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Changes in Russian foreign policy discourse
and concept of “Russian World”

Oleksii Polegkyi

*PhD candidate
Wroclaw University*

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Wroclaw University*

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Abstract

According to a wide topic of this paper we will have to deal with two main concepts here. One is the concept of discourse or even discursive practice which is theoretical and methodological background for this study and other one is the concept of Russian world which is conceptual frame through which now is constructing the Russian foreign policy and in some sense even Russian identity at whole.

Keywords

Russian world, foreign policy, discourse, Russian identity

1. Introduction

In a discursive approach, which sees international politics as increasingly being a struggle over ideas and values, public diplomacy activities are an important means of political influence alongside traditional diplomacy among governments. This discursive struggle, most certainly bears comparison with the symbolic and cognitive struggle mentioned by Pierre Bourdieu, which to his mind makes up one of the essential dimensions of political struggle: "The struggle which sets professionals against each other is no doubt the form par excellence of the symbolic struggle for the conservation or transformation of the social world through the conservation or transformation of the vision of the social world and of the principles of division of this world".¹

The basic tenet of this theoretical framework is that the meaning of social phenomena is socially constructed through language. The language of politics is not a neutral medium that conveys ideas independently formed - suggests W. Connolly - it is an institutionalized structure of meanings that channels political thought and action in certain directions. This means that the discursive practices, which dominate the policy formulation process, reflect also the dominant trends in the policy practices.²

An analysis of the discourse on key societal themes is the way to establish the discursive framework of meaning in a particular society or in a particular social context. In principle, any concept could be the pivot of discourses within particular fields of social practice. Guillaume Colin indicates two levels of discourse of foreign policy:

*"We believe the grounding of foreign policy discourse in the internal sphere can be analysed on two levels which in fact reflect two conceptions of foreign policy discourse. On the first level, foreign policy discourse is a practice that belongs both to the field of International Relations and the field of internal policy. On a second level, foreign policy discourse is also a matrix for interpreting international events grounded in the political imaginaire, thus making up a component of political culture, Russia's in this case."*³

As mentioned S. Rasmussen: "It follows that public diplomacy as a communicative practice is not only a matter of projecting and controlling self-images abroad. Other discursive elements are also targets of public diplomacy. Poli-

1 Bourdieu P. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge (UK): Polity Press. 1991, pp. 180-181

2 Connolly W. *The Terms of political Discourse*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1983, p.1

3 Colin Guillaume. *Russian Foreign Policy Discourse during the Kosovo Crisis: Internal Struggles and the Political Imaginaire*. Research in question, nr 12, December 2004, p.5



cal influence is achieved through influencing how specific issues, such as human rights or corruption, are perceived abroad, or by adding new issues to the political agenda, by relating them to important discursive elements”.⁴

To claim that politics is a struggle over ideas and values is to claim that what matters is not only facts and events in themselves, but how they are interpreted in public discourse. Political influence is thus achieved by articulating a certain meaning of a concept that others then adopt, making it a socially constructed truth. A discourse is the result of social practice that establishes relations among concepts and thereby their meaning. Public diplomacy thus operates through what essentially communicative practices intended to influence foreign political discourses, i.e. seeking support for one’s particular definition of reality. So, important part of Russian foreign policy and public diplomacy is concerned with affecting very specific discursive elements, for instance by trying to affect the news stream related to particular events inside country and in the world. In this way, the Russian policymakers try to frame specific events in a certain way. This is done through different channels, including TV, press and Internet. The idea is that these should function as multipliers, so that the stories are brought also in the national and local press of third countries.

Some other authors move further, pointing to the direct impact of the language we use on social and political practice. (Fairclough, Wodak 1997, Laclau, Mouffe 1985, Larsen 1997 etc.) For example, Henrik Larsen mentioned the existence of a discursive field in which meaning is contested, and a battle over meaning is taking place: “the impact of words derives not only from the difference between them but from the social values given to them (or more correctly the values given to the different signifiers) and the rules determining the ways in which words can be connected”⁵.

