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Return of Russia to World Politics

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Return of Russia to World Politics

A Bachelor Thesis submitted for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts in Law, Political Science and Diplomacy
at the University for Business and Technology
UBT

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1. Abstract

Relations between east and west were relatively calm for many decades, if we don't count the 1962 cold war crisis between U.S. and those days BRSS, the atmosphere was stable during this 47 years that passed. During this time U.S. developed in every field against BRSS, dominating militarily and economically. The Europe, which due to its geographical position stands between two powers, was relatively prosperous and peaceful during these years. Much of the western oriented states faced integration to U.S. supported NATO and EU. Russia felling itself expelled and sometimes opposite to this integration, found itself in difficult position by time. Its military and economy was not more than level of the middle European countries, and its nationalistic pride historically inherited almost vanished by time. The Russian decline gave the U.S. leaded western alliance a free space to expand and strength, in amount that expanding got just near the Russian territory and settled without any interference from old rival. This of course, was a big crack to the balance of power in the world, settled between BRSS and U.S. by the end of the cold war. While U.S. and NATO was bombing Russia's Balkan satellite Serbia, over the Kosovo crisis, the Russians were in rush of electing a new president, from which they expected a lot.

In December 31, 1999 Vladimir Putin was elected new president of Russia. Known a little to public opinion, except that he was a top ex-KGB agent who worked in Dresden Germany. He pledged to build Russia strong, and regain its influence like a world power. Mysterious Putin was a successful president and his mandate lasted for over 8 years, in which he managed to reform Russia entirely. In the beginning Putin centralized his state administration and nationalized economy, he also renationalized natural recourses and industry. He suppressed opposition and expelled the powerful individuals which were known as "oligarchs", they were threat to his model of rule.

Facing condemnation from west as an anti democratic and totalitarian, Putin won his second elections in 2004, and pursued his own way of rule. His strong hand was felt in Chechnya where he managed to displace Russian army out of barracks to fight Chechens rebels. His aggressive posture and effective use of natural recourses (oil, gas) like a political tool, gave Putin enormous political influence in EU and abroad. Russia's first neighborhood countries Ukraine and Georgia and others who were aiming membership to western organizations were facing pressure and aggressiveness from uprising Russian bear. While worldwide oil and gas prices were climbing, Russia was using its recourses as effective as possible. Its economy and military is growing and getting stronger, while

meantime Putin gains popularity of over 70%, and is suppressing all inside opposition voices calling for democracy and human rights.

Seems like Russians liked Putin as a president, he pledged to fight all intense to weaken Russia and promised to regain Russia's pride in international relations, reminding old Soviet Union days. While Putinism was flourishing in region, his popularity was hitting highest tops inside Russia. He restored order in military, increased its budget, minimized the role of oligarchs and sabotaged media that criticized his regime. Facing success in majority fields inside the country, Putin's lack was appearing outside the Russian territory and its potential sphere of interest. As he promised to his citizens that he will expand Russia's influence outside the state borders no matter circumstances. Some of this attempts, of course I am going to refer only chronologically, because it would take me a book to ride, if I refer all in details. And in order to stay objective I will not comment on facts. I will recall to some examples of international crisis like Kosovo one, where for Russians it was a god opportunity to test its new politics. Like the readers know, Russians displaced their military forces in Kosova without prior accordance with NATO alliance, causing tensions that brought NATO soldiers in possible clash to Russian forces in Airport Pristina, first time in history after the end of cold war.

Russia also pressured Ukraine in their presidential elections, giving full support of the pro Russian candidate. They developed special friendship with western opposes like: China, Venezuela, Bolivia, and lately with Iran. Its posture regarding America's missile protection shield in Poland and Czech Republic is another hot issue nowadays, having in mind Putin's threat to station Russian missiles in border with Poland, and targeting them to US missile shield, we see the complexity of problem. And if we combine this problem with war and invasion in Georgia and recognition of Ossetia and Abkhazia, we see that Russia enters in direct conflict with NATO,s plans of expansion to these regions, creating unsorted problem in practices of international relations. In this context the states sovereignty and territorial integrity is protected under international law. While U.S. are trying to settle its missiles in European border, this last is seeking partnership and possible military agreement with Cuba, bringing fragility to balance of power settled by end of the cold war. This reminds me of something that happened in history.

Russia also plays key role in the energy market, performing policy of volatile prices, of oil and gas regarding EU needs, in such that these intends are seen as sabotage to all instruments who are trying to create stabile energy market. Sales of military arms to Washington opposes like Venezuela, Bolivia and Iran, this last by helping to create atomic enrichment centrals with Russian technology, and same time putting U.S. supported Israel in difficult position and threatened from this technology. All these struggles in spite of better days of Russia, like a big and important factor in international

political scene. Some will say that Russian approach isn't a big problem and with more caution we won't have troubles at all. But scientist find this Russian politics very imperialist and destructive, to a new age of globalization, and in the long run it may be far more dangerous than it appears nowadays. West fears of political elite that is controlled by Putin and its secret services, they installed a new model of rule in their country, some kind of modern communism, with high potentials of destruction in era of cooperation and mutual dependence for peace and reconciliation. I tried to give as much as possible information's to the reader, with all touchable facts that support my thesis that "Russia regained its political presence in the world politics" especially after Putin came to power. This presence is more destructive than constructive, but it's not passive like in history. Due to the voluminous size of the events, I referred only to the most important ones and brought information as fact without commenting on its content, because I find this method more original and neutral. With hope that reader will find my analogical style, attractive and find assumptions needed to understand my thesis.

Even thou we western democrats don't like it, the issue "is Russia back like an important factor on international political scene". Is occupying peoples opinion every day, and political scientist explains this Russian behavior as time passed, but very dangerous in current international relations. The problem is evolving in direction that one doesn't know what will happen in future, and seeing from retrospective the future isn't so bright. If you ask about my opinion, I will say yes, the Russia is struggling to hit back like in god old Soviet days, and with Putin it has a lot of success, quoting Mr. Robert Kagan,s comment to "Washington Post" who summarizes situation best.

"It is a war that Moscow has been attempting to provoke for some time. The man who once called the collapse of the Soviet Union "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the (20th) century" has reestablished a virtual czarist rule in Russia and is trying to restore the country to its once-dominant role in Eurasia and the world. Armed with wealth from oil and gas; holding a near-monopoly over the energy supply to Europe; with a million soldiers, thousands of nuclear warheads and the world's third-largest military budget, Vladimir Putin believes that now is the time to make his move".

Robert Kagan. Washington Post

2. Introduction

Dear reader, in following you will find my dissertation prepared for degree of: Bachelor of Law, Political Science and Diplomacy, at the University of Business and Technology (UBT), in Prishtina. As a student of Faculty of Law, Political Science and Diplomacy, my mayor is “International Politics”, this course is taught by Ernst Florian Winter, eminent professor of political science from Austria. Together we decided that my Bachelor thesis “Return of Russia to World Politics” fits fine in subject of international politics. We choose period from 1999 until 2008, because we find Russia transformed after Putin came to power. My focus will be on Putin era and his role in contemporary Russian politics, also his efforts to unite his country and bring it back like important factor in international politics. Russian return is coming after a long period of passivism, especially in international political scene. The balance of powers settled after the end of cold war, between U.S. representing west, and Russia representing east is not so favorable for Russians. And seeing intentions from Putin to change this balance, we find this as potential problem occurring in international politics. We focus on side effects of these politics, especially towards other countries that are affected by them, majorly ex-soviet satellites. This Russian return will affect relations regarding western countries headed by United States and their EU-NATO allies, who minimized Russia’s role in international politics in recent years, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Will Putin manage to shift state politics of passivism to more aggressive politics in order to gain influence, you will see in following of my thesis.

The geographical position of Russia like a huge country located in Eastern Europe and in North Asia, gives her enormous geopolitical tool of influence. The European part of country includes territories to the west of the Ural Mountains. Russia is the largest country in world in terms of area with 17,075,400 sq, but is unfavorably located in relation to major sea lanes of the world.¹ With 57,792 kilometers, Russian border is the world’s longest along with 20 139 kilometer land where Russia has boundaries with 14 ex- soviet countries, 8 of which did not exist as countries until the early 1990.² These new neighbors are Kazakhstan, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. The remaining bordering countries are North Korea, China, Mongolia, Poland, Norway, and Finland. At the far northeastern only 86 kilometers of the Bering Strait separate Russia from its 15 neighbor the United States of America.³ The historical events that shaped the Russian state are based on its long history, those days nation

¹ Info please. Pearson Education. Aug, 25, 2008. www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107909.html

² Msn.com/encyclopedia.PhD,Kurt.E.Engelmann.Aug,25.2008.http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761569000_20/russia.html

³ Msn.com/encyclopedia.PhD,AmyKnight.Aug.25.2008.http://encarta.msn.com/text_761559200__1/Stalin.html

included four Republics: the Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, and the Transcaucasia as SFSR, these four Republics were the constitutive elements of the Soviet Union. The years from 1929 to 1939 incorporated the economic decade in Russian history. It was a period of massive industrialization and internal struggles as Joseph Stalin who was establishing total control over Russian society. Russians in many measures the poorest nation in Europe at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, now industrialized at a phenomenal raising rate of the growing economy. While the Five-Year Plans were implemented with speed, Stalin was establishing his personal power in the state hierarchy. He fostered the actions of tens of thousands of Soviet citizens to face arrest, deportation, or execution if needed, just to gain control and power.

On September 17, 1939, seventeen days after beginning of the World War II, German troops invaded the Polish territory. The Red Army reacted immediately with an invasion of the eastern part of Poland with pretext to protect Ukrainians and Belarusians from further German threats.⁴ By the autumn of 1941 the German army invaded Ukraine and faced the opposition from Soviet Army. By the end of 1943 the Red Army had broken through the German siege of Leningrad and liberated large parts of Ukraine and Western Russia. In the end of 1944 the front line had moved beyond the 1939 Soviet frontiers into Eastern Europe. With a decisive superiority in troops the Soviet forces invaded Eastern Germany capturing Berlin in May 1945.

The war against Germany thus ended triumphantly for the Soviet Union, following the tense period which emerged out of a conflict between Stalin and U.S. president Harry Truman, over the future of Eastern Europe during the Potsdam Conference, the time which will be remembered as a “cold war” period. Like result of this clash between two powers, on summer of May, 08, 1945 the German city of Berlin was divided in two, in the West with American, British and French zone, and in the East controlled by Soviet forces.⁵ In the year 1947 the “Marshall Plan” took action like aid to the West of Europe in order to reconstruct it from war wounds, Stalin at that time refused it for Eastern Europe. While in April 1949 United States sponsored military alliance known as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), in order to counterbalance the Soviet Military power.⁶ Soviets in opposition to that, in year 1955 fostered to formation of the “Warsaw Pact” who was created and called for “Peaceful coexistence”.

On October 22, 1962, the Cuban missile crisis appeared when the U.S. president John F. Kennedy informed the world that the USSR was building secret missile bases in Cuba.

⁴ MFA Productions LLC. Aug 26.2008. <http://worldwar2database.com/html/berlin.htm> 1

⁵ Heiko Burkhardt Aug..26.2008. <http://www.dailysoft.com/berlinwall/history/berlinwall-timeline.htm>

⁶ <http://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html>.updated: 23-Mar-2009.

He demanded from Russian premier Nikita. S. Khrushchev to remove all the missile bases and their deadly contents from Cuba.⁷ In response to the American naval blockade, Premier Khrushchev authorized his Soviet field commanders in Cuba to launch their tactical nuclear weapons if they see an attempt of invasion from U.S. forces. On October 28 the Russian premier surprisingly gave order to all Soviet supply ships move away from Cuban waters and agreed to remove Russian missiles from Cuba's land.⁸ This is one of the few examples of the “cold war” period where two countries actually got clashed between each other and created tension in the world. In the year 1968 USSR and its Warsaw Pact allies invaded Czechoslovakia with 200 000 troops.⁹ In the year 1977 USSR invaded Afghanistan in order to expand in Asia, and took control of the capital Kabul. United States condemned the occupation immediately and sent munitions and food to the mujahidin fighters (opposes of the Soviet occupation) and the refugees. One of these benefiteres of the war was Osama Bin Laden he was fighting against the Soviets that time. In 1989, Soviet forces pulled out of Afghanistan with 15.000 Soviet soldiers and Afghans killed in the decade-long war. During 1988 Gorbachev announced that the Soviet Union would abandon the “Brezhnev Doctrine” and allow the Warsaw Pact nations to determine their own internal affairs, this event was seen like first step backwards or decline of the Soviet Union. The fall of the Berlin wall proved that decline or how to say, the collapse of the Soviet Union was emerging. It opened route for German reunification which was formally concluded on October 3, 1990. On Aug. 29.1991 an attempted “coup d’état” against Gorbachev was orchestrated by a group of hard-liners headed by Boris Yeltsin. Yeltsin's defiant actions during the coup d’état, barricaded himself in the Russian parliament and called for national strikes witch later resulted in Gorbachev's reinstatement. Gorbachev resigned on Dec. 25, and Yeltsin emerged like the driving force behind the Soviet dissolution, who later on became president of the newly established Russia. The dissolution of Soviet Union started when the president of Southern Republic of Chechnya declared his region's drive for independence in year 1994. To these situation Russian troops reacted furiously and surrounded Chechnya's capital, Grozny where heavy fighting broke , and about 215 000 Chechen refugees had fled to neighboring Ingushetia. This led to the almost three years of fighting’s between Russian troops and Chechen rebels.¹⁰

In May 1999 Yeltsin dismissed Primakov and substituted Interior Minister Sergei Stepashin. And just three months later, Yeltsin replaced Stepashin with Vladimir Putin on Aug. 9, 1999. Announcing that in addition to serving as prime minister, the former

⁷ http://www.hpol.org/jfk/cuban_j-goldman@northwestern.edu .Revised: 8 October 1997.

