PRAGMATIC CHANGES IN THE RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY PERCEPTIONS AFTER THE CRISIS IN KOSOVO

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis describes Russian foreign policy perceptions in the period following the 1999 crisis in Kosovo. Specifically, it is argued that Russian foreign policy perceptions became pragmatic in the late 1990s. This author contends that this widely supported pragmatic change is manifested through several factors: Russia's foreign policy's focus on the domestic economic growth and solution of the internal political problems, the fact that Russia abandoned the 'super power' temptations in favor of more modest foreign policy goals and Russia's preference of the Western models of economic and political development. Combined together, these developments indicate a significant departure from the assertive course of foreign policy that Russia pursued since mid-1990s until 1999.

This author reaches the conclusion after finalizing the findings about Russia's pragmatism, that Western perspectives about Russia should also change in response to the pragmatic shift of Russian foreign policy perspectives. Several areas, in which the West should review its own approach towards Russia, are suggested.
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CHAPTER I

Research Objectives, Definitions and Methodology

1. Research Objectives.

Russian foreign policy since the collapse of the USSR has been less than consistent in its approach towards the West. Scholars often point to several stages in Russian foreign policy ranging from a generally pro-Western “honeymoon” period of the early 1990s to a hostile, assertive orientation at the turn of the century. The 1999 crisis in Kosovo, in which both sides were involved and which arguably shattered many proclaimed national interests of the Russian Federation, also created fears about the possibility of the major break between the West and Russia and Russia’s subsequent departure from the democratic and market reformation that the country initiated in the early 1990s. For example, Celeste Wallander, a specialist on relations between Russia and the West, in May of 1999 became concerned that the co-operation between the NATO and Russia, already limited, was doomed to become merely symbolic as a result of Kosovo:

Against this background, cooperation should be viewed as extremely unlikely. Currently, there is bargaining over the makeup and command structure for an international force in Kosovo, with NATO insisting it play the essential role while allowing the force to be labeled as UN and to include Russia. However, even when NATO-Russian relations were on an upward trajectory (e.g., IFOR and SFOR in Bosnia), cooperation was symbolic rather than substantial, and remained limited. 1

Many other scholars similarly expected that the crisis in Kosovo would lead to Russia’s rejection of the West, Russian isolation in the international arena and its rejection of the political and economic institutions of the developed world. The highly negative rhetoric of the majority of Russian foreign policy officials concerning the crisis in Kosovo, the Russian public’s resentment of the Western actions in Serbia, the subsequent civil war in Chechnya which was depicted in the Western mass media as violent, undemocratic and bloody: all this seemed to confirm the above-mentioned gloomy forecasts about the future of Russian relations with the West. Today however, despite the existing tensions, there has been no break between Russia and the West, and thus the difference between an enduring hostile re-orientation
of Russia’s foreign policy, which did not occur, and a temporary adverse reaction to the crisis will be clarified in this study. Clearly, the Russian leadership felt shocked and appalled by the NATO’s attack on Serbia. But many in the West overreacted, using Russia’s angry response to the Kosovo crisis as an argument for abandoning pro-active Western policies toward the country. Frequently, Western advocates of the “neocontainment school of thought” would cite the heated discourse of the Kremlin reacting to the events in Yugoslavia in order to justify their own skeptical approach towards Russia, and to call for appropriate adjustments in Western policies related to Russia. This thesis will, however, show that after the Kosovo crisis Russian policy did not mark a beginning of a hostile break with the West, as was widely feared. Such break did not occur, it will be argued, mainly because of changes in Russian foreign policy perceptions before and after Kosovo, which had not been adequately noticed and analyzed by the scholars. In fact, Kosovo nicely highlights several maturing conceptual trends, which have the potential of bringing Russia closer to the West rather than separating the two sides. Kosovo is taken as an orientation point in the analysis of Russian foreign policy perspectives, precisely because so many in the West expected an adverse change in Russian foreign policy in its wake. This did not happen, and the study will attempt to explain why. Although there is a certain emphasis on Kosovo in relation to Russia’s foreign policy, this author does not argue that Kosovo alone has changed Russian foreign policy perceptions. The argument is rather about an ongoing shift in policy perspectives which is particularly noticeable in the context of hostilities in Yugoslavia and which became apparent to Russians after Russia’s “political weakness” during the Kosovo crisis.

The research will be mainly focused on Russian foreign policy perspectives towards the West and how Russians view their country’s development and position in the world. However, a review of the sources and possible consequences of Russian foreign policy perceptions, as well as description of different features thereof is also useful for subsequent reflection on the appropriate Western policies towards and perceptions about Russia, especially in the light of the “neocontainment fears” existent in the US. That is why after the analysis of Russian foreign policy perspectives, this thesis will offer some observations about their implications on the Western perceptions of Russia.
More specifically, the thrust of the argument in this thesis is that we can observe a change from a "liberal-statist" to "pragmatic" stage in Russian foreign policy. This "pragmatism" has features, distinctively different from "liberalism" in Russia. The features will be described and their impact on Russia’s relations with the West will be analyzed. The value of the Western “containment” policy towards Russia will be questioned in the light of the findings about Russia’s perceptions of the West. This author will suggest that the "engagement" policy is a better alternative.

2. Research Methods and Sources.

The study of attitudes, not of just actual events, frequently presents methodological problems to political science researchers. Descriptions of foreign policy perspectives, being a study of attitudes which are not necessarily accurately reflected in the actual foreign policies of a particular country, require carefully designed analysis. Attitudes are more resistant to accurate description because during a period of change in the society, a country’s actions in the international arena may conflict with the developing views of what foreign policy should be. Thus it is not easy to recognize the difference between the country’s momentary behavior and its changing goals and aspirations in the international arena. Russia, in fact, is in the period of a major post-communist transformation: some of its present policies and foreign policy rhetoric are inherited from Russia’s bipolar mindset during the Soviet past, and thus are sometimes reminiscent of the hostile Cold-War confrontations. But this does not mean that Russian thinking has not at all changed after the “evil empire” collapsed. The gap between the swift, so often not well-thought-through official reaction and deep undergoing changes may lead to “misplaced” policies on the international system, which match neither country’s actual capacities to successfully carry those actions through nor developing political perceptions of the people and/or elites.

Neil MacFarlane’s approach to the study of attitudes provided some guidance to this author. S. Neil MacFarlane in his article “Russian Conceptions of Europe” encountered the challenge of reconciling policies, opinions and statements while researching Russian perceptions. MacFarlane provided working definitions of several difficult concepts, such as Russian understanding of Europe.
and a process of evolution of Russian ideas about Europe. He examined the leading perspectives on Russian foreign policy and the change that occurred over the time (from the early 1990s to 1994) in Russian conceptions of Europe. MacFarlane did so by comparing the statements of Russian officials, the works of intellectuals, official documents and Russia’s real actions in the international arena. He used extensive illustrative quotes throughout his analysis and conclusion. This author’s methodological approach benefited from the approach used by MacFarlane in that in this study foreign policy officials’ opinions, scholarly works, polls and policy are similarly compared, contrasted, and selective examples thereof are cited as evidence.

In particular, being faced with the problem of how to reconcile differences in Russia’s political behavior, official foreign policy rhetoric and opinions expressed by elites, people, etc., this author had to make some strategic research choices. Structurally, the thesis uses two approaches: one is used for the description of Russian foreign policy perceptions before Kosovo; a different approach is used to analyze the current state of foreign policy perceptions in Russia. Russia’s pre-Kosovo foreign policy perceptions are outlined mostly on the basis of several scholarly works on foreign policy compiled by Russian and Western experts. Differences in academic views on pre-Kosovo foreign policy are contrasted and this author’s conclusions about the evolution of Russia’s policy are made.

The second approach is used in the portion of the paper that describes the most up-to-date perspectives. This original research on Russian foreign policy perspectives from the beginning of the crisis in Kosovo until the beginning of 2001 (the date of completion of this work) is based on the survey and comparison of the official documentation, intellectual and scholarly works, some actual policies and numerous opinion polls in Russia. Official documentation consists of the diplomatic statements issued by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as statements, and interviews of the Russian political leadership and other documents issued in the specified period of time. Analysis of intellectual works will derive from the primary sources: books and articles published by Russian scholars and journalists in the leading journals and newspapers and/or works delivered at professional meetings and conferences.
Much of the statistical analysis to support the thesis of this paper will be drawn from a variety of recent surveys of Russian elites. Surveys of elites will be compared or contrasted with public opinion polls on the appropriate issues. Comparative graphs and charts, included in the appendices, will systematize these raw data into a convenient form. Interpretation of the significance of each figure for the analysis of Russia's foreign policy perceptions will be offered throughout the text. Such a comparison will allow for a better view of the evolution of foreign policy perceptions, since it will highlight similarities or contradictions in the opinions of the segments influencing the direction of Russian perceptions, such as elites and the general public. These charts will also provide statistical evidence for the appropriate argument.

As has already been suggested above, the actual policies of the Russian Federation in the international arena will also be included. Comparing, analyzing and contrasting some of Russia's actual actions in the international arena with intellectual debates and numerous official statements concerning foreign policy will add an analytical depth to the study of Russian foreign policy perceptions. The main thing to remember is that the actual policy of Russia on the international scene is not the focus of this paper. Nevertheless, the analysis of perspectives would be incomplete if actual policies were entirely excluded from the text. Actual policies may, for instance, highlight or contradict the thinking of foreign policy elites or the general population. That is why some of the steps undertaken by Russia and an explanation of their significance for foreign policy perceptions will be offered.

The importance of the study of concepts and/or perspectives is overwhelming for a determination of a country's foreign policy. It is often the flow of ideas that shapes the way in which international relations between two states develop and will develop in the future, rather than actual capacities of the state. For example, objective capacities of the Soviet Union did not change overnight in 1989, but perceptions about Russia in Europe and in the USA did: from being seen as a major communist threat and enemy Russia came to be seen as a country in transition. Perspectives shape how the actual policies of the country will develop, whereas capabilities of a country may fail to
determine this country's thinking about the desirable direction of its foreign policy. Unprogressive old elites in positions of power and bureaucratic difficulties of decision making in adjusting foreign policy according to the developing concepts slow down the process of transformation of these new perspectives into concrete policy actions in Russia, though they will be gradually embodied by the actual policies too. At the present though, some of Russian contemporary actions are still reflective of Russian foreign policy perceptions of the recent past (an example is the antagonistic changes in Russian security and military doctrines after the NATO campaign in Kosovo), and thus would not accurately reflect the changes taking place in Russian thinking today. That is why major policies of Russia are considered, but are not a focus of this paper.

3. Definitions.

One of the fundamental terms used throughout this research is “perceptions.” The term “perceptions” is interchangeably used here with the terms “perspectives”, “attitudes” and “conceptions”. Russian foreign policy perceptions (with the emphasis on the country’s perceptions of the West) are the subject matter of this study and, thus have to be described at the beginning. The term “perceptions” as used throughout the paper consists of a combination of four variables: 1) academic views on the direction of Russian foreign policy; 2) elite and leadership conceptions thereof; 3) public opinion; 4) official statements about Russian foreign policy; and 5) a limited discussion of the actual policies. This term emphasizes a way of thinking about foreign affairs rather than the present direction of actual Russian policies in the foreign affairs arena. Although this paper will try to extract a single prevalent Russia’s foreign policy perception, the other views thereof will also be discussed.

Often this paper will mention the term - “elites.” Elites here refers to persons representing the executive and legislative branches of Russian government, business structures and the state enterprises, scientific and journalistic communities in Russia. This author’s definition of elites is fully compatible with the definition of elites in relevant opinion polls used in the paper. Sometimes in the discussion, the author will deliberately allude to a particular subdivision of elites considered, such as
the military leadership or executive or business elites. A specific mentioning will be made accordingly.

Definition of the term “West,” which is frequently utilized in the paper, requires special consideration as well, because “West” may be understood as a geographical location or a political commonwealth of the democratic states or as economic community of the developed countries. Generally throughout this paper “West” should be treated as a unified concept signifying the community of the economically and politically mature nations of the Western Europe and North America. “West” is more than simply a geographical location. “West” represents a cluster of states with highly developed economic systems and advanced democratic polities. However, in some circumstances it will be necessary to differentiate between the US and Western Europe since this contrast will be observed in Russian foreign policy perspectives. Otherwise the “West” should be treated as a collective conceptual term representing economic, social and political community of the countries in Western Europe and the North America.

After the analysis of Russian foreign policy perceptions, there will be a discussion about the implications thereof for Western perceptions of Russia. At the present, there are two main schools of thought about the direction of Western foreign policies towards Russia: “neocontainment” or “containment” and “engagement.” In this section, a basic brief definition of both schools will be provided. The discussion of specific views of different proponents of engagement and containment approaches will be offered throughout the text of this thesis.

The engagement approach encourages bipartisanship, close cooperation and search for common grounds between the two sides, and emphasizes the importance of the domestic factors on Russian foreign policy. The engagement school believes that specific Western policies have either negative or positive effects on the future of the Russia-West relations by influencing domestic factors in Russian political life. They are convinced that domestic politics is interconnected with foreign policy, and argue that engagement, by influencing both internal and external stability of the country and democratizing Russia, would nurture the amicable future of the Russia-West relations.
Engagement scholars believe that by not antagonizing Russia, by following reciprocal cooperative policies, the West will not harm the fragile institutions of liberalism and democracy and will not contribute to a decline in the popularity of the pro-Western politicians in Russia, whereas a hard-line approach would. The West should help the country, according to this school of thought, not just to facilitate Russia's success, but also because it is in the Western interests to see a prosperous and democratic Russia rather than a weak and hostile one:

Still, I foresee a familiar question by many skeptics: Why should the United States and other Western countries help Russia become a great power? Is it not in their strategic interest to keep Russia weak to avoid any future threat? In my view, the West should help Russia for the same reason it helped Germany, Japan, and other countries after the World War II: to enlarge the democratic community friendly to the West. Indeed, given its greater geostrategic significance and because Russians never seriously fought against Americans, Russia perhaps deserves even more help.³

The containment approach is known for its preference for the policy of a strict pursuit of Western interests regardless of the absence of Russian acquiescence, and for a concentration on international superiority of the West in the spheres of military-industrial preparedness, economic capacity and geopolitical influence. Containment school stands for a proposition that domestic policy is not important for a determination of the Western foreign policy towards Russia today:

Cast in theoretical terms, this side would argue that foreign policy is determined primarily by the international environment, not domestic politics, and that a more assertive policy would produce a more cooperative and moderate Russia.⁴

Moreover, containment scholars call for a vote of no confidence in Russia's democratization process and, subsequently, in Russia's right to influence the choice of the West's foreign policies based on containments' analysis of Russia's unstable internal progress, Russian "imperial" policies towards the countries of the CIS, Eastern Europe and the West.⁵ That provides one more reason for the containment authors' conclusion that the West should pursue its interests assertively since Russia in any case will be forced to retrench on its disagreements with the West. Containment theorists especially fear that Russia, following its imperial impulses, will attempt to establish several "zones of influence" in the countries of the CIS and Eastern Europe, unless the US and Western Europe will take
an aggressive stance against this development. The West is interested in tempering Russian
imperialism, and it should do so regardless of the inevitable clashes of interests between Russia and
the West.

Finally, one of this paper’s main objectives is to show the qualitative change in Russian
foreign policy perspectives. Specifically, it will be argued that Russian foreign policy thinking is
undergoing a transformation from its liberal-statist orientation to a pragmatic one. Although what
pragmatism is will be understood fully only after reading the relevant portions of this work, some
preliminary theoretical observations may be helpful. Pragmatism in the context of this thesis is a
concept that is defined by several interrelated elements. It describes a particular form of “perceptions”
about the direction, goals and the most appropriate means to achieve these goals in Russian foreign
affairs. More abstractly, it signifies Russia’s realistic understanding of the main objectives that it has
in the international arena, and a way of appraising the best type of behavior to suit those objectives in
the light of the available means. Several Russia-specific elements of pragmatism will be discussed in
detail: 1) widespread consensus, 2) the prevalence of economic, technological and informational issues
in foreign policy, and 3) the suppressing of the ideological and imperial impulses of post-Soviet
Russia. It will be shown that the emphasis on the economy and internal stability, being Russia’s main
priorities, defines to a great extent Russian foreign policy perspectives and changes Russian policies
toward the West. Pragmatism is different in several respects from the pro-Western phase of Russia’s
foreign policy. For example, Russia now concentrates on its own economic and political revival,
focuses on the strengthening of Russian territorial integrity and strives to solve other problems
inherited from Russia’s past, instead of attempting to blindly follow the Western model of economic
and political development as it did during its “honeymoon” period. Pragmatic foreign policy is more
realistic in that there is no more a naive belief that the West will be a Russian ally in all the situations,
merely because Russia ceased to be the West’s main communist foe. But pragmatism is also different
from the anti-Western realist phase. Russia does not place its superiority in the foreign arena as its
main foreign policy’s priority; it rather focuses on the already mentioned goals of internal
reconstruction, economic strengthening and so on. The focus on power is still important for Russian
foreign policy officials, but the definition of “power” seems to have softened in pragmatic foreign policy. During the realist phase of Russian foreign policy, as described by MacFarlane and Trofimenko, power meant the ability to coerce other actors into some actions, often through the means of threats, reminders of Russian nuclear and other military potentials. Today this term incorporates a stress on great economic capacity, domestic development, economic stability and other similar factors, through which Russia expects to remain an important international actor. Instead of the verbal assertiveness and insistence on formal recognition, Russia works with the West in a more cooperative manner that helps it to accomplish the above-stated, more modest goals.

