# PUTIN'S 'SOFT' FOREIGN POLICY: A RUSSIAN RESPONSE TO AN EVOLVING INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

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# ABSTRACT

Russia has undergone serious changes since gaining independence from the Soviet Union . Today its role in the international community is an important feather in its cap. However the Putin presidency created the path on which the Russian Federation is to walk. How then did the Russian Federation adopt it's 'soft' power rhetoric and why?

The methodology used is one of synthesis, by using the English school which uses a historical and pragmatic method by co-opting elements of other theories to create a 'best-fit' logic to cases, I hope to understand the reasoning behind the implementation of a non-military way of promoting national interests.

The major findings of this thesis are that the adoption of 'soft' power norms by the Putin administration was done in such a way as to keep many of the coercive elements of 'hard' power, and as a reaction to the international communities expectations of Russia. Thus negating the principles behind it without infringing on the norms, and values outright.

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# INTRODUCTION

In 1990 Nye coined the phrase 'soft' power. What he intended by this was to indicate that power is an essentially multi-faceted concept. The uses of power differ depending on the aims, the resources, and the background of whichever actor wields it. 'Soft' power is the feature of power which favours norms, values, and peaceful means in order to achieve its goals. 'Soft' power's use has accrued in recent years, especially in the West. It has become such an important aspect of the West's mandate that it has pervaded the dialogues it holds with non-Western states, notably the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation has since 1990, attempted to find a place for itself in a reshaped and predominantly Western-geared international spectrum. The hopes of a fully democratic Russia that prevailed in the early 90s have evaporated leaving behind an awkward hybrid between supposed democracy and actual autocracy. The Putin presidency saw a change in how the Russian Federation worked, it adopted an authoritarian stance, internally and to a certain extent externally. The role of power however is one that Russia has made clear, it uses whatever facets it feels necessary. During the Putin administration there appears to have been a development of 'soft' power, despite the strong image Putin promoted. This seems to be attributed to the international community's predominant use of 'soft' power. How then has Russia gone about re-building its strong image, while increasing its 'soft' mandate?

The premise of this thesis is to explain and gauge the changes in 'hard' power and 'soft' power, and their effects on Russian foreign policy during the Putin administration. The intention of the thesis is not to say that 'soft power' has replaced 'hard power' but that its use has increased and that it is now a viable alternative to the traditional forceful coercive tools of Soviet and Russian foreign policy. The basic assumption of this thesis being that Russia has had to change the manner in which it addresses foreign policy issues as it cannot act in the belligerent manner that it did when it was part of the Soviet Union, and one of the two balancing 'Super powers'. Russia has become interdependent with its neighbours and the international community and it is adopting a 'softer' foreign policy than at any other time in its history. The suppositions that are implicit are that, unlike authors such as Edward Lucas[1] suggest, that as there is a weakening of the Russian Federation's ability to impose its will on

[1]Edward Lucas, "The New Cold War", 2009.

the international community through traditional methods, it is therefore adopting new methods to safeguard its interests. Furthermore, the ways in which international relations have developed in the last 20 years have dictated the way in which Russia has developed its alternatives to 'hard power'. Due to the move away from 'hard power' and its inability to exert 'hard power' meaningfully, the militarily weakened position Russia is in has allowed it to formulate a dialogue with which to engage the West and its Southern and Eastern neighbours whilst attempting to consolidate power at home and continue to appear as a 'great power'.

The decline in the use hard power in the international community can be attributed in no small part to the Liberal idea that states with common interests do not go to war with each other. Within Liberalism these common interests are usually defined as 'democracy', though nonetheless the paradigm of peaceful non-democratic states exists. What can be noted though is that there is an increase in the use of international organisations to 'act'. Although the use of international organisations is not all encompassing, unilateral action has become uncommon and unilateral military action even more so. This trend, and the decline of Russian reliance on 'hard power', leads me to analyse how energy has become a potent weapon in Russian foreign policy under the Putin administration. Through increasing reliance on energy (a soft political tool) the Russian Federation has so far managed to thrive in the international community despite exerting dubiously self-interested policies. The investment in 'soft power' by the Kremlin has allowed it to forward its own multi-polar view of the world, while using the Western framework to do it. Thanks to this Russia has managed to re-coup some of the influence lost since the break-up of the Soviet Union.

The key area of my own contribution to the subject is through a synthesis of frameworks using the English school to analyse and to argue that the Russian Federation has had to shift away from traditional foreign policy tools and rely heavily on what Nye defined as 'soft power'[2], namely non-military coercion, and the power of attraction. I also argue that it is the reliance on pipeline politics that has so far been Russia's true saving grace, as it has failed to develop a real ideological backbone to its foreign policy. Energy has granted Russia a serious amount of leverage vis-à-vis other power resources, and vis-à-vis other nations. Despite this as it loses its monopsony on Central Asian energy, and Europe begins to consolidate energy

[2]Nye, "Soft Power", 1990, 154.

resources beyond Russia, the Kremlin will continue to feel a sharp decrease of its international leverage and position despite the changes it has so far made.

The basic structure of this thesis is split into three parts, firstly a theoretical chapter (Chapter I) describing the existing literature and what it fails to explain, this chapter also covers the basic theory that will be applied in subsequent chapters. The following chapter (Chapter II) explains how the changes in the international community and the Russian state have allowed for this change towards 'soft' power. The next two chapters deal with the concepts of 'soft' and 'hard' power, describing their uses and how their applications fit with the theoretical framework already laid out. The final chapter explains the conclusions that have been arrived at, explaining the way the theory meshes with the actual actions of the Russian state.

# Chapter 1.

# Theoretical Framework

The English school allows the opportunity to combine defensive Realism and Constructivism as well as Liberalism. Observing how various elements of Russian foreign policy fall into differing theories, is not in itself helpful, but by looking at an evolution there can be an assumption of change within the creation of policy. The English school permits a more fluid interpretation rather than forcing concepts to fit with actions, it also allows for various theories to lie side by side within the overall decision-making body, whereas a theory like Realism would negate the plurality of voices within the process.

As to my framework, by using aspects of the English school, in particular the fundamentally Constructivist and Realist traits, I explain how these have been used to create the Putin administration's current foreign policy discourse. Constructivist elements of the English school explain how this discourse and identity has been created. Realist elements of the English School demonstrate how the concept has come about of an international order that acts to halt the Realist tendency of a war of all against all. Finally I also use a hybrid version of the English school's international order, or rather community, and argue that it has been constructed by Liberal dialogue. Therefore the adoption of Liberal norms and values, in the form of 'soft power', can be traced to the Constructivist and generally Realist elements of the English school.



## *1.1 Realism*

To begin with I will define how I envisage the key concepts I will be using, firstly the Realist school of thought, then the Liberal and Constructivist schools and finally the English school. Realism can in broad terms be defined as the theoretical framework that accepts a Hobbesian view of international relations. This is to say that the international arena is one of anarchy

with each actor adopting actions that will maximize their own specific utility. As Hobbesian theory proposes, a war of all against all is what the IR spectrum is to a Realist. The reasons for conflicts are posited by Realism in two ways: the "unrestrained pursuit of unilateral advantage by individuals, factions or states"[3], interests dictating policy despite the losses that might be incurred, and what Butterfield describes as "the tragic element of human conflict"[4] the simple misperceptions between states. Realists propose that if there is a balance of power the inherent conflicts that arise over finite resources can be stemmed at least temporarily. However Realists also believe in a cyclical motion to all events, and that although able to stem the tide of conflict the balance of power ultimately succumbs to conflict. Lebow states that this is due to the destabilizing effects that one actor can have on the system when "the actor decides that it does not wish to be constrained by custom"[5].

Realism is generally accepted to be, as Lebow puts it, a "complex, subtle, appreciation of agency and understanding that power is most readily transformed into influence when masked and embedded in the accepted system of norms"[6]. In the case of Russian post-Soviet foreign policy, a realist perspective would undoubtedly call attention to the Putinist style of justification mirroring that of the US. The dialogue used by the Kremlin during the Second Chechen war was distinctly marked by terms such as sovereignty, anti-insurgency and other accepted justifications for force. As a standalone case this does not indicate much. But from a Realist perspective the modern IR arena has splintered less clearly than during the previous century. Without the traditional balance of power that has existed since the end of WWII, the modern world has returned to a less alliance driven system and one in which power- seeking states, and not balance seeking, are the predominant actors. Of these power-seeking actors Russia poses a sizeable threat to the current hegemon- the United States as well as to Europe, Central Asia, and possibly even to the supposed rising hegemon of China. Edward Lucas in his 2008 book on Russian resurgence entitled "The New Cold War" stated that "vengeful, xenophobic, and ruthless rulers have turned the sick man of Europe into a menacing bully"[7], insisting that the finite nature of resources has enabled Russia to break the accepted limits of the international community and therefore, to exert a sizeable amount of power. The Kremlin had managed to keep a firm grip on Central Asian supply until 2006 in terms of oil and

[3] Lebow, in Dunne, Kurki & Smith, "International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity", 2010, 60.
[4] Butterfield, 1951, 15.
[5] Lebow, in Dunne, Kurki & Smith. 61.
[6] Ibid. 59.
[7] Edward Lucas, preface.

2008/9 in terms of Gas[8]. The oil pipeline from Aqtöbe in Kazakhstan and the gas pipeline from Sag Kenar in Turkmenistan, both leading directly to China, have created a need for Russia to protect what it views as its traditional interests.

Adding to this, a Realist might point out the geostrategic position of the Russian Federation as well as its sizeable military capacity, which more than doubled from the date of Putin taking office in 1999 (US$14.042 million, according to SIPRI[9]) until his departure in 2008 (US$38.238 million, according to SIPRI). This increase in security expenditure would suggest that the behaviour of the Russian state changed from the immediate post-Soviet foreign policy stance (the budget for which decreased every year from 1989 until 1998, by approximately US$188.957 million, according to SIPRI). This coincides with the Realist theory that Lebow puts forward that "changes in identity and discourse are often the result of modernization, and hegemonic war is more often a consequence than a cause of such a transformation"[10]. The change in Russian governance after the collapse of Communism falls well into this category of changing identity. The Kremlin, lost many of its key policy makers as they returned to their own states, such as Shevardnadze's return to Georgia, and were replaced by the middle ranking go getters of the 'new Russia', predominantly the military oriented 'siloviki'[11]. The Russian Federation, from a realist perspective, went through an identity crisis while the world was attempting to adjust to a new system that no longer enshrined bipolar deterrence. It can be argued that Russia did not truly find an identity until the Putin era. Therefore by adopting a realist theoretical framework to analyse Putin era foreign policy one can see the germination of a new Russian identity based on Westernisers, expansionists, non-expansionists, ultranationalists and the Eurasianist concepts. Realism therefore explains how the internal political power struggle (and identity struggle) has compromised the traditional conventions that kept the Soviet Union and later the Yeltsin administration constrained within the international system.