⁸ http://www.hpol.org/jfk/cuban_j-goldman@northwestern.edu .Revised: 8 October 1997.

⁹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/may/14/newsid_3771000/3771065.stm.

¹⁰By: John Pike.<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/chechnya>.last modified: 27-04-2005.

KGB agent was his choice as a successor in the 2000 presidential elections and that he has full support of the government. This was a short history of Russia and its politics regarding international relations, the politics which in past brought much tension in the world especially in the western hemisphere led by United States and their European allies.

3. Analytical Framework

Analytical framework for this thesis will be structured, based on the theories of international relations. These examples below are some of the theories, which I am going to refer in order to build my thesis in more advanced methodology. In discussions with my tutor we found that these theories of international politics which are stated below will fit best for my thesis, because of my topic "Returning of Russia to World Politics" has to do with these theories. Especially the Putin's era and the aim of his Russia to return like important factor on international political scene of decision making.

Realism

A particular view of the world, or paradigm, defined by the following assumptions: the international realm is anarchic and consists of independent political units called states; states are the primary actors and inherently possess some offensive military capability or power which makes them potentially dangerous to each other; states can never be sure about the intentions of other states; the basic motive driving states is survival or the maintenance of sovereignty; states are instrumentally rational and think strategically about how to survive.¹¹

Imperialism

Hans J. Morgenthau defines imperialism as a national foreign policy aimed at acquiring more power than the state actually has, through a reversal of existing power relations, in other words, a favorable change in power status. Imperialism as a national foreign policy is in contrast to 'status quo' foreign policy and a foreign policy of 'prestige.' The policy of imperialism assumes the classical realist theory perspective of analysis at the unit level in international relations. Furthermore, imperialism is based on a 'balance-of-power' construct in international relations. The three types of imperialism as outlined by Morgenthau are: Marxist theory of imperialism which rests on the foundation that all political phenomena are the reflection of economic forces; the Liberal theory of imperialism which results because of maladjustments in the global capitalist system (e.g., surplus of goods and capital which seek outlets in foreign markets); and finally, the 'devil' theory of imperialism which posits that manufacturers and bankers plan wars in

¹¹ <http://www.irtheory.com/> Mark Beavis, up-dated on 07, February 2009.

order to enrich themselves.¹²

International Political Economy

A method of analysis concerning the social, political and economic arrangements affecting the global systems of production, exchange and distribution, and the mix of values reflected therein (Strange, S. 1988. *States and Markets*. Pinter Publishers, London. p18). As an analytical method, political economy is based on the assumption that what occurs in the economy reflects, and affects, social power relations.¹³

4. Russia under Putin 1999-2004

It was Dec.31.1999 when Russia's President Boris Yeltsin appeared on a national TV audience asking for their forgiveness, and apologized for his mistakes during his rule of Presidency of Russia. In his decision that took world by surprise Russia's President Boris Yeltsin shocked his nation and much of the world by announcing his resignation, giving the Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, the additional title of acting president of the country.

This was unexpected act, so predictions were that he was sending signals of change to international political scene, and the new beginning in Russian domestic politics. Is this really happening, after a decade of passive politics with Gorbachev, or is this just another Russian trick? Shortly after he was nominated in Feb, 2000, Russian troops captured Grozny after almost five months of fighting. It was a political as well as a military victory for Putin, whose hard-line stance against Chechnya contributed greatly to his political popularity. Everybody was wondering about this rapid transformation in Russian politics.



Photo 1. Vladimir. V. Putin

The scholars were wondering about him and asking who this man was, that suddenly came out of nowhere? The new Russian president Vladimir Putin was a puzzle for the majority of public opinion, inside and outside of Russia. About him and his political though was little known .The only thing that majority knew of him was, that he was ex-KGB agent who worked in Dresden (East Germany), he was born in Leningrad in year 1952, that he's married with Lyudmila and has two doters Maria and Katarina. This is a short profile of the newly elected president of Russia, who seemed very mysterious

¹² <http://www.irtheory.com/> Mark Beavis, up-dated on 07. February 2009. From Morgenthau, Hans J. 1948. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. McGraw-Hill, Boston. (Chapter 5, The Struggle for Power: Imperialism).

¹³ <http://www.economywatch.com/political-economy/political-economy-theory.html>. Mar.10.2009.

especially to western political circumstances which were facing the little known ex-KGB president.¹⁴

Normally in situation like this, everybody was in rush to get intelligence as much as one could find out. The results were not so impressive; Vladimir Putin was born in Leningrad on October 7, 1952. In 1975, he graduated with a degree in law from Leningrad State University he later earned a Ph.D. degree in economics.¹⁵ After graduation, Putin was assigned to work in the KGB. From 1985 to 1990, he worked in East Germany in secret mission for 5 years. In 1990 he was to assist the rector of Leningrad State University, responsible for international affairs.

His next position was an advisor to the chairman of the Leningrad city council.¹⁶ In June 1991, he became chairman of the St. Petersburg city council's international relations committee and, starting with 1994, he combined this post with the position of first deputy Chairman of the St. Petersburg city government (First Deputy Mayor). In August 1996, he was appointed deputy head of the President's Administrative Directorate (Property Management Directorate). In March 1997 he became Deputy Head of the Executive Office of the President and head of the Central Supervision and Inspections Directorate. In May 1998, he was promoted to first deputy head of the Presidential Administration. In July 1998, he was appointed Director of the Federal Security Service. In August 1999, he was appointed Prime Minister. On December 31, 1999, he became acting president with 52.94% of votes in the election on March 26, 2000.¹⁷ He was inaugurated as the president of Russia on May 7, 2000, and announced in front of public opinion, that some rapid changes in Russia are to come. In this context I am going to refer a small part of his presidential speech after he was elected President, which stands.

“Dear Russian citizens, we believe in our strength and our effort to achieve our common objectives. We wish for Russia to be a strong, wealthy, democratic state. State which will be respected by his citizens and nations aboard, I find it holy duty to unite Russian nation, and to gather citizens for common duties and objectives. To serve our only homeland, our only nation and our only future, thank you”.

Vladimir. V. Putin.¹⁸

For the majority of public opinion, the speech of the newly elected young president

¹⁴By:Madeleine Albright.http://www.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1733748_1733757_1735578,00.html.Tuesday, March 24, 2009

¹⁵ By: Andrew Bridegam. <http://www.notablebiographies.com/Pu-Ro/Putin-Vladimir.html>.Apr 25, 2006.

¹⁶ By:Tejvan Pettinger. <http://www.biographyonline.net/politicians/russian/putin>.

¹⁷The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition. Copyright 2008 Columbia University Press.
www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-PutinVV.html.

¹⁸ Book: Lubinka Milicij. / “Vladimir Putin, my fight for Kosovo” page 6.Belgrade.Sofos/2007.

seemed far more optimistic. It was discovered later on that Putin wrote this speech by himself, without and advises from his political advisers. And that it took him a lot of time and effort to write it. For Yeltsin who was relieved, it was more important to have guaranties of safe retirement and personal security for him and his family, who were not liked among ordinary Russian citizens.¹⁹ Putin granted him this right immediately, and this was his first document signed in the post of Russia's president. Boris Yeltsin left not so much behind, except presidential symbols, and one country in chaos. Putin inherited one country in chaos, economic instability, corruption, oligarchies and mafia clans.²⁰ He realized that his objectives of uniting and strengthening Russia will be a difficult task, and therefore he will need as much support as possible. He had to take action, and chose to implement a set of reforms that sought to centralize power in Kremlin, and institutions that are directly under his control. After his inauguration, Putin launched a set of initiatives to restructure Russia's federal system and address the problems he inherited from the Yeltsin era. On 13 May 2000, he signed a presidential decree dividing the country's eighty-nine regions, into seven federal districts. And he appointed presidential representatives to each of them.²¹ According to the constitution these regions were under Russian centralized rule, but in reality Moscow didn't have effective control over these regions, until Putin came to power. On 01, 09 2000 Putin established the new State Council, whose membership included the Russian president and all the governors. The body is purely consultative, designed to give the governors' access to the president at least once every three months. Five of the seven representatives which Putin appointed came from the Federal Security Service or the Military, only two were civilians, one a former Prime minister and second a diplomat. The cautious reforms in army and police started immediately, and were so obvious. He substantially strengthened the rights of the agencies of secret service and granted them extensive monitoring powers over the media, including the internet. At the beginning of January, Putin put a law into effect that grants eight different security authorities direct access to all internet transactions. Beside the domestic secret service (FSB), other agencies that gained access to internet monitoring were the: Tax Police, the Interior Ministry, the Border Guard, the Customs Committee, the Security Agencies of the Kremlin, the President and Parliament, as well as the Foreign Intelligence Agency. Centre for Strategic Research was created to provide interdisciplinary analysis of foreign policy, international relations, military strategy, international law, and national security.²²

¹⁹ Book: Lubinka Milicij. / "Vladimir Putin, my fight for Kosovo"/page 7. Belgrade.Sofos/ 2007.

²⁰ Book: Lubinka Milicij. / "Vladimir Putin, my fight for Kosovo"/page 45. Belgrade.Sofos/ 2007.

²¹By:Orttung,Robert,CBS./interactive.2001.http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3996/is_200107/ai_n8987514.

²² By: M.G. Delyagin Moscow 1997.//www.fipc.ru/fipctest/partnership/cisimage.html.

Also the Council of Foreign and Defense Policy was formed as a provider of searchable collection of information on political developments, leaders and organizations, administrative subdivisions and ethnic groups. These agencies named above have enormous capabilities of efficient and effective intervention outside and inside the country, if instructed so by government officials. And having in mind intentions of Putin and his followers, I predict that institutions of power like these will have a lot of job to do in future perspective.

Having the instrument of state power integrated and centralized in his hands, Putin decided to take another brave step in order to implement his centralist politics. He now set the focus on his potential opposers and enemies inside country, like Russia's media baron Vladimir A. Gusinsky who was jailed, and released just after three nights, then charged with embezzlement. One federal prosecutor slapped metals magnate Vladimir O. Potanin with a lawsuit challenging the privatization of his "Norilsk" nickel company.

On July, 11 Vagin Alexperov, president of Lukoil, Russia's largest oil company, was charged with tax fraud. Berezovsky the tycoon, whose connections once made him appear to be "Mr. Untouchable" during the Yeltsin rule, now, seems exposed and vulnerable. Putin has already taken steps to reduce Berezovsky's influence in the Kremlin.²³ He fired high-level post Yeltsin aides with whom Berezovsky had tight ties and those who remain are of questionable loyalty to Putin. The Kremlin's Security Council, the chief instrument of Putin's rule, is dominated by fellow ex-KGB agents, a group that was trying to nail Berezovsky for behaving like a rogue opposition. Putin did not even consult Berezovsky on his far-reaching initiative to establish control over Russia's regions. "Berezovsky's role is diminished and will continue to diminish."²⁴

Putin aimed a direct hit at the oligarchs in his July, 08, at the State of the Nation address which pointed out that Russia can no longer tolerate "shadowy groups" in the economy that divert money abroad, hire their own "dubious" security services, and blocks the development of a liberal market economy. Before leaving Moscow for what he hoped in 2000 would be a temporary exile, Berezovsky formed an opposition party called "Liberal Russia" which intended to unite leading businessmen and other devotees of a free market who felt that their interests were threatened by Putin.

Berezovsky came under criminal investigation for diverting millions of dollars from Aeroflot. He then fled to his villa in France but was arrested on a Russian warrant. After his lawyers won his release, he moved to Britain, which granted him political asylum and rejected requests for his extradition to Russia. His political activities in London

²³ By: Mary Dejevski, Nov.2006. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/boris-berezovsky-the-first-oligarch-425723.html>.

²⁴ (LPAC)April,13.2008.http://www.larouchepac.com/pages/breaking_news/2007/04/13/berezovsky.shtml

aimed at undermining Putin. His objective, as he told the “Guardian” in 2007, was regime change in Russia.

"It isn't possible to change Putin regime through democratic means, there can be no change without force, pressure."

