

**SHIFT IN RUSSIAN POSITION TOWARDS THE CIS
ORGANIZATION:
ELITE-CHANGE EXPLANATION OF POLICY
CHANGE**

By
Nina Rozhanovskaya

Submitted to
Central European University
Department of Political Science

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Supervisor: Professor Anil Duman

Budapest, Hungary

2007

Abstract

The focus of the present research is on the recent shift in the Russian foreign policy, namely the decline of Russian interest in the Commonwealth of Independent States organization, which took place under the presidency of Vladimir Putin. This shift is analysed in contrast with the intensive efforts, aimed at developing the CIS organization, carried out in the course of the 1990s under the presidency of Boris Yeltsin. The change in the composition of the Russian decision-making elite is considered the most plausible explanation of the studied phenomenon.

The theoretical basis of research is the combination of foreign policy analysis and elite theory with an emphasis on agency-oriented explanations. Personal backgrounds of the decision-makers are expected to account for a more profit-oriented and security-oriented stance in the Russian position towards the CIS.

The present work relies on the use of qualitative methods, applying the discourse analysis to the study of the Russian official discourse and paying special attention to particular foreign policy events, relevant for research. The work also makes full use of the existing analyses of the Russian foreign policy and the studies of the Russian political elites.

Officials with military and security backgrounds, on the one hand, and businessmen and economists, on the other hand, are found to be playing the dominant role in the current elite. The expectations concerning the link between the composition of the decision-making elite and the foreign policy line chosen by the representatives of these elite are confirmed.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1 — THEORY AND METHODOLOGY: FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS AND ELITE THEORY COMBINED	6
1.1. <i>AGENCY-ORIENTED APPROACH IN FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS</i>	6
1.2. <i>MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH</i>	8
1.3. <i>ELITE THEORY BASIS OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH</i>	11
1.4. <i>BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW</i>	12
1.5. <i>RESEARCH METHODS AND THE LINK BETWEEN VARIABLES</i>	14
CHAPTER 2 — CHANGE IN RUSSIAN POLICY TOWARDS THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES ORGANIZATION	16
2.1. <i>THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES – BRIEF OVERVIEW</i>	16
2.2. <i>RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY SHIFT TOWARDS THE CIS ORGANIZATION</i>	17
2.2.1. <i>The presence of the policy shift</i>	17
2.2.2. <i>Indicators of the policy shift</i>	18
2.2.3. <i>The CIS in the rhetoric of Vladimir Putin</i>	21
2.3. <i>POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS OF THE POLICY SHIFT</i>	24
2.4. <i>PRAGMATISM OF THE RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY</i>	27
2.5. <i>THE IMPORTANCE OF DECISION-MAKERS FOR RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY</i>	30
CHAPTER 3 — ELITE CHANGE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE RUSSIAN POSITION TOWARDS THE CIS	32
3.1. <i>EXPECTATIONS CONCERNING RUSSIAN ELITE CHANGE</i>	32
3.2. <i>THE CHANGE IN THE RUSSIAN ELITE COMPOSITION</i>	34
3.2.1. <i>Russian elite change: circulation vs. reproduction</i>	34
3.2.2. <i>Putin era elite: dominant trends</i>	36
3.3. <i>KEY FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKERS OF THE PUTIN ELITE</i>	37
3.3.1. <i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials</i>	38
3.3.2. <i>Vladimir Putin and his close advisors</i>	41
3.3.3. <i>Other foreign policy decision-makers and officials in charge of CIS matters</i>	43
3.4. <i>THE EFFECTS OF FOREIGN POLICY ELITE CHANGE</i>	45
CONCLUSION	48
REFERENCES	52

Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 has confronted Russia as its formal successor and the Russian elites with serious challenges in domestic and foreign policy domains: the task of reformulating policy priorities, reconstructing national identity, reconciling new – somewhat limited – scope of available resources with policy goals. One of the crucial tasks was to find the place for Russia in the international community and facilitate a peaceful disintegration of the Soviet Union, finding at the same time new ways of communication with the former USSR republics. All this had to be done in the uncertain environment of transition and under conditions of the profound crisis of the state system.

Most of the scholarly debate on post-Soviet Russian foreign policy takes the following assumptions for granted: profound crisis of political and national identity, “unprecedented disintegration of the classical sinews of international power”, “highly amorphous, unstructured and frequently incoherent” decision making, priority of establishing Russia as “the integrating power in central Eurasia”, better explanations of Russian foreign policy by unit-level than by system-level factors (Lynch: 7-8). However, this is not always the case, and as Lynch argues, should not be taken for granted. Despite all the significant internal problems and external challenges, “Russian diplomacy has been more effective, coherent and balanced than is often assumed”, though not fully institutionalised (Lynch: 26).

Lynch’s article on Russian foreign policy was published in 2001, when it was too early to make conclusions about Russia under the presidency of Vladimir Putin. However, it seemed that the years under the new administration could “provide another test of the hypothesis that it has been internal political factors rather than the very narrow external margin of Russian manoeuvre that account for the main contours of Russian foreign policy” (Lynch: 26). Now, when the second presidential term of Vladimir Putin is coming to an end in 2008, attempts to formulate preliminary conclusions about Russian foreign policy priorities

and major directions, as well as the rationale behind main foreign policy decisions, can indeed be made, paying special attention to domestic incentives and constraints.

While the 1990s were for the Russian Federation a period of dramatic change and adaptation, which could not take place without an influence on foreign policy, Russia has faced the beginning of the new millennium, having overcome the most significant problems of the first decade of its independence and having consolidated its new position in the international arena. Such an accommodation can be expected to lead to certain changes in the foreign policy line; however, a different aspect is in the focus of my research, i.e. elite-based explanation of foreign policy change. The research based on elite explanation is of special interest in the Russian case, as due to low institutionalisation, elite perceptions and elite circulation may prove to have a higher impact on policy change than in well-established Western democracies.

In the present work I aim to demonstrate that there was a policy shift under Putin's presidency – in contrast to Boris Yeltsin's administration – in respect to the CIS. Here, it is necessary to distinguish between the CIS organisation and the CIS region. The region, which is often referred to as the CIS (or sometimes the “near abroad”) and comprises former Soviet republics with the exception of the Baltic States, remains top priority of the Russian foreign policy. However, the CIS organisation has lost its attraction for the Russian Federation as a means of promoting Russian interests in the region. I aim to show this phenomenon by contrasting the intensity of Russian integrative activities in the 1990s (under President Yeltsin) with the relatively low attention to the development of the CIS under Putin's presidency.

In order to understand this policy shift, I intend to test explanations, based on the idea of the elite change. I intend to demonstrate that following the change of presidential administration in 2000 the new political elite gradually came to power in Russia. Though this is not the case of radical rupture, still the new elite is different from the elite of the 1990s –

the Yeltsin decision-making elite, and I will argue that this difference resulted in a policy shift in the case under consideration.

The impact of the elite change on the foreign policy is two-fold. I do not aim to establish a causal link here; it is be enough for the purpose of the present research to an demonstrate association between the elite change and the new policy orientation. I aim to test the idea that Russian interest in the CIS organisation has declined in comparison with Yeltsin' era, because the current decision-making elite is less affiliated with the project and because the project does not fit the current Russian foreign policy line, which is sometimes referred to as “Russian realpolitik” (Trenin, 2004). As for the new elite, according to many observers, it is “comprised of the *apparatchiki*, the so-called *siloviki*, i.e. power structures (military, law enforcement, and security services), big business and liberal technocrats” (Shvetsova: 2). This dominance of the power structures may indeed account for a more benefit-oriented and power-based stance in the foreign policy.

Thus, I will study the shift in the Russian position towards the Commonwealth of Independent States, an organisation created in 1991, which comprises 12 states (one of them - Turkmenistan - having a special status of associate member since 2005, another – Georgia – being close to withdrawing its membership (Levchenkov)). The choice of this policy direction is justified by its historical and current importance for Russian interests, which is confirmed in the official statements of Russian policy-makers and pointed out by Russian foreign policy partners in the region as well as outside.

Established as a means of “civilised divorce”, as it is often called (by journalists, analysts and politicians), the CIS has to a large extent fulfilled this aim, as despite bilateral conflicts and a certain tension between former USSR republics, they managed to ensure a bloodless dissolution of the common state, while Yugoslavian republics failed to do the same: “[c]ompared with the chaos that arose in the former Yugoslavia, another communist-

dominated multinational state that had failed to overcome its underlying ethnic divisions, the disintegration of the Soviet Union occurred with surprisingly little violence” (Weitz, 2007).

However, the Commonwealth of Independent States has at the same time “failed to integrate the Soviet successor states in any meaningful sense” (Sakwa/Webber, 1999: 379) and after its first few years, “ceased to exert any great influence on its members’ most important policy decisions” (Weitz, 2007). CIS project is in decline, and Russia, which used to be the main integrative force over the course of the 1990s, now is sometimes referred to as “disintegrating factor” (Pogorelsky, 2007). This permitted Sakwa and Webber to claim in 1998, that the “distinctive feature of the CIS to date is the tension between integrative and disintegrative processes”, which is equally true nowadays (Sakwa/Webber, 1999: 407). Despite their common past, the states, comprising the CIS, are extremely diverse in terms of size, economic potential, political structure and position in international relations. The current situation in the region is characterised by the failure of integration efforts and growing tension between Russia and its partners.

According to Richard Weitz, “[a]lthough Russia alone might be able to push through certain CIS organisational reforms thanks to its ability to offer commercial and other incentives to its fellow member states, Russian officials have declined to play this locomotive role for many years and instead have devoted their attention towards strengthening other institutions such as the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and the Eurasian Economic Community” (Weitz, 2007).

Due to the limited time and resources, a comprehensive independent study is not possible; however, it is possible to make use of available studies of Russian elites, as well as analytical articles written by specialists in Russian elites. All those studies provide not only important data, concerning major elite characteristics, but also the theoretical approaches to the study of elite change.

The dependent variable I aim to explain is the policy shift. My hypothesis is that this policy shift results from the elite change. The exact link between the variables is to be specified on the basis of elite theory and foreign policy analysis: demonstrating the link between elite background and elite perceptions and subsequently elite perceptions and decision-making.

The chosen topic is located at the crossroads of domestic and international politics, which is often the case in foreign policy analysis. However, establishing the link between the decision-making elite change and the foreign policy shift may prove to be a challenging task, as the present research does not take into account external stimuli and takes the stability of the external environment for granted. Nevertheless, it is an important and interesting study, as the Russian foreign policy and the development of the CIS are topics attracting significant attention of scholars and politicians in Russia and abroad. The present research will be based on existing studies of Russian elites and Russian foreign policy in general and Russian stakes in the CIS in particular. It will also make use of discourse analysis and other research methods to fill the blanks left by previous researchers and to establish the link between the dependent and independent variables.

Chapter 1 — Theory and Methodology: Foreign Policy Analysis and Elite Theory Combined

1.1. Agency-oriented approach in foreign policy analysis

The major problem of the foreign policy analysis, when it comes to comparative as well as single case studies, is the sophisticated interaction of domestic and external factors, contributing to the formation of the foreign policy line, this interaction being difficult to disentangle and analyze. This makes the whole discipline complicated, but interesting to deal with. The main challenge is to provide comprehensive explanations of foreign policy events, taking into account the variety of different factors. However, despite the dynamic development of the scientific field, comprehensive foreign policy theories are still absent. Indeed, “[t]he existing literature offers not a comprehensive theory but rather different pieces of the linkage between domestic politics and foreign policy” (Hagan in Neack et al., 1995: 121). Thus, a researcher still needs to find ways of bridging foreign policy and domestic politics and is faced with a choice between agency-oriented and structure-oriented explanations as well as between the emphases on domestic or external variables.

