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### Russia's Foreign Policy for the country's stability

This analysis aims at signaling Russian Foreign policy shifts in terms of objectives, methods and orientations under the Vladimir Putin's third presidency. It argues that foreign policy has become an instrument for consensus building. In Russia, foreign policy is in fact one of the less controversial and divisive policies subscribed by both supporters and opponents of Putin's regime. The country is also facing a thinning international leverage due to the energy lower prices and to a weakening salience of Russia in the US's foreign policy agenda. As a reaction to a less strategic role, Russia is resuscitating the traditional anti-American rhetoric although tension between Moscow and Washington has significantly vanished in recent years. The post-Soviet space is still pivotal for Russian external projection as well as the reinforcement of the strategic partnership with China. Russia aims at becoming a bridge between Europe and the Asia-Pacific area. The group of BRICS is seen as a means for counterbalancing other actors power and to endorse a regulation of the international system based on the UN principles.

Under Putin's first two presidential mandates (2000-2008), Russia's foreign policy was the mirror of stabilization at the domestic level, secured by solid and protracted economic growth. During the Medvedev presidency (2008-2012), modernization instead became central to both national and foreign policy agendas. According to the president's vision, modernization was to cover all spheres of the country's life, bringing about the diversification of Russia's economy from dependence on natural resources to an economy based on innovation. Medvedev called on external actors to help out with the country's mission and affirmed that the effectiveness of foreign policy would be measured by its contribution to the improvement of living standards in the country. Russian Foreign Minister

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#### ABSTRACT

Under the third mandate of Putin as a president, foreign policy is being exploited for domestic purposes, notably for coalescing a reluctant public opinion around the nation. From being a dependent variable of domestic politics, foreign policy has thus become a key component in the strategy for prolonging the power of the current establishment. The "sovereignization" of foreign policy is accompanied by the reinforcement of Russia's influence on the Post-Soviet space. The strategic partnership with China is considered pivotal for creating an area of stability encompassing Europe and the Asia-Pacific area while the group of BRICS is seen as a means for counterbalancing other actors power and to endorse a regulation of the international system based on the UN principles.

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The opinions expressed herein are strictly personal and do not necessarily reflect the position of ISPI.

Sergey Lavrov stated that it is in Russia's interest to strengthen "relations of interdependence with leading world powers on the basis of mutual penetration of economies and cultures"<sup>1</sup>. Lavrov advocated the creation of "modernizing alliances with the US and Europe" to secure technology transfer and attract Western investors in order to overcome Russia's secular technological backwardness and economic isolation. The financial crisis made the reconfiguration of strategic partnerships and pragmatic friendships both more feasible and more urgent, not only for Russia but also for the other major players. The turbulence of the global economic system opened new windows of opportunity for Russia to extend its traditional influence over the so-called post-Soviet space and to intensify cooperation with both the US and China<sup>2</sup>. Putin's third mandate is still following the path of pragmatism and economization when interacting with third-party countries.

What is new, however, is the exploitation of foreign policy for domestic purposes, notably for coalescing the reluctant public opinion around the nation. From being a dependent variable of domestic politics, foreign policy has thus become a key component in the strategy for prolonging the power of the current establishment. For the purpose of maintaining consensus, President Putin is increasingly recurring to nationalism, traditionalism and selective repression. The Kremlin has imposed its traditionalist agenda on Russia despite the fact that modernization is still declared a priority of the country<sup>3</sup>. On the external front, we are witnessing a mounting "sovereignization" (protection of sovereignty) nourished by typical power-politics language<sup>4</sup>. The "sovereignization" of foreign policy has its roots in the concept of sovereign democracy (first used by Vladislav Surkov on February 22nd 2006, in a speech before a gathering of the Russian political party United Russia) that has both domestic and external implications. Within Russia, the democratic regime should be guided by an highlighted political elite that is able to safeguard and maximize national interests while responding to citizens' needs. Political legitimacy is derived mainly from the leadership's ability to satisfy people's expectations rather than by a bottom-up democratic process. Russians are more sensitive to the output than the input side of their political system. As a sovereign democratic state Russia, and likewise the other post-Soviet states, should not tolerate external actors meddling in its domestic affairs. Democracy needs to be adjusted to the national context and its patterns and timing are not universally valid. Russia has its own set of values. These values are democratic but they have emerged from Russia's unique historical experience, and they are distinct from what the West recognizes as democracy.