Boris. A. Berezovsky

The expulsion of Berezovski and relief from his strong role in Russia policy making was another victory for Russia's newest Car Putin and his followers .He cleared his path from big threat to his rule, and made everybody know that he is serious in his intentions to have more authority, even if it requires to dissolve all Russia's opposition leaders and oligarchs from his path.²⁵ When it comes to citizens reaction and public opinion, is seems that most of the Russian citizens actually approved this authoritarian policy led by government, and found Putin's actions very attractive. Is it that czarist mentality and tradition that requires strong and authoritarian leader? Or is it just Putin's ability to do so well? Or is it something else, that Russian citizens are willing to sacrifice their own universal rights in order to strength Putin's aim of big and strong Russia on the international political scene? These are frequently asked questions among the western scholars, who for my opinion are still underestimating this rapid recovery and awakening of Russian bear.

It was July 8, 2000 when Russian president Vladimir Putin called on his nation to be strong in order to stay together. He issued the plea during his state of the nation address since winning the election earlier that year. In a passionate, one hour performance, Putin called for liberal economic reforms combined with a much stronger central government. The vision of Russia's future outlines a shift in power from the regions to the Kremlin.

"Today we are still hearing speculations about dictatorship and authoritarian rule, but our stand is crystal clear. Only a strong state or an efficient and democratic state can protect civil, political, and economic freedoms of the people."

Vladimir .V. Putin.²⁶

Putin said that the press in Russia was largely under control of financial clans, some of whom he described as anti-state, and that something had to be done. It is known that Berezovsky controlled the state television channel ORT and a number of influential newspapers. Another is Vladimir Gusinsky, owner of NTV, the major private television

²⁵By:Paul Starobin and CatherineBeltonin.Moscow,JULY,24,2000.://www.businessweek.com/2000/00_30/b3691184.htm.

²⁶By:Steve Harrigan,CNN,Moscow.July8,2000.http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0007/08/smn.08.html.

station, and several publishing interests. The third is ruled by Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov, who controls TV-Tsentr and a handful of newspapers. Beside media, Putin's eager for control was growing on rich Russian energy companies, where he immediately started a process of renationalization of big Russian companies like Rosneft', Gazprom, Yukos. Following this process in October 25, 2003, Mikhail Khodorkovsky was arrested, by Russian Prosecutor general's office on charges of tax fraud. Shortly thereafter on October 31, the Russian government froze shares of Yukos because of tax charges.²⁷ The government took further actions against Yukos, leading it to a collapse in the share price. It supported to sell a majority of the Yukos in December 2004. On May 31, 2005, Khodorkovsky was found guilty of fraud and sentenced to nine years in prison. The sentence was later reduced to 8 years. A wide variety of international journalists, politicians, and businessmen in Russia and abroad, considered this process to be largely politically motivated. In 2003, prior to his arrest, Khodorkovsky funded several Russian parties, including "Yabloko", the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, and the pro-Kremlin "United Russia". Kremlin involvement has not been proven, and Putin's declaration was also interesting.²⁸

"Now the state, using market methods, is safeguarding its interests. I think this is quite normal".
Vladimir .V. Putin

Another key sector damaged by Putin's renationalization was banking, in which five big state-owned banks were buying up smaller competitors. Also some heavy machinery companies, notably Uralmash, have recovered, but its mother company, OMZ, who was sold to Gazprom for inexplicable reasons. Another decent private corporation, Siloviye Mashiny, was similarly sold to Unified Energy Systems, thus diverting the latter from its core activities. In the oversized Russian aircraft industry, a few small private companies have recorded success, but they are now to be merged with the big, dying state enterprises into a huge Air Union Corporation. Transactions like these are proliferating throughout Russia's big business sector at an ever-increasing speed. Some owners are friendly with the Kremlin and well paid, while others having neglected their relations with the Kremlin are paid little, but sell in any case because they fear ending up like Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

The internal strategy of Putin was clear he was crashing everything that stood in front of his regime and centralized government's power as much as possible. But the lack was appearing in international political relations, precisely in Kosovo. The NATO alliance

²⁷ BBC News. 16 June, 2004 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/3213505.stm>

²⁸The International legal team of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev. <http://www.khodorkovskycenter.com/history-background>

was bombing Russia's Balkan satellite Serbia, and all of the NATO member states were involved to some degree. The legitimacy of NATO's bombing campaign in Kosovo has been the subject of debate in international law think tanks. Also NATO did not have the backing of the United Nations Security Council (UNSCR), because the war was opposed by two permanent members with ties to ex-Yugoslavia, the People's Republic of China and Russia threatening to use veto on any UNSC resolution authorizing use of force against Yugoslavia. Despite this strong opposition, NATO's bombing campaign started and lasted 78 days, from March 24 to June 11, 1999, involving up to 1,000 aircraft operating mainly from bases in Aviano (Italy). Following the NATO military campaign, the involvement of Russian peacekeepers proved to be tense and challenging for NATO and its European partners. Without prior communication and coordination with NATO forces, the Russian army entered Kosovo from Bosnia and seized the capital Pristina's airport. The act was clear, the Russians were trying to signalize that they are back in international political and military scene, and they are not going in compliance with western allies when it comes to their strategic interest. In the same time they wanted to show to the world that passive Russia is gone and a new beginning is to come.

78 days of American-led NATO bombing campaign, liberated Kosovo region from repressive Serb control and genocide. Its final status was left unresolved under a compromise of UN Security Council resolution 1244. The United Nations has administered the region, and NATO is protecting it, ever since.²⁹ This NATO intervention was a big crackdown for Russia and his satellites; it was a first big humiliation for Putin's government who just came in power. The Kremlin's allies would see the inability of Moscow to defend strategic partner Serbia as an exposure of Russia's international weakness. In their eyes, Russia would have abandoned Serbia not once, but twice. NATO and the European Union have now absorbed, or at least determined the future of all Central Europe, the Baltics and the Balkans.

For Putin this situation of western influence and expansion was intolerant since the U.S. led coalition with NATO, and EU partnership have become active players in Russia's sphere of interest.³⁰ Membership to EU and NATO has become very attractive for ex-Soviet satellites like Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia because these countries were seeking prosperity and security in Western alliance (EU, NATO) precisely because they feared of Russian pressure and aggression like in the past. Putin was familiar with this situation and has shown intention to do something in order to stop this scenario happening, we will see later on his movements. Nevertheless, failure on Kosovo case, Putin's next success was re-nationalization, and economic growth in Russia. Gross

²⁹ <http://www.nato.int/kosovo/history.htm>, updated 15 July 1999.

³⁰ By: Richard Holbruke. The Washington Post | March 14, 2007. <http://www.nysun.com/opinion/putins-test-in-kosovo/50452/>.

Domestic Product (GDP) was over 5.5% in 2001, following increases of 5.5% and 8.3% in 1999 and 2000 respectively, and sustained in 2001 despite the sharp downturn in the world economy as a whole. There is clear evidence of a significant revival of production and investment in Russia. According to official statistics, in 2001 Russian industrial production grew nearly 5%, construction by 9.9%, agricultural production by 6.8%, and investment in the productive sector by almost 9%. According to estimates by the Institute of the World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), Russia's GDP in 2002 amounted to 2.8 percent of the world's figure, slightly up from 2.7 percent in 2000. In the previous 40 years, this index (both in Russia and in the former Soviet Union) continued to decrease.

Interestingly, Russia's GDP per capita has traditionally exceeded that of other countries and the world as a whole. In 1980 it was 120% higher than the rest of the world's figure. Ten years later, it was 100% higher, and at the turn of century it was higher by only 10%. The growth rate for Russia in 2002 is estimated at 20%. Russia is highly involved in the world economy and international labor markets – its export quota exceeds 40% of the GDP calculated on the basis of the current exchange rate.³¹

The machine-building sector, which suffered particularly severely from the post-1990 collapse of capital investment and the transformation of Russia's economic structure to "Third-World-style" export of raw materials, shows signs of coming back to life. Aside from a partial, but significant revival of the domestic investment cycle, from 2000 to 2001 there was a 21% increase in exports of machinery, equipment, transport vehicles, and other products of the Russian machine industry.

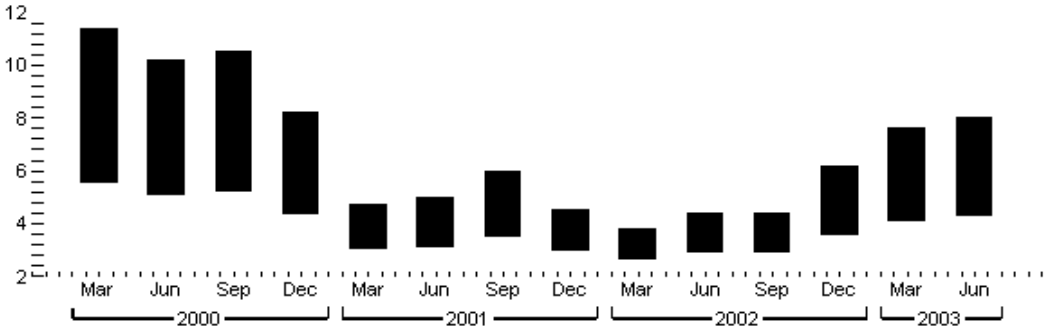


Fig 1: Russia's economic growth barometer.³²

The products of the oil and gas industry remained the most important item in the structure of Russian exports in the year 2001. Concentrated in large holdings, practically the entire oil and gas industry was represented among the top-100 exporters and

³¹ By: Stanley Fischer IMF, Moscow, June 19, 2001. www.imf.org/external/np/speeches/2001/061901.htm.
³² Fig 1. <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/Economics/GDP-Growth.aspx?Symbol=RUB>

accounted for 72.1% of all foreign trade sales made by the companies included in the rating. The second important groups of export products are metals and metal waste. Their share in the overall Russian exports in 2001 continued to decrease and was down from 2.5% points to 14.6%. Cast iron was the only exception: its sales increased by 63% owing to the increase in the actual volume of exports, and by only 8% owing to their price. This was also reflected in our rating: the share of metallurgical companies in the exports of the Top-100 was 17.7% (in 2000 - 19.1%).

It was October 18, 2000, when the biggest catastrophe of the year happened, actually Russian nuclear submarine “Kursk” was announced as sank in deep waters of the Barents Sea, after two unexplained explosions on August 12, 2000. The Kursk was lost during naval exercises on August 12. Russian officials say 118 men died on the ship. Putin said it was Russia's moral duty to recover the Kursk and give a decent burial to those who lost their lives. A total of 69 bodies have been recovered from Kursk, including 12 retrieved a year ago. In October, a senior government official said the disaster had been caused by an explosion at the one of Kursk's torpedoes, but added it remained unclear why it had detonated on board. Appearing for an hour interview on CNN's Larry King show, Putin through a translator answered questions about the recent loss of a Russian navy submarine.

“We need to look into the status of our armed forces. It was not the first incident of a kind, such incidents happened both in the Soviet Union and the United States. The question is ... to analyze it thoroughly.... and maybe jointly, with our partners, to work out a more efficient rule of conduct at the high seas, like we have been able to do with our joint scientific and research policies in outer space”. Vladimir .V. Putin³³

This incident and Putin’s slow reaction caused a critique in the public opinion and among Russian citizens, causing fall in his popularity. Putin’s ratings have sink down from over 70 % in late July 2000, to just over 60 % in September of that year. The reputation of Russia's military chiefs has suffered even more. The public is still asking questions about the real cause of Kursk disaster and accusing the west of involvement in disaster, this is the easiest way in Russia to pass the blame worldwide opinion and military experts were in high concern regarding incident, because of the possible leak of nuclear radiation from submarine. But the biggest concern came after Russia’s refusal to create mutual emergency team to face with problem. Russians were refusing help and saying that, they will handle situation by they own. It was Saturday 16, June, 2001 when

³³By:Jonathan.D.Austin.September.8,2000.<http://archives.cnn.com/2000/WORLD/europe/09/08/russia.putin.03>.

U.S. President George Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin have met for the first time in Ljubljana summit. Despite high expectations the summit is being judged as successful by both sides, even though it leaves Russia and the U.S. little closer to resolving the issues that divide them. The atmosphere was in spirit of friendly co operation with two leaders getting on far better than expected, and with Bush's interesting comment on summit.