Pragmatism has neither been invented by Russians, nor is it a phenomenon existing in Russia’s foreign policy exclusively. Conceptually, pragmatism has deep historical and philosophical roots, especially so in American thinking. One of the greatest American pragmatist thinkers, Charles Pierce, is known for his development of this unique movement. Charles Pierce looked at pragmatism as a sophisticated theory of knowledge, a method of looking at reality and a tool that allows recognition of what is right and what is wrong. He argued that there is an intimate relation between the meaning (how we understand the subject matter) and the action that we undertake in connection to that subject matter. What is good (society’s values) or evil, therefore, was dependent on the practical consequence of the said action. If we apply this theory to studies of foreign policy, then our understanding of what is appropriate and what is not in the international performance of a particular country would depend on what results this conduct will bring to that country: beneficial or negative. The strategy of calculating whether results of a certain behavior were positive or negative is informally made in relation to the ranking of this country’s foreign policy priorities. Step-by-step informal pragmatic strategy looks like this: after the country performed in a certain manner in reaction to certain events, the elites and/or people estimate whether this action brought positive results and then evaluate this action as right or wrong (taking into account the country’s priorities), and then make appropriate adjustments for the country’s foreign policy in the future. That is this author’s understanding of how Pierce’s pragmatism can be translated into foreign policy language.
What is interesting in the light of the previous “costs/benefits” calculation is that a country begins
to evaluate not only individual actions but also the future direction of its foreign policy. Pragmatism in
this paper, when discussing the matter of Russian foreign policy perspectives, will describe values/goals
of and motivations behind Russia’s foreign policy and the ways, which are seen in Russia as the most
appropriate in order to achieve those goals. Special attention will be paid to a notion of how pragmatism
influences Russia’s views of the West. It will be argued that despite some problems in the West’s
relations with Russia in the past, Russian pragmatism provides an optimistic basis for these relations to be
fully operational and successful in the future. Once again, the full practical meaning of the word
“pragmatism” in Russia will be understood better after reading this work.
CHAPTER II

Russian Foreign Policy Perspectives before the Crisis in Kosovo

This chapter, unlike later chapters, does not include an independent analysis of primary Russian sources by this author. It is based on the analysis and synthesis of several studies about Russian foreign policy conducted by Western and Russian experts, not on original research on Russian foreign policy. This chapter will discuss two main phases of Russian foreign policy perspectives before the crisis in Kosovo. The opinions of several experts about characteristics, ramifications and sources of these phases will be offered. The chapter will end with the discussion of the policy perspectives directly preceding the Kosovo crisis. It will set a contextual background for a further discussion of the effects of the crisis in Kosovo on Russian foreign policy perspectives and contemporary tendencies contained therein.

Russian foreign policy perspectives after the collapse of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) shifted several times, and can be grouped accordingly into several phases/periods. A well-known Canadian scholar, Neil MacFarlane, refers to this first period as a period of “liberal internationalism,” which emerged during the Gorbachev era of the late 1980s-early 90s and lasted until a few months following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The first period is generally known as a “honeymoon” between Russia and the West. It can be loosely defined as an early pro-Western, “de-nationalized” course of Russian foreign policy. This period was characterized by the existence of trust into concepts of relative or “mutual” security, the emphasis on the benefits of cooperative international relations, Russia striving for Western-like democratic and market reforms in the country, and a perception by the elites that the success of these reforms was intimately connected to the pro-Western course of Russia’s foreign policy. As an example of the transformation of such ideas into actual policies, in 1992 Russia joined the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and World Bank. Russia also officially abandoned its demands for superpower status in the international arena, instead accepting a more modest “great power” status. In addition, the country joined the West in enforcing the sanctions against Iraq by sending two warships to the Persian Gulf; it supported sanctions against
Libya; and Russia became a supporter of the Arab-Israeli peace process with Vice President Alexander Rutskoi traveling to Israel in April 1992 and Parliament speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov visiting Israel in January 1993. As far as the countries of the former Soviet Union were concerned (where 25 million Russians lived) – Andrei Kozyrev took the lead in calling for normal diplomatic relations, renouncing Moscow's old, imperial behavior - an attitude strongly supported by the United States. Moreover, pro-Western stances in the foreign policies of the countries of Eastern Europe were not seen by the Russian elites as antagonistic or hostile to Russia’s national interests. As one Russian international relations expert, Salmin, noticed - at that moment even NATO and its plans for expansion did not seem to present a problem to Russia’s perceived pursuits of its own interests in the international arena:

In December 1991 Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev of the Russian Federation declared, “NATO is increasingly becoming an alliance capable of supporting the construction of a new world.” In August 1993 President Yeltsin, commenting on Poland’s intention to join NATO, said: “This decision of sovereign Poland would not conflict with the process of general European integration, or with Russian interests.” Nor until 15 September 1993 did Yeltsin send letters to the U.S. president and other Western leaders in which he objected to the entry of Central and East European countries into NATO.7

Kozyrev’s policies in the international arena were designed to win over the West and the US especially, to embrace Western models of political and economic development, and to achieve the abandonment of the world’s negative perceptions of Russia, which were inherited from the Soviet period. Russia’s pro-Western policies besides positively influencing the world’s opinions about the country, were also helpful in acquiring the necessary assistance from the West, specifically:

...in securing Western financial and technical assistance for economic recovery and political stabilization. The presumption was that Russian acquiescence in Western-led initiatives (such as those in the Gulf or Somalia) would facilitate such flows.10

There are several explanations behind Russia’s pro-Western stance in the early 1990s. Whereas MacFarlane stresses the practical necessity as a source of this pro-Western change – i.e., Russia’s need for the West’s financial assistance, Trofimenko in his book about Russia’s national interests asserts that such a shift was not caused by the “oiling” from the West, but rather by a deliberate and, perhaps, the only choice left to Russians after the collapse of the USSR. Specifically,
in the early 1990s Russian elites did not see their country as having any other alternative but to follow a pro-Western path:

So, following the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russia has continued to meekly follow the US in the international arena. It was not because Russia was, so to say, bribed or lured into cooperating, but because there was no other way for her to behave.  

A combination of these two factors, among others, had an influence on the choice of the course of Russian foreign policy. First of all, there was an instrumental motive present in Russia’s foreign policy, as Russia required material and ideological support in its attempts to conduct Western-style reforms. Secondly, depressing objective circumstances of Russia’s bankrupt economic and political systems, the desire to achieve the high level of socio-economic development enjoyed by the Western countries, and an impossibility to dominate in the international arena left Russians with no other choice, but to follow the lead of the West in the international arena. These are just a few explanations behind Russian political elites’ deliberate choice of this pro-Western path of foreign policy. Other explanations include a foreign policy leadership of a person who was a devoted pro-Western politician, A. Kozyrev, the late 1990s-early 1990s downfall of the Communist party, which called for more aggressive foreign policy, in the late 1980s, and others.

After a brief period of a “honeymoon”, Russia’s attitude towards the West, and especially towards the US, started to shift from being pro-Western to being cautious of the West. The time of the shift came approximately between April 1993 shortly after the Vancouver summit and the July 1993 Tokyo summit, when many hidden contradictions between Russia’s and the US position became evident. America’s concerns about Russia’s sale of rockets to India, and Russia’s disappointment with the new aid plan announced during the Tokyo meeting were the first signs of the upcoming change. This shift towards more assertive perceptions can be explained by many factors: by unrealistically high expectations that Russians had about the West’s assistance to Russia, growing chauvinism of the political opposition in Russia, a lack of realistic assessment of the limits of Russia-American cooperation, a temporary weakening of the influence of liberal politicians and intellectuals, American misconceptions about the motives behind Russian actions, and a growing dissatisfaction on the part of
the Russians concerning the excessively agreeable nature of Kozyrev's policy on the international scene combined with Russia's neglect of its focus on the former Soviet republics. This change in Russia's policy highlights this author's previous argument that one has to be careful about the attempts of the assessment of the country's foreign policy based on mere actions on the international scene without taking into account ideas and perceptions. At the time when Russia was pursuing its pro-Western course, National Patriots and other left political forces, already voiced their concerns about Russia turning into a country of the third world in the international arena, they labeled the West 'an enemy' and rallied for an anti-Western direction of foreign policy. There was also a growing suspicion among the people about the hostility of Washington's true motivations toward Russia and the "near abroad." At the same time, while Russia expected to be warmly embraced by Western international institutions with willingness, reality did not endorse such expectations. For instance, the Council of Europe, while extending its admission processes to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, encountered difficulties in extending the same to Russia. Russian politicians became disappointed; and this also contributed to a shift to more assertive foreign policy perceptions. A. M. Salmin, for instance, expresses elites' feeling about how a policy of de facto Western containment affected Russian foreign policy perceptions about the West:

The process of admitting Russia to the Council of Europe — a body primarily focused on law and the defense of human rights, is in no way a threat to the West, which would basically impose obligations on Russia as a member while also making it one of the five principal donors (!) so necessary to the not very rich Council of Europe — ran into difficulties and was delayed even before the war in Chechnya began. Meanwhile, the “opening” of Western alliances to East European countries was accelerated. ... I stress that all the essential steps [decision to develop Western security system based on NATO, the West European Union, rather than on OSCE] were taken before the beginning of the Chechen campaign, which basically played into the hands of those proposing Eastern Europe's divorce from Russia, but which had, as is evident from the chronology, no decisive impact on the formation of the most fundamental decisions. On the whole, in 1993-94 the pendulum of Russian-Western relations swung quite far toward Russia's isolation from Europe and the West as such, and — to a large extent because of the continuing war in Chechnya — it stayed there longer than would have been expected otherwise.
This type of Western behavior, perceived as a hostile one in Russia, was accompanied by the downfall of public and the elites' high expectations about the Western willingness to embrace new Russia and to support financially its reforms, by acknowledgment of a difference between Russian and Western understandings of partnership and cooperation. The outcome of the elections of 1993, during which the left forces (including those of the extreme left) gathered a lot of support, further demonstrated and solidified this shift away from the “Western spell.”

Hence, in 1994–95 the Russian government started developing a set of policies, some of which were opposite to those of the West, and demonstrated a more assertive and independent course of foreign policy. It declared that only equal partnership between the West and Russia was acceptable, in contrast to the acceptance of a ‘junior partner’ role during the early 1990s. Additionally, because of the domestic pressure to restore close contacts with the FSU (former Soviet Union), Russian officials started to understand their mistake of “abandoning” the FSU counterparts and pursue more active policies in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and other republics. This existence of a compelling interest to preserve Russian “legitimate sphere of influence” in the former Soviet republics, Western attempts to counteract this by the NATO’s expansion and active financial policies in the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), general negative attitude of the US to Russian interest in the post-Soviet space, also promoted a feeling of suspicion and resentment towards the West in Russia.

The Russian government mainly demonstrated its disappointment with the West through its aggressive rhetoric, but policies reflected change as well. In February 1995, tensions between the US and Russia came to a boil as the United States attempted to bring to a close a deal that obligated Russia to build a nuclear reactor at one of the nuclear power complexes in Iran. Russia had earlier acceded to U.S. opposition by canceling or changing several agreements involving the transfer of technologies, but on that occasion Russia insisted that it would not tolerate what it perceived as interference in its foreign policy. This defiance was emphasized when a Russian Foreign Ministry official was quoted as saying that Washington is more concerned with removing its competitors than about protecting international security and that the American claims as to Teheran's plans to develop
its own nuclear arms are built on sand. Later, Russia's decision to invade Chechnya in 1994, widely opposed by the US, became a special source of Russia's confrontations with the West. Moscow also started to intervene openly in conflicts in the Transcaucasus - the Abkhaz-Georgian and Azerbaijani Armenian wars - and the civil war in Tajikistan – all of which angered the West. Furthermore, Russian elites voiced their disagreements with the West's position during the Bosnia and Iraq crises. For example, by summer 1994, Russian officials began to call for the lifting of sanctions against Iraq in an attempt to conclude major economic deals and recover some 5-7 billion dollars in Iraqi debts. Primakov's appointment as a new Russian Foreign Minister in January of 1996 and Yeltsin's public criticism of the liberal foreign policy line pursued by Kozyrev further demonstrates Russia's departure from its pro-Western policies.

Whereas Russia's willingness to cooperate with the West embodied both Russia's good will and practical necessity in the early 90s, after 1993-1994 contacts between the West and Russia were maintained intuitively, since they were based often on the mere necessity of the Western financial support to Russia. Foreign policy officials' conception of Russian national interests in relations with the West was, as Trofimenko describes it, "even more moronic than [that] of the old type representatives of the Soviet nomenklatura...." National interests were equated with the formal admittance to prestigious international clubs, such as the G7, signing of the documents formally acknowledging Russian importance in the international arena, such as the Russia-NATO Founding Act and a formal demonstration of Russian grandeur by vocal disagreements with the West. Some of those disagreements on the official level included Russia's resistance to the NATO's decision to enlarge eastward, the refusal of the Duma to ratify the START II treaty and so on. Disappointment with the West was sometimes caused by the difficulties in understanding or accepting the Western refusal to acknowledge Russia's great power status:

The West is constantly saying that NATO's main function is peacekeeping, that, unlike the Cold War, it is necessary now to act together with Russia. ... Why is it that Russia, whose role in peacekeeping operations is greater than the role of any NATO country save, perhaps, the United States, cannot have the equal right not to decision making with regard to NATO's policy, the program of the
alliance’s eastward expansion, but to decision making in cases where by
definition we are supposed to act jointly?\textsuperscript{17}

Being angered by the Western policies towards the country, Russian political elites, behaved
accordingly, i.e., reconceptualizing Russia’s national interests away from the pro-Western course and
becoming more assertive in pursuit of the near-abroad policies. Only a few intellectuals were able to
recognize the importance of the more realistic definition of Russian national interests of the moment.
Those who did, agreed that the true interests of Russia should be centered around narrow, state-
centered, pragmatic goals:

Most of them agree that in the present situation, Russia has to renounce
the thought of any ventures beyond its borders, except the expansion of
its export trade, and to concentrate on the stabilization of the internal
situation.\textsuperscript{18}

A description of the “post-honeymoon” period in Russian foreign policy includes several
characteristics. MacFarlane argues that post-liberal foreign policy perspectives became state-centric and
realist, which represented a somewhat middle ground between the early liberalism of Russian foreign
policy and radical nationalism.\textsuperscript{19} “By ‘state-centric’ I mean that the proper focus in a calculation of
interest is not on the human community or society of states, but the state itself. By ‘realist’ I mean a
focus on power in international relations and on the geopolitical position of the state in its international
environment.”\textsuperscript{20} Celeste Wallander, similar to Neil MacFarlane, suggests that the Russian foreign policy
approach after 1993 and until the crisis in Kosovo was based on statist premises.\textsuperscript{21} She also says that some
liberal elements were still present in Russia’s policies, creating a liberal-statist synthesis. This led to two
elements in the country’s post-liberal perspectives: Russia’s desire to move toward a gradual integration
into the leading economic institutions of the West, and a simultaneous aspiration to continue to play a key
role in the international relations. According to Wallander, Russia’s derzhavniki and national patriots,
who advocate a strong anti-Western foreign policy, could not play a leading role in Russia’s relations
with the West because Russia’s policies are guided by the liberal-statist synthesis. But the policy still
became more assertive, in comparison with the early 1990s in the ways described above. Russian
politicians were seemingly committed to the notion that Russia is still an influential international actor,
which they demonstrated through the country’s participation in the Bosnia crisis, through returning to its
focus on the former Soviet republics and through voicing disagreements with the NATO’s plans to expand eastward and several other Western initiatives listed above. The main thing on which the majority of scholars agree is that during the period, which started in about 1993, Russian foreign policy perspectives became more assertive than those during the “honeymoon” period.

Some advocates argue that the recent crisis in Kosovo shifted the Russian foreign policy approach in an unfavorable way, creating fruitful grounds for the emergence of state nationalism that is in its essence hostile to the West. By way of illustration, the containment proponent, Zbigniew Brzezinski, testified before the US Congress that Russia’s attitude towards the West and the Russian attempts to counterbalance the NATO campaign in Kosovo demonstrated the premature nature of the US engagement policy, since Russia showed to be not trustworthy during the crisis. Additionally, Russian public polls and official statements are commonly quoted in support of the notion that Russia does not trust the West anymore.\(22\) Russian policy documents, among them the Russian National Security Concept (NSC) of 2000 are also cited as a manifestation of the new Russian fears, reservations and a general anti-Westernism caused by the NATO air strikes’ campaign in Kosovo. There are several differences in NSC of 2000, as compared to the NSC of 1997. The major difference is reflected through what is described in this document as security threats to the state. The main external threat is connected to the Russia’s fear of the West and especially of the US. The Russian NSC of 2000, for instance, warns about the following Western inclination endangering Russian interests in the international arena:

\[\ldots\text{a tendency...to create a structure of IR [international relations] based on the international domination of the developed countries of the West, which would be established through unilateral, military solutions.}\]

Mark Kramer argued that this change in foreign policy occurred not just as a purely “bold initiative” by Russian president, Vladimir Putin.\(25\) The major positions of the NSC were discussed over a period of three months after the Russian Security Council approved its draft in 1999. Therefore, some sort of high-level consensus on the main issues in the Concept was reached on the official level, according to Kramer, showing that the hostile tone thereof is serious. Similarly, it was
contended that many other significant changes in Russian perceptions of the West overall were caused by the events in Kosovo. Oksana Antonenko, for example, describes three main myths that Russia had about its relations with NATO before the Kosovo crisis, and were destroyed as a result of this air strikes’ campaign: 1) a myth about the integration of Russia into the West; 2) a myth about the possibility of Russia’s partnership with NATO in the framework of Partnership for Peace (PfP) and peacekeeping missions (for instance, in Bosnia); 3) and a myth about the institutionalization of Russian relations with NATO on the basis of the Founding Act.26 This and other forecasts about the change in Russian foreign policy conceptions after Kosovo require a well-documented analysis. We will try to accomplish this by analyzing the Russia’s reaction to the NATO’s air strikes’ campaign and observing Russian foreign policy perceptions after the Kosovo crisis in the upcoming chapter.
CHAPTER III

Russian Foreign Policy Perceptions During and After the Crisis In Kosovo: Pragmatic Foreign Policy

1. Russia’s Hostile Reaction During the Crisis in Kosovo.

Initially, the scholars arguing that Russian perceptions of the West and the Russia-West relations changed as a result of the Kosovo crisis seem to be right. The 1999 NATO’s operation in Kosovo appeared to reaffirm all of Russia’s worst fears about this security alliance and this resulted in a uniform rejection of NATO policies in Yugoslavia by the Russian people. Masha Lipman, deputy editor of the weekly newsmagazine Itogi, which is published in cooperation with Newsweek, reported that Russians unvaryingly feared and disapproved of the NATO’s actions in Yugoslavia: “Ninety percent of Russians are against NATO’s actions in Yugoslavia. That is a consensus unheard of in this country.”

