

Russia's Foreign Policy in Eastern Europe:
The Moldovan Question

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides an empirical contribution to the existing literature regarding Russian foreign policy and its application in Russia's near abroad. The primary case study is Russian foreign policy instruments applied to the Eastern European country of Moldova. This thesis directly cites the Russian National Security Concept (RNSC) documents from 2000 and 2016 as the foundation for analysis of Russian foreign policy actions applied to both Eastern Europe and Moldova. A summation of the type of instruments used within Moldova, either "soft power" or "hard power" resources, citing specific examples of each, is included. The result of this thesis is a foundation for future research of Russian foreign policy based on Russian foreign policy documents, as it pertains to the former republics of the Soviet Union.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of Russian foreign policy documents and actions as they pertain to the Republic of Moldova. The primary research question addressed here is “What is Russia’s foreign policy in regard to its “near abroad,” and how does Russia enforce this foreign policy?” The Republic of Moldova is used as a case study because since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Moldova has not been able to extricate itself from the political influence of Russia. Each time Moldova seeks trade and military agreements with the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Russia uses various methods to redirect Moldovan foreign policy towards Russia. These methods, their applications, and the goals Russia seeks to achieve through their use are examined in this thesis.

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Introduction

Moldova is an ideal case study when used to examine Russia's foreign policy in its "near abroad."¹ The tools used by the Russian government to influence political environments within other nations are the same tools used by the Russian government to influence the political environment within Moldova. Since Moldova's declared independence from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1991, the Moldovan government has been in a nearly constant state of flux. With each new political election cycle, Moldovan foreign policy vacillates between the extremes of pro-European Union policies and pro-Russian policies. With each reorientation towards pro-European Union (EU) policies, Russia employs its foreign policy tools to undermine pro-EU policy shifts.

Russia actively pursues the acquisition and maintenance of political influence within the regions once under control of the Soviet Union. To this end, within Moldova, Russia readily grants Moldovan workers visas to enter Russia and pursues both punitive and cooperative economic policies with Moldova. In addition, Russia supplies the total sum of Moldova's natural gas supply, ensuring necessary economic ties between the two countries.

The influence of EU culture within Moldova and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) push eastward does not go unnoticed by Russian policy makers. Although the EU once had few trade agreements with Moldova, representatives for economic interests within the EU are pushing for increased trade between the EU and Eastern Bloc² countries, including Moldova. For example, in July of 2016, the Association Agreement (AA) between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova was

¹ Traditionally, the Russian "near abroad" is defined as the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the Central Asian States (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), The East Slavic States (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova), and the Transcaucasian States (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia). "Near Abroad" in this thesis will be limited to the East Slavic States, the Baltic States, and Georgia.

² In the scope of this thesis, Eastern Bloc refers to the former Eastern Bloc countries which remain outside EU membership. Specifically, Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova.

ratified. This agreement “aims to deepen political and economic relations between the EU and the Republic of Moldova.”³

Joint military training exercises also reinforce the idea that NATO members support Moldovan freedom and autonomy. Under the auspices of NATO’s Partnership for Peace, which Moldova joined in 1994, exercises such as 2016’s “Dragon Pioneer,” seek to increase cooperation and interoperability between the Moldovan military and NATO armies. Often, these exercises are paralleled by military exercises conducted by Russia within the Moldovan breakaway region of Transdnister, with the Transdnister military training alongside the Russian 14th Guards Army.

Clearly, for Russia, cooperative efforts between the West⁴ and Moldova are not welcomed. These cooperative measures implemented by Western⁵ powers to seek influence within Moldova, are viewed as a threat of “geopolitical expansion pursued by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU).”⁶

Many works on Russian foreign policy outline actions, such as those mentioned, taken by Russia to remain influential within Eastern Europe⁷ and specifically in Moldova. Although these works offer insights into the tools used by Russia to implement its foreign policy, this thesis will directly address Russian foreign policy goals as outlined in Russian government documents and the tools used to achieve these specific goals. An examination of Russia’s National Security Concept, the document outlining the Kremlin’s foreign policy goals and concerns, brings some important research questions to the forefront. First, what are Russia’s foreign policy goals as stated by the Russian government itself? Second,

³ Full entry into force of the Association Agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova. (2016, July 1). Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/20160701_en.pdf

⁴ In the scope of this thesis, the West will refer to the European Union and the United States of America.

⁵ In the scope of this thesis, Western also refers to the countries of the European Union and the United States of America.

⁶ Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016). (2016, December 01). Retrieved from http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptlCk6BZ29/content/id/2542248 (Article 61).

⁷ Eastern Europe is defined within this thesis as the Baltic States, the East Slavic States and Georgia.

knowing what these goals are, how are these goals pursued by Russia? Lastly, what type of power instruments (hard/soft power) does Russia use to achieve these goals?

This thesis seeks to examine Russian foreign policy actions through the lens of official Russian foreign policy as stated by the Kremlin. The basis of this point of view is established by citing the Russian National Security Concept. This policy document, originating in 1993 during the first terms of Boris Yeltsin's tumultuous presidency, has continuously evolved with each new presidential term. The two documents specifically examined in depth, the RNSC 2000 and the RNSC 2016, state the foreign policy interests and goals of Russia at the dawn of the 21st century and Russia's current foreign policy interests and goals.

By first addressing the policies implemented in Eastern Europe and then in Moldova specifically, a deeper understanding of the tools used to enforce these policies is gained. Rather than relying on analysis of actions alone, addressing Russia's policies directly seeks to fill a knowledge gap that exists in the current literature.

Methodology

This qualitative thesis seeks to gather into one document multiple sources of information to examine Russia's foreign policy application within Moldova, to gain a deeper understanding of Russia's foreign policy within the Eastern Bloc, and to use this information to identify the type of power instrument Russian policy tools employ within the region. The research process used herein was iterative in nature.

First, multiple sources of information were cited to examine Russia's application of its National Security Concept within the countries of the Eastern Bloc. The Russian National Security Concept from 2000 and 2016 were chosen as primary policy source documents. The RNSC from 2000 is used because

it represents Russia's foreign policy statements immediately following the resolution of governmental instability during the first decade after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, whereas the 2016 RNSC was chosen because it is Russia's official policy document drafted following nearly two decades of governmental stability and is Russia's current policy statement.

Once a working frame of reference was defined, examples of each major policy were examined to determine how these policies are applied by Russia to influence regional policies to align with Russian foreign policy goals. During this process, certain research questions arose. A specific research question was formulated: What are Russia's foreign policy goals as stated by the Russian government, with regards to its "near abroad"? Also, secondary research questions emerged throughout the process, such as, "What foreign policy interests is Russia pursuing specifically in the former Soviet state of Moldova?", and "What type of power instruments is Russia using to achieve its foreign policy goals in Moldova and its "near abroad"?"

After reviewing existing literature, Russia's foreign policy tools used to influence Moldovan politics and culture are analyzed, paying particular attention to how Russia's actions are supported by its National Security Concept. Lastly, these findings are used to determine the type of power, either "hard power" or "soft power,"⁸ these foreign policy instruments represent within Moldova and the way in which they are applied to Moldova and the Russian "near abroad."

Numerous studies and much literature has been written regarding Russian foreign policy and its power instruments. These studies are quite informative, drawing conclusions from Russian foreign policy actions rather than directly referencing Russian foreign policy documents published by the Kremlin itself. This thesis focuses on these documents first, then analyzes Russia's actions, to gain a

⁸ In the scope of this thesis, hard power is defined as direct or coercive techniques employed to achieve political goals, often reliant on military force or economic manipulation. Soft power is defined as techniques used by one country to attract or co-opt another country's citizens, to exert internal pressure and realign political goals for a cooperative relationship.

deeper understanding of Russian policy. By using a specific case, Russian policy can be better analyzed and the specific type of power instruments being employed by Russia can be identified. Once these instruments of power are identified, the application of these instruments outside the specific case becomes apparent, identifying cohesion between Russia's foreign policy actions and Russia's foreign policy goals.

Chapter 1: Russian Foreign Policy in Eastern Europe

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia has pursued varying foreign policies in its near abroad. During the initial years of the presidency of Boris Yeltsin, immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation sought to maintain strategic and economic cooperation with the countries of the Soviet Union through the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and reorient Russian foreign policy to incorporate aid offered from Western powers, including the United States of America. “Yeltsin attempted a political modernization that included the wholesale import of Western-style political machinery.”⁹ After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Yeltsin directed his goals to dismantling Communist rule and developing new economic and political reforms based on a Western model. Yeltsin’s new commitment to democracy and capitalism, favored a foreign policy based on democratic principles and cooperation with other states.

As explained by Yannis A. Stivachtis, Russia’s initial path forward following the dissolution of the Soviet Union was predicated on cooperation with the West. Seeking entrance into the international community, it was necessary for Yeltsin to balance the needs of his people and the security of his nation. From the outset, “Russia’s motives for integration into the ‘community of civilized states’ were purely strategic. By taking over the Soviet seat at the UN Security Council and claiming the sole right to control the nuclear weapons, the Russian leadership made it clear from the outset that it wished to maintain Russia’s great power status.”¹⁰ Counter to Russian goals of maintaining its status as a global power, the policies necessary to maintain stability during the formation of Russia’s fledgling democracy

⁹ Cohen, A. (apr/may 2000). From Yeltsin to Putin: Milestones on an Unfinished Journey. *Policy Review*. (p. 35).

¹⁰ Stivachtis, Y. A. (2015). Liberal democracy, market economy, and international conduct as standards of ‘civilization’ in contemporary international society: The case of Russia’s entry into the ‘community of civilized states’. *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 6, 130-142. (p. 134).

were uncertain. For the first time in nearly two centuries, since the founding of the Russian Empire, Russia would seek democracy.

