," p. 16

[834] Ibid

Azarov insisted on "the establishment of irreversible and unlimited free trade zones as the first step taken by the SES..."[835] although this would benefit Russian companies in Ukraine disproportionately.

Nation: Unwanted imports

It was clear from the beginning of Putin's presidency, however, that Belarusian and Ukrainian administrations did not appreciate the new Russian drive for investments abroad. This drive had already caused anxiety during El'tsin's second term, yet at that time El'tsin, if not his allies, had accepted neighbouring regimes needed some time to adjust their laws. Putin was not so tolerant. The Belarusian National Bank had long been one of the main actors helping Belarusian companies to withstand aggressive Russian companies, and in December, 2000, an exasperated Putin pushed hard for gaining control over the Bank, complaining "If we want to create a union state, then we have to voluntarily give up some sovereignty. We already agreed this one hundred, a thousand times."[836] Later, throughout the summer of 2001, pro-Kremlin Russian television aired a number of programmes criticising Belarusian economic exploitation of Russia and pressuring Minsk towards new, economic deals more favourable to Moscow.[837] At the same time, protracted Russian accusations against the allegedly ultra-nationalistic Iushchenko forced Kuchma to fire his Prime Minister, after the latter had finally begun blocking attempted takeovers of Ukrainian companies by Russian firms.[838] This claim appeared despite the fact that Iushchenko, as I mentioned earlier, had been relatively amicable towards Russian investments in Ukraine.

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[835] N. Alekseeva, "'Chetverka' s kartami," *Izvestiia*, 20.12.2003

[836] V. Sokolova, "Belorussiia soglasna na rubl'," *Izvestiia*, 1.12.2000

[837] Bugajski, p. 65

[838] M. MacKinnon, *The New Cold War: revolutions, rigged elections and pipeline politics in the former Soviet Union*, New York: Carroll & Graf, 2007, p. 81

Yet his removal demonstrated that Kuchma could be bullied into submission by Putin, even though Russian investments in Ukraine were mostly of dubious value for the host state. Indeed, some Russian imports directly threatened several aspects of Ukrainian security. According to the International Migration Organisation in 2002, 47% of detained trespassers, 75% of weapons, 48% of ammunition, and 81% of drugs seized by Ukrainian border guards were intercepted on the Ukrainian-Russian border.[839] Lukashenko remained more of a problem. The above-mentioned trade-off, by which Russian companies would be preferentially treated in Belarus in return for support for Lukashenko's re-election campaign,[840] did not materialise. Indeed, after victory had been secured Lukashenko readily demanded that the Belarusian state retain control with most privatised companies in the state.[841] Not that Russian media were suddenly allowed to challenge Lukashenko. In January, 2003, Belarus stopped retransmitting Russian radio programmes from the Golos Rossii, Iunost' and Maiak stations.[842] And then In June, 2003, the television company NTV, owned by Gazprom, was banned from operating in Belarus, at the same time as NTV correspondent Pavel Selin was expelled.[843] In Ukraine, Kuchma's government could not afford so blunt measures, but the opposition was more aggressive. In February, 2003, parliament was informed by Valentyna Semeniuk, Socialist chairwoman of the Monitoring Commission for Privatisation, that: "...as a result of privatisation in Ukraine a number of strategic branches of industry have been concentrated in the hands of representatives of...Russia. This constitutes a threat to national security."[844] Therefore, if Lukashenko was

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[839] Gonzales, p. 48

[840] I. Andreev and I. Maksimov, "Lukashenko, kak i bylo skazano," *Vremia novostei*, 11.9.2001

[841] V. Bibikov, "Den'gi ne znaiut granits," *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, 31.10.2001 ; Hedenskog, p. 136

[842] S. Malinovskii and A. Slanskaia, "Blokada?" *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 11.1.2003

[843] "Pavlu Selinu na piat' let otkazano v prave v''ezda v Belorussiiu," *Kommuna*, 1.7.2003

[844] "Rossiiskii biznes kak ugroza natsional'noi bezopasnosti Ukrainy," *Zerkalo nedeli*, 1.3.2003

allowed to harass Russian companies for long, Ukrainians might be inspired to follow his example.

Conclusion

Between 2000 and 2004, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian economic sovereignty. Belarus and Ukraine remained severely economically dependent on Russia, and this dependency was only set to increase after a number of agreements were struck, notably including monetary union between Russia and Belarus, and culminating in the agreement on the Single Economic Space, an organisation that Belarusians signed enthusiastically up to, and which even Ukrainians did not feel they could avoid. In issues relating to energy, the same overwhelming Belarusian and Ukrainian dependence on Russian deliveries continued to be visible. Deliveries were mostly subsidised and Belarusian and Ukrainian leaders seemed to benefit personally from this, but in return Russian attempts to acquire energy infrastructure abroad was becoming much more organised than it had been under El'tsin, with Putin making clear that he expected Belarusians and Ukrainians to see the wisdom in unifying the energy space under Russian control. Finally, in issues relating to Russian companies operating in Belarus and Ukraine, it became increasingly clear that their interest was rather to obtain increasing amounts of control over local markets, as opposed to maximising any profits. The very costly plans for customs unions, free trade zones, and acquisitions of unprofitable Belarusian and Ukrainian companies was defended both by Putin, by members of his administration, and by his domestic political opponents as a price worth paying for such control, exercised especially through the SES.

By now, however, the paradigm of Nation had become somewhat significant, too, in Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian economic sovereignty. The Belarusian economy was now thoroughly mistrusted by Russians. Putin repeatedly warned that any Russo-Belarusian integration should not hurt the Russian economy, plans to create a single Russo-Belarusian currency were postponed, and Belarusian businesspeople, who had been persecuted by Lukashenko, might now receive succour in Russia. Furthermore, disruption of Russian energy deliveries was becoming increasingly common, and it was increasingly obvious that these disruptions were meant to force politicians in Minsk and Kyiv to sell controlling stakes in local energy infrastructure to Russia. Energy theft was allowed to take place, but only because Russians knew this would provide Russia with legitimate reason to complain, if necessary. Finally, Russian investments were becoming increasingly disliked by the Belarusian and Ukrainian governments. A particular problem was constituted by Russian media companies, which were often critical of Lukashenko and consequently suffered legal problems in Belarus.

Finally, the significance of the paradigm of Law gradually weakened in Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian economic sovereignty. The Russian military-technological complex did continue to depend on Ukrainian products for the development of their goods, yet this dependence would undoubtedly weaken over time. Likewise, although Gazprom and other Russian energy companies were eager to agree long-term contracts with Belarus and Ukraine, and although Putin argued this was good for European energy security, such Russian sentiments mostly appeared because economic dominance had been achieved. Finally, Russian companies allowed onto the Ukrainian market by Iushchenko appreciated the open post-Soviet economy, but only to the extent it benefitted them.

Consolidating cultural sovereignty

History

Law: Nationalism as protest

Russian scholars in the mid-1990s had acknowledged sovereign Ukrainian history-writing as legitimate. By the early 2000s, however, Russians increasingly saw such history-writing as transitory in nature. In June, 2000, Tsipko did accept a sovereign Ukrainian history "...because of the extraordinary attachment of the Ukrainian to the all-Russian, to the old-Russian, to the Russian [and] to the Soviet...Ukraine, in order to become independent, had to emphasise what distinguished it and even make this singularity, particularity, specificity up."[845] This, though, described a very instrumental use of history, as opposed to a history that was genuinely different from that of Russia. Admittedly, when Kuchma's supporters displaced the left from the leadership in the Verkhovna Rada Russians could not ignore that some Soviet symbols disappeared from Ukrainian political life. Indeed, the Communist Party of Ukraine was forced to accept the abolition of the October Revolution holiday and the removal of Soviet insignia from the parliamentary building.[846] Yet new official interpretations of Ukrainian history remained scarce. Similarly, Lukashenko seemed to have little interest in establishing a new, sovereign historical interpretation that would focus on Belarus alone and not on the Russo-Belarusian relationship. Such an interpretation might just find support in society. A study conducted in 2002 showed that the historical figure recognised by most respondents in Belarus, 62%, as a genuinely Belarusian personality was the 16th century scholar and Bible translator Skaryna. Yet although Lukashenko and his

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[845] A. Tsipko, "Muki razvoda," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 28.6.2000, pp. 1, 2
[846] Wilson, *Virtual*, pp. 252, 253

government did allow the main street in Minsk to be renamed Skaryna Avenue[847] they

hardly bothered to use him as a Belarusian symbol.

Power: Blood-kin

Instead, Belarusian official history was often similar to Russian history, and this pleased the

Russian leadership. During the 1990s, the El'tsin administration had consistently highlighted

a common Russo-Belarusian past, and El'tsin had believed such a past existed. In his

memoirs, El'tsin even denoted Belarusians as "blood-kin" to Russians, marking them as

especially close relatives beyond their more general membership of the Slav community,[848]

united by historical trajectories for the last 1,000 years. And despite Skaryna, Lukashenko's

administration could use such a past, too, not least to vilify the West as the enemy that only

Lukashenko could stand up to. For example, before the October, 2000 Belarusian

parliamentary election, the movie An Autumn Fairytale claimed that a happy, prosperous

Soviet Union had been dismantled by Gorbachev and drunk leaders of sovereign Russia,

Belarus and Ukraine, to the delight of Western actors.[849] At the same time, officially

sanctioned Belarusian scholars, including Andrei Ekadumau in 2002, emphasised that the

Imperial and Soviet pasts had influenced Belarusian identity quite differently. Whereas the

former period had allegedly been marred by cultural Russification, this had not been a

problem in the Soviet Union.[850] Lukashenko and Kuchma, too, needed what glory might be

salvaged from Soviet years in order to obscure the troubled, impoverished post-Soviet

history. In October, 2000, Kuchma thus echoed Soviet interpretations of the Second World

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[847] G. Ioffe, "Understanding Belarus: Belarusian identity," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 55 (8), 2003, p. 1262

[848] Yeltsin, p. 239

[849] Wilson, *Virtual*, p. 64

[850] Ioffe, "Understanding Belarus Belarussian," p. 1256

War, and refused to change these as the post-Soviet years progressed.[851] Similarly, in the Ukrainian political opposition, by 2002 the Communist Party of Ukraine introduced the Kremlin clock tower, formerly a highly prominent Soviet symbol, as its own symbol.[852] Such gestures enjoyed widespread popularity, since the Soviet past had by now acquired a rosy sheen throughout post-Soviet society. For instance, in a survey conducted in Russia during the summer of 2001, 70% of respondents at least somewhat agreed that it was a great misfortune that the Soviet Union no longer existed.[853]

Nation: Liberator or occupier, and the winter of war

Nevertheless, during the 1990s Ukrainian nationalists had begun to understand how pre-Soviet history might be used as a tool to legitimate opposition to Russia on non-cultural issues. While Imperial General Aleksandr Suvorov was revered in Russia as victor over the Napoleonic army, Ukrainian historians had long decried him as an occupier.[854] By 2001, some Belarusian historians began challenging his status, too.[855] And ever so slowly, anger towards Russian behaviour within the Soviet Union was becoming visible, too. By 2002, some Ukrainians were describing nationalist partisan leaders from the Second World War, notably including Stepan Bandera, as heroes for their resistance against the Red Army, although precisely such resistance marked Bandera as a war criminal in Russia.[856] Kuchma did not personally support Bandera, but nor did he denounce him. And even if disagreement over one particular historical figure might not damage the bilateral relationship much,

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[851] Serbyn, p. 109

[852] Wilson, *Virtual*, p. 62

[853] White et al., p. 192

[854] V. Gurkovskii and E. Finochenko, "Suvorovskaia tserkov' budet vosstanovlena," *Krasnaia zvezda*, 5.1.2002

[855] Ioffe, *Understanding Belarus Western*, pp. 67, 68

[856] A. Mogil'nii, "Niurnberg ne sudiv Stepana Banderu," *Holos Ukraiiny*, 15.10.2002

elements within the Ukrainian executive were also willing to challenge the fundamentals of Russo-Ukrainian historical integration. Following Kuchma's signature to the SES agreement in September, 2003, the Ukrainian ambassador to Romania, Anton Buteiko, resigned, stating it was "...worse than...Pereiaslav [Treaty in 1654 when Ukrainian Cossacks swore fealty to the Russian Tsar]. Then, Bogdan Khmel'nitskii couldn't find the strength in his own people to defend his state, and he began to look for protectors. But now there's actually nothing pushing on to do it."[857] Lukashenko had few such pre-Soviet events he could denounce as a Russian coup. At the same time, he was unlikely to denounce the Soviet Union as a Russian plot, since Lukashenko had bound his political identity closely to the Union. However, he did find a new way to attack Russia through use of Soviet history in February, 2004. In connection with the Russian disconnection of gas transfers to Belarusian customers Lukashenko thus complained that this was "an unprecedented step, which had not been taken once since the [Second World War]."[858] Suddenly, Putin's Russia was compared to Hitler's Germany; an unprecedentedly aggressive use by Lukashenko of Soviet history.

Language

Law: Russian with rights

During the 1990s, Ukrainian and Belarusian authorities had mostly refrained from infringing on Russian-speakers' rights. Nevertheless, in February, 2000, this did not prevent Putin's human rights commissioner Oleg Mironov from continuing the critical line previously presented under El'tsin as he complained about a new Ukrainian law that allegedly aimed to promote Ukrainian language relative to Russian within Ukraine. Mironov did, however,

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[857] A. Martsinovskii, "Opiat' ne ugodil," *Novye izvestiia*, 23.9.2003
[858] "Lukashenko otozval dlia konsul'tatsii posla Belorussii v Rossii," *Ekonomicheskie novosti*, 19.2.2004

phrase his complaint in the context of international norms, talking of gross violations of basic rights and freedoms of citizens in Ukraine.[859] Thus, the Russian administration still wanted to dispute language issues on the basis of law. The problem with doing so, though, was that Russian language was hardly suppressed in practice in Ukraine. 90% of books sold in Ukraine were in Russian, as were 62% of literature found in state-supported libraries, while half a million ethnic Ukrainians continued to be taught in Russian, since Russian-speakers constituted at least 40% of Kyivans, half of the population in eastern Ukraine, and three-quarters of Crimeans.[860] Some Russian commentators even understood the need for Ukrainians to actively promote their own language. In June, 2000, Tsipko noted: "...it is impossible to sow Ukrainian language on the territory of the former UkSSR without ousting Russian language at least from official use."[861] Tsipko might even have accepted such ousting in Belarus, too, where Russian-speakers were even more privileged. The otherwise pugnacious Lukashenko generally avoided any linguistic controversy with Russia. Indeed, in November, 2001, he admirably argued that no problem concerning language use existed in the state since the population had already decided which language to use.[862] Admittedly, such an argument would in practice heavily favour the Russian language, yet Lukashenko was signalling the principle that language-use was a matter of individual choice, in which the state should not become involved.

Power: Russian as intergovernmental communication

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[859] A. Fournier, "Mapping Identities: Russian resistance to linguistic Ukrainisation in Central and Eastern Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 54 (3), 2002, p. 422

[860] T. Makhrinskii, "Ukaz v povelitel'nom naklonenii," *Moskovskie novosti*, 21.3.2000

[861] Tsipko, "Muki," pp. 1, 2

[862] G. Ioffe, "Understanding Belarus: questions of language," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 55 (7), 2003, p. 1017

However, as events during the 1990s had demonstrated, Lukashenko risked little by allowing his population to speak Belarusian, since Russian language was thoroughly dominant. The Russian government wanted this dominance to continue. Thus, the Russian National Security Concept from January, 2000, declared: "The spiritual renewal of society is impossible without the preservation of the role of Russian language as a factor of spiritual unity for the peoples of the multinational Russia and the language of inter-governmental communication between the peoples of the member-states in the [CIS]."[863] In order preserve Russian as the post-Soviet lingua franca, the language should preferably have official status in Belarus and Ukraine. Such a status for Russian remained mostly unquestioned in Belarus, while in Ukraine an opinion poll from April, 2000, indicated that 39% favoured providing official status to Russian in Ukraine, while 38% more were in favour of its official recognition on a regional or local basis.[864] Official measures to diminish Russian in Ukraine seemed ineffectual. By 2004, most schools were supposed by law to teach in Ukrainian. However, the majority of students learning Ukrainian did not use it outside the classroom. And within some east Ukrainian universities teaching in Russian still remained the norm, despite legal complaints by Ukrainian-language students.[865] Still, Ukrainian was more widely used even in eastern Ukraine than Belarusian was anywhere in Belarus. By 2001, the town of Ashmiany remained one of the areas within Belarus where Belarusian was spoken most widely. Nevertheless, all parents of schoolchildren chose Russian as the language of teaching for their children. This was not least because institutes of further education taught in Russian.[866] Privately, Russian dominated too. A survey in Belarus from

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[863] "Kontseptsiia natsional'noi"

[864] Molchanov, p. 319

[865] "Luhans'kyi student vidsudyv pravo navchatysia ukraiins'koiu" on http://maidan.org.ua/static/news/2006/1164642435.html (accessed on 11.5.2009)

[866] M. Puzinovskii, "Chamu Batski-Belarusy u Shkolakh Vybiraiuts' Ruskuiu Mova?" *Nasha slova*, 520, 2001

2004 asked which language dominated private communication. Only 14% responded Belarusian, while 74% responded Russian, 7% both languages, and 5% neither.[867]

Nation: Combating linguistic aggression

Yet, the remarkable impression was that even with such dominance secured the Russian executive continued to fear that Russian language was under threat in Belarus and Ukraine. Such fears had been expressed only infrequently by Russian politicians during the 1990s, but in February, 2000, Putin immediately advocated the creation of a favourable linguistic environment for Russian compatriots in the CIS.[868] Since compatriots had already been designated worthy of Russian state protection, Putin's comment was a thinly veiled threat. Furthermore, the President risked provoking discord in Ukraine. A survey administered by the Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies in 2001 found that differences in perceptions of identity were considerably more marked between Ukrainian- and Russian-speaking Ukrainians than between self-ascribed Russians and Ukrainians, thus indicating the volatility of the language issue.[869] Unfortunately, neither Russian nor Ukrainian elites understood the danger. In 2003 Ukraine forbade advertisements in the media from being written in Russian. The practical consequence of this was negligible though, as the law was widely ignored[870] since it disadvantaged many low-income Ukrainian citizens who had poor command and experience of exposure to Ukrainian. Lukashenko was not going to such lengths against Russian language, but even he began to show himself as a defender against uncontrolled Russification of his state. In 2004, he even condemned the omnipotent

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[867] Ioffe, *Understanding Belarus Western*, p. 7
[868] A. Khramtsov, "Iz-za okeana vidnee," *Bizness & Baltiia*, 21.2.2000
[869] Shulman, "Ukrainian," p. 33
[870] Ibid, p. 40

presence of Russian music on the Belarusian FM station and demanded quotas for local performers.[871] That the latter often performed in Russian could not hide that such quotas would benefit Belarusian language relatively most.