Moreover, this crisis presented Russians with many pressing questions about the post-Soviet security architecture of the Eurasian continent, world order, the Russian role in this world order and about the future of Russia’s relations with the West. The worst scenarios were at times contemplated. For example, V. Baranovskii, Deputy Director of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations at the Russian Academy of Sciences, made a comment reflecting Russia’s suspicion that air strikes in Kosovo represent only a first step towards the creation of the West-dominated global security order. Such a system was depicted by the foreign policy elites as one that would exclude Russia, reject the importance of Russia’s role in the international arena and essentially ignore Russian reservations in regards to the issues important to the country in international affairs:

Viewed from Russia what the West is doing in Kosovo justifies all apprehensions about an emerging NATO-centrist Europe. Earlier the Russian concern over NATO’s eastward expansion was somewhat artificial (it was fanned from the top). The Kosovo events made this concern natural and real.

... The second major subject that Russia is facing on the global political level is her role in the emerging world order. It is of a clearly
“oligarchic” nature: major decision-making belongs to a small group of states. Russia’s painful emotions are born by her doubts about her own possibility to join the group of the chosen and whether or not she will be accepted as such by its members.

It was precisely the Kosovo developments that confirmed these doubts. Russia felt that she had been pushed to the back burner, and not only that. The most dramatic variant of these feeling speaks of a new redivision of the world, comparable with two previous ones (in 1918 and 1945) or even more radical.

Can Russia gain a higher place in the international political hierarchy? The lamentations about Russia’s great power status leave the world unmoved. What is more they have discredited the approach as such since Russia is unable to practically confirm this status. NATO’s Kosovo-related decisions clearly and discouragingly proved this once more. 29

Consequently, Russia’s initial reaction to the crisis was one of angry rejection of the West’s actions in the Kosovo region. After NATO launched its bombardment campaign in Kosovo in March of 1999, without taking into account Russia’s strong disagreements, Russian officials perceived such an act as a clear violation of “international law and political trust, which seemed so firm only yesterday.” 30 Official statements contained many similar declarations about the breach of trust that was built as a result of uneasy compromises on both sides. Officials claimed that the West broke basic assumptions of the Mutual Founding Act, sovereignty and non-aggression principles of the international law. The difficulties in future relations between Russia and the West, and between Russia and NATO were contemplated by the elites. For instance, the newspaper, Komsomolskaya Pravda, published an interview with Sergei Karaganov, head of Russia’s Council for Foreign and Defense Policy on May 15, 1999, in which Karaganov expressed a commonly shared prediction about the forthcoming difficulties in Russia’s cooperation with NATO:

Unfortunately, we can expect nothing good from NATO. We must terminate the Founding Act. It has produced no real growth in our influence over the North Atlantic bloc. What is more, it might have engendered in the alliance a peace of mind and an illusion that they are able to do everything. In addition, the aggression against Yugoslavia is a direct violation of its provisions. Naturally, we will have to maintain a dialogue with NATO. But it must be a dialogue about limiting offensive elements in arsenals and in doctrine and about the transparency of policy. We will have to think about holding NATO in check and no way about developing relations of partnership. I believe that a partnership with the North Atlantic alliance within the next few years is, unfortunately, ruled out. 31
Furthermore, the Russian officials saw the air strikes' campaign in Kosovo as a dangerous international precedent, during which the Western community of states unlawfully interfered with the internal affairs of another sovereign state. These fears became more significant in the light of Russia's own concerns associated with the Western position on the Russian military campaign in Chechnya. Specifically, Russians were distressed about the fact that a similar NATO campaign could ensue in their own country modeled after the Kosovo precedent, as the West continued to disagree with the Russian war in Chechnya. Baranovskii discussed how Russia's own domestic integrity was perceived to be threatened because of Kosovo:

Alarmist sentiments play a considerable role in the perception of the NATO Balkan operation in Russia fed, first and foremost, by projecting the Kosovo situation onto Russia. Indeed, if NATO regards "humanitarian catastrophes" (especially ethnically induced) as an invitation to interfere and if similar situations emerge or are provoked in Russia it seems logical to believe that the war in Yugoslavia directly concerns Russia. This is best described by the formula "Serbia today, Russia tomorrow."\(^32\)

As a result of all these concerns, Russian rhetoric on the topic of the crisis in Kosovo and Western policies in the region was reminiscent of the harsh rhetoric of the Soviet times. Russian officials consistently labeled the West's actions in Kosovo as "meaningless barbaric air strikes", "a source of humanitarian catastrophe", and "an attempt to place a sovereign country under an international protectorate"; they even suspected that the West started the campaign with the purpose of testing its new military technologies which later could be used against Russia.\(^33\) Russia interpreted NATO's actions in Kosovo as a manifestation of the West not being concerned about Russia's interests, as a violation of the accepted principles of international law, as an unacceptable encroachment upon several agreements and bilateral treaties signed by the two sides, and also as evidence of the Western unwillingness to further pursue its partnership with Russia. The elites were concerned that the very foundations on which the partnership between Russia and the West was based could become unstable. For example, Victor Yaroshenko, a pro-Western politician, wrote an article, in which he discussed the nature of the above-mentioned fears:
But in any case, Russia is not so much influenced by the fact of aggression against Milosevic’s regime, by revision of the post-war world order and even by the audacity of Americans, who ignored the harsh ultimatum of the Russian president, warning: “We will not let you touch Kosovo.”

What’s rejected are not only the last decade’s principles of foreign policy based on partnership (Duma directly mentioned the end of the liberal epoch of the cooperation with the West), but, perhaps, also centuries-long cycles of the Russia-Europe cooperation. The very civilizational bases of the Russia-Europe relations are questioned, the attempts to take Russia out of the European path of development are made. These attempts are, of course, temporary, but very, very dangerous nevertheless.34

Yaroshenko, among others, feared that Kosovo was being used to cast doubt on the fundamental belief that Russia is capable of working with the West and following the path of liberal reformation. In addition to having reservations and fears about the methods used in Kosovo, the government also declared its preparedness to eventually enter into direct confrontation with the West. Hence, the Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, made a chilling statement about a possibility of Russia’s armed involvement in the military conflict, signifying the magnitude of Russia’s discontent with the air strikes’ campaign:

In case of a growth of the military conflict, Russia reserves the right to undertake adequate measures, including those of a military character, in order to assure its own and all-European security.35

All of the above official reactions had temporary consequences for Russian policies and resulted in changes in NSC 2000. Russia’s diplomatic steps appeared to be harsh: in addition to mere statements, Moscow ordered Russian Prime Minister Primakov, to stop his visit to the US, recalled to Moscow its military representatives from the NATO headquarters in Brussels, temporarily inactivated its participation in the Partnership for Peace, delayed accreditation of a NATO information center in Moscow, ceased the official contacts with the organization for a period of one year and suspended any further performance under the Founding Act. To illustrate that Russia acted upon its verbal threats, V. Kozin listed in his article many disturbing policy steps that were undertaken in response to the crisis in Kosovo:
The Russian reaction to the unprovoked NATO aggression against Yugoslavia was immediate and rather sharp, involving a curtailment of practically all ties with the Alliance. The lid was put on official contacts with the bloc's representatives in its Brussels headquarters and in the Mons-based Partnership Coordination Cell; a freeze was imposed on 20 out of 22 lines of intercourse envisaged by the Bilateral Cooperation Program for 1999 (with the exception of interoperability in the course of international peace-making operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and later in Kosovo); Russian chief military representative to the Alliance was recalled to Moscow; participation was suspended in NATO's Partnership for Peace program and in the Individual Partnership Program; far advanced talks on the opening in Moscow of NATO Military Liaison Office were broken off; the operation of the NATO European Security Documentation Center was discontinued; and the accreditation of NATO information service workers was canceled. Russia also refused to participate in NATO military exercises held with partner states and ceased sending its representatives to various retraining courses and scientific-practical meetings organized by the Alliance. Moscow boycotted the Washington summit of the transatlantic group and waived membership of the Euroatlantic Partnership Council (EPC) and the Permanent Joint Council.36

The fact that Russian elites undertook these policy steps in addition to the harsh rhetoric, indicates that they were serious in their disapproval of the Western campaign and had their doubts about the future basis of the West-Russia relations after the Kosovo.

Domestic political leaders of all beliefs also reacted swiftly in their disapproving response to the crisis: “In the Duma everybody was united in their disapproval of NATO – from Zhirinovsky to Yavlinski.”37 The pro-Western forces saw the West's actions in the Yugoslavia region, as a very serious mistake. They condemned the air strikes as an illegitimate means of resolving the conflict in Kosovo, and feared a possibility of a rising anti-Western reaction in Russia that would be accompanied by subsequent foreign policy complications. Yegor Gaidar, a former reformist Russian prime minister, in particular was concerned about the Kosovo-caused tensions in the Russia-West relations, which in the end could have a tendency to create a hostile international environment for the entire world:

What is going on has a very serious and negative influence on Russian-U.S. relations. I am afraid this [outcome] can be a long-term one. If today's tendency continues, [I think] it could inevitably bring the restoration of the Cold War -- in a different form, not as in the '60s. Russia [now] is different. The world is different. But the creation of relations like during the Cold War [is possible.] with a Russia that is afraid of the world, of NATO, of America, has missiles, a mobilized
economy, is friendly with authoritarian and rogue regimes, helps them with technologies, helps them create nuclear weapons.38

The nationalists’ rhetoric on the topic was, of course, even tougher. Patriots called on Russia to respond aggressively to the crisis by sending Russian arms and volunteer troops to Kosovo and announcing a boycott of all the countries participating in the air strikes’ campaign. Russian nationalists invoked a powerful concept of a spiritual and civilizational unity of Russian and Yugoslavian fates in order to appeal to the sympathetic Russian population. The timing of the events in Kosovo, which took place about a year before the Russian parliamentary and presidential elections, came in especially handy to the nationalist parties. Besides opening a possibility to gain more support before the upcoming elections, the NATO campaign presented the left movements with the unique opportunity to destroy the civilized appearance of the West, as well as to discredit the reputation of the domestic right forces that were pro-Western. The following statement is illustrative of how the nationalists attacked the West and Russian pro-Western politicians:

The Western world, self-lovingly calling itself a “civilized” and ancient Christian culture, in reality demonstrated a blood-chilling display of a stupid, cruel, fighting Godlessness and a universal hunger for power. These Western “civilizers,” whom Yavlinskys and Kozyrevs, Gaidars and Yakovlevs, Titovs and Yushenkovs ask with flatter ‘What would you like?,’ started a bloody fight against a Christian Orthodox country ... during the time of love and prayer, right before the great holy day – Orthodox Easter. ... They are building an ugly Babylon tower of the “New World Order” on the ruins of formerly Christian countries. And if today Russia experiences spiritual aggression from the West, Orthodox Yugoslavia experiences a military aggression.39

The left movements used the Kosovo crisis to tarnish Russian liberal parties’ image and undermine the future of Russian democracy and cooperation with the West. Victor Yaroshenko, for example, further described the left parties’ efforts to discredit domestic pro-Western movements and government:

All the Duma discussions about the situation in Yugoslavia show that the opposition is ready to blame all the internal problems on the West and zapadniki [Russian pro-Western movement], to explain our difficulties by the President’s deceit in the war of the national interests, meaning that Russia’s and West’s national interests are diverging.40
The above-discussed immediate official policies and the queue of hostile statements resulted in pessimistic speculations about Russia’s rejection of the West, the development of a new understanding of Russian national interests, which now were claimed to be incompatible with the West’s interests, and a general anti-Western shift in Russian foreign policy. The succeeding subsections of this chapter will analyze whether these fears were supported by the actual developments in Russian foreign policy perceptions. In particular, several major tendencies in Russian foreign policy perceptions in the post-Kosovo period will demonstrate that the anti-Western shift did not occur. On the contrary, pragmatism, which will be argued to be emerging as a predominant school of thought, promises to be a positive development.

2. A Shift from Hostile to Pragmatic Foreign Policy Perceptions.

As was briefly summarized in the previous chapters, immediately before the crisis in Kosovo, Russian foreign policy perspectives were described by a number of Western analysts as assertive and realist.\textsuperscript{41} At the beginning of the Kosovo conflict, Russia’s policy steps and statements seemed to signal that Russia would strengthen its realist course of foreign policy and perhaps develop perceptions hostile to or incompatible with the West. Astonishingly, although Russia behaved assertively at the onset of the crisis, this assertiveness did not last long. Elements of state realism expressed through attempts to intimidate the West with warnings about Russia’s “hard” power and a possible alienation practically disappeared from Russia’s diplomatic language after the Kosovo crisis.\textsuperscript{42} The threats to use Russian military resources to counterbalance NATO’s air strikes’ campaign were soon replaced in the official statements by claims about Russia’s ability to withstand the temptation to become involved in a direct confrontation with the West, and to resist the logic of an “eye for an eye” game in regard to NATO’s offense. Ivanov, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, for instance, said:

Russia has condemned NATO’s actions against Yugoslavia from the very beginning and worked to put an end to the air campaign. ... Moreover aiming at ending the NATO adventure we did not allow any direct Russian involvement in the armed conflict and sliding into the
confrontation with the United States and NATO. Remaining open channels for contacts – both bilateral and through the G-8 allowed us to restart the negotiating process.43

Once again, official Russia was unhappy, but its behavior and its subsequent diplomatic discourse were designed to avoid the negative impacts of potential confrontations with the West, to resolve the crisis in Kosovo in the manner matching Russia's actual capacities, and to demonstrate in practice that Russia is a country that “one can deal with.” One of the statements of a high-ranking Russian foreign policy official during the turmoil of NATO's campaign in Kosovo is illustrative of the early pragmatic undertones in Russia's reaction to the crisis – condemnation of Western behavior combined with a recognition of the need for limited cooperation as the conflict continued:

The NATO's aggression against Yugoslavia irrecoverably destroyed Russia's relations with the alliance. We had to react to the violation of practically the entire complex of the agreements [signed between Russia and NATO in the Founding Act]. ... But despite this, there are foundations for the belief that our bilateral relations have enough strength in order to overcome these problems and to avoid aggravation [of the progress of our cooperation]. In any case, our side [Russia] has a necessary good will [for doing so].44

Despite the initial reaction of open hostility towards the West and a deep Russian dissatisfaction caused by Western actions in Kosovo, Russian foreign policy turned to a definite pragmatic path when Russia renewed its working relations with NATO. Several joint meetings were held, and despite Russia's disapproval of NATO policies in Yugoslavia, in practice, Russian elites started working on re-thinking and re-establishing ties with the alliance:

July 23 of last year [2000] saw the first meeting of the Permanent Joint Council after Russia had frozen its relations with NATO, and September 6, a meeting of the Permanent Joint Council – Military Representatives. Both were devoted solely to the evaluation of the situation in Kosovo as well as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to the upgrading of cooperation between the Russian and the NATO contingents in the said areas and between Russian and NATO representatives in the staff organizations of the Alliance, related to the KFOR operation. PIC ambassadorial-level meetings have been called regularly to discuss practical cooperation in the course of these two peace operations, including an exchange of views on such matters as security measures for the local population and KFOR personnel, common understanding of the operational plan, and other aspects. On the whole, the level of cooperation between the Russian military contingent and the NATO forces in Kosovo is quite satisfactory.45
Working with NATO is not the only evidence of Russia becoming more pragmatic in its foreign policy perspectives. Pragmatism was also recognized as an official foreign policy perspective in the *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*, which was approved by President, Vladimir Putin, after the conclusion of the events in Kosovo, on June 28, 2000:

The Russian Federation is pursuing an independent and constructive foreign policy. It is based on consistency and predictability, on mutually advantageous pragmatism. This policy is maximally transparent; it takes into consideration the legitimate interests of other states and is aimed at seeking joint decisions.\(^{46}\)

This foreign policy doctrine along with the forming widespread understanding of and consensus on the narrow goals and strategies that Russia should pursue in the international system, allow many scholars to conclude that these pragmatic perspectives represent a fundamental change in Russia's foreign policy. For example, Viacheslav Nikonov, president of the Politika foundation, described his widely shared belief that a new era of pragmatism in Russia has started:

The conceptual basis of Russian politics has clearly changed — not only following the adoption of new doctrines (they are, rather, evidence of political continuity), but also from the point of view of policy objectives and priorities. This has been a third change of foreign policy doctrine in the 1990s. The first was the Kozyrev doctrine, which I see as pro-U.S. The second was the Primakov doctrine, which, I believe, was, essentially a multi-vector/alternative doctrine. And finally, today we have to deal with the Putin doctrine, which I am so far feel hard to define, but which could, for convenience, be described as "Russian Gaullism." Just as under de Gaulle, the intention is — while having to act in a far from friendly environment — to preserve independence, pragmatism, and dynamism.\(^{47}\)

The explanation of the reasons behind the rising pragmatism in Russian foreign policy, which followed the adversarial situation caused by the NATO's policies, is multifaceted. One of the more abstract explanations behind the pragmatic trend is based on the officials' understanding that Russia will be able to progress in the international environment only by remaining realistic and by avoiding the usage of the threats of force every time the opportunity arises. The elites' emotionality, which caused such harsh rhetoric during Kosovo, clearly did not help to accomplish any of Russia's objectives in Yugoslavia. One of the foreign policy officials commented during a meeting of international relations' experts in Russia about the necessity to withstand this emotional impulse in
foreign policy given Russia’s unstable economic and political conditions and in order to consider its true national interests:

We are a very emotional nation – this is true. Even here, while we are discussing these diplomatic matters we show a lot of emotions and sentiments. This is a very serious consideration: if we allow ourselves to be carried away by emotions we might come too close to an abyss, behind which there is a total loss of our national identity.48

This understanding is remarkable because Russia has been an “emotional” nation throughout its history. Moreover, looking at Russia’s angry reaction during the events in Kosovo, the threats that Yeltsin and other political leaders made at that period of time, and also the race to Pristina airport undertaken by the Russian military, it appeared that even if the leadership was aware about the dangerousness of reactions based on emotionality and unreasonable ambitions, it disregarded such knowledge. Events in Kosovo in tandem with the Russia’s inability to prevent air strikes and the impotence of its voice during the conflict, demonstrated to the foreign policy elites the concrete weaknesses of the Russian position in the system of international affairs. Even some influential leftist politicians came to an understanding that today’s Russia does not possess enough economic, political and social resources to support its impulsive calls in foreign policy, and that better alternative ways to resolve Russia’s disagreements with the West should be found. They saw that in Kosovo, Russia was not able to pursue its national interests, because the country was politically and economically unstable. One of the left-oriented Russian journals, Ruskii Dom, published an article discussing Russian interests and strategies during Kosovo which stated that a hard-line approach is harmful:

In a political sense, Russia is so weak and dependent that any efforts to become involved into solution of the Kosovo crisis will only lead to the fact that we [Russia] will play not ours but rather someone else’s game, forced upon us. [this game will be] Forced upon us either by the NATO or Milosevic – Russia will become a yes-man - (in diplomatic language it is called more respectfully – intermediary).49

It became obvious to the politicians that in order for Russia to succeed in its process of reformation, to become influential on issues of international importance and to develop a national identity that is compatible with modern developments in the world, the country needs to abandon some of its emotional reactions. Sergey Karaganov, a member of the Presidential Council and the head of
the Council for Foreign and Defense Policy, especially emphasized the grave risks of the impractical, emotionally motivated direct armed involvement of Russia in Kosovo:

If looking at the Serbs we have realized how vulnerable we are and will start sorting out our problems, this will be our salvation. But if we opt for sorting out other people's problems to the detriment or at the expense of Russian problems, or for saving the West or saving the Serbs at Russia's expense, then this will be our undoing. We are quite close to a very dangerous threshold because we are falling to pieces but if we get directly involved in this situation, we will be finished off.  