More recently, the "sovereignization" has been updated with two new actions: on the one hand, the disconnection of Russian civil society from the international web of interactions (Russia's government is emphasizing the role of civil society and piloting its activation at home), and on the other, the "deoffshorizing" of Russian capital. In the first case, the Kremlin is contrasting the

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<sup>1</sup> S. LAVROV, *Program for Effective Utilization of Foreign Political Factors on a Systematic Basis for Purposes of Long-Term Development of the Russian Federation*, published by «The Russian Newsweek Magazine», 10 February 2010,

<sup>2</sup> On the consequences of the 2008 economic and financial crisis in Russia, see S. GIUSTI, *Russia in Crisis: Implications for Europe*, in P. DELLA POSTA - L.S. TALANI (eds), *Europe and the Financial Crisis*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp. 242-253.

<sup>3</sup> The Russian political elite does not conceive modernization as an holistic process. Rather, it channels a project of conservative and partial modernization limited to economics. The state structure and the institutional setting as well as the hybrid form of democracy will persist. Changes will take place selectively and gradually, as is compatible with the stability of the country.

<sup>4</sup> See D. TRENIN, *The Putin Doctrine*, «Carnegie Endowment», 1 February 2013, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/02/01/putin-doctrine/fn1a>.

“unlawful” use of soft power and human rights that risks destabilizing sovereign states through the manipulation of public opinion. The Russian president has even ordered the cancellation of USAID activities in the country and the legal branding as “foreign agents” of Russian NGOs which accept funding from abroad<sup>5</sup>. This move is part and parcel of a strategy to neutralize the Kremlin’s opponents and make the verticalization of power smoother. Putin is in fact trying to create a mass popular organization, replacing United Russia, able to mobilize Russians and promote his personal policies over the heads of government, bureaucracy and parliament. The model seems like a kind of corporate state in which political parties play a subordinate role while the national leader is able to address different constituencies directly<sup>6</sup>.

Putin coined the term “deoffshorization” in the state-of-the-nation address (December 2012), hinting at the necessity to bring back capital and human resources which have left Russia to make better profits and avoid the numerous impediments to a propitious business climate. The president’s objective is to repatriate capital channeled to offshore jurisdictions by reaching agreements with tax havens that would help open up offshore entities and make them disclose their financials. He also moved forward the issue of privatization, saying that the government should encourage capital repatriation by selling stakes in state companies on Russian stock exchanges. Net capital outflows from Russia totaled \$56.8 billion in 2012, after the country lost \$80.5 billion the previous year. The question of “deoffshorization” came on stage again on the occasion of the Cyprus financial crisis, since Russian companies and financial institutions currently hold over \$30 billion in accounts on the island.<sup>7</sup> The reinforcement of state control on public opinion and national capitals is to strengthen statehood in order to placate decreasing domestic approval and international weight.

## Losing leverage

Currently, Putin’s Russia is in fact facing a diminishing leverage due to some transformations in the international system. First of all, the energy sector that made possible the country’s economic recovery in the early 2000s and its international rehabilitation, is suffering. The 2008 global crisis partially slowed down Russia’s economic growth in line with a plummeting trend all over the world and in the BRICS countries too. The Arab Springs and in particular the civil war in Libya caused an unexpected rise in oil prices, favoring Russia’s economy. However, Russia’s future ability to remain a global energy supplier is at risk. Russia is currently cutting gas prices to Europe while Gazprom revenue expectations are starting to decline. The shale gas revolution has made the US uninterested in Russia’s energy resources. For Russia, that holds the world’s largest proven reserves of natural gas and is among the top-ranking oil producers, energy is not simply about commercial interests. Energy has been an extraordinary political tool for the country’s return to being among the great powers and has magnificently supplied its power projection in the post-Soviet space.

