

Negotiating the global security dilemma

Interpreting Russia's security agenda

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With the proliferation of discussion about global order change in recent years, and accompanying predictions about a greater role for non-Western great powers, or the so-called rising powers, in questions of global governance and security (Alexandroff and Cooper 2010; Ikenberry and Wright 2008; Young 2010; Schweller 2011; Gu et al. 2008; Drezner 2007; Ikenberry 2008), the field of Security Studies is increasingly acknowledging that it is no longer sufficient to examine questions of global security primarily or exclusively through the experience of the West. There is growing recognition that it is empirically necessary to take into account the positions, views and interests of these non-Western powers in study of international affairs (Zakaria 2008; Glosny 2009; Kappell 2011; Layne 2009; Whitman 2010; Flemes 2011). In turn, theoretical models and concepts should also take into account the contexts and actors within non-Western contexts (Bilgin 2010).

The aim of this chapter is to shed light on the way in which one such non-Western power, Russia, has sought to conceptualize and make sense of the global security agenda in the post-Cold War era. Within the extensive body of literature assessing the directions, interests and priorities of contemporary Russian security policy, a bias for positivist realist perspectives continues to exist (see Wegren 2003; Kanet 2005). Indeed, many scholars have sought to characterize the Putin regime as ideologically promoting a more aggressive and largely anti-Western position in global security matters (Blank 2002).

However, the interpretivist framework adopted here departs from existing constructivist literature on Russia's foreign and security policy, which tends to focus primarily on Russia's identity politics as the driving factor behind the evolution of Russia's view of itself and the world (see Neumann 2008; Morozov 2008; Tsygankov 2005, 2007; Lomagin 2007; Kassianova 2001; Hopf 2005; Clunan 2009). Instead, as already outlined in Chapter 1 of the book, rather than focusing primarily on concepts such as language, identity, culture or ideas, the interpretivist perspective used here centres primarily on recapturing actors' beliefs and meanings within their own contexts, and on investigating the process by which ideas and beliefs evolve across time, through the notion of traditions and dilemmas and the principle of 'situated agency' (Bevir and Rhodes 2006; Bevir et al. 2013).

Thus, rather than focusing on identity politics, this chapter instead examines the way in which Russia's security policy developed and was structured by the beliefs and traditions adopted by the Putin regime, which in turn fed into and drove the conceptualization of its main security dilemma. The chapter argues that the evolution of Russia's security policy should be viewed as an attempt by Russian policy makers to deal with what they perceived to be the primary dilemma for post-Soviet Russia: how to fit in and normalize its position within the global security landscape. The more assertive, and at times anti-Western, positions of the Putin regime adopted in the second half of the 2000s were a by-product of this negotiated process and their reading of subsequent external developments, rather than a fixed ideological position.

The interpretivist framework adopted here is of particular value for studying non-Western contexts, not just because of its emphasis on the importance of local contexts, but also because it remains agnostic regarding the distinction between internal and external security spheres, or in other words, about from which locale changes to existing traditions and beliefs should come. Unlike in realist approaches, which prioritize or at least have a tendency to draw a distinction between these two security spheres, the interpretivist inductive approach developed primarily from the study of history and British governance (Bevir and Rhodes 2006; Bevir et al. 2013), and thus does not follow any predetermined assumptions about the nature of security concerns in the external or internal spheres. Nor does this approach prioritize one security sphere or context over the other. It is therefore well suited for investigating the way in which Russia's perceptions of global security concerns were localized within its national context and the interrelationship between its global and local security concerns.

This chapter now turns to examine the beliefs and traditions adopted by the Putin regime upon coming to power in 2000; the way in which these beliefs in turn structured the Putin regime's reading of its primary security dilemma for Russia; and finally the two-stage process advocated by the Russian policy makers for dealing with this security dilemma – the rebuilding of Russia from within (2000–02), and subsequent repositioning of Russia as a more confident and independent actor within the global security architecture (2002–08).