Despite the great impact of the international system upon individual states, foreign policy theory long ago abandoned its one-sided structural approach. “State behavior is no longer seen exclusively as a reaction to external stimuli; internal pressures, too, are now widely recognized as affecting foreign policy decisions” (Brecher et al., 1969: 75). One of the major schools of foreign policy theory is thus decision-making analysis, which takes into account domestic processes and the role of individuals as actors shaping foreign policy. Moreover, it deals with the input of the decision-making procedure and the process of decision-making rather than just the output and the outcomes of decisions made.

For the sake of simplicity, in the present research I take the external environment as stable in order to focus exclusively on domestic opportunities and constraints. Indeed, nothing

compared to the extent of the Soviet Union's collapse has happened in the post-Soviet region since 2000 presidential elections in Russia. One can take as given that the external constraints and opportunities are to a large extent the same for President Vladimir Putin and current Russian foreign policy decision-makers as they were for President Boris Yeltsin and his elite. However, this is, of course, a simplification, as the increase of world prices for energy commodities significantly increased the bargaining power of Russia as their exporter.

Foreign policy approaches, focusing on domestic factors, more than those which are based on the international environment rely on the role of agency in decision-making. Rational choice, organizational and bureaucratic decision models developed by Graham Allison are among the most widely used and recognized methods of opening the so-called "black box" of the state and studying the way decisions are made, preferences are formed and policies are formulated (Allison, 1969). Approaches generally taken by scholars vary from those which study individuals, either assuming their full rationality or acknowledging that rationality is bounded (James G. March, Herbert Simon) and concentrating on the role of perceptions and cognitive biases (Jack S. Levy), to those which study collective decision-making with special attention to rules and procedures and to instances of concurrence-seeking and groupthink (Irving L. Janis) or bureaucratic rivalry and government politics (Steve A. Yetiv). An important research bridging the gap between domestic politics and the international environment was carried out by Robert Putnam, originator of the two-level game concept, specifying domestic constraints an authorized official has to face when taking part in international negotiations. The same scholar contributed to the study of elites (Putnam, 1976).

The central role of individual decision-makers is emphasized in the classical works of foreign policy studies by Jervis, Janis, Allison and other scholars. Cognitive processes are viewed as the central component of decision-making, this leading to the extensive use of social psychology achievements and the introduction of individual characteristics, belief systems, and perceptions into the research framework. However, there is a pressing need to

aggregate individual roles into a coherent decision-making structure, as the direct link between individual beliefs and particular foreign policy actions is problematic; moreover, collective decision-making is more than just a sum of individual actions and preferences.

If the units of analysis are individual decision-makers and their interaction, then elite-based explanation of foreign policy change fits this approach very well. Indeed, decision-makers, their attitudes, preferences, biases and cognitive patterns account for variation in the foreign policy of a state, and the number of those decision-makers is somewhat limited even in a liberal democracy. Here, elite theory comes to the fore, dealing with those who hold power and studying elite belief structures, elite recruitment and circulation.

1.2. Major components of the present research

The crucial preliminary research task of the present work is to define and track the dependent variable. Policy shift or policy change – these two expressions used here as interchangeable – can be defined as “some kind of major or profound reorientation in the state’s pattern of foreign policy” (Risse-Kappen, 1995: 297). Richard Hermann identifies the following types of policy change (in Pursiainen, 2000: 204-205):

- 1) revision of policy (which is quantitative, involving the variation in intensity, not in substance);
- 2) programmatic or tactical change (which is qualitative, involving the change in methods and means with policy goals staying the same);
- 3) redefining the problem (involving the change both in policy goals and in policy means);
- 4) total reorientation of the foreign policy line (which is the most substantial change of all).

Thus, those kinds of change differ in degree, and one needs to determine what type the policy shift under consideration, namely the decline of interest of the Russian Federation

towards the Commonwealth of Independent States organization, belongs to. I claim that it belongs to the second type of change, as the goal – promoting Russian interests in the post-Soviet region – remains the same, while methods and means have significantly changed. The CIS organization is no longer in the focus of significant Russian attention, which represents the tactical change, as far as strategic interests are presumably stable.

According to Richard Hermann, three basic mechanisms of policy change can be identified: 1) a change in composition of a decision-making body, 2) a change in internal balance of power, and 3) the process of learning of individuals belonging to the decision-making system (in Pursiainen, 2000: 205), which can also be present in combination with each other. Elite change explanation implies the presence of the first and the second mechanisms, as the composition of the decision-making bodies changes (people with different background and different views come to comprise and dominate them) as well as the balance of power between those bodies (emphasis shifts, for instance, from economic to security issues and corresponding agencies start playing major role).

If one assumes the importance of elite change as an independent variable, one has to give a working definition of the notion “elite”. There are plenty of definitions provided both by classics of elite theory and by more recent theorists. I will recall just a few quoted by Allan Zuckerman (1977: 326). Thus, political elite can be defined as “power holders of a body politic” (Lasswell), those “in positions to make decisions having major consequences” (Mills), decision-making groups characterized by “group consciousness, coherence and conspiracy” (Meisel), “individuals who actually exercise political power in a given society at any given time” (Bottomore).

The definition, suggested by Paul Cammack is the following: national elites are defined as “persons who are able, by virtue of their authoritative positions in powerful organizations and movements of whatever kind, to affect national political outcomes regularly

and substantially” (Cammack, 1990: 416). I will accept Cammack’s definition as a working one, though limiting the scope of the elite’s influence to foreign policy-related issues.

The basic problem is how to identify political elite for research purposes: as those who control power or those who control particular institutional positions (Zuckerman, 1977: 327-328)? I chose the second option, as the notion of power is too tricky to make it a reference point. Thus, I have limited the list provided by Harold Lasswell, which includes the high government officials; those who have recently occupied office and are in harmony with those in power; those perceived as highly influential; those of a counter-ideology who are perceived as highly influential, and close family members (in Zuckerman, 1977: 328). I focus on the first category, when constructing the image of a typical foreign policy official of the Putin’s era. However, I have also relied on other researchers’ studies of broader elite sets. Besides, it is clear that for the purposes of the present research I focus only on those officials who deal with foreign policy issues in general and the Commonwealth of Independent States in particular. Thus, in the present research under the term “elite” I understand decision-making officials of high rank dealing with foreign policy. It is noteworthy that high rank and significant power do not always come together. One can possess considerable influence without occupying a particular important post, at the same time one can be less influential even being in a very high position. When studying personalities, I mostly concentrate on people in important foreign policy decision-making posts, paying special attention to those of them who are said to have considerable power.

The present work relies on agency-based explanations of foreign policy change, deriving its main assumptions from the decision-making approach and attributing the major role to the actors of decision-making, not the structures. Moreover, it derives its theoretical basis from both foreign policy analysis and elite theory. The emphasis is on foreign policy, while assumptions concerning the role of elites are taken to a large extent for granted. However, I will discuss them so as to clarify what exactly I have in mind.

1.3. Elite theory basis of the present research

The concept of political elite and the idea of unequal distribution of power are intuitively appealing (Zuckerman, 1977: 324). In his “Comparative study of political elites” Robert Putnam summarizes the major achievements of elite theorists. According to him, the general principles shared by the three classics of elite theory, namely Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto and Robert Michels, are the following (Putnam, 1976: 3-4):

- 1) Political power is distributed unequally;
- 2) People fall into only two groups: those who have “significant” political power and those who have none;
- 3) The elite is “internally homogenous, unified, and self-conscious”;
- 4) The elite is “largely self-perpetuating and is drawn from a very exclusive segment of society”;
- 5) The elite is essentially autonomous.

These principles, though shared by the classics, are controversial. The autonomy of elites is under question due to the high role of society and non-elite groups in the policy-making in the modern liberal democracies. As for the claims about elite homogeneity and unity, they are also ambiguous, due to inter-governmental rivalry and variety of sources of contemporary political elite recruitment.

Putnam identifies four basic classes of elite attitudes (Putnam, 1976: 80): 1) cognitive orientations (assumptions about how society works), 2) normative orientations (views about how society ought to work), 3) interpersonal orientations (attitudes about other players in the political game), and 4) stylistic orientations (structural characteristics of elite belief systems). Among the generally assumed origins of these orientations one can name social background, education and postrecruitment socialization (Putnam, 1976: 93-94). However, the exact causal link between elite attitudes and particular actions of decision-makers, comprising the elite, happens to be both confirmed and disconfirmed in different studies. It is important to point

out, that according to Putnam, elite orientations “condition the nature and stability of patterns of governance” (Putnam, 1976: 105), this thesis being in line with the basic idea of the present work: that elite change and – consequently change in dominant orientations – may account for policy change.

Vilfredo Pareto is the author of the widely accepted theory of “elite circulation”, stipulating that “elites tend to dissipate their talents, while at the same time a few forceful and talented individuals appear among the nonelite” (in Putnam, 1976: 167). This is one of the numerous possible explanations of why elite change occurs. However, for the present research the reasons behind the Russian elite change are not as important as its consequences.

Interesting for the present study is the hypothesis of some scholars that “in the postrevolutionary period ideologies are progressively displaced by bureaucrats, agitators by *apparatchiki*, revolutionary modernizers by managerial modernizers, specialists in ideas by specialists in control and coercion” (Putnam, 1976: 201). This hypothesis seemed to be confirmed by the Soviet case in the period after the 1917 revolution and the civil war. However, I believe it can also fit the present case, as immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia underwent the profound socio-economic and political change of a revolutionary scale. And indeed, it seems to be the case that the “revolutionary” Yeltsin elite have by now been replaced by the more pragmatic postrevolutionary one.

1.4. Brief literature review

In this section I briefly discuss some of the studies which proved to be useful and insightful for the independent and dependent variables of the present work. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has been under the thorough attention of social scientists. Elite scholars did not miss the opportunity to study the Russian pattern of elite circulation and reproduction, and though most of the studies concern the early 1990s trends, the Putin era elite is also widely present. Some of the scholars, like Frane and Tomsic, study the Russian

case as just one among those representing elite configuration in the post-socialist countries and look at it in a comparative perspective (Frane/Tomsic, 2002), others concentrate on Russia as a case study. Kryshtanovskaya and White are the scholars often referred to by their colleagues, as they carried out a series of comprehensive studies of the Russian elite, based on analyzing their biographies, comparing their background, carrying out formal and informal interviews, making observations (Kryshtanovskaya/White, 1996, 2004). They defined elites in positional terms and did not concentrate specifically on foreign policy (Kryshtanovskaya/White, 1996).

Another pair of scholars who deserve special mention is Sharon and David Rivera, who investigated the recent trends in the Russian elite composition on the basis of the previous findings (including those of Kryshtanovskaya and White) and the original data set (Rivera/Rivera, 2005). The original data set was derived from the yearly directories of an independent research centre The Center for Political Information. Kryshtanovskaya and White relied on a 2003 sample of 786 individuals, selected on the basis of positional approach, while Riveras' data set is different in terms of sample selection criteria, this fact explaining the difference in the final results of these studies (Rivera/Rivera, 2005: 12). Sharon and David Rivera retested the hypothesis proposed by Kryshtanovskaya and White and made important conclusions about the implications of the change in the Russian elite composition for the Russian politics (Rivera/Rivera, 2005). Unlike these and other researchers, who deal with broad trends and shifts, Martin Nicholson concentrates on individuals and personalities of those who form part of the current political elite in Russia. His study enabled me to point out the most influential officials of the Putin elite to focus on (Nicholson, 2001).