To this end, out of necessity, the initial foreign policy for the fledgling Russian democracy was focused on cooperation with the West and a closer relationship with the United States. Russia relied on the West for the blueprint needed to establish the governmental structures which supported democracy and the economic structures necessary to form a market economy. This would be a massive policy turn from those policies of the former Soviet Union. Yeltsin's appointment of Yegor Gaidar and Andrey Kozyrev further enforced Russian reorientation towards the west.

Gaidar, an economist with Western capitalist ideals, sought policies which cooperated with and mirrored Western market economies. Gaidar would also seek policies supporting the privatization of Russian companies, further moving away from the state controlled economic model present in Russia during the Soviet era. Much debate has been brought forth regarding the success or failure of these policies. In particular, a program known as "loans-for-shares" executed by Yeltsin's government, has been vigorously analyzed. In this program, shares of government controlled companies were sold off in order to infuse the new Russian government with capital. This seemed ideal, except the shares were sold to a select group of oligarchs politically aligned with Yeltsin, often at costs well below market value. In Gaidar's own words, "we, of course, were rather naïve concerning the many problems and realities of the market economy: in the underestimation of the many risks connected with loans-for-shares, and in many other areas as well."¹¹ The scandal associated with the loans-for-shares program would follow Yeltsin throughout the remainder of his presidency, and eventually be one of the causes of his relinquishment of the Russian presidency.

¹¹ Gaidar, Y. (n.d.). Up for Debate: Privatization: Who Wins? Russia's Reform Compromise. Retrieved from https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/shared/minitext/ufd_privatizerussia_full.html

Another pro-Western appointment, that of Andrey Kozyrev as Foreign Minister of Russia, would be a cause of consternation for Russian nationalists. Kozyrev, who served as Foreign Minister from 1990 until 1996, supported Russian economic integration with the European Union, policies supporting the development of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Specifically, Kozyrev would maintain that, although cooperative, Russia would maintain an interest in protecting its “near abroad” through “peacekeeping”¹² missions in bordering countries. These “peacekeeping” missions would lead to the deployment of Russian military forces to Georgia, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and Chechnya. Often criticized as too western and too conciliatory by the growing Russian nationalist movement, Kozyrev would voluntarily resign as Foreign Minister in 1996.

The second half of the decade would again show a shift in Russian foreign policy. In response to internal pressure from Russian citizens, in 1994 Yeltsin would reorient Russian foreign policy goals towards a more populist-nationalist agenda. As stated by Richard Sakwa, “post-communist Russian nation-building was profoundly influenced by the problem of the 25 million Russians...who had suddenly found themselves “abroad”, and the claimed defense of their rights and status permeated domestic policies.”¹³ Highlighting this shift in policy, during his speech to the Russian parliament, President Yeltsin outlined a more aggressive Russian foreign policy, especially regarding the threat of NATO expansion into central and eastern Europe. Sergei Medvedev stated “by 1994, even the most ardent advocates of systemic cooperation had to recognize that the West “had lost Russia.””¹⁴ Medvedev sites the rise of increased nationalism, growing economic uncertainty, and public skepticism towards the

¹² Although defined as peacekeeping mission by Russia’s National Security Concept, these actions were often reliant on military force deployed within a foreign nation, often exacerbating existing ethnic tensions and resulting in territorial annexation by the Russian Federation.

¹³ Sakwa, R. (2014). *Russian politics and society*. London: Routledge. (p. 352).

¹⁴ Hopf, T. (1999). *Understandings of Russian foreign policy*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press. (p. 43).

West as reasons for Yeltsin's choice to reorient Russian foreign policy away from the democratic foundations of Western politics.

As a result of this policy shift, following the resignation of Kozyrev, Evgenii Primakov would be appointed as Kozyrev's replacement, and would hold both a position as Foreign Minister and chief of the Foreign Intelligence Service under Yeltsin. Primakov was a pragmatic nationalist and asserted that "Russia has been and remains a great power, and its policy toward the outside world should correspond to that status."¹⁵ Primakov would oversee a massive policy shift, reorienting Russia away from the West in an effort to reestablish Russian interests in "creating external conditions conducive to strengthening the country's territorial integrity."¹⁶ For Russia, Primakov would signal a return to the ideals of strength, territorial integrity, and nationalism held by Russian political elites during the Soviet Union. For President Yeltsin, this reorientation of policy towards Russian nationalism would be too little, too late. Political and economic scandals plagued the last years of Yeltsin's presidency, and in 1999 Yeltsin would resign his presidency.

By Russian constitutional law, Vladimir Putin would assume the role of President of Russia until the next election cycle. In 2000 Vladimir Putin would be elected President of the Russian Federation (here after "Russia") by a 53% victory in the popular vote.¹⁷ Whereas Yeltsin was met with wide spread resistance from his parliament and persistent economic and political turmoil, Vladimir Putin's first term as president would be a major stabilizing factor for Russian politics. With the increase in oil prices during the first decade of the 21st century and Russia's vast oil resources, for the first time, Russia would be enabled to determine its own way forward. No longer needing to ask for financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund and no longer needing to continue to allow foreign investment in Russian

¹⁵ Donaldson, R. H., Noguee, J. L., & Nadkarni, V. (2015). *The foreign policy of Russia: changing systems, enduring interests*. London: Routledge. (p. 121)

¹⁶ Donaldson, R. H., Noguee, J. L., & Nadkarni, V. (2015). (p. 121)

¹⁷ (2000, March 26). Retrieved from http://www.russiavotes.org/president/presidency_96-04.php

natural resource firms to fund the Russian government as during the loans-for-shares program¹⁸, Putin would move Russian economic policy towards a recentralization of Russian companies, especially those involved in the management of Russia's natural resources.

Another major shift in policy for Russia and Putin would be Russia's approach towards its former Soviet states¹⁹. No longer satisfied with watching NATO encroach on Russia's western border, and with the deployment of U.S. military forces along Russia's southern border in support of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, Russian foreign policy would seek to reestablish economic ties with its "near abroad," and seek to regain political influence within the Eastern Bloc in an effort to stop NATO and EU influence expansion. The Eastern Bloc, especially the Slavic states of Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, and Georgia were of particular interest to Putin as these countries once represented the most western provinces of the Soviet Union, and following the incorporation of Romania, Poland and the Baltic States into NATO, were Russia's closest link to Europe.²⁰

These countries would remain a focal point of Russian foreign policy to the current day. Russia's policy in these regions would shift from one of partnership under the auspices of the CIS to a foreign policy that seeks no less than the recreation of the Russian empire. As stated by Marcel H. Van Herpen, "Russia is the last colonial empire that has passed through a process of decolonization. But – unlike the other European colonial powers – it has never really accepted the loss of its empire. It still treats its former colonies with the paternalism of the former colonial power."²¹ This idea is supported by the implementation of Russia's foreign policy towards its "near abroad."

¹⁸ Finance and Development. (1999, June). Retrieved from <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/1999/06/nellis.htm>

¹⁹ Former Soviet states here refers to the Soviet states that have remained outside NATO and EU membership. Specifically, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

²⁰ N. (2017, June 12). Member countries. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/on/natohq/topics_52044.htm

²¹ Herpen, M. H. (2013). *Putinism: the slow rise of a radical right regime in Russia*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (p. 75).

Russian foreign policy for Eastern Europe would be an ad hoc mixture of the categories of foreign policy outlined by Hans J Morgenthau in *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. For Morgenthau, foreign policies fall into categories of policies of imperialism, policies which seek to maintain the status quo, and policies of prestige. In order to reestablish the status quo as a major power within the global power structure, Russia would first need to gain control over its “near abroad.” For Eastern Europe, this would entail the implementation of Russian military, economic, and cultural policies designed to first gain and then maintain influence.

Russian “imperialism”²² would be pursued by policies designed to regain political influence within the former Soviet states, then through the establishment of a non-NATO buffer zone along Russia’s western border to ensure territorial autonomy, and through the maintenance of border security via “peacekeeping” efforts within the nations of Eastern Europe. These “peacekeeping” efforts would particularly exemplify imperialist aspirations as they involved direct military intervention within a foreign country to “protect Russians in the near abroad,” and often resulted in permanent installation of Russian military forces within the offending region.

Prestige, for Russia, would be regained by establishing a greater Russian identity and an ideal of Russian exceptionalism. Furthermore, Russia would seek to maintain Europe’s dependence on Russian energy resources and establish the security for transnational energy supply routes through the countries of Eastern Europe. These policies would allow Russia to gain economic autonomy and influence.

Once military and economic reliance on Russia within former Soviet states was created, Russian cultural policies would be implemented to win the hearts and minds of the citizens. The policy tools used by Russia to attain these goals is as varied as the countries in which these goals have been pursued. As such, the foreign policy measures implemented by Russia within the Eastern Bloc have seemed

²² Imperialism here refers to Russian policy makers desire to extend Russia’s influence and image of exceptionalism beyond its own territory, not necessarily actual territorial aspirations.

confused at the best of times and quixotic at other times. But, through the examination of the policy documents created by the Kremlin, a pattern begins to emerge.

Examination of the Russian National Security Concepts published in 2000 and 2016 highlights the evolving policies of Russia. What is especially apparent is the evolution of the document itself, from a broad scoped document with loosely defined interests and goals, to a measured and principled security strategy reflective of Russia's return to a stable politics. Of special note for this thesis are the sections regarding international threats.

The 2000 RNSC outlined the fundamental threats to Russia as, “the danger of a weakening of Russia's political, economic and military influence in the world; the strengthening of military-political blocs and alliances, above all NATO's eastward expansion; outbreak and escalation of conflicts near the state border of the Russian Federation and the external borders of CIS member states; and territorial claims on Russia.”²³ These stated threats bring to light the reasoning used for Russian foreign policy practices within Eastern Europe during the first decade following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Kozyrev's advisor's statement that “there is a psychological barrier preventing us from treating other CIS members as absolutely independent” is supported by the definition of these threats.²⁴ Although Boris Yeltsin sought to stabilize the Russian political, economic and military landscape through the incorporation of Western democratic and free market principles, these policy actions were viewed by many within his government as being overly conciliatory to the West. This was especially true of Yeltsin's nonresponse to NATO's eastward expansion.