Karaganov's opinion is not atypical. There is a growing realization of this notion after Kosovo, due to the fact that isolated and emotional Russia can hardly survive and prosper. This is the first important source that helped the pragmatic perspectives to develop.

Pragmatism in Russia, which followed the conflict in Kosovo, encompasses increased awareness of the necessity of solving domestic problems or avoiding their aggravation through the foreign policy means, rather than on an inflexible concentration of Russia's geopolitical grandeur as it was during the Soviet times. The emphasis on solving internal problems through foreign policy channels is another source of the forming of pragmatic perspectives. It originates in the elites' realization about what would happen to the country if Russia's foreign policy were not pragmatic towards the West, and Russia became involved in confrontation. Some scholars, for instance, argued that Russia's open confrontation with the West over a conflict in Kosovo would have resulted in a military conflict with the West, as well as with the foreign and domestic Islamic groups, and subsequently the collapse of the Russian state itself. Russian scholars Kurginian and Bialy, in their report evaluating probable scenarios of Russia's involvement in the Balkan conflict and impacts of similar scenarios unfolding at world and internal Russian levels, expressed their concerns about the potential disintegration of the Russian state, unless the elites managed to remain pragmatic and to avoid a direct involvement of the country in the Kosovo crisis:

...after the several rounds of air strikes, Russia will be offered a specific suggestion about the [creation of the] "union based on Slavism and Orthodoxy," which, if pursued, will let the US to build the above described, very desired [by the US] anti-German 'constellation,' and will also engage Russia in ... not only the major military conflict in Balkans,
but also international confrontations with Islam? And all these [complications aggravate], considering Russia’s Islamic encircling from the South and Islamic Povolzhie [territory close to Volga river]? And also taking into account the extreme socio-political and economic instability of Russian federal authorities. It is clear, that this [above-described] scenario is the greatest step towards the [gradual] disintegration of Russia.  

The Russian elites’ fear that military confrontations with the West over Kosovo will contribute to the disintegration of their multinational state, contributed to the strengthening of the pragmatically oriented perspectives.

Yet another source of the change from a statist to a pragmatic foreign policy lies in a different domestic concern: a hard-line approach towards the West would cause some leaders to lose their electoral support. First of all, Kosovo showed that Russian people, despite their uniform condemnation of NATO actions, were not willing to use a hard-line approach to deal with the situation (Figure 4-2 shows that less than 50% of Russians were willing to provide military assistance to Yugoslavia). Secondly, if the political leadership in Russia would choose to follow a realist path, which had been traditionally oriented at, what Trofimenko called, a ‘moronic’ demonstration of hard power, they would jeopardize their ties with the West, and subsequently lose out in the eyes of the Russian electorate, who by the end of the 1990s had acquired habits due to Russia’s contacts with the West, such as travel and studies abroad, and the availability of foreign products in the market, etc. For example, a journalist and political scientist, Kosyrev, described in one of the newspapers how politicians perceived the negative effect of a hard-line foreign policy approach on Russian people’s choice in the upcoming elections:

Choosing this power-oriented path, a knight [Russian politicians] will lose support of that part of the electorate, which recently started fearing that a window to Europe will be closed.  

The elites’ understanding that in the present state of international system, a healthy economy is extremely important in order for Russia to be able to pursue its independent course of foreign policy, also contributed to a rise of pragmatic perspectives in the Kosovo aftermath. Even some anti-Western
intellectuals had to accept this argument. A well-known patriotic scholar, Natalia Narochnitskaia, summarizes this point succinctly:

Somebody said that a serious foreign policy requires strong domestic economy – otherwise nothing can be done. Though not a devoted materialist I believe that we should pay attention to this aspect. At all times in history a strong state willpower was of immense importance. During the war in Yugoslavia former Soviet satellites humiliated Russia by rebuffing her attempts to deliver humanitarian cargo there. This is an example, not matter how limited, of an importance of strong economy for foreign policy.54

Quotes by representatives of different views on the Russian political spectrum were offered above to show why pragmatic perspectives are emerging as a basis for new foreign policy. Besides being contained in the statements, the manifestation of pragmatic perceptions was revealed by several policy steps undertaken by the country recently: Russia’s willingness to slowly rebuild its mutual relations with NATO, to revitalize its economic contacts with the major countries of Western Europe, to renew its military mission to NATO in Brussels, to reopen the question about the accreditation of the NATO information center in Moscow and to ratify the START II treaty. Several key documents, such as a new foreign policy doctrine also offer evidence of Russia’s choice of pragmatism as a leading foreign policy perspective.

However, while recognizing the benefits of pragmatic perspectives, some scholars argue that this pragmatism did not become the prevailing school of thought in Russia. S. Karaganov, who is one of these scholars, in his article “The New Foreign Policy” distinguishes several existing foreign policy schools and approaches.55 In particular, he argues that at the present there are three distinctive schools of thought on foreign policy in Russia. The first, isolationist, school led by derzhavniki and other nationalist forces calls for several hard-line policy directions:

...a military build up, a mobilization economy, reliance on internal resources, support for states that pursue anti-Western policies, such as Iran and Iraq, closer ties with China on an anti-Western basis, harsh rhetoric, heavy pressure on the CIS states with the aim of compelling them to forge closer ties with Russia, and an orientation toward reunification with those states in the foreseeable future.56
The second school, as described by Karaganov, is pro-Western, advocating Russia’s subordination to the West in the role of a junior partner. Finally, Karaganov says that there is yet another official school of thought which focuses on multipolarity, or the promotion of closer Russian ties with the CIS countries and geostrategy. Karaganov notices that this third school, being the official one, has several disadvantages: it does not adequately focus on the economy, it places unjustifiable pressure on Russian resources by pursuing the policies of a “global power,” and draws Russia into confrontations with the US. Karaganov then continues with a proposition for the development of the “new foreign policy,” which would be to Russia’s benefit at present time more than any of the schools briefly discussed above. This new policy of “selective engagement” presupposes a major emphasis on the economy, “unconditional maintenance of an effective nuclear potential,” an end to “chasing the phantom of ‘great power’ status,” avoidance of international confrontations, abandonment of harsh rhetoric, concentration on attracting foreign investments and generally, a reorientation towards the future rather than a focus on the past. These suggestions made by Karaganov are sound and reasonable.

However, Karaganov does not feel that the foreign policy officials in Russia are already on their path to pursue many suggestions made by the Council. This author disagrees with this contention. This research will in the following subsections quote statements, opinion polls and policy steps by the top leadership of the country (including but not limited to: the President, ministers of military and defense and Duma’s leadership), who express their understanding of the desirability of exactly the same perceptions as suggested in the Karaganov article: abandonment of the confrontations, emphasis on the economy, maintenance of the existing nuclear arsenal and attraction of foreign investments. Russian foreign policy elites seem to recognize and support the significance of the main foreign policy objectives which Karaganov listed in a separate school of thought - “selective engagement.” Pragmatic foreign policy is becoming more than just the wishful thinking of many Russian intellectuals, as was contended by Trofimenko and Karaganov. The suggestions made by Karaganov’s became the ingredients of the pragmatic foreign policy perspectives which are likely to shape Russian foreign policy in the years to come. The following subsections will provide more
specific examples to support the hypothesis that the predominant foreign policy school of thought is based on pragmatism. In doing so, the specific characteristics of pragmatic foreign policy perspectives in Russia will be described.

3. Characteristics and Peculiarities of the Emerging Russian Pragmatism.

a. Based on Political and Popular Consensus

The pragmatic school of thought in Russia differs from the liberal-statist approach in a very important respect: it appears to be based on an overwhelming agreement about the necessity of Russia following a narrow and realistic course of foreign policy. The crisis in Kosovo and the parliamentary elections of 1999 assisted in the formation of this consensus on issues of foreign policy, although the tendency may not be entirely new. Sergey Karaganov, for instance, argued that in 1996, there was already a movement in Russia favoring consensus on major issues of foreign policy. He, at that time, named four major points of the growing foreign policy consensus, where a special Russia-West relationship based on "strategic alliance" stood as one of the most important foreign policy goals. But there were two influential schools of thought in Russia – neoisolationists and integrationists - both popular among Russian politicians, which did not allow this movement toward consensus to be fully expressed in everyday decisions.

Whereas from the mid-1990s until 1999, neoisolationists and integrationists both had an influence over foreign policy decisions, making foreign policy more pluralistic and inconsistent, today there is an agreement among the elites about following a restricted, rational, calculated course of decisions in order to reform Russia. Natalia Narochnitskaya discussed her understanding of this consensus on foreign policy matters during a recent meeting of prominent international relations' experts in Russia:

I am pleased to say that today there is an agreement in Russia on the foreign policy issues, which is important. In the middle of the nineties
the nation could not reach an agreement on any issue of the past, present, or future. The majority is convinced that although the people are divided over the past it should be united to work for the future. We should oppose globalization, that is the process in the course of which the supranational mechanisms are acquiring greater political and legal role and the status of moral arbiter. It is very important to return the world to normal and real politics, to recapture the freedom of action not through isolation from the West but the complete freedom that includes the right to enter into coalitions, to support initiatives, to reject and to disagree.

It is true that some intellectuals and military leadership still continue to argue about what Russian national interests are, and where does Russia’s future lie: with the West, Eurasia or East and so on. But the majority understands the importance of acting in a pragmatic manner in the international arena, even though patriotic scholars and the military sometimes fear the “dangers of a pro-Western development” in Russia. These fears often arise out of the lack of trust and a disappointment about the absence of a desired form of cooperation between the two sides. For example, General Ivashov does not recognize the advantages of some joint Russia-West projects because of his lack of trust in benign NATO goals in Russia. Ivashov expressed his suspicious views on the NATO-led maneuvers in Odessa, while explaining Russia’s refusal to participate therein. He said, for instance, that Pf P (Partnership for Peace) is a “mere backdrop to the rehearsing of military actions against Russia.” In spite of the presence of fears caused by the lack of trust, foreign policy thinkers in Russia believe that the country, at the very least, has no other choice but to be pragmatic and to deal with the West in a way that matches the country’s capacities and realistic objectives in the world. Correspondingly, Fedorov, in his article devoted to a discussion of pragmatism as a foreign policy trend in Russia says:

It seems that objective political and economic situation in Russia is pushing us towards the latter [limiting Russia’s role to the narrow area of foreign policy connected to Russia’s national interests and security]. In the new conditions Russia should stick to a strictly realistic policy aimed at setting the problems of prime importance for the country and citizens. In other words, ambitions should be replaced with clearly stated pragmatism when dealing with the West (in the broadest sense of the word) and the East. Early in the new millennium Russia should derive the greatest possible political and economic effect from her relations with the world while retaining the positive experience she accumulated.
In addition to intellectuals, the new government led by Putin is pragmatic in its foreign policy, and the newly elected Duma’s majority is expected to be supportive of the pragmatic government-led reforms. American analysts in Moscow confirm this observation, promising a better ground for investments in Russia because of a more centrist and reforms-oriented Duma.\(^62\) Although the Duma is still divided along party lines, the situation looks very favorable for the executive-led reformation. Alexander Zhukov, Chairman of the Committee on Budget of the State Duma of Russia, described a peculiar composition of the newly elected Duma, which would allow the Executive branch to push its suggested reforms through:

One-third of the Duma supports the president and his government on all points; one third of the Duma is made up of left-wing parties that occasionally vote against the executive; and the last third is made up of the Yabloko and the other movements that support all economic and liberal packages in the government. This configuration allows all liberal proposals to pass when the first and third groups vote together; at the same time more controversial issues that are not in line with the new economy pass because the first and second groups vote together.\(^63\)

Therefore, support of the government-oriented group in Duma is needed for any decision to be passed. And because the government is pragmatic in its views, the basis for legislative pragmatic reforms is present. Specifically, the executive branch agrees on the need to concentrate foreign policy resources on solving problems of economic and other internal natures. For instance, Putin, during his meeting with the business leaders of Italy said:

> The spirit of pragmatism will lead us in our activities. [We will] do everything in the real dimension, in real numbers, in real indicators.

> Our actions will be directed towards de-bureaucratizing our economy, and making it freer and, what is especially important, more responsible. For all the business levels [we] will establish clear and standard rules, and strictly demand everyone to abide by them.

> ...At the end I would like to notice that over the course of last years we learned how to differentiate real opportunities from virtual ones. [We] recognized primacy of the internal tasks over the external effects. We view economic renaissance of Russia as the highest priority. One of the main tasks is to become attractive for both domestic investors and influential business circles of the world...\(^64\)
Putin's desire to cooperate with the West for the purpose of economic advantage is backed up by the public in that it believes in a need for a political course oriented towards the solution of practical problems through Russia's relations with the West (Figure 1). This figure presents data showing a growing support for the notion that Russia must pragmatically cooperate with the West. In the period from September 1999 until May 2000, the percentage of those who believed that Russia should strengthen mutually beneficial contacts with the West went up from 61% to 72%.

Arguments regarding the need for a pragmatic foreign policy between derzhavniki and zapadniki are not as much of an obstacle in the actual political sphere as they were during the previous years. Firstly, the composition of the Duma does not allow derzhavniki (isolationists) to prevail on a number of controversial issues, since they would likely lack a support of the pro-reform coalitions. In addition, many derzhavniki now understand that Russia, having to re-build its economic and political system, has no other choice but to be pragmatic in its relations with the rest of the world. Karpov, an influential derzhavnik and the Chairman of the Foreign Policy Committee in the newly elected Russian Duma, in an interview, explained his acceptance of pragmatism in Russian foreign policy. He sees areas of potential opportunities and possible losses for Russia in the international arena. Correlation of losses to opportunities depends on the course/direction of foreign affairs that Russia will select. Accordingly, he argues, Russia should work with the West on the issues where its interests converge, but must do so in a self-centered way. Simultaneously, Russia should balance its diverging interests with the West by strategic relations with non-Western countries, such as India, China:

The US is a different business. Of course, we should take them into account. Definitely, by taking them [interests of the US] into account, we should use all the opportunities of influence over the US by our partners [India, China]. ...Russia should be led by the principle of, so-called, wise national egoism.

Clearly, by suggesting to take into account US interests while balancing them against Russian interests (when they diverge) using diplomatic means, leaders of the patriotic segment of Russian
political elites also appear to have come to an understanding of a need to follow a more self-interested, pragmatic course of foreign policy in Russian's relations with the West.

In this subsection, the views of intellectuals, and executive and legislative leaders, as well as public opinion about the future direction of Russian foreign were offered. Elites agree that Russia ought to follow a course of narrow, pragmatic, rational foreign policy. Emotionality must be replaced with reason and self-interest; economic strengthening and internal restructuring shall be a priority over other interests. The West should be a helpful partner to Russia, where the interests of both sides are benefited due to reciprocal contacts with each other. Although there are anti-Western opinions in Russia, they are not prevailing over the aforementioned pragmatic school of thought. Many intellectuals and Russian people also came to an agreement that a pragmatic foreign policy is the soundest approach today. This leads to the conclusion that an overwhelming consensus about the future direction of foreign policy is forming in Russia.

b. Preferred Path of Development: Russia Has Not Rejected the Western Model.

Observing Russia's negative discourse about the West during the Kosovo campaign, many became concerned that Russia would transform its disappointment with NATO and US actions in Kosovo into a total distrust and an overall rejection of the Western institutions. Some scholars started making general statements that "polls do show [that] Russians no longer trust the West." This conclusion troubles Russians, who wonder whether the West uses this image of an anti-Western Russia to isolate the country further in the international arena. Russian scholars are aware of the analyses in the West, which describe Russian perspectives as incompatible with the democratic and market ideals, and they warn about the dangers of such perceptions:

Unbending in its naïve belief that it is struggling in Kosovo against "dictatorship and barbarism" and for "human rights," the West is regarding Russia's position as no more than a relapse into totalitarianism. A new stereotype is being formed before our very eyes: liberal democratic values, rejected by the "Russian spirit" as coming from
nokindred souls, will be found to be completely alien to Russian political culture. An old refrain, cast in a different key, will reappear abroad: no matter how you feed Russian wolf, it still has its eye on the Gulag in the woods.69

The academic challenge is to withstand such rapid conclusions about the “Russian wolf” with beastly eyes. It is this author’s contention that there is, instead, a necessity to differentiate between a distrust of Western political and economic institutions per se (market and democracy) and disbelief that Western conduct is always an example of democratic and civilized actions. Whereas the former would inhibit Russia’s development into a liberal and democratic state, the latter simply questions a particular conduct of the Western countries. This section will establish that the NATO’s campaign in Kosovo ended not in Russia’s rejection of Western institutions, but rather in a rejection of Western policies in the international arena, and especially the policies of the US.