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<sup>5</sup> Mass audits of Russian NGOs started on 21 March on orders from the Justice Ministry and the Prosecutor General’s office. Russia has maintained that the checks are regular inspections to see if NGO work complies with Russian law – legislation was recently amended to require that NGOs receiving foreign funding register as ‘foreign agents’.

<sup>6</sup> N. PETROV quoted in <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2013/0402/Is-Putin-trading-his-own-party-for-a-new-power-base>.

<sup>7</sup> Russian presidential advisor Sergei Glazyev affirmed, “We could have solved the problems of Cyprus if it (the country) were in our jurisdiction,” adding that “Cyprus could have asked for a loan from the Eurasian Economic Community, or EurAsEC, under those circumstances”, <http://www.foxbusiness.com/news/2013/03/20/russia-should-embrace-de-offshorization-after-cyprus-crisis-president-advisor/#ixzz2PUER8ceX>

Secondly, Russia is no longer so strategic when dealing with critical international situations. The UN has proven ineffective in dealing with most of the recent crises (e.g. Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan)<sup>8</sup> so Russia's seat in the Security Council (a vestige of the Cold-War period) is of diminishing value, especially after its failure to prevent a bloody civil war in Syria<sup>9</sup>. The US has now outsourced the task of changing Moscow's position on Syria to the Turks while searching for possible solutions, mainly supporting the less Islamicized opposition, with the help of European partners, and marginalizing the Kremlin once more. As a reaction to its less strategic role Russia is resuscitating its traditional anti-American rhetoric, although tension between Moscow and Washington has been significantly scaled down in recent years. The Russian political elite's obsession with the US is countered with broad indifference on the American side. The 2009 "reset" policy which helped bring about some American wishes, including a transport corridor to Afghanistan, cooperation on Iran, and armaments reduction, has now been exhausted<sup>10</sup>. The loss of salience of Russia in US foreign policy prioritizing is de facto plummeting Russian leverage on the international stage. Russia's reaction to Washington's lack of interest is to treat the US as an enemy, at least domestically.<sup>11</sup>

So why does President Putin then put the accent on foreign policy with his compatriots if Russia is losing appeal and leverage? The answer is simple: in Russia, foreign policy is one of the less controversial and divisive policies. The Transatlantic Trends Survey confirms that a large majority of Russians (71 percent) are inclined to approve the government's foreign policy choices. Russians generally expect their country to assume a strong leadership role in the world, just as they also oppose global leadership by either Europe or the US. They conceive the external projection of their country in traditional terms, mainly as an arena for defending national interests rather than for promoting values. Despite the extent of anti-Western propaganda over the last year, the majority of Russians have a rather positive view of the West. Those who are unsympathetic with Putin's regime hardly assume a critical stance on the management of external relations. Both Putin's supporters and his opponents, an aggregate of pro-Western liberals and anti-Western nationalists, subscribe to the Kremlin's foreign policy agenda. As Krastev stresses, "So when it comes to foreign policy, we should expect that a democratic Russia will also be a nationalistic Russia, not unlike other regional powers like Turkey"<sup>12</sup>.

## Principles and vectors

The Russian Foreign Ministry's updated Foreign Policy concept (FPc) document reveals much about Putin's emerging foreign policy in terms of principles and vectors<sup>13</sup>. Besides reconfirming the

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<sup>8</sup> Moscow has stopped support for even the weakened version of sanctions against Iran that it previously voted for in the UN Security Council; as for Syria, Moscow has thrice vetoed US-supported Security Council resolutions calling for sanctions against Bashar al-Assad's regime.

<sup>9</sup> Because of the complexity of the Syrian crisis for its regional implications (diversely from the case of Libya where NATO's intervention did not have major consequences beyond the country's perimeter), Russia's strenuous opposition to any kind of intervention has in the end played into US hands (especially during the 2012 presidential campaign).

<sup>10</sup> NATO's deputy chief has claimed that the military alliance suspended transport through its major logistics base in the Russian city of Ulyanovsk due to prohibitive costs. NATO is studying more financially attractive transport routes, including the reopening of a Pakistani hub that was closed in 2011 due to security concerns, <http://rt.com/politics/transport-hub-nato-russian-150/>, 1 April 2013.