In so far as the Putin administration's foreign policy can be explained by Realism, several indices prove that Realism tends to be a good explanatory system. The Realist framework explains to some degree why Russia has acted in such an aggressive manner in Georgia,



[8] IGC Report no. 133, 2008/2009, 11-19.
[9] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, "Military Expenditure: Russia", 2009.
[10] Lebow, in Dunne, Kurki and Smith, 2010, 60.
[11] Ian Bremmer and Samuel Charap, " The Siloviki in Putin's Russia: Who They Are and What They Want", 2007.

when the aggression was not necessarily warranted. Realism also explains why the Kremlin has shown a tendency to side against America where possible.

In the first instance one cannot take the Georgian crisis out of context. A Realist reading would not only include the natural sphere of influence that Russia feels Georgia is part of but also includes the feeling of political protectionism over Georgia. The Kremlin was deeply involved in the elections that would ultimately place Saakashvili in office. For the Kremlin to see Georgia become a 'democratisation' project[12] of ex-presidential candidate John McCain can not only be viewed as a betrayal by the Saakashvili Government but also a US encroachment on Russia's political hinterland. From a Realist perspective, the Abkhazia and South Ossetia Conflict can be viewed as a proxy battle for influence in which military capacity was used to demonstrate a balance of power. In this case Russia used force to demonstrate its unwillingness to give up influence to the US in Georgia.

The second point Realism addresses in term of Russian foreign policy is the increasing trend to side against the US where possible. This trend began after 9/11 and therefore does not encompass all of the Putin era time-frame. It does however fit in with the Russian balance of power concept. Unwilling or unable to side with the US, Russia has begun to branch out and extend its alliances, notably with China through the SCO, Asia through the ASEAN Regional Forum and ex-Soviet states through the CIS and Single Economic Space. This balance of power fits Morgenthau's concept that it is a "general phenomenon found on all levels of Social interaction"[13]. It adheres to the Realist conception that individual actors will seek to find security in numbers when faced with an overwhelmingly more powerful rival.

The shortcomings of realist theory in explaining Russian foreign policy are that it tends to only view Russia as a single state that is centralised and cohesive. However despite the Putin administration's centralisation of power, Russia is also, to some extent, prone to acting on behalf of certain companies, notably Gazprom. Whether this impact is sizeable or not, Realism does not adequately address the non-state actors within IR, and therefore leaves areas in Putin era foreign policy un-explained. One example, being the role of non-state actors, such as Russian minorities who are 'oppressed' in neighbouring states such as Estonia, and Transdniestria. Realism also has too deterministic an outlook, promoting the

[12] Matthew Mosk &Jeffrey Birnbaum, Washington Post, 2008.
[13] Morgenthau, in Dunne, Kurki and Smith, 2010, 63.

idea that conflict is inevitable and that human nature forces insecurity to come to the fore as conflict. This concept leaves no explanation for interdependence and cooperation, and negates these aspects of international relations, and therefore realism fails to explain Russian foreign relations.

Generally speaking Realism is a good basis for explaining Russian foreign policy from 1999 until 2008. It also gives a decent idea of general trends in Russian policy making. However it does not explain why Russia has not relied more on brute force in countries that would not receive support from the US. Realism also fails to explain why Russian foreign policy has been dependent on economic tools rather than hard power tools. In terms of originality Realism fails to paint a broad picture but does enable a starting point from which energy politics can be analysed, using realist terms applied to a soft power tool. The Realist benefit of looking at energy is that energy can be considered a 'hard power' tool as it coerces rather than attracts. Furthermore until the military power of the Russian state can actively deliver, it is more 'cost-effective' to rely on energy. Basically Realism can to a certain extent explain why the use of energy has been used, as it is less costly to the Russian Federation than military action and seemingly just as effective.

Realism's true domain can be said to be that of the Cold War mentality, although order existed it was based on a preconception of anarchy. When Russia, under Yeltsin, took concessionary and reconciliatory tones with the West, it was a move more in-keeping with Liberalism than with Realism. Therefore the next theory to apply to Russian foreign policy is that of Liberalism.



### *1.2 Liberalism*

One can say that Liberalisms key perceptions of the world are similar to the realist idea that states exist within an anarchic structure of global politics. However Liberalism forwards the ideal that hostility does not stem from human nature. It promotes the idea that states are autonomous actors and are motivated by a plurality of interests which are not necessarily power-seeking but security-seeking. This concept of security-seeking is apparent in the Liberal tendency to prefer cooperation over confrontation. It also adheres to the Democratic

Peace Theory which forwards the concept that the more democratic and Liberal a nation is the less likely it is to enter into conflict with another democratic state. What Liberalism basically depends on is the rationality of the state. Actors are not purely power-seeking and will rationally weigh the possibilities choosing not necessarily the most power enhancing strategies as long as security is not compromised. Within the Democratic Peace Theory there are laws constraining the actions of states and as Russett states "natural processes of self-interest could impel rational individuals to act as agents to bring a just peace"[14]. The greater good takes primacy within Liberalism. Unlike in Realism where the zero-sum game is absolute, if another actor does well then the prime actor concurrently does worse, within Liberalism if an ally does well all do well.

Another facet of Liberal IR theory is that by having a representative government, a principled respect for the non-discriminatory rights and social and economic interdependence there can be a firm liberal alliance as Doyle posits[15]. By analysing this proposition we are able to see how Russian foreign policy fits into the theoretical framework of Liberal IR theory. What Liberalism explains about Russian policy is that firstly, it lacks the democratic element to form firm alliances with all of the nations within the EU. However the secondary thing that Liberalism explains is how through using a Liberal dialogue Russia has managed to move closer to the EU and to extend its economic interdependence through cooperation. This means that Russia has linked it itself to the EU through interdependence while managing to avoid the other two tenets of Liberalism. Within Liberal theory though, illiberal states are thought to increase the likelihood of conflict when acting with Liberal democracies, as Russett repeats the maxim that all great powers are prone to acts of war[16]. On the other hand Russett also states that rationality plays a great part in this and that "The existence of other liberal states constitutes no threat and instead constitutes an opportunity for mutually beneficial trade"[17].

It is a matter of much debate whether Russia is a 'war-prone Great Power' but what is sure is that it has managed to act as an economic force, and cooperating to maximise its economic utility. Liberalism explains the Russian band-wagoning with China, as an effort to extend cooperation and stability. It also explains the attempts at deepening integration with the EU,

[14] Russett, in Dunne, Kurki & Smith, 2010, 96.
[15] Doyle, in Smith, Hadfield & Dunne, "Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases", 2008, 61.
[16] Russett, in Dunne, Kurki & Smith, 2010, 106.
[17] Doyle, in Smith, Hadfield & Dunne, 2008, 59.

which have in more recent times been changed to dividing the EU. Russia has met some of the criteria Liberalism finds necessary for cooperation and diplomacy. Liberalist theory also explains why Russia has in many cases not resorted to violent conflict to solve disputes. The Kremlin has shown favour to economic incentives and to keeping a more balanced perception of global affairs. Returning to the idea of a 'war-prone Great Power', a liberalist explanation of Russian foreign policy would point not to Russia as the war-prone actor but to the USA. Russia would be found in a liberal interpretation as a balancing actor. As Russett states, a "predominant power can stimulate a "balancing" reaction against itself. Fear of domination is an obvious motivation"[18]. This would explain the way in which Russian foreign policy has, since the break-down of talks over missile treaties in 2001/2002, moved to a more multi-polar vision of global affairs, as it attempts to stabilise the IR network and not allow a hegemonic USA to destabilise its position. Agreements within the SCO, agreements with Iran, North Korea and other nations that the US brands as rogue, have been explained by Liberal theory as a compulsion to stabilise the international system against American military advantage. Less militarily independent states have a great deal of incentive to bandwagon to create a multipolar balance in which their voice is meaningful. From this perspective, Russia can be seen as a medium sized power, adopting the role of counter-pole to the USA and allowing smaller states to free-ride on its military capabilities in the name of balance.

However the shortcomings of Liberal theory are that it does not explain the inter-play between liberal states and non-liberal states in a manner that would clearly explain the Kremlin's refusal to use hard power on Liberal states and on most non-liberal states, despite the Liberal interpretation that non-liberal states do not have the incentives to be peaceful. Furthermore Liberalism does not explain how dialogue has shaped the Kremlin's policies. Nor how the semblance of liberalism within the Russian rhetoric has been to a large extent accepted by Liberal states. The disparity between the first and second Chechen Conflicts and the tone used by Russia are clear indices of a change within the discourse of Russian policy. The Second Chechen war used the rhetoric of protection of sovereign territory against insurgents and the American style 'War against Terror' dialectic. Liberalism also fails to explain how Russia, a non-liberal state, has managed to negotiate in the same terms as a Liberal state. Essentially it cannot consolidate the gap between actual Liberalism and the mere outer trappings of it. The Kremlin's non-use of force does not necessarily entail a

[18]Russett, in Dunne, Kurki & Smith, 2010, 112.

refusal to use 'hard power'; it could even be attributed more to the fact that the Kremlin's 'hard power' tools are not yet ready. The Putin administration was happy to use such 'hard' tools when it could – such as the (unproven) cyber-war on Estonia in 2006. What Liberalism is better at explaining is the Western reaction to Russia's non-use (or at least mitigated) use of hard power tools since the Putin administration, and although not an explanation of Russian policy it is important to view what has been perceived as Russian policy by the West.

Perceptions are an ingrained part of policy decision making, and policy adoption, whether overtly acknowledged or not. Constructivist theory addresses the bias inherent in IR thus offering a way past the weaknesses of Liberalism.

