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The Kremlin's Handmaiden: Public Diplomacy Po Russki

Maj Natasha Bolduc

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The Kremlin's Handmaiden: Public Diplomacy Po Russki

By Major M.T.N. Bolduc

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Public diplomacy can no longer be seen as an add-on to the rest of diplomacy. It must be seen as a central activity that is played out across many dimensions and with many partners. Above all, Western governments need a much broader and more creative idea of what public diplomacy is and what it can do.

– Mark Leonard

INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold War brought about a hiatus and marginalization of public diplomacy strategies because of the view that former enemies would become partners and stakeholders in a new democratic world order based on mutual truth and shared security.[1] Yet, the emergence of the hypermedia environment and global information social networks stimulated a growth in public opinion and multiplicity of international non-state actors, further changing the international geopolitical landscape. The new pace and reach of the information age led contemporary states to rethink their public diplomacy strategies as alternate means of influence in state-to-foreign population diplomacy. For the Russian Federation, the colour revolutions were regarded as strategies of influence by the EU and NATO to promote democracy and liberalism. The Arab Spring was further seen as turning point in the use of media as an enabler to accelerate revolutions, changing the nature of warfare in the 21st century. Feeling threatened by their shrinking influence in the post-Soviet space, the Russian Federation invested millions into public diplomacy to counter the Western democratic narrative, extend its influence in the region, and improve its image. But their initiatives fell short of their expectations, attributable the Kremlin's inconsistent rhetoric and its military interventions.

The Russian Federation's international image continued to decline after the Georgian-Russian war, the 2011-2012 anti-Putin protests, the Annexation of Crimea, and today's

[1] Marcel van Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine, Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy* (London: Landham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 6-7.

aggression in Ukraine and intervention in Syria. Significant debate was generated on the emergence of a new Russian form of *hybrid warfare* and their use of mass media technology as the latest weapon in grey-zone strategies. If Western states dismiss Russian public diplomacy efforts as mere propaganda, they risk misunderstanding the Russian narrative which could result in a superfluous escalation of conflict. Public diplomacy, a component of hybrid strategies, becomes an attractive option for countries like Russia against the supremacy of Western states' traditional instruments of national power to restore influence in their region and gain international recognition.

This persuasive essay will explore Russian public diplomacy and its place in Moscow's hybrid strategy. It will examine how it is practically implemented and why their efforts have only been partially successful thus far. This essay will be divided into four sections: basic public diplomacy theories and Soviet Union's interpretation of public diplomacy; the objectives and means of Russian public diplomacy and its place in the Kremlin's hybrid strategy; media and cultural diplomacy initiatives targeting its diasporas; and assessment of their effectiveness.

FUNDAMENTALS OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

While traditional diplomacy refers to the interaction between state governments, public diplomacy refers to the foreign policy strategy of influencing foreign public opinion to obtain international support and turn their policies into advantageous ones. The Russian Federation, like many states, takes public diplomacy seriously; however, it has also been accused of engaging in covert activities of influence, historically referred to as *active measures*.[2] This section will

[2] Martin Kragh and Sebastian Asberg, "Russia's Strategy for Influence Through Public Diplomacy and Active Measures: the Swedish Case," 777-778.

review some basic theories on public diplomacy and the Soviet Union's interpretation of public diplomacy to provide a context in understanding Russian public diplomacy in the 21st century.

What is public diplomacy?

The practice of "public diplomacy" is not new; however, the concept was officially defined in the 20th century. First introduced as "open diplomacy" by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, its meaning denoted diplomacy open to the public, where negotiations, alliances and partnerships between states needed to be transparent. This was a response to the secret diplomacy of World War I.[3] The practice was later coined as "public diplomacy" in 1965 by former U.S. diplomat and scholar Edmund Gullion. One of the earliest pamphlets of the Edward R. Murrow Center described public diplomacy as dealing with

> …the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interest on one country with another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of intercultural communications.[4]

Public diplomacy, as defined by Nicholas Cull, is "an international actor's attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with a foreign public,"[5] widely seen as linked to Joseph Nye's *Soft Power.*[6] Some scholars contend public diplomacy is nothing more than a

[3] Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Law Library, "8 January, 1918: President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points," *The Avalon Project*, accessed 13 April 2018. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14.asp

[4] Public Diplomacy Alumni Association, "About U.S. Public Diplomacy," *PublicDiplomacy.org* (2018). Accessed 23 April 2018. http://pdaa.publicdiplomacy.org/?page_id=6

[5] Nicholas J. Cull, *Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past* (Los Angeles, CA: Figueroa Press, 2009), 12. http://kamudiplomasisi.org/pdf/kitaplar/PDPerspectivesLessons.pdf.

[6] Soft power is about mobilizing cooperation from other without threats or payments…policies based on broadly inclusive and far-sighted definitions of the national interest are easier to make attractive to others than policies that take a narrow or myopic perspective."; Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. 1st ed. (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 61

euphemism and refinement for propaganda.[7] Etymologically speaking, the term "propaganda" means propagating a message with the intent of swaying targeting audiences. If based on facts, public diplomacy can be equated to propaganda; however, propaganda based on falsehoods and lies is more so considered *disinformation*.[8] Murrow summed it up best by saying "truth is the best propaganda and lies are the worst."[9] Though the distinction between public diplomacy and propaganda may be subtle, any influence lacking credibility would be counterproductive to promoting a state's image.[10]

The end of the Cold War brought about a relegation of public diplomacy efforts based on the view that globalization and democracy would turn former enemies into partners and stakeholders.[11] Conversely, the emergence of the hypermedia environment and global information networks fostered a rise public opinion and array of new international non-state actors, reinvigorating interest in public diplomacy strategies. The term "mass diplomacy" is often used in the context of the global information age to "new diplomacy that attempts to cultivate the supports of the *masses*, and for the mean of communication and information transmission that can be rightly dubbed *mass communication*."[12] While the term still accounts for traditional means of public diplomacy, "mass diplomacy" more accurately accounts for cultural, diaspora, cyber and mass media diplomacy lacking from its original definition. It can be argued that mass diplomacy is an evolution of public diplomacy due to the global information revolution. For the

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[7] Pierre Pahlavi, *Mass Diplomacy: Foreign Policy in the Global Information Age* (Montreal: McGill University, 2004), 20; Geoff Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, 4th ed. (New York; Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hamphire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 182.

