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DIPLOMACY¹

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Introduction

In the quarter century since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian diplomacy has evolved from a passive, Western-orientation to a muscular, multilateral and assertive posture. In the immediate post-perestroika years, Russian diplomacy reflected the nascent democratic character of the new Russia, and the search for a new post-Soviet identity. Under the guidance of Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, Russia sought acceptance in the Western liberal democratic order. Kozyrev, committed to the democratization of Russia, viewed the global environment following the collapse of the USSR as friendly and supportive, which he argued would promote the domestic reform process. The absence of foreign hostility would marginalize conservative forces, while providing assistance for Russia's economic transformation. The task of Russian diplomacy was to integrate the country into the Western liberal economic order, becoming "a reliable partner in the community of civilized states" (Kozyrev, 1992: 9, 1995).

While much has been written about Russian foreign policy, little attention has been paid to the actual practice of Russian diplomacy. This chapter starts with a definition of diplomacy, and discusses the major principles and the style of Russian diplomacy. The next section traces the evolution of Russian diplomatic practice from the early Soviet period through the Cold War. Diplomacy in the post-communist era foundered as Russia's leaders searched for ways to integrate the new Russian state into a U.S.-dominated international order. Russia's early, cooperative diplomacy toward the West was soon replaced with a multilateral and more sophisticated approach under former Soviet academic and intelligence chief Evgeniy Primakov.

Primakov's successor, career diplomat Igor Ivanov, continued Primakov's legacy and further professionalized the Russian diplomatic service in the late Yeltsin and early Putin years. Under Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Russian diplomacy became more assertive and confrontational, reflecting the leadership style of Vladimir Putin. In the Putin-Lavrov period of the 2000s, Russian diplomacy stressed multilateral approaches and network diplomacy. Following Putin's return to his third presidential term in 2012, Russian diplomacy became more coercive, relying increasingly on sanctions and the threat of military force to achieve foreign policy aims. The final section provides a broader historical perspective, and summarizes the mixed record of Russian diplomacy.

Principles, style, and conditions of Russian diplomacy

Diplomacy and the Russian perspective

Diplomacy as a concept has a wide range of meanings. Many use the term as synonymous with international relations or the entirety of foreign policy (Kissinger, 1994; Ivanov, 2002; Primakov, 1999); for others it has a much narrower meaning, excluding the use of economic instruments or physical force (Hamilton and Langhorne, 2000). Scholars and practitioners distinguish between the traditional form of “high diplomacy” involving state-to-state negotiations conducted by seasoned professionals, and the more inclusive public diplomacy that incorporates a broad range of non-state actors in international relations (see Chapter 12 by Greg Simons on media and public diplomacy). Here I focus primarily on high diplomacy as practiced by the Russian government that, in recent years, has evolved to include modern forms of network diplomacy.

According to classical realism, diplomacy is the means by which states achieve their objectives short of war. The tasks of diplomacy are to determine the state’s interests and objectives (which are constrained by power), assess the objectives of other nations, determine to what extent these objectives are compatible, and employ the best means suited to pursue national interests. Experienced diplomats use a mixture of persuasion, compromise and the threat of force in pursuing their goals (Morgenthau, 2006: 539–541). Diplomacy is a profession, staffed by experts in foreign languages and cultures who are adept at bargaining, and who use their skills to negotiate their country’s interests (Berridge, 2001: 1–5).

Historically, diplomats have served as the chief representatives of their sovereign states abroad; foreign ministers and ambassadors today continue to serve as the voice and face of their countries in the international arena. The classical realist Hans Morgenthau subdivided this primary function into symbolic representation, legal representation, and political representation (Morgenthau, 2006: 542–545). The first of these deals with the ceremonial or prestige aspects of representation, the second relates to legally binding treaties and documents, while the third involves shaping and implementing foreign policy together with gathering information. In addition to the representation functions emphasized by Morgenthau, Christer Jonsson (2002) lists communicating national interests and goals, bargaining, and negotiation as major aspects of diplomacy.

If traditional diplomacy consists largely of representing individual state interests in the international arena, globalization has elevated the governing function – defined as multilateral cooperation to solve collective action problems – to equal importance (Sending et al., 2011). For Russia, however, the representative function is primary. Global governance is distinctly secondary, despite frequent statements about the importance of multilateral approaches. Russian diplomacy since the late 1990s has been very effective at promoting and representing Russian national interests; defending key principles of sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, and respect for Russia as a great power; recognizing the former Soviet space as a privileged sphere of Russian influence; and addressing Russia’s vital security concerns in the Eurasian region, including limits on NATO and EU expansion eastward. Moscow’s contributions to global governance have been marginal, or even obstructive, in response to U.S. and European global governance initiatives.