<sup>11</sup> *The dread of the other*, «The Economist», 16 February 2013, p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> I. KRASDEV, *Would Democratic Change in Russia transform its Foreign Policy?*, «Open Democracy», February 2013, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/ivan-krastev/would-democratic-change-in-russia-transform-its-foreign-policy>.

<sup>13</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation", *Approved by President of the Russian Federation V. Putin on 12 February 2013*, [http://www.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D).

principle of a national pathway towards democracy, the FPc revives the post-ideological idea of cultural and civilizational diversity that might cause clashes within and among societies. According to the FPc, "... imposing one's own hierarchy of values can only provoke a rise in xenophobia, intolerance and tensions in international relations leading eventually to chaos in world affairs". There are two ways to avoid new chaos: respect of diversity without choosing any mainstream, while "...creating a stable and sustainable system of international relations based on international law and principles of equality, mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs of states". So Russia is once more professing its faith in the UN as a principal and most authoritative institution for the regulation of international relations.

In recent crises (from Iraq to Syria) Russia has firmly invoked the UN as the only actor entitled to mediate and find a solution, preventing in this way any military intervention carried out by other powers in disregard of the precepts of international law. The UN is seen by the Kremlin as the guardian of the sovereign democracy principle. Russia is also endorsing broad ententes and multi-dimensional forms of cooperation based on the principle of non-discrimination<sup>14</sup>. The idea put forward by Lavrov at the Munich Conference (2012) is that the spirit of cooperation reached at the economic and financial level should also be diffused at the political level. Accordingly, block thinking should be overcome in the military and political sector also, while the principle of security indivisibility should be made legally binding. His long-term plan foresees the creation of a "united economical and humane space from Atlantics to Pacific Ocean"<sup>15</sup>.

As for the vectors, the post-Soviet space is becoming even more crucial. Putin's advent to power in 2000 marked the return of the so-called 'near abroad' to the main concerns of the country's foreign policy<sup>16</sup>. This return was not simply a reaction to the so-called "Colored revolutions" but also to the increasing influence of various stakeholders (based on different political and economic resources): from the EU, the US and China to mid-level powers (India, Iran, South Korea, Japan) and to Turkey that is reinforcing its presence especially in the South Caucasus (relations are very intense with both Azerbaijan and Georgia) and Central Asia (particularly in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan)<sup>17</sup>. Russia does not have an imperial plan for the former Soviet countries but rather a post-imperial strategy. The Kremlin is relying on a rich spectrum of means for exerting its influence in the region – stretching from soft instruments to coercive power and even the use of military force (see cultural affinity, progressive institutionalization – for example the Collective Security Treaty Organization,

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<sup>14</sup> An example of this posture is the Russian policy towards the Arctic. According to the FPc, "Moscow pursues a proactive and constructive policy of strengthening multi-format international cooperation in the Arctic. Consistently following its national interests, Russia believes that the existing international legal framework is sufficient to successfully settle all regional issues through negotiations, including the issue of defining the external boundaries of the continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean".

<sup>15</sup> Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's speech at 49<sup>th</sup> Munich security conference, Munich, 2 February 2013, [http://www.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/0/A9CB4318DB0A5C8444257B0A00376FE8](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/A9CB4318DB0A5C8444257B0A00376FE8).

<sup>16</sup> The "Near abroad" entails that Russia's post-Soviet neighbors are less foreign and less fully sovereign than states in the "Far abroad" and that relations with them cannot be simply classified as foreign policy activity. See J. MANKOFF, *Russian Foreign Policy*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011, p. 219.

<sup>17</sup> On the increasing influence of China, see S. GIUSTI, *China: as emerging stakeholder in Eastern Europe*, ISPI Analysis, 23 January 2013, [http://www.ispionline.it/sites/default/files/pubblicazioni/analysis\\_153\\_2013.pdf](http://www.ispionline.it/sites/default/files/pubblicazioni/analysis_153_2013.pdf).

the Customs Union between Belarus and Kazakhstan – negotiations on gas prices, loans, acquisition of strategic assets, military presence, and the Georgian war)<sup>18</sup>.