N. Fairclough definition of discourse states that it is both a mode of action, in which people act upon the world and each other, and a mode of representation, in which people represent the reality they live in. For him, discourse contributes to the construction of “social identities”, social relationships and systems of knowledge and belief. It is important to stress that discursive practice not only contributes to reproducing societal relations, but also to transforming them. The existence of the transformative function of discourse leads us to the conclusion that discourse is ideologically charged.⁶ So, the great part of diplomatic activity takes place on the level of discourse.

2. Changes in Russian foreign policy

After crashed of Soviet Union, every former republic was looking for its identity, the place in the new world and conceptual basis for a model of state development. The Russian power elite started searching for common ideological denominators that could serve as tools for the integration of society. The debate

⁴ Rasmussen S. *Discourse Analysis of EU Public Diplomacy Messages and Practices*. DISCUSSION PAPERS IN DIPLOMACY, Netherlands Institute of International Relations ‘Clingendael’ 2009, p. 5

⁵ Larsen H. *Foreign Policy and Discourse Analysis: France, Britain and Europe*. London: London School of Economics and Political Science / Routledge. 1997, p. 14

⁶ Fairclough N. Wodak R., *Critical Discourse Analysis. In: Discourse as Social Interaction*, ed. Teun A. van Dijk (London: SAGE). 1997

on the principles of the compatriots' policy has a lot to do with Russia's ongoing search for identity.

Russia could not return to its imperial policy of the past, but operates in the sphere of her prevalent interests by economic means of strengthening her influence. Former Soviet republics have been losing their Russian preferences. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) has become internally unstable.

It is very important for Moscow to restore Russia as a global center of power that needs the appropriate surrounding. Using the resources available, Russia is striving to preserve her influence in the neighboring states. It is the geopolitical aspect of Russia's foreign policy.

By the mid of 2000's, favorable conditions on the energy market and the Russian economic development combined to give the Kremlin a position of power it had not enjoyed since the ends of 1980's. Russia has used this position to reassert itself as a great power on the international stage as autonomous center of power and influence.

It will also exploit the potential of its "soft power" - the Russian world will become attractive, the Russian view convincing. Russia uses its compatriots' policy as a way of exerting soft power on neighboring countries. Soft power relates to the ability of political actors to shape the preferences of others through attraction and cooptation, rather than coercion. Opportunities for cooperation are strengthened by shared culture and values as well as economic incentives. According to Joseph S. Nye, the chief proponent of the concept of soft power, its attractiveness is derived from three sources—culture, values and foreign policy. Soft power, Nye argues in his book, is not the same as influence. It is not only persuasion to move people by argument, it's also the ability to attract. In behavioral terms soft power is attractive power. In terms of resources, soft-power resources are the assets that produce such attraction.⁷

As wrote N. Popescu and A. Wilson: "Moscow has been trying to establish a sphere of influence in its "near abroad" since the break-up of the Soviet Union. Its soft power is built on a bedrock of historical and cultural affinity — the presence of Russian minorities in neighborhoods countries, the Russian language, post-Soviet nostalgia and the strength of the Russian Orthodox Church"⁸

Changes in Russian foreign policy became known in 2005. A series of "color revolutions" in neighboring countries of the CIS have as their consequence the aspiration of the new elites to integration without Russia's participation.

For Russia the strategic break point was Ukraine. When the Orange Revolution happened in Ukraine, the West impression was that this was a spontaneous democratic rising. The Russian perception was that it was a well-prepared operation to foment an anti-Russian and pro-American uprising in Ukraine.