Moscow’s skeptical position on humanitarian intervention and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), adopted by the United Nations at its 2005 Summit, is a prominent example of this reluctance to engage in global governance (Ziegler, 2016). The R2P norm as promoted by liberal democratic actors in the West clashes with key Russian principles of sovereignty and

non-interference in internal affairs. Similarly, by annexing Crimea and destabilizing southeast Ukraine, Russia violated Western principles of global governance and international law, OECD principles, and the Budapest Memorandum signed in 1994. From Moscow's perspective these actions are historically justified and vital for national security – they reinforce Russia's position as a great power in the post-Soviet space. Russia is reasserting hegemony in this area of vital national interest, and rejects Western criticism. But Russian leaders do not reject global governance wholesale. The Kremlin is willing to engage international institutions and observe legal processes beyond the post-Soviet periphery, as illustrated in its constructive Arctic policy (Maness and Valeriano, 2015).

Some analysts view diplomacy as the peaceful conduct of statecraft at the very highest levels; for others, diplomacy on occasion involves coercion. Coercive diplomacy – defined as “efforts to persuade an opponent to stop and/or undo an action he is already embarked upon” – is primarily defensive, and is generally related to crisis situations. The tools of coercive diplomacy include threats, sanctions, incentives, and the judicious and exemplary application of limited force. Bargaining and communication (on two levels – between words and actions) are closely coordinated with the threat of force (George, 1991: 4–7, 10). Coercive diplomacy is highly context dependent:

Its effectiveness is a function of the type of provocation, the magnitude and depth of the conflict of interests, actors' images of the destructiveness of war, the degree of time urgency, the presence or absence of allies on either side, the strength and effectiveness of leadership, and the desired post-crisis relationship with the adversary.

(Levy, 2008: 540)

Traditional “club” diplomacy is a largely secretive, hierarchical negotiation process conducted among a select few high-level representatives of the state. This hierarchic form of diplomacy is being displaced by flatter, more open and inclusive interactions termed “network” diplomacy (Heine, 2013). Network diplomacy has emerged in a globalized world where communications are instantaneous and the number of players in foreign policy has expanded dramatically. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), corporations, and various multinational institutions play an important role in public diplomacy. Contemporary Russian practice contains elements of both club and network diplomacy, to be discussed later.

Political institutions, domestic politics, and diplomacy

In Russia's political system the President is instrumental in setting the main contours of Russian foreign policy. According to Article 80 of the Russian Federation Constitution, the President is the head of state and represents the country in international relations. Since assuming the presidency in 2000, Vladimir Putin has centralized policy-making in his office. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and various high-level officials of the Ministry coordinate and implement the details of foreign policy, but policy is closely coordinated with the President, who sets foreign policy guidelines. As one knowledgeable specialist puts it, “There is almost no space for involvement in foreign policy decision-making for the Federal Assembly (Parliament) and a rather small space for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Russian diplomats are managers rather than artists” (Tkachenko, 2017).

Russian diplomacy under Putin has reflected his approach to the world. For example, after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, Putin offered Russian support to

President George W. Bush and Russian diplomacy followed his lead. Six years later, convinced that Bush had been weakened by the Iraq adventure and angered by U.S. support for the color revolutions, Putin delivered his 2007 Munich speech condemning the United States for unilateralism and the hyper-use of force. Russian diplomacy subsequently reflected this more aggressive approach. It also reflects the unpredictability of Russian foreign policy, which is subject to the personal whims of Putin.

As with most chief executives, the Russian President frequently engages in summit diplomacy. High-profile meetings enhance the leader's image abroad, and confirm Russia's great power status for domestic audiences. By inviting Boris Yeltsin to the G-7 meetings in 1994, the leading industrial states were signaling their willingness to include Russia in the club. Conversely, after Russia flouted international norms by annexing Crimea and supporting separatists in southeastern Ukraine, President Putin was excluded from the summit meetings. To minimize this slight, Russian media have played up Putin's participation in G-20, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and BRICS forums, together with his bilateral summits and hosting ASEAN leaders at Sochi in 2016.

There is a close link between Russian foreign policy and domestic politics. As Russia transitioned from centrally planned state socialism toward a capitalist market economy, foreign policy adjusted to prioritize economic diplomacy as a tool to promote development and modernization. One specialist estimates that about half of all activity conducted by the Foreign Ministry's geographic departments is linked to trade and investment (Zonova, 2016: 340). The Ministry has a Department of Economic Cooperation tasked with coordinating trade and investment activities, and promoting Russia's integration in the global economy through such mechanisms as the World Trade Organization. Russian energy diplomacy is often conducted at the very highest levels, as in negotiations over the Nord Stream natural gas pipeline (between Putin and former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder), and the Power of Siberia gas pipeline finalized by Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping in early 2014.

Maintaining a prominent presence on the world stage enhances the legitimacy of Russian leaders, who can point to their diplomatic successes as evidence that Russia is a respected major player in global affairs. Soviet leaders valued *détente* so highly because the United States in effect acknowledged parity with the Soviet Union, recognizing its status as a co-equal superpower. Similarly, Foreign Minister Lavrov's article on the historical background of Russian foreign policy refers to Russia's "special role in European and global history", and quotes Henry Kissinger as stating that "Russia should be perceived as an essential element of any new global equilibrium" (Lavrov, 2016).