Beliefs and traditions of the Putin regime

As soon as it came to power in 2000, the ideological and ideational principles of the Putin regime were under close scrutiny, with commentators trying to assess Vladimir Putin's particular personality traits and attempting to make sense of his past career decisions in order to shed light on this 'new' political actor in Russian politics (Dyson 2001). Some highlighted his KGB past and FSB credentials (Herspring 2003: 3–5), some his involvement with liberal groups in St Petersburg in the 1990s (Charap 2004), and others questioned the extent to which the ideas brought in by this regime amounted to a full ideological programme (Evans 2005: 900).

Nonetheless, a close reading of Russia's public discourse in this period suggests that the Putin regime sought to put together a multifaceted programme for Russia based on a series of 'old' Russian traditions intertwined with a set of 'new' beliefs drawn out of the Putin regime's reading of Russia's position and situation in the late 1990s, and their perception about the failures of the previous Yeltsin administration. As noted by Putin himself in 1999, 'the new Russian idea will come about as a mixture or as an organic combination of universal general humanitarian values with the traditional Russian values that have stood the test of time' (Putin 1999). Hence, rather than rejecting national traditions, as many analysts have argued the previous administration had done, Putin advocated reconciliation between Russia's historical legacy and current circumstances (Sakwa, in Ross 2004: 21). In this way, the 2000 National Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Concepts papers all reiterated the principle that global and domestic threats must be dealt with in line with Russia's traditions.¹

Traditional Russian beliefs and the Putin regime

Drawing on Russia's traditions, the Putin regime promoted the importance of a strong state, and the principles of statism and state sovereignty. As noted by Putin, 'the key to Russia's recovery and growth today lies in the state-political sphere. Russia needs strong state power and must have it' (Putin 1999). It was therefore suggested that the lack of a strong state would result in the disintegration of the country from within and an inability to promote its foreign policy abroad, which harked back to the traditional fear of Russia's collapse either from within or from without.

Alongside the importance of a strong state for the establishment of a strong Russia, this political regime also drew on traditional narratives about Russia's unique position and voice in the world, relating this to Russia's historical image of itself as a great power. Therefore, alongside the principle of Russia's uniqueness within the international context, patriotism became yet another central principle at the heart of this regime's web of beliefs. Putin argued that 'for the majority of Russians it [patriotism] retains its original and positive meaning' (Putin 1999), whilst the sense of pride in Russia's heritage was said to support the idea that 'Russia was and will remain a great power' (Putin 1999). In this respect, the uniqueness of Russia's values and traditions was said to be operating alongside the notion of universal principles that impacted on all international actors, whereby 'our people have begun to understand and accept supranational universal values which are above social, group or ethnic interests'. However, it was suggested that state policy, and Russia's revival in particular, should be based on the 'foundation for the consolidation of Russian society is what can be called the primordial, traditional values of Russians' (Putin 1999). As noted by Evans, the universal values of democracy, for example, were accepted, but situated and therefore combined with Russia's traditional values and context to produce a more state-led notion of

'sovereign democracy' as publicized by Vladislav Surkov, a key ideologist of the Putin regime (Evans 2005: 905).² Russia's uniqueness, the importance of its national interests and position as a great power, were in turn the principles enshrined in the Russian Foreign Policy Concept 2000, where it was argued that the aim of Russian foreign security policy should be:

To ensure reliable security of the country, to preserve and strengthen its sovereignty and territorial integrity, to achieve firm and prestigious positions in the world community, most fully consistent with the interests of the Russian Federation as a Great Power ...

To influence general world processes with the aim of forming a stable, just and democratic world order.³

To bind together this sense of uniqueness, the Putin regime also drew on Russia's cultural heritage and political symbols of the past, in order to construct a positive image for Russia. The regime therefore revived the old Soviet national anthem music in 2000, made increased references to Soviet victories in the Second World War and promoted the role and place of the Orthodox Church in the Russian cultural context.

However, in relation to its civilizational and international position, the Putin regime put forward a rather more ambivalent image of the international system and the West in particular, here too drawing on Russia's traditional heritage and historically ambivalent relationship with what has traditionally been perceived as Russia's main 'Other' in foreign policy (Evans 2005: 900). Whilst the regime suggested that Russia should be part of the wider, often read as Western-centric, international community, it should do so in line with its national interests and by ensuring its independent position in international affairs (Tsygankov 2007: 380).