In 2005 Kremlin political consultant Gleb Pavlovsky announced a major redefinition of Russia's policy in the "post-Soviet space". Linking Russia's global ambitions for the future to the projection of its influence in the "post-Soviet space" at present, Pavlovsky mentioned that: "The concept of the "near abroad" is dead... Russia is currently revising its policy in the post-Soviet space and the mechanisms of its implementation."⁹

7 Nye J. *Soft Power. The Means to Success in World Politics*, Public Affairs, 2004

8 Popescu N., Wilson A. *The Limits of Enlargement-lite: European and Russian Power in the Troubled Neighbourhood*. Published by the European Council on Foreign Relations: London. ECFR June 2009. P. 29

9 SOCOR V. KREMLIN REDEFINING POLICY IN „POST-SOVIET SPACE“. In: Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 2 Issue: 27, February 7, 2005

As a reaction on Orange revolution and election of V. Yushchenko as a President of Ukraine, Moscow reserved the right to pursue its goals by establishing relations with political forces, opposition as well as governing, in post-Soviet countries. Moreover, Pavlovsky's remarks suggest that Russian authorities intend to compete in the civil-society arena by using their tame or government-created NGOs.

"Russia will certainly interact with the entire political spectrum in the neighboring (CIS) countries, both official and opposition, including nongovernmental organizations, democratic organizations, and in-system political groups...Moscow intends to use its NGOs as well as its government agencies to link up with political forces in post-Soviet countries",¹⁰

As a result of the "color revolutions", Russia's leaders learned that crude manipulation might not be enough to remain in power; that ideas matter and that NGOs can make revolutions. Russia began developing a rival "counter-revolutionary" ideology, supporting controlled by government NGOs, using web technologies, and exporting its own brands of political and economic influence. Russia invests in the development of NGO infrastructure, and enhancing its channels to bring across the Kremlin's message at all levels.¹¹

Since 2004, Russia has set up a series of umbrella organizations to project its soft power abroad. Organizations like the Institute of CIS Countries have channeled funding to Russia-friendly parties and NGOs in the region another organization like "Russian World Foundation" was created for promotion of Russian culture and language abroad.

In 2008 in Russia was signed the new concept of the Russian foreign policy. It presents Russia as one of the political centers which is ready to create and implement the international agenda. The conceptual document also speaks to the idea of the "Russian world". A favorable interpretation would be that this represents a desire to globalize Russian cultural and linguistic values, as well as a natural wish to fulfill the moral obligation of supporting fellow Russians.

F.Lukyanov, the editor of the journal „Russia in the Global World”, while speaking about the new document, emphasized that: „Russia's approach towards the relationship with the former USSR republics is not ideological but political, more specifically – geopolitical. Russia... tries to strengthen its positions at the national level, and to demonstrate its power which is not an ideological, but a geopolitical instrument”.¹²

3. “Russian World” and “Russian Identity”

The idea of Russia, as one of political and civilization centers of the world was well known in the history (idea of Russia as a third Rome etc.) . And question of whether Russia belongs to Europe or not remains very controversial. Russia was developing its identity in its discourse with the West and the Near Abroad, and Ukraine's geographical, cultural and historical position made it a crucial link between Russia and the West.

10 Ivi.

11 Popescu N., Wilson A. *op. cit.*

12 [Vadim Volovoj. New concept of the Russian foreign policy: from Vancouver to Vladivostok?](#) 09.09.2008

When talking about the differences on foreign policy issues, existences of two main groups are mentioned in Russia. This narrative framework may be traced to discussions between 'Slavophiles' (we can connect them with later 'Eurasians'), who felt that the proper course of Russian history was disrupted by the reforms of Peter the Great and 'Westernisers' (we can connect them with 'Atlanticist') who believe that the proper course of Russian history only began with the Petrine reforms.

According to the *Atlanticist* view, West's goodwill and support was crucial as well as the integration into Western civilization and international institutions, for the success of Russia's reforms- both economic and democratic. In this Westernizing discourse the West is presented as the future and as that which Russia should aspire to and try to emulate. In the realm of foreign policy such an approach was exemplified by former Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev who saw Russia's principal task to be "to 'become a normal democracy' that would regard 'civilized' Western states as natural partners and allies".¹³

The opposition is called as the *Eurasians*, who contended that Russia should look south and east, not west. The term Eurasia is an amalgam of Europe and Asia. China, India and the Muslim world were more natural allies than Europe and the United States. Russia's political and economic interests were viewed as more connected to the Pacific region and the Middle East.