“I looked the man in the eye. I was able to get a sense of his soul”

George. W. Bush.³⁴

In the wake of the tragedy of September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. Putin agreed to the establishment of coalition military bases in Central Asia, before and during the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan. Russian nationalists objected the establishment of any U.S. military presence on the territory of former Soviet Union, and expected from Putin to keep the U.S. out of Central Asian republics or at the very least extract a commitment from Washington to withdraw from these bases as soon as the immediate military necessity had passed. Despite this opposition U.S. President George W. Bush had openly threatened for war against terrorism in Iraq, months prior to the U.S. invasion there Bush argued that after September 11 attacks, Saddam Hussein's regime was threat to security and peace of U.S. and the Euro-Asian region, because of its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and it links to international terrorism that had ties with the September 11 attacks. He assured American nation that he will pursue hard politics against evil forces that human kind is facing in modern times. In May 24, 2002 Russia and the U.S. announce a new agreement on strategic nuclear weapons reduction. Two sides agreed to cut their nuclear arsenals from over 6,000 missiles to about 2,000 in the next 10 years. Putin criticized it, but accepted it. The U.S. withdrawal from the ABM treaty came as it proceeded its development of missile defense system

“President Putin and I have signed a treaty that will substantially reduce our strategic nuclear warhead arsenals to the range of 1,700 to 2,200, the lowest level in decades. This treaty liquidates the cold war legacy of nuclear hostility between our countries. We've also signed a joint declaration of new strategic relationship that charts a course toward greater security, political and economic cooperation between Russia and the United States. Our nations will continue to cooperate closely in the war against global terror”.

George. W. Bush.³⁵

³⁴ By: Caroline Wyatt .Ljubljana_Saturday, 16 June, 2001.<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1392791.stm>

³⁵The White House office of the Press Secretary.May,24,2002/http://www.nti.org/e_research/official_docs/pres/52402.Bush.pres.pdf

As his strategy of multi-polar world Putin made great efforts to improve relations with the remaining world powers. In July 2001 he met with Chinese president Jiang Zemin were the two leaders signed a "friendship treaty" which called for improving trade between China and Russia, and also committing them to oppose jointly much of the framework for international security that United States and its EU allies are seeking to implement after the end of cold war. Composed of 25 articles, the treaty joins Russia and China formally in opposing the United States missile plans and places Russia more firmly behind China's claim of sovereignty over the island of Taiwan. It also strengthens military cooperation between Beijing and Moscow while rejecting the intervention that NATO undertook in 1999 in the Balkans to stop the ethnic cleansing of civilians in Kosovo.³⁶

In the other side of the medallion something else was going on, the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) was established at the NATO-Russia Summit in Rome on 28 May 2002. It replaced the Permanent Joint Council (PJC), a forum for consultation and cooperation created by the 1997 NATO-Russia founding act on mutual relations, cooperation and security, which remains the formal basis for NATO-Russia relations. The (NRC) is a mechanism for consultation, consensus-building, cooperation, joint decision and joint action, in which the individual NATO member states and Russia work as equal partners on a wide spectrum of security issues of common interest (struggle against terrorism, crisis management, non-proliferation WMD, arms control and confidence-building measures, theatre missile defense, search and rescue at sea, military-to-military cooperation and defense reform, civil emergencies, new threats and challenges), all this include agreement on members of the NATO-Russia council who will work with a view to identifying further areas of cooperation.³⁷

At their last summit in Moscow on 29 May 2002 Russia and the European Union announced a deal granting Russia the status of a "market economy". Romano Prodi, the president of the European Commission, declared that the EU recognized Russia as market economy and emphasized that this recognition will clear the way for easier relations with the EU and the reduction in anti-dumping cases against Russia. He said the gesture was a "recognition and reward for the major reform Russia has undertaken. In exchange, Russia committed itself to the gradual elimination of restrictions to trade and other steps aimed at liberalization of its energy markets and the gradual implementation of market principles in its energy policies. The 2003 EU security strategy (ESS) highlights Russia as a key player in geo-political and security terms, at

³⁶By:Patric.E.Tyler.Published:Tuesday,July17,2001.<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/07/17/world/russia-and-china-sign-friendship-pact.html>.

³⁷ <http://www.nato-russia-council.info/HTM/EN/documents27may97.shtml>

both global and regional level. Russia is a key factor in the UN Security Council, and due to its historical- geographical stand and cultural links, it is one of the key players in the common European neighborhood policy. Russia is also a major supplier of energy products for the EU market. Russia is a large, dynamic market for EU goods and services, with considerable economic growth. The EU’s market, on the other hand, is by far the most important destination for Russian exports. Companies from the EU are the main investors in Russia. Russia and the EU Member States are all members of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe. The ESS predictions came to be accurate, because on June 23, 2007 Gazprom and ENI signed a memorandum of understanding to execute “South Stream” project, which is aimed to strengthening the European energy security. It is another real step toward executing the Gazprom strategy to diversify the Russian natural gas supply routes.



Fig.2 South Stream’s offshore section layout

The total length of the offshore section will be around 900 km, maximum depth – over 2 km and full capacity – 30 bcm. The submerged section is planned for commissioning in 2013. Two possible routes are under review for South Stream’s onshore section, from Bulgaria and from Turkey.³⁸ This Russian mega project let EU countries in difficult position regarding energy import, because the western partners, with support of U.S. were in process of building “Nabucco” pipeline project like alternative to Russian one. . Nabucco project represents a new gas pipeline connecting the Caspian region to Europe. The consortium, “Nabucco Gas Pipeline International” was founded by five transit countries at Austrian initiative.

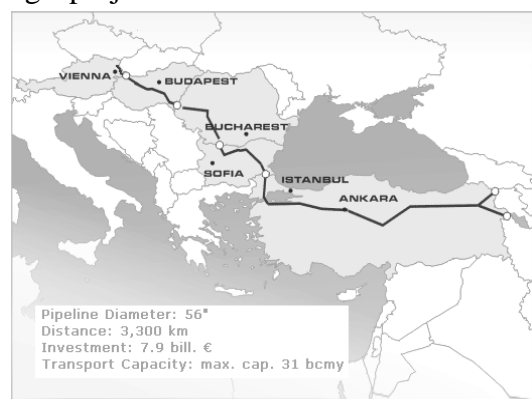


Fig.3 Nabucco pipeline & new gas transmission possibility

It stretches through Middle East and Egypt via Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary to Western Europe. The pipeline length is approximately 3,300 km, starting at the Georgian- Turkish or Iranian-Turkish border. Construction costs are now estimated at €6

³⁸ “Gazprom”. www.gazprom.ru/eng/articles/article27150.shtml.

billion (up from the 2007 estimate of €5 billion). Western “Nabucco” and the Kremlin-backed “South Stream” projects are racing reciprocally for gas supplies in markets of Central Asia and Central Europe. Chances are that, who finishes energy project first will have strategic settlement and be in huge advantage regarding too other. The market is enormous, even though the EU countries agreed to lower amount of CO₂ gases in future. It is obvious that everyday increase in energy needs is forcing EU countries to look for the additional supply for energy. Seen in geopolitical perspective, the owner of energy market will have a considerable influence in the region.

It was May 08, 2003 when president Putin announced withdrawal of the Russian military forces from Kosovo, bringing to an end the country's four-year participation in the international peacekeeping mission over there. This mission was installed from Russian military officials without prior agreement with NATO alliance, as the 10th and final unit of troops and equipment left, the commander of Russian contingent said that, his forces made a great contribution to strengthening security and establishing normality in the troubled Serbian province of Kosovo, he said. While defense officials in Moscow have cited financial considerations as among the reasons for deployment, while insisting that Russia remains committed to Balkan region and its obligations to UN, but not precisising obligations to NATO.

While during the 2003 Iraq crisis, Putin opposed Washington's move to invade Iraq without provision of United Nations Security Council resolution, authorizing the use of military force. Washington approach was little more unilateral and didn't count for Russian opposes. Acting to this opposes U.S. and its allies launched the war with an invasion of Iraq on March 20, 2003. U.S. and British forces (together with smaller numbers of Australian and Polish soldiers) invaded Iraq from Kuwait. They faced Iraqi Military of less than 400,000 troops, and artillery support of 10 armored and mechanized divisions. The situation in the EU countries was complicated due to different approaches of French and British regarding this war. France was unconvinced of Iraqi threat and possession of the weapons of massive destruction in Iraqis hands. Contrary the British Prime Minister Blair is known to have thought the Iraqi threat is serious and real even before 9/11. He believed strongly in the need to sustain the transatlantic relationship and clearly thought he could influence the Washington to work within the UN framework, and France to allow the UNSC to support U.S. military action.³⁹ Putin has called on U.S. military action to stop, saying it cannot be justified and named it "a big political error". He mentioned that U.S. unilateral approach is not in accordance of the partnership proclaimed by Bush and it goes contrary to our reciprocal respect of the differentness. At

³⁹By:Sir.Brian.Crowe.American Diplomacy Publisher.17,February,2003.http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/archives_roll/2004_01-03/crowe_euus/crowe_euus.html

the same time, Dumas left-wingers and the far-right Vladimir Zhirinovsky's LDPR party have held protest in front of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, in opposition of the war in Iraq and as they call it, the imperial policy of United States in the world.

5. Russia in development 2004-2008

In March 14, 2004 Vladimir Putin won his second elections, and is re-elected in post of president of Russia. Supporters of Putin's "United Russia Party" were celebrating victory after his party gained 64.1% of votes. The "Communists" came a distant second with about 11.5%, followed by Ultra-Nationalist "Liberal Democratic Party" taking 8.4%. A "Just Russia" the opposition party also got over the new 7% barrier.⁴⁰ International observers issued a skeptical report on Russia's elections, describing electorate poll as "not fair" and highlighting numerous flaws including "unprecedented" abuse of office by President Vladimir Putin. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) announced that Sunday's parliamentary elections had failed to meet the organization's commitments and democratic standards.

"It was not a fair election"

Goran. Lennmarker , Head of the OSCE's parliamentary assembly.⁴¹

A central aim for Russia's presidency under Vladimir Putin has been to consolidate the state and secure a constitutional mode of politics. Putin has reformed Russia's federal structure under Yeltsin, reined in the regional elite, expelled out external over-mighty actors such as the oligarchs from politics, and presented a vision for a "responsible" press and multi party system. Contributors cover the character of Russia's presidential regime under Putin, the performance of political parties, the role of the media in campaigning, the political role of Russia's oligarchs, and the developments of Russia's feckless civil society.⁴² They suggest that Russia's strong-powered presidency yields uncertain prospects for the development of genuine democracy. Are they right it is to study? But one thing is obvious we deal with hard and authoritarian regime. Russian youth group "Nashi" meaning "Ours" in English, become a funded instrument of Mr. Putin's political control, it is the largest of a handful youth movements created by Putin, to fight for the hearts and minds of Russia's young people. It has organized mass

⁴⁰ OSCE/Documents/Final.Report on the Presidential Election in Russia1/www.osce.org/odihr-elections/item_12_14342.html.

⁴¹Luke Harding. 3 December 2007.<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/dec/03/russia.lukeharding1>

⁴² New York Times.april13,2004.<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2004/apr/13/20040413-0903017171r>

marches in support of Putin and has a role of ideological cultivation, some say indoctrination of today's youth, the first new age generation to come in Russia. Nashi emerged in the wake of youth-led protests in other Post-Soviet republics, especially in Ukraine in 2004. Others call them "Putin's Generation, when asked why they are called Putin's generation? Nashi national spokeswoman Anastasia Suslova explained that since Putin came to power, lot of positive developments emerged in country.

"It is because Putin has qualitatively changed Russia. He brought stability and the opportunity for modernization and development of the country. Thus we the young people like me, for instance, I am 22 and these eight years were the longest part of my conscious life when we were growing up, and the country was changing in good with us".
Anstazia Suslova⁴³

In our question why Putin wins many scholars and political scientist find answer that, Vladimir Putin is the most sincere figure in contemporary Russian history. From the very beginning of his rule he has directed and almost completed a broad antidemocratic counterrevolution in Russia. He has amputated many civil rights in the country, among them some crucial freedoms, as freedom of information and opposition critique. He has significantly restricted freedom of association and assembly, as well as the right to stage peaceful marches, protests, and demonstrations. Some defend theory that system prevails because there is no independent justice in country. Some say that, factor of 100% merger between business and government authority is one which gives government political strength. Such a system always gives business an incentive to be in Duma and Government. Another element is the defense industry, with its 2 million employees which are in some way disabused of the central nationalistic ideals. The defense budget was increased by 50% in 2002 to \$ 2.2 billion and further increase of \$2.7 billion in 2003. All this money goes to R&D, arms modernization and maintaining the inflated nuclear arsenal. Less than one quarter of 2500 defense related firms are subject to the Russian central government supervision. But in the last experts opinion is that, there is something else out there and the key element in whole this puzzle is FSB (Russian Secret Service). The main successor of the Soviet Secret Service KGB, the FSB is formed after the breakup of the Soviet Union and the creation of the Russian Federation. The FSB slowly took the responsibilities of a number of agencies. Most recently, it absorbed FAPSI, the Russian equivalent of the United States "National Security Agency". The FSB's power is unexplainably connected to the influence of Putin as a former director, and a network of former officers that are installed in crucial sectors of Russian government and its society.⁴⁴ All these mechanisms of power are in strict

⁴³ By: Steven.Lee.Myers. July.8, 2007.<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/08/world/europe/08moscow.html>

⁴⁴ By: John Pike. Jan.28.2008.<http://www.fas.org/irp/world/russia/fsb/index.html>

control by government. It is estimated that among Russia's 1,000 leading political figures, 78% have worked for FSB or its predecessors. With this sort of clout at its disposal, FSB carries out intelligence, counterintelligence, counterterrorism, economic crime investigation, electronic intelligence, border control and most important "Social Monitoring". It is worth to mention that, after the fall of the Soviet Union, internal security functions previously performed by the second, third and fifth chief directorates and the seventh directorate were initially assigned to a new Ministry of Security. But that agency was dissolved on December 1993, and replaced by the Federal Counterintelligence Service FSK. This 75,000-person agency was subsequently re-designated in the Federal Security Service (FSB). Having in option all these security structures in disposal, Putin as the chief commander has enormous political abilities. And it isn't hard to guess how come he wins all the time.⁴⁵

It was September 1, 2004 – when more than 330 people, half of them children, were killed in attack by Chechen rebels on a school in the southern town of Beslan. Chechen separatist leader Shamil Basayev took responsibility for the hostage taking action, but blamed the outcome on the Russian president Vladimir Putin. Putin orders a crackdown at rebels on third day of the standoff. Russian security forces destroyed the building using tanks, thermo baric rockets and other heavy weapons. A series of explosions shook the school, followed by a fire which engulfed the building and triggered chaotic gun battle between Chechen hostage-takers and Russian security forces. Ultimately, at least 334 hostages were killed, including 186 school children. Hundreds more were wounded or reported missing. Putin reaction was immediate and his comment was.