Contemporary beliefs: fear of the 1990s chaos and the Putin regime

Aside from drawing on the set of Russian traditional beliefs outlined above, the Putin regime also sought to re-articulate and draw lessons from the situation in which Russia had found itself in the 1990s, particularly linked to the fear of the chaos of the 1990s, the weakness of Russia's international position by the late 1990s and the perceived ongoing failure to normalize Russia's position within the global security architecture. In turn, these 'newer' sets of beliefs, particularly with regard to the global security dilemma, centred on the fear of a weak state, the rise of non-traditional security threats, concerns about the development of a Western-led unipolar world system and concern about Russia's isolation in global security affairs.

Upon ascending to power in 2000, the Putin regime therefore suggested that Russia had found itself in a major crisis in the late 1990s whereby 'morale was exceptionally low. It was suggested that the state was fundamentally weak. The mood was one of humiliation' (Hill 2008: 475). As noted by Sakwa, in

response to this crisis the principle of normalcy in all spheres of political life became a major belief adopted by this administration as President Putin drew a line under the upheavals of the previous decade (Sakwa 2008a). It was argued that Russia must move away from the 'social experiments' of the Soviet period, but also from the adaptation of 'abstract models and schemes taken from foreign textbooks. The mechanical copying of other nations' experience will not guarantee success, either' (Putin 1999). In this way, the older belief in Russia's uniqueness was further reinforced, in light of its experiences in the 1990s, as Putin reiterated that 'Russia ... has to find its own path of renewal' (Putin 1999). The post-Soviet experiment of moving Russia towards a more pro-liberal, pro-Western power, as seen under Yeltsin in the 1990s, was said to have failed and had left Russia suffering from a mass political, economic and societal dislocation, with a failing political leadership and system (Treisman 2002: 58–59), a country suffering from a weak state, rampant corruption, powerful oligarchs, federal breakdown; mass terrorist and separatist problem in Chechnya; and critically an actor isolated externally from the global security architecture. In their political project for Russia, the Putin regime placed a lot of emphasis on the importance of internal cohesion and the need to follow Russia's national principles in conjunction with global developments and the need to re-engage internationally (Putin 2000).

In addition, and particularly in view of the problems of the late 1990s and in conjunction with more traditional Russian traditional beliefs, the Russian leadership continued to promote the principle of multipolarity (as developed by Foreign Minister Primakov in the late 1990s) in international affairs. This was presented as the best policy tool for guaranteeing both Russia's unique international position and as a mechanism for counteracting the unipolar model of global security championed by the West. As noted by the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Sredina, Russia would stand against any encroachment of its national interests and would not support any models of European security centred on the principles of 'NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization]-centrism' (Sredina 1999). Instead, Russia continued to believe in the central role of the United Nations (UN – and particularly the UN Security Council) in the global security architecture, for as noted by Vladimir Sredina in October 1999:

One of the central places in our foreign policy has been allocated to efforts to strengthen the United Nations, it is a unique and in many ways without alternatives mechanism for regulating the whole system of international relations.

dina 1999)

The embrace of the principles of multipolarity and the centrality of the UN in global security was meant to alleviate Russia's sense of isolation in global security affairs and fear of being left out of future developments in global security and international affairs more generally.

Furthermore, and in relation to the image of Russia as a great power, it was suggested that in the future Russia should seek to work in harmony, rather than disunity, with other great powers and the international community in general (Putin 2000). Cooperation between Russia and the outside world was said to be not only possible, but mutually beneficial. As noted by the Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, during his speech to the French Senate on 27 October 1999, 'we are proposing building a world where there would be no wars or conflicts' (Ivanov 1999). The Russian leadership believed that Russia should preserve its state sovereignty, function as a normal great power, and have its voice in the international system.