Those are some of the major studies, contributing to the analysis of the independent variable of the present work, namely elite change and Russian elite composition. As for the dependent variable, i.e. the foreign policy shift, the studies of the Russian foreign policy proved to be highly informative. Thus, for instance Chatham House, or the Royal Institute of

International Affairs, provides on its web-site www.chathamhouse.org.uk a number of articles and a debate summary concerning broad issues of the Russian foreign policy, the CIS being just one of them. There are also specialists in CIS matters, such as Igor Torbakov (Torbakov, 2004), Safranchuk (2006) and others. Torbakov is a journalist and gives his policy recommendations to Russian policy-makers concerning the CIS strategy. Safranchuk carries out a quantitative study of the Russian foreign policy, concentrating on financial issues. Most other scholars provide a broad overview of the Russian foreign policy paradigm, of which the CIS only forms part, and they share the view that Russian foreign policy now is increasingly pragmatic, though giving different definitions to the notion of “pragmatism”.

1.5. Research methods and the link between variables

Though Harold Lasswell “saw no determinant link between social background characteristics and the goals and behaviour of political elites” (Zuckerman, 1977: 330), this presumption is present in the literature and is shared by many other theorists. Therefore, I aim to demonstrate the fit between the Russian foreign policy decision-making elite change and the shift in Russian policy towards the CIS. This hypothesis implies the existence of the link between elite background and elite behaviour. Here, it is necessary to be careful with assumptions and expectations, as some of them may be founded on stereotypes.

Three dimensions are identified as the basis of comparison between foreign policy elites’ belief structures, shaping their foreign policy (Chittick / Billingsley, 1989):

- 1) concerning the boundary between domestic and foreign affairs – universalism versus isolationism;
- 2) concerning the character of international system (foreign policy objectives) – multilateralism versus unilateralism;
- 3) concerning the operation of the international system (foreign policy means) – militarism versus nonmilitarism.

However, these dimensions represent the framework of analysis for the general elite attitude, accounting for the profound change, while the present work deals with tactical policy change, where elite belief fluctuations tend to be more subtle.

I hypothesize that the impact of the change in the Russian elite composition in the present case is two-fold, resulting in a more indifferent personal attitude of decision-makers towards the CIS organization (which is closely connected with the idea that personal attitudes and perceptions of decision-makers matter) and a more realist general foreign policy line (which is connected with the occupational background of the new elite).

This research represents a case study, therefore, I deal with only one object of the Russian foreign policy and concentrate on one region. However, this does not prevent the result of research from being generalizable. However, generalizations should be made carefully, as background and beliefs of foreign policy makers are not the only source of the foreign policy. For instance, the same decision-making elite in the different external circumstances could have chosen a different strategy to pursue Russian aims in the post-Soviet space. Moreover, I use qualitative methods, as I deal with such ambiguous matters as foreign policy beliefs, attitudes and preferences and the major components of my research are not quantifiable.

In order to establish the link between the variables I combine elite theory and decision-making approach of the foreign policy analysis. I resort to the discourse analysis to study official rhetoric of the major foreign policy decision-makers and I analyze particular foreign policy events. In order to demonstrate the change of elite I rely on existing quantitative studies, combining their conclusions about the Russian elite composition with the focus on personalities of those who at present shape the Russian foreign policy.

Chapter 2 — Change in Russian Policy towards the Commonwealth of Independent States Organization

2.1. The Commonwealth of Independent States – brief overview

The Commonwealth of Independent States is in the focus of the present research as a unique integration project, covering most of the post-Soviet space. It was established on 8 December 1991, when the heads of state of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine signed their agreement and expressed their willingness to promote integration and cooperation in the territory of the former USSR (CIS Charter, 1991). Two weeks later – on 21 December 1991 – the CIS was enlarged to include eleven former USSR republics, when their heads of state signed the declaration in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The main governing bodies of the CIS were established on 30 December 1991 during the first CIS summit. These were the Council of Heads of State and the Council of Heads of Government. On February 1999 Tajikistan formally joined the Commonwealth as a full member (Chronology of CIS events in Olcott et al., 1999:243-248). Thus, now the CIS comprises all ex-Soviet republics with the exception of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia (i.e., twelve out of fifteen), however, Georgia is close to withdrawing its membership.

There are narrower integrative projects in the framework of the CIS, which do not include all CIS member states. Thus, for instance, on 15 May 1992 in Tashkent six countries – Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan – signed the Collective Security Treaty, and on 2 April 1997 Presidents of the Russian Federation and Belarus signed their Union Treaty starting the way towards the creation of the Union State (Chronology of CIS events in Olcott et al., 1999:243-248).

The first CIS Executive Secretary was Ivan Korotchenya, replaced by Boris Berezovsky in April 1998. However, one year later Berezovsky was dismissed from his post by the Council of the Heads of State and replaced by Yuriy Yarov. The incumbent CIS

Executive Secretary – Vladimir Rushailo – was appointed in 2004. Thus, the first executive secretary was Belorussian, while the rest were Russian citizens, this fact being one of the signs of Russian dominance in the Commonwealth.

2.2. Russian foreign policy shift towards the CIS organization

2.2.1. The presence of the policy shift

The Russian President Vladimir Putin has recently “complained that the CIS employs “obsolete forms and methods of work” (in Weitz, 2007). However, the CIS organisation was inefficient in the 1990s as well – this is not a new phenomenon. This was acknowledged by the Russian high officials numerous times, but Russia was still pushing to promote it, placing certain hopes on its future potential. Thus for instance, Sergei Prikhodko, international relations advisor to Boris Yeltsin, compared the CIS to “a drowning man (who) has reached the bottom and has pushed himself up from it” (Sakwa/Webber, 1999: 379).

According to Konstantin Zatulin, Director of the Institute of the CIS countries and the member of the Russian State Duma, two extremes can be tracked in the Russian policy towards the CIS: under Yeltsin’s presidency Russia was sacrificing its interests for the sake of cooperation in the framework of the CIS organization, under Putin’s presidency it seems to Russian partners that Russia is ready to sacrifice integration in favor of oil and gas profits (Zatulin, 2006). Thus, there is a shift from integration and development of the CIS project at all costs to the weighing of costs and benefits and following a more pragmatic foreign policy line towards the CIS organization. “Pragmatic” here can be viewed as both appealing to mutual benefit instead of vague common interest in the official rhetoric and as based on finding more efficient instruments of promoting national interest in practice. The pragmatism of the Russian foreign policy in general and towards the CIS in particular will be discussed in the last section of this chapter.

Despite problems and conflicting interests, which were facing the CIS already in the 1990s, Russian authorities were still committed to the project. Thus, in 1997 at the CIS summit Yeltsin made a speech, where he expressed dissatisfaction with the current development of the integration process in the region, but underlined that Russia nevertheless firmly adhered to CIS principles (Yeltsin, 1997).

Several signs of the present lack of Russian involvement in the CIS project and lack of interest towards this organization are present (in contrast to intensive integrative efforts in the framework of the CIS in the 1990s). Among them are the decline in the share of budgetary expenditures on CIS activities, active promotion of parallel cooperative and integrative projects in the region, harsh remarks concerning the future of the CIS organization in the official statements, policy towards the CIS member-states contradicting the spirit of integration.

2.2.2. Indicators of the policy shift

In 1995 President Boris Yeltsin approved the “Strategic course of the Russian Federation in relations with the member-states of the Commonwealth of Independent States”, where promotion of the integration process was named among the main Russian aims in the region (Strategic Course, 1995). The inefficiency of the CIS organization and the lack of commitment to it on the part some of its member-states prompted Russia, as the state claiming the regional dominance, to increase its efforts at developing the CIS. Thus, in 1998 the Ministry of the CIS was created in the framework of the Russian executive structures. It dealt with various issues related to CIS countries and institutions: humanitarian cooperation, peace-keeping, migration policies etc. Moreover, in 1998 Boris Berezovsky was appointed to the post of the CIS Executive Secretary with the plan to carry out the comprehensive reform and restructuring of this organization. However, in 1999 Berezovsky was removed from his post,

the CIS reform was not implemented, and in May 2000 the Ministry of the CIS was merged into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This is one of the indicators of the decrease in the Russian commitment to the CIS organization. Another example is derived from the research made by Safranchuk. In his “Auditing of the Russian foreign policy” he studied the fluctuations of Russian expenses on its foreign policy (on the basis of budgetary data), including the costs of maintaining its efforts in the CIS (Safranchuk, 2006). The figures, taking into account the expenses on CIS directions, demonstrate much more fluctuation than without the CIS. After 2000 “CIS expenses” were fluctuating significantly until they stabilized at the level of the late 1990s, however, the overall flows financing Russian foreign policy were steadily increasing and thus, the share of the “CIS expenses” was constantly decreasing after 2001 and stabilized at the point of half of what it was in the late 1990s. This trend contradicts the alleged importance of the CIS organization for Russian foreign policy (Safranchuk, 2006).

One more indicator of the policy shift is the existence of the parallel cooperative structures in the post-Soviet region, to the development of which Russia at present contributes significantly more efforts. In 2007 Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov made a speech in the Russian State Duma, which was later published in the “Nezavisimaya gazeta” (“Independent Newspaper”). He pointed out that at present “the CIS failed to become either a full-fledged integration structure or an efficient international organization” (Lavrov, 2007). He also underlined the necessity of reforming the CIS, taking into account the narrower structures existing in the region in order to avoid duplicating of functions. Such duplication is indeed present now. The reform, mentioned by Lavrov, could strengthen the CIS organization. However, it is only one of the numerous appeals to reform the CIS, voiced since its establishment, and none of them had considerable implications.

One of the structures, present in the post-Soviet region and duplicating the CIS functions, is the Eurasian Economic Community, a regional organization aimed at regulating

the common foreign economic policy of its member-states and the creation of their common economic space as the next stage of integration after establishing the common customs union. The treaty establishing this organization was signed in 2000 by the Presidents of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. Thus, it was established already after the power transfer from Boris Yeltsin to Vladimir Putin. In 2006 Uzbekistan joined the Eurasian Economic Community as its member-state, while Armenia, Moldova, and Ukraine are given observer status (Moldova and Ukraine in 2002, Armenia in 2003). Since June 2006 President Putin has been the chairman of the Interstate Council, the governing body of the organization. Unlike the CIS organization, the Eurasian Economic Community concentrates on particular matters of cooperation and may indeed become a more efficient integrative structure. Its focus on economic rather than political problems prevents it from being perceived as a threat to the member-states' sovereignty (Eurasian Economic Community / official site).

One more parallel organization is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which was established in 2001 by six countries: China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Thus, five of its member-states are also member-states of the CIS. The declared aims of the organization include promoting cooperation in trade, political affairs, technical sphere, culture, education, environmental protection as well as ensuring regional peace, security and stability. In addition to regular meetings of the heads of state, heads of government and ministers, the SCO has two permanent bodies – the Secretariat and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure. This fact underlines the emphasis of this institution on cooperation and security, unlike the CIS, which is aimed at promoting regional integration. Any transfer of sovereignty is out of the question in case of the SCO. It is not a military alliance; however, its major focus is on security issues (Shanghai Cooperation Organization / official site).

The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) was established on the basis of the Treaty signed in 1992. At present it includes seven member-states: Armenia, Belarus,

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The CSTO is a military-political structure. The initial Treaty was transformed into a real international organization in 2002. In 2006 Nikolay Bordyuzha, representing the Russian Federation, was reappointed to the post of the Secretary-General for three more years (Collective Security Treaty Organization / official site).

To sum up, the above-mentioned organizations include the member-states of the CIS, and it is noteworthy that not all of them, but those, which consider cooperation in the post-Soviet space their foreign policy priority. This means that Russia is eager to cooperate with those neighbouring states, which are willing to cooperate, but not necessarily in the framework of the CIS organization anymore. The first of the above-mentioned structures was established during the presidency of Vladimir Putin, the other two were created earlier, but were transformed in the 2000s. This highlights their priority for the Putin's administration. At present they are considered promising projects and are always mentioned in official statements concerning the CIS region, often completely overshadowing the CIS organization. Thus, being less comprehensive in terms of scope and membership, the duplicating regional structures draw off resources and attention for the CIS.