In foreign policy, military capabilities are closely linked to diplomatic influence. Russia's military weakness in the 1990s resulted from the collapse of the economy and ineffective political institutions. Under these conditions, foreign policy tended to be more accommodating (Tsygankov, 2012). One example is the development of pacific diplomacy between NATO and Russia in the immediate post-communist period, to the point that the possibility of using force in the relationship became unthinkable (Pouliot, 2010). However, the dismissive attitude toward Russia expressed by NATO officials nurtured resentment and a determination to reassert Russia's interests more vigorously once the power balance had been restored.

As Russia has modernized its military under Putin, its diplomatic approaches have become more assertive and confident. Russian diplomacy is very much realist in orientation, power-oriented and premised on defending the country's national interests. In addition, there is a clear hierarchy whereby more powerful states are accorded respect, while smaller and less powerful countries are frequently dismissed as inconsequential. Respect and status are very important for Russia – top leaders consistently assert that Russia must be treated as an equal great power by

other states. Much of the resentment of NATO's expansion eastward derives not so much from an existential security threat posed by the admission of new member states, but because NATO did not take Russian interests seriously in the 1990s (Pouliot, 2010; Tsygankov, 2012).

Since NATO's assault on Serbia in 1999, Russian leaders have been fixated on the principle that state sovereignty should be inviolable. Following the West's support for Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008, against the express wishes of Serbia, Russia politicized its approach to diplomatic recognition. Immediately after the brief Russo-Georgian war in August 2008, Dmitri Medvedev's government extended diplomatic recognition to the breakaway territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, citing a parallel to Kosovo's status. Russia has refused to recognize Kosovo and upon annexing Crimea in March 2014, asserted that in this case self-determination trumped sovereignty (Churkin, 2014). During earlier negotiations on Kosovo's status, Putin dismissed the U.S. claim that Kosovo was a unique situation, positing instead a universal model that equated it with the Georgian territories (Socor, 2006). If Europe and the United States applied a certain model of self-determination in the Balkans, the reasoning went, then Russia was fully justified in applying the same logic to the former Soviet space.

The need for full equality and respect in foreign affairs leads to a strategy of reciprocity in Russian diplomacy – whether positively or negatively (Glasser, 2013a). Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has described “normal” diplomatic relations as characterized by respect, and criticized the Barack Obama administration for being obsessed with American U.S. exceptionalism and leadership, and for a tendency to impose values by force rather than example (“Sergey Lavrov”, 2017). In his controversial speech to the 2007 Munich Security Conference, Putin rejected a unipolar world with only one sovereign, where countries like Russia were constantly being lectured about democracy and with the United States imposing its policies on other nations. Democratic equality, Putin suggested, should extend to the realm of international relations (Putin, 2007).

Russia's reciprocity strategy was evident in 2012 when the U.S. Congress passed the Magnitsky Act designed to punish Russian officials for the death of lawyer Sergei Magnitsky. Encouraged by presidential aide Vyacheslav Volodin, a vocal critic of the United States, the Russian Duma responded by banning adoptions of Russian children by Americans (Zygar, 2016: 240–245). Although Foreign Minister Lavrov personally opposed the adoption ban (his ministry had just concluded an adoption agreement with the United States), he later observed in an interview: “You always reciprocate. Positively, negatively, but this is something which you cannot change. It was not invented by us. It is the law of international relations. Reciprocity is the key” (Glasser, 2013b).

To summarize, Russian diplomacy defends the key principles of inviolable state sovereignty, promotes recognition of Russia as a great power with a Eurasian sphere of influence, demands respect in international affairs, seeks to restrain U.S., NATO and EU advances, and asserts Russia's right to participate in major global forums and institutions. Russian diplomatic methods include both cooperation and coercion, and reciprocity is a key strategy in preserving Russian honor. Finally, Russian diplomacy after the collapse of the Soviet Union was forced to adjust to conditions of economic crisis, limited military capabilities, and a unipolar world dominated by the United States. As chaotic democratization under Yeltsin gave way to consolidated authoritarianism under Putin, Russian diplomacy became more centralized, secretive, and assertive. The next section briefly reviews how present-day Russian diplomacy has been influenced by seventy years of Soviet diplomatic practices and institutions.

From the Cold War to the 1990s

Following a short period of revolutionary idealism, where Bolshevik leaders rejected traditional bourgeois diplomacy and sought to undermine the bourgeois international order, Soviet

diplomacy reverted to a more typical European style of conducting foreign affairs (Kocho-Williams, 2012). Soviet diplomacy was soon tasked with promoting the country's national interests, rather than the cause of proletarian internationalism, although foreign policy behavior was conceptualized through the ideological prism of Marxism-Leninism.

The Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs was highly professional, with diplomats well schooled in foreign languages and history. In 1934 the Diplomatic Academy of the USSR was founded under the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to train Soviet diplomats. Toward the end of WWII, the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) was established to educate students for careers in foreign affairs. Both institutions survived into the post-communist era and continued to train foreign service professionals. The USSR had diplomatic legations in virtually every country in the world, and this policy of great-power engagement has continued in the post-communist era. Diplomacy was a vital tool in the Cold War struggle with the United States.