Russia's security dilemma: how to normalize its position as a great power in the contemporary global security architecture

Drawing on these two sets of 'older' and 'newer' beliefs and traditions, Russian policy makers read Russia's position in the global security architecture in the early 2000s as a major security dilemma. The dilemma of how to normalize Russia within the global security architecture in the post-Cold War era was not a 'new' issue for Russia. However, as noted above, the failure of the previous administration to achieve this aim in the 1990s meant that this major question had returned to the top of Russia's official foreign security agenda in the early 2000s. Whilst the Putin regime continued to advocate Russia's return to the international stage as a normal great power, they identified a series of reasons why it was unable to do so at that time, which were centred on Russia's post-Soviet legacy and shifting international realities that were said to have made Russia weak and internationally sidelined.

It was suggested that the extent of this dilemma was so grave that Russia was facing a series of key existential issues and questions that had to be resolved before it could begin to rebuild its strength. Putin outlined that 'the question for Russia today is what to do next ... How can we overcome the still deep ideological and political divisions within society? ... What place can Russia occupy in the international community in the twenty first century?' (Putin 1999). Russia's inability to engage fully or to have its voice heard in major global security questions, such as the increasingly interventionist policies of the West as witnessed in Kosovo in 1999, the ongoing disagreements between Russia and the West over traditional global security concerns, including the renegotiation of arms treaties, limitation on nuclear proliferation and the possibility of a NATO expansion were all interpreted as major failures. In this respect, Russia was presented as a fallen 'great power', although a 'great power' nonetheless. As Russia's National Security Concept argued:

Despite the complicated international situation and difficulties of a domestic nature, Russia objectively continues to play an important role in global processes by virtue of its great economic, science-technological and military potential and its unique strategic location on the Eurasian continent.⁴

In line with the Putin regime's wider set of beliefs, for Russia to function as a strong global actor and participate fully in the global security agenda, it would have to become a strong state. As a result, the internal weaknesses of the late 1990s were identified as a major reason for Russia's failure successfully to integrate itself into the global security agenda. As outlined in the 2000 National Security Concept:

The state of the economy, an imperfect system of government and civil society, the social and political polarization of Russian society and the criminalization of social relations, the growth of organized crime and increase in the scale of terrorism, the exacerbation of interethnic relations.⁵

Having characterized Russia as a 'weak' state, Putin argued that it had only two choices: to stay weak and be left behind, or to deal with its domestic problems and rebuild itself in order to re-emerge as a 'strong' sovereign state once more (Putin 2000). In this way, 'a central theme running through Putin's policy' was 'recognizing Russia's weakness and diminishing its impact on domestic and foreign policy' (Lynch 2005: 143).

As well as blaming Russia's internal weakness, this dilemma was also said to have re-emerged as a result of ongoing shifts in the international system. It was considered that Russia was having to grapple with a changing global system, following the end of the Cold War, both in terms of what this international system would look like in the future, and what its role would be within it in the future (Legvold 2001).

The potential global trends towards a unipolar world system (a model that was said to be promoted by the West) were interpreted as a threat to Russia's principle of multipolarity and overarching ambition to reintegrate itself into the global security architecture. As noted in Russia's Foreign Policy Concept 2000, the world, and Russia in particular, were experiencing a situation in which:

new challenges and threats to the national interests of Russia are emerging in the international sphere. There is a growing trend towards the establishment of a unipolar structure of the world with the economic and power domination of the United States. In solving principal questions of international security, the stakes are being placed on western institutions and forums of limited composition, and on weakening the role of the U.N. Security Council.⁶

The need to overcome this trend and to ensure that the international system would remain a space in which Russia was able to promote its own interests and act as a significant player was therefore identified as a critical, although at this stage secondary issue for Russian policy makers in the early 2000s. Whilst concerns were raised that other countries may not automatically welcome back a 'strong' Russia and that some foreign governments had a vested interest in keeping Russia down, the belief in the possibility of successfully

and peacefully reintegrating Russia into the global security architecture remained, as optimism about Russia's potential to become of 'great power' once more prevailed (Putin 2000).