"This is challenge to all of Russia, to all our people. This is an attack against all of us."

Vladimir .V. Putin

And later on he was demanding more power, which he thinks are needed to fight terrorism in more effective way. In effort to return its influence in its traditional sphere of interest Russia finds itself deeply implicated in the 2004 presidential elections in the neighboring country of Ukraine. The Ukrainian presidential election held in November and December 2004 were mostly a political battle between Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich supported by Putin, and former Prime Minister and opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko supporter of west .Viktor Yushchenko won about 52% of votes comparing, to Yanukovich's 44%.Causing reaction among Russian government officials stating that votes were not legitimate. Russia's inspired electoral platform was calling on Ukrainians to abandon their aspirations for NATO and EU membership, and promised them to make Russian the second official language, and introduce dual Ukrainian-Russ

⁴⁵By: John Pike.17-12-2006. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/russia/fsb.htm>

citizenship.⁴⁶

On 25 November 2004 at the EU summit, Putin said that Ukraine's vote needed no outside affirmation. In his speech in front of EU representatives he warned that. "We have no moral right to push a big European state to any kind of massive disorder."

Vladimir .V. Putin

On 27 November 2004 Sergei Yastrzhembskii, a top assistant to Russian president Vladimir Putin, accused politicians in the United States and Europe of fomenting political change in the former Soviet Territory stating that.

"Certain forces in the West have decided to test the strength of post-Soviet territory."

Sergei Yastrzhembskii

On 02 December 2004, the Russian parliament passed a resolution accusing the west of taking "destructive actions" in Ukraine by pushing a radicalized portion of Ukraine's population towards dangerous actions. The Russian foreign ministry also accused Europe of interfering in Ukraine's internal affairs and supporting a "breach" of the country's constitution. On 07 December 2004 on a two-day meeting of foreign Ministers from the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) member states heard a warning from Russian foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov that Moscow might withhold its budget contributions unless the organization changes its operating methods. Following April 25, 2005 Putin in his nation addressing speech, told the nation that the collapse of Soviet Empire was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century, and has fostered separatist movements inside Russia

"First and foremost it is worth acknowledging that the dissolve of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century, as for the Russian people, it became a genuine tragedy. Tens of millions of our fellow citizens and countrymen found themselves beyond the borders of Russian territory"

Vladimir .V. Putin.⁴⁷

The NATO representatives are unambiguously indicating that any measure by former Soviet States as Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan or Kazakhstan to distance them from Russia political influence, would receive a warm welcome in Brussels and Washington.⁴⁸ In 28 April 2005 Putin visited Israel and Egypt, with mission of sending mix messages to officials. Thus he offered to host a Middle East peace conference in Moscow, and in return he offered the Arab/Islamic world several opportunities, like

⁴⁶<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/ukraine/election-2004-r.htm>

⁴⁷ The Associated Press. April. 25, 2005.<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7632057>

⁴⁸By:MikhailTroitskiy."Woodrow Wilson" International Center for Scholars.<http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/9286-23.cfm>.

arms and tanks. He promised to support Egypt's aim for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, and while insisting that his country can sell advanced missiles to Syria, missiles which Israel fears will alter the power balance in the region. He in fact came to Syria's defense, calling for conciliatory policies toward the regime in Damascus. He reasserted Russia's right to sell the Palestinians armored personnel carriers, while continuing to aid the nuclear development of Iran, particularly the Russian-built, 1,000-megawatt "Bushehr" nuclear reactor, something which deeply concerns United States and Israel. He named that Russia's Iranian partners put all their nuclear programs under complete international control. But the real reason for Putin's visit in region seems to be an intense to restore influence. The Soviets were always keen on the Middle East the region was practically their backyard where Iran and Iraq were Russia's trading partners.⁴⁹

Today the Russians, under Putin, are trying to regain their presence and influence, in any circumstances. They also fear of possible expansion of western alliance (US, NATO and EU) triggered from conflicts which are engineered by U.S., like conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq, or maybe in North Korea, Iran, Syria, and why not in Cuba. Russian may feel threaten geopolitically as well as economically, experts say. Hence Putin's attempts to team up with China and India, is seen as the tentative to establish multi-polar world and to counterbalance this upcoming Western threat. Also his attempts to establish military cooperation with Kyrgyzstan and Armenia, countries which are helpful to seize counter nationalistic opposition at home. He also does not diminish the role of neighboring countries like Ossetia- Ingushetia, Chechnya, Tajikistan, Tran's Dniestria, and Georgia-Abkhazia.

On 18 August 2005 Russia and Chinese armed forces have begun their first joined military exercise in the eight-day operation, which got underway with consultations between military delegations from both countries. The exercise was held in city of Vladivostok, in Russia's Far East involving naval ships and aircraft. Analysts predict that China and Russia were not liked reciprocally in past, but today they are signaling and preparing to counter balance U.S. dominance in international affairs. And this exercise is the fine example of upcoming strategic partnership between two countries.⁵⁰

According to the "Stockholm International Peace Research Institute", (SIPRI) yearbook-2006 Russia was the world leader in terms of exports of weapons and military hardware between 2001 and 2005. According to the yearbook, the largest world weapons exporters were Russia, then U.S., passed with France, Germany, and the UK.⁵¹ Russia accounted

⁴⁹ See report by: Dr. Sam Vaknin."United Press International"

⁵⁰ BBC News. 27. December, 2004. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4128337.stm>

⁵¹ [http://yearbook2006.sipri.org/files/yb06ap09c.pdf/Appendix 9C](http://yearbook2006.sipri.org/files/yb06ap09c.pdf/Appendix%209C). By: Julian Cooper.

for 31% while U.S. for 30% of world weapons exports in the mentioned period report says. SIPRI experts explained Russia's leadership in this sector by the fact that Russia sells a lot of weapons cheaper than other suppliers. Its space industry is still not comparable to U.S. and Russia is much concerned about this. U.S. space industry consists of over 600 satellites, compared to 100 Russian ones.

While the United States plans to build anti-missile shield in Check Republic and Poland, and withdraws from anti ballistic missile treaty, the situation adds urgency for Russian authorities to intervene and catch up. That's why president Vladimir Putin's reaction was immediate, in reassuring Russians that America's missile shield could be defeated, with a silver bullet called (Bulava) successfully tested in February 2004. I will quote him.

"No country in the world as yet has such arms it will be capable of hitting targets in continents away with hypersonic speed, high precision, and the ability of wide maneuver."
Vladimir .V. Putin⁵²

It is known that Russian launchers "Soyuz U and Tsiklon" are still reliable and that's why EU, in "Barcelona summit" decided to give "Galileo" project to Russian launching facilities and employ their engineers. But this industry has it dark side because it sales missile technology to failed and rogue states in the globe.⁵³ That's why almost all ex Russian satellites like Romania broke up and formed their own space agency named "ROSA" (Romanian Space Agency) in 1991, Hungary created Hungarian Space Agency, also the Czech Republic who is cooperating with European Space Agency (ESA) on a variety of space-related commercial and civil projects.

Russian economy has transformed from industrial and military power into a developing country with an overwhelming dependence on a single category of commodities which are energy products.⁵⁴ According to the "Oil and Gas Journal's 2008 survey Russia has proven oil reserves of 60 billion barrels, most of which are located in western Siberia between the Ural Mountains and the Central Siberian Plateau. Eastern Siberia is one area where little exploration has taken place.⁵⁵ The Russian Ministry of Natural Resources estimated in 2005 that A+B+C1 reserves (roughly equivalent to proven + probable reserves) in east. Siberian provinces totaled 4.7 billion barrels. Whether state owned or private enterprises they serve as potent long arms of Kremlin to help implement its policies faithfully. The statistics from the oil cartel OPEC reflect a trend showing Russians who periodically surpass Saudi Arabia as the world's biggest oil producers on and off, since 2002. According to OPEC Russia extracted 9.236 million barrels of oil a

⁵² By: Scott Peterson | Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor June 16, 2004 edition.

⁵³ Se report by: Dr. Sam Vaknin. "United Press International". Page 15

⁵⁴ Se report by: Dr. Sam Vaknin. "United Press International". Page 69

⁵⁵ RIA Novosti. 01. 02. 2007 <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20070201/60026020.html>

day in June 2008, it means 46,000 more than Saudi Arabia.⁵⁶ The statistics also showed that Russian production in the first half of 2008 year increased to 235.8 million tons, a year-on-year improvement of 2.3 per cent. But what is most surprising is the report about foreign investments in oil production in Russia, where it says that over the past five years, trade between Russia and Great Britain has doubled, to reach \$16.5 billion. With the steady rise of British investment into the Russian economy, now in 2008 at \$26.3 billion, Britain has become Russia's largest investor. In 2007 U.K exports to Russia reached an all-time high of 2.8 billion pounds, an increase of 36% on 2006. According to the Russian Ministry for Economic Development and Trade, there are currently around 400 British companies operating in Russia. It was 28 February 2005 at "Bratislava Summit" when despite all the overt demonstrations of friendship between George Bush and Vladimir Putin summit could not mask the growing tensions between the two leaders. Washington is demanding the coordination of Russia with U.S. foreign policy, and complete opening of Russian economy to international capital flows. And prior to the Bratislava summit U.S. president Bush has sharply attacked the Russian government.

"For Russia to make progress as a European nation the Russian government must renew its commitment to democracy and the rule of law, we recognize that reform will not happen overnight. We must always remind Russia, however, that our alliance stands for a free press, a vital opposition, the sharing of power, and the rule of law. And the United States and all European countries should place democratic reform at the heart of their dialogue with Russia."

Gorge. W. Bush⁵⁷

Putin rejected the Bush criticism, and in his interview to newspapers declared.

"Naturally, the fundamental principles of democracy and the institutions of democracy must be adapted to the reality of today's life in Russia, to our traditions and history,"

Vladimir. V. Putin

Regarding Iran and North Korea, Bush declared agreement with Putin that countries like these should "not possess nuclear weapons". However Putin has always justified its supply of nuclear technology to Iran, with claim that it serves only to civilian purposes. Bush mentioned other points of dispute like, the sale of Russian air defense missiles to Syria. For Bush, this was a clear signal that Putin's Russia is not going to be a reliable partner when it comes to respect western democratic values and ideologies. Even thou

⁵⁶By:Andrew Osborn,Wednesday,Aug 23,2006http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=10397661

⁵⁷ By Justus Leicht.28 February 2005.<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2005/feb2005/bush-f28.shtml>.

many hoped for so, even his administration, which in beginning of his mandate saw Putin as the potential partner. That's why in 2007 "Transparency international" corruption ratings report Russia is ranked with 143rd place in the world, sharing it with countries like Gambia, Indonesia and Togo.⁵⁸ While "Reporters without Borders" list, Russia in 147rd place for the free press from total of 168 countries, listing it after Sudan and Zimbabwe.⁵⁹ On July 15, 2006 the U.S. President Bush traveled to Russian city of St. Petersburg, to attend the 2006 G-8 Summit. The G-8 Summit included leaders from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, the United States, and the representatives from European Union. As at previous G-8 Summits, the leaders discussed continued cooperation on a broad range of issues concerning international economy, security, and political issues. In his first official speech to G8 summit in "Saint Petersburg" Putin warmly welcomed all the participants and announced the opening of the summit with these words.