Furthermore, the section outlining the design of Russian foreign policy in the 2000 document shows Moscow's path forward into the 21st century, and the reasoning behind some of Russia's more audacious policy decisions since Vladimir Putin's presidency. Of particular note, Russia's stated goals

²³ 2000 Russian National Security Concept - BITS. (2000). Retrieved from <http://www.bits.de/EURA/natseconc.pdf> (p. 4-5).

²⁴ Stivachtis, Y. A. (2015). (p. 138).

to “pursue an active foreign policy course, ensure favourable conditions for the country’s economic and social development and for global and regional stability, protect the lawful rights and interests of Russian citizens abroad, through the use of political, economic and other measures, and assist in settling conflicts, including peacekeeping activities,”²⁵ evidence the reasoning behind Russian actions towards Eastern Europe.

The terms used, such as “favourable conditions for the country’s economic...development” and “protect the lawful rights and interests of Russian citizens abroad, through the use of...other measures” leave wide latitude for Russia to justify nearly any action taken within the Eastern Bloc. These broad terms remained largely intact throughout the evolution of the RNSC and remain in place in the 2016 RNSC. The terms within the new document remain broad, and the protections for “Russian citizens and compatriots living abroad,” remain in place. This may be in part due to the continued presidency of Vladimir Putin, now entering his third term, or these terms may remain due to the ongoing nature of the conflicts Russia is involved in within the Eastern Bloc and the necessity to justify a wide range of policy actions.

The most glaring difference in these documents is the emergence of the term “soft power.” Although Russia has a long history of implementing “soft power” tools, the statement “the utilization, in resolving foreign policy problems, of the instruments of “soft power,” first and foremost the potential of the civil society and information, media, humanitarian, and other methods and technologies, in addition to traditional diplomatic methods, is becoming an integral part of modern-day international policy,”²⁶ in section two of the 2016 document is shocking. This statement outlines Russia’s use of “media” and “other methods and technologies” within international policy. These practices were often held as state

²⁵ 2000 Russian National Security Concept – BITS. (2000). (p. 11).

²⁶ 2016 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016). (2016, December 01). (Article 9).

secrets by Russian policy makers during the Soviet Union, and questions regarding the implementation of these policies by outsiders often go unanswered.

An examination of Russian actions with regards to Eastern Europe through the lens of Russian policy doctrine sheds light on Russia's policy goals for the Eastern European nations that exist outside of NATO and EU membership. These goals are especially apparent with regards to nations of the Eastern Bloc in which separatist movements have established strongholds, nations such as Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova. These actions by pro-Russian rebel groups, to seize territory within the borders of sovereign nations to establish autonomous regions, have been used by Russian policy makers to send Russian military forces into other nations "to protect the lawful rights and interests of Russian citizens abroad."²⁷ Elaine Holoboff offers a more in-depth explanation:

"There seems to be general agreement that military intervention can be justified as long as it fulfills one or more of the conditions below.

- i. Contributes to the maintenance of Russia's great power status;
- ii. Protects Russians residing in the "near abroad" (*blizhnyeye zarubyexhye*);
- iii. Prevents the spread of instability, especially to regions of Russia itself;
- iv. Looks after Russia's geopolitical interests, for example, protecting Russia's southern borders and preventing the spread of Islamic fundamentalism;
- v. Coincides with nationalist public opinion."²⁸

Although this statement is referring to Russian policies implemented in 1994, during the tumultuous presidency of Boris Yeltsin, in response to the crises in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, this same explanation is touted as applicable today by members of Putin's government. For example, following the

²⁷ 2000 Russian National Security Concept - BITS. (2000). (p. 11).

²⁸ Freedman, L. (1994). *Military intervention in European conflicts*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell (p. 156).

Russian annexation of Crimea, Ukraine, Russian government representatives justified the use of military forces in Ukraine as necessary to protect Russian citizens living abroad.²⁹

Russian troop deployments within the region also strengthen Russia's security position, making it more difficult for NATO or the EU to seek expansion further east. Highlighted in the 2000 RNSC document as a threat to Russian national security and described as a "containment policy" in the 2016 RNSC, NATO expansion directly conflicts with Russian economic goals and imperialistic ideals.³⁰ As John J. Mearsheimer's brings to attention, "great powers are always sensitive to potential threats near their home territory."³¹ Mearsheimer posits that Russian troop deployment to Ukraine, like Georgia before it, is a direct response to actions by the West in the guise of NATO to seek influence expansion into Russia's "near abroad." Stated in Russia's own security policies, these types of actions were viewed as direct security threats, and would not be tolerated. By deploying its military to Crimea, Russia was following its own security policy to secure its borders.

Further exacerbating tensions within this region, the governments of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova have continued to vacillate between seeking trade agreements with and security aide from the EU and Russia. This has been viewed by Moscow as an indirect attack on Russian sovereignty through the undermining of Russian trade and security commitments within the region by the EU.

These policy shifts within Ukraine were met with unilateral economic sanctions by Russia. Known as Russia's "energy weapon," Russia's ability to manipulate the pricing and supply of natural gas to Ukraine has proven especially useful during policy and trade negotiations. Whether used as a reactionary, punitive measure, or a preemptive, beneficial measure, these manipulations have been a

²⁹ R. (2015, March 15). Crimea. The Way Home. Documentary by Andrey Kondrashev. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t42-71RpRgI&feature=youtu.be> (timestamp 1:06:00)

³⁰ Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016). (2016, December 01). (Article 61).

³¹ Mearsheimer, J. J. (2014). Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault. Retrieved from <http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/Ukraine%20Article%20in%20Foreign%20Affairs.pdf>

primary policy tool for Russia with regards to Ukraine. As stated by Karen Dawisha, “Russia increasingly used energy wars as a way of taming ungrateful and uncooperative neighbors whenever they sought independence from any line espoused in Moscow.”³² Since companies such as Gazprom and Rosneft, the two largest suppliers of petroleum resources to Ukraine, are state-run companies controlled by the Russian government, exports of natural gas from these companies can be strictly controlled by the Russian government. As Ukraine has continued to pursue trade agreements favoring the EU over Russia and military agreements with NATO following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia has punished Ukraine by increasing the price of natural gas, or by stopping the flow of natural gas to the country completely.

For Ukraine, so severe was the price increase in 2013, then President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, sought to extricate Ukraine from the signing of the EU association trade agreement. This decision by Yanukovich was met with wide spread protests that would eventually escalate to the point of civil unrest and civil war within Ukraine.

During the initial unrest, in 2014, Russian soldiers were dispatched to Crimea to protect “Russian citizens in the near abroad” and protect the Russian Naval base in Sevastopol.³³ Unrest continued in southern and eastern Ukraine, leading to official annexation of Crimea, Ukraine by the Russian military. Although Crimea, Ukraine is not internationally recognized as being part of Russia and the annexation being viewed by the United Nations as an illegal occupation, Russia claims Crimea has become officially part of Russia.³⁴

³² Dawisha, K. (2015). *Putins kleptocracy: who owns Russia?* New York ; London ; Toronto ; Sydney ; New Delhi: Simon et Schuster Paperbacks. (p. 343)

³³ Ethnic Russians: Pretext for Putin's Ukraine Invasion? (2017, July 13). Retrieved from <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/05/140502-russia-putin-ukraine-geography-crimea-language/>

³⁴ McKirdy, E. (2017, February 16). Russia: 'We're not returning' Crimea to Ukraine. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2017/02/15/europe/russia-foreign-ministry-crimea-ukraine/index.html>

For Georgia, the punishment for seeking integration into the EU and membership in NATO wouldn't be a gas price increase, rather, Georgia would see the outbreak of separatist violence within two distinct regions of its territory, directly backed by Russian military involvement. Both South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions would declare independence from Georgia over long standing ethnic divides within the country. Pro-Russian forces, reinforced by Russian military units, in both regions defeated Georgian military forces. Although Russia would eventually remove its armed forces from these regions, both South Ossetia and Abkhazia are now de facto Russian provinces.³⁵

Furthermore, from Russia's point of view, the 2016 RNSC calls for "assisting the establishment of the Republic of Abkhazia and the Republic of South Ossetia as modern democratic States, strengthening their international positions, and ensuring reliable security and socioeconomic recovery remains a priority for Russia."³⁶ Directly citing these two regions as independent republics despite UN reluctance to do so evidences Russia's goal for increased influence within the region and possible imperialist goals.

Military occupation notwithstanding, Russia has taken further measures to ensure Russian foreign policy remains influential within Ukraine and Georgia. Russian influence after the fall of the USSR has been aimed at no less than the control of the hearts and minds of the citizens of the Eastern Bloc. Cultural similarity and historical parity is one of Russia's greatest policy tools within Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the susceptibility of Eastern Bloc cultures to subtle "Russification"³⁷ efforts is amongst the most pressing security issues within the region. Russia's declaration by action to gain

³⁵ 2008 Georgia Russia Conflict Fast Facts. (2017, March 26). Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2014/03/13/world/europe/2008-georgia-russia-conflict/index.html>

³⁶ Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016). (2016, December 01). (Article 57).

³⁷ Russification refers to policies implemented, throughout the history of the Soviet Union and still implemented today, to create a common, Russian identity throughout Russia's sphere of influence. These policies emphasize Russian exceptionalism and Russian nationalism.

control and rights within the Eastern Bloc, at first glance, appears to be sustained by the Russian speaking population within the region at an increasing rate.