Peter Truscott, who stresses Russia’s traditional ambivalence towards the West in explaining the shift toward a more independent and assertive foreign policy in the mid-1990s, was wrong in insisting that Russian people rejected Western models of polity and economy, choosing instead a “Russia First” variant for their country.70 Truscott argued that Russia shows that it will not follow the Western path of development by expanding its arms sales abroad, placing restrictions on Western investment, leading a military campaign in Chechnya and by disappointing performance of the democratic parties’ in the 1993 and 1995 parliamentary elections. Ironically, Russia’s furious and often misunderstood reaction to the events in Kosovo, in conjunction with its transformation in the post-Kosovo period, allows concluding that Russia does not reject market and democratic reforms even at the time when conditions were especially nurturing for such a rejection.

During the early days of the widely unpopular campaign in Kosovo, Russia was presented with the perfect opportunity to reject the Western institutions per se, in addition to Western policies. First of all, the left political forces in the country received a significant strategic advantage over the democratic, pro-Western parties in that the left leaders for a long time were pointing out the double standard in the way the West treated international norms, applied the notion of military force in the international arena and regarded the other sovereign states. Kosovo, in the eyes of Russians, proved
this interpretation true. Leftists also stressed the existence of the double standard in the West’s alleged adherence to pluralism and democracy, while in practice the West ignored other nations’ objections to NATO military interference in a sovereign country, and did not follow the recognized principles of humanitarian conduct. Since Russians overwhelmingly disliked what the West did in Kosovo, communists and national patriots were justified to start yet another political campaign focusing on the so-called inadequacy of the Russian pro-Western parties and failure of the government’s West-oriented reforms. This campaign was designed to encourage the sentiments of Russian xenophobia and militarism during times which were difficult for Russian foreign policy. The fact that the Kosovo crisis took place shortly before the parliamentary and presidential elections in Russia, was also advantageous for the left forces as it increased the likelihood of the patriotic parties’ success in these elections. Liberal forces, that previously supported the Western style reform and Western participation in Russia’s reforms, were clearly at a political disadvantage, having to condemn the policies of Western Europe and the US. Russian people’s opinions about Western actions were negatively influenced by propaganda on TV, radio programs and newspaper materials during the Kosovo campaign. This thesis described above shows that both the people and political elites responded to the crisis in a united and disapproving manner. It is unquestionable that Russia rejected Western behavior in Yugoslavia, and once again the timing for a rejection of Western institutions also seemed to be perfect. However, the *prima facie* appearance of Russia’s total rejection of the West fails upon further examination. It is proper to begin this examination with the question of whether Russia rejected a democratic society as a viable model for its own development as a result of the air strikes campaign in Kosovo. The answer is, that it did not: Russians, rather, rejected what they saw as a Western double standard and undemocratic behavior during the campaign.

From the very onset of the official criticism of Western actions in Kosovo, Russian foreign policy elites emphasized the undemocratic nature of the military activities in the region. There is a long-standing body of international law, which lays down the principle of sovereignty as the very foundation of the modern international system. In Russia’s opinion, the very fact that the West, by its actions, unilaterally overruled this established body of legal authority on the issue of the supremacy of
sovereignty, showed that legal rules were not respected by the West as they should have been in countries committed to democracy. Russian foreign policy officials point out that appreciation of civil rights concepts and a rule of law in any democratic state is expected to be valued highly. The West, by leading the war in Kosovo, which harmed civilians, and by trying to force Milosevic to accept NATO conditions at "any price," dishonored any democratic understanding of the terms 'rights' and 'liberties.' Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov on April 1999, for instance, made his comment about the West's double standard in regards to the concepts of 'rights' and 'rule of law' during the campaign in Kosovo:

The official spokesperson from the Pentagon declared yesterday about the intent to cause Serbians such damage that the cost of these damages would force president Milosevic "accept the peace on NATO terms." Considering that the USA along with the European countries respect rights very much, I would like to focus your attention on these words. I.e., "by any price," – and there is only one price here – civilian lives -, to force S. Milosevic to accept peace on NATO terms.\(^{72}\)

There is no mention of Russia's rejection of the value of 'rights' in this and other statements made by the Russian government. The officials plainly pointed out that they condemned Western disrespect for these democratic values. Thus, Russia stigmatized not 'democracy' per se, but the 'undemocratic' nature of the Western policies in Yugoslavia.

Indeed, the very thrust of Russia's official argument in regards to peace in Kosovo was based on the notion that the much desired process of democratization in Serbia will be disrupted or prevented from taking place due to the NATO attacks:

Of course, democratic reforms are necessary in Yugoslavia too. This is a necessary condition for development of a modern society. However, according to Yugoslavian opposition itself, West (by isolating Serbia) averts the process of democratization [in the country].\(^{73}\)

Russians recognized that Yugoslavia should be democratized and peaceful, but at the same time were skeptical about the notion that the NATO air strikes campaign would achieve this objective. Peace and reformations in Yugoslavia could be achieved only through non-aggressive means. Many Russian people, for example, showed their trust in democratic standards through their belief that ultimately the conflict in Kosovo will be resolved as a result of civil unrest and a subsequent pressure of negative public
opinion within the NATO countries, rather than by force. Specifically, a nationwide poll indicates that although the majority felt indignation and fear when they learnt about the NATO air strikes, yet about 41% of Russians also believed, in the midst of the bombing, that this hostility would be ended by democratic means, when "under pressure from the world public NATO will have to retreat and resume talks." Russian people did not demand Russia to retaliate against NATO by striking back. Instead many placed their hopes on the strength of public debate and public opinion in resolving this armed conflict (similar to the effect of public opinion during the American campaign in Vietnam).

Even more clearly, Russia did not reject the institution of a market economy as a result of Kosovo. Moreover, Russian impotence to resist the unwanted air strikes and the Western ability to ignore Russia's disagreements, demonstrated to the elites a pressing need for Russia to focus on becoming an internationally respected state. A powerful state requires a strong economic basis to support its ambitions in the international arena. The most economically efficient and successful countries in the world are market-based systems. Russia had already invested time and resources into stumbling towards a market-based economic system. The Kosovo conflict, if anything, emphasized Russian economic weaknesses and motivated further the efforts towards the development of the functioning capitalist regime. Opinions held by the elites confirm this conclusion. When outlining Russia's foreign policy objectives, the vice-secretary of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stressed that when "Russia made its choice for changes towards democracy and market, it stepped on the path of reformation." One of the subsequent subsections of this paper will be devoted entirely to a notion of 'economization' of Russia's foreign policy. Russia's preference for the market system will be discussed in that subsection in detail.

Certainly, there are negative changes in Russian perceptions of the West as a result of the military campaign. The most obvious one is Russia's total rejection of Western policies in Kosovo as being immoral, illegal and uncivilized. What in fact has suffered the most is Russia's understanding of the importance of democratic values to Americans. The Russian people started believing in an unfortunate notion that individual preferences for a single country or alliance, a double standard, and the doctrine of "might is right" can replace law, or the accepted norms of behavior and customs established in
international practice. Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov, recited a number of international agreements, which were seen by Russians as having been violated by the West, said:

It must be clear for everyone that we are talking about direct aggression, in spite of any attempts to justify the NATO actions by some "new" concepts of international law, and allegedly existing limitations on state sovereignty. We would insist on reading once again the text of resolution, which was adopted by the General Assembly in 1974, in order to find the meaning of the term aggression. It says everything. And it was adopted unanimously, including the voices of those states, which today lead the aggression. That is why all the matters should be referred to by their own names, without trying to confuse the world's public opinion. This is the aggression with all of its full consequences. 76

A new, materialized belief by Russians in the futility of Western commitments to democracy, humanitarian rights and fairness, is one of the biggest losses for the West and for Russia in the Kosovo aftermath.

Russian officials were convinced that the USA and Western Europe bear different degrees of responsibility for the air strikes. They believed that Kosovo was to be blamed mainly on America's egoistic behavior and less so on Europe's. The US was perceived as a leader providing logistics and resources for the NATO campaign in Yugoslavia, whereas Western Europe was seen more as a follower - the role for which Russia was inclined to be more sympathetic. Russian foreign policy officials agreed upon a hypothesis that without the US pressure on the countries of Western Europe, the Kosovo campaign would not have occurred. Foreign minister, Ivanov, emphasized, for example, the fact that the operation in Kosovo was led using American resources almost exclusively. 77 Ivanov said that this knowledge, about the US being primarily responsible for the resources behind the campaign, made it hard for Russia to even conditionally classify the air strikes' campaign as a truly international effort. The US, therefore, carried a greater proportion of blame in the Kosovo tragedy than did the countries of Western Europe.

Another harm done to Russia's perceptions of Western policies was inflicted in the form of an intensification of Russian fears about the US attempts to eventually dominate the international arena, and to become the only pole of power in the system of international relations. At the onset of the crisis, events in Kosovo were believed to be:

44
... a practicing ground for the American version of the new NATO Strategic Concept, in order to press for [further] political and military dictatorship of the US.\textsuperscript{78}

In connection to the belief about American domination, Western Europe was blamed by Russia for its lack of decisiveness and initiative in allowing the US, who has “allowed practically no breach of discipline among the allies,” to influence negatively the system of European security and the future of the stability on the continent.\textsuperscript{79} Russian people did not trust in a humanitarian cause behind the NATO’s campaign in Kosovo, with 56\% of the surveyed population believing that the crisis in Kosovo was unreasonably aggravated by the aggressive policies of the US and NATO.\textsuperscript{80} Clearly, the reputation of the US suffered more than the reputation of Western Europe in Russian eyes.

Despite all the dangerous possibilities presented by the crisis in Kosovo, the outcome of Russian parliamentary elections with the victory of the cabinet-supporting parties showed that the government campaign representing a more balanced practical approach to foreign and domestic politics was successful. The public, in the aftermath of the Kosovo campaign, supported the pragmatically oriented political parties, and did not follow the propaganda of the anti-Western leftist parties, despite the public’s dissatisfaction with Western behavior in Kosovo (Figure 2). Michael McFaul emphasizes this positive feature in his article devoted to the Russian Elections of 1999:

> Russians value their right to vote. Sixty percent turned out last Sunday. The vast majority of voters also shunned extreme nationalists and communist and placed their hopes for the future with more mainstream options.\textsuperscript{81}

By voting for the centrist parties, supportive of the government’s approach with its ambition to improve Russia’s relations with the West, Russian people demonstrated that the skeptics of Russia’s loyalty to the liberal reforms underestimated Russia’s ability to resist negative external influences. The Kosovo campaign was clearly condemned by a majority of the Russian population, elites and intellectuals. Nevertheless, Russia chose to continue its progress towards a free market and cooperation with the West. Moreover, pragmatic perspectives of Russian foreign policy, predominating after the crisis, premise that Russia must cooperate with the West, not only in order to survive, but also in order to benefit its own internal development and its position in the world. Russia does not need to sacrifice
its own beliefs so that it can cooperate with the West according to pragmatists. For instance, Doctor of Sciences and Professor, Viktor Kremeniuk, wrote about the need for Russia to work with the West without abandoning its unique values:

To survive in a dignified way and avoid the fate of a slave Russia should turn to the West (like this was done under Peter the Great); it should not be afraid to closely cooperate with it. This does not mean that it should abandon the freedom of choice and become totally dependent on the West. The contrary is true: a readiness to cooperate with it goes well with such conceptions as "multipolarity," and other elements of foreign political maneuvering which emphasize the complex and sophisticated nature of Russia's foreign policy and its reserves. Russia can become a link connecting the West and the East, the North and the South, between the "outcast" countries and the civilized world.82

There are many values, which Russia has in common with the West and which will foster Russia's relations with the West. For example, president Putin believes that Russia, being a part of Europe, ought to pursue a path of liberal reforms in order to fit into the society of democratic states. During his visit to Western Europe, he emphasized that the Russian government will strive to achieve closer working relations with Europe and will strengthen Russia's system of democratic values, such as following the rule of law and developing a competitive economic system:

Main tasks of the state amount neither to interference into the business, nor to an encroachment onto the real sector or [free] trade, but rather add up to a protection of the private property, to insuring the fairness of rules of the competition, [and] to a development of a simple and quality-oriented law. Then the effectiveness of the government and economy will increase. And that is the essence of my approach to the economic policy.

...Russia is an indivisible part of Europe. We are willing and capable to develop not in struggles with Europe as it was in Cold War years, but together with Europe. Only this way it is possible to insure stable development of the continent in the long run.83

So in addition to Russia's choice of market economy and democracy as its model of economic and political development, Russians also choose to cooperate with the West, despite their disappointment with Western behavior in Yugoslavia. That is manifested by the fact that Russia did not limit its foreign policy tactics to a formation of a strategic triangle "Russia-India-China" as has been suggested by some foreign policy thinkers, and instead started to recreate its broken ties with the West shortly after the conflict in Kosovo. Russia's pragmatic foreign policy perspectives suggest a new basis
for relations between the two sides. Reliability, consistency, narrow pragmatic objectives and realistic expectations will eventually determine the direction of Russia’s relations with the West.

c. Dampening Its Neoimperial Ambitions.

There are some fears in the West that Russian foreign policy, even after the collapse of the USSR, still contains expansionist elements. Zbigniew Brzezinski, among other neocontainment scholars, is especially seriously concerned about a possibility of a rise in “Moscow’s neoimperial aspirations”/“old imperial temptations”.\(^{84}\) He argues that Russian opposition to any Western economic presence on the territory of the CIS countries is an example of Russia’s desire to subordinate these states and is an indicator of Russian imperial temptations:

Although it would appear that they realize that the end result may not be a single imperial state, they seem determined to attain the gradual subordination of the post-Soviet states within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States in a way that limits their practical sovereignty in the key areas of security and external economic relations.

That aspiration is the root cause of Moscow’s vehement opposition to any Western economic presence in the space of the former Soviet Union. The Kremlin’s attitude in this regard is still based on the old Leninist zero-sum approach: it is better for the non-Russian areas not to develop economically if such development entails a Western presence.\(^{85}\)

Brzezinski claims that these imperial ambitions exist mainly because Russian elites, who are unreformed in their thinking and consist of the former Communist *apparatchiki* and criminalized oligarchs, relish the mighty Soviet power and are preoccupied with the restoration of the Russian empire. Brzezinski, for instance, says that Putin is one of the clearest examples of the Russian elites whose mindset is influenced by the desire for his country to achieve a superpower status:

Although Putin displays a picture of Peter the Great in his office, his reliance on a KGB entourage and his professed admiration for his KGB predecessor, Yuri Andropov, indicate that Putin is no Russian Ataturk. His geopolitical mindset reflects the thinking of the last Soviet generation and not of the first post-Soviet generation. These elites press their agendas forward, making Russia’s foreign policy follow the imperialist path.\(^{86}\)
That is why, Brzezinski believes that "geostrategic conditions must be created that convince the Russians that it is in Russia's own best interest to become a truly democratic and European post-imperial nation-state--a state closely engaged to the transatlantic community." As a part of these geostrategic conditions, Western aid should be restructured so as to go not to the central government with the purpose to solve its basic problems, but to reform the mindset of the elites through exchange programs and local assistance. As for NATO's enlargement, it should continue its eastward enlargement without a priori closing of the possibilities for eventual Russian participation, and so on.

However, the available evidence does not support Brzezinski's assertions about Russian values and foreign policy objectives. This author will analyze Russian foreign policy perceptions and priorities in order to show that Russian perceptions are not the perceptions of an empire; they are rather the attitudes of the "great power" (Russian leaders see their country to be entitled to a "great power" status by the virtue of Russia's glorious history, influential culture, geopolitical place, territory and resources). There is a difference between the two, which will be explained in this subsection. In addition, Russian elites do not possess the views, which are attributed to them by Brzezinski, according to the data that will be cited here. It will also be shown that Russia's extensive involvement in the affairs of the former Soviet region is not an example of Russian imperialistic ambitions, but rather a matter of pragmatic national interests, which are not threatening to the West. The policy implications of this and other characteristics of Russia's pragmatic foreign policy will be discussed in more detail in the conclusion of the thesis.

It is true that adherence to Russia's great power status is important for foreign policy elites, as Zbigniew Brzezinski suggested. At the present, when Russian foreign policy is becoming more pragmatic, Russian politicians still often invoke the concept of 'great power' status. Putin, for instance, talked about this view succinctly:

Russia does not negotiate for itself a status of "great power." [Because] it is a great power per se. It is determined by its huge potential, history and culture.^

What is doubtful, though, is the judgment that the invocation of the great power position equates with the notion of Russia's pursuit of its imperial objectives in the international arena. The difference is
not merely one of the masterful usages of language; it is a qualitative difference in the country’s foreign affairs’ concepts. Great power behavior may, in fact, encompass threats, or some display of military power, designed to suggest the readiness to use available force to back up the country’s demands, and to discourage adversaries. In Russia, such a behavior involves developing and maintaining projection and defense capability for her military forces, including strategic weapons, nuclear missiles and submarines; establishing formal and informal strategic cooperation and/or agreements. There is hardly any official basis for complaints regarding such behavior insofar as it is directed against other powers playing the same game - the US and Western Europe. If Russia were influenced by imperial ambitions, the intensity of the game would be higher (more than mere proclamations of the existing interest in the CIS region) and its territorial extent greater. In the case of an empire, the interests of other countries would hardly be taken into account, and Russia would pursue its vital international goals by force if needed. However, despite Russia’s clear interest in close cooperation with the CIS countries on many levels, Russians today do not propose to achieve this cooperation by force. In identifying the CIS as the top region in Russia’s priorities, Prof. Nikonov noticed, that indeed the opposite process in the CIS is probable – those CIS countries, which are not interested in relations with Russia, will be eventually ‘peeled off’ from the sector of Russian interests:

The first priority is, without a doubt, the CIS. That was unacceptable for Kozyrev. It was more acceptable for Primakov — importantly, in two contexts: in the context of building a common market and in the context of building a collective security system. I believe that by far the most important change that we have seen in 2000 has been an effective transition to a "multi-track" concept: a clear multi-level integration within the CIS, the relations with various countries being built depending on the extent to which they are ready to integrate with Russia [emphasis added]. On the one hand, there is a consolidating core of the CIS — Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Armenia. On the other, relationships with all countries are being built on a general basis, as it were. In this context, there is reason to talk about a consolidation of the core and the shedding of whatever poorly lends itself to integration. There is even some evidence of aggravating relations with countries that do not particularly reckon with Russian interests. I am talking of Georgia.89

Besides the intensity/character of the game, another difference between the empire and the 'great power’ is based on the magnitude of the country’s global aspirations. The United States’ attempts to
democratize South America and Eastern Europe, its stationing of troops in Asia, Europe and Central America, and its active efforts to solve the conflicts far beyond the borders of the Western hemisphere (Somalia, Serbia, etc.) is much closer to being in a position of a superpower than Russia is. In a 'great power' state, such as Russia perceives itself to be, the objective capabilities and country's subjective ambitions are limited to a smaller segment of geographic and political space in the international system – the CIS states and some other states in Eastern Europe. The "great power" state is still not an ordinary actor in the international arena. Its status in the international organizations is often privileged, such as Russia's right of veto in the Security Council of the UN, and its recent entry into the economically powerful "G-8". Its military capacities are also greater.