"This will be the first time that Russia will chair this respected international forum. I hope that the experience we have accumulated since joining the G8 will ensure respect for tradition and consolidation of our efforts. Russia as the presiding country, regards it as its duty to give a fresh impetus to efforts to find solutions to key international problems in energy, education and healthcare." Vladimir. V. Putin

The summit had long discussion on variety of topics starting from: global energy security, fight against infectious diseases, world economy and WTO, corruption, international security, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Iran's advanced nuclear program, DPRK and ballistic missiles, global initiative to combat nuclear terrorism, violation of United Nations Security Council arms embargoes, Middle East, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan/Darfur, Nagorno-Karabakh and lot of other topics.⁶⁰ *Photo2.US president George W. Bush sits next to Russian president Vladimir Putin during a working session at the G8 Summit at the Konstantinovsky Palace Complex in Strelna, Russia, July 17, 2006.*⁶¹



⁵⁸ Transparency International, 2007 .<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0781359.html>.

⁵⁹ Reporters Without Borders. http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=24025

⁶⁰G8 Summit, St. Petersburg, 17 July 2006. <http://en.g8russia.ru/docs/25.html>

⁶¹ Photo2 by: Eric Draper G8 Summit at the Konstantinovsky Palace Complex in Strelna, Russia, July 17, 2006

Summit finished its discussion with the offer of the Federal Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany to host next Summit in 2008. On October 7, 2006 Anna Politkovskaya a famous Russian journalist was found shot dead in the elevator of her apartment building. She was a respected Russian journalist, a book's author and human rights activist. She was known for her opposition to Chechen conflict and Putin's autocratic policies. Politkovskaya made her name by reporting from Chechnya, where many journalists and humanitarian workers have been kidnapped or killed. She was arrested and subjected to mock execution by Russian military forces and poisoned on the way to participate in negotiations during the Beslan school hostage crisis, but survived and continued her reporting. She authored several books about the Chechen wars, as well as Putin's Russia. She received numerous prestigious international awards for her professional work. Dozens of public figures and admirers of her work gathered at a cemetery on the outskirts of Moscow at her funeral. No high-ranking Russian officials could be seen at the ceremony. There was widespread international reaction, where Russian authorities were accused of negligence in doing nothing to prevent her murder, or even of actual involvement in her assassination. The Russian authorities denied this accusation, and held themselves as not responsible for her murder.

In 24 November 2006 a former Russian security officer Alexander Litvinenko has died in a London hospital, after apparently is being poisoned with radioactive polonium 210. Litvinenko was a security agent in the FSB after transferring from the Russian Military. He then managed to rise in the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. He is reported to have fallen out with Putin, then head of the FSB in the late 1990s, after failing to crack down on corruption within the organization. Litvinenko is thought to have been close to journalist Anna Politkovskaya, who was murdered and said that he was investigating her murder. Litvinenko was subsequently arrested on charges of abusing his office, and spent nine months in a remand centre before he fled outside the Russia⁶².

Later on he wrote "Blowing up Russia, Terror from Within" in which he stated that it was FSB agents and not Chechen rebels, who carried out the bombing attack on apartment blocks in 1999 in Moscow. That attack killed more than 300 people. Complaining of persecution in 2000, Litvinenko fled to UK where he got an asylum. This case brought to the growing tensions between British and Russian authorities. Namely the British's Greater London's Metropolitan Police Service on Terrorism, found evidence of Russian government involvement in the poisoning, and they pointed to the member of FSO (Federal Protective Service) Andrei Lugovoy. On 6 December 2006 the Metropolitan police announced that, it was treating Litvinenko's death as murder.

⁶² BBC News November 2006 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6163502.stm

In February 11, 2007 at the 43 Munich conferences Putin made some of his harshest criticism of the United States. He defended his country's arms sales to Iran as a way of reaching to that Middle Eastern power, which is under pressure from the United States and Europe to curtail its nuclear program. Russia has supplied some air defense weapons to Iran because, he said, "we don't want Iran to feel cornered".

Washington's unilateral, militaristic approach had made the world a more dangerous place than at any time during the cold war. And the U.S. desire to place antimissile systems in Eastern Europe could further upset the international balance of power and embolden the United States in its foreign policy decisions. Russia would pursue an independent foreign policy he said.

"We are not going to change this tradition today. The United States has overstepped its national borders in every way. Nobody feels secure anymore, because nobody can take safety behind the stone wall of international law." Vladimir .V. Putin.⁶³

The White House reaction was in line with Putin's comment, citrating spokesman Gordon Johndroe who replayed the Russian president strongly.

"We are surprised and disappointed with president Putin's comments. His accusations are wrong. We expect to continue cooperation with Russia in areas important to the international community such as counterterrorism and reducing the spread and threat of weapons of mass destruction." White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe

Putin didn't stop with this, in his Victory Day speech of May 9 2007 he compared the U.S. foreign policy as the "Hitler's Third Reich", in a speech on commemorating the 62nd anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany .The comments were the latest in a series of sharply worded Russian criticisms of the foreign policy of United States, on Iraq, missile defense, NATO expansion and, more broadly of United States unilateralism in foreign affairs. Some political analysts find the new tone as attempt to return, to cold war-style rhetoric by a country emboldened by petroleum wealth, which is desperate to regain its influence in the international political scene.Facing Lugovoy problem in relations with UK, on 22 May 2007 authorities in Moscow angrily said that, they would not hand over Andrei Lugovoy to British authorities, in a move which puts further strain on Russia's cooling relationship with the West.

"Russia is ready to conduct its own investigation of the Litvinenko case, if Britain stops politicizing it and produces the necessary materials, if British law enforcement produces relevant documents to the Russian prosecutor general's office, the possibility of conducting a corresponding probe in Russia could be considered, and we have

⁶³Geopolitical/weekly column/J.R.Nyquist..<http://www.financialsense.com/stormwatch/geo/pastanalysis/2007/0216.html> 02.16.2007.

experience of conducting such investigations. Meanwhile, Britain continues to insist that Russia should expel its citizen, thus pushing us to directly break the constitution”.

Yury Fedotov Russian ambassador to Great Britain.⁶⁴

In protest at the refusal of president Vladimir Putin to allow the extradition of the Andrei Lugovoy .Britain expels four Russian diplomats on 17 July 2007. The decision was hard reached, after lengthy discussions within UK Government officials and U.S. - EU allies. In his declaration for this issue British Secretary David Miliband said:

“Mr. Litvinenko, a British citizen, had suffered a horrifying and lingering death in front of his family after being poisoned with the radioactive polonium-210. That’s why British Government has chosen to expel four particular Russian diplomats in order to send a clear and proportionate signal about the seriousness of the case, but would not identify the diplomats by name or specify their position”.

David Miliband .British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Russian reaction was reciprocal they expelled four British diplomats and banned its officials from travelling to UK. Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin announced that Kremlin was suspending its cooperation with Britain in fighting against terrorism and would stop issuing visas to British officials.

“To our regret co-operation between Russia and Britain on issues of fighting terrorism becomes impossible”

Mikhail Kamynin Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman

While Putin decided to calm down the situation and, not to escalate this conflict with Britain. “I think relations between Russia and Britain will develop normally because both countries are interested in this, it is necessary to measure one's actions against common sense, respect the legitimate interests of partners and everything will be alright. I think we will overcome this mini crisis”.

Vladimir .V. Putin

Following the 2007 Peace Mission Military exercises between Russia and China, jointly conducted as the SCO member states on August 17, 2007. Putin together with Chinese leader Hu Jintao and other leaders of the SCO nations attended the exercise. He

⁶⁴ Interfax/interview .<http://www.interfax.com/17/408514/Interview.aspx>

announced the resumption on a permanent basis of long-distance patrol flights of Russia's strategic aircraft bombers.⁶⁵ These strategic flights were suspended in 1992 due to the improvement of security situation, 14 strategic bombers, support aircraft and aerial tankers were deployed.⁶⁶ For many western countries mainly US-EU, this strategic movement from Russian authorities meant that cold war patrol flights are turned back, and by so the Russians are trying to bring back the time that passed. The U.S. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack was quoted as saying in response that.

"If Russia feels as though they want to take some of these old aircraft out of mothballs and get them flying again, that's their decision".

US State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack

The announcement was made typically during the SCO summit in the light of Russian-Chinese military exercises, first-ever joint military exercise in history to be held on Russian territory. Some believe that Putin is inclined to set up an anti-NATO bloc or as to say the Russ-Asian version of OPEC in order to minimize the role of U.S.-EU led western alliance. When presented with the suggestion that "Western observers are already likening the SCO to a military organization, who by time would stand in opposition to NATO alliance". Putin's comments were very blurry concerning this issue.

"This kind of comparison is inappropriate in both, form and substance"

Vladimir. V. Putin

In the other side Russian General Staff Yuri Baluyevsky was quoted as saying that.

"There should be no talk of creating a military or political alliance or union of any kind, because this would contradict the founding principles of SCO".

Russian Chief of the General Staff Yuri Baluyevsky

Just for the readers notice, The "Shanghai Cooperation Organization" or (SCO) is an intergovernmental mutual-security organization, which was founded in 2001 by the leaders of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Its member states cover an area of over 30 million km², or about three fifths of Eurasia,

⁶⁵RIA Novosti, 17/ 08/ 2007 <http://en.rian.ru/Russia/20070817/72189719.html>.

⁶⁶SCO official site.http://english.scosummit2006.org/en_zxbb/2006-06/15/content_772.htm

with a population of 1.455 billion, about a quarter of the world's total.⁶⁷ Iran appears increasingly interested in joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and form a powerful axis with its twin pillars, China and Russia, in order to counterweight US power in the region. Should we have these facts into consideration?

6. Return of Russia to World Politics.

It was January 23, 2008 when NATO spokesman James Appathurai announced that NATO member states have decided to invite President Putin to attend an April 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest Romania.

“The NATO allies felt it was appropriate, given our relationship with Russia, to invite Russian president Vladimir Putin in 2008 summit, allies believed that Putin’s presence would provide added value to the summit and would help to clear the air”.

NATO Spokesman James Appathurai

Did NATO officials predict for following days to be hard and critical for both sides, or is it just their wish to have closer and friendly relations with the growing threat? Lot of people, who are familiar with international relations, will say that there is something of both approaches. And to be honest they are right. If you say why, see for upcoming events and you will have clearer picture. I will remind the reader the day of 17 February 2008, when Kosova’s Parliament unanimously endorsed a declaration of independence from Serbia. This came as result of the endless process of the negotiations between two parts in conflict, Kosovars and Serbs. Negotiations started in February 02, 2007, when the UN's special envoy Martti Ahtisaari presented a draft proposal for Kosova's future status. It seeks to protect Kosovo's minorities while giving the province the right to join International Organizations and adopt national symbols.⁶⁸ In March 26, 2007 -- Ahtisaari reported to the UN Security Council that Belgrade and Pristina cannot reach an agreement, and that internationally supervised independence is the only applicable solution for Kosovar problem. In April 03, 2007 the UN Security Council begins discussions on Ahtisaari plan, which is accepted by Albanian leaders, but rejected by Belgrade. July 20, 2007 a draft resolution based on the Ahtisaari plan is shelved due to opposition with veto from Russia.

August 10th a "troika" of mediators representing the EU, United States and Russia

⁶⁷<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/int/sco.htm>

⁶⁸ <http://www.unosek.org/unosek/en/statusproposal.html>

launches a new round of talks on Kosovo's status. November 29th -- The troika led talks to end, without any agreement from sides. January 16th the UN Security Council meets to discuss Kosova, but remains split over the issue.⁶⁹ Still unfamiliar with situation ahead Kosova's patience was melting up, and their wish to declare unilateral independence was grooving simultaneously with support from western allies, in head with U.S. Thus 17, February 2008 brought the parliament of Kosova in event, of declaration the independence based on Ahtisaari,s plan, which meant new state in Europe, the state of Kosova.

“We have waited for this day for a very long time. From today we are proud, independent and free “
Kosova's Prime Minister Hashim Thaqi.⁷⁰

In that moment happiness broke up, with tens of thousands of people fledted outside occupying the streets of Kosova's capital, Pristina and celebrating this historical moment. That day the UN Security Council went into emergency session on the evening, after Russia called for the United Nations to declare the Kosova declaration illegal.



Photo 3. Kosovars celebrating independence with their new flag

The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon called on all sides to keep op their commitments for peace. Putin immediately charged that, Western support for the newly declared state is immoral and illegal, saying that behavior like this will open “Pandora box” and provoke a global storm of separatism worldwide, and demolition of international order settle by time. As from now Kremlin has no obligation to follow international law when it comes to it. Russian media have publicized a large list of separatist conflicts that could be affected by Kosova events, including Taiwan, the Turkish enclave in northern Cyprus, Spain's Basque region, Quebec, the Kurdish zone in Iraq, Republika Srpska in Bosnia, and Tibet.⁷¹



Photo 4. Serbian protestors burning the US embassy in Belgrade

⁶⁹http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/special/kosovo/contexts/timeline

⁷⁰ BBC News.17 February 2008/<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7249034.stm>

⁷¹By: Fred Weir/Correspondent of the Christian Science Monitor February.20,2008.<http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0220/p06s01-woeu> .