Much of this Soviet foreign policy bureaucracy would be carried over into the post-communist period – with Cold War thinking and a residual Marxist-Leninist worldview evident among older diplomats. The foreign ministry also inherited a centralized, top-down form of decision-making characterized by a high level of formality and secrecy (Pouliot, 2010: 134–138). In the Soviet period all major foreign policies were formulated by the Communist Party's Politburo, and decisions of the Party leadership were above criticism. Mikhail Gorbachev's "new thinking" in foreign policy sought to de-ideologize Soviet foreign policy, to open it up to more critical scrutiny, and to admit foreign policy failures, as in the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. In today's Russia, the President and his closest advisors dominate foreign policy decision-making, much like the Politburo in Soviet times, and certain issues are no longer open to critical discussion.

Studies of Russian diplomacy

There are many excellent studies of Russian foreign policy, but very little has been written specifically on Russian diplomacy in the post-communist period. Former Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov's *The New Russian Diplomacy* (2002) is useful as an overview of Russian foreign policy positions a decade after the collapse of the USSR. Evgeniy Primakov's *Gody bol'shoi politiki* (1999, translated as *Russian Crossroads*, 2004) provides insights into Primakov's tenure as Foreign Minister, including his energetic efforts to contain NATO expansion, Russia's negotiations on Iraq and Kosovo, and U.S.-Russian relations.

Russia's first post-communist Foreign Minister, Andrei Kozyrev, expressed his thoughts on foreign policy in several works from the 1990s. In his 1995 book *Preobrazhenie*, Kozyrev outlined the transformation of Russian foreign policy from the messianic, ideological, and confrontational practices of the Soviet period, to the more cooperative and pragmatic diplomacy of his tenure. Soviet foreign policy concentrated on the good of the state, while the new Russian diplomacy had as its basic goals defending the rights of citizens, guaranteeing the country's security, and creating favorable conditions for economic development. Kozyrev defended his engagement with the West, which some denigrated as unduly "romantic", as not only natural but also necessary to break completely with the imperial Soviet past.

Kozyrev emphasized the importance of a friendly international environment for the new Russia, and the need to work together with international financial institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) for Russia to complete successfully its transformation to democracy and become a normal great power. The central tasks of Russian diplomacy were to improve the everyday life of Russian citizens, and reconstitute ties with the former republics – the Commonwealth of

Independent States (Kozyrev, 1992). In another essay Kozyrev stressed the need for a close strategic partnership with the United States based on mutual trust and conducted in the framework of a multipolar world and inclusion of Russia in the G-7 forum (Kozyrev, 1994).

Within the academic literature, Tatiana Zonova's work on Russian diplomacy is very useful. Zonova, a faculty member at MGIMO holding diplomatic rank of Counsellor 1st class, surveys the range of Russian diplomatic activities and discusses new trends in Russian diplomatic practice (Zonova, 2016). Elsewhere, Zonova has analyzed the historical Byzantine tendencies that infused Soviet and Russian diplomatic culture with messianic elements distinct from the modern European model (Zonova, 2007).

Recent work on coercive diplomacy illustrates how Russia is able to combine enhanced military capabilities with skilled diplomacy to shape international affairs, punching well above its weight globally. Stanislav Tkachenko, professor at St. Petersburg State University, notes the complexity of Russia's coercive diplomacy, its "*respect for sovereignty as the highest value in the international arena*", and a preoccupation with preserving the status quo near Russia's borders (Tkachenko, 2017; emphasis in the original). Ryan Maness and Brandon Valeriano (2015) find Russia's use of coercive diplomacy to be situational, influenced by context and history. Coercive diplomacy – including military force, cyber attacks, and energy leverage – has been evident in Russia's relations with Georgia, Ukraine, Estonia, and Moldova, former republics of the USSR that Moscow considers to be within Russia's sphere of influence. Maness and Valeriano argue that Russia's heavy-handed coercive tactics encourage neighboring states to align more closely with the West, resulting in diplomatic failures.

Russian diplomacy in the 1990s

The new Russian diplomacy has been oriented toward reasserting Russian national interests long ignored by the West. Former Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov (1998–2004), in an oblique criticism of Kozyrev, described Russia's approach to the post-Cold War order eloquently: "Probably the main Russian illusion of the 1990s was a romantic vision of the world after the Cold War" (Ivanov, 2011). A key diplomatic goal at this time was avoiding Russia's isolation, by using diplomacy to make up for the lack of economic clout or military prowess in foreign policy. In a world order dominated by the United States, promoting multipolarity became a means of limiting U.S. power. Evgeniy Primakov's efforts at restoring the balance of power during his tenure as Foreign Minister (1996–1998) earned him a reputation as Russia's consummate diplomat – professional, experienced, a realist and pragmatist dedicated to advancing Russia's interests abroad by strengthening alliances with the non-Western powers.²

A key priority of Russian diplomacy from the beginning was to provide the conditions for Russia's economic development and economic reform through integration into the global economy (Ivanov, 2002: 141–149). During the 1990s, the Russian economy suffered from hyperinflation, unemployment, and the stress of transitioning toward a market economy. Russia's economic diplomacy was tasked with encouraging foreign investment, making foreign markets more accessible to Russian exports, developing economic ties with the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members, and preserving economic links to the former Soviet republics. Participation in the World Trade Organization (WTO) was a top priority – Russia eventually acquired WTO membership, but only after eighteen years of arduous negotiations. As the economy improved, Russian diplomacy prioritized the re-integration of the post-Soviet space through the Customs Union, and later the Eurasian Economic Union.