### *1.3 Constructivism*

The concept of Constructivism which proposes that socially constructed norms dictate behaviour and that these norms are usually led by the actions of elites. Elites therefore influence the beliefs of the state, using culture and social identity to create a basis of norms, values and accepted rules. These rules must be upheld by the state in order for them to be legitimate to the people, and these rules must be upheld by the international community for them to be legitimate on the IR level. Constructivism puts forward the idea that there is no inherent fixed 'fate', that human nature is not inevitably destructive and that there is no predetermined path. It suggests, instead, that the social dimensions of IR lead to the possibility of change, and that political debate emerges due to historically and culturally specific circumstances. Fierke uses the example of missiles to illustrate constructivism, saying that these instruments do not exist in nature and have been socially constructed. "To construct something is an act which brings into being a subject or object that otherwise would not exist"[19] states Fierke, this means that the idea of Liberalism was created as was the concept of Realism, meaning that the inevitability of both theories is not based on actual inevitabilities but constructed perceptions of inevitability.

The way in which constructivism explains Russian foreign policy is important. It makes the historical and social existence of Russia a cogent element in its IR character, and ultimately

[19] Fierke, in Dunne, Kurki & Smith, 2010, 179.

also explains how the perception of Russia is understood by others. Fierke speaks of a 'mutual consistency' stating that historical processes and interactions develop relations in certain manners. With this in mind the evolution of the Kremlin's stances in foreign policy can be gauged as evolving; from an era in which there was little interaction, bar aggressive and blinkered dialogue, during the Brezhnev and Andropov eras, to Gorbachev's era of un-popular changes, followed by an era of re-evaluation and attempted normalisation in the immediate post-Soviet Yeltsin era, and a re-establishment of a Russian identity and construction of its own set of norms and values during the Putin administration. As Fierke states, "a series of gestures determine whether the other is hostile or friendly. Each exercises an element of choice and thus agency in how this relationship develops"[20], therefore constructivism does not isolate a state's actions as purely their own, it is the interactions that create the policy. In addition to this, constructivism enhances the elite's role in the IR field. It is not simply a matter of a 'state's' utility, but also the individuals who form the elite. Constructivism thus allows a dissection of Russian policy to an individual level, looking at policy makers such as Putin, Primakov, Fradkov and their impact on the policies and dialogue undertaken. The embedded identities and culture of individuals shape the norms, this indicates how it is possible to have a stagnant dialogue if the policy makers within the US and Russian Federation are made up of the Cold War hawks, who have a distinct aggressive dialect between each other. What Constructivism explains then is how the evolution of Russian foreign policy has happened, and explains the changes based on changing identities through interactions. It explains the changes as based on the re-forming of the political elites, and their perception of the IR political spectrum. Constructivism propounds the idea that not only is policy created internally by rational choice and decision-making, but also by the policies of external actors, meaning that interconnectivity and interdependence are important. Given that the international community is by and large a Western construct this means that its mere Western leaning impinges on Russian policy actions. The use of 'soft power' rather than 'hard power' confirms this, as Russia attempts to normalise due to external influences.

The problems that constructivism faces is that interpreting state and individual norms and identities is based on the identity and norms of the person analysing. Even when taking personal bias into account it is virtually impossible to interpret the nationally constructed dialogue outside of the IR dialogue, and the individual dialogue. Another failure is the

[20] Ibid, 182.

concept that there are shared norms and values in the IR arena. Although not discounting this there must be multiple IR norms as there are multiple IR identities, trends in behaviour and divergences are addressed but as constructivism is fluid in what conceptions of identity and norm influences it tends to simply act as a middle ground between theories. This is to say that it consolidates multiple theories without dismissing any. It can therefore be applied to any situation, but is forced to explain all actions as an exception that is subject to historical, social, geographic and other constraints that cannot be replicated.

The theoretical frameworks so far have one distinct commonality, the constricting assumptions that surround them. The final theoretical framework is able to overcome these assumptions and consolidate the strength of each of the above theories.

### *1.4 The English School*

The English school proposes an interesting synthesis of the above theories rather than a totally new approach. Along with constructivism it holds the middle ground avoiding arguments that pit idealism against realism or explanatory against interpretive. "The English School purports to offer an account or International Relations which combines theory and history, morality and power, agency and structure."[21] This makes the nature of the English School somewhat hard to define but allows flexibility in its application.

The English school presupposes as Realism does, that the world of international relations is an anarchical one. However there is also what Hedley Bull calls an 'international society' which attempts to regulate the interactions between states. He also states that this international society creates a balance of power, the function of which is to "provide the conditions in which other institutions on which the international order depends (diplomacy, war, international law, and great power management) have been able to operate"[22]. Bull also talks of the concept of 'Great Powers'. He states that the implication of this term is that firstly; there are multiple powers that can be referred to as 'Great Powers' since a single dominant power would cease to hold this title and simply be a Superpower, therefore he

[21] Dunne, in Dunne, Kurki & Smith, 2010, 136.
[22] Bull, "The Anarchical Society: A study of Order in World Politics", 1977, 106-107

states that this indicates "the existence of a club with a rule of membership"[23], not truly a system but the international society. A second implication is that the members of this club all exist on a level of parity vis-à-vis their military capacity. Thirdly, Bull states that 'Great Powers' acknowledge the rights and duties bestowed upon them to shape the international system, "They accept the duty, and are thought by others to have the duty, of modifying their policies in the light of the managerial responsibilities they bear"[24], ensuring that policies do not spill-over and pejoratively affect the wider world. 'Great Powers' actively manage their relations with each other by preserving the balance of power, "seeking to avoid or control crises in their relations with one another"[25], to limit or contain wars between each other, to maintain a local hegemonic influence, to advance the respect of one another's spheres of influence, and finally to promote joint action, something akin to a 'Great Power' concert.

This framework, for want of a better word, can be used to explain Russian foreign policy action in a manner that groups together the above theoretical frameworks. Firstly if one is to take the Russian Federation as a 'Great Power' one can see the clear Russian attempt at maintaining the balance of power. Another element to register is that although writing in 1977, Bull described the rise and decline of 'Great Powers' and the need to be wary of what was to be defined as a great power as the Balance of Power has the capacity for change. By Bull's criteria Russia is still at present a 'Great Power'. However the decline in local hegemonic influence in Eastern Europe, and increasingly in Central Asia demonstrate a serious need to re-evaluate the Russian Federation. Lena Jonson in 1998 described the "involuntary disengagement" that Russia was experiencing in Central Asia due to Russia's inability to "sustain its influence following the break-up of the Soviet Union, owing, in part, to a lack of economic and military resources"[26]. Furthermore the idea of military parity may be less meaningful when looking at the interplays that Russia has with 'liberal' states that adhere to policies that rule out military action that is not sanctioned by the international community. The English school, similarly to the Constructivist theory, indicates that states themselves are not agents, but the elites, individuals, and groups behind their decision-making are. It is the perceptions of the actors who make up the whole that dictate how the world is viewed and how to react to it. Dunne states that "actors are constituted by normative structures while at the same time allowing for a certain degree of material determination of

[23] Ibid, 201.
[24] Ibid, 202.
[25] Ibid, 207.
[26] Jonson, " Russia and Central Asia: A New Web of Relations",1998, 2.

the system"[27], this means that as well as having a system of norms and values on an individual level, there also exists norms at regional and world levels. This means depending on which level an agent is acting his behaviour could be different depending on the pre-existing norms, which (usually) constrain or modify action. Dunne explains this in that the "English School have a great deal to say about the intersection of history, morality, and agency. What actors say, how they learn or adapt, under what conditions they react rationally"[28], this demonstrates that the English school not only has a wide scope in terms of the various theories it brings together but also over the philosophical and long term trends in a policy's formation.

If there are any real weaknesses within the English School framework, they are that it inevitably relies on a multitude of theoretical frameworks that may sometimes contradict each other. The benefits of this however are that one can apply the correct assumption to the proven case. Some may say that this qualitative method allows too much subjectivity, however it approaches IR from such a wide variety of angles that it is this weakness that becomes its strength. It can apply itself (using facets of other theories) to virtually any situation. Another subjective weakness is that it also relies heavily on personal judgement calls and one's own perceptions of the political world. In defence of this it must be noted that, perceptions play a great part in how politics is constructed. Essentially the greatest benefit of the English School is that it effectively allows analysis to be unconstrained by existing frameworks and to develop a more inclusive theoretical application.

Before developing these ideas any further it is sensible to determine what is meant by the expressions employed. As the theories broached have been defined, so there must also be further clarification of the terminologies surrounding the idea of power. In the first instance, a few definitions must be clarified, firstly what is meant by the various concepts, such as; international community, balance of power, power, 'hard power', 'soft power'. In so far as power is concerned as has already been illustrated Hedley Bull's conception of the world relies heavily on the notion of a 'balance of power'. Morgenthau's explanation taken up by Nobel is that the reason the balance of power has been successful in alleviating the Realists fears of a war of all against all is that there has been a moral consensus of what is acceptable.

[27] Dunne, in Dunne, Kurki & Smoth, 2010, 141.
[28] Ibid.

"The 'balance of power' politics which were practiced in the heyday of European diplomacy worked because of a willingness to abide by the rules of the system, to accept that, whatever the outcome; there would in the end remain some balance of power. It was the restraining influence of a 'moral consensus' which had, on the whole, helped to secure the political system."[29] This moral consensus is what Bull would describe as the concert of powers, the Hobbesian notion of a Leviathan that regulates the world order, the Liberal notion of a moral compass, the Constructivist notion of inherited values and norms. The concept of power in its vaguest conception is described by Nye as being the "ability to do things and control others, to get others to do what they otherwise would not."[30] Within this concept there is a division between non-military coercion, usually ideological and economic and the forceful coercion of combat, invasion or any other form of conflict. These two forms of power are generally known respectively as 'soft' and 'hard' power. The English school addresses how the constructed Liberal dialogue of the international community has promoted non-military methods to resolve disputes, and to forward interests. Russia in order to play a part in the international community and the balance of power has had to adopt certain of these constructed attributes, namely 'soft power' as a tool of foreign policy, rather than relying solely on force.

'Soft power' is obviously a far newer concept as the notion of economic coercion has been historically put aside in favour of forceful coercion. "Traditionally the test of a great power was its strength in war. Today, however, the definition of power is losing its emphasis on military force and conquest that marked earlier eras. The factors of technology, education, and economic growth are becoming more significant in international power"[31]. This leads to a re-shuffle in how the business of political interactions on an international level are undertaken, and explain why the duality of power is of prime importance to the Russian Federation. 'Soft Power' is generally used in the manner that Nye describes as the "ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion"[32]. Using this formulation throughout means that the conception of 'Hard Power' must also be discussed. This initially seemed a simpler task, however in light of technological changes and the extension of military capacity in warfare (notably unmanned drones and cyber-warfare) this definition has become tricky to define and now encompasses many 'non-combat' elements of conflict.