[8] "Propaganda," *Online Etymology Dictionary*. Accessed 12 April 2018. https://www.etymonline.com/word/propaganda; "About U.S. Public Diplomacy."

[9] Edward R. Murrow was the Director of the USIA in 1963; "About U.S. Public Diplomacy."

[10] Mark Leonard, "Diplomacy by Other Means," *Foreign Policy* no. 132 (Sept 2002)50. https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/docview/224048517?accountid=9867.

[11] Marcel van Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine, Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy* (London: Landham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 6-7.

[12] Pahlavi, *Mass Diplomacy: Foreign Policy in the Global Information* Age, 20.

purposes of this paper, the terms mass diplomacy and public diplomacy will be considered synonymous.

Soviet Public Diplomacy

To understand Russian public diplomacy, it is important to understand its Soviet history because the Russian government took some cues from its past to develop their current public diplomacy strategies. For the Soviets, public diplomacy was interpreted as "highly competitive and ideological… [consisting] of propaganda, cultural diplomacy and special 'political influence techniques'" that were both covert and overt.[13] While Western states typically assess former Soviet public diplomacy as sheer propaganda, the Soviet Union once possessed a great deal of soft power. After World War II, the Soviet Union attracted many Europeans due to its victory against Hilter and as an alternative option to European imperialism, especially in colonized areas of Africa and Asia. The Soviet Union invested billions on public diplomacy programs to promote the communist ideology, a Soviet high culture and a positive image of the Soviet Union abroad.[14] These programs included international publishing and broadcasting, cultural exchange and youth programs, and sponsoring antinuclear protests and peace movements.[15] Their use of overt techniques, however, was more of a window dressing that showcased the best features the Soviet Union had to offer.

[13] Sinikukka Saari, "Russia's Post-Orange Revolution Strategies to Increase its Influence in Former Soviet Republics: Public Diplomacy Po Russkii," *Europe-Asia Studies* 66, no. 1 (2014), 53.

[14] The institutions responsible for these forms of Soviet public diplomacy were the Central Committee's International Department and the International Information Department as well as the Soviet Foreign Ministry and the national security agency KGB. Philip Taylor estimates the equivalent of $2 billion dollars was spent by 1960 on communist propaganda worldwide. This is worth noting President Vladimir Putin's experience as a former KGB Intelligence Officer provides some context into a seeming resurgence of Soviet like covert strategies in the 21st century; Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Day* 3rd ed. (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), 256.

[15] Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 73-74; Saari, "Russia's Post-Orange Revolution Strategies to Increase its Influence in Former Soviet Republics: Public Diplomacy Po Russkii,", 53.

Despite their efforts, the Soviet Union could not compete with the rise in popularity of the 'America Dream' and Western popular culture. The disparity between what the Soviet Union presented to the international community through its "softer" means and what it achieved through "harder" methods received the most criticism. Much of the Soviet *soft power* was lost after the invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, despite growth in their economic and military. [16] The Soviet War in Afghanistan and the Chechen wars leveraged the use of proxy forces, disseminating a messaging campaign to justify their actions as counterinsurgency. The term *active measures* became central in their glossary as a "continuation of war through other means" or political warfare.[17] These measures aimed at

> …influencing another government, undermining confidence in its leaders and institution, disrupting relations between other nations, strengthening the allies of the Soviet Union and discrediting and weakening governmental and non-governmental opponents of the Soviet Union. [18]

Although these methods are not open and transparent, disseminating disinformation in Western media, deploying agents of influence and leveraging front organizations were facets of Soviet public diplomacy to influence foreign populations and advance Soviet foreign policy goals.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: A COMPONENT OF HYBRID STRATEGY?

Though the Soviet Union used overt and covert strategies of influence to maintain power in the region, the balance of power and stability during the Cold War can be attributed to bipolarity and nuclear deterrence, rather than public diplomacy efforts. According to the *Stability-Instability Paradox* theory, the collapse of the Soviet Union ended of bipolarity and transformed

[16] *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, 9.

[17] Also known as *aktivnye meropriyatiya;* Saari, "Russia's Post-Orange Revolution Strategies to Increase its Influence in Former Soviet Republics: Public Diplomacy Po Russkii," 53.

[18] *Ibid.*

threats, violence and terror into asymmetric forms.[19] These events indirectly influenced the evolution of public diplomacy by creating the illusion of the "end of history" and the impression that ideological struggles have been overcome.[20] When this illusion was blurred with the realities of the 21st century, public diplomacy was reborn but it needed to adapt to a privatized and deregulated environment. These changes in the world order fundamentally changed how the Russians viewed themselves, their perceived role internationally and their overall goals. This section will define Russian public diplomacy in the 21st century and its place in Russia's hybrid strategy

Russian Public Diplomacy

With the fall of the Soviet Union, the communist ideology giving the state its identity also fell apart, forcing Russia to redefine itself. Unfortunately, the discourse of Cold War defeat, followed by the dark decade of the 1990s, [21] left the new Russia searching for a new identity, economic prosperity and most importantly securitizing its position as a great power. [22] President Vladimir Putin promised reform focusing on strengthening sovereignty, growing of the economy, protecting of Russian interests, and promoting regional influence.[23] The common

[19] The Stability-Instability Paradox is an international relations theory which defines the probability of a direct war between states as directly proportional with the concept of mutual assured destruction and the use of nuclear deterrence. See: Robert, Rauchhaus, "Evaluating the Nuclear Peace Hypothesis: A Quantitative Approach," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 2 (2009): 258-277.