2.2.3. The CIS in the rhetoric of Vladimir Putin

One of the most important sources of information about the fluctuations in Russian policy is the presidential addresses delivered annually to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. They do not have a predefined list of topics. Instead they reflect the shifts in Russian domestic and foreign priorities, as the emphasis on this or that issue is an indicator of its importance for the Russian President at the given moment. A great role is attributed to the President in the political system of the Russian Federation, as he defines major policies and strategies, and his official statements draw considerable attention of scholars, analysts, policy officials and media, political scientists making conclusions about the fluctuations in Russian

policy priorities, officials regarding these statements as implicit guidelines. The issue of the CIS is usually present in the presidential speeches; however, the focus every year – since 2000 till the last address delivered on April 26, 2007 - was on different aspects of cooperation and integration.

In 2001 President Putin in his annual speech stressed the importance of “practical considerations” in stimulating Russian activities in the CIS space in addition to historical proximity, which is commonly referred to as the foundation of integration. Indeed, this pragmatism is gradually becoming the basis of Russian foreign policy in the region, and as a result appeals to commonalities between the states are becoming just a rhetorical tool to justify significant Russian influence (Annual Presidential Address, 2001).

In 2002 President Putin again emphasized the “strict” pragmatism of Russian foreign policy, which is based on “capabilities and national interests”: economic, political, strategic and military, and the role of the CIS as the “factor of stability” in the region, underlining at the same time the role of joint economic projects. However, he did not speak about the CIS organization, but about its member-states – “the CIS countries” – and their bilateral and multilateral cooperation (Annual Presidential Address, 2002).

In 2003 President Putin stated in a straightforward manner that the CIS region is a priority for Russia, the sphere of its “strategic interests”, and emphasized the role of the Eurasian Economic Community and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, again stressing the importance of cooperation, but not mentioning the main CIS institutional structures (Annual Presidential Address, 2003).

In 2004 Vladimir Putin stated further integrative efforts of Russia in the CIS as a priority, especially within the framework of the Common Economic Space and the Eurasian Economic Community, emphasizing the issues of trade, information flows, business and social initiatives. Again nothing was said about the Council of the Heads of States, or the Council of the Heads of Governments, or official summits and Inter-Parliamentary Assembly,

including all CIS member-states. All the stress is on narrower, but deeper integrative projects, of which a limited number of the CIS states are part (Annual Presidential Address, 2004).

In 2005 Vladimir Putin mentioned the CIS member-states in connection with Russian foreign as well as economic interests, moreover economic interests seem to be the basis of the foreign, which is again the reflection of pragmatism, which is becoming the basis of official rhetoric (Annual Presidential Address, 2005).

In 2006 President Putin devoted a lot of attention to foreign policy issues. He underlined the fact that Russian foreign policy is based upon “principles of pragmatism, predictability and the supremacy of international law” and acknowledged the role the CIS organization has played in facilitating the dissolution of the USSR and solving subsequent problems. He also stressed the dynamic development of parallel economic projects – the Common Economic Space, the Eurasian Economic Community, and the Union State with Belarus. He agreed that there is a difficult search for cooperation models underway and he underlined, as he had done previously, the importance of the post-Soviet space as a foreign policy direction for the Russian Federation (Annual Presidential Address, 2006).

In 2007 President Putin declared that Russian “foreign policy is aimed at joint, pragmatic, and non-ideological work to resolve important problems”. He claimed that Russia “seeks to develop equal relations with all countries avoiding any attitude of arrogance”, that instead it tries to promote its own economic interests, taking into account the interests of its partners. He spoke in detail about the project of the Russian-Belarusian Union and mentioned the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Eurasian Economic Community, stressing the role of economic integration in CIS region (Annual Presidential Address, 2007).

Thus, we clearly see that the stress upon historic proximity is replaced by more pragmatic references to mutual economic benefit as the basis of cooperation in the CIS region. Moreover, the stress seems to be on the region and on parallel institutional structures, not on the CIS as the initial integrative project of the post-Soviet space. The 2007 speech also seems

to be an implicit reaction to the problems Russia is now facing in its bilateral relations with CIS countries.

Annual Presidential Addresses are not the only source of policy shift indicators, but can be considered the most comprehensive one. However, I will also discuss in brief the rhetoric of the Security Council. The Security Council is one of the major foreign policy making bodies of the Russian Federation, and practically the only available online document of this structure, fully devoted to the CIS and reflecting official position of the Putin administration towards it, is the official summary of the Council meeting of 19 July 2004, with the following agenda: “On the Russian Federation policy in the CIS space”. The agenda issue was deemed “the crucial strategic issue not only of the foreign, but also of the domestic politics of Russia” (Security Council / summary, 2004). The pragmatism of the Russian approach was emphasized and the accent was placed on national interests of Russia and its partners. The Collective Security Treaty Organization was named as the major security structure in the region, while the Eurasian Economic Community and the Common Economic Space are the pillars of economic integration. The overall CIS structures, however, are not mentioned; it is only states of the region which are referred to as “the CIS” in the reports of the high officials of the Security Council. President Putin made a statement at this Security Council meeting, where among other things he said that “the efficiency of the CIS activities for both its member-states and their citizens could have been much more remarkable and much more significant” (Security Council / summary, 2004).

2.3. Possible explanations of the policy shift

The incumbent Russian presidential administration often refers to the CIS project as one which is inefficient and needs reform. However, it is not a symptom of the policy shift yet, as similar statements were made by the previous administration as well. Nevertheless, the decision-makers of the Yeltsin elite carried out attempts to revive the organization, while

current foreign policy decision-makers repeat the big words about reforms and possible efficiency, but in fact have switched to more efficient organizational structures and to bilateral communication, having abandoned integration in favour of concrete results.

What are the reasons behind the policy shift under consideration? One of them could be the shift of priority from the region itself. Indeed, if the post-Soviet countries are no longer in the focus of Russian attention and are no longer vitally important for Russian strategic interests, then there is no need for a comprehensive integration project in the region. However, this explanation is not plausible. Former USSR republics are still proclaimed among the key priorities of Russian foreign policy, and this is not only rhetoric. For instance, according to official statistical data, Russian trade with the CIS states is increasing.

Table 1. Foreign trade with the CIS member-states (at actual prices, mln. USD):

Export							Import						
1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
14530	13824	14617	15711	20498	29471	32594	13592	11604	11202	10163	13139	17713	19035

SOURCE: Russian foreign trade data 1995-2005. *Federal State Statistics Service*. Available at: http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/2006/b06_13/24-08.htm.

This is a positive trend, which means that Russian economic interaction with the states of the CIS region is not in decline. Former USSR republics remain among the main Russian trade partners, especially in the energy sphere. They are also important because of the common borders, the need to fight drug-trafficking and organized crime, the need to protect rights of Russian-speaking minorities etc. Moreover, they remain strategically important from the point of view of supporting the Russian position as a regional power.

As for official rhetoric, it confirms the importance of the CIS region (but not the organization). The major directions and priorities of Russia in the international arena are listed in one of the principal documents of the Russian foreign policy – the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation approved by President Putin on 28 June 2000. A large

section of it is devoted to Russian relations with neighbouring countries, to the creation of the “good-neighbour belt along the perimeter of Russia’s borders” and elimination of any potential conflict in the region. The priority for Russia is multilateral and bilateral cooperation with CIS member-states. According to the Concept, Russia will promote interaction “in the CIS as a whole and in narrower associations” with the Russian-Belorussian Union being a top priority (Foreign Policy Concept, 2000).

Thus, the region is still in the focus of Russian attention. It is seen from the trade activity, from official statements and from the Russian active cooperation in other – narrower – regional activities and projects, mentioned above. Then, could it be that Russia does not promote the CIS merely due to its inefficiency? The CIS is inefficient in a sense that it did not contribute to the deepening of integration in the region, and due to obstruction by the member-states it did not facilitate the promotion of their interests. It could be the reason, but this organization was already inefficient in the 1990s and very soon outlived its use as a “civilized divorce”, aimed at ensuring the peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union. Yeltsin and his high officials also acknowledged that the CIS is far from being a successful project. However, the Putin administration, unlike Yeltsin’s, does not try hard to revive it.

Thus, there is a need to find alternative explanatory variables. One of the possible frameworks to use is the one elaborated by the Comparative Research on the Events of Nations (CREON) Project. Their six “theoretical perspectives” or explanatory factors roughly correspond to Rosenau’s paradigm, namely: the personal characteristics of political leaders; the bureaucratic aspects of governmental decision-making; the properties, features and characteristics of the regime; the attributes of society; transitory qualities of situations; properties of the international system (Geller, 1985: 12). In the present research I focus only on one of them, i.e. characteristics of political leaders, or taken broader, characteristics of decision-making elites. I hypothesize that there was an elite change in recent Russian history and that this change results in a different foreign policy line and includes the shift of position

towards the CIS organization. I claim that the new elite, due to its educational and occupational background, chooses different foreign policy goals and foreign policy instruments than the Yeltsin elite, and that it has significant implications for the Russian policy towards the CIS project. I also claim that the new elite feel less affiliated with the project, which also partly accounts for the policy change. In the next section I will concentrate on the new Russian foreign policy paradigm and how it is reflected in the Russian policy towards the CIS, linking it with the elite change in the next chapter.

2.4. Pragmatism of the Russian foreign policy

In 2001 Sergey Ivanov, the Secretary of the Russian Security Council, made a statement about reformulating the Russian position towards the CIS organization. According to him, taking into account the poor prospects of the CIS becoming the real integrative structure in the nearest future, Russia faced a difficult choice between promoting integration at all costs and at the price of endless concessions to its partners or choosing a more pragmatic line based on bilateral relations (in Kasaev, 2001). He claimed that the choice was made in favour of the latter option. And though the year 2006 was declared the Year of the CIS, I believe that Russian foreign policy-makers still adhere to the choice made in the beginning of the Putin's presidency.

Therefore, the reason for the policy shift towards the CIS is that this integration project does not fit the new Russian foreign policy line. In order to study this phenomenon, one needs to concentrate on the Russian foreign paradigm. In order to do this, I will study the views expressed by various foreign policy analysts and specialists in Russian foreign policy.

The results of the Experts' Russian Foreign Policy Roundtable, held on 8 November 2006 by Chatham House, provide a very insightful, but concise overview of the Russian foreign policy. Chatham House, or the Royal Institute of International Affairs, claims to be an independent body promoting the rigorous study of international questions and not expressing

opinions of its own (The Royal Institute of International Affairs disclaimer). Following the fruitful discussion, covering the broad set of foreign policy related issues, the experts, despite the hot debate on some topics, managed to agree on key points characterizing contemporary Russian foreign policy. Important from the point of view of the present research is the argument that “the quality of the decision-making is reduced by an under-institutionalized policy process dominated by the president’s highly personalized power” and that one of the key vectors of the foreign policy is “building dominance in the post-Soviet space” (Experts’ Russian Foreign Policy Roundtable, 2006: 2). Therefore, the personality of the President and those people whom he recruits to occupy the highest decision-making positions do matter in the Russian case more than institutional constraints and inertia.

However, the experts claim that Russian foreign policy is “becoming increasingly unpragmatic” (Experts’ Russian Foreign Policy Roundtable, 2006: 2). Nevertheless, even if the claim is justified and the overall trend is that of decreasing pragmatism, it does not prevent the Russian position towards the CIS region to be based upon more pragmatic rhetoric and more pragmatic rationale behind the actions than in the 1990s. Besides, it depends on the definition of pragmatism. If one points out that recent Russian foreign policy moves and official statements were to a large extent dictated by emotions, then it is unpragmatic in a sense of not being balanced and rational. However, if one concentrates attention upon the increasingly dominating role of energy leverage in bilateral relations, then it is in fact more pragmatic than it seems to be in a sense of being profit-oriented.