Religion

Law: Unnecessary Orthodoxy

During the 1990s, apathy had mostly helped preserve peaceful religious relations between Russia and Ukraine. Gradually, the idea that religion might be used to define citizens of Ukraine did appear. However, the idea only partly caught on. A nationally representative survey from May and June, 2001, found that only 28% of respondents required members of Ukrainian society to be Orthodox believers, while 53% saw religion as an unimportant or very unimportant characteristic of citizenship.[872] Similarly, although Orthodox and Catholic denominations might have struggled in Belarus, these churches seemingly co-existed peacefully, most Belarusians were atheists, and the fastest growing denomination by 2003 was Protestantism.[873]

Power: Soulmates and the Order of Prince Vladimir

Still, Russian political and religious elites had previously understood how religion might help bind Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians together. In June, 2001, the spokesman for the Russian Orthodox Church announced the dissolution of the Soviet Union to be a sin, while

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[871] V. Silicki, "Belarus" in V. Bulhakau, ed., *The Geopolitical Place of Belarus in Europe and the World: materialy z konferencji w dniach 11-12 listopada 2006 r.*, Warsaw: Wyzsza Szkola Handlu i Prawa, 2006, p. 76

[872] S. Shulman, "The Contours of Civic and Ethnic National Identification in Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 56 (1), 2004, p. 44

[873] Ioffe, "Understanding Belarus Belarussian," p. 1242

Aleksii II argued that Russia, Belarus and Ukraine were soulmates, bound to live together. He also attended a meeting of Slavic Peoples from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, which declared that the "creation of the political union is the pledge to our salvation."[874] Putin did not approve of such political interference by the church in Russia, but the church managed to find together with Ukrainian communists to praise restoration of past, imperial glory. Thus, in June, 2003, Aleksii II presented the Order of Prince Vladimir to the leader of the Ukrainian Communist Party.[875] In Belarus, the Orthodox leadership needed no party to help welcome Russian advances. Indeed, the Orthodox leader in Belarus during this period, Filaret, was not only ethnically Russian, but born in Moscow as Kirill' Vakhromeev and confessed: "I serve Russia! I serve the Russian Orthodox Church! I serve the Russo-Belarusian Union!"[876]

Nation: Ukraine of the enemies

The problem was, as had gradually become clearer during the 1990s, that the Ukrainian administration had become increasingly worried about any Russian support for local opposition parties, even if the latter could not threaten Kuchma. Overt support from Orthodox communities of Russia-friendly parties during the March, 2002, Ukrainian parliamentary election, was punished when the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice conveyed a status of complete autonomy on the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyiv Patriarchate), thus for the first time recognising the Kyiv and Moscow patriarchates as officially equal.[877] The

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[874] "Belarus'-Rossiia," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 7.6.2001; Mihkelson, p. 105

[875] S. Velychenko, "Introduction: Ukraine: EU member of a second Belorus?" in S. Velychenko, ed., *Ukraine, the EU and Russia: history, culture and international relations*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 12

[876] A. Feduta, "'Moskal' – eto ia,'" *Moskovskie novosti*, 28.10.2003

[877] D. Rudnev, "Ukraina ofitsial'no priznala avtonomnuiu pravoslavnuiu tserkov'," *Izvestiia*, 20.3.2002

Russian Orthodox Church, however, struck back that year with an encyclopaedia that explained how "'enemies of Russia' invented the term 'Ukraine,' which was popularised after 1917 by 'Jewish Bolsheviks.'" It was allegedly intended "to Polonise and Germanise the Russian people."[878] Belarus was not vilified by the encyclopaedia, and Lukashenko remained tolerant of the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church. The fact that the church supported his regime, however, in April, 2002, prompted two opposition parties, the Belarusian Popular Front and the Christian Conservative Party, to accuse the Russian Orthodox Church of acting as an anti-national force, conducting Russification.[879] And the same year, former Belarusian leader Shushkevich lamented: "…the widespread Orthodox Russian Church in Belarus, subordinated to the Moscow Patriarchate, became a supporting force for Communist revanchism and today continues to support the amoral, inhumane, dictatorial regime."[880] As long as that regime belonged to Lukashenko, however, religion might not be able to divide Russians and Belarusians to the extent that it was dividing Russians and Ukrainians.

Conclusion

Between 2000 and 2004, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian cultural sovereignty. In relation to perceptions of history, El'tsin had previously become increasingly keen to mark Belarusians and Ukrainians as "blood-kin" of Russians, and on this point Putin seemed to concur. In addition, Putin's glorification of the Soviet and Russian Empires seemed increasingly echoed by the Russian

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[878] O. Platonov, ed., *Sviataia Rus' (tom 3)*, Moscow: Entsiklopediia russkoi tsivilizatsii, 2002, pp. 481, 613 and 829

[879] Ioffe, *Understanding Belarus Western*, p. 53

[880] S. Shushkevich, *Neokommunizm v Belarusi*, Smolensk: Skif, 2002, p. 45

population, and in Minsk and Kyiv, too, where history provided ample sources of legitimacy. In relations to linguistic affairs, Putin's National Security Concept made clear that the spread of Russian language, as medium for both inter- and intra-state communication in the region, was highly prioritised by Russia. Governments in Ukraine and Belarus could hardly do much about this: in Ukraine the legal pre-eminence of Ukrainian was not mirrored in public reality in the eastern parts of the state, while in Belarus the titular language still remained as primary language for a small minority of the population. In relation to religion, the Russian Orthodox Church, the leadership of which had been encouraged by its close connections to the Russian executive, was active in fomenting close relations with Ukrainians and Belarusians, whom Aleksii II named soulmates of Russia. Aleksii II also found it appropriate to officially support the Ukrainian Communist Party, thus becoming involved in Ukrainian domestic politics, while the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in Belarus openly admitted his primary loyalty was to Russia.

By now, however, the paradigm of Nation had become somewhat significant, too, in Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian cultural sovereignty. Concerning perceptions of history, Lukashenko indirectly compared Russian energy cut-offs to Nazi German behaviour during the Second World War, while Kuchma failed to denounce Bandera, who remained anathema to Russians. Concerning linguistic issues, Putin mentioned the right to speak Russian as inalienable for Russian compatriots abroad, and declared he would defend such rights with all means possible. This could soon become necessary, for Lukashenko had understood the benefits of encouraging the public use of Belarusian language by law, while Kuchma forbade Russian-language advertisements. Finally, in religious issues the Russian Orthodox Church sponsored a highly Ukrainophobic encyclopaedia, which denounced any

expression of the Ukrainian nation. In return, the decision in Ukraine to provide legal autonomous status to the Kyiv Patriarchate was highly provocative to many Russians, who had been combating this option for a decade.

The significance of the paradigm of Law gradually weakened in Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian cultural sovereignty. Concerning perceptions of history, a few Russians still claimed that Ukrainian nationalism had originated in response to Russian pressure, but this did not mean such nationalism was condoned. Concerning linguistic issues, Belarus and Ukraine continued to provide extensive legal rights to Russian-speakers in their states, but this did not really seem to influence Russian debate. Finally, in religious matters Russian Orthodoxy and its competitors were all losing adherents as atheism and plain lack of interest continued to prevail, yet if anything this made religious authorities even more hostile towards their religious opponents.

Chapter 7: Strengthening sovereignty (2004-2008)

Strengthening political sovereignty

Territory

Law: International legal norms

Previously, Putin had ensured the demarcation of Russo-Ukrainian land borders, although he did not initiate any new guarantees. Such guarantees, however, were sought by most Ukrainians. Already before Iushchenko's presidential inauguration, in September, 2004, an opinion poll showed that 75% of respondents supported Ukrainian territorial sovereignty. This figure was the second highest reported in similar polls conducted in Ukraine over the preceding twelve years.[881] Understanding that this represented a persistent trend, in January, 2005, Russian commentator Sergei Dubynin consequently reminded Russians that: "There are no influential political or social forces in Ukraine, who would like to engage with the task of direct unification with Russia."[882] Tellingly, such sentiments were increasingly visible in Belarus, too, where a survey from December, 2005, showed that only 12% of respondents agreed that "Belarus and Russia should become one state, with one president, government, army, flag, currency etc." This proportion had dropped from 21% one year before, and 28% in late 2000.[883] Yet it seemed increasingly clear that the Russian leadership did not make the necessary conclusions for such observations. Certainly, at a press conference held jointly with Iushchenko in December, 2006, Putin stressed that the territorial dispute had to be resolved through international law.[884] Yet this statement was

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[881] Shulman, "Ukrainian," pp. 34, 35

[882] S. Dubynin, "Vyzov Ukrainy," *Vedomosti*, 18.1.2005

[883] I. Drakakhrust, "Gde konchaetsia Belorussiia?" *Neprikosnovennyi zapas*, 30.6.2006, pp. 108-19

[884] Surkov, p. 35

provided more out of necessity than of conviction, and subsequent Russian territorial claims indicated that no permanent acquiescence to the Ukrainian position would take place. And that Russians would not listen to neighbours' demands was subsequently indicated in Russo-Belarusian integration, too. In April, 2007, the Russian Ambassador to Minsk, Aleksandr Surikov, underlined how Belarusians could not expect preferential economic treatment in any future union.[885] This might have made economic sense, but only served to reinforce Belarusian disinclination to integrate.

Power: Union State moving forward

Yet the Russian leadership was unwilling to abandon the idea of Russo-Belarusian integration. Previously, reintegration with Belarus and Ukraine had commanded support in Russian leading circles during Putin's first presidential term. And during 2004, opinions polls among the Russian elite showed that support for reintegration with Belarus remained strong among all political groups. Indeed, within governmental elites a 34% increase in favour of reintegration was discernible over the previous five years.[886] Furthermore, Russians understood that although inhabitants of Belarus had partly lost interest in integration this was due to disillusionment with the project, not to any inherent animosity towards Russia. Tellingly, a poll from 2004 revealed that twice as many Belarusian-speakers opted for unification with Russia than did Russian-speakers themselves. Russian-speakers were, on the contrary, much more interested in looking to the EU.[887] It might have been expected that Ukrainians would have been much more sceptical of Russians' intentions after

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[885] K. Avimova, "Stroili, stroili, i 'nedopostroili'," *Belorusy i rynok*, 2.4.2007

[886] W. Zimmerman, "Slavophiles and Westernizers Redux: contemporary Russian elite perspectives," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 21 (3), 2005, pp. 196, 207

[887] Ioffe, *Understanding Belarus Western*, pp. 84, 85

the election of Iushchenko as President in December, 2004. Indeed, a survey from February, 2006, showed that only 19% of respondents intending to vote for Iushchenko's Our Ukraine electoral bloc wanted to unite with Russia and Belarus. However, at this time former Prime Minister Iuliia Tymoshenko's coalition had become more successful, and among its prospective voters 40% wanted integration with Russia and Belarus.[888] In addition, support for territorial integration was resistant to dissatisfaction with the Putin administration's criticism of Ukraine and Belarus. While in the former, Tymoshenko's supporters, and the politician herself, ignored previous Russian accusations of criminal activity against Tymoshenko, in Belarus, even during the trade war with Russia taking place during 2006-07, the question: "Different people are reaching different conclusions on the basis of the gas and oil conflict between Belarus and Russia. Which of the following statements do you agree with?" elicited 40% support for closer relations or unification with Russia, against 22% for the EU.[889] Putin wanted to capitalise on this. In April, 2007, he emphasised: "Russia is open for any kind of integration [with Belarus]. We are ready to go as far as our Belarusian friends are prepared to."[890] At the same time, data showing economic progress were also used to retain public support for the process. Vasilii Khrol, Deputy State Secretary of the Russia-Belarus Union State, highlighted that the Union budget had grown one and a half times between 2001 and 2006, and that turnover of goods within the Union had increased almost threefold.[891] This provided seemingly concrete proof that continued integration was

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[888] I. Katchanovski, "The Orange Evolution? The 'Orange Revolution' and political changes in Ukraine," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 24 (4), 2008, p. 371

[889] "Natsional'nyi opros 20-30 ianvaria 2007," *Nezavisimyi Institut Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskikh i Politicheskikh Issledovanii*, January, 2007, on *www.iiseps.org/data07-01-2.html* (accessed on 11.5.2009)

[890] V. Putin, *Poslanie federal'nomu sobraniiu Rossiiskoi Federatsii (26.4.2007)* on www.kremlin.ru/appears/2007/04/26/1156_type63372type63374type82634_125339.shtml (accessed on 16.7.2009)

[891] Avimova

worthwhile, not only for Belarus, but also for an increasingly chaotic Ukraine. Thus, as

dissatisfaction with Iushchenko's Westernising project had grown during this period by June,

2007, a survey taken among inhabitants living throughout Ukraine by the Eurasian Monitor

International Research Agency showed that 55% of respondents were now willing for their

state to enter into a union together with Russia.[892]

Nation: Taking territory back

Russian belligerence could easily change Ukrainian opinions, though. Already, a serious

Russo-Ukrainian territorial clash had taken place in late 2003. Despite the conflict resolution

seemingly provided by Kas'ianov and Ianukovych in the aftermath, the risk of Iushchenko's

election to President a year later confirmed to Putin that territorial threats might remain

necessary as a bargaining tool. Mostly, other politicians were left to present the threats. In

November, 2004, Luzhkov thus attended a self-ascribed separatist conference held in

Severodonetsk in eastern Ukraine by invitation from Ukrainian Prime Minister and

presidential candidate Ianukovych. Luzhkov's appearance had undoubtedly been approved

by Putin beforehand, since the Moscow Mayor used the conference to present Putin's

support for Ianukovych's candidacy.[893] Additionally, the threat of separatism in south-

eastern Ukraine at this time had substantial popular backing. After Ianukovych had been

defeated, a popular survey conducted in the region in December showed that 20% of

Crimeans and a remarkable 40% in Donetsk wanted their region to separate from the rest of

Ukraine and join Russia.[894] Although these wishes did not subsequently result in unrest,

Belarusian observers at the time were sufficiently worried for Lukashenko in May, 2005, to

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[892] Marples, "Russia," pp. 34, 35

[893] "Komu nuzhna 'Kashtanovaia revoliutsiia'?" *Argumenty i fakty*, 1.12.2004

[894] Shulman, "Ukrainian," p. 44

argue that the Russia-Belarus union had reached an impasse because of Putin's earlier proposal that Belarus become part of Russia; a proposal that allegedly would result in a new Chechnia west of Russia.[895] Not many people believed Lukashenko, and open military territorial conflict remained an unrealistic scenario for the region. Yet diplomatic disputes showed no signs of diminishing and by June, 2006, official delegations from Russia and Ukraine openly disagreed on border demarcation in the Sea of Azov: "Russia is attached to the Kerch agreement from 2003, which was signed by the presidents of the two states. [Ukraine] suggests changing the status of the Sea of Azov, declaring the waters not internal, but international."[896] In the case of Belarus, matters were different since territorial integration was, officially, welcomed by both parties. Yet, in October, 2006, Lukashenko complained to visiting Russian journalists that the Russian authorities were hindering the re-unification of Russia and Belarus by offering either nothing more than cooperation like in the EU, or, conversely "that [Belarus] should be incorporated in Russia [and] 'Even Stalin did not go that far.'"[897] No Belarusians were allowed to contradict Lukashenko, and it was perhaps particularly ominous that the unquestioned leader of Belarus was the most outspoken critic of Russian territorial ambitions. In Ukraine, on the contrary, Iushchenko's administration had no interest in increasing the dispute, but rather reacted to renewed provocations by Luzhkov. In February, 2007, the Mayor went to Sevastopol', where he declared: "Here in the legendary Sevastopol', a city of Russian glory, we must talk about the developments that tore Sevastopol' and Crimea away from Russia...These developments were undeserved..." Not unreasonably, Ukrainian authorities accused Luzhkov of

[895] Marples, "Russia," p. 25

[896] "Rossiia i Ukraina opiat' ne dogovorilis'," *Svobodnaia Gruziia*, 24.6.2006

[897] G. Savchenko, "Ul'timatum soiuznika," *Gazeta*, 2.10.2006

interference in Ukrainian internal affairs.[898] Perhaps they were prudent in doing so as a precautionary step, for Luzhkov's sentiments certainly had supporters within the Russian executive. An interview I conducted with a civil servant of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in May, 2007, repeatedly returned to discussion of territorial revanchism and potential divisions of Ukraine.[899] And at the pinnacle of power, Putin provided similar threats. Eventually, in April, 2008, he reportedly warned American President George Bush that the entry of Ukraine into NATO might prompt Russia to encourage the predominantly Russian-inhabited areas, including Crimea and the eastern regions, to break away from the rest of the state.[900] Thus, even borders officially agreed on were not secure for the future.

Governance

Law: Iushchenko in Moscow

Even under Kuchma by mid-2004 Ukraine was ranked as partly democratic by the respected international organisation Freedom House, which was higher than any other post-Soviet state, bar the Baltic States.[901] Russia had certainly lost democratic ground since El'tsin's retirement, but this hardly seemed to concern the presidential administration. There remained a token allegiance to the popular vote. In October, 2004, the Chairman of the Russian Electoral Commission, Aleksandr Veshniakov, complained that the Belarusian referendum on constitutional amendments allowing Lukashenko to stand for President

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[898] I. Vas'kovskaia, "Liubov' k trem milliardam," *Novaia gazeta*, 26.2.2007

[899] *Interview with civil servant in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ukrainian section*, Moscow, May 2007

[900] O. Allenova, E. Geda and V. Novikov, "Mirovaia praktika," *Kommersant*, 7.4.2008, pp. 1, 3

[901] I. Solonenko, "The EU's Impact on Democratic Transformation in Ukraine" in S. Velychenko, ed., *Ukraine, the EU and Russia: history, culture and international relations*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 140

again did not ensure public control and should not be emulated by Russia.[902] However, few

doubted that Putin planned to stay in control for many years, even if public opinion should

somehow turn against him. Indeed, the idea of sovereign democracy that was becoming

such a buzzword in Putin's Russia was visible in relation to neighbouring states, too. In

December, 2004, before the re-run of the Ukrainian electoral runoff between Iushchenko

and Ianukovych, Putin did state that the Ukrainian crisis "can only be solved democratically,

that is on a legal basis, and not under external or internal pressure according to political

bias,"[903] but this was primarily a demand for Western actors to refrain from assisting the

Ukrainian opposition. Iushchenko still won and in January, 2005, the co-chairman of the

Russo-Ukrainian inter-parliamentary commission, Aleksandr Lebedev, had to grudgingly

admit that masses of Ukrainians flocking to Kyiv and protesting there had decided the

Ukrainian election. It could not be explained through the concept of foreign plots and

financing.[904] Most observers had exactly that opinion, and Iushchenko's triumph now led

the Belarusian opposition to criticise the West for not supporting it in similar fashion to

topple Lukashenko.[905] Putin could certainly not accept the situation, but for the time being

he had to limit the damage. Thus, when Iushchenko, fully aware that Russian elites had

strongly criticised his democratic credentials, suggested that his first trip abroad would be to

Moscow, Putin happily agreed to seek reconciliation between the two regimes.[906]

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[902] D. Marples and L. Pervushina, "Lukashenko's Red October," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 52 (2), 2005, p. 26

[903] "Vladimir Putin i Gerkhard Shreder obsudili situatsiiu na Ukraine," *Ekonomicheskie novosti*, 1.12.2004

[904] G. Herd, "Colorful Revolutions and the CIS: 'manufactured' versus 'managed' democracy?" *Problems of Post-Communism*, 52 (2), 2005, p. 15

[905] Ibid, p. 8

[906] E. Kovalova, "Ukraine's Role in Changing Europe: uniting or dividing Europe and Eurasia?" in D. Hamilton and G. Mangott, eds., *The New Eastern Europe: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova*, Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2007, p. 184

Power: Supporting Ianukovych

Not that Putin respected Ukrainian sovereign governance, but in a direct continuation of previous policy he saw Iushchenko's visit as an opportunity to increase continued Russian influence in Ukraine. Previously, in the run-up to the Ukrainian Presidential election of late 2004, leading Russian actors had supported Ianukovych with a sum of at least $50 and possibly $300 million.[907] That this had not let to the desired outcome was mostly blamed on outside interference. By December, 2004, when a swift election for Ianukovych was scuppered, Putin "compared the West with 'a fellow in a colonial helmet'...[and] reproached Washington for wanting to impose 'a dictatorship in international affairs under the guise of pseudo democratic rhetoric.'"[908] Russian political analysts argued similarly, with Viacheslav Nikonov stating: "Ukraine is next in line for the execution of the American plan of 'velvet revolution,'...the secret service operation to replace regimes that have not already been tested successes as 'banana republics' by the USA, already accomplished in states in Eastern Europe or Georgia."[909] And inside Ukraine Ianukovych sought to deflect the blame for impending defeat away from himself: "A large number of organisations sponsored by the USA have worked in Ukraine for many years. America interferes with the internal affairs of Ukraine"[910] or, at least, allegedly did so until the mission was accomplished through Ianukovych's defeat in the repeated electoral runoff. In Belarus, there was evidently a similar fear of Western influence and pressure for regime change. In late December, 2004, twenty opposition youth activists from United Civic Party regional and city organisations were thus detained for participating in an unauthorised demonstration celebrating the

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[907] Velychenko, p. 5

[908] N. Nugaired, "'Mond' (Frantsiia): 'Vladimira Putina presleduiut neudachi na Ukraine...'" *Belgorodskaia pravda*, 17.12.2004

[909] V. Nikonov, "Banany, dollary i kashtany," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 1.12.2004

[910] V. Bogdanov, "Lishnie liudi ukrainskoi demokratii," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 17.12.2004

victory of the Ukrainian opposition.[911] Yet the Belarusian and Russian leaderships had to accept that they could not keep Iushchenko from power. As a second-best solution, however, maybe the new Ukrainian President could be kept from the West? In January, 2005, Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov noted that: "...not all [states] have succeeded in getting rid of stereotypes from the past. This is shown by the reaction of some circles in Europe and the USA to the political crisis in Ukraine [and by] declaring that 'Ukraine must be together with the West.'"[912] And after Iushchenko's regime was soon beset by domestic troubles, in 2006 the former head of the Russian presidential administration, Aleksandr Voloshin, went on a semi-official mission to the USA, where he complained that expanded American activity had problematised events in Ukraine and elsewhere in the post-Soviet region, an area that Russia could rightfully lay claim to.[913] By this time, a recent dearth of Western economic and other support for Iushchenko showed Voloshin that the West might just be removed again from Ukraine. In Belarus, despite the troublesome Lukashenko, signs of this were even clearer. By May, 2007, lack of Western assistance had finally convinced some members of the Belarusian opposition that governance by Moscow would be a lesser evil than Lukashenko. Uladzimer Parfenovich and Leanid Sinitsyn duly published a manifesto that favoured associated member-status for Belarus in the Russian Federation.[914] Lukashenko would certainly oppose this, but he was even more averse than Putin to Western intervention. Thus, it came as no surprise when Russia, Belarus and other post-Soviet governments in October, 2007, presented a plan for monitoring all elections in OSCE

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[911] Herd, p. 8

[912] I. Gavrilov and S. Chirkin, "Razgovor s Amerikoi bez perevodchika," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 15.1.2005

[913] D. Sidorov, "Pod prikrytiem oligarkha," *Cheliabinskii rabochii*, 20.1.2006

[914] L. Sinitsyn, "Dalucheniie da Rasiei – eta 'zaichyk u matrioshtsy'" on *http://archive.svaboda.org/articlesfeatures/politics/2007/5/AFE9358F-7FD5-4C81-AABF-23B8FD3F507D.html* , 2.5.2007 (accessed on 11.5.2009)

member-states equally and for reducing the amount of monitoring: "...the number of [OSCE] observers [at a given election] shall not exceed 50 people..." This would prevent the OSCE from establishing whether elections were free and fair[915] and would thus reduce the risk that a Iushchenko-like unpleasant surprise would not be sprung on Putin and Lukashenko in future.