Among those countries Russia could be an ally, even a leader. With the West, they argued, Russia would never be more than a second-class country. The "Eurasian school" refers to the classical historical philosophy of Konstantin Leontjev, Nikolaj Trubeckoj, Pitrim Sorokin etc. Currently, the Eurasian concept remains very popular in Russia. The concept *Eurasia* was since then used by Russians to associate these different tendencies, to built kind of a third state – it was the so called rebirth of Russia.

Of course, this division between the Atlanticists and the Eurasians is not definite and there are other views and moderates that would want to take the best of both worlds. However, this distinction between the two camps is quiet visible and useful for understanding the foreign policy discussions in Russia.

In 2003 Anatoly Chubais proposed some kind of liberal concept of the "Russian World", the doctrine of the "Liberal Empire". Chubais argued that Russia should construct a "liberal empire" of its own from the pieces of the old Soviet Union. Russia's 'mission' should be to promote Russian culture and protect Russian populations in its 'neighborhood'; establish a dominant position in their trade and business; and guarantee its neighbor's 'freedom and democracy'. Only through 'liberal empire', Chubais argued, "can Russia occupy its natural place alongside the United States, the European Union and Japan, the place designated for it by history".¹⁴

According to his ideas, the Russian government should actively support freedom and democracy outside Russia and Russia should become the 'liberal reforms leader' among the countries of the former Soviet Union. And the government must seriously work to protect Russian culture and the Russian people (those people who consider themselves Russians through their culture and language) outside Russia.

In their historical and political circumstances the process of creation the Rus-

13 Neil MacFarlane S. "Russia, the West and European Security", *Survival* (Vol.35, No.3), 1993:9

14 Skidelsky Robert. How Russia became doubly delusional. *The Times*, June 02, 2007 <http://www.skidelsky.com/site/article/how-russia-became-doubly-delusional/>



sian national identity has some specifics. Identity it is not a stable “thing” which we can objectively describe. “It is a field of cultural discourse. It is each person’s perception of themselves: as an individual, in relation to a group or groups, and by contrast with other individuals and groups. Russian identity is and has been a topic of continual argument, of conflicting claims, competing images, contradictory criteria”¹⁵

For centuries, the Russian Empire and its successor, the Soviet Union, were territorially integral entities and the Russian elite was more interested in expanding the empire’s frontiers than in strengthening the national identity.

The experience of empire gave Russians a weak sense of nationhood. Unlike the nations of Western Europe, the Russians have never been obsessed with the idea of creating a national state, and never equated the nation and the state. Ethnic Russians were encouraged to identify with the Russian empire as a whole, rather than develop a national solidarity among themselves. The Soviet Union had in some ways strengthened Russian identity, although it proclaimed itself a multi-ethnic rather than a Russian state.

The Russian ethnic nationalism has not become a serious force in Russia yet and it does not have any significant impact on the country’s policy towards neighboring states. Supranational aspects of Russian identity in various forms continue to play a significant role. (But growing of economical and social problems in Russian society, can give an additional impulse of populist and nationalist movements in the nearest future) .

Another factor that until recently held back the formation of mass Russian nationalism was the concept of “the Soviet people” and the realities that supported it. Ethnic Russians viewed the entire Soviet Union as their native land, which was in sharp contrast with other ethnic groups, for whom only their own ethnic republic was their homeland. The mixed marriages, people who lived far away from their “historical homeland,” and Russians in large cities – all these categories proved to be particularly receptive to this concept. Russians took it more willingly than other ethnic groups, because to be “Soviet” indirectly meant being a Russian-speaker and acknowledging the “civilizing” mission of Russian culture and its extraterritorial nature throughout the entire Soviet Union. Also, the commonality of the linguistic, cultural and historical roots of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine and the lack of clear-cut boundaries between them played an important role in weakening of Russian nationalism. For centuries, this circumstance caused the Russian elite to “soften” its nationalism.¹⁶

In beginning of 90s, seeking legitimacy for the new state, Russian officials initialized the process of creation of civic identity focused on the multi-national Russian Federation. According to it, the formation of a Russian nation seems as a community of all those ethnoses who live on the territory of Russia.