[20] See: Francis Fukuyama," The End of History?" *The National Interest* (Summer 1989), 1-18. https://www.embl.de/aboutus/science_society/discussion/discussion_2006/ref1-22june06.pdf

[21] During the 1990s, the new Russian Federation failed to thrive, politically and economically; however, these failures are not solely attributable to Yeltin's administration. The Russians also blamed the United States and Europe for failing to recognize Russia as an equal international partner. See: Roger E. Kanet and Rémi Piet, *Shifting Priorities in Russia's Foreign and Security Policy* (Burlington, VT: Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013), 2.

[22] Team of the Official Website of the President of Russia, "The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation," (Moscow: 12 January 2008), accessed 24 April 2018. http://en.kremlin.ru/supplement/4116; President Vladimir Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," (Moscow: 8 July 2000), accessed 25 April 2018. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21480.

[23] These are the four overarching objectives within the 2000, 2008 and 2013 Russian Foreign Policy Concept, aimed at restoring Russia to a power status. See: Federation of American Scientists, "The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation," (Moscow: 28 June 2000), htssiatps://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm;

assumption within the Kremlin, however, was that the negative sentiments towards Russia were a direct result of the Western states' global dominance of the media, which favoured 'anti-Kremlin' narratives. Russian public diplomacy, therefore, became an important offensive tool in the attempt to convey alternate narratives and engage with target audiences abroad.[24]

The Kremlin believed it could shed its former pre-conceptions of Soviet Russia by focusing on a narrative of economic cooperation partnership. It attempted to project an image of Russia as an integrated and reliable business partner, predominantly in the gas and oil industry and in foreign investment.[25] These were not without its challenges. Russia's economic influence was undermined, not only from the 2008 economic crisis, but from its non-transparent business practices and its desire to maintain an economic monopoly in the post-Soviet space. Although the Russian government needed to rebuild relations with the states in its Near-Abroad, Russian political elites struggled to accept the former interdependent Soviet republics as independent sovereign states, upholding a greater interest in this region compared to other foreign states. This desire to maintain influence in the post-Soviet space was deeply engrained in Russian Foreign policy and evident in their practice of public diplomacy. When Russian economic influence began to decline, the Kremlin shifted focus to compatriot policies and the promotion a collective Russian identity.

To understand Russian public diplomacy, it is important to understand Russian Foreign Policy goals towards its neighbouring states. Viewing the region as a zero-sum game, its approaches to influence foreign public opinion changed due to NATO's expansion. The Kremlin

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"The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation" (2008); Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation," (Moscow: 12 February 2013), http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/122186.

[24] Russia's Strategy for Influence Through Public Diplomacy and Active Measures: The Swedish Case," 5.

[25] Valentina Feklyunina, "Soft Power and Identity: Russia, Ukraine and the 'Russian World(s)'," *European Journal of International Relations* 22, no.4 (December 1, 2016), 783.

consistently drew the hard line against the expansion, considering it a manifestation of United States influence by proxy.[26] The use of Russian public diplomacy was, therefore, used not solely to promote Russian language and culture but also as a force multiplier to degrade the unity of NATO and European Union and to quell American exceptionalism. Straying away from Nye's original definition of *Soft Power*, the Kremlin used a consequentialist approach with in using its instruments of influence, combining the power of attraction and the art of manipulation.

The colour revolutions were the catalyst in the Russian Federation's shift in foreign policy policies, and subsequently evident in its practice of public diplomacy. The Kremlin viewed these events as a deliberate use of *soft power* and public diplomacy by Western states to create a pro-West and a Pro-Russian cleavage in Eastern Europe.[27] Feeling threatened, the Kremlin shifted its foreign policy philosophy from a relatively pragmatic approach, focusing on economic growth and international cooperation, to a nationalist approach, emphasizing the need for a collective Russian identity. [28] Regardless, Russia still maintained its desire to reaffirm its position as a great power.

Sinikukka defines Russian public diplomacy as divided into two categories: the *Western Strand* and the *Post-Soviet Strand*. Russia invested heavily to develop their public diplomacy, predominantly in their media, to invoke *soft power* aiming to attract and persuade Western

[26] Russian Foreign policy concepts

[27] Team of the Official Website of the President of Russia, "Interview with Time Magazine," (19 December 2007). http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24735;

[28] Russia has yet to fully define its identity. Some refer to it as Soviet-like, but without the communist ideology, while other scholars the Kremlin is attempting to restore a sense of Russian imperialism. There is significant debate about what characterizes Russian nationalism, on whether geopolitics play a central role, or whether it is culture and spiritual factors, such as the Russian Orthodox Church. Others like Limonov and Dugin speak of neo-eurasianism and of the idea of being cultural closer to Asia than Europe while lending their hand to Russian minorities living in its Near Abroad. Yet President Putin understood Russian sense of collectivism best in his "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium," as deeply rooted and paternalistic. article; See: Vladimir Putin, "Vladimir Putin's First Paper as President: 'Russia at the Turn of the Millennium' – A Strategy for Russia's Revival," *Signs of the Times* (31 December 1999). Accessed 03 May 2018. https://www.sott.net/article/310072-Vladimir-Putins-first-paper-as-president-Russia-at-the-turn-of-the-Millenium-A-Strategy-for-Russias-Revival.

audiences, and to counter Western monopoly and narrative; however, it "still suffer[ed] from the same clumsiness that the Soviet propaganda once it."[29] The *Post-Soviet Strand*, conversely, "reli[ed] on the manipulative logic that was inherited from Soviet practices," targeting Russian speaking communities, predominantly in the Slavic, Baltic and the Eastern European States.[30] The Kremlin leveraged its compatriot and humanitarian policies to reach out to its compatriots living abroad, or diasporas. The Russian Orthodox Church and cultural organizations, as the Russkiv Mir, are also leveraged to build sympathetic communities and encourage public diplomacy by proxy in targeted regions in the post-Soviet space.