Nation: Disparaging the ambassador

Still, such measures would not help the Russians to get rid of Lukashenko, who seemed increasingly able to gain support in Belarus relative to the Russian leadership. Already, Putin had suggested incorporating, and thus neutralising the Belarusian central administration in an expanded Russia. Yet this seemed decreasingly popular in Belarus, and not just among Lukashenko's supporters. In November, 2004, following suspension of Russian gas to Belarus, inhabitants of Belarus for the first time favoured Lukashenko relative to Putin. Answering the question "If the position of President for Belarus and Russia was established whom would you vote for?" 30% supported Lukashenko, against Putin's 24%. Putin had previously been favoured, notably gaining 51% to Lukashenko's 14% in April, 2002.[916] Putin's role in the Ukrainian turmoil during this time worried inhabitants of Belarus, who did not want similar unrest. Although the Ukrainian election had a peaceful outcome this had not seemed a certain outcome, particularly after Ianukovych in a menacing and downright irresponsible statement in November had stated: "Today we're on the edge of catastrophe...When the first drop of blood is spilled, we won't be able to stop it."[917] And even if Putin had not promoted Ukrainian civil war, parliamentarians in Russia supporting

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[915] A. Bausin, V. Kashin and E. Ivanova, "Nepravil'no nabliudaete," *Vedomosti*, 26.10.2007

[916] Drakakhrust, p. 113

[917] "Vybory na Ukraine," *Molot*, 30.11.2004

him had been more willing to do so. Luzhkov was now member of United Russia, openly

supporting Putin, and in December the Moscow Mayor visited eastern and southern

Ukrainian regions including Donetsk, Luhan'sk and Crimea, which vowed to pursue

strategies of greater autonomy from the central Ukrainian government through any means

possible, should Iushchenko win the election. As mentioned earlier, Luzhkov repeatedly

visiting Severodonetsk to express his support.[918] Lukashenko was unwilling to be similarly

undermined. In mid-2005, the Kremlin appointed the governor of Saratov region, Dmitrii

Aiatskov, as ambassador to Belarus. However, after he then spoke disparagingly about

Lukashenko at a press conference in his hometown, "...the Belarusian [administration]

strongly opposed his appointment." Aiatskov never went to Minsk and by February, 2006,

Aleksandr Surikov became ambassador instead.[919] Yet while the Russian government

deferred to Lukashenko on this matter, Iushchenko's regime was being deliberately

obstructed. Supplies of natural gas to and through Ukraine were halted on January 1, 2006,

just when the Ukrainian political system was most vulnerable as it transformed from a

presidential to a presidential-parliamentary system.[920] Although no political turmoil ensued,

the dispute showed Iushchenko's political skills in an unflattering light, while a Russia-

friendly parliamentary opposition could argue that increased power to them would mean

less difficult relations with Russia in future. Iushchenko had been forced to cede some

presidential power to the parliament in order to come to power, but Lukashenko could not

be similarly undermined. Russian criticism of Lukashenko was therefore sometimes forced

to use other means, including slander. In November, 2006, for instance, Russian journalists

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[918] "Komu nuzhna"

[919] "Rossiiskii posol v Belorussii," *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti*, 9.2.2006

[920] G. Flikke, "Pacts, Parties and Elite Struggle: Ukraine's troubled post-orange transition," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 60 (3), 2008, p. 385

quoted his family's neighbour: "…We all drank and we're going on drinking….the President's uncle…can tell you the recipe for home-brewed alcohol in details',"[921] while in January, 2007, even the normally measured analyst Iuliia Latynina denounced Lukashenko as "the demonstrative parasite in Minsk."[922] Still, Lukashenko knew that such comments would be resented by inhabitants of Belarus in general, and he was determined to exploit any waning in Belarusian public support for the Russian leadership. In January, 2007, dismissing Western and Russian interference alike, he thus stated that: "As long as we're not disturbed [by other states] our people can figure out things for themselves. We don't need either 'coloured' or 'gas revolutions'!"[923] Putin's administration was hardly impressed and continued to undermine Belarusian governance, not least by halting energy supplies. Ukraine could be damaged, too. In September, 2007, following the Ukrainian parliamentary elections where Tymoshenko's bloc had gained 31% of the votes, threats by Gazprom to cut supplies to Ukraine were followed by Putin's announcement that Ukraine should pay a price closer to the international average.[924] Even though Tymoshenko was now much more reconciliatory towards Russia than had previously been the case, Putin wanted to ensure that she and others knew what challenging Russia would mean.

Ideology

Law: Ukraine in the EU

Previously, Russian respect for Belarusian and Ukrainian ideological sovereignty had decreased during the first term of Putin's presidency. During the second term, he did

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[921] I. Bobrova, "U lukomor'ia zmii zelenyi," *Moskovskii komsomolets*, 10.11.2006

[922] V. Ivanov, "Ne nuzhno zabluzhdat'sia naschet Belorussii," *Izvestia*, 18.1.2007

[923] "My – neot''emlemaia chast' Evropy," *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, 30.1.2007

[924] N. Copsey, "The Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections of 2007," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 24 (2), 2008, p. 306

profess his support for Ukrainian membership in international organisations, such as the

EU,[925] but only because it was December, 2004, when he wanted to persuade Ukrainians to

vote for Ianukovych in the presidential election, and because Putin knew, Ukrainian

membership of the EU was impossible even in the medium-term. To refuse any sort of

sovereign international identity for Ukraine would have forced Putin to specify a Russian

vision, and this was still not ready. As Russian analysts complained: "...what can we offer

Ukraine and the other post-Soviet states today? Builders of a 'new empire' must have a no

less weighty domestic ideological foundation and no less serious foreign policy intent. At

present there is neither one, nor the other."[926] With a Russian vision absent, Ukrainians

looked to GUAM, the organisation they had helped found almost a decade earlier, which in

May, 2006, became the Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development with the

stated aim to "...secure rule of law [and] strengthen European integration" among other

aims, squarely positioning the organisation within established, Western norms.[927] Yet in

order to achieve these aims, cooperation with democratic states such as the Baltics and

Romania were in order, and these now thought of little else than their recent membership

of the EU. Iushchenko's Ukraine was therefore somewhat left to itself. Belarusians, too, felt

increasingly peripheral in Russian international affairs. In October, 2006, members of the

Belarusian political elite argued that the Russian elite no longer viewed Belarus as a priority,

and that the Belarusian state therefore should seek a different source of inspiration.[928] Yet

no one any longer knew what that source might be.

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[925] Tsygankov, "Vladimir," p. 148

[926] A. Vladimirov, "Revoliutsiia na eksport," *Itogi*, 7.12.2004, pp. 10-12

[927] *Organizatsiia*

[928] A. Rubinov, "Toupiki krestovogo pokhoda za demokratiia," *Belorussiia segodnia*, 27.10.2006

Power: Modern Russian identity and the spiritual leader

Putin's imperial ideology had been clear already during his first presidential term. Iushchenko's election in Ukraine brought the momentum of this project to a halt, but Russian political analysts did not believe Ukrainians could build a separate ideology in Europe. In December, 2004, Tsipko rallied: "Russian language and Russian culture is an inseparable part of European civilisation. At the same time, Ukrainian language – which was preserved through south-Russian folklore – remains to this day on the fringes of European civilisation..."[929] Tsipko and his colleagues would certainly believe that Belarus, too, was peripheral in Europe, and inhabitants in Belarus still agreed that their future was close to Russia, although, as seen above, not necessarily united with it. A survey in Belarus from April, 2006, showed that 85% perceived Russia as one of the five friendliest countries towards Belarus, as opposed to 1% who perceived that Russia was one of the five most unfriendly countries towards Belarus.[930] And according to Anatolii Rubinov, deputy chief of the Belarusian presidential administration, in July, 2006, there was no ideological content in the oft-repeated phrase calling for a "revival" of the Belarusian nation. Rubinov instead argued that the identity of the state was bound to the BSSR.[931] In Ukraine, wistful memories of the Soviet Union belonged to the opposition, particularly the Communist party. Yet the more general idea of some sort of Eurasian unity together with Russia was much more widespread. By 2006 the controversial politician Natalia Vitrenko's political party, Blok, controlled approximately 1,000 seats in local eastern and southern Ukrainian councils. With her close connections to Russian Eurasianists such as Aleksandr Dugin this political presence

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[929] A. Tsipko, "Chto reshaetsia na Ukraine," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 1.12.2004, p. 2

[930] Ioffe, *Understanding Belarus Western*, p. 201

[931] A. Rubinov, "Eshcho raz ob ideologii," *Belorussiia segodnia*, 28.7.2006

was a significant boost for pro-Russian ideology in Ukraine.[932] However, Ukraine, and

Belarus, too, had to receive benefits from Russia in order to stay loyal, and this had latterly

not been the case. The details of economic disputes between Russia and its neighbours are

outlined elsewhere in this and the previous chapters, but the outcome was increased

alienation between the states. And this remained one of the few venues where Russian

political opposition could criticise Putin. In January, 2007, Aleksandr Prokhanov complained

that: "There remains one Belarus that is the gateway to Europe, that Gazprom were so

thoughtlessly prepared to slam, positioning the relationship of our states and peoples on an

'economic foundation,' which preserved 'Russian state [rossiiskii] oil' and the 'Russian state

[rossiiskii] budget.'"[933] Yet, Prokhanov was being unfair towards the state-owned natural gas

company, for, as I show elsewhere, Minsk was often responsible for energy disputes. The

Russian executive, on the other hand, had shown itself patient, allowing temporary setbacks

in the promotion of its expansionist ideology. Iushchenko might have become Ukrainian

President, inaugurating Westernised international policies, separate from and at times even

opposed to Russia, but his government was soon beset by infighting. Less than two years

after his electoral defeat, Ianukovych had thus come back as Prime Minister, and with his

return Ukraine looked to Russia again. In January, 2007, the new government even ensured

that Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Borys Tarasiuk, who had been closely identified with a pro-

Western line for more than a decade, was dismissed as he had been in the past,[934] following

a pattern previously set by Kuchma. Despite worries from the Russian opposition, therefore,

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[932] Velychenko, p. 11

[933] A. Prokhanov, "Belarus', ty prava!" *Zavtra*, 17.1.2007

[934] S. White and I. McAllister, *Belarus, Ukraine and Russia: east or west?*, Aberdeen: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, 2008, p. 10

powerful indications appeared that Ukraine and Belarus would remain closely aligned with Russia.

Nation: Rejecting West Ukrainian leadership

Yet this would only be the case if Russians would tolerate the right of Belarusians and Ukrainians to sometimes take differing opinions, and this had not always been the case. Russians' intolerance to difference was growing, particularly among so-called panslavists, who enjoyed a state-tolerated renaissance. In May, 2004, at the first Ukrainian congress of the Conference of Slavic Peoples of Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, the leader of the Slavic National Patriotic Union, P. Tolochko, stated: "If we wish to survive as a civilisational entity then we have to unite....[if] we...should tear ourselves away from Belarus, Russia...we would...be 'unravelled.'"[935] The onus here was on Russia to preserve the bond, but it was obvious that Lukashenko and other Belarusians criticising Russia would not be tolerated, either. Iushchenko was seen by Tolochko and his allies as a straightforward enemy. It was therefore tempting for Iushchenko's Russian opponents to emphasise this animosity, framing him as hostile to Russians. In June, 2004, a report allegedly written by Russian spin-doctor Marat Gel'man appeared in Ukraine. It advocated presenting Iushchenko as an enemy of Crimean Russians by using unwitting Ukrainian nationalists to provoke land disputes and Tatar retaliation on the peninsula, showing Iushchenko's inability to protect local Slavs.[936] This plan was not successful, but the impression that Iushchenko and Ukrainian nationalists were out to hurt Russian neighbours was only reinforced as the divisive presidential campaign developed towards the end of the year. Already in October,

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[935] "Slavianskii Sobor – v stolitse kazachestva," *Pravoslavnaia Moskva*, 15.5.2004
[936] "Tretii termin Kuchmy," *Ukraiinska pravda*, 25.6, 30.6 and 1.7.2004

Russian commentators were complaining: "If the 'west-Ukrainians' are used to see themselves as oppressed, why should Ukrainians in the east accept such a detrimental role?...why should the 'westerners,' who worship the Polish lord and the American decree, declare themselves to be the only real Ukrainians?..."[937] This impression, as I have indicated previously, was only reinforced among Russians following the election. Ukrainians, too, could vilify Russia, denouncing it in so many words as barbaric. Notice Tarasiuk's comment while still Foreign Minister in October, 2006: "Russia is the Eurasian outskirts. It won't enter the EU, since it wants to gain the status of a global great power at the centre of a Slavic Union."[938] Although the latter part of Tarasiuk's statement could be viewed as recognition of Russia as a great power, the former part linked Russia to a Tatar past, with Ukraine, incidentally, as the bulwark of civilised Europe. Lukashenko was prepared to use similar rhetoric in January, 2007, in the wake of yet another energy dispute with Russia: "You know, [Belarusians] are an inalienable part of Europe, the heart of Europe...Today has come the time when Europeans realized that...they also have to link their security with that of Belarus."[939] Undoubtedly, Tarasiuk and Lukashenko had gone too far; Russia was in many ways as European as the two smaller states. The lack of tolerance went both ways, however. In the Russian government Belarus and Ukraine were seldom denounced as alien to Europe since Russia, as Tarasiuk had correctly pointed out, was simply not just part of Europe, but a special international actor. Yet less prominent Russian politicians did highlight the insular, xenophobic nature of Ukraine. This was most forcefully indicated to me in an interview in May, 2007, with a member of the Russian Federation Council. Repeatedly, claims appeared

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[937] I. Serkov, "Nastoiashchie ukraintsy segodnia," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 13.10.2004

[938] K. Schuler, "Evropi potribna Ukraiina" on
http://www.mfa.gov.ua/mfa/ua/publication/content/7295.htm (accessed on 11.5.2009)

[939] "My – neot''emlemaia"

that Ukrainians wanted a state purified of *Moskali*, Muslims and other outsiders.[940] This was presented as a disease unique to western Ukraine, whereas the eastern regions had much more in common with Russia. To me it was quite clear that the politician in question would view a split Ukraine as a natural development and, although the Russian leadership might not overtly share this sentiment, it no longer sought to counter it.

Conclusion

Between 2004 and 2008, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian political sovereignty. In territorial matters, Putin ensured Belarusians that integration would go as far as they were ready for it to go, while the Union budget indeed seemed to increase substantially. Furthermore, opinion polls taken among executive elites in Russia showed that Putin had strong domestic support for his plans for integration with other post-Soviet states. In matters relating to governance, Russian elites openly and consistently supported Ianukovych during the Ukrainian presidential election. Putin complained about interference from a colonial West, while Sergei Ivanov was claiming that past stereotypes continued to dominate thinking in the EU and North America. What these and other actors indicated was subsequently confirmed by Voloshin, when this former senior aide to El'tsin and Putin told the American administration that Ukraine and the rest of the post-Soviet region constituted part of a Russian sphere of interest. Finally, in matters relating to ideology prominent Russian commentators such as Tsipko portrayed Russia as spiritual leader of the Slavic community and the only medium through which peripheral Ukrainians and Belarusians could enter Europe. Many Russians believed their state had a duty to assist this development, for instance through

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[940] *Interview with member of the Russian Federation Council*, Moscow, May 2007

unquestioned, generous subsidies or through political alliances with dominant parties abroad, such as that existing between Dugin and Vitrenko in Ukraine.

The paradigm of Nation also significantly influenced Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian political sovereignty, however. In issues concerning territory, Putin showed that any previous border agreement could be annulled. Most notoriously, he threatened revanchism against Ukraine if the latter joined NATO, and he endorsed Luzhkov to visit eastern Ukraine and support regional separatism. Strongly voiced protests resulted, not just from Ukrainians but also from Belarus, where Lukashenko compared Putin with Stalin and threatened a new Chechnia. In matters concerning governance, the Russian government showed a distinct lack of respect for the Ukrainian democratic choice of Iushchenko. Energy and other types of disruption were introduced at the most critical times for the Ukrainian polity, such as when this changed from a presidential to a parliamentary system, while the Russia-endorsed presidential candidate in Ukraine, Ianukovych, warned of civil war when his election did not progress smoothly. Finally, in issues concerning ideology Russian commentators increasingly appealed to Russians in Ukraine, who should rebel against the alleged hijacking of their state by West Ukrainian nationalists. Although rumours that a Russian spin-doctor in Ukraine tried to provoke inter-ethnic strife to discredit Iushchenko were not confirmed, local political elites certainly took offence. If Tarasiuk and Lukashenko could agree on one thing, this was apparently that their states were more European than Russia.

The paradigm of Law had by now become insignificant. That Russians declared territorial disagreements with Ukraine should be solved by international law was not shown in

practice, while Iushchenko's early attempts to mollify Russians by visiting Moscow were not appreciated by Putin. Finally, Putin could easily suggest Ukrainian membership of Western organisations such as the EU when he knew this would not soon become a possibility.

Strengthening military sovereignty

Forces of Belarus and Ukraine

Law: Shielding the EU

Previously, the El'tsin presidency had seen Belarusian and Ukrainian military forces return most of their strategic assets to Russia, while at the same time no significant Western military seemed prepared to cooperate further with the two states. During Putin's second presidential term, this did not change, although Lukashenko in July, 2004, did reject the claim that Belarus was a source of soft security threats to the EU. He argued that "...in terms of migration, trafficking in drugs, trade in arms and many, many other illegal things we are a barrier for...the EU"[941] and thus envisaged a role for Belarusian military forces in upholding regional stability. However, by now only Russia had any interest in what Lukashenko could offer.