According to I. Zevelev, there are two main approaches to the Russian identity formation now. The first is a radical nationalist discourse on a “divided nation,” which, however, does not have a strong impact on concrete policies. The second approach embraces moderate concepts of “the diaspora” and the “Russian world”. “If we place these two approaches in a broader context of the formation of Russian identity over the last two centuries, then we can say that they reflect the tra-

15 Franklin S., Widdis E. ed. *National Identity in Russian Culture: An Introduction*. Cambridge University Press, 2004: xii

16 Zevelev I. Russia’s Future: Nation or Civilization? „*Russia in Global Affairs*”, № 4, 2009 http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_14246

ditional coexistence of two principles – ethno-national and supranational”,¹⁷

In his study of Russian national identity I. Zevelev suggests three scenarios for the future development of Russian identity: neo-imperial, ethnic, and civic. While he is clearly favors a civic identity, he recognizes that none of the prerequisites, such as common traditions or an effective state, are present in contemporary Russia. As an alternative to policies of isolationism, ethnic nationalism and imperialism, Zevelev argues for some form of integration between Russia and the former Soviet republics, which he thinks would reduce the importance of the diasporas issue.¹⁸

The Russian scholar Valery Tishkov, suggest that a modern Russian civic nation already exists. At the same time, a Russian civic nation is rather a project, a vector of the possible development, and one of the trends. There are large groups of people in the country who view themselves as citizens of the Russian Federation but belonging to a nation other than Russian – Buryats, Tatars and so on.

In this sense development of “Russian world” can help to fulfill this task. The Russian government began to speak in terms of a large supranational project. More and more often, the ideological fundamentals of the foreign policy were formulated in terms of civilization affiliation of the country.

One was set forth by President Dmitry Medvedev in his speech in Berlin in June 2008: “The end of the Cold War made it possible to build up genuinely equal cooperation between Russia, the European Union and North America as three branches of European civilization.”¹⁹

4. The conception of “Russian World”

The conception of “Russian World” was formulated in earlies of 1990s by such intellectuals as Petr Shchedrovitsky, Efim Ostrovsky, Gleb Pavlovskiy, Valery Tishkov and others. In mid of 2000s those ideas was accepted as a part of reformulated foreign policy of Russian Federation. Russia has been quietly working to boost its own attractiveness in the neighborhood, and in particular has learned the power of incentives. Russia’s strategy is to counter EU soft power in the neighborhoods by presenting itself as an alternative model.

Another point for Russian elites to use this conception was inability to elaborate an effective policy of relations with the Russian Diasporas abroad. Because to this days the millions of Russians living abroad have not become drivers of Russia’s development in economic and other spheres, unlike the Chinese and Indian diasporas.

A message uniting Russians at home could theoretically also be used for strengthening ties between Russia and its compatriots abroad. This approach is based on the Russian power elite’s conviction that Russian society needs a mobilizing idea.

Quite important for this paper is suggestions of W. Russel, that classical definition of “imperialism” do not in fact establish a productive framework for anal-

17 Ivi.

18 Zevelev Igor. *Russia and its new Diasporas*. Washington, 2001

19 See: D. Medvedevs speech in Berlin, June 2008 http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2008/06/05/2203_type82912type82914type84779_202153.shtml

ysis of current Russian policy toward the “near abroad”. As he mentioned that:

“I will rather suggest that the vagaries of Russian policy toward the near abroad can be better understood as stemming from a fundamental tension in the thinking of even moderate Russian leaders, between assumption about the Russian Federation’s dominant position in the hierarchy of the former Union, on the one hand, and subordinate position in the hierarchy of the international community, on the other.”²⁰

At this moment “imperial” intentions in Russian foreign policy in CIS are more visible, and in my opinion, concept of “Russian world” can be viewed as an answer of Russian elites to dominant position of West in international discourse. (“West” can be seen here as a mythical ‘Big Other’ for a creation of Russian identity in Lacanian terminology).