There are four pro-Russian breakaway regions in post-Soviet territory like South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia, who press their case for full diplomatic recognition of their de facto independence. Frustrated with Kosova,s declaration, Serbs from all around Serbia started massive demonstrations witch escalated in violence and burning of embassies of the western missions located in capital Belgrade. They started with burning of the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade and attacking others like Britain, Croatia, Slovenia and Turkey. Serbia’s Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica denounced U.S., saying that U.S. helped Albanians to create a false state in Serbian territory and stated that Serbia will never recognize the illegal declaration of independence. Surprisingly and not expected at all, first recognition of the Republic of Kosova came from Costa Rica in 17 Feb, followed by U.S., France, Afghanistan, Albania, Turkey, United Kingdom, in 18 Feb 2008 just day after.

“U.S. is ready to violate the international order for its own military interests, today this policy of force thinks that it has triumphed by establishing a false state”

Serbian Prime Minister. Vojislav Kostunica

Following declaration of those coming from Serbian leaders, tensions between U.S. and Russia were grooving even more, especially after the rapid recognition of the new state among different governments of world, which by the begging of March increased to 22 states. This political failure was a big hit on Putin, s big and strong Russia who will counterweight U.S. power in the international political scene. After these events, precisely in March 03, 2008 the new Russian presidential elections were held, with election turnout which estimated 64%, higher than in 2004. With 80% of ballots counted, the voting results were as expected. Dmitry Medvedev Putin’s favored candidate and his political party “United Russia” won election with more than 65% of the total votes.



Photo 5. New Russian president Dmitri Medvedev

With the strong win of the 43 years old Putin’s protégé, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev, Russians are in favor to continue the course of Putin’s regime whether it is authoritarian, democratic or totalitarian, experts say. Opinion polls have consistently shown Putin's high level of popularity. Russian voters are prepared to back whichever

candidate endorses to replace him.⁷² Even though some experts predicted that Putin will push to the change on Russian constitution, in order to gain his third Presidency, but this of course didn't happen. Putin reassured his nation that he will retreat from Russia's president, giving full support to the newly elected president Dmitri Medvedev, and that he will attend the post of prime minister. This was not unexpected, say some Russian intellectuals who know of his political thought. Putin with this act, wanted to show to his fanatic followers that he is a real patriot, who follows constitutional law and order in country. And that he is not authoritarian and antidemocratic like others say, and when national interests are in concern he will obey and follow them. This behavior is expected to add value to his personality and character, because in common people's opinion he is a respect leader who does right things, right.

The new Russian president Dmitry Anatolyevich Medvedev was born on September 14, 1965 in St. Petersburg and was Vladimir Putin's chief of staff and same time chairman of "Gazprom's" board of directors. He received a law degree and doctorate from St. Petersburg University.⁷³ In November 2005, Putin posted Medvedev for the newly created deputy prime minister position and from that day until now he served with no question. The new president is welcomed with high expectations among Russians, because subsidizing Putin is not easy, and it will require strong leadership and touchable results. Medvedev inherited a strong posture of Russian politics regarding relations with other countries, especially with U.S., NATO and EU. But also growing alliances between trading and ideology partners like: China, Venezuela, Cuba and Iran. What will Medvedev's stand be regarding inherited politics from Putin, will he act as a god cop, or bad cop? Is he going to pursue the same policy as his previous, or is he going to change something to ease aggressive politics of Putin, these questions will be answered after his inauguration in 7 May 2008. Like we all know from the past, Putin's political aim was to reaffirm Russia in international political scene like important global actor, and to bring back lost Russian pride and nationalism. He also tried to suppress all intense from western alliance, in head with US, EU and NATO to integrate ex-soviet countries in the western alliance shield of interest. Putin managed to stop this western institutionalization by creating problems for some and offering economic benefits to others, some kind of "carrot and stick diplomacy". Example of this we see best on Kosovo case, where he offered economic cooperation to Belgrade if it acts in behalf of Russian interest, and in the same time it suppressed the aims of Western partners to resolve Kosovo's political status through UN Security Council.

⁷² By: Mark Resnicoff. Mar2,2008. http://russia.suite101.com/article.cfm/medvedev_wins_russian_election.

⁷³ Russia Profile.org 2009/ www.russiaprofile.org/resources/whoiswho/alphabet/m/medvedev.wbp

It is not surprisingly that “Vanity Fair” announced Putin as the most powerful and influential person in the world, even though by that time he was Prime Minister.

“After eight years as Russia’s president, Putin’s still at the height of his power. He saw his approval ratings top 80 percent, thanks to an economy revived through energy profits, which has made it easier for him to get away with his antipathy to free speech and other civil liberties he controls the media and imprisons or exiles his enemies. And cashing in on Russia’s natural resources has enabled Putin to pay off the nation’s foreign debt, rebuild its military, restore its pride, and re-assert its place in world affairs”.
Vanity.Fair.⁷⁴

Sensing the tense clouds in the emerging relations between west and Russia, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer invited Russia’s President Putin to attend the April, 3, 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest Romania, which he accepted. In March, 3, 2008 United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution slapping stronger sanctions to press Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment activities. Fourteen of the 15 members of the Security Council voted for Resolution 1803 but Indonesia abstained.⁷⁵ One day after The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) dropped a proposed resolution against Iran which urged the Islamic Republic to further cooperate with the IAEA to clarify its nuclear research program, suspend its uranium enrichment activities and allow an in-depth international probe into its nuclear program. That day Russia and China jointly managed to block the aims of the west to adopt resolution 1803 saying that they were not informed priory with this plan. Soon later by April 4, 2008 in NATO Bucharest Summit, Putin criticized NATO promise to eventually make Ukraine and Georgia his member, by saying that NATO cannot guarantee its security at the expense of other countries security and claiming, this as direct threat to Russia. Putin complained that some NATO members, presumably those formerly under Soviet occupation, went as far as total demonization of Russia and they can't get away from this even now. Russian anger was decreased by alliance's refusal to back US President Bush's position that two aspirant members should be welcomed sooner into the membership action plan. Bush was opposed by Germany, France, Spain and Italy, which sad that two countries are not ready for the membership plan and that such a decision would be an unnecessary blow to Russia They also pointed that Russia’s anger over Kosovo’s independence is still fresh, and western partners should be very careful to not create more tensions. Quoting German foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier “We could see no convincing reason to create more tension”.

⁷⁴VanityFair/updated.August,20,2008<http://www.vanityfair.com/online/newestablishment/2008/08/vladimir-putin>.

⁷⁵ http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Focus/IaeaIran/unsc_res1803-2008.pdf

Allies also reaffirmed their commitment to stability in the Balkans, and that KFOR will remain in Kosova on the basis of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1244. NATO and KFOR will continue to work with Kosova authorities, bearing in mind its operational mandate. KFOR will cooperate and assist the United Nations, the European Union and other international actors to support the development of a stable, democratic, multi-ethnic and peaceful Kosovo. In the 7, May, 2008 Dmitry Medvedev was inaugurated in the post of the Russia's new President. He swore in as a new Russia's president in a solemn ceremony in the Kremlin's throne room before 2,000 invited guests. In the 7, May, 2008 Dmitry Medvedev was inaugurated in the post of the Russia's new president. He swore to act in state interest, in a solemn ceremony in the Kremlin's throne room before 2,000 invited guests.

“I believe my most important aims will be to protect civil and economic freedoms. We must fight for a true respect of the law and overcome legal nihilism, which seriously hampers modern development”

Dimitry Medvedev.

New president seemed more modern from Putin, people who studied his behavior and personality say that he likes western music(peep purple, led's zepplin), likes to dress expensive Italian close, and that he loves high technology gadgets (phones ,cameras) etc. But this absolutely doesn't show that he will be more open to cooperation with western partners. The only thing what is known until now is Medvedev,s public promise to protect and to strength the economic freedoms in name of economic growth and development, and to modernize Russian economy. That's why in March 2008 the Center for Development of an Information Society (RIO) was renamed as the Institute of Contemporary Development (INSOR) where chair of the board of trustees is Dmitry Medvedev. The Institute of Contemporary Development was established to unite the country's intellectual capital and leading experts to develop policies and recommendations which are crucial to Russia's future.⁷⁶

On June 6, 2008 Medvedev hosted his first summit of the presidents of the Moscow-led Commonwealth Independent States (CIS).Where the new Russia's president rhetoric was in line with his predecessor Putin. Just to enlighten readers that CIS stands for Commonwealth of Independent States (kind of economic, cooperation union). The organization was founded jointly on 8 December 1991 by Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine. On 21 December 1991 the leaders of eight additional former Soviet Republics Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan joined the CIS, bringing the number of participating countries to 11. Georgia

⁷⁶ Institute for Contemporary Development site/<http://www.riocenter.ru/en>

joined CIS two years later as of that time; CIS included 12 of the 15 former Soviet Republics.⁷⁷ In Saint Petersburg Summit Medvedev reaffirmed Putin's hard-line position regarding NATO expansion. The most important talks occurred between Medvedev and presidents of Ukraine and Georgia, Medvedev repeated Putin's warnings that the entry of Ukraine or Georgia into NATO would seriously harm their future relations with Moscow. And that Ukraine's entry into NATO would violate the terms of the 1997 Russian-Ukrainian friendship treaty.⁷⁸ Escalating tensions were felt between Moscow and Tbilisi over the status of the pro-Russian separatist region of Abkhazia and south Ossetia.

“I think that we ourselves are capable of resolving all the issues that face us today, overcoming the difficulties before us and building relations for the long term”

Russia’s President Dmitry Medvedev

What do you think? He asked the Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili, and he replied.

"There are plenty of issues we still need to resolve, but there are no problems for which solutions cannot be found."

Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili

Just Day after in 07 June 2008, at 12th Petersburg International Economic forum speech Medvedev attributed the world's current economic problems, which could evolve as serious as the “Great Depression” of the 1930s, Medvedev told the forum that Moscow was prepared to help fill the leadership gap resulting from the eventual decline of U.S. in power and the "institutional vacuum” at the level of international governmental agencies responsible for solving the specific problems that are today most acute. Observing that, Russia today is a global player Medvedev said, everyone must recognize its responsibility for the destiny of the world, and we want to participate in shaping the new rules of the game.⁷⁹ He also added that Moscow aspired to a global leadership role not because of any so-called imperial ambitions, but simply because we have both the requisite capacity and resources.

Diplomats and journalists who followed this summit viewed this enthusiastic declaration with smiles and surprise in their faces, probably because they were expecting a calmer

⁷⁷ <http://cisstat.com/eng/cis.htm>

⁷⁸ World Politics Review Exclusive/Richard Weitz. 16 Jun 2008 <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/Article.aspx?id=2296>

⁷⁹ President of Russia official site. June 7, 2008 http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2008/06/07/1338_type82914type127286_202288.shtml

approach after Putin was off the stage. But this didn't happen, in contrary they saw another anti-west hard Russian stand and unexplained willingness of Medvedev to demonstrate these politics in front of world wide public opinion. Having in mind that summits like this are excellent opportunities for states to reaffirm their positions regarding political processes in world Medvedev,s speech was just in that context. Reaction of the western alliance to this uprising Russian aggressiveness posture came so fast that even biggest skeptics could not imagine, in follow you will see what happens.

While the 4th of July Independence Day celebrations in the United States were ongoing in the holiday atmosphere, five days later in July 09.2008 two Balkan states Albania and Croatia signed membership accords into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), opening way for them to join the western military alliance, most likely by early 2009. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, the NATO Secretary-General, said the signing treaty showed progress achieved in the Balkans since the violence



that marked the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. *Photo 6. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg signing agreement of Ballistic Missile Defense Radar Site in the Czech Republic*

In July 8 2008 U.S. Secretary of state Condoleezza Rice and Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg signed in Prague, the agreement between the United States and the Czech Republic on establishing a United States ballistic missile defense radar site in the Czech Republic.⁸⁰ Russian reaction was furious to this U.S. progress, in an earlier statement, the Russian foreign ministry statement said: "If a U.S. strategic anti-missile shield starts to be deployed near our borders, we will be forced to react not in a diplomatic fashion but with military-technical means. In July 10, 2008 the US State Department issued an official statement.

“This project is an important step in our efforts to protect the United States and the Czech Republic, as well as our other NATO Allies from the growing threat posed by the proliferation of ballistic missiles of increasingly greater ranges and sophistication, and potentially armed with weapons of mass destruction. This radar will provide precision tracking of ballistic missiles launched out of the Middle East, and will be linked to other U.S. missile defense facilities in Europe and the United State”.

⁸⁰U.S.Department of State/.<http://www.america.gov/st/texttransenglish/2008/July/20080710163116xjsnommis0.554867.html>

US State Department, Washington, DC.⁸¹

What makes Russians even more furious is that, radar system will be linked to the missile launching establishments in Poland, and it will content 10 interceptor missiles located just near the Russian border. That's why Putin hinted strongly stating that, although Russia is not planning to begin wholesale targeting of Europe.

“Any new targets in the future would be connected to the strategic nuclear potential of the United States... in Europe”
Vladimir .V. Putin

Citing world affairs correspondent at the BBC, who predicts that, this problem will be present for long time in international political scene.