Stage 1: internal rebuilding and Russia's attempts to fit into existing global architecture, 2000–02

Having identified and interpreted the key dilemma of how to normalize Russia's position in the global security landscape, the Putin regime proceeded to move towards rectifying this problem by prioritizing the need to rebuild Russia's internal sphere first, and from this base of domestic strength it was then, though, that it would be possible for Russia to regain its position as a 'great power' in international security. Hence, the need to deal with the mass economic collapse, societal and political turmoil and the lack of effective state governance were prioritized over the global security agenda in the early 2000s.

The project of 'rebuilding' Russia was carried out on all fronts, and particularly centred on the four pillars of reconstruction, identified in 1999/2000–01 as: economic growth, state making, nation building, and dealing with the terrorist activity threatening Russia's stability in Chechnya. On the economic front, despite structural weaknesses and institutional problems (Hanson 2003: 380), the reform proposals of Economics Minister German Gref led to a restructuring of the Russian economic space. These changes included tax reform, deregulation, land and judicial reform (Åslund 2004: 398), devaluation of the rouble and prudent monetary and fiscal policy (Hanson 2003: 380). Furthermore, Russia's state building centred on three key principles: state integrity (Chechnya), state capacity (federal reforms) and state autonomy (attacks on oligarchs) (Taylor 2003: 1). All of these reforms sought to deal with the state failures inherited from Yeltsin's administration, which were blamed for Russia's weaknesses in 2000.

Externally, and in view of the idea that Russia must first become strong internally, in order then to regain its position globally, the Russian authorities moved towards a conciliatory international position, showing both goodwill and intention to work within existing global structures. As identified earlier, Russia's three key foreign policy goals became economic modernization, global competitiveness and regaining its status as a modern great power (Trenin 2004). To this end, rather than a unipolar approach,⁷ the Putin regime adopted a flexible, multifaceted and pragmatic foreign policy (Lavrov 2005). The Russian leadership also proposed that Russia should reconcile itself with the West, despite its earlier disillusionment in the late 1990s, in view of its internal problems and desire to reintegrate itself back into the international fold.

Thus, particularly following 9/11 and the subsequent launch of the US-led 'war on terror', Russia presented itself as a much more accommodating and conciliatory global security actor than in the late 1990s. As noted in the 2000 Foreign Policy Concept, 'today our foreign policy resources are relatively limited', and as a result Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov noted that

Russia's foreign policy should be pragmatic to help the country resolve its internal problems (Herspring 2003: 231). It was hoped that this new cooperation with the West would create a more favourable global security environment for Russia, enable it to deal with its domestic problems, and to facilitate its return to the global stage as a much strengthened international actor. Russia therefore moved to seek a compromise on the Start 2 Treaty between Russia and the United States in 2000, gave support to the US campaign in Afghanistan in 2001, moved towards the establishment of the Russia-NATO Council in 2002, and launched a much more active policy to revitalize Russia's fledgling relations with its European partners (Herspring 2003: 238–44). Therefore, in this period its international partners, and particularly the West, acquired a much more positive image and role in Russia's official foreign policy.

Stage 2: Russia's reassertion of its position in the global security architecture, 2002–08

Following the rebuilding process, particularly in the internal sphere, by the mid-2000s, Russia was no longer presented as an existential security threat to itself, and the overall message from the Russian authorities was one of self-confidence. As noted by the Duma Banking and Finance Committee Chairman Valerii Zubov, from United Russia, on 3 January 2005: 'The country is not in crisis, not in the political, nor in a crisis of federal relations, nor in economic crisis, there is not a single crisis.'⁸

Within the official foreign policy strategy Russia was therefore increasingly presented as a great power in the international system, capable of defending its position and interests and no longer prepared to be sidelined in major international developments. According to the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, this signalled the 'new status' of Russia, which was 'on the upgrade' internationally (Lavrov 2007a). Accordingly, Russia seemed ready to take its rightful place in the international arena among other great powers, a preparedness linked to its internal stability. This was outlined in the 2008 Russian Foreign Policy Concept, which laid out the parameters and principles of Russia's understanding of its security position, alongside state perceptions of the external environment and Russia's place within it:

Under these conditions, the role and responsibility of Russia in international affairs have qualitatively grown. The chief achievement of recent years is the newly acquired foreign policy independence of Russia. The time is ripe for conceptualization of the new situation, particularly at the doctrinal level.⁹

Furthermore, as suggested by Lavrov in 2006, 'the most important thing that we ourselves sensed is that the role of the Russian factor in international affairs has considerably grown' (Lavrov 2006).