In Putin's third mandate, the idea that domestic "stabilization" – after the mass protests preceding and accompanying his installation – should be pursued and paralleled by stronger authority over the former Soviet Republics became a political imperative. Some analysts now recur to the concept of "Finlandization" to describe the limited sovereignty of some post-Soviet states as a result of Russia's penetrating control of important policies and foreign policy choices<sup>19</sup>. Certainly the Kremlin believes that a sympathetic neighborhood lines up with a polyarchic paradigm based on various centers of power relying on a different mix of power resources, but with all able to exert hegemonic authority at a regional level. Furthermore, the control of the near abroad mirrors an osmotic conception of the international system: if the outer circle (International System) is stable then there are more chances that the inner circle (Russia) will also be stable. However this is neither a sufficient condition nor a guarantee for stability at the regional level (post-Soviet space). It is more likely that regional stability will positively impact on the inner circle: first of all the 'near abroad' is seen as a special extension of the state, and secondly any crack there might contaminate the central circle (see the fear of a domino effect of the colored revolutions). The ideal condition would be multi-level stability encompassing the international, regional and national levels.

One way to strengthen control of the neighborhood is to push for more economic integration. In his speech at the Foreign Ministry last summer, Putin reaffirmed Russia's commitment at regional level, calling the "deepening of the integration" of former Soviet territory the "heart of our foreign policy." For attaining his scope the President is prone to use coercive power especially through the political use of energy pricing. Russian leverage should 'persuade' recalcitrant countries, like Ukraine, to join the Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan<sup>20</sup>. The next step in Russia's strategy is to enlarge and reinforce the Customs Union while reaching the Eurasian markets. The Customs Union is being upgraded to a single economic area with the goal of an economic union by 2015. This broad economic Union should also constitute a bridge between Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. Putin is cultivating the idea of stretching Russian geopolitics towards the Asia-Pacific vector. As Trenin underlines, "Moscow understands the importance of the

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<sup>18</sup> Among the soft power instruments mentioned in the FPc is the reinforcement of cultural links with compatriots living in the CIS Member States, as well as negotiating agreements on the protection of their educational, linguistic, social, labor, humanitarian and other rights and freedoms.

<sup>19</sup> L. ARON, in his article Foreign Policy, affirms that "under the Putin Doctrine, the pursuit of regional hegemony has acquired a new dimension: an attempt at the "Finlandization" of the post-Soviet states, harkening back to the Soviet Union's control over Finland's foreign policy during the Cold War. In such an arrangement, Moscow would allow its neighbors to choose their own domestic political and economic systems but maintain final say over their external orientation". L. ARON, *The Putin Doctrine*, «Foreign Affairs», 8 March 2013.

<sup>20</sup> The pressure over Ukraine has been particularly powerful but not yet efficacious. Ukraine has proclaimed a strategic course of Euro-integration and plans to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union in late 2013 which also promises to give a significant fillip to the Ukrainian economy. So far Ukraine has refused to enter the Moscow-led Customs Union but things might rapidly change. In the past Ukraine has been already embroiled in several gas rows with Russia over gas siphoning and gas prices, occasionally interrupting supplies to Europe, which gets around a quarter of its gas from Russia. Now weaker demand for steel, a key export commodity and a major source of revenue for Ukraine, and the country's unsuccessful attempts to restart cooperation with the International Monetary Fund, which has demanded unpopular economic reforms in exchange for unfreezing its loan provisions to Kiev, are pushing Ukraine to cut a deal with Russia to reduce the burden of its burgeoning gas bill. Russia has said on numerous occasions it could cut gas prices for its neighbor, if Ukraine joins the Customs Union or cedes control of its gas pipeline network to Gazprom

rise of Asia, and of China in particular, and is seeking to find ways to develop its eastern provinces, which otherwise risk tilting, economically, toward the great neighbor across the river”<sup>21</sup>.

So while reinforcing the strategic partnership with China, Moscow is also weaving relations with Japan, India, South Korea, Vietnam. The FPc clearly affirms that “The global power and development potential is now more dispersed and is shifting to the East, primarily to the Asia-Pacific region”. In this perspective, the EU is less appealing (the Euro crisis has also contributed to the deterioration of its image) for Moscow. Russia is simply interested in advancing the partnership for modernization and in obtaining visa liberalization. The cooperation with Brussels is selective and not inspired by a shared long term vision on the pan-European space. Russia openly recognized that there is a gap in values that among others hinders a common strategy as for the stabilization of what Moscow considers its near abroad.