The above-mentioned roundtable debate summary is not the only informative discussion of the Russian foreign policy provided by Chatham House. In the framework of the same Institute, Dr. Bobo Lo, head of Russia and Eurasia programme, has published online a comprehensive summary and principles of the new Russian foreign policy. I would like to draw attention to his claims that “Russian foreign policy is based on the convergence of selected interests, not values” and that “Russia’s key foreign policy priorities are <...>

overwhelmingly security-oriented” (Lo, 2004: 7). This is in line with the increasing realism of Russian foreign policy in general and its strategy in the CIS region in particular. Not only security, but also economic interests and pursuit of profit shape Russian priorities as a result of the so-called “economization” of the foreign policy (Lo, 2004: 7), which leads to the increasing use of economic instruments in relations with former Soviet republics. I believe that these securitization and economization are linked with the composition of the Putin elite.

Another Chatham House briefing paper was prepared by Alexander Nikitin, the Director of the Center for Euro-Atlantic Security and Professor of the Political Science Department at Moscow State Institute of International Relations. He acknowledges the weakening of the CIS as an integrative structure and the shift of balance in favor of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, which includes only seven post-Soviet states, unlike a more comprehensive CIS organization (Nikitin, 2007: 1). Nikitin believes that under the current conditions Russia has to redefine its policy towards the region and allow the CIS itself to “pass away peacefully” (Nikitin, 2007: 8).

Igor Torbakov, a journalist and researcher specializing in CIS politics, identifies three groups of scholars suggesting three major CIS strategies: neo-imperialists, whose name speaks for itself, integrationists, who advocate the Russia-lead supranational model in the post-Soviet space, and pragmatists, who promote the move from “paper integration” to solid bilateral relations (Torbakov, 4 June 2004). Though Russian foreign policy in the CIS is still the mixture of these positions, it seems that the so-called pragmatists do indeed dominate and Russia is indeed starting to “prioritize its relations with various CIS countries depending on their economic potential, transit capacities, and significance for Russia’s strategic interests” (Torbakov, 4 June 2004), which represents the shift from the emphasis on the CIS organization and integrative efforts in its framework to a more pragmatic stance. However, despite the presence of the policy shift, the “clear-cut strategy” towards the CIS countries is yet to be formulated (Torbakov, 20 September 2004).

2.5. The importance of decision-makers for Russian foreign policy

According to Bobo Lo and Dmitri Trenin, the studies of contemporary Russian foreign policy are narrow and focus mainly on actors and mechanisms, answering the question “who makes Russian foreign policy” instead of why particular decisions are made (Trenin/Lo, 2005: 6). Trenin and Lo strive for a more comprehensive approach, combining the institutional context, ideas, interests and external factors to give a full picture of the contemporary Russian foreign policy (Trenin/Lo, 2005: 7). However, I will, due to the limitations of the space, focus on the link between the change of the dominant backgrounds and – consequently – orientation of the foreign policy decision-makers and the foreign policy line chosen by them.

The major reason for relying on the personality and agency-oriented approach is the fact that Russian foreign policy-making is historically highly personalized. It was always the business of the czar, Secretary-General or President to define foreign policy directions and priorities and to recruit high rank personnel for foreign policy issues (Trenin/Lo, 2005: 9). Moreover, according to Trenin and Lo, it “is not much of an overstatement to say that the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is little but an institutionalized gathering of the sovereign post-Soviet presidents” (Trenin/Lo, 2005: 9). Indeed, the work of the organization is very much focused on the summits of heads of states with special emphasis on their joint statements and defection from participating by this or that president as a protest against a particular event or action.

According to Lo, promoting Russian economic, political and security interests in the CIS region is not imperialism, as Moscow “has no intention and no interest in resurrecting the Soviet empire, its approach is unashamedly patrimonial and realpolitik in orientation” (Lo, 2006: 62). Thus, there are Russian national interests – presumably objective, but subjectively perceived and defined by policy-makers, and there are instruments the policy-makers exploit and found their official rhetoric upon: shared history, geographical proximity, common cultural heritage, political ties, economic interdependence (Lo, 2006: 62).

Thus, the current Russian foreign policy in the CIS region is pragmatic, both in the official rhetoric and in practice. It is pragmatic as opposed to “the inflammatory rhetoric of the Yeltsin years” (Lo, 2006: 67) and that it implies “discreet activism that proved much more effective in extending Russian economic and political influence” (Lo, 2006: 67). I hypothesize that this pragmatism and the policy shift towards the CIS organization result from the change of the Russian decision-making elite. The link between these two phenomena will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 — Elite Change and Its Implications for the Russian Position towards the CIS

3.1. Expectations concerning Russian elite change

I hypothesize that the tactic change in Russian foreign policy in the post-Soviet region, namely the shift of attention from the Commonwealth of Independent States organization, results from the change in the composition of the Russian elite in general and Russian foreign policy elite in particular. To demonstrate this change, I rely on existing quantitative studies of the Russian elite as well as the views voiced by scholars analyzing Russian politics. I also focus on a limited number of key decision-makers who have an impact on shaping Russian foreign policy and determining the Russian position towards the CIS project.

I expect the foreign policy decision-makers' background, especially education and career patterns, to have a significant influence upon their foreign policy choices and decisions. This is in line with foreign policy decision-making theories, claiming that decision-makers' background shapes their biases and preferences and thus defines their foreign policy orientations. These expectations also follow from the studies carried out by Margaret Hermann and her colleagues, who established the correlation between leaders' preferences and their foreign policy behaviour and asserted the role of leadership style in foreign policy-making. For instance, in her article "Explaining foreign policy behaviour using the personal characteristics of political leaders" Hermann presents the results of the study of 45 heads of government and links their foreign policy orientations with their personal features (Hermann, 1980). Moreover, the relationship between her variables manifests itself both with and without taking into account such mediating variables as special training or interest in foreign affairs" (Hermann, 1980: 44). However, Hermann's study, linking six personal characteristics (nationalism, belief in one's own ability to control events, need for power, need for affiliation, conceptual complexity, distrust of others) with two foreign policy orientations (aggressive

versus conciliatory), is quantitative, while my research is qualitative, due to the limitations of the master thesis. Besides, present work is a case study, and one case is not enough for the successful application of statistical methods. Qualitative methods are more appropriate in the present case, as they allow establishing the link between such ambiguous phenomena as personal backgrounds and policy orientations, as well as between those orientations and foreign policy line, without necessarily claiming causality.

I expect age to matter in contemporary Russian foreign policy-making, as the older elite representatives by virtue of their socialization are likely to be affiliated with the USSR and to be less flexible when it comes to change in the foreign policy of Russia as the successor of the Soviet empire. For them it may be difficult to let the former Soviet republics go. As for those decision-makers, who in the 1990s already occupied official positions high enough to make authoritative decisions in foreign policy, I expect them to have taken part in creating the CIS structures and thus, by virtue of personal contribution to the project, to feel certain affiliation to it. This affiliation can be expected to result in the efforts, aimed at reforming and developing the project instead of abandoning it in favor of more successful and promising initiatives.

Moreover, for those elite members whose postrecruitment socialization took place in the Soviet time, the CIS structures represent the patterns of multilateral communication in the framework of the former Soviet borders, which is more familiar than usual bilateral contacts between independent states. Besides, before the change of elites, which is underway in many of the former USSR republics, the elites were initially reproduced and in the course of the 1990s the CIS forums brought together decision-makers linked by interpersonal ties. Thus, it is necessary to look upon the career patterns of the current decision-makers and to check if they by virtue of their age, institutional position or scope of responsibilities could feel special affiliation with the Commonwealth of Independent States organization.

Other expectations, concerning elite change and foreign policy change, are related to the foreign policy priorities and the preference for specific instruments of achieving foreign policy goals. I expect people coming to the foreign office from business or academia to be more flexible in their foreign policy line than those who had a continuous career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and are constrained by previous decisions and choices. This expectation is in line with the findings of studies on cognitive biases and framing.

I expect foreign policy officials to pay more attention to those areas which they are professional in and specialize in. Therefore, I expect economists and businessmen to be more proficient in utilizing economic instruments in international negotiations and to know how to make full use of the bargaining power, while people with a security background may be expected to pay special attention to security issues and people from academia may resort to historic analogies in their decision-making more often than others. Besides, I expect people who were brought to high ranking posts by the perestroika wave of change to be focused on constructing the new image of Russia in international affairs, while those who occupied their high rank positions later, are expected to concentrate on day-to-day issues of economy, security and political influence and to take into account the post-transition reality.

3.2. The change in the Russian elite composition

One can hardly claim that there was a rupture between the 1990s Russian elite and that of the beginning of the 21st century, a complete replacement of one by another. However, the decision-makers of Yeltsin and Putin times are indeed different in their occupational background and career patterns and therefore in their foreign policy orientations.

3.2.1. Russian elite change: circulation vs. reproduction

When studying post-Soviet Russian elites, the main question is what the dominating trend is: elite circulation or elite reproduction, and the answer to this question is not obvious.

The Yeltsin era elite has shown significant continuity with the previous period. Frane and Tomsic, scholars who studied the elite change in the post-communist region, claim that “over half (51%) of the members of elites in 1993 belonged to the *nomenklatura* in the late 1980s” (Frane/Tomsic, 2002: 437). However, these figures also mean that while more than half of the elite members belonged to *nomenklatura* (i.e. to the fraction of the Soviet population, who were members of the Communist Party and were appointed to key administrative positions by the Party), almost half did not. Thus, the combination of elite reproduction and elite circulation is present in Russia in the 1990s. Olga Khryshtanovskaya gives different figures: she claims that 75% of the new Russian political elite, i.e. “persons who are able, by virtue of their authoritative positions in powerful organizations and movements of whatever kind, to affect national political outcomes regularly and substantially” (Cammack, 1990: 416), originated in the old Soviet *nomenklatura* (in Lane/Ross, 1998: 53). However, this difference may be due to different definitions of *nomenklatura*; besides the focus of the present research is the elite shift of 2000, not of 1991.

The mixture of circulation and reproduction is also the case of the post-Yeltsin times. Though Putin is claimed to have brought to power with him his former colleagues from the team of Anatoliy Sobchak, the mayor of St. Petersburg, and people with occupational backgrounds similar to his, a significant portion of the previous elite has retained power. The presence of a large fraction of economists in the Putin elite, as well the present domination of the security and military service representatives are in sharp contrast with the composition of the early 1990s Russian elite. Then the “overwhelming majority came from the intelligentsia, from those working in research, education, journalism, and a smaller group came from managers in industry and agriculture...” (Lane/Ross, 1998: 53).

What we see now is not only occupational, but also to a large extent generational change. Contemporary elite members started their careers before the collapse of the USSR, but they were too young to occupy high posts. They did not take a direct part in the events

leading to the collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent development of the Russian domestic and foreign policies. They did not take part in the initial elaboration and development of the CIS project. Many of those who deal with foreign policy issues nowadays previously – at the time of the CIS establishment and development – were serving abroad in diplomatic and security service missions.

3.2.2. Putin era elite: dominant trends

The Putin elite is dominated by people from security and military backgrounds as well as by economists and lawyers. Though it may be preposterous to claim that these categories are necessarily characterized by pragmatic attitude to interstate relations, they however, may be ready to sacrifice vague integration projects and idealistic appeals to common history in favor of economic benefit and greater security.