However, Russia's ongoing failure to be fully integrated and accepted into the global security landscape continued to be presented as a major

security dilemma; however, this was no longer linked to Russia's internal position (which had been resolved), but to Western unilateralism, its failure to acknowledge Russia's national interests and position as a normal great power.¹⁰ For Russian officials, the Iraq crisis in 2003 signalled the West's readiness to use unilateral force, by-passing international law, disregarding the principles of sovereignty, cooperation, multipolarity, respect for national interests and the apparent hollowness of the norms expounded by the West.¹¹ As noted by the Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksander Safonov:

The Iraq crisis has become a major test of strength and readiness of the international community to mount real opposition to the global threat of terrorism. Because of the thorough and flexible position of Russia it was possible to resolve the biggest task – to prevent the division of international anti-terrorist coalition, to preserve the mechanisms to return it to its original principles such as adherence to cooperation, the unquestioned legitimacy and central role of the UN.

(Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2004)

Furthermore, as suggested by Trenin, crises such as 'Iraq and Chechnya, YUKOS and Ukraine have brought the [Russia-West] relationship to even lower depths at the close of 2004 than Kosovo five years earlier' (Trenin 2004). This sentiment was compounded further by a plethora of new global security tensions between Russia and the West in 2005–08, including energy geopolitics, oil and gas disputes with Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia and Moldova in 2006–08; the potential future NATO expansion towards Georgia and Ukraine; the positioning of US Missile Defence in Poland and the Czech Republic; bilateral friction between Russia and the United States/European Union (EU), together with the friction over the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) space, which resulted in the Russian leadership arguing that the key actor preventing Russia from resolving the dilemma of Russia's return to 'great power' status was in fact the West and its role in domestic, regional and global affairs in relation to Russia. This point was exemplified by Putin in 2007: 'today we are witnessing an almost uncontained hyper use of force – military force – in international relations, force that is plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts' (Putin 2007). In response, the Russian leadership also increasingly suggested that the West failed to acknowledge that its actions violated key Russian national interests, and used double standards, between its own behaviour and norms imposed upon Russia. Aleksandr Aksenyonok, an ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation, for example, suggested in December 2008 that:

no one can ignore Russia's natural state interests; there are lines that cannot be crossed. None of these warnings have been taken seriously; and in general Moscow's arguments have long been running across a wall of more or less polite indifference.

(Aksenyonok 2008)

With the initial ambivalent image of the West in Russia's foreign policy agenda, the perceived failure of this actor to take into account Russia's wider set of beliefs and traditions, and its ongoing attempts to derail Russia's ambitions to normalize its position in the global security architecture, the West was now presented as Russia's main 'Other', or threat. The Russian official position therefore betrayed disillusionment, disappointment and to some extent resignation with regards to the West. This was the sense in Lavrov's article in the journal *Global Affairs* in April–June 2007, in which the West appeared to be securitized:

The novelty of the situation is that the West is losing its monopoly on the globalization process. This explains, perhaps, attempts to present the current developments as a threat to the West, its values, and very way of life ... Russia is against attempts to divide the world into the so-called 'civilized mankind,' and all the others. This is a way to global catastrophe.

rov 2007b)

As a result, the Russian authorities hardened their position and defence of national interests vis-à-vis Western powers. As Sakwa notes, alongside political, strategic and security questions, tensions with the West also became a debate over 'intellectual' and 'cultural' principles of organizing both nation-states and the global world order (Sakwa 2008b: 264). By the end of this period 'all sides entered into a deeply negative spiral of mutual suspicion that gradually hardened into abuse which in turn gave way to threats and counter threat. Indeed, the scholar Dmitry Furman argued that "there is only one opposition to Putin at present – other countries"' (Sakwa 2008b: 253).