For example, a Gallup Poll conducted by the Broadcasting Board of Governors in Ukraine supports the claim by Russian officials and journalists that the annexation of the Crimean territory was supported by the population of Crimea, and was a justifiable action.³⁸ What isn't mentioned in media reports, and what becomes apparent upon closer analyses is that Russia has employed its media apparatus within Crimea to full effect. Although those polled state "The cessation of Ukrainian broadcasts within Crimea has not changed my new viewing habits," the reality is, the news sources are completely altered.³⁹ The top 5 news sources within Crimea are now Russian-based broadcasting networks and are broadcast in the Russian language. Furthermore, the number one news source, Russia-24, is a Russian state-owned broadcasting agency that has been used as a Russian propaganda outlet for the Kremlin.

This is unambiguous evidence of Russia's pursuit of the 2016 RNSC goal for the use of "soft power" including media sources. Furthermore, the employment of Russian media and the subsequent removal of none Russian media sources from the broadcast airwaves in regions such as South Ossetia, Georgia and Crimea, Ukraine support Russian policy goals dating back to the foundation of the Russian Federation following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Specifically, these efforts enhance Russia's effort to pursue an active foreign policy, and regain political influence within the former Soviet states.

Research conducted by Gerard Toal, John O'loughlin and Vladimir Kolossov also presents data that would initially overwhelmingly support Russian claims that Russia is simply supporting movements

³⁸ BBG Research Series: Newsgathering and policy perceptions in Ukraine. (2014, May 20). Retrieved from <https://www.bbg.gov/2014/05/20/bbg-research-series-newsgathering-and-policy-perceptions-in-ukraine/>

³⁹ BBG Research Series: Newsgathering and policy perceptions in Ukraine. (2014, May 20).

for sovereignty within these regions.⁴⁰ But there are other political policy goals at play within these regions, just as there is in Crimea. These regions are largely populated by ethnic Russians who share deeply rooted cultural similarities to Russians in the “mother-land.” Furthermore, Russia takes great steps to ensure that a constant stream of Russian language, state-controlled media stations are available within these regions. Whether those answering the polls were influenced by Russian propaganda, or answered out of fear, or were answering truthfully, is difficult to determine. But what is apparent is that Russia knows the strength of its media and culture as policy tools.

A recent development within the Baltic States further emphasizes Russia’s use of propaganda within its broadcasts. As an effort to counter NATO involvement within the Baltic States, Russia has released fake news stories, over stating increased rapes and crimes around US military installations in other foreign nations. Baltic States are taking active measures to combat this type of media, including fines and suspension of broadcast licenses for Russian networks.^{41,42}

Whether relying on direct military intervention, resource manipulation or propaganda measures, Russia has numerous tools at its disposal to pursue Russian foreign policy goals. Amongst the countries in Eastern Europe which Russia has taken an active interest in pursuing political influence is Moldova. Moldova, geographically located within Eastern Europe, bordered by Romania on the west and Ukraine on the north, east, and south, has been a battleground of foreign influence throughout its history. Its population consists of 3.5 million citizens of multiple ethnic backgrounds including Moldovans,

⁴⁰ O’Loughlin, J., Kolosov, V., & Toal, G. (2014). Inside the post-Soviet de facto states: a comparison of attitudes in Abkhazia, Nagorny Karabakh, South Ossetia, and Transnistria. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 55(5), 423-456. doi:10.1080/15387216.2015.1012644

⁴¹ Bulletin, B. (2017, July 6). Fighting Disinformation in the Baltic States. Retrieved from <http://www.fpri.org/article/2017/07/fighting-disinformation-baltic-states/>

⁴² Caryl, C. (2017, April 05). Opinion | If you want to see Russian information warfare at its worst, visit these countries. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/democracy-post/wp/2017/04/05/if-you-want-to-see-russian-information-warfare-at-its-worst-visit-these-countries/?utm_term=.f36fbc074f62

Ukrainians, Russians, Romanians, Bulgarians and Gagauzian Turks. The Russian population of Moldova is concentrated primarily in the Transdniester region, on the east side of the Dniester river.

Historically, Moldova was part of Bessarabia, the Bulgar state, before the Mongols and Magyars divided the country in the 1300s. Later, Moldova was part of Ottoman Empire until Moldova fell to the Russian Empire after the Napoleonic Wars during the 19th century. Following the Russian revolution in 1917, Bessarabia joined Romania, except for the Transdniester region. Following the ratification of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in 1939, Moldova joined the USSR. William Crowther places much emphasis on the historical nature of Moldovan Politics. As he states, “Moldova’s historic development is closely related to that of neighboring Romania by bonds of language and culture. Yet the influence of the present republic’s Slavic neighbors has also been considerable, producing in Moldova a unique culture that is recognizably distinct from that of the western Romanian region.”⁴³

It is this historically tumultuous political past and Moldova’s unique mix of ethnic identities that makes Moldova an ideal case study for Russian foreign policy and its goals. Since 1991, Russia has been deeply interested in enforcing its foreign policy within Moldova. By analyzing Russian involvement within Moldova through the lens of Russian foreign policy documents a deeper understanding of Russian foreign policy actions may be obtained.

Conclusion

Whether by direct, “hard power” or through indirect, “soft power” means, the foreign policy makers of the Russian Federation continue to seek policies of influence within Russia’s “near abroad.” The increased involvement of NATO and the EU in Eastern European politics following the dissolution of the Soviet Union has created a political environment in which Russian foreign policy makers seek to regain and maintain political influence. In the terms outlined in Russia’s Foreign Policy Concept, the

⁴³ Dawisha, K., & Parrott, B. (1997). *Democratic changes and authoritarian reactions in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldavia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (p. 283).

eastward expansion of NATO is especially troublesome and must be countered. By gaining and maintaining political influence within its “near abroad,” Russian policy makers seek to create a non-NATO buffer zone to ensure border security, Russian political autonomy, and seek to recapture Russia’s place as a great power within the global and regional power structure.

Chapter 2: Russian Foreign Policy in Moldova

Since the 1940's, Moldova has been continuously influenced by both regional powers, Romania, representing the influences of Europe, and Russia, representing influences of the Soviet Union. During the dissolution of the Soviet Union, there were multiple political movements calling for Moldovan reunification with Romania. Moldova's political policy at that time was oriented towards the West, away from Russia. Due to regional ethnic disputes between ethnic Romanians and ethnic Russians, in 1989, the proclamation of freedom for two autonomous Moldovan districts, Gagauz and Transdnier, sought to reorient political policies towards Russian integration. Moldova's declaration of independence followed, with presidential elections in 1991.

The cultural divide between Romanians and Russians was so deep that, in 1992, a civil war erupted within the Transdnier region of the country, in which Moldova lost control over the eastern province of Transdnier to pro-Russian separatists. Mirroring other civil conflicts that took place during this time, the Moldovan Civil War, also known as the Transdnier Conflict, was a brief and extremely violent conflict.

The tensions that would eventually spark the Transdnier Conflict took root during Mikhail Gorbachev's administration of the USSR. His dual political reforms "perestroika" (restructure of the economic and political system) and "glasnost" (government transparency towards the public) facilitated conditions for open expression of nationalist feelings. A nationalist movement arose within Moldova, and Moldovan was declared as the official state language. The Moldovan language resumed its Latin script, replacing the Cyrillic alphabet used by Russians, in an effort to reunite Moldovans with their Romanian heritage. During this time, political movements to join Romania took place within Moldova. Other changes happening within Moldova, such as adaptation of the Romanian flag with the Moldovan coat-of-arms, and the use of the Romanian National Anthem "Desteapta-te Romane!" (Awaken thee,

Romanian), further exacerbated ethnic tensions. Russian citizens, finding themselves living in a foreign country for the first time as a result of the dissolution of the USSR, were not pleased by being represented by a national anthem which proclaimed, “It’s now or never to the world we readily proclaim/ In our veins throbs Roman blood.”⁴⁴ These policies were met with opposition from the Russian speaking population, especially within the Transdnister region.

The Transdnister region proclaimed independence in 1990. The declaration of autonomy was declared null by the Moldovan government, leading to Moldovan military intervention in an effort to reestablish control over the region. The Transdnister separatists were supported by the Russian 14th Army who had been based in Transdnister since 1945. After all, as cited by Stivachtis, Kozyrev stated during the Congress of Peoples’ Deputies, “no Russian government could afford to stand aside when ethnic Russians living in successor states are oppressed...Russia would in accordance with international law even use force if necessary.”⁴⁵ The conflict ended with a ceasefire in 1992, with the region east of the Dniester remaining autonomous.

Transdnister has been referred to as “Russia’s second Kaliningrad.”⁴⁶ Russia’s military presence and stored military weapons on the Transdnister territory only lead Transdnister to further ideas of separation from Moldova. By introducing its own currency, border control, and army, Transdnister government officials sought to form an independent nation. Moldova government’s continued refusal to recognize Transdnister as autonomous brought Russia to the negotiation table.

Russia initially promised to withdraw its military troops by 1997. It withdrew some troops, lowering the numbers from 10,000 to 5,000 men in 2001 and to 1,500 men in 2003, but the weapons

⁴⁴ Republic of Romania Anthem [Romanian National Anthem (Deșteaptă-te Române)]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://lyricstranslate.com/en/romanian-national-anthem-de%C5%9Fteapt%C4%83-te-rom%C3%A2ne-republic-romania-anthem.html>

⁴⁵ Stivachtis, Y. A. (2015). (p. 139).