The term “Russian World” is generally understood to comprise not only the Russian Diaspora itself, but also an ideological concept of Russian culture and its mission in the world. V. Tishkov supposes that only a few countries could create a “world”: “trans-national and transcontinental community, which united by belonging to some state and loyalty to its culture. Such a worlds has Spain, France, China and Great Britain”.²¹ Tishkov claims a unique character for the Russian world—its connection to the legacy of a supranational state with many different ethnicities and languages. The history of the Soviet period, in which he sees the promulgation of the Russian language as a tool of modernization, makes it more difficult to classify and measure “native” and “non-native” speakers among those in the post-Soviet states who are also fluent in their national language²².

The Head of “Russian World Foundation” Vyacheslav Nikonov says: “Our immediate goal is to find a personal identity, to realize at last that we are a separate civilization that does not resemble any other. We have our own path of development, our own culture, traditions and habits. And their importance must not be underestimated.”²³

Presented by Peter Shchedrovitsky geo-economics school considers the Russian world as a kind of network structure of diasporas organizations, and representing various kinds of economic interests that can serve the modernization of Russia. He identified the Russian language as one of its cornerstones. He insists that those who *speak* Russian in their everyday life—also *think* Russian, and as a result—*act* Russian.²⁴ Thus according to P. Shchedrovitsky, the Russian world is a world of Russia plus the world of the Russian Diasporas. To this unity belong all those, who feel themselves engaged in the Russian world. Russian - is the common language and a common destiny²⁵.

But the Russian language is not only a medium of communication between nationalities. It is a powerful factor in shaping the system, even more so, the promotion of Russian is a way of protecting the geopolitical interests of the Russian

20 Russel W. Russian policy towards the «near abroad»: the discourse of hierarchy. Working Paper nr. 1995/7, Australian National University, Canberra, 1995:2

21 V. Tishkov. Nowyj i starjy “russkij mir”, 29.05.2007 http://ricolor.org/rus/rus_mir/proekt_rusmir/1/

22 Tishkov V. The Russian World — Changing Meanings and Strategies. Carnegie Papers, No 95, August 2008:1

23 Nikonov V. Globalization of the Russian world.12.03.2008 <http://www.russkiymir.ru/russkiymir/en/fund/press/press0002.html>

24 Kudors A. “Russian World”—Russia’s Soft Power Approach to Compatriots Policy. Russian analytical digest nr 81, 2010

25 Ostrovsky E., Shchedrovitsky P. Rosija: strana, kotoroj ne bylo, 1999. http://www.archipelag.ru/ru_mir/history/history99-00/shedrovicky-possia-no/

Federation outside of its own territory. The Soviet empire is lost, but the Russian language still plays an important role in almost all of the SIC countries. Often the imperial language remains the high status language even after decolonization.

From a political perspective the Russian language is seen as a way of holding the Russian world together. As Deputy Head of *Federal Agency* "Rosstrud-nichestvo" Alexander *Chesnokov* says: "Preservation and expansion of the Russian language presence in foreign countries - a significant factor in strengthening Russia's prestige as one of the world's educational and cultural centers",²⁶ Even more so, the promotion of Russian is a way of protecting the geopolitical interests of the Russian Federation outside of its own territory, in the Commonwealth of Independent States and in the rest of the world.