Russia, by the end of Putin's second term in power, had grown much more confrontational and negative towards its previous Western partners. The crises experienced in the external sphere were often blamed on the West's refusal to take Russia seriously, and it was felt that it was the West that had lost Russia, and not the other way around.

In this way, the Russian authorities had shifted from arguing that it was Russia's internal failure that was holding it back from normalizing its position as a great power in the global security architecture, towards the suggestion that it was the West that was preventing Russia from successfully resolving its main dilemma in the post-Cold War global environment.

Conclusion

The key driver of Russia's security policy under Putin during the 2000s was the ongoing attempt by Russian policy makers to make sense of and negotiate the main dilemma for Russia at the turn of the twenty-first century – how to normalize its position within the global security architecture. In this respect, the Putin regime drew on a set of Russian traditional beliefs, such as the importance of a strong state, Russia's national culture and unique perspective

on global affairs, and its position as a great power internationally. Alongside these 'older' sets of beliefs, the regime also sought to draw a series of lessons from more contemporary developments, particularly characterized by the failure of the previous administration to resolve Russia's position internationally, which were in turn read and interpreted through the same set of traditional beliefs adopted by the Putin regime.

Therefore, Russia's reading of its failure to normalize its position in the global security architecture did not derive from external and objective circumstances, but from the beliefs and traditions that were at the heart of Putin's political project for Russia. The initial prioritization of the internal space, later followed by a greater engagement in the global security sphere, also emerged out of this particular reading of Russia's position internationally and domestically. Taking this into account, rather than adopting an anti-Western position outright, the antagonistic relationship with the West that developed in the second half of the 2000s was the result of the Putin regime's attempts to negotiate the original security dilemma identified in 2000.

An interpretivist reading of the evolution of Russia's security policy therefore emphasizes the importance of the role played by beliefs and traditions adopted by the key policy makers in the Putin regime and the political project that they espoused, and the way in which these beliefs structured their reading of global security dilemmas and the solutions and practices they put in place to overcome these dilemmas.

Notes

- 1 'Kontsepsiya vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii', *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, 2000: 8.
- 2 'Surkov, Rossiya i demokratiya', *Ekspert*, 3 July 2006, www.expert.ru/printissues/expert/2006/25/news_surkov_rossiya_i_demokratiya/; Gromov.
- 3 'Kontsepsiya vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii', *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, 2000: 8.
- 4 'Kontsepsiya natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii', *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, 2000: 2.
- 5 'Kontsepsiya natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii', *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, 2000: 2.
- 6 'Kontsepsiya vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii', *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, 2000: 8.
- 7 Within this framework, debates emerged as to where Russia's strength and greatness should come from: from its energy and economic power; greater engagement with the post-Soviet space; through a more active role on the international stage; or from its historical heritage, national norms and identity (Trenin 2004: 63); or greater links with other emerging and developing great powers, particularly in the East, such as the other BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) countries.
- 8 'Interview with First Deputy Secretary of the Duma Committee on Banks, Financial and Credit Markets, Conducted by Valerii Zubov', *Litsom k Litsu*, Radio Svoboda, 3 January 2005, archive.svoboda.org/programs/ftf/2005/ftf.010305.asp (accessed 18 September 2010).
- 9 Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (2008), Russian Foreign Policy Concept, 12 July, www.mid.ru/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de

28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/869c9d2b87ad8014c32575d9002b1c38?OpenDocument (accessed 3 May 2009).

- 10 Transcript of Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Igor Ivanov interview with TVTs Television Company, Moscow, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 25 January 2003, www.ln.mid.ru/Brp_4.nsf/arh/1D1C016B1F8D675943256CBC0053750A?OpenDocument (accessed 10 September 2010).
- 11 Transcript of Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Igor Ivanov interview with TVTs Television Company, Moscow, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 25 January 2003, www.ln.mid.ru/Brp_4.nsf/arh/1D1C016B1F8D675943256CBC0053750A?OpenDocument (accessed 10 September 2010).

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