Russia's diplomats faced the daunting challenging of reorienting their country's foreign policy in the midst of political transition, major economic reforms, and virtual political anarchy.

Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was charged with establishing diplomatic ties to the fourteen new states on Russia's border, while contending with the Defense Ministry freelancing foreign policy in the Caucasus, Moldova, and elsewhere.³ A central problem was the question of Russia's national and foreign policy identity, which in the earliest years was oriented toward joining the Western world. But Moscow's perspective quickly evolved in a different direction. By the mid-1990s many Russian elites became disillusioned with the West, believing that Russian weakness in the 1990s led the West to take advantage of Russia, to humiliate it while ignoring Russian interests.

Soviet diplomacy was premised on the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, and Russia inherited much of this legacy, including personnel, institutions, and experiences. The Marxist-Leninist ideology that had shaped Soviet foreign policy was abandoned, but a democratic ideology never really took hold. In the more liberal political atmosphere of the 1990s, however, new foreign policy actors emerged – the state Duma, independent media, business groups, regional officials, and public opinion – effectively decentralizing the conduct of foreign policy (Ivanov, 2002: 21). Under Putin's leadership, power to shape foreign policy gravitated toward the presidency – no other institution has as significant a role in Russian diplomacy. The State Duma has a Committee on International Affairs, for example, but it lacks the policy-making or oversight authority to constrain either the President's office or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The new post-communist Russian diplomatic corps retained much of the Soviet foreign policy structure and personnel (Ivanov, 2002: 21). However, like many other government bureaucracies, the new Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs experienced a significant decline in budget and personnel following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Some thirty-two embassies and consulates were closed, and many talented younger diplomats – especially those with good language skills – left for more lucrative employment in the private business sector. Women found professional advancement in the diplomatic service highly limited (Zonova, 2016). Yelena Biberman's survey of international affairs students in Russia found that careers in the Foreign Ministry were unattractive not because of low salaries, but rather due to their perception that power was concentrated in the ruling elite, and their belief that the Foreign Ministry lacked autonomy in policy-making (Biberman, 2011). This concentration of power stemmed from Vladimir Putin's determination to rebuild the “power vertical” in Russian politics, to address the weakness of a decentralized, nearly feudalistic polity.

This weakness was evident on the international stage. Many conservatives and nationalists in Russia decried the country's subservient position in relations with the West. In his memoirs Evgeniy Primakov describes a conversation that Andrei Kozyrev had with Richard Nixon in 1992, shortly after the breakup of the Soviet Union, as related by Nixon Center director Dmitri Simes. Russia's young Foreign Minister assured Nixon of Russia's commitment to universal human values and told the ex-President he would be very appreciative of any assistance in identifying Russia's national interests. Nixon, the consummate realist, was clearly embarrassed by the question, which he regarded as hopelessly naïve and idealistic (Primakov, 1999: 210–211). This exemplified for many Russians the weakness of Russian diplomacy under Kozyrev, who seemed to many Russian nationalists more determined to transform his country into a client state of the United States than to build a partnership based on equality.⁴

Evgeniy Primakov personified the turn away from Kozyrev's Western orientation toward greater multilateralism in foreign policy. Primakov's strategy of creating the best possible conditions for a severely weakened Russia to pursue internal reforms, while avoiding isolation and preserving an international balance of power favorable to Russia's interests, was modeled on the diplomatic precedent set by Prince Aleksandr Gorchakov, who served as foreign minister (1856–1882) to Tsar Alexander II in the aftermath of the Crimean War (Ivanov, 2002: 26–27).

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has repeatedly praised Gorchakov for restoring Russian influence in the nineteenth century solely through diplomacy, without resort to force. And like his Soviet counterpart Andrei Gromyko, Lavrov personifies Russian opposition to U.S. policies, earning the nickname “Mr. Nyet” (Glasser, 2013a). Russian diplomacy under Putin and Lavrov, while assertive, has also been highly pragmatic, realist, and until Putin’s third presidential term, largely non-ideological, tailored solely to the defense and promotion of Russian state interests.

Using Gorchakov as his model, Primakov sought to restore Russia’s global influence in the 1990s, balancing the United States by strengthening Russia’s ties with China and India. Lavrov has continued to pursue Primakov’s multipolar diplomacy, while constraining the exercise of U.S. power through the United Nations and other international institutions. In 2015, to honor Primakov, the government created the Moscow Primakov Center, with Henry Kissinger and a phalanx of Russian dignitaries in attendance for the opening. His name was attached to the prestigious Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), and in 2016 the Gorchakov Fund held a series of “Primakov Readings” marking the legacy of the Russian statesman.