Power: Joint exercises

This did not worry Belarusians much, though, since they remained interested in cooperating with Russia. By 2006, Russian and Belarusian military integration had progressed to the point when joint air defence exercises could begin taking place. In June the Union Shield

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[941] R. Allison, S. White and M. Light, "Belarus between East and West," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 21 (4), 2005, p. 491

exercises were conducted,[942] showing that the gradual faltering of integration in other issue areas was not quite so prominent regarding military matters. And by 2007, the Russian administration finally understood that for Russia, Belarus and like-minded states the CIS was not the way forward. Thus, in March, the secretary of the Russian Security Council, Igor' Ivanov, implied that CIS military functions should be taken over by the CSTO, which also included Russia and Belarus.[943]

Nation: Terminating cooperation

However, Ukrainian forces were not in the CSTO and Russians increasingly feared they and especially the valuable Ukrainian military-industrial complex should move away from Russian control. Thus, during 2005 Russia loudly threatened Kyiv that Ukrainian military cooperation with Western states would terminate Russian-Ukrainian defence industrial cooperation, accounting for 30% of Ukrainian defence exports.[944] To retaliate, in June, 2006, an official statement from the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded to Russian complaints about impending naval exercises with Western participation near Crimea, by stating that Russia was unlawfully retaining and using naval units that it had not received under existing agreements,[945] the first time the Ukrainian government had officially denounced Russian use of the Black Sea Fleet after 1997. Even more controversially, Ukrainian forces finally opposed Russia in connection with disputes on a nuclear missile defence, culminating in February, 2007, when the US administration announced that

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[942] N. Chepurnykh, "Shchit Soiuza-2006," *Voennyi zheleznodorozhnik*, 3.7.2006

[943] "RF dolzhna aktivno otstaivat' svoi pozitsii na postsovetskom prostranstve, no ot termina 'postsovetskii' pora otkazyvatsia – Ivanov," *Itar-Tass*, 18.3.2007

[944] D. Trenin, "Russia and Ukraine" in D. Hamilton and G. Mangott, eds., *The New Eastern Europe: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova*, Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2007, p. 209

[945] "Commentary of the Spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Relating to the Situation with Preparation for International Military Exercises in the Territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea" on www.mfa.gov.ua/mfa/en/publication/print/6062 (accessed on 11.5.2009)

Ukraine was considered a partner in the deployment of the US missile defence that remained anathema for Russians. This, as much as anything else, was certain to divide Russians and Ukrainians.[946]

NATO

Law: Relaxed reaction

Previously, a somewhat relaxed Russian attitude to NATO had been visible in Putin's early presidency. Although Putin continued to accept the idea of Ukrainian NATO-membership in principle, though, by May, 2005, he made clear that Ukrainian cooperation with NATO would jeopardise Russian military assistance to Ukraine: "...if other former Soviet republics enter NATO our relations with them will, in principle, remain the same...for now our relations [with NATO] are such that we cannot retain some sensitive technology and isolated production in a NATO country (even if we're here talking about Ukraine)."[947] In Russian society more generally, ambiguity concerning NATO dominated. In 2005, 55% of respondents in an opinion poll in Russia were either neutral in their attitude, or did not know what to answer.[948] Yet it was likely that the majority of these respondents would challenge NATO the moment Ukrainian or Belarusian membership was contemplated. Similar ambiguity existed in Ukraine, where even Russia-friendly Ianukovych wanted to retain the option of cooperating with both Russia and NATO. While in opposition he had admittedly voted against a law permitting NATO-sponsored joint military exercises in

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[946] G. Mangott, "Deconstructing a Region" in D. Hamilton and G. Mangott, eds., *The New Eastern Europe: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova*, Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2007, p. 277

[947] "Vstuplenie Ukrainy v NATO otrazitsia na rossiisko-ukrainskom voenno-tekhnicheskom sotrudnichestve – V. Putin," *Defense express*, 12.5.2005

[948] White and McAllister, p. 16

Ukraine. However, after rejoining government in August, 2006, Ianukovych's party promptly

voted for the law,[949] displaying his unwillingness to condemn NATO once and for all.

Power: Union Shield 2006 and aggressive enlargement

Previously, however, Ukrainians and Belarusians had not seen any signs from NATO that the

organisation might be prepared to provide funding or equipment to the extent Russia did.

Russian observers understood that Russia could not afford to lose this advantage. In June,

2005, they worried that Ukraine had already been lost to NATO, and that Belarus, if similarly

lured to support the Western organisation, would leave the entire western flank of Russia

vulnerable to NATO aggression; thus, preventing cooperation between NATO and Belarus

remained an issue of military security, as well as prestige.[950] Stakes were sufficiently high for

the Belarusian military to receive plenty of Russian assistance during the following year. The

Belarusian public, having had their belief in Russian goodwill confirmed, continued to refuse

NATO. In a survey conducted in April, 2006, the question was asked how people would vote:

"If today a referendum in Belarus was held on the question of whether Belarus should enter

NATO." Only 14% stated they were in favour of membership, while 46% were opposed and

23% would have abstained from voting.[951] Anyway, such a vote remained hypothetical,

whereas in June that year Russo-Belarusian cooperation advanced very concretely with the

Union Shield 2006 military exercise. This was even presented as "a defence operation,

connected to the opposed military activity of a country...either the NATO-member Poland or

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[949] F. Larrabee, "Ukraine and NATO" in D. Hamilton and G. Mangott, eds., *The New Eastern Europe: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova*, Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2007, p. 248

[950] Ambrosio, *Authoritarian*, p. 130

[951] "Natsional'nyi opros v aprele 2006" by *Nezavisimyi Institut Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskikh i Politicheskikh Issledovanii*, April, 2006, at www.iiseps.org/data06-02-42.html (accessed on 11.5.2009)

Ukraine, which hungers for entering the alliance."[952] The Russian government had certainly not given up on Ukraine yet, though, but instead considered how best to save Ukrainians from NATO. In June, and again in December, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov thus warned that the early entry of Ukraine into NATO would bring about a tremendous geopolitical shift and require a revised policy from Russia. The fact that these comments were severely criticised by NATO[953] showed their international impact. Ukrainians, too, seemed to take Lavrov's message to heart. In June, 2006, an opinion poll released in Kyiv demonstrated that only 12% of respondents were in favour of NATO membership, whereas 64%, almost two-thirds, were directly opposed.[954] Thus, the majority of Ukrainians continued to reject the idea of assistance from NATO. Lukashenko, too, knew he could count on Belarusian public opposition to NATO. Therefore, most Belarusians would certainly support him when he promised in September, 2006, that: "...if tanks arrive from over there (the West) we shall die here for Russia!"[955] And despite allowing for joint exercises with NATO, Ianukovych's return as Prime Minister in 2006, led to the declaration that "Ukraine is not ready to enter NATO...We have to convince the public and that's the main task..."[956] And, as highlighted, three months later, the Ukrainian parliament decided to sack the pro-Atlanticist Tarasiuk and the equally pro-Atlanticist Minister of Defence.[957] The Russian leadership were on the offensive now, although blame was often placed on NATO, not Belarus and Ukraine. In February, 2007, Putin emphasised that he would view the membership of Ukraine and Georgia in NATO as a hostile act by the West, not Ukraine; an

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[952] V. Mukhin, "Moskva i Minsk zashchishchaiut pakt Molotova-Ribbentropa," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 19.6.2006

[953] A. Tsygankov, "Russia's International Assertiveness: what does it mean for the West?" *Problems of Post-Communism*, 55 (2), 2008, p. 49

[954] Lyne et al., p. 113

[955] E. Gamaiun, "Drug otbilsia ot ruk," *Moskovskii komsomolets*, 3.10.2006

[956] "Ukraina poka ne gotova k vstupleniiu v NATO," *Ekonomicheskie novosti*, 14.9.2006

[957] Trenin, "Russia," p. 207

act that was directly threatening to Russian security.[958] Russian commentators followed the President's lead; often, Ukrainian initiatives to seek cooperation with NATO were ignored in order to rebuke the West and particularly the USA. In April, 2007, Russian commentators thus focused on American shenanigans when American President George Bush signed an act supporting Ukrainian and Georgian NATO membership: "In recent years the USA has not become tired of showing the entire world who is the master of the house."[959] Ukraine was here simply grouped with "the world" and not seen as an active protagonist challenging the Russian great power. In order to compete with NATO, Putin's government also viewed further afield than just Belarus and Ukraine, and built up the military capacity of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which also included the military might of China. Duma speaker, Boris Gryzlov, for one eyed the possibilities in August, 2007, stating: "The [SCO] is already today an independent factor [promoting] stability and security..."[960]

Nation: Violating airspace

Given the differences between a Russia- (and China-) centred SCO on the one hand, and NATO on the other, it was thus not unreasonable for Ukrainians to hope their cooperation with NATO might be ignored in Russia. Yet, in recent years members of the Russian legislature and others had threatened severe sanctions against Ukraine. In 2004, when the Baltic States joined NATO, as the first former Soviet states to do so, the Russian air force then repeatedly violated the airspace of the Baltic States, in a warning to them and to Ukraine that NATO would not be able to protect them, while members of the Russian

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[958] A. Stent, "The Lands in between: the new Eastern Europe in the twenty-first century" in D. Hamilton and G. Mangott, eds., *The New Eastern Europe: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova*, Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2007, p. 12

[959] S. Achil'diev, "Bremia vybora," *Nevskoe vremia*, 19.4.2007

[960] "Boris Gryzlov," *FK-novosti*, 17.8.2007

General Staff complained of "...the disdain for the interests of Russia in the region" shown by both NATO and the Baltic States.[961] Another method was for Russians to arrange local demonstrations against NATO. In August, 2005, such demonstrations against Ukraine-NATO joint military exercises marred Sevastopol'. Placards declared "The troops of NATO shall not pass" and "NATO is the enemy of the Ukrainian soldier."[962] Undoubtedly, Russian state institutions supported these demonstrations, which only served to increase discord between inhabitants of Ukraine. When this was not sufficient to prevent similar exercises the following year, in June, 2006, Russian ambassador to NATO Konstantin Totskii stated that if Ukraine entered NATO "...Russia would be justified in using both diplomatic and economic levers [which was] normal practice in international affairs."[963] Iushchenko, in return, "pledged the security service, the Ministry of the Interior and border troops to remove foreigners, who had participated in anti-NATO demonstrations, from the country."[964] Now that Iushchenko had become involved, members of the Russian government found it necessary to answer. In December, 2006, Sergei Ivanov even warned that "...the consequences of these steps are negative for our bilateral relations...whether we want it or not, [rapprochement] will reflect on our relations."[965] Ivanov knew that this argument resonated strongly in Ukraine. "The authorities ignore their own people's protest" complained Mikhail Dobkin of the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine soon after,[966] while a consultative Crimean vote in December indicated that over 98% opposed NATO membership among those who voted, which was a respectable 60% of the electorate on the

[961] V. Strugovets, "Nebesnyi politkhod," *Russkii kur'er*, 1.3.2004

[962] V. Mikhailov and M. Korets, "NATO nam ne nado," *Trud*, 3.8.2005

[963] "U NATO poiavilsia povod ne prinimat' Ukrainu," *Moskovskie novosti*, 9.6.2006

[964] S. Stepanenko, "Krym ne khochet v NATO," *Vremia novostei*, 5.6.2006

[965] "Vybor vyboru rozn'," *Krasnyi voin*, 9.12.2006

[966] I. Sergeeva, "Simferopol'skii marsh," *Novye izvestiia*, 23.8.2005

peninsula, while only 1% favoured membership.[967] The distance between Simferopol' and

Kyiv had been underlined again. Based on such examples, in May, 2007, Leonid Slutskii of

the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia and First Deputy Chairman of the Committee for

International Affairs in the Duma, wrote to me that "It would be a serious mistake to decide

the question of the accession of Ukraine to NATO only in the corridors of power, without

considering the opinion of the entire Ukrainian people...[otherwise] this can lead to such

serious destabilisation [of Ukraine] that the unity of this country is in danger."[968] Putin

wanted such warnings to appear more often. In 2007, he personally endorsed a new Russian

manual on teaching Russian history after the Second World War in schools; this guide

among other things defended the Russian intervention in the Ukrainian Orange Revolution

since "Iushchenko [was] known for his anti-Russian [*antirossiiskimi*] initiatives (particularly

calling for inclusion in NATO)."[969]

Forces of the Russian Federation in Belarus and Ukraine

Law: Russian dependence

During the early 2000s, the Russian executive had assumed that the stationing of Russian

forces in Belarus and Ukraine had already been definitively agreed on. Stability on the issue

suited the Russian military well, for the Volga early warning radar at Baranovichi in Belarus

was central to Russian defence. With its ability to detect ballistic missiles 5,000 kilometres

away, the radar was the newest, most modern among all Russian military radars.[970] To the

south, the facilities on Crimea were very important for the Black Sea Fleet and for this

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[967] E. Shesternina and I. Sokolovskaia, "Krym ne khochet v NATO," *Izvestiia*, 18.12.2006, p. 1

[968] *Personal electronic correspondence with Leonid Slutskii*, 17.5.2007

[969] A. Filippov, *Noveishaia istoriia Rossii, 1945-2006*, Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 2007, p. 461; also A.
    Novikova, "Suverennaia demokratiia idet k detiam," *Gazeta*, 27.12.2007

[970] Danilovich, p. 147

reason Ukrainians had to be humoured, too, at least formally. As mentioned previously, following Putin's decree to establish a naval base at Novorossiisk Sergei Ivanov thus focused on the construction of such a base during 2004, even though Russians did not want it and it would have to contend with a shallower and smaller port than that of Sevastopol'.[971] Yet in return for indicating that Ukrainian hospitality would not be exploited, Ivanov ensured by March, 2006, that Iushchenko opposed many of his supporters eager to kick out Russian troops from Crimea by making clear that "It's out of the question to revise already signed agreements...concerning the length of stay for the [Black Sea Fleet] in Ukraine."[972]

Power: Retaining bases

Nevertheless, such a revision was exactly what Russians sought. This aim might be reached more easily in a multilateral forum. In June, 2005, at a summit of the CSTO the Russian military demonstrated this by presenting plans to conduct exercises for the joint ground forces of the organisation in its western region, that is, in Belarus, in 2006.[973] Joint exercises would reify the existence of Russian troops in Belarus; an objective that would enable Russians to incorporate the neighbouring state in its centralised military structure. In May, 2006, a major Russian newspaper printed a large map with a dividing line separating West and East in Europe: "Asia has remained with Moscow, while the formerly Socialist Europe has run to the side of America...Russia is now left to strengthen ties with Belarus and Central Asia."[974] Since most Russians also wanted Ukraine to be with the East, it was thus logical for

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[971] "Prezident Rossii podpisal ukaz o sozdanii punkta bazirovaniia Chernomorskogo flota v Novorossiiske," *Ekonomicheskie novosti*, 18.9.2003; MacKinnon, p. 202

[972] "Poka ne uregulirovany voprosy po 170 zemel'nym uchastkam, 100 ob''ektam nedvizhimosti, ob''ektam navigatsii, kotorye ispol'zuiutsia ChF RF v Krymu – Prezident Ukrainy," *Defense express*, 9.3.2006

[973] Allison et al., p. 494

[974] A. Baranov, "SNG raskololos' na zapad i vostok," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 5.5.2006

Putin to mention in October, 2006, that "Russia is not rushing to remove its fleet from Crimea ahead of schedule, for the treaty [on basing rights] is in effect until 2017. Afterwards, Moscow is prepared to negotiate on extending the stay of the Black Sea Fleet." Ukrainian Prime Minister Ianukovych seconded this, undermining Iushchenko's position.[975]

As a consequence, by the first half of 2007 Russian forces used facilities in Belarus and Ukraine to cover the entire western flank of their state. The 43rd Communications Hub at Vileika and the Independent Radar Node at Gantsevichi in Belarus were paid by Belarus and enabled Russia to operate in Central Eastern Europe and the Baltic Sea. Within Ukraine remained the Black Sea Fleet, while the Operational Group of Russian Troops in Tiraspol', Moldova, also depended on transport links through Ukraine.[976] It was perhaps to have been expected when Russian state television in June, 2007, unexpectedly reported that Ukraine had agreed to extend the agreement providing for the use by Russia of the port of Sevastopol' for its Black Sea Fleet for ten years more.[977] This was never confirmed in Kyiv, but demonstrated the importance held by the base for Russian authorities.

Nation: The Ialta lighthouse

At the same time, however, it was increasingly clear that the Russian government would not risk the position of its Black Sea Fleet to the whims of the Ukrainian state. As I previously described at length, Iushchenko's election as president had resulted in boisterous Russian protests from state officials and private individuals alike, but as long as the Black Sea Fleet depended on Ukrainian goodwill there was a limit to how strong criticism Russians could

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[975] "V sleduiushchii raz priedet nastoiashchii," *Donbass*, 1.11.2006

[976] M. Lukin, "Vse rossiiskie bazy," *Kommersant-Vlast*, 22.5.2007, pp. 69-77

[977] N. Munro, "Which Way Does Ukraine Face? Popular orientations towards Russia and Western Europe," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 54 (6), 2007, p. 46

voice. In March, 2005 the head of the Ukrainian security services, Aleksandr Turchinov, had

bluntly warned: "[Russians] will insult us as long as we allow them to do so. The presence of

the Russian Black Sea Fleet on Ukrainian territory contradicts [our] national interests."[978]

Afterwards it became clear that Turchinov and his allies were ready to follow threats with

action. In January, 2006, in an unprecedented dispute between Russian and Ukrainian

military forces, Ukrainian troops occupied the Ialta lighthouse, claiming Russians had

illegally appropriated it. The lighthouse was central to Russian naval activities in the area

and Sergei Ivanov immediately protested: "'...when Ukrainians say that this

lighthouse...does not appear [in the 1997 allotment of equipment for the Russian Black Sea

Fleet] it's untrue...'" while he also "threatened that Russian soldiers had been given every

authority to secure [the lighthouse]..."[979] Armed struggle was avoided, but it seemed quite

obvious that Russia would not easily be allowed to remain in Sevastopol' for as long as it

wanted. Furthermore, even Lukashenko was no longer malleable. In April, 2007, he

challenged plans to station Russian nuclear missiles in Belarus as retaliation for the

construction of an American nuclear missile shield nearby: "Most likely, it is simply public

relations, [and] moreover unfortunate...Apart from the President of Belarus no one has the

right to introduce normal missiles here, or those with nuclear filling."[980] On its own, this

complaint was not unusual for the troublesome Lukashenko, but the latter knew how vexed

the Russian leadership was about the American missile shield. Openly refusing to help the

Russian military in this matter was unusually provocative, even for Lukashenko.

Conclusion

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[978] "Rossiiskii voennyi desant v Krymu poterpel politicheskoe porazhenie," *Izvestiia*, 29.3.2005

[979] "U rossiian – vse polnomochiia po okhrane ob''ektov v Krymu," *Taimyr*, 19.1.2006

[980] I. Kol'chenko, "Rezul'tativnye zadachi," *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, 5.4.2007

Between 2004 and 2008, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian military sovereignty. Concerning Belarusian forces, Russia ensured that substantial military exercises, some of which were larger than any exercises hitherto seen, were conducted. The Union Shield exercise witnessed the participation of a significant Belarusian contingent. Furthermore, Igor' Ivanov officially suggested that CIS military cooperation could be transferred to CSTO aegis, allowing for more effective incorporation of Belarusian forces. It was no secret, either, that the purpose of keeping Belarusian forces close to Russia was often to oppose NATO and NATO enlargement. The Union Shield exercise was specifically conducted with the relatively new NATO-member Poland in mind, while both Putin and Lavrov strongly warned NATO against increased contacts with Ukraine. Ukraine, however, had still not been completely abandoned by the Russians, who continued attempting to co-opt the substantial Ukrainian forces. Finally, Russian forces in Belarus and Ukraine showed little sign of preparing to leave, even though this had sometimes been agreed, not least in the case of the Black Sea Fleet. Putin now suggested that the Fleet might remain indefinitely in Crimea, to increase Ukrainian as well as Russian security, while Russian communications bases and information hubs located in Belarus were if anything becoming of increasing importance for the Russian forces. The transfer of military cooperation from the CIS to the CSTO could also be seen in this light, since the new framework would make it easier for Russian troops to operate in Belarus.

The paradigm of Nation also significantly influenced Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian military sovereignty, however. Russia officially threatened to terminate cooperation with the Ukrainian defence-industrial complex, which would greatly have

harmed the latter, while the Ukrainian government in return both insisted its troops needed the best military facilities in the state taken back from Russia, and promised to join American plans for a missile defence shield, which Russia vehemently opposed. In relation to NATO, Russian military planes harassed the airspace of the Baltic States when they joined the Western alliance, and Ukraine would likely experience the same if it joined NATO. Sergei Ivanov and others certainly threatened sanctions in such a case, while Russian history as endorsed by Putin denounced Ukrainians cooperating with NATO as little short of traitors. Finally, Russian troops stationed in Ukraine came closer than ever before to armed conflict with their Ukrainian counterparts over the command of local, crucial naval infrastructure. Sergei Ivanov threatened all means would be used to defeat Ukrainian resistance, while the Ukrainian security services denounced the Russian Black Sea Fleet as a national security threat.

The paradigm of Law had by now become insignificant. Lukashenko attempted to make Belarusian forces more internationally respectable, but this threatened Russia. Putin periodically seemed relaxed about NATO, but only when NATO stayed out of Ukraine. Finally, Russian forces depended on facilities in Belarus and Ukraine, but Minsk and Kyiv would not be allowed to exploit this.