Public Diplomacy and Hybrid Strategy

In the 21st century, the term *Hybrid War* became widely used to define a strategy combining the use of conventional warfare with irregular, cyber and other influencing methods. By definition, *hybrid warfare* fundamental principles resemble Nye's cohesive use of soft and hard power, known as *Smart Power*; but the difference between *Smart Power* and *hybrid warfare* lies in the eye of the beholder. *Hybrid warfare* became pejoratively associated to Russian methods of a concealed character, notoriously in Ukraine and Crimea, with the use of disinformation, agents of influence and special operations; all which ultimately undermined their credibility. *Smart Power*, however, became typically associated with transparent methods endorsed by Western states. [31] Conversely, the Russian narrative likewise accused Western states

[29] Saari, "Russia's Post-Orange Revolution Strategies to Increase its Influence in Former Soviet Republics: Public Diplomacy Po Russkii," 62.

[30] *Ibid*., 62-63.

[31] Mark Galeotti, "Hybrid, Ambiguous, and Non-Linear? How New is Russia's 'New Way of War'?" *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 27:2 (2016), 287; IISS *Military Balance* 2015 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2015), 5.

of using concealed and non-transparent forces under the guise of peacekeeping and crisis missions.[32]

> Russia elevated the logic of hybridity to an unprecedented level of complexity
>
> …[adopting] a multifaceted policy which has been described as "grey zone", "asymmetrical", "hybrid" or "short of war" strategy. The world is witnessing the emergence of this stealthy 360º influence strategy for some time, which adopts a multifaceted non-conventional approach to international affairs while minimizing the use of direct violence.[33]

While this strategy may seem new in the West, the concept is arguably not new for Russia, sharing a resemblance to the Soviet integrated use of former public diplomacy and *active measures.* Galeotti argued a corollary with the Clausewitz doctrine, that if "war is politics by other means [than] politics can also be war by other means."[34] Even Sun Tzu interred that "[subduing the enemy without fighting is extreme excellence," and Machiavelli that "no proposition ought not to be rejected."[35] But *grey-zone* strategies differ from early theorist because of globalization and the information revolution. The growing influence of public opinion, the increased speed of information, the vastly expanding social networks and the global economic interdependence have increased constraints on the use of brute force. Public diplomacy, cyber and special operations have become another dimension of diplomacy to promote national interests and achieve foreign policy objectives.

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[32] Mark Galeotti, "The 'Gerasimov Doctrine' and Russian Non-Linear War," *In Moscow's Shadows* (2013). Accessed 02 April 2018. https://inmoscowsshadows.wordpress.com/2014/07/06/the-gerasimov-doctrine-and-russian-non-linear-war/

[33] Pierre Pahlavi, "Grey Zone Strategies," *Canadian Defence at 150 and Beyond* (NATO Association of Canada, 2017), 41.

[34] Galeotti, "Hybrid, Ambiguous, and Non-Linear? How New is Russia's 'New Way of War'?", 287.

[35] Tao, Hanzhang, Shibing, Yuan and Sunzi, *Sun Tzu's Art of War: The Modern Chinese Interpretation* (New York: Sterling Pub. Co, 2000), 15; Niccolò Machiavelli, *Machiavelli on International Relations*, First Ed. (New York: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 62.

Many claim the events of the Arab Spring as defining a moment in the evolution of 21st century warfare because it uses the media as an enabling platform to "accelerate the pace of a revolution and help build its constituency."[36] General Valery Gerasimov, in his infamous 2013 article, shared this view, arguing the Arab Spring was an example where

> …the role of non-military means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force weapons in their effectiveness…The focus of applied methods of conflict has altered in the direction of the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian and other non-military measures – applied in coordination with the protest potential of the population.[37]

He recapitulated how the Russian Federation viewed the conduct warfare in the 21st century and elaborated how "new tactics [were] needed which focus on the enemy's weaknesses and avoid direct and overt confrontations." [38] Over the past decade, the Russian Federation used the Arab Spring, the colour revolution and the NATO expansion, in their narrative to re-invigorate public diplomacy efforts as an essential element of non-linear political focused operations. Russian public diplomacy simultaneously mimicked some Western practices while incorporating former Soviet *active measures* as a means to counter Western supremacy, restore influence in the region and seek international recognition.

RUSSIAN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY INITIATIVES

Approximately 30 million ethnic Russians reside in the post-Soviet space, with its largest populations in Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan.[39] The Kremlin viewed this diaspora population as a distinctly separate audience from other foreign populations. Even before the colour

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[36] Philip M. Seib, *Real-Time Diplomacy: Politics and Power in the Social Media Era*, 1st Ed. (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2012), 41;

[37] Galeotti, "The 'Gerasimov Doctrine' and Russian Non-Linear War."

[38] *Ibid*.

[39] "Moscow Says 30 Million Russian Live Abroad" (Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty:08 March 2006). Accessed 01 May 2018. https://www.rferl.org/a/1066475.html.

revolutions, the Kremlin was taking measures to strengthen its ties with compatriots abroad, a theme highlighted in Russian Foreign Policy from 2000 to 2016. These policies focused on consolidating the Russian diaspora, not only for the promotion of Russian language and culture but for strengthening Russia's position in the world. This section will explore Russia's use of media diplomacy and cultural diplomacy as elements of a public diplomacy strategy to attempt to increase its influence in its diaspora population.[40]

Russia's Media Diplomacy

The global information age revolutionized the media industry, providing a broader array of instruments at Russia's disposal for its public diplomacy efforts. Television and the internet became primary means of mass influence. In 2005, the Russian Federation launched a new government sponsored international news channel, Russia Today (now simply known as RT). Between 2005 and 2007, the Kremlin invested over $150 million into this project and their budget continued to increase, with $120 million 2008 and $380 million in 2011 from the Russian Federation federal budget.[41] The Kremlin envisioned this 24-hour English news channel as becoming a global competitor to western broadcasters such as BBC World, CNN and Al-Jazeera.[42] Although diffusing in over 100 states, its largest audience resides across Europe, with 43 million weekly viewers in 15 countries.[43] In RT's early years, the Kremlin's rhetoric primarily focused on improving the Russian Federation's image by disseminating cultural

[40] Ho and McConnell, using assemblage theory, conceptualize "diaspora diplomacy as *diaspora assemblages* composed of states, non-state and other international actors that function as constituent components of assemblages, connected through networks and flows of people, information and resources." This dimension of diplomacy considers how states engages in diplomacy through diasporas to promote their national interests, and how diasporas conduct diplomacy for their own agenda; Elaine L.E. Ho and Fiona McConnell, "Conceptualizing 'Diaspora Diplomacy': Territory and Populations Betwixt the Domestic and Foreign," *Progress in Human Geography* (SAGE Publication Ltd., 2017) http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0309132517740217, 16.