Russian diplomacy in the 2000s

In the early years of Vladimir Putin’s presidency, Russia largely continued the cooperative diplomacy toward the West pursued by Yeltsin’s administration, albeit leavened with Primakov’s multipolar diplomacy. Putin demonstratively supported the United States in its war on terror following the September 11, 2001 attacks, overruling his generals to approve U.S. military deployments to Central Asia. However, with the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, and the succession of color revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan (2003–2005), Russian policy shifted toward confrontation.

The most prominent backlash to U.S. unilateralism was Putin’s 2007 speech to the Munich security forum, which took Western leaders by surprise. By that time Russia was developing the economic and military capabilities to back up its diplomatic maneuvering to gain acceptance as an equal partner. But the effectiveness of Russia’s material capabilities cannot rest solely on energy resources and military might. Russian leaders realized that to maintain Russia’s status as a great power the country would also need to develop its soft power, or non-material capabilities. Former Foreign Minister Ivanov advocated pursuing a “smart” foreign policy – one that was more flexible and backed by expert advice, with better inter-agency coordination, incorporating civil society institutions and public-private partnerships. Ideas, Ivanov stressed, could confer a decisive advantage in a globalizing world. These non-material dimensions of foreign policy had been underestimated or neglected by the traditional diplomacy of the past (Ivanov, 2011). Network diplomacy exemplifies this new strategy.

Network diplomacy

Foreign Minister Lavrov first advanced the concept of “network diplomacy” in 2006, though the concept may be traced back to the system of flexible alliances advocated by Count Gorchakov in the nineteenth century. The idea is purely pragmatic, to move beyond the bloc politics of the Cold War and engage any combination of states based on coincident interests. Network diplomacy, Lavrov claimed, is aimed at solving common problems and is not directed against any particular state or organization. One major configuration Lavrov specified was the Russia-EU-U.S. partnership. This triangle was not directed against China, but rather could cooperate with China on issues of mutual concern such as North Korea’s nuclear weapons program.

Similarly, Lavrov asserted, a network like the BRICS was not directed against the interests of the United States or the EU (Umerenkov, 2006). Following the annexation of Crimea and deterioration of relations with the West, Russia's network diplomacy focused more on the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and the Russia-China-India triangle, groupings that excluded Western powers.

For Russia, network diplomacy aligns with the primary goal of shifting the global order away from U.S. dominance, and toward a more balanced, multipolar system. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the BRICS process are examples of diplomatic successes because they include non-Western powers China and India, and so constitute the realization of Primakov's Eurasian vision. These organizations, together with the CIS and CSTO, form the new ideal of network diplomacy. Lavrov has identified the Iran nuclear agreement, the deal to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons, and terrorism as issues where collective action is needed (Lavrov, 2016).

These diplomatic initiatives may be considered a form of global governance, but it is governance on Russia's terms. Russian support for the United Nations, for example, can be viewed as a form of network diplomacy and support for global governance. Since Russia has a veto in the UN Security Council, however, and can work with shifting coalitions of like-minded states in the UN General Assembly to realize foreign policy goals, this global institution provides Moscow with an effective means of restraining U.S. power.

Personal diplomacy

In the decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union, personal diplomacy at the highest levels augured well for bilateral relations between Russia and the United States. Presidents Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin personally met eighteen times over the eight years that Clinton was in office, and developed a close friendship. A second regular line of diplomatic communications was the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission, proposed by Andrei Kozyrev and headed by U.S. Vice President Al Gore and Russia's Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin. The commission dealt with IMF conditionality provisions (a sore spot with Chernomyrdin), energy development, joint space exploration, and Russia's nuclear deal with Iran. Through these high-level channels the principals negotiated a number of major agreements, including securing Ukraine's nuclear weapons, withdrawing Russian troops from the Baltic states, and institutionalizing Russia's relationship to NATO (Talbot, 2002: 5–9, 84–86).

As Russian diplomacy, like Russian politics, was recentralized under Vladimir Putin, his penchant for secrecy and lack of any significant institutional constraints made foreign policy more unpredictable. Putin established close personal relations with some leaders – former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, most notably. Schröder had criticized the U.S. invasion of Iraq, while Berlusconi admired Putin's macho authoritarian style of leadership. With other world leaders Putin had tense relations, including President Barack Obama, who early in his first term chided Putin for “having one foot in the old ways of doing business and one foot in the new”, and Schröder's successor Angela Merkel, famously intimidating her with his black Labrador (Blomfield, 2009; Smale and Higgins, 2017).⁵ Putin's extensive experience as the leader of Russia, and his intelligence training, give him an edge in personal diplomacy. One senior U.S. intelligence officer remarked on how Putin's KGB training helps him discern vulnerabilities in others and exploit them to his advantage during negotiations (Morell, 2016).

Russian diplomacy in the early years of the Yeltsin administration was fairly idealistic, but under Putin it became far more pragmatic in advancing Russian interests. U.S.-style moralism, which resists engaging with certain international actors (rogue states, for example), is absent from

Russian diplomatic practice. Indeed, Putin sought to reestablish close ties with states that had been effectively abandoned following the breakup of the USSR, and he made a point of courting leaders hostile to Washington. These included Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, Syria's Bashar al-Assad, and North Korea's Kim Jong-il. Curiously, while the Chinese-Russian strategic partnership is critical to Moscow's foreign policy, and both leaders describe ties as the best in history, Putin's personal relationship with President Xi Jinping is not very warm (Baev, 2016).