Olga Kryshtanovskaya and Stephen White claim as a result of their comprehensive study, on the basis of interviews, biographies and observations, that the share of military and security representatives in the Russian elite increased from 11.2% in 1993 to 25.1% in 2002 (in Rivera/Rivera, 2005: 3). Moreover, 70% of the staff of the presidential representatives in the seven federal districts also come from military and security organs (in Rivera/Rivera, 2005: 3). Besides, according to Kryshtanovskaya and White, 26.6% of top-level political elite received at least some “military education” as opposed to 6.7% in 1993 (in Rivera/Rivera, 2005: 13). These results make them argue that after 2000 militocratic elite “began to move into economic and political life in unprecedented numbers” (in Rivera/Rivera, 2005: 13). Kryshtanovskaya and White also report that the share of business representatives in the elite increased from 1.6% in 1993 to 11.3% in 2002 (in Rivera/Rivera, 2005: 7).

Sharon and David Rivera have also studied the composition of the current Russian decision-making elite in order to find out the role of the two trends in it: the so called “siloviki”, officials with military and security background, and business professionals. The

impetus of their study was the idea that the “role of siloviki in Putin’s administration has probably been exaggerated” (Sakwa in Rivera/Rivera, 2005: 4). They reanalyzed the results obtained by Kryshstanovskaya and White, applying different methods, and used a different data set. As a result what they found was that there is not “much cause for alarm over the militarization of the Russian polity” (Rivera/Rivera, 2005: 19) and that there is significant evidence “of a sustained influx into the Russian elite from the world of business” (Rivera/Rivera, 2005: 20).

3.3. Key foreign policy decision-makers of the Putin elite

Putin himself is a leader who comes “not from among politicians either of Yeltsin’s own or the next generation, but from among young officials from the security services, loyal but politically untainted” (Nicholson, 2001: 867), and he brought loyal and reliable people with him as the foundation of his power. According to Martin Nicholson, Putin, who by virtue of Russian political institutional arrangement – which is often referred to as “superpresidentialism” – and his own personal characteristics is considered to be the principal decision-making center, is influenced by three categories of advisors (Nicholson, 2001: 871-872). The first group is represented by those who were part of the Yeltsin team: Alexander Voloshin, Vladislav Surkov, and Gleb Pavlovsky. However, Nicholson’s article was published in 2001, while at present the influence of this group is partly in decline. Thus, for instance, Alexander Voloshin, who has been the Head of the Presidential Administration since 1999, was dismissed from this post in 2003 and replaced by Dmitri Medvedev. The second influential group includes Dmitri Medvedev, Dmitri Kozak, Alexander Kudrin, German Gref, and Andrei Illarionov, who are economists and lawyers coming mostly from the St. Petersburg team. The third group consists of officials of military and security background, which prompted some scholars to refer to today’s Russian ruling elite as “militocracy” (Rivera/Rivera, 2005). The third group is represented by Sergey Ivanov and Nikolay

Patrushev. Moreover, five out of seven plenipotentiary presidential representatives in the federal districts also come from the military background, which is indeed symptomatic.

The point of view of Trenin and Lo coincides with that of Martin Nicholson. They list practically the same influential decision-makers. They also claim that, unlike Yelstin times, academic circles now have lost their influence on foreign policy-making (Trenin/Lo: 12). As for the parliamentary foreign policy committees, “their role, however, is not so much to help make foreign policy as to explain it to the outside world” (Trenin/Lo: 13). All other potentially influential groups, such as opposition parties, regional leaders, general public – are significantly weakened due to the peculiarities of the Russian political system (Trenin/Lo: 13).

If the decision-making is highly personalised, then what is a typical official, forming part of the decision-making elite of the Putin time? Now, after having seen the data concerning the overall elite composition and the major trends evident in its change, it is interesting to focus on key policy-makers and key personalities, in order to make the image of a decision-maker less abstract and at the same time to make it generalizable. Here, I intend to focus on high rank foreign policy makers, including Foreign Ministry officials; people who are claimed to form part of Putin’s inner circle; and officials who by virtue of their institutional position deal with the CIS issues.

3.3.1. Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials

Though doubt is nowadays cast by some analysts upon the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in shaping Russian foreign policy and “it has become increasingly fashionable to dismiss the Foreign Ministry as an institution of minimal significance” (Trenin/Lo: 12), still one cannot disregard the Ministry officials, when studying foreign policymaking.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov was born in 1950 and has been in Foreign Service since 1972, working in Moscow and abroad. He was the

director of International Organizations and Global Problems Department in 1990-1992, deputy minister in 1992-1994 and Permanent Representative in the UN in 1994-2004, occupying the post of the Minister since then (official biography available at www.mid.ru).

Officials currently occupying positions of Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs are Andrey Denisov, Grigory Karasin, Alexander Grushko, Sergey Kislyak, Alexander Losyukov, Alexander Saltanov, Vladimir Titov and Alexander Yakovenko. Doku Zavgaev, Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is also worth mentioning. I will briefly study their biographies, available the official web-site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at www.mid.ru.

Denisov was born in 1952 and has been working in the Ministry structures since 1992. Thus, his Ministry career started after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and his postrecruitment socialization can be assumed to be free of at least major Soviet clichés.

Karasin is the one in charge of CIS matters, dealing mostly with bilateral relations and Russian citizens abroad. He was born in 1949 and has been in diplomatic service since 1972, the peak of his career was achieved in 2005 with the post of the Deputy Minister. In the early 1990s he dealt with Africa and the Middle East and then became the head of Information and Press Department. The emphasis of his scope of current responsibilities on Russians abroad and on bilateral relations makes it clear that Russia does not attribute significant importance to the integration aspect of the CIS cooperation.

Grushko is in charge of common European and transatlantic organizations. He was born in 1955 and has been in diplomatic service since 1977. In 1995-1996 he was head of subunit of the Department of security and disarmament of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and was responsible for arms control negotiations in 1996-2000 in Vienna. He is thus a person in charge of the security aspects of international cooperation.

Kislyak is in charge of Russian relations with Latin and North America. He was born in 1950 and in 1977 graduated from the USSR Foreign Trade Academy, having served in

diplomatic service since then and having been appointed deputy minister in 2003. He is thus concentrated on economic cooperation and has no stake in the CIS development.

Losyukov is in charge of cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. He was born in 1943 and has been in diplomatic service since 1968. He worked in the Asian-Pacific Department in 1990-1992 and served abroad in 1992-1997. He was appointed Deputy Minister in January 2007. Serving abroad during most of the 1990s he did not take part in the development of the CIS project and did not witness personally the transition of the CIS states from being parts of the same country to becoming fully independent.

Saltanov is a special representative of the Russian President on the Middle East issues. He was born in 1946 and has been working in the Foreign Ministry structures since 1970, in 1992-1998 having been Russian ambassador in Jordan. He was appointed Deputy Minister in 2001.

Titov is in charge of cooperation with European countries. He was born in 1958 and came to work in the Ministry in 1980. In 1993-1997 served abroad in the Russian embassy in Sweden. He was appointed Deputy Minister in October 2005. Saltanov and Titov are also examples of long-term foreign mission in the course of the 1990s.

Yakovenko is in charge of Russian participation in the international organizations and different aspects of international cooperation. He was born in 1954. He is a doctor of jurisprudence and professor of the Moscow State Institute of International Affairs. Several international organizations are mentioned in his official biography: NATO, UN, OSCE, IAEA, G-8, but not the CIS, this regional project not being a large-scale priority.

Doku Zavgaev is Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was born in 1940. He has PhD in economics. In the course of his career he dealt with Russian domestic matters, mostly connected with Russian federalism. Thus, in 1994-1995 he dealt with socio-economic problems of republics, in 1995 he was the chairman of the government of Chechen

Republic and in 1995-1996 head of the Chechen Republic. Zavgayev was appointed to his present post in 2004.

As one can see from the official biographies, most of these highest rank officials were born in the 1950s, and in the 1990s they either served in diplomatic missions far from the major domestic events or occupied posts in Moscow, but due to their rank following rather than shaping the Russian foreign policy line. All of them were appointed to the present positions during the presidency of Vladimir Putin and have no special affiliation with the CIS. Most of them have economic education, making them pay special attention to the economic aspect of international relations.

3.3.2. Vladimir Putin and his close advisors

However, high Foreign Ministry officials are not the only and – allegedly – not the most important decision-makers in Russia nowadays. Thus, it is necessary to look at those people who are claimed to form Putin's inner circle and to have a look at the personality of the President himself. Official biographies, briefly discussed later, are available at the official sites of the Presidential Administration (<http://president.kremlin.ru/>), the Security Council (<http://www.scrf.gov.ru/>), the Council of Federation (<http://www.council.gov.ru/>), and the Commonwealth of Independent States (www.cis.minsk.by/).

Vladimir Putin was born in 1952 in Leningrad. He has PhD in economics devoted to energy diplomacy, which is at the moment one of the pillars of the Russian foreign influence. In 1975 Putin graduated from the Department of Legal Studies of Leningrad State University and was transferred to serve in the state security services. In 1985-1990 he served abroad – in the German Democratic Republic. Starting from 1991 he worked in St. Petersburg city administration. In 1996 he started to work for the Presidential Administration. In 1998 Putin was appointed the head of the Federal Security Service and in 1999 the Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation. In 1999 he became the chairman of the Russian

Government and in 2000 was elected President of the Russian Federation, having been reelected in 2004. He is claimed to be the center of Russian foreign policy decision-making, his statements regarded as guidelines by other officials and as signals by his foreign counterparts. Trenin and Lo claim - and one can hardly disagree - that “individuals are products of their environment – historical, cultural, professional”, and they argue that Putin’s approach to power and policy shows the imprint of the “many diverse experiences that shaped him”: intelligence officer career, political ups and downs as a deputy to St. Petersburg mayor Anatoly Sobchak, his knowledge of the early Yeltsin years (Trenin/Lo: 10).

One of the people in the Putin’s inner circle and often referred to as a potential successor is Sergey Ivanov. Trenin and Lo, as well as Martin Nicholson included him in the list of most influential Russian politicians (Nicholson, 2001; Trenin/Lo, 2005). He was born in 1953 in Leningrad and belongs to the St. Petersburg group in Russian politics. Ivanov is a retired general-colonel, who served in the KGB and then – after this organization was restructured – in SVR (Foreign Intelligence Service) and FSB (Federal Security Service). In 1998 he became FSB Deputy Director and in 1999 was appointed the Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation. In 2001 he was appointed the Minister of Defense. Since 2007 he is the first Deputy Chairman of Government.

Alexey Kudrin is also mentioned by Trenin and Lo (Trenin/Lo, 2005) among the “Putin team”, and he also comes from St. Petersburg. He was born in 1960. After having defended his PhD in economics, he was doing research in the Institute of Socio-Economic Issues. Since 1990 he has worked in Leningrad (St. Petersburg), in 1993-1996 was the first deputy of St. Petersburg mayor. In 1996 he was appointed Deputy Head of Presidential Administration and in 1997 – the first Deputy Minister of Finance. In 2000 he became Minister of Finance and was reappointed in 2004.

Dmitri Medvedev was born in 1965. He graduated from Leningrad State University in 1987 and received his PhD in 1990. In 1990-1999 he combined lecturing in St. Petersburg

State University with working in St. Petersburg Administration. Since 2000 he is the first deputy Head of Presidential Administration. He is chairman of the board of directors of “Gazprom”. In 2003-2005 he was Head of Presidential Administration. Since 2005 he is the first deputy Head of Government of the Russian Federation. He is a person who combines influence upon various aspects of Russian domestic and foreign policy with economic background and connections with “Gazprom”, the major player in Russian energy dialogue with the CIS states.

Thus, we see the major trends of elite composition reflected in the key figures of Russian politics. Key decision-makers mostly come from military and economic backgrounds. They also tend to be part of the St. Petersburg team, which the President himself comes from. This underlines the emphasis on personality and interpersonal ties in the recruitment policy and may explain the economization of the Russian policy in the CIS and the shift of attention from the CIS organization to parallel regional structures, more efficient in dealing with security issues and economic cooperation.