[29] Nobel," Morgenthau's Struggle with Power: The Theory of Power Politics and the Cold War", 1995, 65.
[30] Nye, 154.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Nye, in Popescu, "Russia's Soft Power Ambitions", 2006,1.

The notion of the international community is that of the modern conception of a trans-national or international organisation and the members who make them up. In the case of this thesis I will deal predominantly with the direct neighbours of the Russian Federation, namely the EU, CIS, Eastern Europe and SCO members, and to a lesser extent the Russian relationship with China and Asia. The purpose of this narrowed version of the 'international community' is to focus on the areas in which the Russian Federation has a greater influence, and to create a more feasible research area.

By having establishing the existing theories and explanations for Russian foreign policy behaviour and defining the terms intended to be used, it can be assumed that historical context must also be provided. The following chapter deals with the changes within the international community and how, if at all, they have affected the Russian Federation.

## CHAPTER 2.

## CHANGES: RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

To gauge the uses of 'soft' and 'hard' power policy tools during the Putin era, two things must be analysed; firstly how the changes in the international community affected the Russia Federation and secondly how they affected the Russian foreign policy arena.

In his 2005 Address to the Russian Nation, President Vladimir Putin stated that "the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th Century"[33]. Many have judged this as an indication of a Eurasianist, or nationalistic stance by the ex-President and now Premier of the Russian Federation. However from a political theorist's point of view nothing can be more truthful than saying that the Cold War deterrence and balance of power stood the world in great stead during its 50 or so years of bipolarity. This use of deterrence provided a measure of stability on the world stage; although theoretically flawed, as it allows propagation to stabilize. The greatest irony of deterrence, as noted by Freedman, is that "Deterrence theory has always worked much better in practice than in theory"[34]; unlike the Realist school would suggest the armament of both sides did not lead to conflict. The de-stabilisation therefore falls into a dense quagmire, neither Constructivism nor Realism explain the lack of conflict. The Cold War was defined by "two blocs, each led by a great power"[35] which enabled a security framework for the entire world to fall in line with. The security of the bi-polar system accorded nations the ability to use the 'Great Powers' security umbrellas of the Soviet Union and the United States. Conflicts between these two blocs were restricted to proxy fighting such as the Korean War, and the Afghan conflict. If one were to take the security and power argument, then the idea that the fall of one of the two forces that enabled conflicts to be prevented from spilling over onto a global scale has crumbled. It leaves only one result: imbalance. Putin may not have worded his views in the most Western friendly manner, yet despite this, the trenchant remark of imbalance brought about by the collapse of the Soviet Union holds fast. The 'Great Powers', as were accepted for the last half century, have ceased to exist in the classical sense and what we are now left with is the global hegemon of the USA and the regional great power of the Russian Federation.

[33] MSNBC- Associated Press, " Putin: Soviet Collapse a 'Genuine Tragedy'", 2005. (http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7632057/)
[34] Freedman, "Framing Strategic Deterrence: Old Certainties, New Ambiguities", 2009, 46.
[35] Donaldson & Nogee, "Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests", 2005, 229.

The international community in terms of the Russian Federations direct neighbours transformed in several ways. Firstly the EU continued to expand its normative agenda towards Eastern Europe a traditionally "Russian" sphere of influence, while still tending to rely on the Cold War military construct of NATO for defence. "Both NATO and the Warsaw Pact, Russians thought, would be subsumed within a new European collective security system"[36], excluding non-European actors. However due to the better part of 40 years spent under a security umbrella, Europe was loath to depart from its existing framework. In fact NATO initially continued to provide a purely reactive military framework until the Yugoslav conflict, at which time it expanded its mandate under UN pressure. Secondly, Central Asia began to capitalize on its own energy industry, despite heavy reliance on the Soviet structures for oil and gas transportation and acquisition. Thirdly the CEE countries began a shift away from Russia, enabled in no small part by the EU's PHARE and TACIS programmes (despite the fact that Russia was also funded by TACIS as it covered all ex-Soviet states). According to Allison et al, "In1994 the European Council approved a 'pre-accession strategy' designed to facilitate their (the CEE's) eventual accession to the EU"[37], marginalizing the Russian Federation from its Western neighbours. "Russians found themselves outsiders in the advancing process of EU and NATO enlargement"[38] exposing that although Russia may have viewed herself as European, Europe did not share the same view.

Donaldson states that in the early 1990s "In both Washington and Moscow, a new perception of the other emerged. The two rivals became partners."[39], and under Gorbachev and the administrations of Yeltsin this was to a certain extent true. Gorbachev and Yeltsin both "redefined the country's national security requirements"[40] and the Russian Federation made immense concessions during the START II negotiations with an agreement "to eliminate all land-based ICBMs armed with multiple warheads- the back bone of its strategic force"[41] states Donaldson. This marked a serious step away from the Cold War notion of parity with the US. It also marked a break from the traditional Realist perception of Russia's foreign policy, although there was substantial opposition to the Yeltsin stances in both the Duma and his own administration it marked an acknowledgement of the end of an era.

[36] Allison, Light, and White, "Putin's Russia and the Enlarged Europe", 2006, 2.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid, 3.
[39] Donaldson, 2005, 229.
[40] Ibid, 231.
[41] Ibid, 232.

In so far as the West was concerned if America was talking to Russia, there was little cause for Europe not to. The first decade after the fall of Communism, rapprochement between the West and Russia was marred by conflicts in Yugoslavia and Chechnya. There is some doubt about whether the outbreak of hostilities in 1994 was indeed caused by Yeltsin or by side-lined military leaders desperate for some ardent glory. The effects of this conflict however demonstrated to many that, firstly the "prestige of the Russian military declined"[42], and secondly that a televised war without well-defined justification or victory would attract clear domestic opposition. Furthermore the American-led NATO decision to bomb during the Yugoslav conflict further demonstrated to Russia that it was no longer a military asset to any security block. What this engendered was a similar action to what was happening in Europe: there was a re-evaluation of military security, in part prompted by the RMA (Revolution in Military Affairs) and partly due to the changing security challenges brought forth by the collapse of the bi-polar world. The re-evaluations however went in opposite directions, for Europe there was the brief snatching of the 'Peace Dividend' which for Russia confirmed Europe's reluctance to re-arm. This openly asserted to Russia that a non-militarised Europe would not need to be coerced or forced; no sabre rattling would be needed.

These changes in the international community are not the sole reasons that the Kremlin's foreign policy has been re-evaluated. After the Cold War and the Yeltsin era there was a deep sense of dissatisfaction within the way of things within the Russian Federation. Russian ex-foreign minister Egor Ivanov affirms that Russian identity is highly caught up in the foreign policy of the nation. Ivanov, when writing about the Foreign Policy Concept of 2000, posited a similar proposal as the English school in that "the substance of the document reflected the truth that, no matter how deep internal changes may be, the foreign policy of any state cannot begin with a clean slate, but bears the imprint of continuity determined by the country's geopolitics, history, and culture."[43]. The common trend in IR is to view the changes in Russian post-Soviet foreign policy as a transition towards democracy, or rather towards a more Liberal form of government. Lovell, however, argues that this transition has been "unfortunately- described as democratization. What makes this description 'unfortunate' has to do with the complexity and extent of the changes"[44]. Lovell also states that there is a certain continuity with Russian policy, and that although there has been an "establishment of

[42] Ibid, 241.
[43] Ivanov, " The New Russian Identity: Innovation and Continuity in Russian Foreign Policy", 2001, 7.
[44] Lovell, in Tikhomirov, " Russia After Yeltsin", 2001 , 34.

the formal institutions of democracy"[45], there continues to be an underdeveloped political spectrum, general lack of trust due to corruption, and a continuation of the old boy network or 'blat' (блат) system[46]. What this indicates is that although the rhetoric within the Russian federation has changed, the actual change is far from keeping pace with that rhetoric. By using a Liberal dialogue the Russian Federation has managed to speak with the West and international organisations on an even level, However this veneer of democratisation inherently demonstrates firstly: a pragmatic vision of IR within the Kremlin, secondly the acknowledgment that to act internationally demands a certain amount of normalisation in Russia's case, and thirdly that if Russia is to speak 'Liberal' abroad, it will also have to 'act' it. As Ivanov indicates "By all indications, the Russian Federation is a new state functioning in a radically changing system of international relations"[47] but the external projections of a democratic state are juxtaposed by an internal continuity that Shevtsova calls a "bureaucratic-authoritarian regime that (has) become fully entrenched."[48]

Since Putin took office in 1999 there has been a measured and firm move away from Yeltsin's post-Soviet pro-Western stances and uses of power. The Kremlin under Putin has re-evaluated two major foreign policy aspects; firstly the reliability and structure of the Russian Federations military, and secondly the opportunity that current markets have opened for economic incentives. The re-evaluation of the Russian military as has been illustrated, was born from the catastrophic management of troops in conflicts during the mid- to late 90s. "Russian forces encountered fierce resistance from the guerrillas and often had to give up territory captured from the Chechens", a far cry from Putin promising to "finish off the 'bandits' in a fortnight"[49]. What was needed was a break in the path dependency and Cold War mentality that a bigger arsenal would mean victory. From a Realist stance, the Russian Federation realised that with a struggling economy and no clear enemy bar, terrorist insurgency, there was no need for additional strain on the economy from military expenditure.