Classical diplomacy attaches great importance to developing long-term personal relationships based on understanding each other's national interests. During Yeltsin's time in office U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov worked together productively during the Balkan crises of the 1990s. As Ivanov and Albright observed years afterward at a conference on U.S.-Russia relations, understanding and respecting the other side's national interests will lead to trust and respect, even if the sides have serious differences.⁶ Echoing this point, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice noted "Personal relationships do matter . . . I came to trust that Sergei Ivanov was someone who was going to deliver on what he said he would do, and I think he believed the same about me" (Roxburgh, 2013: 45). U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Sergei Lavrov had a warm relationship, notwithstanding the tensions between Obama and Putin. But even the closest personal relationships cannot surmount competing national interests, which often lead great powers to engage in more forceful diplomacy.

Putin's coercive diplomacy

Coercive diplomacy relies on threat of force, rather than persuasion, and it includes economic, trade, and visa sanctions, in addition to a willingness to use military force in at least a limited capacity. Russia's weakness and its determination to limit U.S. influence along its periphery has led Moscow to move quickly from coercive diplomacy to a demonstration of military power (as in Ukraine and Georgia), rather than engage in more extended efforts at diplomatic persuasion (Tkachenko, 2017). Russia has at times used large-scale coercive diplomacy against Georgia, Ukraine, and Turkey. These actions are designed primarily to limit U.S. power in Russia and throughout the former Soviet space, to oppose infringements on Russian sovereignty, and to protect its perceived sphere of interests. Tkachenko claims that given Russia's disadvantageous position after the Cold War:

Russian leaders simply do not believe that non-violent coercive diplomacy will lead to effective change of the existing status quo for one favourable to Russian interests. This perception is based on the view that even the most talented negotiators are not able to "renegotiate" the consequences of the collapse of the USSR and change Russia's image as a country defeated by the West in the Cold War. The Russian Federation needs another type of argumentation to insist on changing the post-Cold War status quo.

(Tkachenko, 2017: 121)

Russia's coercive diplomacy seeks to create a new multilateral balance of power in the regional, if not the global, order. The goal is to force the United States to accept certain changes in the status quo favorable to Russia, namely the frozen conflicts in Georgia and Moldova, Russia's annexation of Crimea, and limits on Kiev's authority in southeastern Ukraine. Russia's coercive diplomacy has been applied along the country's periphery, and beyond that to Syria, but not much further. Conventional military power is sufficient to allow Moscow to exercise a regional form of coercive diplomacy, but Russia has neither the capability nor the inclination to extend its reach globally.

Diplomacy is effective only if it is backed up by the prospect of credible verbal or non-verbal signaling, substantial economic power (needed for imposing sanctions or providing incentives), and a willingness and ability to use military force. Russia has modernized its military forces since the Georgian war (2008), giving it sufficient capabilities to back up coercive diplomacy regionally (Trenin, 2016). Diplomacy alone was not sufficient to ensure that Georgia and Ukraine remained outside NATO, a key goal for the Kremlin. President George W. Bush had pushed membership for both states at the April 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, and while France and Germany were opposed, the Bucharest Summit Declaration expressed support for their eventual membership (Baker, 2008). Lavrov asserted NATO membership for either country was a critical threat to Russian national security, and blamed the events in Ukraine on NATO's 2008 ("Dragging Ukraine", 2014). Similarly, Syria exemplifies the new Russian strategy of coercive diplomacy backed by a demonstration of military capabilities, while calling for the destruction of terrorists and an eventual negotiated settlement.

Generally, more powerful states are better positioned to make use of coercive diplomacy. Russia uses coercive diplomacy not only against weaker states such as Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, but is increasingly using intimidation against stronger entities like the United States, the EU, and NATO. Diplomacy, especially coercive diplomacy, is an essential dimension of Russia's hybrid warfare strategy, which incorporates a range of measures, many of them non-kinetic, to disrupt and weaken a potential opponent. These include cyber attacks, trolling, disinformation, and similar methods that are especially effective against open democratic systems.

Russia uses secretive instruments of coercive diplomacy in tandem with public diplomacy, which relies on a country's soft power, or cultural attractiveness. As communications technologies have advanced, public diplomacy – the practice of influencing public opinion among publics in foreign nations using governmental and non-governmental organizations – has moved into prominence as a form of soft power (Melissen, 2005; Nye, 2008). Russia's government utilizes a network of organizations to advance Russian interests abroad, including RT (formerly Russian Television), Sputnik, Rossotrudnichestvo (Federal Agency for the CIS Region, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation), *Russkii Mir* (Russian World), and the Russian Orthodox Church. Russia's public diplomacy and media are discussed at length in Chapter 12; here I will simply note that the Kremlin is skillfully using modern forms of public diplomacy to complement Russia's successful traditional diplomacy.