3.3.3. Other foreign policy decision-makers and officials in charge of CIS matters

The Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation Mikhail Fradkov, who by virtue of his position has influence on many aspects of Russian policy, was born in 1950. He has PhD in economics. He occupied his first high post – deputy minister – in 1992. Since then he dealt mostly with economic issues, having worked as Minister of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade, Minister of Trade, Director of Federal Tax Service. In 2004 he was appointed to his current position.

Another famous Russian official, Igor Ivanov was born in 1945. He has PhD in history. He started his career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1973. In 1973-1993 he worked in Moscow and abroad, in the Soviet and then Russian embassy in Spain. In 1993-1998 he worked as a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and in

1998-2004 as a Minister, being in 2004 appointed the Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation.

Sergey Mironov is a member of the Council of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS. He was born in 1953 in Leningrad and has technical, economic and jurisprudence graduate degrees. He came to politics in 1994, being elected member of the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg. In 1998 he was reelected. In 2001 Mironov was elected member of the Council of Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation as a representative of the St. Petersburg Legislative Assembly. He was elected the Chairman of the upper chamber of the Russian parliament and in 2003 he was reelected to represent St. Petersburg legislature there, being also reelected to the post of chairman. Thus, Mironov is another high official coming from St. Petersburg, though by virtue of being a deputy he was not recruited by Putin, and another official with economic degree. He deals with the CIS as a result of his institutional position.

The choice of officials to deal directly with the CIS organization is symptomatic. The first CIS Executive Secretary was Ivan Korotchenya, born in 1948. He has PhD in economics. In 1992 he was appointed coordinator of the Working Group of the CIS Heads of States and Heads of Governments Councils, and then the CIS Executive Secretary. He was replaced in this post by Boris Berezovsky in 1998. He was one of those who created the CIS organization and was replaced when it was deemed necessary to carry out its comprehensive reform. However, he did not leave the organization for good, as he was made the first deputy Executive Secretary of the CIS. When in 1998 Boris Berezovsky was appointed Executive Secretary it was considered as an effort to reform the structure and to increase the organization's efficiency. Boris Berezovsky is an oligarch, who was claimed to have had significant influence upon President Yeltsin, but now lives in London and opposes President Putin.

In the same way as Berezovsky's appointment was an implicit reform signal, the choice of Vladimir Rushailo to be the Executive Secretary from 2004 till present day can also be interpreted as a signal. Rushailo was born in 1953 and since 1972 has been making career in the Ministry of Interior structures: from investigator to his appointment as Minister of Interior in 1999 and the secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation in 2001. Thus, he unambiguously represents the "militocratic" share of the Putin elite. Unlike Korotchenya, he has no affiliation with the CIS and no experience in foreign policy domain, unlike Berezovsky, he is hardly expected to concentrate on structural reform of the organization or on Russian economic interests. His appointment clarifies the place the CIS has now in the Russian foreign policy in the region and the emphasis, which is placed on security issues in the framework of the CIS, while other organizational structures are considered by Russia efficient channels of promoting economic interests.

3.4. The effects of foreign policy elite change

The influx of decision-makers from security and economic background results in the increased pragmatism of the new elite and its focus on security and economic benefits. This is in line with Richard Hermann's thesis about policy change as a result of the change in composition of decision-making bodies and in the balance of power between them (in Pursiainen, 2000: 205).

The image of the typical Putin high official seems to be close to the one Margaret Hermann and her colleagues label "pragmatist" in contrast with crusaders, strategists and opportunists, although assigning one of these labels to this or that official is quite arbitrary (Hermann et al., 2001: 97). According to Hermann, a pragmatist "respects the political constraints in the environment and seeks to work within them while at the same time having some idea about where he or she wants to take the government, the dilemma is to ensure that

some progress is made toward a goal without stepping outside the bounds of one's position” (Hermann et al., 2001: 97).

The exact causality concerning two trends of the elite change is difficult to establish. It may be that global and domestic instability brought to the elite a growing number of people from the military, while the profound change in society, especially transition to free market economy, gave businessmen as economic elite an opportunity to join the political elite as well. It may also be a recruitment policy, bringing to the elite on the basis of personal connections people, who also happen to share similar characteristics.

The effects of both trends are ambiguous. It would not be justified to claim, that, due to their socialization patterns, people with military backgrounds are necessarily prone to authoritarian solutions of problems (Rivera/Rivera, 2005: 5), while economists and businessmen are necessarily more rational and, for example, value family and freedom (Tikhonova in Rivera/Rivera, 2005: 8-9). This generalization, though based on a common assumption about the link between background and behaviour, is too strong. However, it is reasonable to refer to particular foreign policy actions instead of vague beliefs to make a claim more sustainable. Thus, for instance, though one can hardly prove that economists are necessarily rational and practical, one might claim that by virtue of being familiar with cost and benefit analysis and economic specifics they are more professional and more successful in using economic leverage in international negotiations. One can also expect people with military and security backgrounds to pay special attention to security problems and their solutions when making crucial foreign policy decisions. These trends are reflected in official statements as well as in actions, decisions and foreign policy events.

Among the foreign policy events in the CIS region, which partly result from the growing fraction of economists in the Putin elite, are the instances of using oil and gas prices to influence the neighbouring states, as “Russian leverage throughout the former Soviet space is derived from the dependence of the new post-Soviet states on Russian energy supplies”

(Saivetz, 2007). Thus, in 2005-2006 a serious Russian-Ukrainian energy dispute took place. "Gazprom" demanded Ukraine to pay the world price for natural gas. Ukraine asked to postpone the price adjustment, but "Gazprom" stopped the flow of gas until a compromising deal was negotiated. Observers link this energy dispute with the preceding victory of the Orange revolution in Ukraine contrary to the Russian interests (Saivetz, 2007). Another instance of using energy leverage was the Russian dispute with Belarus in December 2006, which also involved oil and natural gas. The resolution of this pricing dispute resulted in a significant increase in the amount Belarus had to pay and in Russia gaining a 50% stake in the Belarusian pipeline (Saivetz, 2007).

These are just two of the numerous examples of Russian politicized energy policies in the CIS region. Such politicization of economic disputes and at the same time economization of the foreign policy were made possible due to the growing pragmatism of the Russian foreign policy line as a result of the influx of economists and businessmen into the Russian foreign policy elite. At the same time, securitization of the foreign policy is also present, as a result of the dominance of the military elite in decision-making. These elite concentrate on security problems in the region, among those the threat of terrorism, drug-trafficking, the problem of Russian military bases in neighbouring states etc. In their view, the CIS major institutional structures seem unable to bring efficient solutions to these problems, while other structures, such as Shanghai Cooperation Organization, provide significant opportunities.

There is no place for the CIS integration project in Russian foreign policy, based on the search for security and benefit, as the project has exhausted its use in both spheres. Appeals to a common past and multilateral cooperation are no longer the foundation of the foreign policy line in the post-Soviet region, they have been replaced by bilateral interaction and pragmatic rhetoric of the new foreign policy elite, who does not feel affiliated with the CIS organization and does not consider it efficient in promoting Russian interests.

Conclusion

The major conclusion of the present research is that the policy change of the Russian Federation towards the Commonwealth of Independent States organization results from the change in the composition of the Russian foreign policy-making elite. I consider the change to be tactical, as Russian foreign policy goals and aspirations remain to a large extent the same. The CIS region is still a priority, while the CIS organization has lost its significance as a channel of policy goals achievement. The work relies on the comprehensive studies of the Russian elites in the post-Soviet period and on the existing literature on Russian foreign policy, as well as on analyzing Russian foreign policy discourse and the foreign policy events and decisions relevant for the research question. The novelty of the work is in bringing together foreign policy analysis and elite theory.

The results of the present work can be generalized, as the foreign policy change is comprehensive and not limited to the CIS region, while the elite change is also present in respect to the decision-making elite in general rather than only the fraction of it dealing with foreign policy. However, generalizations should be done carefully, as for the sake of simplicity the external environment of the foreign policy-making was taken as stable without considering the possibility of the decision-makers acting differently under different circumstances.

In March 2007 the secretary of the Russian Security Council Igor Ivanov questioned the further existence of the CIS organization and said that the term “post-soviet country” should not be used anymore (News Report, 19 March 2007). Such a statement signifies an important change in the Russian regional strategy. Among the signs and indicators of this change, namely the decline in the Russian interest towards the CIS project, are the expressions of disappointment in the official statements, growing involvement of the Russian Federation in duplicating regional structures, decline in the share of budgetary expenses on

the CIS-related activities, the merger of the Ministry of the CIS with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, displacement of a reformer from the CIS Executive Secretary position, growing economization of the bilateral relations with the CIS member-states. On the basis of these indicators it was possible to track the policy shift, which is the dependent variable of the present research.

The explanatory factor is represented by the elite change, which implies attributing significant importance to the role of individuals in the foreign policy-making. Such emphasis on agency and personalities of decision-makers is justified by the low institutionalization of Russian politics, where the President is considered the key foreign policy decision-maker and where selection to official positions is often based on interpersonal ties rather than professional achievement. Besides, agency-oriented approach is common in foreign policy analysis with its focus on actors' preferences and decision-making procedures. In the present research the main elite theory assumptions are taken for granted as the basis for further investigation. Major expectations about the impact of elite change on the Russian policy towards the CIS organization seem to be confirmed, though due to the peculiarities of both dependent and independent variables these expectations are not quantifiable.

To sum up, there is an influx of the people with military and security backgrounds, as well as economists and businessmen into the Russian foreign policy-making elite. This influx has been underway since the new president Vladimir Putin was elected in 2000, and this trend results in the growing economization and securitization of the foreign policy in the CIS region. One of the reasons for the increased share of the so-called "militocrats" in the Russian elite is the intelligence service background of the President himself. Among the reasons for the influx of businessmen and economists to the political elite are the opportunities provided to them by the Russian transition to market economy.

One of the consequences is the decline of the Russian interest in the CIS organization and shift of attention and resources in favor of other initiatives and projects in the region, less

comprehensive in terms of scope and membership, but more promising in terms of efficiency and concrete results. Moreover, in order to promote Russian national interests in the post-Soviet region and ensure the Russian position as a regional power, Russian foreign policy-makers resort to the active use of economic instruments to achieve political goals and switch from multilateral interaction to bilateral contacts.

Generally, causality in foreign policy making and particularly in the present case is hard to establish, as in foreign policy one deals with the sophisticated combination of interests and preferences, opportunities and constraints, which are located at the border of the domestic and the foreign. Moreover, the notion of orientations, presumably resulting from particular educational and occupational backgrounds, is not tangible and is difficult to reveal. However, there is a certain pattern present in the case under consideration, which implies the presence of the link between the change of elite composition and the dominant background and orientation patterns, on the one hand, and the resulting foreign policy line, on the other hand.

The present foreign policy makers share similar characteristics, differentiating them from the previous elite, and this gives rise to a new dominant foreign policy paradigm. There is also one more factor – psychological so to say – explaining the decline of interest towards the CIS project: the lack of personal affiliation with the CIS due to the lack of personal involvement in its creation and development, but this factor is more difficult to track than the often-mentioned pragmatism of the Russian foreign policy, as it is personal and is not revealed in the official discourse.

I expect the present decline of the Russian interest in the CIS to remain persistent. However, I believe it will not result in the dissolution of the organization. Even if the CIS efficiency is under question, it is not in the Russian interests to abandon it completely, as this organization still has not fully outlived its use as a forum of communication of the former USSR republics. It may not be a successful integration project, but it gives an opportunity for the member-states' leaders to meet regularly and discuss urgent issues. Nevertheless, I expect

Russia to transfer some resources from the CIS direction to the development of other initiatives, such as the Eurasian Economic Community, for instance. Moreover, I believe that Russian foreign policy makers in the near future will continue to use actively Russian economic leverage and its increased bargaining power, especially in bilateral relations with neighbors.