⁴⁶ Nygren, B. (2010). *The rebuilding of Greater Russia Putins foreign policy towards the CIS countries*. London: Routledge. (p. 83).

storage remained intact. Although, Boris Yeltsin promised to withdraw the remaining Russian military equipment in the amount of 50,000 firearms, and 40,000 tons of ammunition from Transdnester, this promise turned out to be worth very little when Vladimir Putin took over the Russian presidency in 2000.⁴⁷

For Moldova, the transition to the new millennia would mark another government crisis. As a result of this crisis, early parliamentary elections were held. In February 2001, the Communist Party won the election and Vladimir Voronin was elected as president. His first visit to Moscow was aimed to establish further economic policy cooperation with Russia and improve Moldovan-Russian relations. After Voronin and Putin's negotiations, the 1997 military cooperation agreement regarding the Transdnester region was finally ratified. Furthermore, another treaty between these two parties followed. The new treaty condemned separatism and all its forms and any aiding of "infringement on each other's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity."⁴⁸

Under the new treaty, both parties agreed that it was in their best interests to settle the Transdnester dispute, but also respect ethnic identities living within Moldova, specifically those residing in the Transdnester region. Putin stressed, that due to a Russian centric population within Transdnester, the Russian language is especially of value. After all, "a spiritual renewal of society is impossible without preserving the role of the Russian language...as the language of intercourse among CIS member states."⁴⁹ As an effort to appease Putin, Voronin declared that all Moldovans speak Russian. Moldova's foreign policy turned towards Russia, at the same time relations with Romania and the EU would be abandoned. Again, the new foreign policy changes stirred protests amongst the population of Moldova.

⁴⁷ Nygren, B. (2010). (p. 83).

⁴⁸ Nygren, B. (2010). (p. 84).

⁴⁹ 2000 Russian National Security Concept - BITS. (2000). (p. 10)

In 2004, the EU launched its largest campaign for expansion since the formation of the European Union. Along with the Baltic states, Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania were invited to join the EU. Although initially unsuccessful, Romania would later join in 2007. With the chance for Romania to become a part of the EU, and with growing popular support for European integration, Moldovan President Voronin decided to *again* reorient Moldova's foreign policy direction towards the European Union.

Voronin's efforts towards reestablishing relationships with Romania, the United States, NATO and the EU had a negative impact on Moldovan-Russian relations. These actions were viewed as Western interference within the Russian sphere of influence and ran counter to Russia's goal of "upholding...and strengthening its position...as one of the influential centres of a multipolar world."⁵⁰ The Transdniester issue was unresolved and Russia held Voronin responsible for the deteriorated relations between them. "Before Moldova's presidential elections in spring 2005, Russia supported Voronin's opponents and Voronin even accused Russia of trying to assassinate him."⁵¹ To follow policies for EU integration, and retaliate against Russia's efforts to control Moldovan politics, in 2006 Moldova introduced new customs control in Transdniester on export goods. In response, the first of multiple wine bans was introduced by Russia. As stated by Cristian Cantir and Ryan Kennedy, "Effective border control would provide more rigorous surveillance of border activities, cutting unregulated trade from Transdniester, reducing the region's economic well-being, and therefore cutting down Moscow's ability to use the region's strength as leverage against Moldova."⁵²

Wine is the largest export produced by Moldova and is distributed to Russia, Europe, and the United States. Moldova's wine export constituted 60% of the total amount of wine export to Russia in

⁵⁰ 2000 Russian National Security Concept - BITS. (2000). (p. 2)

⁵¹ Nygren, B. (2010). (p. 85).

⁵² Cantir, C., & Kennedy, R. (2015). Balancing on the Shoulders of Giants: Moldova's Foreign Policy toward Russia and the European Union. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 11, 397-416. (p. 405).

2006, and 29% in 2013.⁵³ This reduction in trade volume is a direct result of Russia's ban of Moldovan wine imports in retaliation for pro-EU policies being supported within Moldova. Russia used its trade relationship with Moldova to manipulate the Moldovan parliament into voting in policies that support Russian trade and ignore EU trade.

After negotiations between Voronin and Putin, Putin agreed on lifting the wine ban only if Moldova would support the Russian World Trade Organization (WTO) bid. Being a member of WTO was essential for Russia's political and economic standing, and essential if Russia was to attain its goal of "ensuring that this State participates on an equal and proactive basis in the global economy."⁵⁴

Russia would again use this economic weapon in 2013. The second wine ban would be punishment for Moldova's participation in the economic summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, on November 28-29, where Moldova was expected to sign agreements with the EU on political reform and free trade.⁵⁵ These agreements would be counter to Russian foreign policy interests within Moldova, and Europe in general. Furthermore, Russia's inability to control Moldovan policies would be a sign of weakness for the Kremlin, and this could not be allowed. As Cantir and Kennedy stated, "Russia's acts of economic and political retribution significantly increased both the threat to which the state's security was subject and the threat to elite survival, given the economic reliance of the wine industry and the agricultural sector on Russian consumers."⁵⁶

According to Moldova's trade numbers, the wine bans had cost Moldova \$6.6 million US dollars by 2013. "Russian officials have made little secret of the fact that the wine ban is another arm-twisting tactic aimed at forcing Moldova not to sign up to the EU agreements."⁵⁷

⁵³ Why has Russia banned Moldovan wine? (2013, November 25). Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2013/11/economist-explains-18>

⁵⁴ Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016). (2016, December 01). (Article 40).

⁵⁵ Why has Russia banned Moldovan wine? (2013, November 25).

⁵⁶ Cantir, C., & Kennedy, R. (2015). (p. 404).

⁵⁷ Why has Russia banned Moldovan wine? (2013, November 25).

Multiple sanctions set by Russia caused Moldova to considerably decrease its exports to this destination. Thus, in 2014 Russia lost its status of top export partner for Moldovan goods to Romania. At the same time, the share of Russian exports to Moldova didn't change significantly. This was due to Moldovan dependence on Russian fossil fuels, which account for 65% of the Russian imports.⁵⁸

In 2014, Romania became one of the main trade partners for Moldova. 2014 marked more sanctions on Moldova's exports to Russia due to Moldova's expansion of its markets in Europe. Moldova's signing of the Association Agreement with the EU, and the establishment of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) with the EU, was a crucial step for Moldova to recoup its financial losses resulting from Russia's punitive actions.⁵⁹ These trade agreements ran counter to Russian national security goals, specifically in assuring Russia's national interests "on the basis of sustainable economic development."⁶⁰

Russia's policy of economic manipulation would extend into other areas. By crippling the Moldovan economy, Russia attempted to manipulate the political opinions of Moldovan citizens and force political choices that back Russian policy. By placing the blame for economic crises on the broken promise of EU integration, rather than on the trade ban, Russian media twisted the facts and increased calls for Russian trade within the Moldovan parliament.

Another economic tool used by Russia to manipulate Moldovan policy is Russia's "energy weapon." Randall Newman describes how Russia uses its energy resources to "reward its friends and punish its enemies,"⁶¹ in this case, punishing Moldova when necessary. Russia is the only gas supplier meeting Moldovan energy needs. In the 2000s, Moldova's gas debt rose from \$190 million to a total

⁵⁸ Popa, A. (2015). *Moldova and Russia: between trade relations and economic dependence*(Rep.). Chisinau: Independent Think-Tank Expert Group. (p. 7).

⁵⁹ Popa, A. (2015). (p. 7).

⁶⁰ 2000 Russian National Security Concept - BITS. (2000). (p. 2).

⁶¹ Newnham, R. (2011). Oil, carrots, and sticks: Russia's energy resources as a foreign policy tool. *Journal of Eurasian Studies*,2(2), 134-143. doi:10.1016/j.euras.2011.03.004 (p. 134).

debt of \$900 million, including the Transdniester debt of \$700 million. Moldova agreed to Russian terms on extending the payoff of the debt for 20 years. Moldova would receive cheaper prices for gas if it would allow Russia more shares in the joint Moldova-Russian gas company. By gaining a controlling interest in the gas company, Russia increased its control of Moldovan gas supplies.

In 2002 gas delivery to Moldova was stopped. Negotiations were reentered and Moldova agreed to pay some of the debt. In exchange, Russia offered to reduce gas prices for allowing the reconstruction of the Moldovan Hydropower station, further increasing Russian control of Moldovan energy supplies. Also, Russia's Unified Energy System offered to lower the price for electricity to Moldova in exchange for a share in the joint electricity company.

Again, in 2003, negotiations over the debt were reentered. Gazprom was willing to write off Moldova's gas debt in exchange for ownership of a few Moldovan electric companies, the former Soviet military-industrial complex and a 35 per cent share of Moldova's gas company *Moldovagaz*.⁶²

To further increase control of Moldovan energy, another threat followed from the Russian authorities in 2005, to increase gas prices from \$80 to \$160 per 1,000 cubic meters of gas. Russia sought a share of the Transdniester portion of *Moldovagaz*, to offset the debt owed to Gazprom. The agreement was settled in 2006 after another gas cut off to Moldova. Moldova split its share of the Transdniester *Moldovagaz* and agreed to pay \$110 per 1,000 cubic meters for natural gas.

In 2007 Moldova again sought to negotiate with Russia, this time for a five-year agreement with Gazprom. The parties agreed on Moldova paying \$170 per 1,000 cubic meters for gas in 2007 and annual increases up to \$250 per 1000 cubic meters for gas in 2011.

This constant manipulation of the gas market forces Moldova's parliament to maintain pro-Russian trade agreements, in spite of growing interest in EU trade options, and maintains instability

⁶² Nygren, B. (2010). (p. 96).

within the Moldovan market. By disrupting the oil and natural gas supply to Moldova each time Moldova policy shifted towards the EU, Russia ensured these policy changes would not pass. Russia's "energy weapon" is a major foreign policy resource capable of inflicting great economic pain within countries which rely on these resources.

Another Russian foreign policy tool used in Moldova is economic and cultural manipulation through worker visa and citizenship agreements. Moldova's economy relies heavily on economic support from foreign interests and the influx of money from its citizens working abroad. It is estimated that nearly 25% of working age Moldovan adults work abroad. The actual number may be much higher as this number only includes those doing so legally. With this influx of foreign money comes an influx of foreign cultural influence.⁶³

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, new reforms and policies related to immigration were put in place. Policies on residence and work for former Soviet countries were lacking a systemized procedure. To restructure the migration regulations, Russia implemented a set of migration management policies, in regard to entry visas, work permits, registration of place of stay for migrants, and permits for permanent and temporary residence.