Nevertheless the country normally does not behave in a way consistent with the aspiration of becoming a global leader: Great power country's goals are more modest in geographic terms. Russia, as has been mentioned above, now localizes its attention on its ties with the "near abroad" countries and on strengthening its position in some Asian and European affairs. Neocontainment scholars may and do argue that Russia's emphasis on the republics of the former Soviet Union is an example of Russia's "neoimperialist ambitions," but Russia's extensive involvement in the region constitutes nothing more than an ordinary policy of national security and pragmatic national interest. Russia inherited, from the Soviet times, numerous economic, social and cultural connections emanating from the close geographic locations and political ties of the former republics, thus it is in its best interests to be involved in that region as long as these connections exist. Moreover, cooperation between the former Soviet republics based on these connections benefits not only Russia's national interests, but also those of its former USSR counterparts. For instance, RFE/RL (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty) reported that the newly elected President of Moldova, Voronin, stated that the main benefit of Moldova joining the Russia-Belarus Union would be obtaining energy prices at below world market prices. Thus, by pursuing active policies in the CIS, Russia and the other republics are interested in the protection of their vital national interests.
Russia also has to deal with emerging security threats coming from its neighbors: drug trafficking, international terrorism, Muslim threats in Central Asia are examples. Furthermore, during a short period following the collapse of the USSR, a number of bloody wars broke out in the "near abroad." In the cases of Moldova, Tajikistan, and the Caucasus, losses of human lives and economic damage were very grave. Russia had a justifiable anxiety that these conflicts threatened the lives and well-being of many Russians who remained in the “near abroad” after the collapse of the USSR. That is why the country proclaimed its strategic interest in the former Soviet Union republics a long time before the events in Kosovo (during its statist foreign policy phase). Many economic and political agreements between Russia and the former Soviet republics have been signed in the past decade. Many of them remained merely on the paper, despite an opportunity for Russia to establish a stronger economic or strategic influence over those countries. Analysts argue that this was the case, because practical questions prevailed over “imperial” ambitions: Russians did not wish to pay from their pockets for any economic losses associated with making a Belarusian-Russian Union a breathing political entity, for example. Many in Russia, though, argue that Russia is literally bound to remain a center of influence on the post-Soviet space, as a guarantor of stability in the region, a protector of over 20 million Russians living in the former Soviet republics, an inheritor of many industrial units, pipelines from Central Asia to Europe, transportation nets, which are a must for other republic’s economic survival, and a successor of a great military might after the collapse of the USSR. In addition to the existence of these objective ties between Russia and the CIS, after the collapse of the USSR, Russia faced a legitimate question of national security in that the conflicts in the territories of the neighboring republics may spread to the lands of Russia itself. Russian military assistance to fight Afghan and Islamic militants in Tajikistan, and military activities directed at securing its borders with Georgia, are examples of Russia’s protection of national security, rather than of attempts to restore the lost empire. Russian official documents confirm this observation. In fact, Russia, in its first foreign policy concept, during the “honeymoon” phase, declared its acceptance of the ‘great power’ status, while rejecting its superpower status (except in the sphere of nuclear weapons), and renounced all of its imperial claims. That was predominantly celebrated in the West as a positive step. Today, after the
events in Kosovo, Russian stances on these issues did not change in the new foreign policy doctrine. Russia’s active role and attempts to strengthen positions in the CIS will continue, but that should not be regarded as a neoimperial spirit.

There is another sign that Russia is interested more in pragmatic goals while cooperating with the CIS, rather than in imperialistic pursuits. Pragmatism is demonstrable through several qualitative changes in policies and perspectives as to what should be emphasized in treaties and agreements between Russia and the CIS countries. There is much more stress today on clear mechanisms of implementation and clear definitions of each member’s duties and obligations in connection with the treaties. In October 2000, for example, Russia and four other former republics signed a mutual agreement about the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union. This union is different from the other documents signed by several former republics in the past, in that it offers a realistic mechanism of decision-making in the body (by 2/3 majority rather than unanimously), makes the decisions passed by the executive branch of the Union mandatory for all the participants, and sets a time limit for a package of economic and financial tasks to be implemented. The shift towards an accent on the practical usefulness of Russia’s contacts with the CIS, has been described succinctly by Valerii Nikolaenko, general secretary of the Collective Security Council, during the roundtable meeting with his Russian colleagues in 2000:

The new foreign policy concept formulated a new approach to many matters, including our position in the world, relations with our allies, and relations with other countries and groups of countries. Sure, as far as security matters are concerned, the thrust here is being placed on our close allies. In the past year, contacts along the lines of the Collective Security Treaty were aimed to turn this treaty from an amorphous, non-binding document into one imposing some clear-cut obligations on the member states. While the Treaty remained basically what it was when it was signed in 1992, the main emphasis is now placed on how to relate to it, how to interpret it, and how to use it in practice.\(^{91}\)

As has been mentioned earlier, the geographic extent of Russia’s international ambitions is also an indicator of the fact that Russian elites perceive the country as a ‘great power,’ but not as a superpower. That Russia is perceived by the elites to be more than an ordinary actor - a great power - is demonstrated by the fact that the majority of those questioned said that Russia’s interests extend beyond its own borders (Figure 3). Russia’s interests are, in fact, greater than the geographical borders of the
country itself. But also from these data, it is clear that Russia’s aspirations in the world are less ambitious geographically than those of an empire. For instance, elites believe that Russia’s national interests are limited mainly to the countries of the Near Abroad, the Caucasus, Asia and Europe. Its involvement in questions of the Middle East, Africa and North and Latin America is considered to be less important. This shows that Russian elites do not put forth effort for their country to achieve a predominant position in the entire world, as the expansionist superpower would. This data illustrates that elites in Russia perceive the scope of Russian national interests to be limited to several traditional regions, consistent with its ‘great power’ pursuits and practical national interests.

In addition, preparedness to offer military support to foreign countries is also an indicator of whether the country has a consciousness of the empire-state. Foreign policy elites of an empire-state are likely to have military aspirations embracing a wider geographical territory. There are two statistical indicators, which tend to support the view that Russia perceives its foreign policy to be of the great power quality, rather than neoimperial. Russian elites (Figure 4-1) endorse the view of Russia providing military assistance to the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States only if asked to do so by those republics (64.3%). This shows that elites believe that Russian military influence extends beyond the country’s own borders. Yet 53.6% also believe that Russia should not militarily support countries which are not the members of the CIS. This data is consistent with the conclusion reached above, that Russia is only active in the protection of the areas, which are vital to Russia’s national interest. Russian people seem to agree about the limits of Russia’s military aid to foreign countries. The study of Russian opinion on military support prior to and during the Yugoslavia campaign shows that Russians were not willing to contribute militarily to the campaign (Figure 4-2), although an overwhelming majority disagreed with NATO actions in the region. Thus elites and the general population in Russia do not accept a wide military involvement of their country in the affairs of foreign countries, other than the members of the CIS upon their requests.

As far as Russian military resources are concerned, there is yet another matter to be discussed. Brzezinski of the containment school claims that Russians “greatly underestimate the economically
draining effects of the renewed arms competition with America, and overestimate the political leverage that Russia can exercise through its essentially one-dimensional strategic capability. But in fact, the available evidence suggests to the contrary - expenditures on defense and military have been cut considerably due to the leadership's understanding of the importance of pragmatism and avoidance of the 'draining economic effects' of Russia's "imperial" ambitions. Unquestionably, there remain some nationalists and leftist leaders who still wish to restore Russia's former military might, but it is hardly the view of the official Moscow. On the contrary, The Globe and Mail of Canada published the following observation concerning its interview with President Putin:

While many Russian nationalists yearn for the days when the Soviet Union was a mighty superpower, Mr. Putin gave a surprisingly humble view of Russia's place in the world and the advantages of its more modest ambitions. "We are satisfied with our present position because it doesn't demand excessive effort in the defence field. It doesn't suck blood from the economy of our country, even though we are still spending quite a lot to maintain the defence system of our state."  

To this author, such an answer by the president is hardly surprising in the light of several statistical indicators related to pragmatic foreign policy trends in Russia, some of which have been discussed above and some will be further discussed in this thesis. These statistics, coupled with other factors, tend to support an assertion that there is a departure from the Soviet-style imperialistic grandeur in Russia's foreign policy. Moreover, pragmatic foreign policy perceptions lead the country to quite a contrasting quality in its international behavior – understanding of the irrationality of an empire-like impulse, and acceptance of Russia's moderation in its foreign affairs. Russia's understanding of its own place in the world and the role that it is to play in the contemporary system of international relations is seen as more humble in comparison with the assertive foreign policy tone of the mid-1990s and the Soviet epoch. For example, M. Deliagin, the present director of the Institute of Globalization and analyst for the Russian ex-president Yeltsin, wrote:

Hence the strategic task: to abandon all forms of individual confrontation, which country cannot afford at present, switching over from negative, and therefore self-destructive, to positive, self-strengthening, aims of cooperation... It is critical not to succumb to any impulses to oppose the United States by any overt means. As long as
Russia's sovereignty is not backed up with sufficient resources, it is purely symbolic. Humility and restraint are indispensable for survival.⁹⁴

Many share this view, calling for humility and restraint in Russia's foreign policy quest. That is, of course, not to say that every political movement is in agreement with the proposition of a more modest foreign policy. There have been political appeals from Russian hard-liners to oppose the West and to pursue unrealistic ambitions in the foreign policy arena. Zatulin, leader of the Derzhava movement, called for an increase of military aid to Yugoslavia during the NATO campaign. Mitrophanov, of the nationalist LDPR, argued that Serbia should be admitted into the Russian-Belarus Union, which would mark the resurrection of Russian grandeur in the international arena. Several leftist parties and movements have made similar speeches demanding greater foreign policy objectives. However, the nature of a democratic society, which Russia strives to become, is such that it necessarily allows for a pluralism of different, sometimes unpleasant opinions. Moreover, as exemplified in one of the earlier parts of the thesis, even some hard-line derzhavniki are changing their views on foreign policy, shifting toward a more pragmatic self-interested approach. Besides, the leadership of Russia did not embrace these extreme views. The elites in Russia prefer the task of internal strengthening to that of a resurrection of Russian empire. For example, the former Russian defense minister Rodionov, influenced by the Kosovo crisis, reiterated the general position of the leadership:

Russia has to give up its Soviet-time ambitions... It should by no means accept to be dragged into a military conflict with NATO, and should focus on the internal political, economic and social problems particularly on avoiding a civil war, and thus escaping NATO “help” to Russia itself on Yugoslav model.⁹⁵

Pragmatism in a weak country is not compatible with imperialism per se. This conclusion has a multifaceted logic to support it: Russia simply does not possess enough economic resources and political weight to be “neoimperial.” In addition to a mere lack of resources, the elites’ and the people’s vision of Russia as a superpower is gradually changing as a result of its long-term internal instability. Zbigniew Brzezinski agrees that Russian leadership recognizes the importance of economic recovery, but he states that some members of the Russian elite do so only in order to restore Russia’s “historical grandeur.” He also states that the top military leaders place a special emphasis on military power in their hopes of
restoring Russia’s global status, quoting Russia’s new military doctrine. However, Russian top military officials’ own understanding of this and other documents sharply contrast with the explanation given by Brzezinski. In fact, many military leaders believe that the new Russia’s Military Doctrine, Constitution, Russia’s Foreign Policy Concept and other state documents serve as strong supportive evidence to an argument that Russia does not yearn to become a “new empire,” instead it strives to protect its own security and preserve its status as a regional power. Director of the Russian Defense Ministry’s Center for Military-Strategic Studies, Major General Anatoly Klimenko, formulates the list of Russian vital interests, which focused mainly on Russia and on accomplishment of enumerated tasks in the surrounding regions, based on the documents listed above:

- sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the Russian Federation;
- state of peace required for stable political, economic and spiritual development of the country and society;
- peace and stability in regions adjacent to Russia
- freedom of operations in the international waters and outer space, and free access to international economic zones and communications that are important to Russia;
- constitutional order, rule of law, and social security;
- protection of Russian citizens against armed threats.

From this list of the vital national interests compiled by an official and scholar, intimately familiar with Russian security realities, it is clear that Russian ambitions are much narrower and more modest geographically and strategically than what one would expect from the “neoimperial”-minded state. Klimenko says that military doctrine is designed to defend Russia’s internal stability and decrease the influence of negative international tendencies, which is not equal to desires to promote global expansionism and to restore the Russian might. In his article, he also stresses the modern realities of the international system, to which Russia has to react in a new way:

The present-day trends in the development of the military-political situation are setting new requirements for a state's military doctrine. The essence of these demands is to not impede the development of the new positive tendencies but to neutralize negative ones.

Nowadays countries sometimes suffer a defeat before armed actions begin or even without any action at all. This is why a military doctrine must aim at ensuring military security in all aspects, i.e. not only through "victory in a war" but, above all, by efficiently using diplomacy;
international law; information, economic and other non-military means of protection against the threat of armed violence.¹⁹⁸

To be sure, Russian resources and capacities are greater than the resources of its Soviet counterparts: Belarus, Kazakhstan and the rest. Because of Russia’s geographical location being in close proximity to all of the post-Soviet states, various economic and other types of contacts developed between Russia and the Soviet republics, and Russian ambitions which extend beyond the country’s own borders - aggregate all of these factors to continue to ensure Russia’s active participation in matters concerning the CIS republics. Russia’s role as a regional leader, a great power in Eurasia and even in the entire complex of European affairs is, in this sense, inevitable. However, the rise of multiple poles of power (Japan and China in Asia, EU in Europe) coupled with economic problems, greatly limits the development of Russia’s perceptions of itself as an empire state. Secondly, Russians, themselves, do not seem to prioritize the distribution of their resources to a task of the maintenance of “neoimperial ambitions.”

This analysis of Russia’s loss of its imperial ambitions answers some concerns raised by Sergei Karaganov in his recent article about a desirable foreign policy school of thought. ⁹⁹ There, he recommended that Russia should temper its “great power” demands as a part of the suggested “new foreign policy.” However, Karaganov did not suggest that the insistence on Russia’s “great power” position be abandoned all together. He recognized that “there is no need to give up the term ... itself in all settings.”¹⁰⁰ Karaganov appeared to call for Russia to avoid imperialistic behavior in the international arena, rather than to renounce its “great power” status. But this position seems to be compatible with the government’s invocation of “great power” status in the cases when Russia’s foreign or domestic policy so requires, while at the same time pursuing its modest goals of economic and political reconstruction. The analysis above showed that Russian official school of thought recognizes the importance of the focus on narrow pragmatic objectives and not on the Russia’s “neoimperial” grandeur.

d. Economizing Russia’s Foreign Policy.
One of the above-discussed articles by a well-known analyst of Russian foreign policy, Sergei Karaganov, argued that the official school of thought did not make economy the focus of its foreign policy. This is where Karaganov’s opinion is especially different from this author’s assessment. Focus on economic development is the foremost characteristic of foreign policy pragmatism in Russia. This section will concentrate on how the emphasis on ‘economization’ is evident in the predominant foreign policy perception in Russia today. It will also show that Russia seeks to build a market economy, which is compatible with the Western model and may serve as a good basis for Russia-West relations.

Russian pragmatism, in the current period of economic instability and reform, calls for a strong emphasis on economic relations with foreign countries rather than for an emphasis on ideological pursuits, military strengthening and geopolitical superiority. The fact that the economy is Russia’s main priority has been recognized officially in the new foreign policy concept and among the foreign policy experts. For instance, at an International Affairs roundtable, A. Torkunov, member of the Collegium of Russia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and rector of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, talked about the strengthening of the economy through pragmatic policies as being one of the Russia’s most important recognized objectives:

A new foreign policy concept was adopted, which substantially differs from previous concepts that were adopted in the post-perestroika era. New priorities were defined — something the previous speaker has pointed out. One of these priorities, which is becoming increasingly important, has to do with Russia’s economic development, including a view of particular aspects of our foreign policy through the prism of pure pragmatism — above all, prospects for the country’s economic and social advance and the fulfillment of tasks that were set in the domestic policy sphere.¹⁰¹

President Putin also recognized the importance of the focus on economic development in Russia. He specifically commented on the new realities of the contemporary international system, which place economy on the very top of the modern state’s concerns, and unfortunately place today’s Russia far from leadership in this sphere:

“Competition today has shifted from the military sphere to the economic sphere,” Mr. Putin said in the interview from the Kremlin. “We have to
look at things realistically. In the global list of economically developed countries, Russia is located in the middle.102

The burden to stabilize economy, to ensure positive economic growth and increased economic assistance from overseas, confines Russia’s freedom of behavior on the domestic scene and in the international arena in a very substantive manner. Foreign policy makers have to develop narrow policy goals, which must be restricted by a realistic view of the country’s present state of economy, and the elites’ vision of opportunities to improve its economic position and the most effective ways of achieving these goals. The elites’ opinion, about what exactly these narrow foreign policy goals are, is obvious from the results of the poll carried out in September 2000. The poll requested Russian elites to rank Russian policy priorities in the international arena (Figure 5-1). According to the poll’s results, the top priority in Russia’s foreign policy was apportioned to the defense of economic interests (99% expressed their choice of this category as the main foreign policy goal of Russia). The elites’ perspectives on the foreign policy goals indicate that economic concerns notably prevail over military concerns and over concerns about protection of Russians living abroad. The latter two were identified at the bottom of the comprehensive list of Russian priorities. This shows that elites, to a large extent, are in consensus with the notion that economic concerns should define Russia’s foreign policy, followed by the other problems, which are also mainly of a domestic character.