The Russian language of today, after the demise of the Soviet Union, is in the same position as French and English once were, suppose Per-Arne Bodin. In almost all of these countries, new language laws have been instituted, which should stressed the hegemony of the titular language of the country, formally giving Russian a new and diminished, secondary role in various ways. At the same time, the Russian language is still de facto very important in all parts of the former Soviet territory. It is still often used as the common language in official contacts between former Soviet countries even today. This role of the Russian language as a world language - as a language of intercommunication and science, including its civilization properties - is stressed in various ways by the Russian government and by nationalists of different kinds. The Russian language is in this context given a crucial importance for the state and for the imagined Russian empire, and it is given a string of imperial attributes as "velikii", great, and "moguchii", powerful, attributes derived from the discourse on Russia and not on Russian language.²⁷

Second cornerstones subject for unity of «Russian World» is the Russian Orthodox Church and its traditional cultural values as an alternative to the ideas of liberal democracy. Orthodox Church is at the moment also seen as a uniting bond between the three East Slavonic countries: Russia, Ukraine and Belarus (and a bit less in Moldova) . The Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill proposed next concept of the Russian world: Russian world as the world of Russian Orthodox tradition.

The Russian Orthodox Church has a thousand-year history of strong political as well as spiritual influence over the inhabitants of the Russian state. After enduring the Soviet era as a state-controlled religious facade, the church quickly regained both membership and political influence in the early 1990s.

The Orthodox Church's influence is strengthened by the fact that it is the one of the most trusted institution (more than the army, media and the government) in countries like Ukraine or Russia and it is often openly involved in politics. The traditional role of the official Russian Orthodox Church as a political and cultural integrator of the Russians inside Russia and the pro-Russian forces outside Russia was rapidly revived after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Strong historical tradition of relations with Russian Orthodox Church makes Orthodoxy an important part of Russian cultural heritage. Patriarchy of Moscow is actively resisting any breakaway branches of the Church, because they don't want to lose its power in other countries – also loosing important source of in-

26 Chesnokov A. <http://www.ruskiymir.ru/ruskiymir/ru/analytics/tables/news0005.html>

27 Per-Arne Bodin. Two Languages and three Empires: About the Discourse on Russian and Church Slavonic in Today's Russia. In: From Orientalism to Postcoloniality. Södertörns högskola, 2008. pp. 57-58.



fluence for Russia.

In the last years, the Russian Orthodox Church joined in discussions about Russia as the center of a specific civilization. Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill began to pose not as the head of the Orthodox Church of Russia but as a supranational spiritual leader of “Holy Russia,” which comprises Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and – on a broader scale – all Orthodox Christians.

The Russian Orthodox Church tried to become a major player in the discourse on Russian identity and on Russia’s relations with neighboring states. Orthodoxy has begun to play the role of one of the most important institutions for preserving supranational principles in Russian consciousness and maintaining the unity of civilization space in “Russian world”.

Third basis for “Russian World” is a common historical memory. The Second World War, or the Great Patriotic War as it is called in Russia, is certainly one of the most (if not the most) evocative historical events in the Russian imaginaries. It is the most meaningful, the one the Russian people feel most strongly about. Indeed, constant reference to the memory of the Second World War is not so much a reference to historical facts as the evocation of a real founding myth. The memory of the Second World War (WWII) has to be understood from this viewpoint of mobilization by identification. The numerous references to ‘Slavic are part of the national patriotic rhetoric too. ‘Slavic Brotherhood’ can be considered as an identity myth also, but it surely is not as unquestionable and unquestioned, universal and evocative, as the WWII memory.²⁸

Another promise in the Russian foreign policy concept which deserves attention is the idea of strengthening the positions of the Russian mass media in the world. Russian media both take an active role in domestic politics in the neighborhoods and shape the way citizens see international events. Russian mass media is popular in many neighboring countries and serves as a vehicle for spreading influence.

We can summarize the current development of conception of “Russian World” in a two main streams.

First, from mid-2000s, representatives of the Russian humanitarian elites considered the concept of “Russian World” as:

- conceptual framework and tools to organize the Russian Diaspora abroad, which can consolidate the Russian people living outside of Russia, on the basis of national and cultural identities. It was assumed that the Russian Diaspora has actual potential to create the Russian world, which can give opportunities for development and support it outside Russia.
- as a project of new (Russian) civilization in the modern world, among such analogical projects as Chinese, Japanese projects, projects of incorporated Europe or Islam world etc.