[41] *Putin's Propaganda Machine, Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy*, 70-71; About RT." RT News. Accessed 02 May 2018. https://www.rt.com/about-us/

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] "About RT" (RT News). Accessed 02 May 2018. https://www.rt.com/about-us/

programming highlighting Russian culture, ethnicity and also modernization efforts. Regardless of successes, it has been continuously criticized by Western states for the Soviet-like, top-down centralization management of its media outlets; this is a sharp contrast to the bureaucratic-entrepreneurial model of most Western states.[44] Regardless of its attempts to project a positive image, the credibility of Russian media, even in its early years, was questioned for the absence of reliable, consistent and objective information on critical subjects regarding government corruption, atrocities of the Second Chechen War, murders of journalists, amongst others.

In 2006, Russia's international reputation was at all time low because of Russia's interference in the Orange Revolution, its role in the Ukrainian gas disputes and subsequent lack of comprehensive media strategy. Avgerinos argued that

> …Russia's failure to promptly form a coherent public relations strategy and convey its points of view to foreign media delivered a major blow to Russia's brand image, as the Ukrainian version of the story dominated the press and was accepted by Western publics as the truth…During the August 2008 Russia-Georgia conflict in South Ossetia, Russia repeated many of the same public relation mistakes.[45]

During the Ukrainian and Russia-Georgia conflicts, Russian media diplomacy, including RT, shifted towards *offensive soft power* strategies, focusing on Russian nationalism and the negative aspects of the West. *Sputnik News* and the increase of internet troll factories grew from this shift in public diplomacy strategy. In 2014, the Kremlin launched this new website and radio service, as a replacement of its international broadcasting service *Voice of Russia.*[46] The Kremlin

[44] According to Pahlavi, the "bureaucratic-entrepreneurial" mass diplomacy [that combines] a minimum of decision-making centralisation and a maximum of managerial decentralisation replacing the obsolete hierarchical system inherited from the Cold War period; see: Pierre Pahlavi, "Bureaucratic-Entrepreneurial" *Mass Diplomacy: Foreign Policy in the Global Information* Age, 191-245.

[45] Katherine P. Avgerinos, "Russia's Public Diplomacy Effort: What the Kremlin is Doing and Why it is Not Working," *Journal of Public & International Affairs* Vol. 20 (Spring 2009). 119-120.

[46] The *Voice of Russia* was seen at the time as a revival of the Soviet *Moscow Radio;* Alec Luhn, "Ex-Soviet Countries on Front Line of Russia's Media War with the West" (The Guardian: 6 January 2015).

invested $103 million in *Rossiya Segodnya,* the state-run news agency which includes *Sputnik.* Headquartered in Moscow with regional offices around the world, *Sputnik* broadcasts in 130 cities in 24 countries; yet, its focus resides in its Near Abroad and on countering the western bias towards Russia. Focusing on its neighbouring states, *Sputnik* runs versions of their website in local languages targeting Abkhazia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, China, Spain and Turkey.[47] Russian public diplomacy through social media platforms, like Facebook and YouTube, are more difficult to categorize because it falls into the nebulous *grey-zone*. Renowned for its use of internet trolls, this use of media and information technology saturates social media and internet platforms with large scale disinformation, with articles like the MH17 airplane crash and others on the Ukraine conflict to create confusion and disunity amongst target audiences.

Russia's Cultural Diplomacy

Russian media is a noticeable tool in socializing foreign compatriots to Russian cultural, but cultural diplomacy has always been an equally fundamental element of Russian public diplomacy. Russia's cultural and diaspora diplomacy is about redefining the collective Russian identity and welding some soft power through similarities on language, religious and cultural views. The Kremlin defined Russian ethnicity as Russian born, descendants of Russians and any Russian speaker living abroad to reach into its diasporas and play onto this sense of collectivism and nationalism. Mimicking the Confucius Institutes and the British Council & Goethe Institute, the Russian government invested into a variety of government-organized nongovernment organizations (GONGOs) to export its academic, religious and humanitarian views into its

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/06/-sp-ex-soviet-countries-front-line-russia-media-propaganda-war-west.

[47] Luhn, "Ex-Soviet Countries on Front Line of Russia's Media War with the West"; van Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine, Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy,* 70-71.

periphery and beyond. [48] The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and GONGOs, like the *Russkiv Mir* Foundation and *Rossotrudnichestvo* explored further in this section.

The Russian Orthodox Church was always an agent of the Russian state, dating back from the tsars. Even under the Soviet Union, it remained tutelage of the Kremlin but was repressed under the communist atheist ideology. The re-emergence the ROC as a *soft power* and Foreign Policy instrument was emphasized during President Putin's first presidency. He not only praised the positive role and virtues of the religion but also affirmed a need for "spiritual security" of the Russian diaspora.[49] The newly constructed Kremlin-funded Russian Orthodox cathedral in Paris serves as a prime example of Russia's attempt to boost its *soft power.*[50] The ROC formalized its ties with the Russian Foreign Ministry, subsequent the reunification of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOC) and the Moscow Patriarchate under the Act of Canonical Communion. As a united entity, the Russian Orthodox Church could on providing spiritual oversight of the Orthodox people from Russian and its diasporas, advocating for international human rights, facilitating dialogue with the United Nations, UNESCO, OSCE and the Council of Europe.[51]

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[48] Rutland, Peter and Andrei Kazantsev, "The Limits of Russia's 'Soft Power'," *Journal of Political Power* vol. 9, no. 3 (2016), 402.

[49] van Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine, Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy*, 131-133; Daniel P. Payne, "Spiritual Security, the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Russian Foreign Ministry: Collaboration or Cooptation?" *Journal of Church and State* 52, no. 4 (Autumn, 2010): 712-727.