One of the reasons for the change is the way that 'Hard power' is used is due to the change in the status of the Russian Federation's relations with its neighbours. From an antagonistic

[45] Ibid, 35.
[46] Ibid, 40.
[47] Ivanov, 2001, 7.
[48] Shevtsova, "Russia: Lost In Transition", 2007, 47.
[49] Donaldson and Nogee, 2005, 277.

stance with Western Europe, and a repressive stance with Central Asia, and Eastern and Middle Europe there was little place for constructive dialogue. This was fruitful for the Realist paradigm of a war of all against all, with the Russian state acting in its own interest using the power of the Soviet Union. However there has been a shift since then towards a far more Liberal interpretation of IR. Yesterday's enemies are today's partners whether as potential markets or as potential investors, and Russia's interest no longer lies in dominating other nations but in allowing its economy to flourish. Russia is one of the EU's key trading partners, and the EU is by far Russia's main trading partner, accounting for 51.5% of its overall trade turnover in 2007[50]. It is also by far the most important investor in Russia. It is expected that up to 75% of FDI stocks in Russia come from the EU Member States[51].The continuation of 'Hard Power' as a tool can be attributed to two things that fall within the Constructivist and Realist structures. Firstly that the constructed idea of the 'other ' has existed for generations of policy makers and breaking with this is a difficult and painstakingly long task. Secondly this constructed 'Hard Power' reliance has its foundations within the Realist school and invests greatly in the concept of territorial sovereignty as the key element in foreign policy. This is of importance to Russia's self-perception as it has a vast territorial expanse, of which much of the Far East is underdeveloped and a prime area for Chinese interest, "For many years observers have seen the Russian Far East as a region in crisis, pointing to troubled economic conditions, corrupt mis-governance, and problem-ridden cross-border relations with China, Japan, and both parts of the Korean peninsula"[52].

The shift in policy although easily attributed to Liberalism, is actually more complex than a simple 'liberalisation' of the Russian Federation. There have been moves within the Russian federation towards a more Liberal economy and political structure, although this is a comparative term. Russia has only liberalised if one takes the repressive Soviet Union as a meter by which to measure the changes. A more potent reasoning is to illustrate that Europe has evolved towards a dialogue that demands the Liberal voice to be heard. The EU speaks of relations in terms of norms and values; the international community speaks in terms of Human Rights, and duties of the state. This demonstrates that the 'Soft Power' doctrine has permeated what I refer to as the international community, and has prompted the changes within Russian foreign policy.

[50] European Commission Bilateral Trade Relations Brief, 2009.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Rozman, "Strategic Thinking About the Russian Far East", 2008, 36.

The changes in the international community have been an expansion of the EU mandate to include the Russian 'near-abroad', and what the Putin administration has interpreted as marginalization by the West and interference in the Russian sphere of influence. Despite this there has been a rapprochement of Russia and the West, since they are no longer military rivals but economic ones, and yet also enjoy economic partnerships. This is in part due to the changes in the external dialogue by the Russian Federation. The 'soft power' doctrine has been adopted in place of 'hard' power as it fits with the West's Liberal tendencies, even if the Kremlin only 'plays' at being Liberal.

The adoption of 'soft' power as a tool is apparently a direct reaction to the international community. The question then is what is Russian 'soft' power and how has the Russian Federation used it to its advantage?

# CHAPTER 3.

## RUSSIA'S SOFT POWER: 'SOVEREIGN DEMOCRACY', TRADE, AND ENERGY

When talking about Russian 'soft power' it is easy to jump immediately to energy as the key element. In spite of this a complete overview of the 'soft' tools the Kremlin has developed. Energy may be the most powerful, but it is by no means the most politically palatable to the international community. The 'soft powers' that the Kremlin adopted under Putin are threefold, firstly and most blatantly there was the use of energy as a political tool, secondly trade was used as a political tool to a lesser extent and in a far narrower field, and lastly and perhaps the least effective and least developed of the Kremlin's 'soft tools' was the use of an ideological construct, 'sovereign democracy'.

Russia under Putin's administration reformulated what it meant to be 'Russian'; Putin did this by co-option of Czarist and Soviet history and values. Ivanov states "The Russian Federation resolutely has broken with the ideological legacy of the Soviet Union while proclaiming its legal status as the successor state to the USSR. The Russian leadership, therefore, has had to reformulate its key foreign policy objectives, given its new system of values and international position"[53].This commentary indicates that although having undergone changes there is a certain amount of continuity in the Russian Federation's foreign policies. Beyond the simple change in 'identity', we also see a change in how policy is divided. The Constructivist idea that elites formulate policy can easily be applied to the Kremlin's decision making process. Internally, Realism continues to dominate policy. The use of force during the Chechen conflicts, to preserve sovereign territory, indicates that there is indeed a continuation of policy. However, externally the Kremlin has constructed a new character for itself, based on the Western Liberal rhetoric it encounters. Having stated this, it must be clarified that, simply by virtue of constructing a character that the Putin administration views as on par with the West, does not make it so. This idea of a dual political ideology fits well with the Russian model of political manoeuvring. Ivanov indicates a similar phenomenon using less pejorative terms: "Modern Russian diplomacy combines the firm protection of national interests with a

[53] Ivanov, 7.

consistent search for mutually acceptable solutions through dialogue and cooperation with the West"[54].

The reconceptualization of identity and how to act among other 'western' states has wrought a change in the traditional exertion of power. Internally it may be acceptable to use force, but Russia has rapidly learnt that aggression towards trading partners leads nowhere. The only true benefit the Russian Federation can glean through its neighbours must be within the commonly accepted boundaries of the international community of which it wishes to be a part of. Favouring 'soft power' is not solely based on the concept that it is a commonly accepted method by which to exert influence, but also due to the knowledge that militarily the Russian Federation has been found wanting. The Russian military, although once one of the most feared military structures in the Cold War era, had during the Yeltsin era, fallen into disrepair: perhaps due to Yeltsin's reliance on diplomacy or due to the division of the Soviet security structures among the Former-Soviet Union states (FSU). More pertinently, Soviet power had been overstated both internally and externally, internally for reasons of domestic prestige and externally by the western military to get the funding they wanted. Poor morale, training, and pay and out-dated equipment were the legacy of Reagan's squeeze on the 'Evil Empire'. What is certain is that there was a deficit in the Russian Federation between the rhetoric and the capacity of its security services, an issue that cannot be hastily resolved. Essentially this created conditions for the Russian Federation to expand their foreign policy tools, instead of relying on what was increasingly an out of date military alternative.

At this juncture a brief aside should be made as to whether 'soft power' really extends to Russian mimicry and subversion of Western norms it takes lightly and flexibly in application. Russia has been guilty, internally, of having an opaque and government-run legal system skewed against foreign investors; dodgy share markets; mafia negotiating tactics and so on. However externally it has been willing to abide by the majority of 'international norms'. During the Yugoslav conflict it used the veto system to voice its displeasure and used embargoes against Serbia when dialogue would appear too brusque: free-riding and shifting the blame, but also playing by the rules. Another aspect of 'soft power' that should be addressed is whether energy can truly be called a 'soft power', of course this discussion about semantics could warrant its own paper, but briefly when speaking of adherence to norms, can

[54] Ibid, 11.

a total monopoly of something as vital as energy ever be seen as a 'soft power'? Can the BP-Shtockman Oil field issue, or the winter power cuts in Ukraine, be viewed any differently from the cyber-attacks on Estonia? For the purposes of this thesis the assumption is that energy is a 'soft power' as it does not resort to overt, military action.

### *3.1 'Sovereign Democracy'*

One method that demonstrates the new-found use of 'soft' power is the use of a political alternative to western notions of liberal democracy that the Kremlin has begun to employ in the form of ideology. Much like the EU and its attempts to normalise states through democratic values, Russia under the Putin administration began to offer an alternative. Trenin and Greene state that "As Russia had gained strength in the first decade of this century, the Kremlin announced its return to the global scene with a newfound assertiveness"[55], and this move is based on the new identity that reclaims the sphere of influence more or less abandoned by Yeltsin. This idea of an ideological attraction underpinned by trade benefits mimics the EUs policies, and furthermore the Russian policy takes as its counter model the idea of Western Democracy. Popescu cites Sergei Ivanov, the Russian defence minister as saying "if there is western democracy, there should be an eastern democracy as well"[56]. This thinking has emerged according to Popescu, due to the recent Colour Revolutions in the traditional Russian sphere of interest. He states, "The moment of truth for Russia came with the 'Orange Revolution' in Ukraine, when the power of ideas was revealed by events", Popescu then goes further to affirm that "Russia realised that its policy suffers from an 'ideological emptiness'."[57] And the remedy for this ideological vacuum is what the Putin administration dubbed 'sovereign democracy'. Popescu deconstructs the term 'sovereign democracy' into two parts: firstly sovereignty which he stresses "is understood as non-interference from the West"[58]. He goes on to demonstrate that this is an important reaction to the external interventions in the traditional sphere of influences that Russia views as its own. The interventions, Popescu asserts, are the trigger to the Russian emphasis on 'sovereign democracy' and that it is "meant as a counter-example to post-revolutionary

[55] Dmitri Trenin & Samuel A Greene, " Re-engaging Russia in an Era of Uncertainty", 2009, 3.
[56] Nicu Popescu, 2006, 1.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.

Ukraine and Georgia which in Moscow's view are ruled from the outside."[59]. Not only does this move by Russia towards interfering in states adjacent to it coincides with the perceived US meddling, but "Russia's intervention in Ukraine's elections in 1999, 2002 and 2004 increased at the same time as Putin rose to power"[60]. As Kuzio indicates, the rise and power consolidation of the Putin administration clearly show the move towards using political manoeuvring as a 'soft' alternative. Despite the inherent hypocrisy of these actions on the Kremlin's behalf, they do again imitate the US propaganda and political manoeuvring in foreign states, and therefore from this murky perspective can be viewed as following in the US' footsteps. The second deconstruction of 'sovereign democracy' is Popescu's attestation that in the Kremlin's opinion "Russia's democracy should not necessarily correspond to Western standards of democracy"[61]. What Popescu contributes to the criticism of Russian 'sovereign democracy' is, firstly an apparent reaction to the international community, and a mimicry of its processes, and secondly as an ideological counterweight, falling in line with the Russian ideological multipolarity.

The effects of this are, basically to afford the Russian Federation a mask of respectability within the international community. Through a veneer of Liberal rhetoric, Russia can promote an opposing and self-interested ideological framework while using terminology that the international community has difficulty in brushing aside without appearing hypocritical. Popescu indicates a similar idea stating that 'sovereign democracy', as a vague and ill-defined concept, provides Putin's authoritarianism with "'democratic' clothes in order to strengthen it internally and insulate it from international criticism"[62].

### *3.2 Trade: Purchasing Power and Tactical Embargoes*

From ideological manipulation to political manipulation through trade is not a great leap, one appeals to the heart and mind, and the other to the purse strings. In both cases the use of the international community's norms and regulations have been used by the Russian Federation

[59] Ibid.
[60] Taras Kuzio, "Russian Policy toward Ukraine during Elections", 2005, 515.
[61] Popescu, 1.
[62] Ibid, 2.

to create a parallel and demonstrably self-interested system, while remaining through technicalities legal and above board.