In the early post-Soviet years, it was difficult to distinguish between temporary and permanent labor migration, and between the legal and illegal employment of immigrants from the former Soviet republics. This was caused by the substantial number of people with unresolved citizenship, who bore Soviet-era passports.⁶⁴ Change came at the beginning of the 21st century, when Russia's developing economy required an increase in labor, especially in the construction, transport, and services sectors. Citizens from former Soviet countries, who were suffering from the economic decline after the Soviet

⁶³ MPC-Migration Profile Moldova." Migration Policy Center. (2013, June). Retrieved from http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/migration_profiles/Moldova.pdf (p. 1).

⁶⁴ Russia: A Migration System with Soviet Roots. (2017, June 07). Retrieved from <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/russia-migration-system-soviet-roots>

Union collapse, were searching for job opportunities in Russia. Russia established a visa-free entrance program for former Soviet citizens. As a result, according to official statistics, 300,000 Moldovans were allowed employment in Russia.⁶⁵ The overcomplication of entrance to the labor markets of the EU for Moldovans, accompanied with the ease of entrance into Russia, guarantees Russia a readily available and exploitable work force. Russian policy makers recognize the value of “human capital” and in Article 13 of the 2016 RNSC state “as...migration flows become increasingly globalized, domestic processes are having a greater effect on international relations.”⁶⁶

The ease of movement between Moldova and Russia for workers has additional effects. This policy generates resources in the form of cultural similarity and parity. By treating Moldovans as “valuable workers,” Russia is viewed in a more favorable light than the EU. Often Moldovans who return from working in Russia continue to hold pro-Russian views and seek to be governed by pro-Russian politicians. Russian citizenship reforms have also undergone significant changes after the Soviet Union collapse. “From 1992 to 2015, about 8.5 million people acquired Russian citizenship. Many residents of post-Soviet states have viewed attaining Russian citizenship as a desirable goal.”⁶⁷

In 2006 Russia launched a new program, *The State Program of Assistance for Resettlement of Compatriots*,⁶⁸ to increase the ease of emigration to Russia for citizens of former Soviet states. This program created an easier path to citizenship by offering assistance for resettlement of “compatriots” living in the near abroad. The program was an initiative to encourage immigration to Russia for the former Soviet citizens, as long as they speak Russian. The essence of the program is to influence the Russian ethnic culture to invest in Russia’s economy by working within the Russian territory and

⁶⁵ Ćwiek-Karpowicz, J. (2011). Russia’s Soft Power Influence on the Eastern Partnership Countries: Threat or Opportunity for the European Union? *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs*, no.2. (p. 22-23).

⁶⁶ Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016). (2016, December 01). (Article 13).

⁶⁷ Russia: A Migration System with Soviet Roots. (2017, June 07).

⁶⁸ The program of resettlement of compatriots to the Russian Federation. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://pereselenie.moscow/en/help/resettlement-program.html>

benefiting from Russian citizenship and permanent employment. The program allowed migrant applications only from professionals with a minimal technical educational level. The popularity of the program grew rapidly. By the end of 2015, approximately 530,000 people had participated in the program.⁶⁹ The Russian speaking population throughout the former Soviet republics, including Moldovans, had taken advantage of the compatriots' program by migrating to Russia and uniting with the shared common culture and ethnicity.

According to a study commissioned by the BBC, 106 Moldovans leave their country each day.⁷⁰ At the end of the 1980s, around 4.5 million people lived in the Republic of Moldova. Now, according to the national statistical office, there are less than 3.5 million people living in the country.⁷¹ The Center for Demography in Chisinau states that over 600,000 Moldovans have moved abroad temporarily or permanently, the majority being those that emigrated to Russia.⁷² In this regard, Russian foreign policy tools used to influence Moldovan opinions have worked. By continuing to be open to Moldovan workers, Russia remains economically more influential within Moldova than the EU. This economic influence is a step towards achieving Russia's policy goal of consolidating "the Russian Federation's position as a centre of influence in today's world."⁷³

This policy also generates other forms of influence. In particular, the required use of the Russian language and the cultural parity of Moldova and Russia increases cultural influence within Moldova. Russia's search for influence recovery within Moldova begins with the reestablishment and maintenance of a Russian language policy within Moldova. As stated in the 2000 RNSC "A spiritual renewal of society is impossible without preserving the role of the Russian language as a factor of spiritual unity of

⁶⁹ Russia: A Migration System with Soviet Roots. (2017, June 07).

⁷⁰ (www.dw.com), D. W. (2016, August 27). The Republic of Moldova: 25 years of independence | Europe | DW | 27.08.2016. Retrieved from <http://www.dw.com/en/the-republic-of-moldova-25-years-of-independence/a-19508448>

⁷¹ (www.dw.com), D. W. (2016, August 27).

⁷² (www.dw.com), D. W. (2016, August 27).

⁷³ Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016). (2016, December 01). (Article 3.c).

the people of a multinational Russia and as the language of intercourse among CIS member states.” As a CIS member state, Moldova falls within the scope of Russian language policy influence. For Russia, efforts to reestablish Russian as a language of discourse within Moldova was paramount. Russia would employ various policy tools to bring this goal to fruition.

Perhaps, no other region within the former Soviet Union has had such a tumultuous existence as that of Moldova. Moldova is a creation of the Bolshevik Revolution. Initially consisting of two Soviet Socialist Republics, the Moldova SSR and the Moldova ASSR, Moldova would eventually coalesce not from a broad sweeping national identity, but by political force.

With populations geographically divided, ethnic Romanians to the west of the Dniester river and ethnic Ukrainians and Russians to the east of the Dniester river, language quickly rose to the forefront as a point of geopolitical contention. The border of Moldova during the early 1920’s was even redrawn, further to the east, to encompass more Russian ethnic groups and attempt to mitigate the influence of ethnic Romanian citizens within the Moldovan regional government. This marginalization of the Romanian population was reinforced through Soviet language policy in the region. A new Moldovan ethnic identity was artificially created by the Soviet Union, to displace the Romanian ethos, and a new “bilanguage” emerged, Moldovan.

The Moldovan language is a regional dialect of Romanian, with great emphasis being placed on the intermingling of Russian words and phrases. “...the Soviet government began a campaign to create a Moldovan ethnic identity and, as a central part of that identity, a Moldovan language, distinct from ethnic Romanians and Romanian language.”⁷⁴ The extremity of the necessity felt by the Soviet government in Moscow to distance Moldova from Romania is evidenced by their acceptance of the

⁷⁴ Grenoble, L. A. (2011). *Language policy in the Soviet Union*. Dordrecht: Springer. (p. 90).

Moldovan's abandonment of the Cyrillic alphabet for the Latin alphabet in 1933, in order to avoid oppression of the alphabet.

This ran counter to Soviet policy in all other republics within the Soviet Union. For Moscow, Moldova would be Soviet at all costs. However, in 1938 this policy would be overturned to realign Moldovan policy with that of the USSR. The language policy that emerged as a policy of the USSR targeted the unification of nations of the Soviet Union. And in the case of Moldova, the policy also “was designed to cut the strong linguistic and historical links between Moldova and Romania.”⁷⁵

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Moldovan intellectuals disputed the existence of a Moldovan language and promoted the proclamation of Romanian as the official language. This movement was met with protests from many ethnic minorities within Moldova, and especially in the Transdnister region. As a result, political officials tried to avoid an ethnic conflict within the country and called the Moldovan language *limba de stat* (the official language) or *limba noastra* (our language).⁷⁶

Bertil Nygren examines the language issue within in Moldova, which he calls “language politics.”⁷⁷ He describes the intense events between Moldovan and Russian citizens when Moldovan president Vladimir Voronin announced in 2001 that the Russian language would attain the status of the official language. This was met with protests from nationalist groups within Moldova. Tensions escalated in 2001 following a proposal for introducing mandatory Russian-language classes in schools, and the rise in power of a citizens' movement which blamed the government for “Russification” of the population. Following the gathering of 60,000 anti-Russian protestors on the streets of Chisinau, the

⁷⁵ Green, S. B. (1997). Language of Lullabies: The Russification and De-Russification of the Baltic States. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. doi:10.2139/ssrn.1261425 (p. 236).

⁷⁶ Hüning, M., Vogl, U., & Moliner, O. (2012). *Standard languages and multilingualism in European history*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Pub. Company. (p. 320).

⁷⁷ Nygren, B. (2010). (p. 93).

government annulled the decision. Voronin called the occurrence a “virus of nationalism, extremism, and insanity.”⁷⁸ The issue reappeared again when Voronin claimed that Moldova is a bi-lingual country and Moldovan nationalists must rid themselves of mistrust, nationalism, and xenophobia by accepting the reality.⁷⁹

Since the divide between ethnic Romanians and ethnic Russians remains deeply rooted in the linguistic culture of Moldova, Soviet policies of parental language choice still persist within Moldova. Under these policies, it is the choice of the parent which language, Romanian or Russian, their child will receive education in. The choice of educational language can have long lasting effects for the child in question. Each set of schools, either Romanian or Russian, has a particular curriculum that is followed, espousing either pro-EU or pro-Russian educational standards. Children learning Russian and ignoring Romanian will have less opportunities for employment later in life within Moldova and the EU. Those that focus on Russian often choose to seek employment in Russia because it is their only option.

Citizens are deeply divided along these traditional lines. Not seeking a Romanian or Russian education, depending on regional preference, can also lead to social discrimination. In cities where Romanian dominates, such as the capital of Chisinau, those that learn Russian only are viewed as “less educated” or “backwards” in their thinking. Furthermore, Russian institutions are stigmatized as being less exceptional. Ironically, for those that seek employment in Russia, the Romanian institutions are viewed as less exceptional or sub-standard by the Russian population. This is yet another example of the deep divide created by cultural policies that have remained largely unchanged within Moldova since the fall of the Soviet Union. The “Russification” process erased much of the original Moldovan culture.