[50] "A New Orthodox Church Next to the Eiffel Tower Boosts Russian Soft Power." *The Economist* (5 December 2016). https://www.economist.com/blogs/erasmus/2016/12/ecclesiastical-diplomacy; John Lichfield, "Paris Welcomes Kremlin-funded Russian Orthodox Cathedral – As French Court Tries to Seize its Assets," *Independent* (Paris, 18 March 2016). https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/sainte-trinite-paris-welcomes-kremlin-funded-russian-orthodox-cathedral-as-french-court-tries-to-a6939601.html

[51] van Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine, Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy*, 131-133; Daniel P. Payne, "Spiritual Security, the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Russian Foreign Ministry: Collaboration or Cooptation?" *Journal of Church and State* 52, no. 4 (Autumn, 2010): 712-727.

The *Russkiy Mir* Foundation was created in 2007 by presidential decree with the purpose of "promoting the Russian language [and] support Russian teaching programs abroad."[52] A joint project between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Science, its original importance was on the promotion of Russian cultural, rather than the spiritual one of the Russian Orthodox Church. However, over the course of the decade, the emphasis gradually shifted to the promotion of "spiritual heritage." *Russkiy Mir* "reflects a softer overt side of Russian public diplomacy in the post-Soviet region," having established centers in 39 countries, 17 centers in Ukraine alone, and receiving more than $20 million annually from the federal budget.[53] In 2008, *Rossotrudnichestvo* was established under the Foreign Ministry with almost the same vision as the *Russkiy Mir.*[54] Agencies like these have propelled throughout the world with representative offices in most European states, the United States, Canada and in many major states in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Institutions like *Russkiy Mir* are excellent platforms for diplomacy by proxy, further providing grants for individuals and NGOs. [55]

EFFECTIVE OF RUSSIAN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The long-term effects of public diplomacy are difficult to assess in the privatized, deregulated and information age of the 21st century. Pahlavi argued that effects of political, economic and strategic payoff cannot be fully evaluated because governments have yet to

[52] "About Russkiy Mir Foundation." Russkiy Mir Foundation. Accessed 03 May 2018. https://russkiymir.ru/en/fund

[53] Sinikukka. "Russia's Post-Orange Revolution Strategies to Increase its Influence in Former Soviet Republics: Public Diplomacy Po Russkii Diplomacy Po Russkii," 60.

[54] Also known as the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation, the *Russotrudichestvo*, operates under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and guided by the constitution of the Russian Federation; "About Rossotrudnichestvo." Rossotrudnichestvo. Accessed 05 May 2018. http://rs.gov.ru/en/about.

[55] *Ibid.*

develop a measurable system of evaluation of the real effectiveness of public diplomacy policy.[56] At the moment, public diplomacy is critiqued through audience analysis, perceived credibility, and popular public opinion. Since public diplomacy and strategies of influence, in general, are difficult to quantify, Western states often dismiss their relevancy. States like Russia, China and Iran, on the other hand, profoundly believe in its *soft power* albeit the lack of metrics. This section will explore the immediate outcomes of Russian media and cultural diplomacy initiatives.

The Media Wars

Although investing heavily into international TV channels and web-based media, Russian media outlets, by industry standard, are still considered relatively small compared to the world's leading stations like BBC, Deutsche Welle and Al Jazeera. RT, for example, has amassed 70 million weekly viewers worldwide compared to 372 million weekly viewers watching BBC.[57] Regardless, it has gained international recognition; successfully adopt new media technology, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to increase its sphere of influence.[58] However, the Russian media enterprise only superficially appears as an instrument of public diplomacy and *soft power*. From the Western perspective, credibility relies on impartiality, the reliability of sources and a perceived distance from governments. For Russia, objectivity and credibility are compromised because their "editorial accountability for authoritarian media outlets ultimately rest with the political leadership [and] the content that they produce is compromised through

[56] Pierre Pahlavi," Evaluating Public Diplomacy Programmes," *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 2, no. 3 (2007), 256.

[57] Rutenberg, Jim. "RT, Sputnik and Russia's New Theory of War." *The New York Times.* (13 September 2017). Accessed 02 May 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/magazine/rt-sputnik-and-russias-new-theory-of-war.html.

[58] *Ibid.*

either editorial omission or commission.[59] Some criticize Russian media diplomacy as a mere re-emergence of Soviet style propaganda and disinformation, while others characterize its efforts as a "firehose of falsehoods" leveraged by the technologies of the information era. [60] *MediaBiasFactChecks.com* concurs with some of these allegations, labelling Sputnik for publishing a mix of truthful, misleading and false stories; but, RT News is considered mostly factual but categorized as using loaded language to entice strong public emotions over events.[61] Rutland argues that RT viewers

> …experience cognitive dissonance. Domestically, the Russia regime legitimizes itself as a defender of traditional conservative values…But Russian Today presents itself as a radical, free thinking critic of establishment thinking. Its broadcasts oscillate between ridiculing Western political correctness, multiculturalism, and gay rights on one.[62]

Similarly, Russia criticizes the West's deontological perspective towards media reporting, arguing "there is no such thing as objective reporting" and justifying the deployment of the necessary means to sway foreign publics.[63]

There appears to be no effort made by Russian officials and media outlets to reconcile these widely divergent ideologies; instead, Russian public diplomacy is entrenched with deep contradictions. Walter suggests the West misinterprets Russia's significant investment into its media, was not "to build prestige and gain respect from the outside world," but to "contain the spread of democracy and reshape the norms of the international order."[64] Russia is not the only

[59] Christopher Walker, "The Hijacking of 'Soft-Power'," *Journal of Democracy* Vol 27, No 1 (January 2016), 51

[60] Christopher Paul and Miriam Matthews, "The Russian 'Firehose of Falsehood' Propaganda Model: Why it May Work and Options to Counter it" *RAND Corporation* (2016).

[61] "Media Bias/Fact Check - Search and Learn the Bias of News Media." Media Bias Fact Check. Accessed May 4, 2018. https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/.