Woodrow Wilson stated in 1919 that "A nation that is boycotted is a nation that is in sight of surrender. Apply this economic, peaceful, silent, deadly remedy and there will be no need for force. It is a terrible remedy. It does not cost a life outside the nation boycotted, but it brings a pressure upon the nation which, in my judgment, no modern nation could resist."[63] Using a similar tactic the Russian Federation has exerted international pressure, and leverage through economic embargos and trade restrictions. An interesting feature of the Kremlin's use of this tool under Putin was that frequently it used the reasoning and justification of the international community, therefore highlighting its supposed adherence to international norms, whilst at the same time promoting its own influence and interests.

Russia has learnt the lessons that the West has been teaching, sanctions are acceptable as they do not infringe upon the norms and values of the international community. From the late 1990s to the early 2000s Russia was shown pragmatic examples of how and when to use trade sanctions. When sanctions were proposed by the EU as a response to Russian actions in Chechnya, "The most likely response would be to increase customs tariffs proportionately, which would seriously affect the interests of EU exporters"[64]. Even when affecting Russia there was an acknowledgement that the only measured reaction was to impose sanctions back. Russia has also used trade as a bargaining chip, the most notable occasion being the ban on Polish meat and agricultural goods. The dispute surrounding the Russia-Poland embargo ended in 2007, and it had, in the words of some "blocked EU attempts to broker key trade and energy deal with Russia for more than two years"[65]. Two things may be deduced from this, firstly the choice of Poland was one of proximity and usefulness as Poland and Russia have an increasingly cool relationship with each other, and offending an EU member that has close

[63] Woodrow Wilson, quoted in Hufbauer, Schott, Elliott, and Oegg, "Economic Sanctions Reconsidered", 2007, 9.
[64] Simon Taylor, " Russia Threatens Retaliation if Union Imposes Trade Sanctions", 2000.
[65] Euractiv, "Russia Lifts Embargo on Polish Meat", 2007.

ties with Russia would be detrimental to Russian interests. Secondly the embargo on Polish goods was not so much a tool to barter with Poland, but one to barter with the EU. Furthermore it created dissension in the ranks of the EU member states as Poland was not meaningfully backed up by key members. It was also a test of the EU's cohesiveness, helping Russia measure the likely opposition to other attempts to divide and rule. In this sense the use of trade has enabled Russia to acquire a better bargaining position while also undermining the EU, proving that Russia should not be taken lightly.

### *3.3 Energy: Putin's Petro-Politics*

What this information serves to demonstrate is that the term used since the early 2000s and reiterated by Rutland in his article "Russia as an Energy Superpower", is not one to be taken lightly. Unlike many labels, this label of an energy superpower fits the Russian Federation well. In terms of the English School discussion about the differences between 'Superpowers' and 'Great Powers', there is a clear delineation between these two terms. Bull describes the term 'Great Power' as existing within a concert of powers of the same level, whereas Bull describes the term 'Superpower' as existing beyond the 'Great Powers', that it "outstripped" the other powers so "as to have become a single dominant power"[66], what French IR theorists have dubbed '*hyper-puissance*'. It is Russia's 'energy superpower' position that sets it apart from other nations and makes its foreign policy more interesting and vitally important. The reasoning behind the division of energy from trade is a parochial one, trade although an important element in any state's ability to exist, has become something of a commercial venture, somewhat detached from the state's ability to function. Energy on the other hand, continues to be an extremely sensitive area, in which a state's sovereignty plays a deep role and in which Russia has a clear advantage over most nations. This concept of a state's sovereignty loops back to the question of whether coercion in the boardroom is any different from coercion by tanks on the borders. It remains a moot point whether turning pipelines off is any more or less coercive than cyber-terrorism. In either case the non-use of military force as a signifier of a 'soft power' indicates that the use of energy is an acceptable tool in so far

[66] Bull, 201.

as the international community is concerned. One case in point being the use of energy as a diplomatic tool goes back as far as 1973 when OPEC denied oil to the Netherlands for six months because of the Dutch support for Israel in the Yom Kippur war.

The use of energy as a tool for Russia must be viewed as a double-edged sword as it affects Russia in two ways. Firstly its use as a bargaining chip for further engagement benefits the Russian Federation, yet the Russian Federation is heavily dependent on demand for its energy, as other industries are undeveloped.

Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Russian economy (especially gas exports to the EU) stagnated. Before its sharp rise in the mid-90s, Russia's market share of EU gas imports had been halved since 1980, from 80% to barely over 40%[67]. Gazprom ended this era of stagnation and replaced the Soviet Ministry for Gas Industry. Even from its earliest conception Gazprom voiced its wish to become an influential energy exporter[68]. Based on statistics gathered by the US Energy Information Administration which compiles independent statistics for analysis, in 2007 and 2008 the Russian Federation was ranked second only to Saudi Arabia in global oil production and first in global crude oil reserves. The Russian Federation was also ranked first in terms of natural Gas production and 4$^{th}$ in electricity generation. In 2006, there were signs that Russia had begun to use its massive reserves of natural gas and oil as a lever to wield international influence in a manner it had not done since the end of the Cold War. One of the dominant themes of President Putin's period in office, according to Smorodinskaya, was that of recouping the resources given away so cheaply by his predecessor Yeltsin in the 90s.Yeltsin did this firstly to ingratiate himself with the West and secondly to continue ties with Central Asia[69]. Rutland also insinuates that Central Asia continues to be an important target for Russian foreign policy, as it has shown through its attempts "to rebuild a sphere of influence in what the Russians called the 'near-abroad'[70]".

The Russian Federation's relations with the Central Asian energy producing states is one heavily bound up in the common Soviet history they shared. Not only linked by languages

[67] Pierre Noël "Beyond Dependence: How to Deal with Gas", 2008.
[68] Jonathan Stern, " Competition and Liberalisation in European Gas Markets- A Diversity of Models", 1998, 43.
[69] Smorodinskaya, "Motives Behind Russian Foreign Policy, 2008
[70] Rutland, "Russia as an Energy Superpower, 2008, 204.

and political structures, they are concomitant through their common production system, their common market, their infrastructures and their institutions. According to Laruelle, the Russian legacy in Central Asia is predominantly one of Russian style thinking, a common constructed identity, in which interests play a serious role as do commonalities[71]. Russia's interests in Central Asia, although predominantly based on the unidirectional energy flows of Central Asian energy and the re-exporting of it, also has a vested interest in stability and security. Laruelle points out the 'porosity of borders' between Russia and Central Asian states, as an example of the common issues and areas which Russia wishes to influence. European ventures have resulted in very little actual change but Russia's Western border is a lesson in the way the EU can hem a nation in, and is enough to threaten the Kremlin. The Russian interests in this region are therefore not only a will to ensure stability for energy production but also to avoid Western engagement that would detract from the Russian energy market and to ensure the traditional Russian concept of the 'near abroad'. One way on which the Kremlin has exerted influence over Central Asian states through energy is through the existing structures. Jonson asserts that "They (Russia and the Central Asian states) are also all part of the once common production structure with its inbuilt division of labour and common infrastructure of electricity grids and railways. This common legacy may in some respects be viewed as an asset to promote cooperation, but it can also be regarded as a burden and a cause if dependency on Russia"[72].The reliance on Russian structures has made the Central Asia nations complacent, added to the near total dependence on Russian investment. The continued control of energy transportation means that Russia has retained its dominant position in Central Asia. As Jonson affirms "The government saw it mainly as an issue of how to maintain influence and prevent foreign penetration of Central Asia and the Caspian Region"[73]. The issue of keeping Central Asia from diversifying away from Russia has been a predominant goal of the Kremlin, and it has used energy to promote its own influence and best interests, but at the same time some Central Asian states have done the same. In terms of using energy as a tool of influence, of which electricity is the predominant example.

The dependence of Central Asian states on Russian electricity began during the Soviet era and continued, when the subsidies shrank and the debt grew. There were few alternative options available to Central Asia. As Gleason notes in one typical case, the result was an

[71] Marlène Laruelle, "Russia in Central Asia: Old History, New Challenges?",2009, 3.
[72] Jonson, 48.
[73] Jonson, 60.

"exchange (of) debt for ownership in Kazakhstan's energy infrastructure"[74]. This means that in so far as electricity is concerned, the Russian state, which owned the majority share in the now defunct, RAO UES electricity company has maintained a strong hold on a key necessity in Central Asia, creating a favourable position for itself through the use of 'soft power'. Not only does Russia retain the majority control over the ex-Soviet power infrastructure but it also has manoeuvred itself into buying shares in independent electricity companies, creating a sizeable dominance during the Putin Administration. As Rutland states "It is widely assumed, both in the Kremlin and abroad, that this energy wealth will enable Russia to regain some of the 'superpower' status that it enjoyed in its Soviet incarnation prior to 1991"[75]. Nevertheless Russia is not the same nation it was before 1991, and its tools are different as is the international community's tolerance for the exercise of power exertion. Central Asia has accorded Russia a serious amount of influence as, energy-wise; Central Asia has proven to be highly dependent on the Russian Federation, creating 'soft' power leverage using nothing more than the existing pipelines. More recently the balance has begun to shift. When speaking about Central Asian energy, two nations stand out, "Perceived as the richest among central Asian countries in oil reserves, and second only to Turkmenistan in gas reserve, Kazakhstan intends to use these reserves to its national advantage."[76] These two nations have become the prime focus of the Kremlin's interest in the region which shows no signs of flagging. The economic benefits of being resource rich are innumerable; it immediately creates a global trade- despite possible insular tendencies by the nation state (such as Turkmenistan), and also has a relatively high demand rate, creating stability in an economy. The pipelines from the energy rich nations tend to go directly to Russia, "Kazakhstan is a landlocked country and not near major consumers. About 84 per cent of its oil exports pass through Russia to market"[77] creating an immediate and palpable dependency. Furthermore the Kremlin has ensured that Central Asian states are supplying Russia in the long term, "Gazprom has long-term contracts with Turkmenistan dating back to 2003 that entitle it to annual deliveries of up to 90Bcm through to 2028."[78] These elements all tend to benefit Russia more than the Central Asian states, yet without these structures and contracts there would be serious uncertainty in the region. However Dash illustrates the one-sided nature of the relationship when he states; "The biggest dilemma facing Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan

[74] Gregory Gleason, "Russia and the Politics of the Central Asian Electricity Grid", 2003, 43.
[75] Rutland , 203.
[76] Dash, , 2.
[77] ICG Report, 9.
[78] Ibid, 15.

was that until recently, they did not have trade links and pipelines of their own"[79]. Therefore although autonomous in resource they have until very recently been entirely dependent on outside actors, in particular Russia.