The continued “Russification” of the population increases the divide between pro-Russian and pro-Romanian interest groups, leading to conflicts and protests during reforms and policy

⁷⁸ Nygren, B. (2010). (p. 94).

⁷⁹ Nygren, B. (2010). (p. 95).

implementations, or any other government decision. Russia's role in Moldovan language policy is to maintain influence within Moldova and to mitigate the cultural influence of Romania and the EU. Moldovans "are now caught up in a geopolitical tug-of-war between Russia and Europe."⁸⁰

This issue is of such import that the linguistic tradition of Moldova is still in debate, with a new agreement between the Moldovan Government and the International Organization for Migration being signed in May of 2017. This agreement seeks to "promote national identity, including the cultural and linguistic values of Moldova."⁸¹ Whether this new agreement will promote Romanian or Russian language policies remains to be seen. Much would be gained by the Moldovan government if a linguistic tradition could be agreed upon, settling long term ethnic disputes, in an effort to begin to close the cultural divide within Moldova. Until such an agreement is realized, Russia will continue to use its policy tools to seek influence within the Moldovan culture. Russia's greatest tool in this regard is its state controlled media.

The Russian language is not currently as popular as it was during Soviet times, but Russian remains the primary language of communication in business, social, cultural and scientific relations in the post-Soviet space. Russian language television continues to dominate the broadcasts in Moldova. Even movies from other countries, such as the US and the countries of the EU, are translated into Russian rather than Romanian for rebroadcast. Also, Russian cinema always portrays Russia as a super power and leading the world in both socio-economic and political development. Russian media within Moldova directly reflects Russian policy goals outlined in the 2016 RNSC, specifically, "to strengthen Russia's role in international culture; promote and consolidate the position of the Russian language in the world; raise global awareness of Russia's cultural achievements and national historical legacy,

⁸⁰ Rumer, E. (2017, May 23). Moldova Between Russia and the West: A Delicate Balance. Retrieved from <http://carnegieendowment.org/2017/05/23/moldova-between-russia-and-west-delicate-balance-pub-70056>

⁸¹ (2017, May 31). Retrieved from <http://www.gov.md/en/content/moldovan-diaspora-contribute-development-public-policies>

cultural identity of the peoples of Russia, and Russian education and research; and consolidate the Russian-speaking diaspora.”⁸²

Media is presented in both Russian and Romanian through multiple sources within Moldova. The most popular form of information distribution is television. Russian channels are especially popular since Moldovan media sources don't have enough financial resources to rebroadcast foreign content that would need retranslation to Romanian. Therefore, mass-media programs in Romanian are few in quantity in comparison with Russian media.

“Russian TV channels account for about half of the programming on Moldovan cable networks – outlets that reach an estimated 19 percent of the country's more than 1.13 million households, according to official data. By contrast, rebroadcasts of programs from Moldova's cultural cousin Romania, a member of the EU, account for just 10 percent of cable programming, according to the Coordinating Council of Audiovisual (CCA), the Moldovan broadcast-regulatory body.”⁸³

Other sources of information include radio networks that are broadcast in both languages. Most FM radio networks are private stations and are funded by oligarchs and politicians who use the outlets as a tool to promote their interests. Even though “officials have taken steps to curb "propaganda" by suspending rebroadcasts of some stations,” these bans are based on a corrupt political system, where the ruling party makes sweeping changes to promote their own points of view.⁸⁴ As such, the bans in place change with each change of governing body.

Fact checking within these outlets is suspect, at best. Russian media presents information about neighboring countries that is not necessarily correct. The content often distorts the real events by

⁸² Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016). (2016, December 01). (Article 3.i).

⁸³ Moldova: Does Russian TV Threaten National Security? (2015, February 05). Retrieved from <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/71961>

⁸⁴ Moldova profile - Media. (2016, April 20). Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17602346>

blocking reports that show a full image of a given situation. Therefore, the information is biased, and is used as a tool to manipulate Moldovan citizens to favor pro-Russian policies and the politicians that support them. This evidences how Moldova's freedom of information is limited due to Russia's control over media outlets. By maintaining a controlling interest in Moldovan media outlets and the greatest percentage of media viewership, Russian policy efforts ensure Russian media sources are disproportionately viewed by Moldovans in comparison to other media sources. This fact is not surprising when considering Russia's continued statement within its foreign policy documents to have at interest a regaining of influence within former Soviet states and a retention of influence where it still exists.

A stark example of Russian attempts of political manipulation within Moldova using Russia's numerous media outlets was Russia's campaign to influence Moldova's presidential elections in 2016. Russian media executed a massive disinformation campaign against pro-EU candidate Maia Sandu during the Presidential elections in Moldova. She was labeled with anti-feminine derogatory terms by the Russian media, and was said to be involved in wide spread financial corruption. Mihail Popsoi, a policy analyst from Georgian Institute of Politics states, "Dodon cannot compete with Sandu on integrity, so he tries to smear Sandu implying that she is a lesbian."⁸⁵ Although completely unfounded, these claims had great influence during the campaign, and her opponent, Igor Dodon, was elected as President of Moldova. During the 2016 presidential campaign mass media remained under political control, where media institutions were preoccupied with polishing candidates' images rather than informing the public.⁸⁶ "Media used survey data to manipulate public opinion, and television channels owned or controlled by politicians turned their newscasts into opinion programs with manipulative headlines."⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Skardžiūtė -Kereselidze, R. (2016, November 16). Moldovan Recipe to Win the Elections: Go Domestic - GIP. Retrieved from <http://gip.ge/moldovan-recipe-to-win-the-elections-go-domestic/>

⁸⁶ Moldova. (2017). Retrieved from <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2017/moldova>

⁸⁷ Moldova. (2017).

In a recent effort to curb the influence Russian propaganda has within the borders of the Republic of Moldova, the Democratic Party of Moldova introduced a new bill in 2017. If ratified, this bill would limit and sanction Russian media channels which have not ratified the European Convention of Transfrontier Television and which continue to broadcast news, information and military programs within Moldova. This bill is a direct effort by the Moldovan government to increase political autonomy and mitigate Russia's political influence.

Russia's use of its media outlets within Moldova to propagate widespread pro-Russian propaganda messages is an effective policy tool aimed to directly misinform and present selective information to the Moldovan population. These messages are a result of Russian policy directed by the Kremlin, and the result of pro-Russian supporters ensuring and strengthening ties with Russia. Russian media domination amplifies the impact of Russian language and influences policies in Moldovan society. Russia seeks to further exacerbate identity issues within Moldova, for "Moldova, despite an active engagement with EU policies, the European choice remains partial because of fundamental internal schisms along ethno-linguistic lines and identities that could be broadly characterized as either Western...or Russian..."⁸⁸ Russia's goal throughout the years has been to manipulate media outlets to promote Russia's image in Moldova. This propaganda tool is especially apparent each time any attempts by Moldova is made to integrate into the European Union. Russia's media manipulation has a serious impact on Moldovan citizens' political opinions that result in political preferences which lean to closer ties with Russia. The continuous promulgation of the ideological spirit of the USSR exemplified by unity through language is still evident within various sources of Russian media.

Whether through the use of military, economic or social forces, Russia has remained influential within the political environment of Moldova. Moldova's independence from Russian political influence

⁸⁸ Dangerfield, M. (2014) *Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine: In or Out of European Regional International Society?* In: Stivachtis, Y. A., & Webber, M. eds. (2014). *Europe after enlargement*. London: Routledge. (p. 125).

is incomplete, and the dualism of the Moldovan culture supports this uncertainty. By exacerbating these ethnic tensions and playing on Moldova's reliance for Russian economic support, Russia ensures Moldova will be unable to politically extricate itself from the sphere of Russian foreign policy influence.

Conclusion

Russia has exerted political influence within Moldova since its inception as a Soviet Republic on October 12, 1924. The fact that Moldova is a geographical and political creation of the Soviet Union is not lost on Russian policy makers. For Russia, Moldova is, by its very nature, Russian.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia has sought to remain politically influential within Moldova. Initially, as an effort to protect Soviet era arms stores, Russia used its military presence to ensure the ceasefire following the brief Moldova-Transdnister War. Currently, Russia's military presence within the region of Transnistria offers Russia a foothold in Eastern Europe and creates a region of influence counter to NATO and EU expansion. Furthermore, within Moldova itself, Russia continues to maintain its political influence. This also offers Russia a buffer zone between its geographic and political borders and those of NATO. As outlined in the Russian National Security Concept, Russia will continue to maintain and make efforts to increase its political influence within Moldova as a viable method to counter NATO and EU expansion.

Chapter 3: Conclusion: Russian Foreign Policy in Eastern Europe

Russia's foreign policy in Eastern Europe is one of continuous interference from Russia within the politics of the former Soviet states. When examined in relation to foreign policy documents published by Russia, the goals of this involvement and the tools used to reach these goals become clear.

As Martin Dangerfield states, "Russia strives to neutralize the influence and attractiveness of Euro-Antlantic integration and remain the dominant external presence in the region."⁸⁹ Russian policy makers clearly state this goal in their policy documents, that is, "to pursue neighbourly relations with adjacent States."⁹⁰ In fact, Russian policy makers go one step further, calling for Russia "to consolidate the Russian Federation's position as a centre of influence in today's world."⁹¹

To achieve these goals, for Russian foreign policy in Eastern Europe, a pattern of power instrument application exists. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Russian Federation has created for itself a pattern of tools used to generate foreign policy successes within its near abroad. Initially, Russia uses traditional hard power methods to counter political movement away from the influence of the Kremlin. Russian "peacekeeping" activities and economic manipulation ensure the security of Russian interests within Moldova. Then, through the manipulation of "soft power" resources such as media, language, and immigration policy, Russia reinforces the political influence it has gained with cultural influence of Moldovan citizens. The emerging pattern of an ad hoc mixture of hard and soft power tools used by Russia in the case of Moldova is shown to be largely effective and the same pattern can be seen in use by Russia in relation to other Eastern European countries.