Strengthening economic sovereignty

Economies of Belarus and Ukraine

Law: Attracting FDI

The Belarusian economy had on some counts seemed more robust than the Ukrainian and even Russian economies at the end of the 1990s, although this tendency had not lasted long into Putin's presidency. By 2004, the Belarusian economy had a little reason for optimism, since Belarusian GDP had reached 117% of pre-independence levels, while GDP in Russia and Ukraine remained 90% and 67%, respectively of their pre-1992 levels.[981] However, these were largely misleading figures, for the Russian GDP was now fast increasing, while the Belarusian economy, as shall be shown below, had lost none of its past dependence on Russia. Ianukovych understood that a similar problem existed for the Ukrainian economy, and in September, 2006, when he had been reinstated as Prime Minister, Ianukovych advocated a Ukraine-EU partnership, and eventual Ukrainian membership of the organisation: "Ukraine will not be a 'cul-de-sac' in EU-Russia relations. We will build a bridge."[982] Indeed, Western interest might provide the Ukrainian economy with a small chance to relinquish its dependence on Russia. By June, 2007, Ukraine was attracting 19% of its GDP in FDI. Proportionally, this was a much higher number than in Russia, where only 7% of GDP even now appeared through FDI.[983] Ukrainian economic sovereignty appeared much less certain when it was remembered than an increasing proportion of its FDI in fact originated in Russia.

Power: Elusive aid and ready subsidies

Ukrainians were painfully aware of the dependency of their economy on Russia, and had already taken the consequence and joined the SES. Membership of the EU, on the other

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[981] Ioffe, *Understanding Belarus Western*, p. 113

[982] G. Il'in, "Ukraina uzhe ne speshit v NATO," *Izvestiia*, 15.9.2006

[983] A. Illarionov, "Rossiia ne voidet v piaterku krupneishikh ekonomik mira k 2020 godu, esli sokhranitsia nyneshnii kurs," *Ezhednevnyi zhurnal*, 27.6.2007

hand, was seen as a partial boon only. Ianukovych argued in October, 2004: "When I'm told that we must enter the [EU] straightaway, we understand well that as soon as we do that we'll be unable to compete with our salaries...As for [economic cooperation in the CIS]...economic relations contribute to our working to unite our forces."[984] Furthermore, the EU did not appear enthusiastic about cooperating with Ukraine and Belarus. When aid was allocated to the CIS in 2005 the two economies did remain potential beneficiaries, but the structure of the EU economic programme ensured that Belarus and Ukraine would be competing on equal terms not with Russia, but with Russian regions.[985] Partly, EU policy reflected the incomparable size difference between the post-Soviet economies. As of 2006, Russian GDP thus remained approximately twenty times larger than the GDP of Belarus.[986] Additionally, products of the Belarusian economy were not competitive on the international market, in Russia or elsewhere. Thus, by 2006 Minsk registered a record trade deficit of $2.5 billion, which forced Lukashenko's government to ask its Russian counterpart for a stabilisation loan of $1 billion.[987] That such a loan would increase Russian control over the Belarusian economy was welcomed in Moscow. In March, 2007, the Secretary of the Russian Security Council Igor' Ivanov implied that the remaining economic functions of the CIS should be taken over by the Eurasian Economic Community, which included Russia and Belarus and full member-states and had Ukraine as an observer.[988] Belarusians seemed to fully agree, as long as they continued to receive Russian resources and materials at

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[984] "Viktor Ianukovich," *Rabochaia gazeta*, 29.10.2004

[985] T. Lankina, "Explaining European Union Aid to Russia," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 21 (4), 2005, pp. 330, 331

[986] V. Chaplygin, "Russian and Belarus Monetary Union: phantom or reality?" in L. de Souza and P. De Lombaerde, eds., *The Periphery of the Euro: monetary and exchange rate policy in CIS countries*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, p. 229

[987] Mangott, p. 273

[988] "RF dolzhna"

privileged prices, and while Russian credits contributed to about 30% of Belarusian GDP.[989]

Inhabitants of Ukraine had previously hoped that Iushchenko's presidency would move their state closer to the West and dispel the need for Russian subsidies, yet by June, 2007, these hopes had not been fulfilled, and a popular survey in Ukraine showed only 35% of respondents were satisfied with their lives, as opposed to 65% in Belarus and 51% in Russia.[990] Consequently, Russians might well expect the Ukrainian economy to be linked even closer to that of Russia in future.

Nation: Import duties

However, an increasing proportion of Ukrainians doubted that cooperation with Russia benefitted their economy, and indeed they suspected that Russian actions had mainly been harmful toward Ukraine; a suspicion that had eventually led Zlenko to advocate a separate Ukrainian bid to enter the WTO. And in June, 2006, it seemed like wilful obstruction when the Duma banned imports of allegedly radioactive Ukrainian metal pipes: "...if the import of radioactive pipes is not prevented today, then within 10 years Ukraine will supply around [2 million] tonnes of radioactive products..." Unsurprisingly, no proof supported the flimsy, but damaging allegation,[991] which nevertheless served to mark Ukrainians as "unclean" in a line of reasoning that implicitly could be traced to the Chornobyl' disaster, as well. Somewhat surprisingly, perhaps, the Russian political elite did not want Belarusians, either, to be too smug concerning their economic sovereignty. In December, 2006, the Russian authorities announced that import duties would be imposed on some Belarusian goods from February.

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[989] M. Nuti, "Belarus: a market socialism prototype?" in D. Lane, ed., *The Transformation of State Socialism: system change, capitalism or something else?*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 231

[990] Marples, "Russia," p. 35

[991] O. Burkova, "Chernobyl' dobralsia do rossiiskikh gorodov," *Parlamentskaia gazeta*, 7.6.2006

The chosen goods were central Belarusian exports, such as foodstuffs and electronics that Belarusians could not market outside Russia.[992] And unlike Iushchenko Belarusians could not expect any sympathy from the liberal Russian opposition. In January, 2007, Russian journalist Iuliia Latynina complained: "...Belarus wants a union with Russia in the same way as...a tapeworm wants a union with a stomach...that is exactly how the ideal union with Russia would be for [Lukashenko]. The fact that it is necessary to remove the tapeworm is unquestioned...it's unhygienic to live with it."[993] In return, in February, 2007, Belarusian opposition leader Aleksandr Milinkevich appealed to Lukashenko: "...[the trade war conducted by Russian against Belarus] worries people tremendously. They fear a threat to their living standard...the loss of independence for the country...the responsibility for preventing this belongs to the elite of [Belarus], both the governing administration and the opposition."[994] Thus, perceived Russian aggression was uniting defiant Belarusians under Lukashenko.

Energy

Law: Towards market prices

Lukashenko had already briefly demonstrated a desire to promote Belarusian energy sovereignty after Putin's presidential inauguration. Certainly, during Putin's second term another bilateral agreement was struck in June, 2004. Russia was to sell natural gas for $47

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[992] R. Lindner, "Neighborhood in Flux: EU-Belarus-Russia" in D. Hamilton and G. Mangott, eds., *The New Eastern Europe: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova*, Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2007, p. 59

[993] M. Ganapol'skii, M. Berger and I. Latynina, "Rossiisko-belorusskii neftegazovyi konflikt" on *Ekho Moskvy*, 9.1.2007, on www.echo.msk.ru/programs/razvorot_evening/48788/index (accessed on 12.5.2009)

[994] A. Milinkevich, "Otkrytoe pis'mo Aleksandra Milinkevicha k Aleksandru Lukashenko" on *Khartiia 97*, 7.2.2007, on http://www.charter97.org/rus/news/2007/02/07/pismo (accessed on 12.5.2009)

per 1,000 cubic metres, while Belarus in return pledged to lower its transit tariff to $0.75.

Although these provisions constituted de facto subsidisation of Belarus, market principles of

reciprocity were formally in place.[995] The leadership of Gazprom in February, 2005,

subsequently insisted that gas sold to Belarus would in future be priced according to market

terms,[996] irrespective of Belarusian concessions elsewhere. This was a popular refrain from

the Russian state-owned company. In September, 2005, Gazprom similarly demanded that

Ukraine begin paying rates "corresponding to European standards." A representative

explained that "When we began to raise this theme a few months back, this indicator was

around $160[/1,000 cubic metres], now it's more like $180, but eventually the price can be

both higher and lower than this figure."[997] As I show below, the actions of Gazprom did not

really follow this rhetoric, yet it did convince the Belarusian and Ukrainian governments to

seek diverse deliverers of energy to reduce dependence on Russia. In December, 2006,

"...the presidents of Belarus, Ukraine and Azerbaijan agreed to create a working group to

study...the transport of Caspian energy resources to the European market."[998] Already,

Iushchenko had ordered his government to reverse the flow of the pipeline running

between Odesa and Brody, which had previously been used to transport oil from Russia. By

doing so, the pipeline would be able to carry Caspian oil to Western Europe, circumventing

Russia and thus partly liberating Ukraine from energy dependence on Russia.[999] The Russian

executive did not directly oppose this plan. Indeed, in February, 2007, Putin was much more

scathing about Ukrainian and Belarusian demands for energy subsidisation, stating that

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[995] A. Bekker, "Dogovorilis'," *Vedomosti*, 9.6.2004

[996] Yafimava, p. 60

[997] "'Gazprom' budet postavliat' gaz na Ukrainu po evropeiskim tsenam?" *FK-novosti*, 1.9.2005

[998] A. Khodasevich, "Lukashenko ves' god stremilsia k samostoiatel'nosti," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*,
       11.12.2006

[999] MacKinnon, p. 208

Russia "...is not obliged to subsidise the economy of other countries....this is not done anywhere in the world, 'so why is it demanded of Russia?'...support for the Belarusian economy within the energy sphere alone was $5.8 billion in 2007, or 41% of the entire budget of Belarus."[1000] Indeed, throughout the Russian polity there was irritation over Belarusian demands for subsidies and at times even an earnest wish that Belarus and Ukraine would just go away. An exasperated member of the Russian Duma, whom I interviewed in May, 2007, put it like this: "Ok, so we made an agreement [on energy deliveries and transit] five years ago. But those five years passed" and now Russians would like to gain a little more from their own resources.[1001]

Power: Covering energy needs in an integrated transit network

Such rhetorical defiance could not hide, though, that the Russian state seemed as prone under Putin as under El'tsin to subsidise the energy deliveries to Belarus and Ukraine. By 2004, Ukraine depended on Russia for 46% of its energy consumption. However, if it was considered that Ukraine furthermore depended on Russian fuel cells and nuclear energy in order to use its own nuclear power plants, Ukrainian energy dependency relative to Russia was in the range of 70-75%.[1002] Belarus was less dependent on Russian energy transfers than Ukraine. Nevertheless, in early 2005, Russia still covered 30% of all Belarusian energy needs.[1003] At the same time, the management of Russian companies such as Gazprom knew that as long as the USA and other Western actors did not become involved in post-Soviet energy relations, Russian companies would easily control their Belarusian and Ukrainian

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[1000] "V. Putin," *FK-novosti*, 2.2.2007

[1001] *Interview with member of the Russian State Duma*, Moscow, May 2007

[1002] Balmaceda, *Energy*, p. 10

[1003] Tsygankov, "Vladimir," p. 146

counterparts. By late 2005, Gazprom alone was the ninth largest company in the world measured on revenue. Subsequently, after earning $100 billion extra, Gazprom became the second largest energy company, and fourth largest company overall by revenue in April, 2006.[1004] The Russian company could use its strength to control not just Russian energy deliveries, but deliveries from Central Asia, too. In January, 2006, Gazprom purchased all Turkmen natural gas exports, much of which was re-sold to Ukraine. This development ensured that long-term contracts for Turkmen natural gas, which had previously been agreed between the Central Asian state and Ukraine, could not conceivably in future be used by Iushchenko's administration to avoid Russian control.[1005] Putin believed this plan would work if only the USA was prevented from assisting Ukraine. In May, 2006, he even disparaged the seeming hypocrisy of American foreign policy: "As the saying goes, 'Comrade Wolf knows, whom to eat.' To eat, and never to listen to. And, seemingly, is not preparing to listen to."[1006] Yet even if Americans were not ready to listen to Russia, they could not ensure energy deliveries to Ukraine and Belarus in any foreseeable future. Belarus was slowly beginning to feel its dependency. From 2006, Russian control had forced Belarus to pay $47 per 1,000 cubic metres of gas to Gazprom, as mentioned above. This was an increase on previous prices but still significantly lower than what Ukraine or any other state in central and Eastern Europe had to pay.[1007] Ukraine had a further problem, since Turkmen pipeline capacity was insufficient for existing contracts with Gazprom and Ukraine. By July, 2006, the

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[1004] Trenin, "Russia," p. 204; "'Gazprom' stal vtoroi kompaniei v mire v svoei otrasli posle Exxon Mobil," *FK-novosti*, 27.4.2006

[1005] "Vozmozhnost' uchastiia 'Gazproma' v proektakh po dobyche gaza v Turkmenistane obsudili glava kompanii i prezident respubliki," *FK-novosti*, 17.2.2006; "Ukraina namerena pogasit' dolg za turkmenskii gaz do 19 sentiabria," *Zerkalo nedeli*, 9.9.2006

[1006] V. Putin, "Poslanie federal'nomu sobraniiu Rossiiskoi Federatsii (10.5.2006)" on http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2006/05/10/1357_type63372type63374type82634_105546.shtml (accessed on 13.5.2009)

[1007] Trenin, "Russia," p. 249

capacity was 45-50 bcm/year. Gazprom purchased 30 bcm/year while Ukraine ostensibly purchased 40 bcm/year via the intermediary company RosUkrEnergo, part-owned by Gazprom. Russians thus ensured that the energy sector of Ukraine was dependent on layers of Russian control.[1008] The Ukrainian economy would not be able to avoid dependence for the foreseeable future. In 2008, official Ukrainian studies showed that, despite the recent discovery of several natural gas fields, oil and natural gas condensate reserves within Ukraine would be exhausted between 2025 and 2030, and natural gas reserves overall by 2032.[1009] This was not necessarily to the detriment of Belarusian and Ukrainian economies since governments in these two states could use not just Russian credit, but also the substantial amount of Russian professionalism on offer. These advantages Gazprom put to good use in January, 2007, when the purchase of 50% of Beltransgaz was, once again, agreed, with the first $625 million for 12.5% of stocks to arrive four months later.[1010] Having demonstrated its willingness to integrate its energy infrastructure with that of Russia, the Belarusian government could then ask for a new credit of $1.5bn the following month, to offset the January price increase for Russian gas, and the introduction of a new Russian oil export tariff.[1011] At the same time, and despite the statements from Putin and the Russian Duma member mentioned above, subsidisation of Belarus made sense for Russia since half of all oil exports and one-fifth of natural gas exports to the EU were now transported across Belarus.[1012]

[1008] Ibid, p. 129; I. Mostovaia and A. Eremenko, "Sovershite vy massu otkrytii (inogda ne zhelaia togo)," *Zerkalo nedeli*, 4.2.2006

[1009] Trenin, "Russia," pp. 69, 70

[1010] "'Gazprom' k 2010 godu stanet vladel'tsem 50 protsentov aktsii 'Beltransgaza,'" *FK-novosti*, 9.1.2007

[1011] V. Kashin, "Belorussiia nabiraet dolgi," *Vedomosti*, 26.2.2007

[1012] Ioffe, *Understanding Belarus Western*, p. 117

Nation: Stopping gas deliveries while exploiting Belarus?

Nevertheless, despite the seemingly mutual benefit derived from energy subsidisation by Russia and Belarus, it had been clear since the beginning of Putin's presidency that energy relations were increasingly a source of Russo-Belarusian discord. Gazprom had since 2003 relentlessly raised energy prices for Belarus. Prices by mid-2004 were still only $47/mcm, relatively low in an international context, but had still risen by 235% in one and a half years, raising import costs to 3% of Belarusian GDP.[1013] The price rise was intimately linked with Lukashenko's repeated reneging on promises to sell parts of Beltransgaz to Gazprom. In June, 2004, he even talked about the dangers that such a development would pose to Belarusian national security and complained that "...one cannot 'haggle about national dignity'..."[1014] Such comments made it unlikely that the above-mentioned sale of 50% of Beltransgaz to Gazprom three years later would proceed smoothly. The Ukrainian government was equally unwilling to transfer ownership of energy infrastructure to Russia, having already experienced a substantial loss of control with the introduction of the opaque RosUkrEnergo.[1015] Indeed, whoever owned this company alongside Gazprom, they certainly seemed to favour Russia over Ukraine. In January, 2006, Gazprom suspended gas deliveries to and through Ukraine, demanding $230/1,000 cubic metres of gas, as opposed to the existing $50. Agreement was subsequently reached that RosUkrEnergo should pay Gazprom the new price, while Ukraine should only pay $95 to RosUkrEnergo. Still, this was a temporary solution[1016] and in May Iushchenko joined his colleagues in GUAM in declaring "the unacceptability of economic pressure and monopolisation of the energy market, and

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[1013] Yafimava, p. 52

[1014] O. Gubenko, "Belorussiia ostalas' bez rublia, no s gazom," *Izvestiia*, 7.6.2004

[1015] "Rossiia i Ukraina uchredili kompaniiu 'RosUkrEnergo,'" *FK-novosti*, 30.7.2004

[1016] M. Baltianskii and V. Vernodubenko, "Soglashenie – dostignuto!" *Rabochaia gazeta*, 5.1.2006

underline the necessity of activating efforts in order to ensure energy security, including the diversification of directions for the transport of energy resources…"[1017] Such a statement was directed against Russia and the displeasure in Moscow was evident. However, it was only in March the following year that Gazprom halved deliveries to Ukraine due to alleged unpaid bills, in return for which infuriated Ukrainians threatened to cut off transit of natural gas to the EU, although this might jeopardise Western goodwill.[1018] The fact that it had taken the Russian administration so long to respond to Iushchenko was not due to any increased acceptance of Iushchenko, but to the fact that Russian attention had been taken by Belarus. Lukashenko's regime, previously so pampered by Russia, had now in many ways become its enemy in the energy question, despite the previously mentioned formal pledges to cooperate. As already stated, disputes often centred on Lukashenko's unwillingness to sell half of Beltransgaz to Russia. Although this was, again, agreed in April, 2006, in return for energy subsidisation,[1019] Russian economic and political elites did not trust Lukashenko anymore and continued to put pressure on him. By June, Gazprom even suggested Belarus could buy natural gas at $200/1,000 bcm, almost five times existing prices.[1020] And even more contentiously, in January, 2007, the Russian state-owned oil company Transneft' stopped deliveries to and through Belarus, claiming that Belarus had illegally tapped oil to the value of $45 /100 bcm. This tapping had been imposed from Minsk as an increased transit duty dating back to the beginning of the year.[1021] A Belarusian delegation now went to Moscow to seek him for a compromise, but was simply told "..that there was nothing to

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[1017] "Kievskaia Deklaratsiia o sozdanii Organizatsii za demokratiiu i ekonomicheskoe razvitie – GUAM" on www.guam.org.ua/node/103 (accessed on 12.5.2009)

[1018] A. Tekin and P. Williams, "EU-Russian Relations and Turkey's Role as an Energy Corridor," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 61 (2), 2009, p. 341

[1019] Götz, p. 166

[1020] "Komu dostanetsia 'Beltransgaz'?" *Rabochaia gazeta*, 14.6.2006

[1021] V. Arekhina, "Ekonomicheskaia voina," *Biznes & Baltiia*, 5.1.2007

discuss..." until Belarusians accommodated Russian wishes.[1022] This demonstrated contempt for the Belarusian leadership unthinkable in earlier years. Lukashenko complained of greedy, ungrateful Russians: "During the Second World War we lost almost one third of our population...I cannot allow anyone to forget this...We don't have the resources of other states. And these resources cannot be instruments to blackmail our people."[1023] Such rhetoric showed that the promised sale of half of Beltransgaz by 2010 indicated not so much a resolution of Russo-Belarusian energy disputes, as another, future reason for strife. For now, agreement was soon reached. But Putin noticed "...that Poland is buying gas from Russia at $270/1,000 cubic metres for 2007. 'This means that the price for Belarus...should be around $260. Russia agreed with those, who would sell gas to Belarus for $100/1,000 cubic metres..."[1024] Russia would thus be justified in squeezing spoiled Belarus again. And, indeed, after the Belarusian regime during the first months of 2007 continued to threaten to cut off Russian energy deliveries unless more Russian economic assistance was forthcoming, a civil servant I spoke to in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was ready to dismiss Belarusian behaviour as nothing but "blackmail."[1025]

Economic actors of the Russian Federation in Belarus and Ukraine

Law: Diversification

Already, Ianukovych had a record of being less than welcoming towards Russian investments in Ukraine. Russian business had noted this, and statistics showed that during the decade to 2005 the share of Russian exports going to Ukraine declined from 11% to 5%.