Infrastructure as an important factor, has already been mentioned above, and although Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan have both been slow to move in terms of creating their own infrastructures they are now both moving into diversification of markets. Traditionally happy to rely on Soviet pipelines, which favour Russia, China's recent encroachment upon the energy scene has induced Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to start building pipelines to China as well as using existing Russian pipelines to become less dependent on Russia. By diversifying their markets, these two nations have begun to use their energy as a way to halt Russian influence, or at the very least to stop it from increasing. This should spell serious danger for the Kremlin as Rutland states, that "Clearly, oil and gas are key to Russia's return to prominence on the international stage"[80]. Yet the inherent suspicion the Central Asian states have of China has been beneficial to the Russian Federation. China has been met by some resistance to its options as a diversification source, as Lateigne notes "Beijing is a late arrival to the international energy game, and must not only compete with established fossil fuel consumers for regional supplies namely the United States, Europe and Japan, but also with Russia"[81]. Regardless of these moves away from Russia, it must be acknowledged that Russia has used very few tools on the Central Asian states. Russia's broken monopsony means on the one hand that it will have to diversify its policy tools in Central Asia and also that Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have been presented with a golden opportunity. All that really needs doing is to play Russian and Chinese interests off one another. Hadfield goes so far as to say that it is Russia who due to this soft power tool has put itself in a precarious position "long term access to reliable energy resources has increased the level of political, economic, and societal progress, but it has also heightened the vulnerability of their (Russia's) dependence upon natural gas and oil, and underlined energy as a strategic course"[82].

The mutual dependence of the Liberal school of thought is apparent in the Central Asian-Russian energy dialogue, the need for Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan to ensure an energy

[79] Ibid, 1.
[80] Rutland, 203.
[81] Lateigne, 147.
[82] Hadfield, in Smith, Hadfield and Dunne, 322.

market that can cater to their needs, explicitly, the need for investment, transport structures, and pipelines. The breaking of the Russian energy monopsony does one thing: make Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan have slightly more leverage than before and creates an interdependent relationship. This interdependence thanks to energy is also prevalent in the EU-Russia energy relationship. Russia provides around one-third of Western Europe's natural gas supplies, a dominance only likely to increase in years to come according to some such as Hooper[83]. Russia has recently been accused of using 'pipeline politics' to influence neighbouring states and oil dependent nations, but this can however be argued to be a use of soft power, much in the same vein as Europe's use of soft power and economic benefits and sanctions.

Russia has since 1990 developed its assets, namely its uses of gas and oil in political discussion with the EU. In 1990 Russia was a weakened and bankrupt state with very little optimism and even less confidence. However in more recent times Russia has truly come to the fore. Energy for Russia has been the saving grace, and the EU's dependency on oil is rising. Global demand for oil and gas are on the rise, the European Strategy for Sustainable Energy expects the demand for oil to rise by 60% by 2030. According to the 2006 Green Paper published by the European Commission, unless domestic markets can be made more competitive the EU will have to import 70% of its energy (compared with around 50% of its energy at present), and 90% of its oil in the near future[84]. For Russia this is a benefit: oil and gas reserves being concentrated in a few select countries, often in areas of insecurity, thus creating a stable demand for secure oil and gas from one of the more consistent states. Having stated this, Russia has been criticised by Western European countries for what has been called pipeline politics, this being the manipulation of oil and gas supplies to influence other trade and political sectors.

The Russian tack during the past dozen years has been a shrewd system of division, using gas and oil as the dividing lines. Popescu and Leonard refer to Russia as "On the one hand, reaching out and flattering several member states – in particular the big ones – signing long-term bilateral energy deals and exchanging state visits"[85], and on the other causing problems for smaller states, creating dissension within the EU's ranks. The benefits of using petro-

[83] Hooper, "Russia: A Super Power Rises Again", 2006.
[84] Commission Green Paper, 2006.
[85] Leonard & Popescu, 2008.

politics as opposed to classical incentives and disincentives are that firstly the EU is heavily dependent on Russian supply, secondly it is difficult to find stable resources, and thirdly it takes a long time to change the physical structures. As Baran says "if a supplier refuses to provide gas or charge an unreasonable price, the consumer cannot quickly or easily turn to another source"[86]. 'Soft' power therefore allows the Russian Federation in this case, to manipulate its buyers, although it must be taken into account that switching off pipe-lines is as difficult for the supplier as for those who demand, and therefore it is in the interests of all to resolve issues speedily.

Recently the Russian policy of division has been noted by Brussels, with the 2006 Commission Green Paper stating that 'former Central European Soviet-bloc nations have experience with Russia's small-carrot/big-stick policies and believe it will continue to use Gazprom as a blunt instrument of foreign policy'. It went on to note that Russia has become increasingly aggressive towards Eastern Europe, re-adopting some of its Cold War rhetoric, a classic example of pipeline politics being the interruption of gas supplies to the Ukraine and the Czech Republic[87]. Moscow however insists that the reduction in oil supply to the Czech Republic was due entirely to technical malfunctions and not as a political disincentive to the recent proposal that Prague host an American anti-missile radar station. The radar system has since been abandoned perhaps in response to the Kremlin's exerted pressure. Whether or not this opinion has any serious basis, it shows how the Kremlin has adopted a new method of exerting pressure. Instead of outright aggression it has begun to use the language of the EU to 'voice' its wishes. It speaks to the sovereign interests of EU member states via the medium of trade, bartering for its position within foreign policy.

Where Russia's 'soft' petro-policies have truly been effective however are in disseminating discord within the EU. In the words of Baran "EU members limit their criticisms of Moscow, lest they be given a raw deal at the negotiating table. Russia's increasingly tainted record on transparency, responsible governance, and human rights, is thus allowed to stand unchallenged and unquestioned"[88].

Joffe outlines the concept of divide and conquer as Russia's key policy, yet he goes further, and states that as the EU doesn't have a true policy it tends to stick to the old dictum of 'Don't rile the Bear'. He goes on to say that the August conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia

[86] Zeyno Baran, ,, 132.
[87] Commission Green Paper, 2006.
[88] Baran, 133.

should have instilled a healthy portion of 'Ursophobia' in the more pro-Russian sectors of Europe but that instead these sectors have sought to please, and not to rile[89]. Joffe concludes however, that "the EU is stronger than it thinks, and Russia is weaker than it pretends […] recruit it (Russia) into the community of responsible powers"[90]. Again what is apparent is a Liberalised approach to a predominantly Constructivist Cold War rhetoric. The Kremlin views Europe less as a partner but as a rival to be cut down and manipulated

What this means is that in terms of energy Russia can continue to act in the manner to which it has become accustomed even if it cannot in other spheres. As Rutland puts it "It is widely assumed, both in the Kremlin and abroad, that this energy wealth will enable Russia to regain some of the 'superpower' status that it enjoyed in its Soviet incarnation prior to 1991"[91]. Two cases delineate the power Russia has exerted using only energy as a 'soft power' tool and the limits of that power. The first is how it has dealt with the EU. By adopting an interest based policy the Kremlin has to a certain extent managed to divide and conquer the European market. Even if we accept that Russia may not have abandoned its quest for real 'hard' power, and even if that is to be exercised only on its periphery, and not world-wide as during the era of its world power, Russia has proved that it does not need it for the moment. Its main trading partner the EU is a captive customer for Russian energy and is effectively debellicised. If Russia has adopted a more liberal vocabulary, it does not indicate that it means what it says nor does it mean what we in the West think it means.

Essentially, the Realist dialogue of anarchy and self-interest prevail in this domain, it explains why the Kremlin has taken this route, and yet does not fully explain why an ideology should be created. The ideological conception of 'sovereign democracy' appeals to the English school in that it is a historically based construct of Russian self-perception, and attempts to attract nations to it.

The key points then being that instead of using force, the Kremlin uses the sensitive and precarious areas of energy policy to 'push' nations towards acquiescing to its interests, or at the least forcing them onto the agenda. Furthermore the 'soft' power goes beyond energy to the spheres of trade, where it has used the concepts of the international community to its own advantage by manipulating the framework to fit its needs. And lastly it has begun to create an

[89] Josef Joffe, "The Russia Problem", 2008, 25.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Rutland, , 203.

ideological pole to attract nations away from the Liberal Western style of the international community.

# Chapter 4.

## *Russia's 'Hard' Power: Last Resort or Inadequate Policy Tool?*

As has been posited, the Kremlin under Putin has expanded its power mandate to include 'soft' power. However this use of 'soft' political tools is not by any means an abandonment of 'hard' power. In fact many political commentators, such as Tsygankov[92], Lukyanov[93] and Trenin[94], note that the 'colour revolutions' caused a major shift in the Putin administration, towards a more assertive stance. This has created a consciousness in the West of a 'resurgent Russia', based on the aggressive petro-politics and re-militarization, culminating in the Georgian War. However the use of 'hard' power within Russian foreign policy has been used minimally. For a state to 'hold back' when it is assumed that it can simply unleash its full force is contradictory, especially when the Western Cold War hawks assume that Russia is a resurgent neo-imperialist power. Why then has Russia moved toward 'soft' power instead of using its 'hard' power tools? This chapter analyses the changes that Russian 'hard' power must and is undergoing, and why it has been used in the way it has.

### *4.1 Asymmetrical Threats*

As Lucas says "On the face of it, Russia is still an intimidating military power. It has one of the world's largest armies, excellent Special Forces and some remarkable modern weapons."[95] However the Russian military power structures are out-dated and rely on the framework of the Cold War. The framework itself is based on the idea of a bi-polar confrontation in which either the deterrent power of first and second strike capabilities would fail to spark a conflict or one in which large land, air and sea forces would be needed. In Tsygankov and Tsygankov an explanation of the reliance of Russia on 'hard' power is found " As a borderland nation in an uncertain and volatile, external environment"[96], the basic

[92] Andrei Tsygankov,. "Russia's International Assertiveness: What Does It Mean for the West?",2008.
[93] Lykyanov, "Reading the World, Re-wiring Institutions",2008.
[94] Trenin, "A New Modern Foreign Policy", 2010.
[95] Lucas, 2009, 245.
[96] Andrei Tsygankov & Pavel Tsygankov, "National Ideology and IR Theory: Three Incarnations of the 'Russian Idea'", 2010, 3.

premise being that Russia is used to using traditional symmetrical force to solve problems in its near-abroad. This system of symmetrical warfare no longer exists, the Realist idea of combat warfare has been drastically modified and the obligations of the military with them.