The present research has certain limitations resulting from the specificity of the problem under study. Foreign policy is a complicated matter to deal with; it is hard to open the “black box” of the state, to find the rationale behind certain actions and events and to track policy change. Elite change is more quantifiable in terms of analyzing the share of a particular background in the overall pattern; however, the link between the dominant pattern and the resulting policy shift is established via such non-tangible matters as foreign policy beliefs and actors’ preferences. Thus, there is a need for further research to make the results more generalizable. Nevertheless, the present work is a useful contribution to the field, as there are very few attempts in the existing literature to link the current Russian foreign policy with the dominant Russian elite on the basis of particular examples.

References

Sources and Literature

A framework for research on foreign policy behavior / by Michael Brecher, Blema Steinberg, Janice Stein. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol.13, No.1 (March, 1969), pp.75-101.

Allison, Graham T., Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 63, No. 3 (September 1969), pp. 689-718.

Allison, Graham T.; Zelikow, Philip. *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (2nd edition), New York: Longman, 1999.

Annual Presidential Addresses to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation 2001-2007.- <http://www.president.kremlin.ru/sdocs/appears.shtml?type=63372> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Brunk, Gregory G.; Minehart, Thomas G. How important is elite turnover to policy change? *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol.28, No.3 (August, 1984), pp.559-569.

Cammack, Paul. A critical assessment of the new elite paradigm. *American Sociological Review*, Vol.55, No.3 (Jun., 1990), pp.415-420.

Carlsnaes, Walter. The agency-structure problem in foreign policy analysis. *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol.36, No.3 (Sep., 1992), pp. 245-270.

Chittick, William O.; Billingsley, Keith R. The structure of elite foreign policy beliefs. *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No.2 (Jun., 1989), pp. 201-224.

Coulloudon, Valerie. The dichotomy of the post-Yeltsin elite / *Project on Systemic Change and International Security in Russia and the new States of Eurasia*.- <http://www.sais-jhu.edu/programs/res/papers/Coulloudon.pdf> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Elite (re)configuration and politico-economic performance in post-socialist countries. By Frane Adam and Matevz Tomsic. *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.54, No.3 (May, 2002), pp. 435-454.

Experts' Russian Foreign Policy Roundtable / *Summary of presentations and discussions*. Chatham House, 8 November 2006. – <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/pdf/research/rep/Pcmcfp.pdf> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Foreign policy analysis: continuity and change in its second generation. By Laura Neack, Jeanne A.K. Hey, Patrick J. Haney. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1995, 319 p.

Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2000.- <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Fuller, Liz. CIS: death notices serve to revive the moribund organization. *Radio Free Europe*, August 30, 2005.- <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/08/0145c8d7-db3d-4734-8917-c9497abdd66f.html> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Geller, Daniel S. Domestic factors in foreign policy: a cross-national statistical analysis, Schenkman Books, Inc., 1985, 211 p.

Getting hold on a moving target: foreign policy change / Review by Thomas Risse-Kappen. *Mershon International Studies Review* (1995), 39, pp. 297-299.

Getting it wrong: regional cooperation and the Commonwealth of Independent States / by Martha Brill Olcott, Anders Aslund and Sherman W. Garnett. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., 1999, 265 p.

Hermann, Margaret G. Explaining foreign policy behavior using the personal characteristics of political leaders. *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol.24, No.1 (Mar., 1980), pp. 7-46.

Janis, Irving L., *Groupthink* (2nd ed.) Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982.

Kasaev, Alan. "Sovet Bezopasnosti Rossii reshil zakryt' SNG" ("The Security Council of Russia decided to close the CIS"). *Nezavisimaya gazeta (Independent Newspaper)*, 2001.- http://www.ng.ru/cis/2001-02-07/5_soviet.html (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Kryshtanovskaya, Olga; White, Stephen. From Soviet nomenklatura to Russian elite. *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.48, No.5, 1996, pp. 711-733.

Kryshtanovskaya, Olga; White, Stephen. Putin's militocracy / Summary in "Putin's generals", *JRL Research and Analytical Supplement*, January 2004.- <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/8013.cfm#2> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Lane, David. The transformation of Russia: the role of the political elite. *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.48, No.4 (Jun., 1996), pp.535-549.

Lavrov, Sergey. "Evolutionary reform as a goal". Speech at the State Duma session, 2007. *Nezavisimaya gazeta (Independent Newspaper)*.- <http://www.ng.ru/printed/76874> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Levchenkov, Alexander. "Ugroza vyhoda Gruzii iz SNG"/"The threat of Georgia withdrawing its membership in the CIS".- <http://www.eurasianhome.org/xml/t/expert.xml?lang=ru&nic=expert&pid=651> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Levy, Jack S., "Political Psychology and Foreign Policy" in: Sears, David O. et. al. (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*. Oxford: OUP, 2003. pp. 254-284.

Lo, Bobo. Evolution or regression? Russian foreign policy in Putin's second term. *Chatham House*, 2006 – pp. 57-77.- <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/pdf/research/rep/R0506Lo.pdf> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Lo, Bobo. Towards a new Russian foreign policy? *Chatham House Briefing Note*, March 2004, pp.7-8.- <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/pdf/research/rep/PutinMar04.pdf> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Lynch, Allen C. The realism of Russia's foreign policy. *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.53, No.1 (Jan., 2001), pp. 7-31.

March, James G. *A Primer on Decision Making*. New York: The Free Press, 1994. Ch. 1. pp. 1-55.

News Report, 19 March 2007.- <http://www.infoniac.com/news/russia-nato.html> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Nicholson, Martin. Putin's Russia: slowing the pendulum without stopping the clock. *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs), Vol.77, No.4 (Oct., 2001), pp. 867-884.

Nikitin, Alexander. The end of the "post-Soviet space": the changing orientations of the New Independent States". *Russian and Eurasia Briefing Paper*, Chatham House, February 2007, pp. 1-10.- <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/pdf/research/rep/BPnis0207.pdf> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Pogorelsky, Alexander. "Raspadayuschayasya semya po imeni SNG" („Falling apart family called CIS"). *RIA News*, 19.02.2007.- <http://www.rian.ru/analytics/20070219/60963911.html> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Pursiainen, Christer. *Russian Foreign Policy and international relations theory*. Ashgate, 2000, 239 p.

Putnam, Robert D. *The comparative study of political elites*. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1976, 246 p.

Rigby, T.H. New top elites for old in Russian politics. *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol.29, No.2 (Apr., 1999), pp.323-343.

Rivera, Sharon Werning. Elites in Post-communist Russia: a changing of the guard? *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.52, No.3 (May, 2000), pp.413-432.

Rivera, Sharon Werning; Rivera, David W. The Russian elite under Putin: militocratic or bourgeois? *Post-communist state and society: transnational and national politics conference*, Syracuse University, Sep.30 – Oct. 1, 2005. pp. 1-25. - <http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/moynihan/programs/ces/pconfpdfs/Rivera.pdf> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Russia – old wine in a new bottle? The circulation and reproduction of Russian elites, 1983-1993 / by Eric Hanley, Natasha Yershova, Richard Anderson. *Theory and Society*, Vol.24, No.5 (Oct., 1995), pp. 639-668.

Russian foreign trade data 1995-2005. *Federal State Statistics Service*.- http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/2006/b06_13/24-08.htm (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Safranchuk, I.A. "Audit rossiyskoy vneshney politiki" ("The auditing of the Russian foreign policy"). *Rossiya v global'noy politike (Russia in global politics)*, 2006.- <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/23/6693.html> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Saivetz, Carol. Russia's Energy Policies: Business or Politics or Both. *Security Studies Program Seminar* (February 28, 2007).- http://web.mit.edu/ssp/seminars/wed_archives_07spring/Saivetz.htm (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Sakwa, Richard; Webber, Mark. The Commonwealth of Independent States, 1991-1998: stagnation and survival. *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol.51, No.3 (May, 1999), pp.379-415.

Secrieru, Stanislav. Russia's foreign policy under Putin: "CIS project" renewed / *UNISCI Discussion Papers*, January 2006.- <http://www.ucm.es/info/unisci/UNISCI10Secrieru.pdf> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Security Council of the Russian Federation / Summary of the official meeting. July 19, 2004.- <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/55.html> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Shevtsova, Lilia. Putin's legacy: how the Russian elite is coping with Russia's challenges. *Carnegie Moscow Center Briefing*, Vol.8, Issue 4, June 2006.- http://www.carnegie.ru/en/pubs/briefings/Briefing-2006-04-web_en.pdf (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Strategic Course of the Russian Federation in Relations with the CIS member-states, 1995.- <http://gov.cap.ru/hierarhy.asp?page=../25/11453/37921/40008/81092/81097> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

The Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States, 1991.- <http://www.cis.minsk.by/main.aspx?uid=180> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

The Russian political elites, 1991-95: recruitment and renewal". By David Lane and Cameron Ross. In *Postcommunist elites and democracy in Eastern Europe*, ed. By John Higley, Jan Pakulski and Wlodzimierz Wesolowski. Macmillan Press, Ltd, 1998, pp. 34-66.

Torbakov, Igor. Kremlin still lacks a clear-cut strategy for the CIS. *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol.1, Issues 88 (Sep. 20, 2004).- http://www.jamestown.org/print_friendly.php?volume_id=401&issue_id=3076&article_id=2368534 (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Torbakov, Igor. Russian strategists debate Kremlin policies on CIS integration. *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol.1, Issues 24 (June 04, 2004).- http://www.jamestown.org/print_friendly.php?volume_id=401&issue_id=2974&article_id=2368047 (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Trenin, Dmitri. Moscow's realpolitik. *Carnegie Moscow Center*, 09.02.2004.- <http://www.carnegie.ru/en/pubs/media/69778.htm> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Trenin, Dmitri; Lo, Bobo. The landscape of Russian foreign policy decision-making. *Moscow Carnegie Center*, 2005. – http://www.carnegie.ru/en/pubs/books/9200doklad_fin.pdf (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Weitz, Richard. Things fall apart: the Commonwealth of Independent States can't hold the former Soviet republics together. *The Daily Standard*, 01.18.2007.- <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/013/178ehxfz.asp> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Who leads matters: the effects of powerful individuals. By Margaret G. Hermann, Thomas Preston, Baghat Korany, Timothy M. Shaw. *International Studies Review*, Vol.3, No.2, Leaders, Groups, and Coalitions: Understanding the People and Processes in Foreign Policymaking (Summer, 2001), pp. 83-131.

Yeltsin, Boris. Speech at the CIS summit, 1997. *Nezavisimaya gazeta (Independent Newspaper)*, 2000.- <http://www.ng.ru/printed/13200> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Yetiv, Steve A., Testing the Government Politics Model: US Decision Making in the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf Crisis. *Security Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Winter 2001), pp.50-84.

Zatulin, Konstantin. Politika Rossii v SNG ostavlyayet zhelat' luchshego (Russian policy in the CIS leaves much to be desired).- <http://www.psj.ru/text/200612201323.htm> (last accessed 27 May, 2007).

Zuckerman, Alan. The concept "political elite": lessons from Mosca and Pareto. *The Journal of Politics*, Vol.39, No.2 (May, 1977), pp. 324-344.

Official Web-sites

Collective Security Treaty Organization.- <http://www.dkb.gov.ru/>

Commonwealth of Independent States.- <http://www.cis.minsk.by>

Council of Federation of the Russian Federal Assembly.- <http://www.council.gov.ru/>

Eurasian Economic Community.- <http://www.evrazes.com/>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.- <http://www.mid.ru>

President of the Russian Federation.- <http://www.president.kremlin.ru>

Security Council of the Russian Federation.- <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/>

Shanghai Cooperation Organization.- <http://www.sectsco.org/>