Russia believes that a progressive institutionalization and politicization of the BRICS group will contribute to underpin multipolarism while strengthening Russia’s status as an economic and political power. The group has in principle agreed to create a development bank to provide initial funding for infrastructure projects worth \$4.5tn (£3tn), in a potentially historic challenge to western-dominated financial institutions (e.g. the World Bank, where Africa holds only three seats on the 25-seat board and where Nigeria’s Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was defeated for the presidency last year). President Putin has described the group as “a key element of the emerging multipolar world,” explaining that its members “advocate the creation of a more balanced and just system of global economic relations.” Russia is willing to consolidate the Brics as a both economic and political force able to counterbalance, in particular, the US’s power. The diplomatic success of the Brics mainly depends on the future of Moscow-Beijing relations that at the moment are quite promising<sup>22</sup>.

Moscow and Beijing share similar view on the most critical issues such as the turbulences in the Middle East, Iran nuclear program, cross-border security and the North Korean nuclear issue, on which China and Russia, as the neighboring countries, have the common goal of resuming the Six-Party Talks and urging North Korea to return to the negotiation table. According to Aron “the path taken by Putin’s Russia and Xi’s China seems to be based on a tacit division of the world into spheres of influence between the two powers, where Moscow recognizes Chinese influence in Africa and the Pacific in exchange of Beijing’s recognition of Russian primacy on the Eurasian mainland, Middle East included”<sup>23</sup>.

After taking office, Chinese President Xi Jinping chose Russia for his first visit. Russia has also decided to give China a share of prized Arctic exploration licenses as part of a “breakthrough” deal. Under agreements signed during President Xi Jinping’s first state trip abroad, China may double oil imports from state-run OAO Rosneft (ROSN) to more than 620,000 barrels a day, challenging Germany as the biggest buyer of Russian crude. The two also plan to sign an agreement this year to build a pipeline to ship Russian gas to China. In return, China National Petroleum Corp. (CNPZ) will join with Rosneft in exploring three offshore Arctic areas for oil, the first such deal Russia has

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<sup>21</sup> See D. TRENIN, *The Putin Doctrine*, op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> Beijing and Moscow are by far the geopolitically strongest powers of the club’s five members. With a combined population of almost one billion and half people over an area of 26,805,203 km<sup>2</sup>, equal to roughly 18% of the world’s land area, the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation form together a formidable regional actor capable of dominating Eurasia and projecting its influence over the entire globe.

<sup>23</sup> L. ARON, *The Putin Doctrine*, op. cit.

signed with an Asian company. The ocean north of Russia is considered one of the world's largest unexplored oil provinces, and Exxon Mobil Corp. (XOM), Italy's Eni SpA (ENI) and Norway's Statoil ASA (STL) have already agreed to help finance drilling. "China is emerging as the most important buyer of Russian oil and gas, helping Russian companies diverge from European exports," said Tony Regan, an energy consultant with Tri-Zen International Inc<sup>24</sup>.

## Conclusions

Russia's foreign policy is lately less aggressive and more aligned to the national priority of cohesion and stability. The Kremlin manipulates the debate on foreign policy to align a disappointed public opinion around the nation. Once a dependent variable of domestic politics, foreign policy is now a key element in maintaining a large national consensus and strengthening the role of the President. The former-Soviet space is considered determinant for both preventing upheavals at home and in the region and for reinforcing the status of Russia as one of the poles of a multipolar world system. According to Moscow, the international relations should be regulated by the respect of national sovereignty in compliance with the international law and the UN directives. Russia is yet pragmatically consolidating its network of relations at bilateral and multilateral level taking into account its losing ground on the international stage. Despite professing ambitious plans of wide economic frameworks of cooperation, Moscow is being very selective – chasing primarily economic benefits – in both prioritizing and choosing partners and friends.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-03-25/russia-cuts-china-into-arctic-oil-rush-as-energy-giants-embrace.html>.