Conclusion and assessment

Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a proud tradition dating back to September 1802, when it was established under Tsar Alexander I. Russian diplomats have rediscovered Tsarist imperial practices, and routinely praise Russia's contribution to European statecraft. Foreign Minister Lavrov has heralded Russia's central contribution to the defense of Europe and preservation of civilization, while noting the continuity of Russian history and diplomatic traditions. Russia's great historical mission, the Foreign Minister claimed, was to serve as a bridge between East and West. The Russian Revolution and communist rule resulted in tremendous violence, Lavrov acknowledged, but on the positive side the Soviet state played a vital role in defeating fascism and promoting decolonization and the right of self-determination. Russia's diplomatic experience provided "the basis for moving vigorously forward and asserting our rightful role as one of the leading centers of the modern world, and as a source of values for development, security and stability" (Lavrov, 2016).

Historical continuity may be discerned in Russia's current promotion of stability and opposition to revolutionary movements or popular protests that threaten authoritarian government, which recalls the Holy Alliance of conservative monarchies sponsored by Alexander I. Popular

uprisings near Russia's borders threaten Russia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, much as French revolutionary ideas threatened Europe's monarchies in the nineteenth century. The Kremlin has enlisted Russia's Orthodox Church, led by Patriarch Kirill, to promote Russia's image as guardian of conservative Christian values, and to legitimize the regime's actions in Ukraine and Syria (Cichowlas, 2017). This search for a new unifying Russian national idea based on religion recalls the symphonia tradition of close collaboration between church and state of the pre-Petrine era (Zonova, 2007).

James Sherr (2013) suggests that historically Russian diplomacy has exhibited calculated ambiguity about what was domestic and what was foreign. The historical messianism of Moscow as the Third Rome, Soviet efforts to spread communism internationally, and the Kremlin's current paternalistic approach toward compatriots in the former republics exemplify this relationship. Close linkages between foreign and domestic politics are evident in the dominance of President Putin, together with a few close associates, as chief decision maker, and the degree to which national interests reflect elite group interests (Lo, 2015: 3–37).

Russian diplomacy also reflects political culture, most notably the pride in national greatness, recognition as an influential major power, and the importance of preserving honor in international relations, aspects of Russian foreign policy that have endured for centuries (Tsygankov, 2012). To honor Russia's diplomatic service, in 2002 President Putin decreed a Diplomatic Worker's Day, marking the 200th anniversary of Russia's Foreign Ministry.⁷ In his congratulatory remarks to Foreign Ministry personnel marking the 2017 holiday, Putin said, "Russia's diplomacy has a long and glorious history and our diplomats have always remained true to their professional duties and served the homeland with honor."⁸ Russian diplomacy pragmatically expresses Russian national interests, as realism would suggest, but it also reflects the quest for international respect and defends a distinct Russian national identity, dimensions neglected by a purely realist approach.

Russian diplomacy is in a process of transition away from the traditional high diplomacy of the Soviet era, and the diplomacy of weakness of the 1990s, toward a multifaceted and complex diplomacy balancing effective traditional mechanisms with newer, more nimble forms of diplomacy. It builds on pre-revolutionary and Soviet traditions, and is tightly controlled by President Putin, who is assisted by a small group of foreign policy elites. Russia's professional diplomatic corps has played an important role in restoring the country to a position of prominence in world affairs, though a tendency to resort to coercive diplomacy and intimidation has heightened tensions with the West, and contributed to Russia's isolation. Russian diplomacy has been more successful with the non-Western world, through an extensive network of multilateral institutions that either exclude or constrain U.S. and European actions.

The skill and professionalism of Russia's diplomatic corps has served the country well, enabling the Kremlin to exercise a larger global influence than its economic or military capabilities would suggest. Nonetheless, in the absence of effective long-term domestic reform, economic and demographic factors will constrain Russia's foreign policy options. Diplomacy can only partially compensate for these structural weaknesses. Moreover, Russia's increasing reliance on coercive diplomacy has often proved counter-productive, alienating friends and strengthening opposition to the Kremlin's aggressive tactics.

Notes

- 1 I am indebted to Andrei Tsygankov and Kenneth Yalowitz for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this chapter.
- 2 See the commemorative speech by Foreign Minister Lavrov to the Gorchakov Fund, 1 December 2016, at <http://gorchakovfund.ru/en/news/19893/>.

- 3 I am indebted to Ambassador Kenneth Yalowitz for this insight.
- 4 A different perspective may be found in Sidorova (2017). Galina Sidorova is a journalist who served as Kozyrev's political advisor from 1992–1995. She has high praise for Kozyrev, though she is very critical of Lavrov for “dumbing down” Russian foreign policy and his slavish devotion to Putin's foreign policy line.
- 5 For an extended discussion of Putin's relationship with Angela Merkel, see Mushaben 2017. Mushaben notes that for all his misogyny, Putin has great respect for Merkel's leadership.
- 6 At <https://sfs.georgetown.edu/secretary-state-madeleine-allbright-foreign-minister-russia-igor-ivanov-discuss-u-s-russia-relations/>.
- 7 The precise date of the holiday was also meant to commemorate the *Posolsky Prikaz* (roughly, Foreign Office) set up under Ivan IV in 1549.
- 8 <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53849>.

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