[1022] I. Khalip, "'Druzhba' so vsemi vytekaiushchimi," *Novaia gazeta*, 11.1.2007

[1023] A. Zolotnitskii, "Lukashenko suverenitet na gaz i neft' ne meniaet," *Belorusskie novosti*, 7.1.2007

[1024] "Putin podschital ubytki ot gazovogo soglasheniia s Minskom," *Severnaia Osetiia*, 11.1.2007

[1025] *Interview with civil servant in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belarusian section*, Moscow, May 2007

Although this development was undoubtedly also influenced by increased Russian economic activity in the West, China and elsewhere, the decline to Belarus during this period was minimal, from 5% to 4%,[1026] indicating that Russian investors were uninterested in these markets. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Tarasiuk was not worried, though, and by January, 2005, seemed more interested in legalising the activities of remaining Russian companies dealing with Ukraine, or, indeed, with Moldova through Ukraine: "For Ukraine Transnistria is a black hole in Europe...I'm convinced that the existence of this and [similar] regimes...is also unfavourable for Russia."[1027] By stating this, Tarasiuk expected that Russian companies would come to support the legalisation of their foreign activities, although this hope was shared by few in Ukraine or in Russia.

Power: Ukraine in the Single Economic Space

Russian investors were uninterested in laws governing their activity in Belarus and Ukraine, at least not until control over crucial sectors of the economy in these states had been secured. Achieving such control had been the overt aim during Putin's first presidential term, too. The SES might be of assistance. In September, 2003, Putin thus explained the purpose of the organisation: "...to lower the infrastructural burden on production, transport and sale of goods...to increase the competitiveness of our goods on the world market." It was a triumph for Russian exports when the Ukrainian parliament finally ratified the treaty in April, 2004.[1028] The Ukrainian economy might also benefit. Despite the overall decade-

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[1026] Mangott, p. 283

[1027] "Ministr inostrannykh del Ukrainy nazval reshenie pridnestrovskoi problemy odnoi iz vazhneishikh zadach Ukrainy" on http://old.azi.md/news?ID=33027 (accessed on 12.5.2009)

[1028] *Otvety Prezidenta V.V. Putina na press-konferentsii po okonchanii zasedaniia Soveta glav gosudarstv SNG, Ialta, 19 sentiabria 2003 goda (22.9.2003)* on www.mid.ru/ns-rsng.nsf/6bc38aceada6e44b432569e700419ef5/a4e97e1ff73ef08f43256daa0028654a?OpenDocument (accessed on 14.7.2009) ; Kuzio, "Neither," p. 63

long decline in Russian investments that I mentioned above, 2004 alone saw a year-on-year increase in Russo-Ukrainian trade of 40%, reaching $16 billion overall.[1029] Furthermore, although Russian companies might have found markets elsewhere, the share of Russian imports in the Ukrainian economy still constituted 42% by 2004, 9% more than the share claimed by EU imports.[1030] Correspondingly, ordinary Ukrainians mostly believed that future investments in their economy would come from Russia rather than the EU. This was indicated in 2004 and 2006 through opinion polls that showed a majority of respondents in Ukraine preferred some sort of union with Russia and Belarus to membership in the EU.[1031] Russian investors might not all be that enthusiastic about increased economic integration, but some types of business used Belarus and Ukraine well. Notably, by 2005, Russian arms exports to unsavoury states such as Iran and North Korea went through neighbouring post-Soviet states, as Russian companies did not want to be directly connected to these pariah states, but still craved lucrative exports.[1032] Such shenanigans would be easier if Russian companies controlled facilities abroad. And by December, 2006, Rosoboroneksport, the Russian state intermediary agency for exports and imports of defence-related and dual-use products, technologies and services, indicated its ambitions of acquiring control over titanium producers in Ukraine,[1033] a useful front for arms exports as well as a lucrative business in its own right.

Nation: Fall in imports

[1029] Sakwa, p. 297

[1030] M. Emerson, "Ukraine and the European Union" in D. Hamilton and G. Mangott, eds., *The New Eastern Europe*, Washington, DC: Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2007, p. 228

[1031] Katchanovski, p. 376

[1032] Hedenskog, p. 134

[1033] S. Blank, "Ivanov, Chemezov, and State Capture of the Russian Defence Sector," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 55 (1), 2008, p. 52

However, Ukrainians and Belarusians were increasingly resisting Russian investments in their states. This was not least because Ukrainian and Belarusian businesspeople were themselves becoming increasingly competitive and willing to succeed in competition with Russians through means both fair and foul. In June, 2004, Russian companies Severstal' and EvrazHolding wanted to bid for Ukrainian steel producer Kryvorizhstal'. However, bidding rules stated that bidders had to have introduced not less than 1 million tonnes of coke on the Ukrainian market. This condition was, unsurprisingly, not met by a single foreign candidate since all coke-plants in Ukraine remained state-controlled.[1034] Such overt discrimination could not be carried out indefinitely, but another threat to Russian investments was being introduced through EU investments, which were increasingly visible in Ukraine and Belarus. By 2005, as Belarusian imports of Russian goods were again falling by 12% year-on-year, EU products that Russians could seldom compete with were filling out the gap.[1035] Russian companies were furthermore hampered by the poor reputation they had gained in Belarus and Ukraine, as harsh, highly criminalised, and representing the economy of a colonialising state bent on exploiting the Belarusian economy,[1036] which, therefore, had to be defended. Predictably, Lukashenko had become particularly interested in warding his state against Russian media companies, which might challenge him politically. Above, I highlighted how Lukashenko shut down the operations of NTV in Belarus, and in July, 2005, he also forced through various agreements involving the Russian channel TVTs and elements of local television. The agreements ensured joint broadcasting, which effectively meant the right of Belarusian broadcasters to close unwanted programme;

[1034] A. Sikamova and O. Gavrish, "Metallurgi pomeriatsia silami," *Vedomosti*, 3.6.2004

[1035] Lindner, p. 63

[1036] G. Miazhevich, "Official Media Discourse and the Self-representation of entrepreneurs in Belarus," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 59 (8), 2007, p. 1343

something that had previously happened with ORT and RTR, despite their popularity in Belarus.[1037] Maybe media companies were a special business, but by December, 2006, political analyst Andrei Suzdal'tsev truthfully complained: "Over two decades economic integration between Russia and Belarus has not resulted in a single solid Russo-Belarusian venture...business conditions in Belarus are complicated. The government of the country makes active use of the 'golden share' including possibilities of unlimited nationalisation."[1038] Ukrainians were also seen by Russians as harassing not only Russian companies in Ukraine, but also further abroad. New customs laws between Ukraine and Moldova in March, 2006, thus required all exports from Transnistria to clear Moldova customs before they left the state, thereby preventing Russians from profiting on smuggling.[1039] That the Ukrainians might be entitled to introduce such laws was hardly mentioned in Russia.

Conclusion

Between 2004 and 2008, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian economic sovereignty. Both the Belarusian and the Ukrainian economies continued to receive substantial Russian subsidies, while any aid from the EU was difficult to come by. Economic realities favoured Russian dominance, since Russian GDP was many times larger than that of its neighbours, and could cover at least 30% of the Belarusian GDP. As in military affairs, members of the Russian executive sought to move cooperation from the CIS to control neighbouring economies even more. In energy

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[1037] A. Khodasevich and N. Orlova, "Blagoslovite na dosrochnye vybory," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 21.7.2005

[1038] A. Suzdal'tsev, "Poidet li Lukashenko na privatizatsiiu gazovykh kommunikatsii?" *Ekonomicheskoe obozrenie*, 15.12.2006

[1039] C. Bruce, "Power Resources: the political agenda in Russo-Moldovan gas relations," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 54 (3), 2007, p. 42

relations Russia also continued to be the far most important provider to both Belarus and Ukraine. Ukraine depended on Russia for three-quarters of its energy, a decade and a half after the Soviet collapse. Putin complained that the West should stay out of regional energy relations, yet since Gazprom was growing to a significant international size, Putin had little need to fear loss of Russian control. Finally, Russian investments in Belarus and Ukraine were much facilitated by the SES, and members of the Russian executive often reminded Belarusians and Ukrainians of the boons that Russian companies could bring. Certainly, almost half of investments in Ukraine came from Russia, while Belarus was profiting significantly from Russian arms transits across its territory.

The paradigm of Nation also significantly influenced Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian economic sovereignty, however. Russian authorities introduced new import duties on Belarusian goods, aware that Lukashenko's regime would have nowhere else to sell them. Since Lukashenko and Belarusians more generally were also harshly even slanderously denounced in Russia, Belarusians from all political sides joined in opposition to Russia. Ukrainians were also angry by Russian allegations that radioactively contaminated goods were being sold to Russians, a painful reminder of Chornobyl'. In energy issues, Russian authorities lambasted Belarusians for refusing to sell Beltransgaz, while Ukrainians were accused on reneging on their debts and stealing gas. The Russian reaction included more frequent reductions and terminations of energy deliveries to and through Belarus and Ukraine than previously seen. Russian investments in Belarus and Ukraine were increasingly obstructed. In Belarus, Russian media companies were harassed by Lukashenko, who feared his control over the state might be endangered. In Ukraine, it was more often local oligarchs

who rigged the sale of companies against Russian competitors, leading the latter to consider how Ukrainian economic actors might be undermined.

The paradigm of Law had by now become insignificant. Belarusian and Ukrainian companies attracted some FDI, but this was often Russian. Energy prices moved towards market levels, but only when it suited the Russian government. And diversification of Russian investment did not change the powerful influence of Russian companies in Belarus and Ukraine.

Strengthening cultural sovereignty

History

Law: Recognising historical injustice

New official Ukrainian interpretations of history remained scarce. If anything, this impression was reinforced from 2004 onwards. In October, 2004, Kuchma did use the 60-year anniversary of the liberation of Ukraine from Nazi Germany to appeal for conciliation between Red Army veterans and former nationalist partisans, who had fought for a sovereign Ukraine: "The President stressed that Ukraine will always count all those who fought for its freedom during the war as its children..."[1040] Yet Kuchma was not attempting to distance Ukraine from its Soviet past, but rather to show this past as inclusive of all Ukrainians. Ostensibly, Putin was bolder in April, 2005, declaring that: "[During the 1990s] Russia was faced with the task of...[choosing] a new vector for its historical development. It was necessary to decide how...to become a free society of free people. First of all, Russia

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[1040] "Leonid Kuchma prizval obshchestvo k edinstvu i konsolidatsii," *Rabochaia gazeta*, 29.10.2004

was, is, and will continue to be one of the largest European nations."[1041] Yet, crucially, he was not talking about a break with the Soviet and Imperial past; he was talking about its continuation in a new world. This view was by now widely shared in Russian society. The strongest criticism of the Soviet past one might expect appeared through piecemeal denunciations of specific events. For instance, opinion polls from 2005 and 2006 showed 47% of university students and teachers in Russia identified "...persons living in West Bank Ukraine and western Belarus" among victims of Soviet repression, 27% identified them as having been victims of Soviet terror, while 26% argued that they had been victims of both.[1042] Such repression and terror, though, was viewed as having affected Russians, too, and as having been instigated by individual villains, most notably Stalin, not the Soviet system as such. In Belarus, the official interpretation of history remained similar, even though the authorities in March, 2007, for the first time recognised the anniversary of the short-lived Belarusian state that had existed in 1918, following the lead of the Belarusian opposition that had been celebrating the anniversary for years.[1043] However, Lukashenko's regime still argued that this Belarusian state had subsequently integrated voluntarily in the Soviet Union, and no signs appeared that the President would change this opinion in future.

Power: Geopolitical catastrophe

Public opinion in Russia had seen the Soviet collapse as a misfortune during the early 2000s. This opinion did not change over the following years in Russia, nor, tellingly, in Iushchenko's

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[1041] V. Putin, *Poslanie federal'nomu sobraniiu Rossiiskoi Federatsii (25.4.2005)*, www.kremlin.ru/appears/2005/04/25/1223_type63372type63374type82634_87049.shtml (accessed on 14.7.2009)

[1042] C. Frierson, "An Open Call to Focus on Russia's Educated Young Adults," *Problems of Post-Communism¸* 54 (5), 2007, p. 12

[1043] G. Barbarich "Den' voli," *Belorusy i rynok*, 26.3.2007

Ukraine. Between 2000 and 2007 opinion polls repeatedly asked whether the Soviet collapse was a disaster. Whereas the proportion agreeing with this had fallen following Iushchenko's inauguration as presidency, his increasingly disappointing tenure witnessed an increasingly significant proportion of the populace regret the Soviet demise once more.[1044] Interestingly, this nostalgia was stoked by parts of Iushchenko's administration. Despite an avowedly Westernised ideology in the government, the Ministry of Culture thus continued to instruct history teachers to refer to the Second World War as the Great Fatherland War.[1045] In Belarus, Soviet nostalgia was even more pronounced. The official image of the Soviet past was still propagated as an economic utopia for the BSSR, which had allegedly been transformed from a backward agricultural republic into an industrially advanced, thriving one. Belarusian official media furthermore appropriated any Western scholarship that concurred.[1046] Putin, too, retained an imperial and Soviet perspective on past events; a perspective he showed little inclination to give up. In April, 2005, he displayed this most forcefully when he stated to the Federal Assembly: "Above all, we must acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the largest geopolitical catastrophe of the century."[1047] Russians living in Ukraine were gradually roused by Putin's rhetoric. By 2005, only 6% of Ukrainians in Ukraine counted themselves as "citizens of the Soviet Union." However, 18% of Russians placed themselves within this category.[1048] Predictably, respondents perceiving themselves as "citizens of the Soviet Union" were less likely than "citizens of Ukraine" to

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[1044] White and McAllister, p. 19

[1045] Serbyn, pp. 109, 110

[1046] Such as G. Ioffe, "Ponimanie Belarusi," *Belaruskaia dumka*, 6, 2004, pp. 140-48

[1047] Putin, *Poslanie (25.4.2005)*

[1048] L. Aza, "Diferentsiiuiuchii proiav etnichnosti" in V. Vorona and M. Shul'ha, eds., *Ukrains'ke supil'stvo, 1994-2005*, Kyiv: NAN, 2005, p. 341

view Ukraine as their homeland.[1049] Similar developments in Belarus might erode Lukashenko's authority, yet he mostly chose the Russian-linked past over other foreign alternatives. In February, 2007, construction began on a memorial church for Suvorov in Brest, thus imposing a central figure unifying Russia and Belarus on a traditionally Polonised part of Belarus. Lukashenko hereby chose sides in the above-mentioned spat between Russian and some Belarusian historians concerning Suvorov's role as liberator or occupier.[1050]

Nation: Anti-Russian campaign

Still, Lukashenko had in recent years showed an increasing tendency to co-opt the rhetoric of his opposition if he felt this might benefit his popularity in Belarus. As before, such rhetoric was often directed against Russia and it was increasingly inspired by a combative Belarusian diaspora. In 2005 the Belarusian émigré scholar Zianon Paz'niak even equated mediaeval Belarus with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Thus, he established the historical origins of the state as included in an international actor that had been opposing Russia directly and had been defending Europe against its eastern neighbour.[1051] Ukrainians did not have to go this far back to attack Russia. During 2005 Iushchenko repeatedly pushed for a Russian apology for the alleged genocide of the artificially provoked famine in the 1930s UkSSR. Russian ambassador Chernomyrdin, however, made clear that no such apology would be forthcoming: "If we're talking about terror in the USSR, then this caused the death

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[1049] V. Tykhonovych, "Spivvitchyznyky" in V. Vorona and M. Shul'ha, eds., *Ukrains'ke supil'stvo, 1994-2005*, Kyiv: NAN, 2005, p. 108

[1050] "V Kobrine stroitsia Suvorovskii khram-pamiatnik," *Khartyia'97*, 8.2.2007 on www.charter97.org/rus/news/2007/02/08/kobrin (accessed on 14.7.2009)

[1051] Z. Paz'niak, *Belaruska-Raseĭskaia vaina*, Warsaw: Belaruskiia Vedamastsi, 2005, p. 5

of many more Russians, than Ukrainians."[1052] But this did not prevent Ukrainian parliamentarians in November, 2006, from repeating the allegation of genocide conducted against Ukrainians, based on the UN definition of the term, as an attempt to eliminate all or part of a population or nationality group. The motion was passed by 233 votes to 1, with 216 deputies abstaining.[1053]

Language

Law: Supporting national languages

Hitherto, Russian language had dominated in Ukrainian public life into the 2000s. Under Iushchenko, laws were introduced to correct this, albeit with little effect. In January, 2006, the parliament changed the television law, stating that 75% of broadcasting had to be in Ukrainian, at the same time as around 30% of foreign-language films allegedly had Ukrainian dubbing or subtitles.[1054] Knowing that such developments hardly threatened the supremacy of Russian language, in December, 2006, Putin promised Iushchenko "to assist the aspirations of people to preserve their national culture and language."[1055] This was an easy promise to make for Putin, since his assistance to the Russian language was hardly needed for its continued dominance. Similarly, any spreading of the Belarusian language was very local in nature. For example, in March, 2007, a local branch of the Belarusian Language Society persuaded transport officials in the town of Baranovichi to switch recorded next-

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[1052] I. Sergeeva, "Kiev zazheg svechi," *Novye izvestiia*, 28.11.2005

[1053] D. Marples, "Ethnic Issues in the Famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 61 (3), 2009, p. 506

[1054] M. Starozhitskaia, "Iazykoznanie. Lish' by ne po-russki," *Ogonek*, 6.2.2006; Velychenko, p. 9

[1055] V. Prikhod'ko, "Diplomaticheskii gopak," *Moskovskii komsomolets*, 25.12.2006

stop announcements on local buses from Russian to Belarusian,[1056] hardly a major blow to Russian-speakers in the town, let alone in the state as a whole.

Power: Disseminating Russian-language products

At the same time, although Putin might have told Iushchenko otherwise, official Russian policy still sought the strengthening of the Russian language in neighbouring states, as outlined in the National Security Concept from 2000. Before the Ukrainian presidential election in late 2004, Ianukovych thus went to Moscow for discussions with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov. The outcome was that Ianukovych would make Russian the second official language in Ukraine if he became President.[1057] Even though Ianukovych did not achieve this, the position of the Russian government had been made clear. Subsequently, suggestions from Russian political commentators supported such a position. In May, 2005, Vladimir Frolov wanted the Russian authorities to broaden their definition of post-Soviet humanitarian cooperation. Beyond the issue of preserving basic rights to life and liberty for the Russian diaspora, Frolov wanted to include issues of education, Russian language and media.[1058] This duly happened at the end of the year, when the government pledged to: "...strengthen the statehood, national security and prestige of [Russia]...the development of...integration within the [CIS, by approving] the presented federal programme on 'Russian language (2006-2010)'..." Here, 800 million roubles should produce and disseminate Russian-language printed and audio-visual products in other post-Soviet

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[1056] "Belaruskaia mova guchyts' u baranavitskikh autobusakh," *Radye Svaboda*, 20.3.2007 on www.svaboda.org/content/Article/755733.html (accessed on 12.5.2009)

[1057] "V sluchae pobedy na prezidentskikh vyborakh Viktor Ianukovich sdelaet russkii iazyk na Ukraine vtorym gosudarstvennym," *Ekonomicheskie novosti*, 9.10.2004

[1058] Tsygankov, "Tanks," pp. 1086, 1087

states.[1059] Admittedly, this still seemed unnecessary in Belarus, where Russian remained the language of choice for most people and in public debate. In August, 2005, a Belarusian sociologist thus recorded the frequency with which major Belarusian- and Russian-language websites from Belarus were being used. His study revealed that almost seven times more visitors appeared on the Russian-language websites.[1060] As for Ukraine, Ianukovych's electoral defeat did not imply that significant political parties were not prepared to continue the argument for introducing Russian as a second official language. In July, 2006, the Socialist Party of Ukraine officially advocated this, and joined forces with Ianukovych's Party of Regions to regain control of the state. Indeed, after Ianukovych had become Prime Minister again, by September the parties together defended the Russian language on Crimea.[1061]

Nation: Annihilation of Belarusian

That the Russian language still had to be defended, however, illustrated that the potential for division in Ukraine along linguistic lines remained. Furthermore, they were spreading to Belarus. In August, 2005, the decision of the German broadcaster Deutsche Welle to transmit in Russian to Belarus was called "shameful" by the leader of the Belarusian National Front, Vinchuk Viachorka, who denounced "...[Western] bureaucrats, who completely supported the politics of annihilating the Belarusian language..."[1062] The disappointment that Western help for the Belarusian language was not forthcoming was

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[1059] "O federal'noi tselevoi program'e 'Russkii iazyk (2006-2010 gody)'" on http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/knigi/zakon/zakon052.html (accessed on 12.5.2009)

[1060] V. Dorokhov, "Trusovskaia logika," *Belorusskaia delovaia gazeta*, 12.8.2005

[1061] "Na Ukraine sozdana 'antikrizisnaia koalitsiia,'" *Ekonomicheskie novosti*, 7.7.2006; "V Krymu prokhodit miting v podderzhku russkogo iazyka," *Ekonomicheskie novosti*, 20.9.2006

[1062] Dorokhov

palpable. Linguistic divisions in Ukraine were becoming much more severe, though, as a survey from 2006 showed. Whereas 51% reported that Ukrainian was the language of their home environment, almost as many, 46%, stated that it was Russian. Furthermore, 76% of inhabitants in eastern regions spoke Russian, while 91% in the West spoke Ukrainian.[1063] After Ianukovych became Prime Minister in 2006, legally proscribed Ukrainianisation of television and movies was only enforced by Ukrainian interest groups. A group of 200 activists authored a Memorandum insisting on the dubbing into Ukrainian of all foreign movies, even Russian ones. 90% of Ukrainian film distributors were convinced or coerced into signing the document,[1064] which left Russian-speakers fearing that some Ukrainians were prepared to ostracise their language from the state.