[62] Rutland, "The Limits of Russia's 'Soft Power'," 403.

[63] Peter Pomerantsev, "Inside Putin's Information War," *PoliticoMagazine* (04 January 2015). Accessed 03 May 2018. https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/01/putin-russia-tv-113960.

[64] Christopher Walker, "The Hijacking of 'Soft-Power'."

regime to adopt these strategies, with Iran's Press TV and CCTV sharing similar philosophies.[65] Tools like Sputnik and social media troll factories serve to spread confusion and encourage disunity within their target audiences. Europe, for example, is portrayed as weak, focusing on issues like the Greek economic crisis and the influx of migrants; simultaneously, it considers the NATO expansion an existential threat, accusing political leaders a meagre vassal of the US government. [66]

The Russian Federation's international reputation was hurt most by the duality between its messaging and actions, notably during the Ukrainian and Georgian conflicts. Avgerinos argued that Russia's image was severely affected by the Kremlin's "failure to promptly form a coherent public relations strategy and convey its point of view to foreign media… as the Ukrainian version of the story dominated in the press and was accepted by Western publics as the truth."[67] The Orange Revolution, the Gazprom dispute, the Russian-Georgian war, the Annexation of Crimea, and the conflict in the Donetsk region demonstrated some of Russia's use of hard power to exert influence into a neighbouring state. The Kremlin felt completely justified in their actions, advocating for the rights of its compatriots and interdicting perceived hostile forces near their borders. However, Nye and Leonard argued that explaining domestic decisions to foreign press is a crucial element of public diplomacy, but many governments pay more attention of explaining political decisions only to their domestic audiences, consequently overlooking how their actions may be perceived by the international community.[68] The Russian Federation made

[65] Christopher Walker, "The Hijacking of 'Soft-Power'," 61.

[66] "Putin: US needs vassals, not allies, it doesn't suite Russia," YouTube video, 4:40. Posted by "RT," 16 April 2015. www.youtube.com/watch?v-MDyCWKcONHk; Kragh, "Russia's Strategy for Influence Through Public Diplomacy and Active Measures: The Swedish Case," 788

[67] Avgerinos, "Russia's Public Diplomacy Effort: What the Kremlin is Doing and Why it is Not Working," 119-120.

[68] Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. 1st ed. (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 107-108; Mark Leonard, "Diplomacy by Other Means," *Foreign Policy* no. 132 (Sept 2002): 50. https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/docview/224048517?accountid=9867.

precisely this mistake even though it claimed a military victory in Georgian. Essentially, they lost the media war because the Kremlin "failed to put together a sophisticated communications strategy to relay Russia's version of the conflict to international audiences," whereby the Russian Federation was demonized for its actions.[69] This duality and inconsistency have frustrated Western media and policy makers, further agitating the anti-Russian bias. Consequently, the Russian Federation makes use of media outlets, as a part of their *grey-zone* strategies, to overwhelm foreign publics and sow confusion, making not only difficult to discern facts from fiction but exasperating underlying societal divides and casting doubt on the legitimacy of democratic leaders. [70] Western actors, accustomed to linear, legal and overt approaches, underestimated the magnitude of Russia's public diplomacy efforts but also failed to understand its function within Russia's new *hybrid* strategy, especially pertaining to its Near Abroad.

The Russian World

The Russian Orthodox Church and Russian GONGOs more closely resemble the original principles of public diplomacy and Nye's *soft power,* yet they remain divergent from Western practices. The Kremlin views these institutions as agents of the state reaching into the Russian diasporas to project their soft power and the notions of *Russkiy Mir* and *Novorossiya.*[71] Sharing similar primary convictions with Russian Foreign Policy, they focus on shaping the search for

[69] Avgerinos, "Russia's Public Diplomacy Effort: What the Kremlin is Doing and Why it is Not Working," 120.

[70] Mike Wendling and Will Yates. "NATO Says Viral News Outlet is Part of "Kremlin Misinformation Machine"," *BBC News* (11 February 2017). http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-38936812.

[71] Based on Shedrovitsky, *Russkiy Mir* or "Russian World" is defined as a as a network of communities thinking and speaking in Russian. The term *Novorossiya* was reinvigorated by President Putin in 2014 to emphasise that the regions of Kharkov, Lunansk, Donetsk, Kherson, Nikolayev and Odessa were part not part of Ukraine during the tsarist era, but part of Russia. This plays into the mindset that Russia wants to reclaim their lost territories and re-unite its Russian communities with the Russian Federation; Alexander Sergunin and Leonid Karabeshkin. "Understanding Russia's Soft Power Strategy." *Politics* Vol. 35 (3-4) (2015), 355; "Transcript: Vladimir Putin's April 17 Q&A." *Washington Post (*04 April 2014). Accessed 06 May 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/transcript-vladimir-putins-april-17-qanda/2014/04/17/ff77b4a2-c635-11e3-8b9a-8e0977a24aeb_story.html.

Russia's national identity, including a sense of Russian nationalism, deep-rooted sense of conservatism, advocacy of anti-liberalism, profound dislike for Western democracy, and continuation of the former Russian "freedom of fear."[72] Russian GONGOs, like the *Russkiy Mir* Foundation and *Rossotrudnichestvo,* experienced some modest success but they may pale in comparison compared to larger institutions; as smaller institutions, they have concentrated most of their offices in regions of national interest, Europe and South East Asia, attempting to maximize their influence.[73] *Russotrudnichestvo*, however, despite its best efforts, has not lived up to expectations, has provided a low number of scholarships available for post-soviet states and acquired a reputation for incompetency.[74] The Kremlin's restrictions on foreign NGOs operating within the state has further impeded relationships between Russian and foreign states.[75]

Since the colour revolutions, the rhetoric of the Russian Orthodox Church prominently focused the 'sacred' East Slavic orthodox community, eliciting the old idea of a 'Holy Russia' to reunite Russia, Belarus and Ukraine as an informal (religious) empire.[76] The ROC is considered by some as "the Kremlin's soft-power instrument par excellence" and an effective mean of strengthening the linkages with post-Soviet states; however, others scrutinize its credibility for its close collaboration with the Russian government.[77] With Putin's help, the Moscow Patriarchate brought the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia under its fold, meaning the

[72] van Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine, Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy*, 148-149.