Hard power is being rethought and re-evaluated due to an increased number of perceived threats and a diversification of threats. Traditionally 'hard' power focused on territorial defence and acquisition, the sovereignty of the state being the prime goal of the military. With the changes in the international community leaving the world to re-shuffle, sovereignty has become a more contested idea, as has the idea of preserving national sovereignty. The military mandate now extends further than ever before, including areas such as: terrorism, separatism, societal security, in the form of immigration from Central Asia, environmental issues and their possible spill over, such as a possible nuclear conflict between India and Pakistan, and ensuring stability in their near-abroad, not only to ensure energy supplies but also to halt the flow of non-nationals onto Russian territory and the criticism of the international community. In terms of the Russian 'hard' power and the international community, the military also faces challenges under security cooperation. Most notably, a re-focus towards peace-keeping, policing missions, and to some extent law-enforcement, such as drug control in Afghanistan[97], and UN troop, police and military observation contributions.

Unlike 'soft' power, 'hard' power remains a tool predominantly used by states, concurrently 'soft' tools can be wielded by private actors, corporations, NGOs and the like. This means that when 'hard' power is allowed to leave the domain of the state, there is a certain amount of interdependence. By contributing forces to international organisations such as the UN, Russia demonstrates not only its willingness to act on the international level, but also that it abides by the rules delineated by the other actors on this level. This fits with the Liberal idea that interdependence extends cooperation, by starting with trade there can be overtures made to expand joint-security. Although 'hard' power is traditionally a Realist tool the fact that there is moderation in its use causes the Realist theory to leave unexplained gaps. The English school's theory of an identity constructed by the methods of the Liberal international community's identity and Russia's own will to 'fit' into the global dialogue, explains the restraint of 'hard' power and the use of 'soft'.

[97] RIANOVOSTI, 2010. http://en.rian.ru/russia/20100316/158217814.html

### *4.2 The Price of Russian 'Hard' Power*

A further aspect to view is one that appeals both to the purse strings and to the greater integration of Russia into the international community. In the early 1990s Russia was a basically bankrupt nation that had to default on its debt. It has since then recouped a sizeable amount of capital[98]. During the 1990s a series of technological advancements generated what has come to be known as the RMA (Revolution in Military Affairs), and the majority of European states began to re-evaluate how the European security structure would look if the United States took a step back from NATO and the security umbrella it provided for the now 'reconciled' European continent. European nations began to downsize their militaries for pragmatic reasons, firstly the asymmetries with the threats they were facing and secondly the cost of keeping a large military force. With the advances in technology what Europe learnt was that a small, well-trained, well-equipped military would be far more suited to their purposes. The Kremlin however, continues to survey the Russian Federation as a nation of porous borders, encircled by the 'other'. What this meant pragmatically is that the RMA in Russia barely happened. The basis of Russian forces remains an ill-equipped, short term, conscript army of young, inexperienced men, and due to the costs that it would take to remedy this, it seems likely that this will be the case for quite some time.

As Nye states "military power is more costly and less transferable today than in earlier times"[99], even when excluding the cost of re-structuring the military and re-training troops for an expanded mandate there remains the simple fact that transferring 'hard' power into workable long-term policies is not feasible unless conflict is the aim. Although an internal problem, Chechnya has proved to be a costly conflict for Russia. During the first Chechen conflict the unprepared and badly trained Russian forces proved that pitting a symmetrical force against an asymmetrical terrorist guerrilla force was not a battle that could be won. In fact it proved it so conclusively that Yeltsin very nearly lost his position over it, and the Russian Federation was highly criticised by the international community. The second Chechen conflict did not fare militarily much better, but the clear difference was an adoption of Liberal Western rhetoric, justifying military action as 'protection of citizens' against an aggressive terrorist insurgency. The result was that of ensuring Putin's position within the

[98] Greene & Trenin, 2.
[99] Nye, 159.

Kremlin, beating down a troublesome internal conflict, and all the while avoiding a sizeable amount of negative press through asserting that it was abiding by international guidelines, and by the pressures exerted by his energy policy.

The move toward using a Liberal rhetoric has also led to various cooperative security structures, notably the SCO, PfP and the NATO-Russia Council. This serves to indicate that the Liberal rhetoric may be more than it appears as genuine efforts are being made to share the security burden. Although to some extent it is likely that the sharing of responsibility is more based on the sharing of costs and diffusion of accountability.as Nye states a " trend in the diffusion of power is the spread of modern technology, which has enhanced the capabilities of backward states"[100], essentially free-riding to reduce costs, or allowing free-riding to reduce criticism.

The question then is why has Russian not abandoned its use of unilateral 'hard' power? While multilateral action is preferable in the international community, having a sovereign deployable, force backs up the preferable 'soft' power alternative, and although not averse to using military means, it has become apparent that the Putin presidency preferred using it as a last resort when 'soft' power tools had failed. The key example of this being the Georgian conflict which began with a series of embargoes on Georgian goods, and cumulating in an armed conflict, to ensure in the Russian point of view, a Georgia that was not a puppet state acting on the demands of Washington. The Georgian conflict serves to illustrate that although the Kremlin under Putin was enamoured with 'hard' power, it was not addicted to it.

Essentially the reason for the use of 'soft' power is that 'hard' power has proved itself to be less effective, more costly and less easy to justify when it has been used. It has not been shelved but has been relegated in favour of the more easily applicable and readily available 'soft' resources of political power. The fact that Russia has bounced back economically since the previous decade contributes to the concentration on economic tools[101], although perhaps in the long run creating certain resources curse within Russian power, energy has so far served better than military influence.



[100] Ibid, 162.
[101] Greene & Trenin, 2.

# Chapter 5.
# Conclusion

As has been previously stated power is an essentially multi-faceted concept. The implementation of power is highly dependent on the actor and the resources available to that actor. In the case of this study, the actor is the Putin administration and the type of power that was focused on was 'soft' power. As has been discussed there has been a steady transition of the use of power. What this transition has done is to avoid belittling either facet of power but to recognise that there are situations where 'soft' power can achieve more beneficial results than pure force. According to Nye, the diffusion of power is due to five elements, the most important element of which is economic interdependence, which promotes placid action as force could disrupt economic balance and be detrimental to all actors. The second is the idea of transnational actors, termed as the international community during this study, the basic principle here being that non-state actors promote non-state means of interaction, as has been explained military action is still predominantly a sovereign domain. Thirdly nationalism in weak states, basically a simple matter of willing to influence others without the military might to do it, instead 'soft' alternatives to promote interests must be found, this to a certain extent fits the Russian state of the mid-90s. Fourthly, the spread of technology which as has been described has not been taken to its full advantage within the Russian state as it is a costly endeavour. And finally Nye proposes that the changes of political issues have also led to the use of 'soft' power[102].

In attempting to find a new position for itself in the international community, The Russian Federation has re-shaped the force it employs to match the other states or organisations it interacts with. When dealing with a predominantly economically geared group it speaks in terms of economic interests, and uses a tough line in trade and energy policy to get its way. When dealing with what it views as a belligerent puppet state it has (eventually) used force to demonstrate that it continues to be able to implement its will forcefully, even if it is very costly. Putin's use of 'soft' power has enabled him the time to restructure his 'hard' power, create a network of dependent countries round the Russian Federations borders, enabled a decent relationship to grow between itself and its non-European energy markets, notably the

[102] Nye, 160.

two rising powers of India and China, and has kept the EU feeble and divided on energy topics. Putin has abjured hard power as unnecessary, since his version of 'soft' power uses the language of the West but has the element of coercion well to the fore.

Realism has failed to explain why there has been a move towards 'soft' power in the West and why those who employ 'hard' power have not used this fact to their advantage. In an anarchic system of all against all, the weakness propounded by the Wests disinclination to use power could easily be turned to a 'hard' powers advantage. 'Hard' power in retaliation of 'soft' seems to the international community to be the act of a millennial power, and not a traditional state. Liberalism too fails to adequately explain Russian behaviour. Moving away from the concept of anarchy and towards interdependence, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly how the Putin administration fits into the Liberal paradigm. It has proven itself to use illiberal and pointedly aggressive techniques (despite their 'soft' nature). It has done so with little regard for international norms and values, and yet is treated with them in return. The Liberal model has therefore provided the Kremlin with a means to exploit the West and not be part of it. Constructivism brings more insight than the previous theoretical frameworks; however it is constrained by the fact that the other two frameworks have elements that need to be incorporated into the theory if it is to 'fit' the Putin administration's actions. What constructivism does do is to propose that the Russian Federation has developed the uses of power due to the new identity it has begun to adopt, the elite driven policy is in turn pushed by the heritage and beliefs of the elites, indicating that the uses of power in Russia will remain the same so long as the 'siloviki' retain their influence in the Kremlin.

How then does the English school differ from these theories, and how does it synthesise them to explain the Putinite use of power? Firstly it retains a similar acknowledgement of the maximisation of state interests as does Realism, unlike realism however it also believes that the norms and values of states can create a concert of powers who will act in order to keep the balance of power and promote their norms and values globally. Secondly, it agrees with the Liberal concept of interdependence, in which a state will seek to promote itself peacefully if it does not believe other actors are likely to attack it. It does not however abandon the idea that there are states that do not share the same values of Liberalism and would prefer independence to interdependence. Constructivism meshes quite well but as it does not include the ideas of a balance of power, nor the ideas of interdependence it must be rejected in favour

of the English school. Using as a basis that there is indeed a body of states who outline the norms of interstate action, and that these states tend to preserve the stability of the international system and maximising their interests within the bounds they have outlined for themselves, the English school then goes on to provide a Constructivist element. This, in the case of Russian 'soft' policy explains that due to the international community Russia has had to develop non-military means that still impose Russian will on other nations. What this has led to is a particularly brutal trade and energy policy backed up by a military force. The English school therefore explains that 'Russian soft power' was not solely created by the Russian government but also by the interpretation of Western norms and how to maximise their own utility when faced with these norms. Therefore Russian 'soft' policy can be said to be a direct response to the international community.

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