Religion

Law: Belarus between churches

So far, atheism, often bred by indifference, had remained the most significant safeguard against religious conflict in Belarus during the early 2000s. Attempts to actively place the state between religious denominations on a wholly sovereign footing were subsequently limited to isolated groups in Minsk. An example of this remained the theatre production Tuteishiia, performed by the prominent Ianka Kupala Theatre. The production had been running almost continuously since 1990 and through the main character of Mikita openly advocated Belarusian religious sovereignty.[1065] But this was not an argument listened to by the vast majority of inhabitants in Belarus. Inhabitants of Ukraine seemed a bit more

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[1063] White and McAllister, p. 7

[1064] E. Konstantinova, "Poslednii dubl'?" *Zerkalo nedeli*, 3.2.2007

[1065] *Tuteishyia* on
http://wikisource.org/wiki/%D0%A2%D1%83%D1%82%D1%8D%D0%B9%D1%88%D1%8B%D1%8F
(accessed on 13.7.2009)

receptive. In a popular survey conducted during 2006, as many as 40% of respondents defined themselves as Ukrainian Orthodox, as opposed to only 26% who answered that they were Russian Orthodox.[1066] Still, these Ukrainians were still Orthodox, being unable or unwilling to espouse a wholly Ukrainian religion.

Power: Orthodox support for Ianukovych

Previously, though, keeping Ukrainians attached to some sort of Orthodoxy had not been good enough for the Russian Orthodox Church, the leaders of which wanted to keep control. During the Ukrainian presidential election in late 2004 the Church even openly supported Ianukovych's pro-Russian, regime-supported campaign.[1067] In Belarus, too, Lukashenko used Orthodoxy to support his regime, in September, 2004: "Yes, we were, remain and will continue to be an inalienable part of the pan-European civilisation...But Belarus and Belarusians are not native to the Catholic, Protestant western civilisation, but primarily to the Orthodox one, in which we have lived together with Russians for centuries."[1068] Most Russian elites wholeheartedly agreed.

Nation: Provoking schism

Yet, Russians also increasingly used religion to provoke splits within the Belarusian and, particularly, Ukrainian polities. In June, 2004, a report by Russian political campaign coordinator Marat Gel'man advocated provoking conflict between the Russian Orthodox

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[1066] White and McAllister, p. 7

[1067] T. Colton, M. Goldman, C. Saivetz and R. Szporluk, "Russia in the Year 2004," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 21 (1), 2005, p. 13

[1068] A. Lukashenko, "Stenogramma vystupleniia pered studencheskoi molodezh'iu Brestchiny (23.9.2004)," *Ofitsial'nyi internet-portal Prezidenta Respubliki Belarus'* on www.president.gov.by/press10981.html#doc (accessed on 12.5.2009)

Church and the Uniate Church. Following privatisation of the eleventh-century St Antonia

Caves in Chernihiv by the Orthodox Church, Iushchenko would end in an untenable position

between the two parties.[1069] This was a risky strategy for the Uniate Church was on the

march, threatening Orthodox dominance. It was moving beyond the western regions of

Galicia and Transcarpathia and now commanded parishes in Donbas and Crimea, while

Uniate Cardinal Liubomir Guzar sought support from the Pope to found a Greek Catholic

patriarchate centred on Kyiv.[1070] Similar developments were not really possible in Belarus,

where no national church existed, yet instead Russians were left to fear gradual Belarusian

conversion to the cause of Catholic Poland: "...Warsaw tried to convert the Poles in

Belarus...[allegedly] everything for...the Poles, was the same as for the Belarusians...even

the Catholic Easter was [claimed to be] the same holiday as the Orthodox one."[1071] An

increasing proportion of Russians seemed willing to believe that Belarusians and Ukrainians

were allowing Western religious forces onto sacred Russian soil.

Conclusion

Between 2004 and 2008, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian

perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian cultural sovereignty. In issues concerning

perceptions of history, Putin now denounced the Soviet collapse as a geopolitical

catastrophe, in terms stronger than El'tsin had ever used. In Ukraine, public opinion was

increasingly nostalgic in relation to the Soviet period, particularly as the hopes engendered

by Iushchenko's presidential election faded. Lukashenko had always praised Soviet history,

and now Imperial times were praised, too. Concerning linguistic issues, an official Russian

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[1069] "Tretii termin"

[1070] "Emissar Vatikana pribyl v Moskvu," *Molodezh' Estonii*, 18.2.2004

[1071] O. Stepanenko, "Panstvo lezet cherez okno," *Pravda*, 8.2.2008

government project advocated disseminating Russian-language materials in Belarus and Ukraine, even though the position of the Russian language there remained strong. Already the Russian Prime Minister had convinced Ukrainian presidential candidate Ianukovych to campaign on a promise to have Russian made an official language in Ukraine. The fact that Ianukovych lost the election did not convince the Russian government to abandon this goal; the above-mentioned government project was an example of this. Finally, in religious issues the Russian Orthodox Church openly and consistently supported Ianukovych's presidential candidacy. The fact that this was unsuccessful did not convince the Patriarch or his representatives in Ukraine that Iushchenko should be supported, nor, indeed, that the Church should in future stay away from Ukrainian politics. The leadership of the Church might even soon become interested in taking a similar interest in actively supporting the Belarusian leadership, since even the unpredictable Lukashenko was now declaring his state to be predominantly Orthodox.

The paradigm of Nation also significantly influenced Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian cultural sovereignty, however. Concerning perceptions of history Russo-Ukrainian relations were severely damaged by disputes over the Holodomor. While Ukrainians denounced this event as genocide perpetrated against their nation by the Soviet Union, and thus by Russia, which had become the successor state to the Union, Chernomyrdin curtly informed that no Russian apology would be forthcoming. In linguistic issues the Belarusian opposition was more worried about annihilation of their language than ever before, and something might be said for this. Not only was Russian dominant in Belarus, and forced through by the Russian government, too, but Western organisations now assisted the Russian cause. Finally, in religious issues Russian spin-doctors were allegedly attempting to

undermine the Iushchenko presidency by forcing him to take sides and thus exacerbate the religious differences in Ukraine. This was unsuccessful, yet such differences seemed certain to increase in the near future as the Uniate Church was becoming a serious competitor to the Russian Orthodox Church, even in central Ukraine and Kyiv.

The paradigm of Law had by now become insignificant. Putin did acknowledge the need for a new start for Russia, but not for a break with the past. Belarus and Ukraine introduced laws supporting titular languages, but with little effect. Finally, a few groups suggested Belarus might exist between Orthodoxy and Catholicism, but few took any notice.

Chapter 8: Conclusion: Revanchist Russia

In this thesis I have argued that between 1990 and 2008 Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty primarily remained within the paradigm of Power; that a decreasing proportion of Russian perceptions existed within the paradigm of Law; and that an increasing proportion existed within the paradigm of Nation. Eventually, the paradigm of Nation was almost, if not quite, as influential as the paradigm of Power. In this conclusion, I shall summarise how this development took place. Finally, although this was never the primary purpose of my thesis, I shall summarise why the relative influence of the paradigms changed as it did during the four chronological periods that my thesis covers.

Political sovereignty

Between 1990 and 1993, the paradigm of Power dominated Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian political sovereignty. Despite the Soviet collapse historical territorial delimitations persisted, Russia and Belarus agreed on joint border protection, El'tsin advocated the gathering of Russian lands, while Kozyrev predicted the rapid return of Belarus and Ukraine to Russia. Saturating such rhetoric was a multi-national ideology that viewed Moscow as a regional centre, just as it had historically been. At the same time, though, the paradigm of Law was visible, too. Borders between Russia, Belarus and Ukraine might not have changed in form in 1992, but they certainly changed in substance. Within the Soviet Union, such borders had been purely administrative in nature, their function simply to facilitate Soviet control in the republics. After the Union collapsed, and despite the misgivings of most Russians, the borders were suddenly subject to international law. Now, the borders were meant to divide Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, instead of uniting them. To

their credit, Russians mostly accepted the new reality and seldom advocated changing post-Soviet conditions through violent means. Indeed, whereas the RSFSR-UkSSR treaty already in 1990 had provided notable territorial guarantees between the two republics, a guarantee that was repeated under post-Soviet conditions, belligerent Russian threats to Belarusian and Ukrainian political sovereignty generally came from insignificant political actors. The fate of Crimea and its mainly Russian inhabitants might have been expected to ignite Russian resentment, but this hardly happened, not least since El'tsin resisted this personally and with assistance from the UN.

Between 1993 and 1999, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian perceptions. Most notably, a Community Treaty, a Charter of a Union State, and a Union State agreement were struck to facilitate renewed integration between Russia and Belarus; integration that aimed to help them regain great power status. El'tsin strongly promoted this process and even advocated a referendum on complete Russo-Belarusian integration. For many Russians integration retained an air of inevitability. Thus, Lebed' expected neighbouring states to hand over their territories, while Primakov mentioned a specific road to integration with Belarus as well as Ukraine, a view also evident in the Strategic Concept for the CIS. The paradigm of Law remained important, too, yet less so than it had previously been. Whereas the early 1990s had witnessed overt Russian support for democratic governance, such support later waned, especially in the case of Belarus. Renewed territorial guarantees were provided in the Russo-Ukrainian Friendship Treaty, yet both El'tsin and Igor' Ivanov indicated that these guarantees were no longer an end in themselves, but a means to facilitate cooperation on other issues. Conversely, although the paradigm of Nation remained relatively less significant than the other paradigms, a number of potential

disputes remained. For a long time, the parliaments of Russia and Ukraine refused to ratify agreements on land borders between their states, while a similar agreement on sea borders was far from achieved. Furthermore, the fortunes of some members of the Russian political opposition, such as Zhirinovskii, had increased partially through criticism of Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty.

Between 2000 and 2004, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian perceptions. Putin ensured that Russia-Belarus integration continued to be prioritised, and the two states even agreed a Constitutional Act for their future unified state. Putin wanted to promote integration under Russian leadership, possibly with Belarus being incorporated directly in the Russian Federation. The President and the Russian government were certainly interested in Ukrainian participation, as well, in such a project. At the same time, whereas El'tsin had consistently advocated a Russian identity that identified with the Russian Federation, Putin was much more interested in identifying present-day Russia with historical, multi-national entities such as the Russian Empire and, especially, the Soviet Union. Yet at the same time, the paradigm of Nation was becoming increasingly noticeable. Although Putin preferred voluntary Russo-Belarusian integration, he rudely dismissed those Belarusian concerns that began to appear. Between Russia and Ukraine, Tuzla proved a much more dangerous experience. Never had Russia so crudely challenged Ukrainian political sovereignty. And the challenge had been tacitly supported if not initiated by the Russian government. Conversely, the paradigm of Law had gradually become the least significant of all paradigms. Although the last parts of the Russo-Ukrainian land borders were finally demarcated, the dispute over Tuzla made any formal agreement seem irrelevant. The Russian government and Putin might intermittently have complained of lack

of democracy in Belarus, yet Lukashenko was only criticised when he did not act according to Russian wishes. And although Russian support for Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereign ideologies remained, it was seldom if ever found within the executive.

Finally, between 2004 and 2008 the paradigm of Power again dominated Russian perceptions. Putin still promoted Russo-Belarusian integration as far as possible, allowing the Union budget to substantially increase. It was clear from statements and opinion polls taken among other members of the Russian political elite that the President had broad backing for such policies. Russians were also convinced that interference in Belarusian and Ukrainian politics was justified. Never was this been clearer than during the 2004 Ukrainian Presidential election, which was widely understood among Russians as an event that they, but not the West, had a right to influence. Yet by now the paradigm of Nation had also become highly significant. Whereas Russians mostly blamed Western interference for Iushchenko's presidential election, Ukrainians, too, were accused of stealing the state from Russia and Russians. Later, Putin openly threatened Ukraine with territorial revanchism, while even Belarusians suffered felt threatened by Putin's threat to incorporate their state as a mere republic in the Russian Federation. In contrast, the paradigm of Law had by now lost almost all of its importance. Declarations from Putin and others that territorial disputes ought to be solved through international law did not seem to be mirrored in practice. Iushchenko's electoral victory might have been acknowledged in Russia, but it was never accepted. And although Putin did at one point accept that Ukraine could join the EU, the President only did so because he knew the EU would not accept Ukraine, whereas the Russian state ideology Putin was constructing still saw Ukraine as an integral part.

Military sovereignty

Between 1990 and 1993, the paradigm of Power dominated Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian military sovereignty. Until 1992, military forces in the BSSR and UkSSR were integrated in all-Union forces. Afterwards, CIS-agreements stipulated similar integration for so-called "strategic forces" in Belarus and Ukraine. Integration should rival NATO-forces: provisions in the Collective Security Treaty, signed by Russia and Belarus, directly mirrored NATO-provisions on collective defence against outside enemies. Furthermore, Russians wanted to retain military bases abroad and sought permission within the CIS and from the UN to deploy troops abroad, including in Belarus and Ukraine. The paradigm of Law was not insignificant, though. Belarus and Ukraine were allowed to retain substantial military contingents, and attempts by Ukraine to keep troops out of multilateral cooperation were tolerated in Russia. Similarly, Russians might not have appreciated the establishment of neutral Belarus and Ukraine between Russia and NATO, yet Russians never berated their neighbours for this. Finally, El'tsin accepted in early CIS-agreements that Russia should allow Belarus and Ukraine joint command over any Russian strategic forces stationed on their territory. In contrast, the paradigm of Nation was insignificant. El'tsin might have claimed the Black Sea Fleet returned from Ukraine, but he only did so to co-opt and sideline his parliament, proving unwilling to force the matter. Belarusian and Ukrainian cooperation with NATO against Russia was simply not envisaged in Moscow, where Belarusian and Ukrainian suggestions for a new European security regime were widely ignored. Finally, while the Russian executive did want to retain military presence in Belarus and Ukraine, all indications were that this should be accomplished through negotiation, not by fiat or threats.

Between 1993 and 1999, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian perceptions. Russian subsidisation of Belarusian forces constituted a central part of all agreements concerning integration, while even Ukraine joined some Russian-led cooperation, a development supported by El'tsin throughout. NATO enlargement was criticised by Belarus and Ukraine as well as Russia, as were the bombings of Yugoslavia, which prompted Russia and Belarus to conduct exercises directed against NATO. Finally, Russian sought and acquired long leases of Belarusian and Ukrainian bases, widely perceived in Russia as enhancing national prestige. The paradigm of Law continued to have some significance, too, yet less than previously. Russia did allow the USA to promise security guarantees to Belarus and Ukraine, yet no protective mechanisms were allowed to be established. Russia did eventually participate in Ukraine-NATO naval exercises, but did not approve of them or trust the intentions of NATO in the Black Sea. Finally, while Russia promised to consistently consult Ukraine on use of naval bases in Sevastopol', in reality the 1997 naval treaties increased Russian unilateral dominance there. In contrast, while the paradigm of Nation remained least significant, worrying signs appeared. In the Russo-Ukrainian naval treaties, Ukraine was deprived both of the majority of its vessels and of proper mooring places for the remainder. This would prevent Ukraine from hosting NATO vessels in future, a prospect that Russian politicians such as Luzhkov vehemently opposed. Ukraine was not trusted to keep NATO at bay, and already indications appeared that Russian troops might remain on Crimea even after the agreed lease had expired, despite Ukrainian resistance.

Between 2000 and 2004 the paradigm of Power remained dominant. Integration of Belarusian forces under de facto Russian command progressed within the CSTO, while Russians knew that even the Ukrainian leadership could find no useful military allies elsewhere. The Russo-Ukrainian Cooperation Treaty was used to keep Ukraine out of NATO, while Putin could be sure that Lukashenko would faithfully copy any Russian criticism of the Western organisation. Finally, the Russian government assumed bases in Belarus and Ukraine would always be available, Sergei Ivanov assuming that even the lease on the Sevastopol' facilities would be extended. The paradigm of Nation remained relatively less important, but it could no longer be ignored. As long as Ukrainian forces refused to accept Russian command, the Russian elite were pleased to see them weakened, not least since this also hindered Ukraine and other GUUAM states from cooperating closely with NATO. At the same time, Putin's policy doctrines continued to stress that Russian forces had the right to defend Russians abroad, and definitions of who these "Russians" were constantly widened. In contrast, the paradigm of Law was now rapidly losing influence. Although Russia hardly needed the cooperation of Belarusian and Ukrainian forces anymore, these forces could integrate nowhere else. Similarly, Putin might have initially had a relaxed attitude towards NATO, but he never indicated that Belarus and Ukraine should be part of this organisation. At the same time, Putin did claim in the West that Russian troops would behave responsibly abroad, yet the President was never ready to listen to Belarusian and Ukrainian complaints regarding Russian troops stationed on their territories.

Finally, between 2004 and 2008 the paradigm of Power again dominated. Belarusian forces continued to be intimately involved in Russian-led exercises, which increasingly moved from the moribund CIS to the more effective CSTO. Putin remained strongly opposed to NATO,

following NATO enlargement into the post-Soviet region, and Belarus continued to present a joint front with Russia on this question. Finally, Putin's regime more clearly than before showed its intention to have Russian forces remain indefinitely in Belarus and Ukraine, ostensibly to enhance regional security. Yet, the paradigm of Nation had by now also become quite influential. Sections of the Ukrainian military remained highly dependent on Russian equipment, and now the Russian government was openly threatening that cooperation could be terminated. The prospect of Ukrainian membership of NATO prompted Putin to directly threaten territorial revanchism, while Russian forces had previously indicated willingness to harass post-Soviet NATO member-states. Finally, unprecedented conflict appeared between Russian and Ukrainian forces over military infrastructure on Crimea. Sergei Ivanov even authorised Russian troops to use military means to win the dispute. In contrast, the paradigm of Law had now become insignificant. Russians showed no interest in letting Belarusian and Ukrainian forces cooperate with the West, instead ensuring that these forces remained highly dependent on Russian goodwill. Putin might have stated that Ukraine could enter NATO in an unforeseen future, yet he did so only when knowing that Ianukovych's presidency would not prompt rapid Westernisation of Ukraine. Finally, Russian forces might still have been somewhat dependent on facilities in Belarus and Ukraine, yet as Sergei Ivanov indicated this dependency was not something Lukashenko and Iushchenko could exploit.

Economic sovereignty

Between 1990 and 1993, the paradigm of Power dominated Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian economic sovereignty. The economies of the BSSR and UkSSR had

depended on the RSFSR to purchase their goods, and this continued with substantial Russian subsidies after 1991. Energy dependency had been even more pronounced, particularly since the Union centre had forced the UkSSR to use natural gas, which had to come from or through the RSFSR. Finally, both Belarus and Ukraine had historically provided transit areas for Russian goods to the world market; following 1991, the Russian government sought to continue this policy. The paradigm of Law was noticeable, too, though. El'tsin appeared intent on forcing Belarusian and Ukrainian economies to reform, abandoning monetary union when this was seen to be damaging to the Russian economy. Russian energy companies, including state-owned Gazprom, did suggest that Belarus and Ukraine should pay market prices for what they received; an unprecedented signal even if one that was not yet enforced. Finally, Russian investors were not primarily focused on Belarus and Ukraine; instead they were moving to the West and would only go to neighbouring economies if these conducted effective market reforms. In contrast, the paradigm of Nation was insignificant. Russo-Ukrainian disagreement over the fate of Soviet assets and debts remained muted and did not obstruct economic cooperation more generally. Ukraine might have periodically been threatened with reduced energy deliveries and price increases, but Russian energy subsidies always appeared when they were needed. Similarly, threats that discrimination against Russians might prevent Russian investments in Ukraine were never echoed in practice or by El'tsin, whose demands of local economies were strict, but economically rational.