[73] "Russian Centers of the Russkiy Mir Foundation." Russkiy Mir Foundation. Accessed 0 May 2018. https://russkiymir.ru/en/rucenter/.

[74] Rutland, "The Limits of Russia's 'Soft Power'," 406.

[75] Chloe Arnold, "Russia: NGOs Uneasy as Deadline Passes," *RadioFreeEurope Radio Liberty* 19 April 2007). Accessed 06 May 2018. https://www.rferl.org/a/1075954.html; "Russia Closer to Controlling NGOs," *BBC News* (27 December 2005). Accessed 06 May 2018. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4562278.stm.

[76] This notion mirrors with Shedrovitsky's concept *Russkiy Mir* previously mentioned, but with a theological identity.

[77] Van Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine, Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy,* 268; According to Cull, the credibility of public diplomacy via cultural diplomacy and international broadcasting is contingent on its perceived distance from the government; see: Nicolas J. Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (2008), 33-36.

Kremlin could maintain a closer grip of the priest appointments in foreign states and expecting priests to support the "conservative and often openly reactionary version of the Orthodoxy propagated by the Moscow Patriarchate."[78] The ROC also acts as Kremlin's unofficial mouthpiece in international organizations, "where [it attacks] universal human rights in the name of 'traditional values'."[79] But the Western States are not the only to criticize the centralization of the Church. Belarus, sharing good diplomatic, economic and military ties with Russia, seeks more independence and self-governance status for the Belarusian Orthodox Church, especially since the intensified conflict in Ukraine.[80] Regardless, the Moscow Patriarchate will continue its efforts to promote unity and a collective identity amongst all its self-governing branches of the ROC, especially those in Eastern Europe.[81]

CONCLUSION

Public diplomacy aims to influence foreign publics' perception, promote greater mutual understanding and indirectly impact official relations with foreign governments to serve their national interests. It is quintessentially a soft policy aimed at achieving hard goals. Although adopting a similar public diplomacy framework to the West, Russian understanding of public diplomacy is vastly different and divergent from Nye's *soft power*. Believing it could never truly rely on other states for its survival, the Kremlin's motives are best understood through a realist, Westphalian and low context societal lens, where it aims to regain control of Russia's destiny and sovereignty. This perspective explains the dichotomy between the search for a defined

[78] Van Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine, Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy,* 268

[79] International organization such as the UN, UNESCO, the OSCE and the Council of Europe; Van Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine, Soft Power and Russian Foreign Policy,* 268; "Russkiy Mir: "Russian World"." German Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed May 5, 2018. https://dgap.org/en/node/28188.

[80] "Belarusian Orthodox Church Seeks More Independence from Russia," *BelarusDigest*. Accessed 05 May 2018. https://belarusdigest.com/story/belarusian-orthodox-church-seeks-more-independence-from-russia/.

[81] Self-governing branches of the ROC in Eastern Europe are Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Moldova and Belarus.

Russian identity and the desire to reaffirm its position as a great power. It also explains the vast inconsistencies and duality between the Kremlin's rhetoric and its actions; that in one breath, the discourse speaks to non-intervention and sovereignty while defending Assad and Russian actions in Georgia and Ukraine. The global information age further changed the conduct of warfare of the 21st century, necessitating the need for new tactics and strategies to contain the West's liberal and democratic narrative. The Kremlin re-invigorated its own version of public diplomacy, integrating overt and covert strategies drawn its former Soviet strategies and leveraged by the latest information technologies. This form of Russian public diplomacy became an attractive option for *grey-zone* or *hybrid* strategy, subservient to the achievement of Russian economic and military objectives, especially pertaining to the Near Abroad.

While it may be too soon to evaluate the long-term outcomes of Russian public diplomacy and its impact on foreign policy, the efforts to project a positive image of Russia were overshadowed by the deployment of hard military and information power, particularly in Georgia and Ukraine. Although Russia justified its actions as legitimate in the face of humanitarian aid and self-defence, the West considers Russian military intervention as flagrant breaches of international law. This use of force, along with its current interference in Syria, has reinforced negative stereotypes of Russia as a hard power, undermining any soft power and public diplomacy initiatives. "Looking like the evil wrongdoer," Russian officials failed repeatedly to develop an adequate media strategy to explain decisions to foreign publics. [82] Russia, however, made use its media to overwhelm foreign audiences, spread confusion, sow seeds of doubt and encourage disunity; this is becoming more evident in the region of Western Europe and the United States. With Putin's help, the Russian Orthodox Church was re-

[82] Avgerinos, "Russia's Public Diplomacy Effort: What the Kremlin is Doing and Why it is Not Working," 121.

invigorated as an effective mean of strengthening the linkages between Moscow and foreign diasporas, promoting a Russian nationalism and conservatism. The use of NGOs and diaspora diplomacy, also attempting to create a level of separation between foreign public and the Kremlin, has been met with mixed results with Kremlin calling for tighter control over NGO activities and finances.

Even though the Russian Federation continues to be criticized for its deceitfulness and nepotism, they do understand public diplomacy more than the West's give them credit for. From the Russian perspective, the Kremlin does not feel the need to differentiate between overt and covert or truth and lie, so long as they meet their foreign policy objectives and avoid military confrontation. Public diplomacy should also concentrate on "building relationships, starting from understanding other countries' needs, cultures, and peoples and then looking for areas to make common cause."[83] As ideologies continue to diverge between Russia and liberal democratic states, the Russian Federation's focus will be towards only those most loyal and willing to support Russian foreign policy, on a rapprochement with regions formerly under Russian imperial control, such as Crimea and the Donetsk region, and states with similar anti-liberal philosophies, such as Iran, Belarus, China and Syria.

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[83] Mark Leonard, "Diplomacy by Other Means," 50.

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