⁸⁹ Dangerfield, M. (2014). (p. 127).

⁹⁰ Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016). (2016, December 01). (Article 1.f).

⁹¹ Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016). (2016, December 01). (Article 1.c).

When applying “hard power,” Russia forcefully aims to control the former Soviet states through control of their territory, restrictions on access to Russian energy resources, and through the use of economic sanctions. The initial implementation of policies involving Russian military forces within Moldova in 1991 granted Russian military access to territory within a sovereign foreign nation and a military foothold in Eastern Europe. The Russian military forces acted to “defend the rights and legitimate interest of Russian citizens and compatriots living abroad,”⁹² within the Transdniester region of Moldova. The Russian 14th Army, stationed in Transdniester at the time, backed pro-Russian separatists and aided in the maintenance of peace following a ceasefire agreement, granting Russia leverage over Moldovan territory. The presence of Russian military forces in Transdniester would prove even more effective years later. When NATO acted to expand eastward during the late 1990’s and early 2000’s, Transdniester created for Russia a buffer zone that remained outside NATO’s influence. Furthermore, by leaving the Transdniester conflict as a “stalemate,” by leaving Russian military resources in Transdniester, and recognizing the Moldovan region of Transdniester as an independent de facto pro-Russian state, Russia continues to gain the benefit of having a political foothold in Eastern Europe.

Russian policy makers have applied this same strategy with other breakaway regions. The Russian military was also used as peacekeeping resources in Ukraine and Georgia. In both cases, because of continued political uncertainty, Russia has annexed control of territory within the nations. In Ukraine, Russia has usurped governmental control of the Crimean Peninsula, now recognized internationally as geographically Russian. For Georgia, the territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia have become autonomous regions and de facto Russian territories. Both regions represent a stronghold

⁹² Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016). (2016, December 01). (Article 45.e).

for Russian influence counter to NATO expansion, a policy described by Russia as a “containment policy adopted by the United States and its allies against Russia.”⁹³

Alongside the use of military force, Russian efforts to gain regional control are reinforced through economic manipulation. As has been evidenced by Moldovan-Russian relations, each time a government politically orients itself towards pro-EU policies, Russia reacts by manipulating economic factors such as energy supplies or trade agreements. Moldova’s energy and trade dependency with Russia allows Russia to use its resources in the form of “carrots and sticks,”⁹⁴ thus either rewarding or punishing Moldovan political decisions. Russia has used its direct control over energy supplies and Moldova’s over reliance on Russian markets for their exports to twist Moldova’s political policies. Rather than taking direct control of Moldova’s resources to force Moldova to change policy direction, Russia manipulated Moldova’s economy. In 2002, 2003, and 2007, following attempts by Moldovan parliament to pass trade agreements with the EU, Russia either stopped supplying Moldova with natural gas, or moved to call in Moldova’s outstanding gas debt. In each case, only after talks with the EU were abandoned by Moldova, did Russia restore natural gas supplies to Moldova. For Russia, not only does this hard power tool provide “greater protection of the interests of Russian producers,”⁹⁵ but also ensures Moldovan reliance on Russian energy. Therefore, Moldova’s reliance on Russian energy supplies ensures Russia a powerful hard power resource that is implementable each time Moldova seeks to extricate itself from Russian influence.

Whereas the pattern of military occupation followed by economic manipulation was demonstrated in Moldova, in Ukraine the pattern would be reversed. For much of the 21st century Russia has sought to remain influential in Ukrainian politics. Each time Ukraine sought closer relations with

⁹³ Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016). (2016, December 01). (Article 61).

⁹⁴ Nye, J.S. (2006). (p. 5).

⁹⁵ 2000 Russian National Security Concept - BITS. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.bits.de/EURA/natsecconc.pdf>

Europe, Russia would either increase natural gas prices to a point of unaffordability for Ukraine, or cease the flow of natural gas supplies completely and each time Ukraine would capitulate by returning to Russian influence. So severe was the manipulation of energy supplies to Ukraine, anti-Russian protests erupted in 2013. The violence of the protests quickly escalated to civil war and the pro-Russian government of Ukraine was deposed. Russia would send military forces to secure its naval facility in Crimea, and would eventually officially annex the Crimean Peninsula as Russian territory.

Although “hard power” is the most direct approach to political policy action, the application of hard power is not always the best strategy for use within the sphere of international relations. These traditional “hard power” techniques of military and economic force used by Russia to manipulate Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia are complimented and reinforced by “soft power” techniques.

For Moldova, Russian “soft power” would be pursued through cooperative immigration policies, Russian language policies, and Russian media channels within Moldova. This new form of “soft power,” “works through [the] persuasive potency of ideas that foreigners find attractive.”⁹⁶ Therefore, to change what Moldovans desire to align with Russian goals, Russia emphasizes the attractiveness of Russian culture, values and policies. The values and practices that create meaning for Russia can be used as factors of influence for Russia to obtain its policy objectives within Moldova.

For Russian foreign policy makers, these objectives continued to be the pursuit of cultural and political influence within Moldova. By employing Russian “soft power” policy, Russia has been able to influence parliamentary elections within Moldova and influence Moldovan public opinion. Following the Moldovan elections of 2016, for the first time in Moldova’s history, the offices of the president and prime minister belonged to the opposite parties. While the Democratic Party controlled the parliament, the presidency was won by Igor Dodon, a pro-Russian political leader and the head of the Socialist

⁹⁶ Gray, C. S. (2011). *Hard Power and Soft Power: The Utility of Military Force as an Instrument of Policy in the 21st Century*. doi:10.21236/ada542526 (p. v).

party. The presidential elections were finalized in November of 2016, the Socialist party winning 58% of the vote versus 49% going for the Action and Solidarity Party, with Maia Sandu as a presidential candidate.

Although the poll numbers showed support by Moldovan citizens for a country run outside Russia's influence, Moldovan policy directed by Igor Dodon reoriented towards pro-Russian agreements. For now, the country is stuck with conflicts between the Democratic Party controlled parliament led by Pavel Filip, which expresses interest in the EU, and the pro-Russian President Igor Dodon. Igor Dodon and Pavel Filip may seek to find a balance and compromise in Moldova's foreign policy in the year to come. Meanwhile, the parliamentary elections of 2018 continue to lay ahead, possibly changing ground for the governing competition between the opposite parties of Igor Dodon and Pavel Filip.

In the regions now under Russian control within Ukraine and Georgia, media has also played a key role. Russia plies its vast broadcasting resources to ensure a constant stream of pro-Russian media is available to the Russian speaking citizens within Crimea, Ukraine; South Ossetia, Georgia; and Abkhazia, Georgia. These information sources always portray Russia in a positive light, and seek to maintain the idea of "Russian exceptionalism."⁹⁷ Furthermore, the use of Russian media to influence political opinion within Russia's near abroad directly reflects Russia's policy goal "to facilitate the preservation of the Russian diaspora's identity and its ties with the historical homeland."⁹⁸

This pattern of traditional "hard power" policies reinforced by "soft power" has had mixed results. For Moldova, there is no end to the stalemate in Transdnister and no apparent solution to remove itself from Russian influence. Transdnister has become a "cornerstone for renewed foreign

⁹⁷ Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016). (2016, December 01). (Article 3.i).

⁹⁸ Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016). (2016, December 01). (Article 45.f).

policy of Russia.”⁹⁹ Therefore, Russia continues to seek to freeze the process of European integration for Moldova, and keep the territory under its influence. Losing Transdniester to a fully independent Moldova is unacceptable, but losing Transdniester *AND* Moldova to the European Union would be a catastrophic failure for Russian foreign policy.¹⁰⁰

If losing Moldova to the EU would be catastrophic, losing Georgia or Ukraine would be cataclysmic. Both countries were territories of the Russian Empire, predating the Soviet Union by a century or more. Furthermore, both countries were home to the Russian Black Sea Fleet during the USSR, a source of great nationalist pride for Russians. These countries represent the epitome of what Russia hopes to gain from its foreign policy in Eastern Europe, no less than “strengthening its position as a great power and as one of the influential centers of a multipolar world.”¹⁰¹ It comes as no surprise then that each policy shift by these countries towards the EU has been met with the most extreme measures available, short of a declaration of open war.

Even without a declaration of war, Russia has succeeded in annexing territories within Ukraine and Georgia. In both cases, Russia stated it was defending “the rights and legitimate interest of Russian citizens and compatriots living abroad,”¹⁰² in direct accordance with its stated National Security Concept. And in both instances, the international outcries against this action were noted, but completely ignored by Russia. No other countries sought to use their military to ensure the integrity of the sovereignty of these regions. In this regard, Russia’s foreign policy pattern has been a success.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that, barring involvement of other great powers, Russia will continue to use the pattern of “hard power” to crack the political will of countries it wishes to influence,

⁹⁹ Tudoroiu, T. (2011). The European Union, Russia, and the Future of the Transnistrian Frozen Conflict. *East European Politics & Societies*, 26(1), 135-161. doi:10.1177/0888325411404885 (p. 138).

¹⁰⁰ Tudoroiu, T. (2011). (p. 154).

¹⁰¹ 2000 Russian National Security Concept - BITS. (2000). (p. 2).

¹⁰² Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016). (2016, December 01). (Article 45.e).

then use “soft power” policies to influence the hearts and minds of the countries’ citizens. Although Ukraine has recently sought new energy suppliers, bringing with them a new source of independence and a weakening of Russia’s energy weapon, and Georgia’s signing of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement in July 2016 goes a long way to ensure Georgian economic sovereignty, for Moldova the way forward is unclear.

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