“President Vladimir Putin's threat to target missiles at Europe indicates that the hostility between Russia and the west is more than a passing phase. It has become a permanent part of world diplomacy”.
Paul Reynolds BBC Friday, 8 June 2007

President Bush, on an earlier visit to the Czech Republic, had made it clear that he would not give up the plan of building U.S. missile defense system in Poland and Czech Republic, but he went out of his way to try to explain it.

“The cold war is over...Russia is not our enemy my message will be: Vladimir -- I call him Vladimir -- that you shouldn't fear a missile defense system. As a matter of fact, why don't you cooperate with us on a missile defense system?”

U.S. President George. W. Bush

It is not hard to guess what is happening between two military powers. The events are shaping in that way, that US are pushing hard to secure itself and Europe from threats upcoming from east, while the Russians felling themselves threatened from this policy, are in struggle to counter vain this dominance as soon as possible. Thus U.S. with support of their European allies are in advantage, because U.S. scored effectively two times, once in Kosova,s (declaration of independence) and now in Czech Republic (missile defense shield). The Russians are in search to find all the potential anti – American allies to pressure Washington back from its plans in Europe. That's why finding a partner who will help Russians to implement this anti U.S. Policy isn't hard, especially partners like some Latin American countries who traditionally are opposes to U.S. foreign politics. They are in favor to cooperate with Russians just to oppose Washington, and not comply with its politics. It was July 23, 2006 when the Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez announced a military cooperation signed with Russia over the import of Russian arms to Venezuela over upcoming years. Deal which estimated over the 3bln\$ contained the buy of at least 24 Russian Sukhoi-30 jets to replace Venezuela's

⁸¹ U.S.Department of State/ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2008/07/106923.htm>

U.S. F-16s, also helicopters, surface-to-air missiles and possibly even a submarine.⁸² Deal was reaffirmed on 27 July 2008 by Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez and Russia president Dmitri Medvedev.

“Russia is trying to be good friend with Chavez because he is an ideal partner in arms trade”.

Fyodor Lukyanov, analyst at the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy in Moscow

“The Russians also see this as a way to push the notion that there is a multi-polar world”

Michael Shifter, professor of Latin American studies at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

Earlier this week, Russian newspaper “Izvestia” quoted an anonymous Russian Air Force official saying that individuals had arrived in Cuba to prepare the groundwork for deployment of Tu-160 White Swan and Tu-95 Bear nuclear bombers on the island, as part of a Russian plan to counter America's proposed missile defense system in Eastern Europe. The source told newspaper that “while they are deploying the missile shield in Poland and Czech Republic, our strategic bombers will already be landing in Cuba”. Reaction from U.S. Air Force came immediately upon this rumor threat.

The Bush administration's nominee to become Air Force chief of staff, General Norton Schwartz, warned Russia not to deploy nuclear bombers on Cuba as a countermeasure to America's planned antimissile shield in Poland and the Czech Republic

“I think we should stand strong and indicate that this is something that crosses a threshold, crosses a red line”.

General Norton Schwartz

If these events were cream, and my thesis was cake, this cream would fill in just perfect and relief my job of proving that Russia is back like strong and serious actor in international political scene. But wait, this is not the “end” of the story, namely in 7 August 2008 conflict emerged in the Russian border with Georgia, following evening of August 7, 2008, where Georgia launched a ground- and air-based military attack on South Ossetia's capital Tskhinvali, in order to cease intends of the pro Russian province to establish independence in Georgian territory.

Over 10 Russian peacekeeping force servicemen stationed in Tskhinvali were killed during the Georgian attack in the morning. Georgia announced that it had surrounded Tskhinvali and captured eight South Ossetia villages. At the morning of the 8 August

⁸²By: Betsy Pisik/The Washington Times, July 22, 2008. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2008/jul/22/russia-increases-weapon-sales-to-chavez/>

Russia launched the massive attack on the Georgian territory pushing back the Georgian forces from Tskhinvali and starting new war in Caucasia. By the morning of August 10, Russian troops had occupied the bulk of South Ossetia, and reached its border with the rest of Georgia, and were shelling areas across the border. Russian troops occupied several Georgian cities with Russian warships landing troops in Georgia's breakaway Abkhazia region and took up positions off Georgia's Black Sea coast. On August 12, Russian President Dmitriy Medvedev declared that "the aim of Russia's operation for coercing the Georgian side to peace had been achieved the aggressor has been punished



Photo7. Russian military forces occupying South Ossetia

Russian propaganda always referred to the genocide of the Georgian authorities against the Russian population living there, and justified the action to protect the Russian citizens against this crime.⁸³ At 07 August 2008 approximately 7 PM, the Georgian government announces its decision to cease fire in order to defuse tensions and offers to engage in talks with the South Ossetia side .In 10 August 2008 the White House came with statement condemning Russian actions in Georgia, stating.

“Russia’s military action in the Georgia was dangerous and disproportionate, and any further escalation of the conflict could harm bilateral ties. “We have made it clear to the Russians that this will have a significant long term impact on U.S.-Russian relations”.

Jim Jeffrey, deputy National Security Adviser.

Bernard Kushner, the French foreign minister who has been dispatched to the region by President Sarkozy, forecast a Balkan-style war if neither side backed down.“Such violence was “unacceptable at the doors of Europe and reminded of other recent conflicts that have torn our continent apart”.⁸⁴

French foreign minister, Bernard Kushner

The United States also cancelled a joint naval exercise with Russia to show its

⁸³Central AsiaCaucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program/Cornell,Popjanevski,Nilsson/page.4 site.<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/silkroadpapers/0808GeorgiaPP.pdf>

⁸⁴By:Jules Cavendish./August10,2008/Times Online/<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article4497344.ece>.

disapproval of Moscow's military actions in Georgia, while Moscow was rushing to prepare accusation, pointing at the Washington like the orchestra of the lately events.

“The things that were happening in Kosovo, the things that were happening in Iraq – we are now following the same path. The further the situation unfolds, the more the world will understand that Georgia would never be able to do all this without America. They have prepared the force, which destroys everything in South Ossetia, attacks civilians and hospitals. They are responsible for this. The world community will learn about it”.

Chairman of the State Duma Committee for Security, Vladimir Vasilyev

Two US C17 transport aircraft landed in Tbilisi, from the U.S. airbase in Ramstein in Germany, bringing aid like: children’s cots, sleeping bags, blankets and medical supplies for refugees displaced by the conflict. Air force crew was delivering aid, but distribution was being managed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Georgian Health Ministry. Robert Gates, the U.S. Defense Secretary, said that more supplies were expected to arrive in the days ahead by both air and sea. While all this humanitarian aid was ongoing, the Russian president Dmitry Medvedev ordered a cease fire in Georgia on Tuesday, 12 august2008. The agreement came after the heavy talks between the EU presidencies, French President Sarkozy. On August 19, Russia agreed to the stationing of 20 observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to be deployed immediately to an area adjacent to South Ossetia. The talks brought cease fire but the tensions were in maximum, especially after the intensions of Russia to recognize the independence of separated provinces. Following the end of hostilities, the Federation Council of Russia called an extraordinary session for 25 August 2008 to discuss recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. That day later the Federation Council unanimously voted to ask the Russian president to recognize independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.



Photo 8. South Ossetia man shoots in the air as he celebrates the recognition of South Ossetia independence by Russia

The Russian parliament voted in favor of this motion, while the following day 26 august 2008 Russian President Medvedev signed decrees to effect that Russian Federation recognizes South Ossetia and Abkhazia like independent from Georgia. This unilateral recognition by Russia was condemned from Western countries and other members of

United Nations, together with international organizations like: NATO, OSCE, European Council. It is seen as violation of Georgia's territorial integrity, the United Nations numerous resolutions protecting the states sovereignty and the international law itself. I will citrate some of the statements.

“I have appealed to all leaders concerned to speed up Georgia's NATO and EU integration. We already have some positive signals from our North Atlantic and European partners... We will continue our struggle to peacefully restore our territorial integrity... Georgia will be unified and indivisible. We will defeat the evil”.

Mikheil Saakashvili, Georgian president.⁸⁵

“The Russian intention to recognize two regions that have been in conflict but are clearly within the internationally recognized borders of Georgia, by multiple Security Council resolutions... is regrettable. It puts Russia, of course, in opposition to a number of Security Council resolutions of which it is party as a member of the Security Council, as member of the United Nations and most appallingly as a member of the P5 (permanent five). Since the United States is a permanent member of the Security Council, this simply will be dead on arrival in the Security Council. And therefore, in accordance with other Security Council resolutions that are still in force, Abkhazia and South Ossetia are a part of the internationally recognized borders of Georgia and it's going to remain so”.
U.S. Secretary Condoleezza Rays

“Russia's actions in recent weeks call into question Russia's commitment to peace and security in the Caucasus. NATO firmly supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and calls on Russia to respect these principles”.

Jap de hoop Schaeffer NATO secretary General

“The risk of a new schism has arisen. There is a growing threat of global chaos”.

Mikhail Gorbachev. Former Soviet Union Leader

“Russia must seek genuine strategic partnership with the U.S., and the latter must understand that, when excluded and despised, Russia can be a major global spoiler. Ignored and humiliated by the U.S. since the cold war ended, Russia needs integration into a new global order that respects its interests as a resurgent power, not an anti-Western strategy of confrontation.”

Israeli Foreign Minister and historian, Shlomo Ben-Ami

“It is a war that Moscow has been attempting to provoke for some time. The man who

⁸⁵ BBC News/Aug 26.2008.<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7582367.stm>

once called the collapse of the Soviet Union "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the (20th) century" has reestablished a virtual czarist rule in Russia and is trying to restore the country to its once-dominant role in Eurasia and the world. Armed with wealth from oil and gas; holding a near-monopoly over the energy supply to Europe; with a million soldiers, thousands of nuclear warheads and the world's third-largest military budget, Vladimir Putin believes that now is the time to make his move".

Robert Kagan. Washington Post

During a UNSC meeting on August 28, most members criticized Russia's noncompliance with the six-point plan and the recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. U.S. deputy permanent representative Alejandro Wolff reportedly condemned Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as incompatible with a UNSC resolution approved in April 2008 that reaffirmed the commitment of U.N. Members to respect the territorial integrity of Georgia, and asked from Russia to respect "international law". The Russian response was immediate when Russian ambassador to the UN Vitaly Churkin responded to US by saying that "UNSC members should not have violated U.N. resolutions by recognizing Kosovo"⁸⁶

Some observers in Soviet successor states voiced concerns that Russia's actions in Georgia did not bode well for their own sovereignty and independence. Russia's "*Moscow Times*" newspaper termed Russia's actions in Georgia "the strongest possible signal of how far (Russia) is ready to go to regain influence" in other Soviet successor states, and warned that these states are likely to "seek protection" from west, because of fears that one day they might be invaded by Russia. Ukraine and Azerbaijan appeared to be among the Soviet successor states with heightened concerns about Russian intentions.

However, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan quickly endorsed Russia's actions and shipped humanitarian assistance to North and South Ossetia. Are these radical actions, Medvedev's warning signal to world, that Putin's politics will be pursued in his mandate. Simultaneously showing that Russia is not going in accordance with western partners, risking direct collide, and possible expel from future processes.

From what we have seen until now, the Caucasus region is facing instability and fear since Georgia conflict broke up, this problem will stay for a long time in international political scene and can bring to more violence. For US and western allies this will add another problem, to a list of problems that Russia is bringing to the world, and imperil future relations between two powers.

⁸⁶ Ibid. 85

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8. Acronyms

ABM.....	Anti-Ballistic Missile
BBC.....	British Broadcast Chanel
CIS.....	Commonwealth Independent States
CNN.....	Cable News Network
ESS.....	European Security Strategy
ESA.....	European Space Agency
EU.....	European Union
FAPSI.....	Federal Agency of Government Communications and Information
FSK.....	Federal Counterintelligence Service of Russia)
FSB.....	Federal Security Service
KFOR.....	NATO, forces in Kosova
GDP.....	Gross Domestic Product
INSOR.....	Institute for Contemporary Development
IAEA.....	International Atomic Energy Agency
IMEMO.....	Institute of World Economy and International Relations
INSOR.....	Institute for Contemporary Development
LDPR.....	Liberal Democratic Party of Russia
NATO.....	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NTV.....	HTB, Russian television channel
NRC.....	NATO-Russia Council
ORT.....	(Общественное Российское Телевидение), Public Russian Television
OSCE.....	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OPEC.....	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PJC.....	Permanent Joint Council
RIO.....	Centre for Development of Information Society
R&D.....	Research and Development
ROSA.....	Romanian Space Agency

SCO.....Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SIPRI.....Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SFSR.....Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
UBT.....University for Business and Technology
US.....United States
USSR.....Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UN.....United Nations
UNSCR.....United Nations Security Council Resolution
UK.....United Kingdom
UNSC.....United Nations Security Council
USAID.....United States Agency for International Development
WMD.....Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO.....World Trade Organization