In concrete terms, the economization of Russia’s foreign policy perceptions will eventually mean that the country will cooperate with the West more extensively in spheres where Russia’s economic interests are involved: foreign investments, business ventures, and restructuring loans. It also indicates that Russians might overlook differences in some diverging interests between Russia and the West, where such an approach will benefit (or at least, not harm) the Russian economy. Economization of foreign policy is not likely to change Russian stances on such important diverging issues as American development of NMD, NATO expansion, and so on. And yet, a pragmatic foreign policy means that Russia is not prepared to sever its relationship with the West over these diverging issues; there will be an effort to compromise. Overall, in the foreign arena economization will eventually lead to prioritization of several areas, on which Russians are likely to concentrate their
efforts: the creation of effective mechanisms for attracting foreign capital (direct investment) into the
country, cooperation in the sphere of information exchange,\textsuperscript{103} trade co-operation with an emphasis on
increased Russian imports and development of science-incentives and various technologies.

In the domestic arena it means that Russia is likely to try to attract foreign capital by creating a
positive business image of the country through the introduction of awaited changes in legislation
affecting economic issues, executive acts directed towards the improvement of the economic situation,
public advocacy efforts abroad, etc. It must be expected that the new government, as a part of its
pragmatic strategy, will contrast its policies with the unstable political and economic course of the
Yeltsin period, will try to negate the effect of those “evils”, which the West is most critical of –
concentration of Western aid in governmental and oligarchic hands and widespread corruption. Of
course, there is a difference between talking about reformation and actually introducing the changes,
but Putin already made several steps which show that he will attempt to push the reforms through.
For example, Western and Russian analysts alike were increasingly concerned about the regional
leaders concentrating local power in their hands, and creating a basis for corruption. The president's
efforts to cut Russia's regional leaders down to size and to change the mechanism of their
accountability to the center came as a response to these fears. One of Putin's first acts in power was to
divide Russia into seven regions, each headed by a presidential envoy directly reporting to the
Kremlin. Putin's record on regional reform has been more impressive than expected, as he managed
to reduce the power of regional oligarchs through democratic means (local elections). Putin has also
moved to curb the power of the business oligarchs who amassed vast economic empires and wielded
significant political power under Yeltsin. Even skeptics of Russian progress admit that Putin's effort
in this sphere were successful.\textsuperscript{104} Centralization of tax collection enabled the Russian government to
increase its revenue, and “according to Yegor Gaidar, Putin has been able to: 1) improve tax collection
2) institute new custom tariffs 3) push through federal reform and 4) set the course for the military
reform.”\textsuperscript{105}
The economization of perspectives is likely to significantly influence the future of Russian foreign policy, also because there is a big domestic interest in the 'economization' of Russia's foreign conduct. Besides being driven by the foreign policy elites, the economic focus will be fostered by the private commercial interests of the large industrial-financial enterprises and energy companies. Gazprom, the largest energy company which accounts for 8% of Russia's GNP, already pursues a successful investment policy in the countries of Western Europe. Angela Stent of Georgetown University contended that in Russia, participation of private interest in foreign policy is essential because large energy complexes and banks have numerous links to the government and other domestic political actors.106 Thus, opportunities for the lobbying of foreign policy officials are vast. Such opportunities, besides being used to promote Russia's relations with the West, will be utilized also in the sphere of Russian "near abroad" policies. Combined with the elites' and government's interest in a revival of Russia's economy, commercial lobby's efforts shift foreign policy towards an even greater economic pragmatism. Professor Yuri Fedorov, of the Moscow Institute of International Relations, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in his study of Russia's policy towards Caspian oil, has discussed the influence of private commercial pragmatism:

... [a] pragmatic approach has begun to influence Russia's behavior, especially in connection with oil-related projects in the Caspian region. The main advocates of this approach are to be found among oil people and realistically-minded members of the government. The essence of the new tactics is to make sure that Russian oil companies, primarily Lukoil, are given the opportunity for normal business activity related to Caspian oil and natural gas projects, especially since development of the Caspian's reserves may provide considerable guaranteed profits with relatively low capital investment.107

Undeniably, economics is not the only concern shaping the direction of Russian foreign policy. The other important factors, which have been mentioned before, include but are not limited to: geopolitical ambitions in the world, pressure of domestic politics, Russia's objective capacities and so on. Notwithstanding, consensus on the pursuing of economic stability that leads the rankings of national interests, modifies Russian ambitions in the international arena mainly to those of securing good conditions for promoting Russia's internal goals, especially restoring its economic power and strengthening domestic integrity. Pragmatism, as recognized by a large segment of the Russian society,
will eventually ensure the prevalence of economic issues over the other factors in deciding Russian foreign policy objectives and strategies.

Russia’s more modest objectives in the international arena are also evident from the view that mingles advancement of internal tasks with international ambitions. For instance, Russian scholars argue that the line drawn between the economic and political, internal and external tasks is changing in Russia, tying up economy with foreign policy closely:

The separator between “internal” and “external” is disappearing more and more in the modern world. Between internal and external markets. Between the population living inside the country and diaspora. Between economic policy, directed towards solving the internal problems, and a direct political, managerial and economic participation in the international system.\(^{108}\)

Recognizing that Russia does not separate its tasks of internal development from its role in the international system, it is not difficult to conclude that Russia will be interested in pragmatic development of economic relations with the rest of the world. Many economists and businessmen believe that it is impossible for Russia to accomplish its foreign policy objectives and its internal tasks without cooperating with the West. Russia’s best chances of coming out of its economic and political crisis and becoming a progressive state are in having the support of the countries which are successful in their own economic growth. Economists make an argument that the development of a civil society in Russia greatly depends on the development of an innovational economic and technological culture, and on the formation of the elites devoted to the progress of Russia.\(^{109}\) The argument is grounded on the idea that such a process is possible only as a result of Russia’s cooperation with the West, which has many years of experience with a market economy and a civil society.\(^{110}\) Thus, the economization of foreign policy and Russia’s relations with the West are believed by the scholars, to improve the state of Russian democracy in the long run. Certainly, in order for the above academic attitudes about the importance of economic factors to positively influence actual foreign policies, it must be supported by a similar economic emphasis by the foreign policy elites. The foreign policy elites’ consensus about the importance of economic development has been discussed earlier, based on the data from Figure 5-1. This, however, is not the only statistical indicator of the economization of foreign policy. It is also interesting in this
respect to look at what the elites consider to be a main threat to the state’s security (Figure 5-2). The focus here is also clearly on the dangers of internal threats: corruption and an unstable economy. External threats, such as NATO policies are considered to be much less dangerous to Russia’s security. This data indicates that the Russian elites’ perspectives are not shaped by the neoimperial pursuits and the fears about the decline in Russia’s imperial appearance. On the contrary, even the most urgent security threats are considered to be of internal nature, such as economic weaknesses. Clearly, in the security sphere, the elites recognize the importance of internal economic and political stability as well.

The top political leaders seem to be similarly in favor of the economic emphasis in Russian foreign affairs. Economic pragmatism, for instance, is a key term for the new president of Russia, Vladimir Putin. He and his administration made their first steps in the world arena by attempting to expand Russia’s economic ties with the developed countries of the Western Europe. Knowing about the “bad” reputation of Russia in the world economic sphere, Putin sought to economize his foreign policy from the very beginning and to shift the world’s concentration from the past failures of Russian economy to the emphasis on positive developments and changes that the new government will undertake in order to improve market mechanisms. To cite an instance, many Western economists and scholars were increasingly concerned about Russia’s reliance on financial aid from the West without sufficient efforts to develop its own domestic market tradition. The engagement scholar, Michael McFaul in his criticism of US foreign policy in 1998, emphasized that the US should focus its policies toward Russia on “facilitating the development of important market institutions, such as laws governing property rights, financial disclosure, bankruptcy, pension funds, taxes, and securities markets, to promote enterprise restructuring.” One of Putin’s first positive moves was to promise the West many practical changes in economic legislation, something that the major Western economic institutions and scholars believed to be the basis for an economic reconstruction in Russia:

You are right, recently there has been a certain stagnation in our economic relations [Russian-West]. I agree that Russia must still do a lot for improvement of the investment climate. Our task is to minimize factors of risk for Russian and foreign investors, [and] to provide transparency and clarity of the [Russian] economic policy for years to come. That’s why we perfect our economic legislation. For instance,
there is a preparation for changes and additions in legislative and normative acts in federal law “On Foreign Investments.”

Putin made a series of visits to the countries of Western Europe with the specific purpose of improving their political and economic cooperation with Russia. Along with the emphasis on Russian cooperation with the West in attempts to improve the Russian economic position, the President also made it clear that Russia understands that the main factor in the success of Russian economic relations with the world is the country’s own efforts and hard work, which directly addressed another concern of the Western countries. To assure that Russia is serious in its struggle for a Western-type free market, trade and investments, Putin proposed a plan, identifying several steps, which would make the country more attractive for foreign investors (Figure 6). This plan by Western experts, focuses on the areas which are considered to be keys for a successful development of a Russian economic system: changes in legislation, decrease in corruption, implementation of economic laws, etc. The President stressed the significance of the endeavor of building a successful market system in Russia, and the value of the experience of the developed countries.

In general, realizing that the West is concerned about a possibility of Russia abandoning its reforms oriented towards a market system, and subsequently turning to an old command economy, or remaining a mixed economic system, Putin’s administration repeatedly emphasized its devotion to the development of an economic model based on free trade and pragmatism:

Firstly, government must not control the business. On the contrary, all our activities will be oriented towards “de-bureaucratization” and freedom in the sphere of economy. In this sense I would like to direct your attention to the fact that we will try not only to introduce the principles of the market-based economy, but also to liberalize it. ... In Russia there is more than simply a new President and a new government, there are also many pragmatists who are devoted to a constructive work with the executive branch. And this is the natural outcome of our policy aimed at the consolidation of the society around [finding] the solutions to clear, practical tasks.

It was a clever judgment on the part of the new President to start his career as a new leader of Russia with a focus on the sphere, which is vitally important to Russia and the West — economy. Firstly, this step gave an indication to the leaders of the Western Europe that Russia under a new president will be
a country which can be dealt with in a reasonable and practical way – an assurance which was necessary, but lacking under the Yeltsin’s administration. It introduced the Russian President to the West as a practical and clear-headed person. This step also highlighted the sphere where Russian and Western interests do not conflict.

Secondly, economic orientation of foreign policy brings to the President much-desired domestic support. Economic pragmatism in foreign policy seems to be important to Russian people today. From all the steps undertaken by the new president, people believed Putin’s foreign policy direction to be the most successful one (Figure 7). Russian people are clearly more likely to agree with the government about the necessity of economic reform and stabilization with the goals of establishing a mature market economy compatible with that of the West, than they are to agree that a Western type of democracy and social relations are suitable for Russian soil. In one of the surveys by the National Polling Organization VTSIOM, a comparison of people’s opinions about continuation of market reforms through 1998-2000 in Russia has been made (Figure 8). According to the outcomes of this poll, there is an uneven but persistent growth of public support for economic reforms from 29% in May 1998 to 39% in May 2000. This support is coupled with the gradual decrease of negative opinions about the continuation of Western-type economic reforms from 26.4% in May 1998 to 21% in May of 2000. Nevertheless, there still remains a large segment of population undecided about the future of the economic reform in Russia (about 40%). Elena Bashkirova explains that such a large proportion of people with uncertain views on the economic development of their country have a conflict in values that people undergo in any transitional society. For instance, Bashkirova says that according to statistical analysis, Russians approve of economic freedom and private enterprise, but at the same time they are unwilling to bear the personal economic and financial losses accompanying the period of transition in Russia. Despite a large segment of undecided, there is still a clear 18% tilt in favor of the Western-type reforms in the Russian economy among those people who have their opinions fixed. Russia is more consolidated in its support for a liberal economic change than it was earlier. Such a consolidation on economic issues forms a basis for a pragmatic consensus about foreign policy priorities in the country. A pragmatic consensus among foreign policy elites and the people, in its turn, allows for a smoother, more predictable conduct of the
country, in the international arena. Pragmatism makes Russia the country that can be dealt with in a rational and beneficial manner.

Economic emphasis in Russian foreign policy also favors a more active participation of the West in the country's economic reforms. With Russia willing to cooperate with the West on the issues of economic policy, trade, investments and others, there are more opportunities for the West to provide Russia with support, without direct interference in controversial questions of a political nature, but still with the benefit of resolving these political problems in an indirect way. For example, President Putin argued that the West is able to influence decisions of a political nature in Russia by engaging Russia in constructive conversations with the West where concerns of both parties are heard:

Of course, it is possible to follow the logic of isolation. I am sure that such logic will harm not only [relations of] Britain and Russia, but also the entire Europe. The best example of that is what we have had in Russia recently. I do not want to exaggerate but a visit of the leader of the Great Britain in itself during such difficult times, including problems in the North Caucuses, created an atmosphere of trust from the Russia side to the Western community. And in an important, but and indirect way it influenced the decision of the deputies in the Russian Duma to vote in favor of ratification of the START-2 Agreement.116

An economic emphasis in Russian foreign policy is compatible with Russia's active dialogue with the West in the future. Although the political sphere in Russia can only superficially be characterized as advanced democracy today, if the market system is successfully planted in Russia, it is likely that liberal political reforms will follow the economic change. The understanding of such a sequence has been argued in a plethora of modernization theory literature on comparative politics. R. Inglehart, for example, found that as economies of countries were developing, so did their cultural norms and values, including for that of a political system.117 The grounds for a successful cooperation between the West and Russia in the economic sphere are present; the success depends on Russian devotion to pragmatism (which appears to be strong) and the direction of Western policies towards Russia.
CHAPTER IV

Conclusion: Implications of Russia’s Pragmatism on Western Foreign Policy Perspectives.

In this paper it has been argued that Russian foreign policy is entering its pragmatic phase. The case has been made that the pragmatic trend is different from the liberal and assertive/realist phases in Russian foreign policy perspectives. Several characteristics of pragmatism were described in order to clarify the nature of pragmatism, and the ways in which it differs from the other phases in Russian foreign policy. In particular, it has been argued that pragmatism in Russia is based on several distinct pillars: (1) political and public consensus; (2) a notion of the compatibility between the Russian path of development with the basic Western values and ideas; (3) a rejection of the “neoimperial fever;” (4) and the “economization” of the foreign policy. Russia’s pragmatic perspectives were described based on the original research of recent Russian sources: published intellectual and political debates about the problems of foreign policy, official documents and speeches. Furthermore, foreign policy conceptions of the public were analyzed using the public opinion polls and the outcomes of the recent elections. There were discovered some interesting and seemingly inconsistent details as related to the validity of our conclusion about the existence of a pragmatic direction of Russian foreign policy. Official Russia’s angry dissatisfaction with the Western policies during the Kosovo crisis, aggressive rhetoric, Russia’s break up with NATO for a year and stranded relations with the US in the Kosovo aftermath, are examples of such contradictions. However, after a careful analysis, the temporary nature of these apparent inconsistencies was explained, and pragmatism’s stress on practicality, economization, and search for domestic strengthening was shown to have been prevailing as the major foreign policy perspective. For example, this author demonstrated that Russia was appalled by the Western conduct in Yugoslavia, but did not reject the Western institutions of democracy and market economy per se, and that Russians used hostile statements and aggressive policies towards the West during the air strikes campaign but changed their tone after the end of the crisis, and sought rapprochement with the NATO and the Western community. Overall, it has been suggested that emerging pragmatic perspectives will eventually influence the direction of Russia’s actual foreign policies. The fact that pragmatism is becoming the prevalent foreign
policy perspective in Russia has certain ramifications as to Western policies toward Russia and Western perspectives on Russia. These ramifications will be briefly described in the following paragraphs concluding the thesis.

Russia is no longer euphoric about its relations with the West, but neither is it willing or capable to pursue confrontational policies. It is committed to achievement of domestic integrity and economic growth through its actions in the international arena. Russians are concerned with establishing strong, mutually advantageous ties with the former Soviet republics, but do not seem to be interested in maintaining Russia’s superpower/imperial status by forcefully coercing these republics to be Russian allies. These are positive pragmatic developments in Russia’s foreign policy perspectives. First of all, they suggest that the West shall no longer concentrate its resources on a rebuttal of Russia’s imperial ambitions. Russia lacks objective capacities to carry out imperial intentions, besides which it does not show signs of a desire to become an empire as was suggested above. The majority of Russians today talk about their relations with the countries of the near abroad not in terms of imperial grandeur, but in terms of realistic, mutually-agreed-to economic and strategic cooperation that would benefit both sides. This indicates that Russia seeks to further its pragmatic economic and political interests, like any other normal Western country, not to return to a spirit of imperial expansion. Among the others, Belarus, Moldova and Central Asian republics recognize numerous advantages of intimate connection to Russia and willingly pursue a course towards an even closer rapprochement. As long as there are no aggressive Russian attempts to pressure the former Soviet republics, there should not be any reasons for Western disagreements about Russia’s policies in the near abroad. Analysts like Zbigniew Brzezinski and Richard Staar should recognize that statistical evidence of Russian political perspectives analyzed in this thesis does not support the speculation about the existence of Russia’s imperial ambitions among the majority of elites and Russian people. Rather, this evidence, along with the statements made by the leadership suggests that active Russian policies in the former Soviet republics are dictated by pragmatic national interests, and neither threaten the West nor the independence of the CIS countries. Thus, the first implication of the developing pragmatism suggests that the West should leave aside its fears about the rebirth of Russia’s imperial ambitions and concentrate its resources on other urgent problems that today’s
Russia experiences, such as the economic downfall of the country, extreme methods used in the Chechen war, and others.