Between 1993 and 1999, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian perceptions. The government sought to re-integrate the Belarusian economy; a policy El'tsin vocally supported, while he and the Russian parliamentary opposition also wanted

increased economic support for Ukraine. Energy subsidies continued as before; the Russian government and Gazprom knew such subsidies enabled them to largely control Belarus and Ukraine the economies of which remained highly energy-intensive. And with increased prominence in Russia after El'tsin's re-election in 1996, numerous oligarchs tried to establish themselves, too, in Belarus and Ukraine where an increasing number of industries were opening up to foreign control. Still, the paradigm of Law also remained visible, if less so than before. Russian ministers consistently demanded Belarusian economic reforms, while territorial and other guarantees in the Friendship Treaty indicated that the Ukrainian economy might no longer be hostage to Russian non-economic demands. Gazprom and other Russian companies attempted to hold Ukraine responsible for its energy debts and to gradually increase prices to world market levels, although these attempts were mostly unsuccessful. Finally, El'tsin remained aware that Russian investors in the longer run needed reformed Belarusian and Ukrainian economies, although presently citizens of Russia took advantage of high Belarusian salaries. All this could mostly be addressed amicably, though the paradigm of Nation was slowly gaining a little significance. Chernomyrdin was annoyed with Belarusian calls for subsidies, while tax wars and arms export disputes with Ukraine only just remained within the limits of normal economic competition. When Russia imposed excise duties on energy deliveries to Ukraine relations were further damaged, albeit Russian analysts justifiably indicated that reduced energy theft by Ukrainians would improve energy relations. Finally, Russia did re-open customs barriers partly in protest against obstruction of Russian investments in Ukraine, yet at this time Kuchma managed to mollify Russians.

Between 2000 and 2004, the paradigm of Power again dominated. The establishment of the SES, vigorously promoted by Putin, tied the economies of Belarus and Ukraine closely to

Russia, which remained an important market for Belarusian and Ukrainian goods. Russian companies acquired energy infrastructure particularly in Ukraine, while Putin became directly involved in Russo-Ukrainian negotiations concerning expansion of transit pipelines through Ukraine to Central Europe. Furthermore, Putin championed the creation of costly free economic zones and Lukashenko's re-election, giving Russians privileged access to the sale of Belarusian and Ukrainian companies. Simultaneously, though, the paradigm of Nation had become more noticeable. Putin loudly derided the Belarusian economy as unreformed and weak; a statement halting Russo-Belarusian integration and scaring the Ukrainian government, too. Energy deliveries were increasingly turned off following Ukrainian energy thefts, while Putin and Gazprom now openly threatened that future energy subsidies required Russian ownership of Belarusian and Ukrainian energy infrastructure. Putin chided the Belarusian National Bank for organising resistance to Russian energy and other types of investments in Belarus, while Lukashenko in return harassed Russian media companies. Conversely, the paradigm of Law became less important than it had been under El'tsin. The Russian military-industrial complex might still have needed some Ukrainian products, but Ukrainian companies and Kuchma's government were unwilling and unable to use this dependency to defend Ukrainian sovereignty. Putin might occasionally have advocated stable energy prices and European energy security, but he seldom kept these principles in mind when dealing with Belarus and Ukraine. Finally, although Iushchenko as Ukrainian Prime Minister temporarily facilitated Russian investments in the state, Putin and the Russian government never concealed their preference for Ianukovych, who, despite supporting Ukrainian oligarchs, was preferred in Moscow for political reasons.

Eventually, between 2004 and 2008, the paradigm of Power dominated again. Despite Iushchenko's presidency, the EU remained reluctant to subsidise the Ukrainian economy, leaving this state and Belarus reliant on Russia and its Eurasian Economic Community. Gazprom used RosUkrEnergo to better control transit networks in Ukraine, while Putin complained that the USA should stay away from internal post-Soviet affairs. At the same time, the Ukrainian parliament ratified participation in the SES, which would favour the inflow of Russian goods to Ukraine and Belarus. Yet by now, the paradigm of Nation had become more significant than ever before. The Russian government placed import duties on goods central for the Belarusian economy, while Lukashenko was widely derided in Russia as parasitical. Disruptions to energy deliveries were more frequent and longer lasting than previously, with the Russian government and Gazprom increasing their demands of neighbouring states whenever winter approached, in the process ignoring previous agreements. Russian investors were openly discriminated against in Ukraine and Belarus, where Russian businessmen, not always without reason, were depicted as criminal, aggressive colonisers. On the contrary, the paradigm of Law had become insignificant. Although Ukraine attracted increasing amounts of FDI this often originated in Russia or from Russian-controlled companies. Putin and other members of the Russian political elite complained that energy subsidisation must stop, as it had done elsewhere in the world, yet only increased prices whenever it could hurt Belarus and Ukraine the most. Finally, albeit some diversification of Russian investments took place, indicating that Belarusian and Ukrainian markets were seen as increasingly less important, this did not imply that Russians were ready to accept competition against their companies in these two states.

Cultural sovereignty

Between 1990 and 1993, the paradigm of Power dominated Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian cultural sovereignty. The Soviet claim of historical union between Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians remained at the inauguration of the CIS, and El'tsin ordered imperial flags hoisted over vessels in Ukraine. Russian language remained dominant in both Belarus and Ukraine, and it gained official pre-eminence in the CIS, too. Russian Orthodoxy was seen by Russians as a unifying factor between Russia, Belarus and Ukraine; an impression supported by Aleksii II. However, the paradigm of Law was significant, too. El'tsin visited Kyiv, acknowledging historically unprecedented Russo-Ukrainian equality, and his state-building project inspired Russian scholars to claim Novgorod as the new founding city for Russia. States in the CIS pledged to secure the linguistic rights of all their inhabitants, a pledge mirrored in domestic laws of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. And following Soviet repression of religions in general, Aleksii II appealed to free choice of denomination for post-Soviet parishioners; a policy Russians could see mirrored in Ukrainian law. In contrast, the paradigm of Nation was insignificant. El'tsin implicitly accused Shushkevich and Kravchuk of abandoning the Soviet Union, but only sought to deflect blame, whereas intended attacks on Ukrainians' historical role were left to outsiders like Limonov. Gorbachev worried unnecessarily for the Russian language in the UkSSR, and in independent Ukraine only isolated local politicians discriminated against Russian-speakers. Finally, disagreements between Russian and Ukrainian clergy did appear, but they never escalated despite of religious terminology by some Russian politicians, notably including Rutskoi.

Between 1993 and 1999, the paradigm of Power continued to dominate Russian perceptions. El'tsin repeatedly highlighted the common imperial links of Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians, and ensured the Russo-Belarusian Community, founded shortly

before El'tsin's re-election, reminded observers of Soviet cooperation. Russian language continued to effortlessly dominate in Belarus and Ukraine; even so, Russian government policy continued subsidisation of Russian-language publications in these two states. Furthermore, El'tsin had Aleksii II bless Russo-Belarusian integration, just as Ziuganov emphasised the central place of Russian Orthodoxy for post-Soviet integration. The paradigm of Law remained noticeable, but less so than before. Russian scholars such as Furman acknowledged that Russia had historically provoked Ukrainian nationalism, yet the Russian elite did not respond. Similar elite ignorance appeared in linguistic issues. Whereas Russian-speakers in Belarus and Ukraine did not want to be defended by Russia, the Russian government continued to interfere. And although religious tension remained infrequent, it now appeared to be less the result of conscious compromises, and more of religious apathy among Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians in general. Still, the paradigm of Nation remained relatively weakest. Chernomyrdin honoured Iaroslav the Wise and not Taras Shevchenko, yet this was perhaps thoughtlessness more than a deliberate slight, while complaints that Russia had historically been exploited never came from the Russian executive. Through Iastrzhembskii, El'tsin did complain of discrimination against Russian-speakers, but language was used primarily as a bargaining tool, not as a subject for perceived genuine grievances. Finally, the fact that some members of the Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox Churches chose to support revanchist political parties only highlighted that such clergy was marginalised.

Between 2000 and 2004, the paradigm of Power remained dominant. El'tsin transferred an image of Belarusians and Ukrainians as "blood-kin" to Putin's administration, while the Russian population in general regretted the Soviet collapse. Putin's National Security

Concept highlighted the role of Russian language in regional integration, while nothing indicated that Belarusian and Ukrainian language could challenge the dominance of Russian language. The Russian Orthodox Church, increasingly connected to Putin's regime, professed Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians to be soulmates and in both Belarus and Ukraine openly supported integrationist actors. Yet by now, the paradigm of Nation had become somewhat important, too. Russians complained about the elevation of Ukrainian nationalist Bandera to war hero, while interpretations of imperial history differed, too. Putin threatened to actively defend the rights of Russian-speakers against alleged forced conversion to Belarusian and Ukrainian, while Lukashenko and others noticed domestic political potential in such discrimination. And the Russian Orthodox Church supported denunciations of Ukrainian statehood, while interference in Ukrainian politics grew. In contrast, the paradigm of Law had by now become mostly insignificant. That Ukrainian nationalism had originated due to Russian provocations never gained the attention of the Russian executive, while Lukashenko had little interest in distinguishing Belarusian history from that of Russia. Putin's administration did attempt to defend Russian-speakers' rights on a legal basis, but quickly tired of this since such rights were generally not infringed on in Belarus and Ukraine. Finally, religious apathy continued diminishing disputes between denominations, yet religion had not been chosen by Belarusian and Ukrainian elites as a topic around which sovereignty could be built.

Finally, between 2004 and 2008 the paradigm of Power again dominated. Putin now named the Soviet collapse a singular "geopolitical catastrophe," and this nostalgia was echoed within Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, alike. Proliferation of Russian-language materials in Belarus, Ukraine and elsewhere in the CIS was budgeted by the Russian government, while

Ianukovych was persuaded to introduce Russian as state language in Ukraine whenever possible. The Russian Orthodox Church supported his presidential candidacy, while Lukashenko's claim that Belarus was an Orthodox state showed an interest in similar support. By now, though, the paradigm of Nation was stronger than ever before. Russian and Ukrainian politicians fought over responsibility for the Holodomor, with Chernomyrdin notably dismissive of Ukrainian allegations. Iushchenko's presidential election had given Ukrainian-speakers increased strength to increase the spread of their language; a development the Belarusian opposition now focused their efforts on, too. And whereas Gel'man and other Russians inside Ukraine sought to undermine Iushchenko's presidency on religious grounds, the Russian Orthodox Church openly did so from Moscow. In contrast, the paradigm of Law had become insignificant. Putin did not advocate constructing a new Russia, but adjusting historical Russia to a new world. He agreed with Iushchenko to protect their languages, but this gave Putin another tool with which to defend existing Russian linguistic dominance. And while a few Belarusians continued to advocate a sovereign Belarusian between Orthodoxy and Catholicism they still had no plan for how this could be done, and little if any support in society.

Revanchist Russia: freedom, order and justice

In this thesis I have argued that between 1990 and 2008 certain Russian perceptions of Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty waxed and waned in importance relative to each other. Whereas the paradigm of Power remained dominant throughout, the paradigm of Law became increasingly less influential, whereas the paradigm of Nation became increasingly more influential. As I mentioned in the introduction, since I define both the

paradigm of Power and that of Nation as "revanchist" in nature, I argue that we can talk about "revanchist Russia" in relation to Belarus and Ukraine. The examples I have provided were intended to empirically support this argument. Yet there remains the question of why the significance of perceptions waxed and waned as they did. This was never the primary focus of my argument; nevertheless, I believe that a final discussion of this question might help to illuminate my argument from another, analytically fruitful angle. In chapter 1 I outlined the different sets of assumptions inherent in each of the three paradigms, I identified: Law, Power, and Justice. Each of these sets of assumptions must ultimately rest on an unquestioned ideal for how the world should work. In chapter 1, I briefly named these as the ideals of freedom, order and justice, respectively. Now, in the final part of my conclusion, I shall expand on this topic, using the identification of these ideals to understand the changes in the relative significance of the three paradigms between 1990 and 2008.

Between 1990 and 1993, the paradigm of Power dominated because of both material circumstances and the personal circumstances of significant Russian actors. Within the Soviet Union many factors assisted multi-national cooperation. Oil and gas pipelines kept the republics dependent on the Union, as did the all-Union military forces, and the fact that the RSFSR shared numerous institutions and a capital with the Union. Furthermore, republican leaders including El'tsin, Kravchuk and Shushkevich all had their careers within this system. Although El'tsin rebelled against the Soviet centre he had nonetheless spent the majority of his career adjusting to and rising within the Soviet system. Chaotic post-Soviet reality became an abrupt contrast to this, and it is quite understandable that many looked nostalgically at the ordered affairs of the past and tried to re-create some such stability in the present. However, the paradigm of Law was also favoured to some extent given the

substantial increase in freedom that had taken place since the mid-1980s. Gorbachev had inadvertently provided El'tsin and other republican elites with the freedom of speech and organisation to further policies, which ultimately led to the collapse of the Union. The new Russia, which was built on this background, needed a new identity, which could hold the Soviet centre as its antithesis. This identity became founded in law, through El'tsin's as well as Gorbachev's and others' efforts. The Soviet collapse provided Russians with the possibility to completely reform their sovereign statehood through laws that could further democracy, construct a new economy based on the principles of a fair market, and allow all to speak their language of choice and worship in the manner of their choosing. Conversely, the paradigm of Nation suffered from the fact that few significant Russian actors after 1991 could claim the Soviet collapse had been unjust against Russia. Chaotic it certainly was, and its consequences might have led to unacceptable poverty for many individuals. Yet it was difficult for Russian elites to blame Belarusians and Ukrainians for the situation, since it was El'tsin more than anyone, who had initiated the Soviet collapse. Consequently, the only lack of justice that Russians might use to criticise Belarus and Ukraine concerned isolated issues such as Crimea, which in themselves could not command general opinion.

Between 1993 and 1999, the situation remained much the same. The paradigm of Power retained its dominance, since post-Soviet reality generally failed to stabilise. When it seemed as if economic wealth was gradually being rebuilt, the crisis of 1998 brought back all the insecurity of the early 1990s, just as persistent speculation about El'tsin's health and potential successors made Russians long for the past. El'tsin understood how this could benefit him, and while his role in the Soviet collapse prevented him from overly praising the Soviet Union, he could reinvigorate imperial order to buttress his regime. In this order

Belarus and Ukraine remained essential components. At the same time, elites in Minsk and Kyiv generally failed to liberate their states from integration with Russia. Lukashenko and Kuchma continued to prefer subsidies to grappling with actual economic reforms, just as they saw the benefits in participating in Russian-led military cooperation. Conversely, the paradigm of Law was now losing influence despite the unprecedented expansion of freedom, which had taken place following the Soviet collapse. In a sense, the expansion of freedom had almost been too successful. Since there was no longer any Soviet regime, which could be opposed, perceptions within the paradigm of Law depended for their continued influence on a positive programme for the development of Russia. It was no longer sufficient to say what Russia was not; and the identification with the Russian Federation, which El'tsin championed, soon turned out to lack content. The construction of Belarusian and Ukrainian sovereignty suffered from a similar problem. Conversely, the paradigm of Nation gained nourishment from the increasing resentment felt by Russians against other post-Soviet peoples. Whereas anger over Belarusian and Ukrainian participation in the Soviet collapse had previously been downplayed due to the assumption that the two states would return to Russia any moment, several years had passed, and elites in Minsk and Kyiv were defending their sovereignty against Russian encroachment. Suddenly, it mattered that Russia was losing money on its energy deliveries to Belarus and Ukraine, and that Crimea remained a part of Ukraine, for even the Russia-friendly Lukashenko and Kuchma liked to govern sovereign states. Still, Russians could for now continue to blame delays in integration on obstruction from nationalists, whom regimes in Minsk and Kyiv could be expected to overcome in the near future.

Between 2000 and 2004, Putin built much of his legitimacy on the ability to recreate a stable, strong and ordered Russia. The new President had never opposed the Soviet system in a way comparable with his predecessor and was therefore more able to take advantage of elements of the Soviet system without fear of self-contradiction. Compared to using the Russian Imperial past, Putin's focus on the Soviet past had the benefit that while its flaws had been mitigated for many after a decade of post-Soviet hardships, they had experience of Soviet integration and could thus identify with it. Furthermore, if Putin was to recreate Russian great power status quickly, material factors still favoured a unified energy system, joint military exercises and the like, with the direct participation of Belarus and Ukraine. Yet Putin had also acquired the presidency through his opposition to non-Russians, particularly in the Caucasus, and he never presented himself as a conciliator in the mould of El'tsin. This assisted the continued increase in the influence of the paradigm of Nation. While Belarusians and Ukrainians were certainly not the prime target of Putin's ire, he and his allies were not prepared to allow plans for integration be disrupted in Minsk and Kyiv. Lukashenko particularly infuriated the new Russian regime, for he did something worse than opposing Russia; he took advantage of it by constantly demanding more economic subsidies and assistance against domestic and Western opponents. Kuchma at least appeared less needy, but when Russian elites looked back on the post-Soviet period, Ukraine had not often accommodated Russian wishes. The Black Sea Fleet would eventually have to leave Ukraine, worries in Moscow about NATO were not respected in Kyiv, and Kuchma's regime was beginning to rehabilitate historical figures, who had virulently opposed Russia. All this increased Russian resentment. In contrast, the paradigm of Law suffered from the maladies mentioned above, only more so. With El'tsin retired, Putin had little interest in constructing an identity for a Russia that was much smaller and weaker than he planned for it to be. If

Russia had already been constructed, Putin's plans for great power status would prove impossible. At the same time, the freedom, which had facilitated the prominence of this paradigm, now had a poor reputation among Russians, who had lived through the difficult 1990s. Putin's intention to promote a business-like administration, ostensibly ready to compete with and beat the West on its own terms, was the only reason why the paradigm of Law still held some influence.

Between 2004 and 2008, the paradigm of Power remained dominant. Putin's plan to recreate Russian international power seemed to have been successful, and in the post-Soviet region Russian supremacy was mostly unchallenged. The population of Russia was gradually becoming more secure, financially and also conceptually as there seemed to be a plan for the further development of Russia, domestically and abroad. Inhabitants of Belarus and Ukraine could look to such relative successes and demand that their own governments either achieved the same on their own or at least had the good sense to cooperate more closely with Russia. At the same time, the so-called "war on terror" including troubled occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan seemed to confirm to many Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians that whereas Putin could create stability and order, the West was no longer capable of or interested in this. With rising energy prices and de facto nationalisations of energy companies, such as Iukos, improving the economic might of Russia considerably, Putin seemed able to keep not only Belarus and Ukraine, but at times even much of Europe under control. Thus, it was remarkable that the paradigm of Nation became even more important than previously. How could Russians resent Belarusians and Ukrainians, when events seemed to have provided Russia with so many advantages? The problem was that the stronger Russia was becoming, the more obvious was the fact that Belarus and Ukraine

would never be integrated into Russia again. Energy flows to Belarus might be repeatedly halted, yet Lukashenko only increased his complaints against Russia and his attempts to curry favour with Western investors. Ianukovych might be supported openly by Russia in his presidential bid, yet he still lost the Ukrainian presidency to Iushchenko and Tymoshenko. Western influence might explain part of the latter case, but eventually Russian elites had to accept that Belarusians and Ukrainians simply did not want to give up their sovereignty. Thus, actors perceiving Russia as a great power faced an unsolvable contradiction: they expected, and needed, Belarusians and Ukrainians to support the Russian project, but Belarusians and Ukrainians did not do so. From such observations many Russians found it easy to conclude that Belarusians and Ukrainians had betrayed them, and it was therefore not impossible that the paradigm of Nation might eclipse the paradigm of Power in future. Conversely, the paradigm of Law seemingly had little future. The centre was no longer the enemy against which a free Russia could position itself. Instead, El'tsin's attempt to construct a new sovereignty for Russia had failed, not because it had been an impossible project, but because important Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian actors at key moments in time had chosen not to identify with the project, a failure of which Putin was merely the most prominent example.

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