Second approach was announced by Patriarch Cyril, during the opening of III Assembly of the “Russian world Foundation”:

- The “Russian World” is a response to the challenges of globalization as a conception of cultural and national identity, which must become an independent subject in new world order.

.....
 28 Colin Guillaume. *Russian Foreign Policy Discourse during the Kosovo Crisis: Internal Struggles and the Political Imaginaire*. Research in question, nr 12, December 2004, pp.27, 28

- The core of the Russian world is Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. Bases of the “Russian world” are an Orthodox faith, Russian language and culture, historical memory and common views on social development.

The idea of the “Holy Rus” or “the great Eastern-Slavic civilisation” as a spiritual and historical entity rather than a political one, which would happily coexist with secular society, was a theme throughout all of the Patriarch’s speeches.²⁹ In view of Patriarch Kirill, globalization threatens to merge all cultures, and the foundation offers an opportunity to prevent such an outcome. The Russian Orthodox Church is a backbone of the Russian World, with the word “Russian” indicating only a cultural unity of people speaking the same language.

5. Conclusion

Thus the goal of Russian foreign policy using the concept of “Russian World” is to reintegrate the Russian nation and to include our ex-countrymen in its sphere of influence. Since belonging to a cultural-linguistic group is considered to be the main determinant of one’s belonging to the “Russian World”, its boundaries are not strictly delimited. This characteristic in turn allows Russian federal authorities to target their policy of “protecting compatriots’ interests” at a broad group of foreign countries’ citizens, flexibly adapting it to changing circumstances. Russia claims that it has a responsibility to ensure the security of Russian citizens, ethnic Russians and even more Russian-speakers in its “near abroad”.

The Russian language in this discourse is seen as one way of stabilizing the Russian federation and preserving its unity, but also as an instrument to preserve and strengthen the Russian influence in the former territory of the Soviet Union.

Another idea is the existence of a united Orthodox Eastern Slavic civilization, with a messianic role in the modern world. For example, in case of Ukraine, in order to spread these ideas, Russian compatriots work closely with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Therefore it became necessary to create the concept of a “Russian World” and to join Russia and its compatriots into a single unity. The “Russian World” was developed as a unifying concept that does not cause any legal problems. Affiliation with the language, religion, and cultural community was taken as the basis for the Russian World”.

However, the concept may create problems on a political level. After applying the concept of the “Russian compatriot abroad” to citizens of several neighboring countries who have close connections with Russian culture, language and traditions, Russia has announced its wish to protect these compatriots’ rights and interests. Russia has declared a fight for the “hearts and minds” of the citizens of these independent countries, and promised legal assistance to Russian compatriots who appeal to international organizations.

The ideological concept of the “Russian World” tries to unify compatriots living abroad with their historic homeland, inviting them to actualize the interests of Russian foreign policy. Russian foreign policy makers and ideologists still speak in the categories of the “sphere of influence”. Thus, the concept “Russian

²⁹ Speech of **Patriarch Kiril** on III Assembly of the “Russian world Foundation”, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/print/928446.html>

World” is a resource or an instrument for popularizing the Russian language and culture in former Soviet Union.

Foreign policy issues are likely to catch domestic political attention, or rather to be seized by domestic political debate, as it seems to be a good medium for mobilization (given that Russian society is deeply demobilized and fragmented). Moreover, through foreign policy issues and through a reflection on Russia’s place in the World order, its status and even its identity, Russian society can experience itself as a whole.

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Oleksii Polegkyi

Polegkyi Oleksii is a PhD student at the Institute of International Studies at Wroclaw University, Poland. Among his recent publications are "Changes in Russian foreign policy discourse and concept of "Russian World" and "Political changes in Post-communist Eastern Europe: from totalitarianism to the "gray zone"? He is currently working on a project "The media and political discourse in post Communist Ukraine".

polegkyy@hotmail.com

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