Secondly, pragmatic developments may, as time goes by, prove to provide a more realistic basis for Russia's productive relations with the West. Because of internal problems, especially the economic problems, will eventually become a priority in Russia's actual foreign policy, financial assistance and other types of Western participation in Russia's internal reformation (leadership exchange programs and help in the establishment of civic organizations in Russia) become a weightier argument in the West's foreign policy strategies in comparison with the period when Russia was more aggressive. As President Putin recognized in one of the statements cited earlier, the West is able to indirectly influence Russian policies more effectively by engaging, rather than by isolating the country. This suggests that North America and Western Europe should refocus on the conceptualization of the best strategies for cooperation with Russia, rather than on the best ways of protecting themselves from Russia. The West, by promoting its interest in assisting Russia to become a democratic and mature market country, will benefit Russian development and strengthen a background for amiable Russia-West contacts. By taking an interest in Russia, the West will demonstrate that it respects Russia's concerns and is prepared to cooperate, thus reducing Russian insecurities and fears expressed by some military and nationalist leaders. For example, even those scholars in Russia, who due to the Kosovo conflict, feared that the Kremlin turned away from its liberal democratic path, were nevertheless convinced that the West would be able to change the situation by actively engaging Russia and working on improving trustworthiness between the two parties. As such, Eduard Ponarin approves of the engagement strategies in the description below:

What then is the alternative strategy for dealing with Russia, given its current aversion to the West? To go back to disenchanted lover analogy, loving could be alternative strategy to leaving. Sometimes it is possible to persuade an offended person that you really care, especially if you are genuinely interested. There are important interests that Russia and West share. But in order to realize this potential, it is absolutely necessary to convince Russians that the West cares. If such an effort to succeed, it must involve a structure of incentives for Russia that seriously commits the Western powers to consideration of Russia's interests.
As for the choice between neocontainment and engagement lines of policies, briefly described in the introduction of this thesis,\textsuperscript{119} it seems that engagement has more advantages at the time when Russian policies will become pragmatic. Pragmatic policies will center on strategies committed to steady, long-term advancements in Russia. Although in the short-term future Russia may become less influential in Europe and the rest of the world because of its main focus on domestic reconstruction, Russian leaders understand that in the long run their country will benefit due to such focus. Similarly, the West should emphasize the long-term perspectives of its policies toward Russia, in addition to the understanding of its short-term goals. Unfortunately, the neocontainment scholars seem to proceed in the restricted manner as to the time span of their policy objectives: they concentrate on short-term benefits. For example, Zbigniew Brzezinski, among others, in insisting on being cautious in forming a partnership with Russia and ignoring Russia’s concerns and disagreements, suggests to us that we avoid thinking about the uneasy nature of mutual relations beyond the potential immediate benefits that the Western political assertiveness has a potential to create.\textsuperscript{120} Co-operation and trust between the West and Russia can hardly be built as a result of disregard for Russia’s disagreements with the West inherent in the neocontainment approach. To be fair, trust and co-operation does not seem to be a goal of the neocontainment school. That is why the neocontainment proponents suggest anticipating and preparing for the problems that may or may not occur, even in the face of the obvious tensions that such approach creates in the present relations of the West and the US. For example, containment proponent, Richard Staar, in his 1996 article indicated that the US must do the following:

Lastly, if the Russians repudiate or violate the START I agreement, Washington will have a legal basis for giving Moscow six-months notice that the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty will not be renewed when it comes up for review in 1997. In the meantime, preparations to deploy a nationwide ABM system should be expedited as protection from aerospace attack by any country, including Russia. According to the old Roman maxim, si vis pacem para bellum!\textsuperscript{121}

Richard Staar showed in his work that he is intimately familiar with Russian objections to the NMD (National Missile Defense) system in the US, which is also legally inconsistent with the 1972 ABM Treaty. By suggesting that the US should deploy or, at least, be ready to deploy one, he offers to disregard Russian concerns and ignore any alternative resolution of the ABM question through
cooperative efforts of the US and Russia. Russians never repudiated the START Treaty showing the futility of this containment scholars’ concern, but they were indeed angered by the US preparations to deploy the NMD system. Thus this approach, rather than offer solutions, actually contributed to the emergence of more problems.

Other containment supporters believe that Russia is weak and cannot, at the present, challenge the West, concluding that the US should step over the Russian heads in pursuing its policies. Paul Kubicek exemplifies this hypothesis through the analysis of how Russia reacted to four conflicts on the international arena: conflict in Bosnia, NATO’s expansion eastwards, Ukraine, and the Transcaucasus. Kubicek contends that after a period of resistance to and disappointments with the course of aggressive and persistent policies pursued by the West, Russia had to back down on its interests and demands related to these four cases. Therefore, he finally concludes, the lesson that the West should learn from the above-mentioned four cases is that the West should pursue the balanced, but assertive containment course of foreign policy towards Russia, firmly pushing forward its own interests. In fact, neocontainment scholars are right in their analytical judgment:

According to this line of thought Russia cannot challenge the West. ... Faced with a determined Western policy, Russia, regardless of the political configuration in Moscow, will be forced to be more conciliatory and retrench.122

What is problematic about this approach is that the only result of totally discharging Russian disagreements is development of more conflict areas and unnecessary disruption of cooperation between the two parties in any long-term calculations. Additionally in the short run, it is not to the West’s advantage to have a disillusioned Russia. Engagement scholars, such as Anatol Lieven, agree that today’s Russia is weak due to its economic instability, the lack of extreme ethnic nationalism and a military inadequacy. But despite Lieven’s understanding of the fact that Russia is hardly capable of presenting a direct threat to the countries on the international arena,123 he still warns us about the potential dangers of the lack of cooperation between the West and Russia:

Concentrating on the direct threats posed by the Russian military, on the other hand, merely makes the Russian government look bad – at a time
when its cooperation is vital to combating the very real threat of weapons proliferation and terrorism. Russian official help against the Russian international crime and smuggling menace may have been very limited, but without it the Western task would look almost hopeless. The debate both on the nature of the Russian threat and the balance of US security interests will of course continue. Sadly, it might take an act of terrorism—a bomb built from materials originating in Russia—to force a serious rethinking in the West. As far as the US is concerned, the weakest Russian army of this century may yet prove the most troublesome.124

Neocontainment analysts often derive their strategies from their fear of the resurrection of Russia’s neoimperialism and pessimism about the success of the democratic and market reformations in Russia, and the Western capacity to influence these internal/domestic reformations. Preparedness for potential conflicts and failure are more important for this school of thought. This view is erroneous in that it does not take into account many changes that have and continue to occur in Russia after the Soviet collapse, and does not seem to recognize the positive pragmatic changes described above: commitment to a democratic and market society, renunciation of superpower ambitions and so on. To the extent that these pragmatic changes took and are taking place, the neocontainment’s pessimism about the inability of Russia to change, is defeated. Moreover, the fact that Russia could become more pragmatic and choose market economy and democracy as models for its own development in the aftermath of Kosovo, and overall in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse shall be celebrated, and promoted by the West:

Russia has experienced the greatest peace-time economic contraction that the world has ever witnessed. The combination of this poorly performing economy and egregious violations of democratic practices has served to undermine support for democracy in Russia. Further, integration with the West has produced few tangible payoffs for average Russians. Given these facts, it is remarkable that the window is still open for the development of markets and democracy in Russia, and for the integration of Russia into the West. Before the window closes, we must do all we can to reinvigorate this trajectory.125

To summarize what has been said above: pragmatism in Russia points towards some exciting new avenues for Russia’s cooperation with the West. Both sides, being more realistic in their expectations about each other, now have a potential to work more closely in the areas of investments, economic reforms, policies towards the countries of the near abroad, fighting corruption and concentration of power in Russia, etc. Such processes, as Russia’s acceptance of Western economic and political institutions, its abandonment of imperialist legacies for the pursuit of a more modest ‘great power’ status, and its
prioritization of internal reconstruction seem to be compatible with the West’s interests in regards to Russia. Because pragmatic perspectives contain more realistic expectations than during the period of the early liberalism, and offer more areas of Russia-West compatibility than during the assertive period of Russia’s foreign policy, there are more opportunities for mutually advantageous cooperation between the two parties today. That is why the West’s focus on engaging Russia, rather than containing it seems to be a better alternative for future of Russia-West relations, especially when pragmatic perspectives will eventually become the prevailing influence in Russia’s foreign policy making.
Endnotes:


6 MacFarlane.

7 In the definition of "de-nationalized" foreign policy, I follow the interpretation of Henry Trofimenko in his book Russian National Interests and the Current Crisis in Russia. Aldershot, Hants, Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1999, 277. This policy incorporated several factors: tendency to focus upon internal problems; realization of Russia’s impotence in the international arena; and a realization of certain benefits of following the US lead in the international system, while still possessing nuclear potentials of a superpower.

8 MacFarlane, 242.


10 MacFarlane, 261.

11 Trofimenko, 276.

12 A. M. Salmin.

12 MacFarlane, 261-262 explains that Russian understanding of the terminology used in the Russia-West relations presupposed equality, or at least, respect and consideration for Russian position on a row of question in international affairs. However reality fell too short of this expectations.

14 MacFarlane, 264 quotes Liah Greenfeld definition of ressentiment, which in Russia is closely connected to the identity crisis of the post-Soviet period: "ressentiment refers to a psychological state resulting from suppressed feelings of envy and hatred (existential envy) and the impossibility to satisfy these feelings."


16 Trofimenko, 315.

18 Trofimenko, 314.

19 MacFarlane, 235 (Footnote 2).

20 Ibid.


29 Ibid. 7, 10.


32 V. Baranovskii.

33 This paragraph is based on this author’s analysis of several official documents of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The thrust of the argument in this paragraph is based on the following four official statements: Ivanov, I. “Выступление От 19.04.99 24 Апредя Исполнится Ровно Месся С Начала Военной Акции Нато Против Суверенной Югославии. В Этот Же День В Вашингтоне Будут Проходить Юбилейные Мероприятия В Связи С 50-летием Нато.” Internet; available from Http://Www.Ln.Mid.Ru/Website/Brp_4.Nsf/5d65d6387a9a442ec325681e003d046c56d9f9875d291427c325675800 57bed47?Opendocument (accessed April 01, 2000), I. Ivanov. “Стенограмма Пресс-Конференции Министра Иностранных Дел.” Internet; available from Http://Www.Ln.Mid.Ru/Website/Brp_4.Nsf/5d65d6387a9a442ec325681e003d046c21426876db38a6bfc325674e00 52b8777?Opendocument (accessed April 1, 2000) ; I. Ivanov. “Стенограмма От 07.04.99 Пресс-Конференции Министра Иностранных Дел РФ И.С.Иванова.” available from


Yaroshenko, 4.


Alexander Krutov in "Devil is Their Father." Russkii Dom no. 5 (May 1999).

Yaroshenko, 4.

See, for example, articles by Neil MacFarlane and Celeste Wallander, “PONARS Memo no. 30.”

The argument is based on the analysis of official materials by this author. All of the published official on-line statements of Russian Foreign Ministry up to May 1, 2000 were surveyed.


V. Kozin. “Kremlin and NATO: Prospects for Interaction.”


51 See, for example, Sergei Kurginian and Yuri Bialy. “Anatopmia Bezumia.” Rossia no. 1 (1999).

52 Ibid. 54.


56 Ibid.


59 See “The Continent of Conflicts and Hopes: A Roundtable Discussion.”


64 “Putin Na Vstreche S Veduschimi Businessmenami Italii.” Official Web-Site of the President Online; available from http://president.kremlin.ru/events; Internet; (accessed 21 June 2000).

65 Derzhavniki and zapadniki were represented in Russian political and intellectual circles since the times of the Peter the Great. A rough description of the difference between the two can be made in the following manner: derzhavniki assert that Russia should develop according to its own unique way and foreign policy should follow these directives. Whereas zapadniki believe that Russia is or should be a part of the Greater Europe, and Russia’s foreign policy should be oriented towards strengthening ties with the West.


67 Ibid.
Peter Truscott. Russia First: Breaking with the West. London: I. B. Tauris, 1997. Truscott argues that “Russia First” is a school of thought which in foreign policy is expressed through its assertive stance (in contrast to the earlier liberal phase of Russia’s policy towards the West). It is directed toward the renewal of Russia’s traditional pursuits in the international arena – recreating its zone of influence in the FSU and some other countries of Eastern Europe (Balkans) as well as looking for new allies India, China, etc.

See among others, Baranovskii’s discussion on the topic of the political turmoil in the country, 11-12.


Nationwide VTGIOM Poll.

V. Sredin.

Igor Ivanov. “ПРЕСС-КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ от 02.04.99.”

Ibid.


A. Matveev, 59.


86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
89 Viacheslav Nikonov in “Forecasts and Challenges: Russia in the Third Millenium.”
91 Valerii Nikolaenko in “Forecasts and Challenges: Russia in the Third Millenium.”
92 Zbigniew Brzezinski. “Living with Russia.”
96 Zbigniew Brzezinski. “Living with Russia.”
98 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
101 Anatolii Torkunov in “Forecasts and Challenges: Russia in the Third Millenium.”
102 Geoffrey York and Chrystia Freeland.
103 Vladimir Rubanov. “Press Conference Regarding Russia-West Partnership in the Sphere of Security,” Federal News Service (17 October 2000) available On-Line; http://www.fednews.com (accessed 12 December 2000). Rubanov discusses a rationale for cooperation between the US and Russia in the sphere of information exchange. He states that both countries should cooperate in this sphere due to the unique level of sophistication which two countries have already reached and the importance of such information exchange for securing both countries’ security.
104 See for instance the abstract of the director of the RAND Center for Russia and Eurasia seminar on Putin. “President Putin’s First Year.” Rand Organization (December 11, 2000); available from http://www.rand.org/nsrd/cre/putin.html; Internet; (accessed June 20 2001).


Ibid.


“Ivterview Presidenta Rossiiskoi Federatii V.V. Putina Gazete ‘Velt Am Zonntag’.”


Cited in Elena Bashkirova.


See pp. 7-9 above.

Zbigniew Brzezinski. “FDCH Congressional Testimony: NATO campaign in Yugoslavia.” Brzezinski is assured that close cooperation and partnership with Russia is not the right choice for the US and European politics because, in his words “Russia is not yet a reliable partner.” He argues that Russia’s resistance to the West’s campaign in Yugoslavia demonstrated that West cannot trust Russia, that engagement policy failed in bringing Russia closer to the West.


Paul Kubicek, 547.


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Yaroshenko, V. “European Choice and the Crisis in Yugoslavia.” *Otkrytaia Politika* no. 36 (March-April 1999).


APPENDIX 1 (FIGURES 1-8):

Figure 1

Russian Center for Study of the Public Opinion (VTSIOM).
Public Poll (Numbers represent % of those who answered the question):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We should strengthen mutually beneficial contacts with the West;</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We should distance ourselves from the West;</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistical error does not exceed 3.8%; samples were taken from 33 regions of Russia; 1600 people participated in the poll.

In the following tables, the federal list final results of the 1999 elections are compared to those from 1995.

1999
Federal List Results
Elections to the State Duma
Russian Federation

- Voter Turnout was 61% of total registered voters.
- 6 of 27 (22.2%) Federal Lists competing in the election passed the 5% threshold and participated in the distribution of mandates, up from 9.3% of the lists in 1995.
- Federal Lists actually winning seats in the State Duma represented about 80% of the total positive votes cast on the federal list ballot, up from 50.3% in 1995.

The Scope Of Russian National Interests Extends to the Following Regions:

- Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova
- Caucasian Region
- Asia
- Europe
- Middle Asia and Kazakhstan
- Baltic States
- North America
- South America
- Africa

The date is retrieved from the September 2000 questionnaire answered by 500 persons, who represent Russian elites from legislative, executive, business, scientific and governmental communities. The raw data was found on "Zone of National Interests," ROMIR, [home page on-line]; available from http://www.romir.ru/eng/research/zone-interests.htm; Internet; accessed December 13 2000.
Figure 4-1

**Russian Elites on Military Involvement in Foreign Countries**

Should Russia Provide Its Military Aid to Foreign States, if Asked To Do So by These Countries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To the CIS Countries, Only if Asked by These Countries</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Other Foreign Countries, Not the Members of the CIS</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure 4-2

**Russian People on Helping Yugoslavia with Military Aid:**

Whether You Favor Russian Military Support to Yugoslavia?

Figure 5-1

Goals of Russia’s Foreign Policy - Survey of Russian Elites

This table is based on the data retrieved by ROMIR (the member of Gallup Organization) from the September 2000 survey answered by 500 representatives of Russian elites. The raw data was found on “Goals of Russia’s Foreign Policy,” ROMIR, [home page on-line]; available from http://www.romir.ru/socpolit/vvps/11_2000/foreign_policy.htm; Internet; accessed December 13 2000.

Figure 5-2

Elites on Main Security Threats to Russia

Figure 6:

Steps suggested by the President Putin in order to improve transparency and clarity of the economic policy in Russia for international businesses and to develop an effective method for attracting foreign investments:

1. Continuation of perfecting the economic legislation in Russia, including a code on lands and that on foreign investments.

2. Return of Russian capital from foreign countries and decrease in its migration from Russia. Such a tendency should become a good sign for foreign investors.

3. Fighting economic corruption – beginning with the attempt to overcome a corruption, ineffectiveness and weakness in the governmental apparatus.

4. Protection of investors’ rights, intellectual property, trade marks. A special emphasis is on work on this protection of foreign businesses in Russia in the regions and local communities.

5. Improvement of the work of the Council on Foreign Investments in Russia.

How successful during the last year [2000], in your opinion, was Putin in dealing with the following problems?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Months</th>
<th>Very Successful</th>
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<th>W/o Much Success</th>
<th>Absolutely Unsuccessful</th>
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<td>Political Solution in Chechnya</td>
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Figure 8

Popular Survey on Continuation of Economic Reforms in Russia

Whether economic reforms in Russia should continue. Columns represent the percentage numbers of those who replied.

Poll has been conducted in Russia over the period of several months during 1998-2000. The results of the poll have been published on “Economic Trends,” VTSIOM On-Line; http://www.wciom.ru/ (accessed 13 December 2000).