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Russia's reactions to the color revolutions

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THESIS

RUSSIA'S REACTIONS TO THE COLOR REVOLUTIONS

by

Katherine T. Hinkle

March 2017

Thesis Advisor: Mikhail Tsypkin
Second Reader: Carolyn Halladay

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The color revolutions, the popular democratic protests that occurred in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan from 2003–2005 and overturned the pro-Russian regimes in those nations, played a significant role in the development of Russia's relationship with the West. They created a narrative of a continuous wave of pro-democracy, pro-reform movements sweeping through the former Soviet Union (FSU) that had the potential to spread across the FSU, including to Russia itself. This thesis examines Russia's reaction to the color revolutions as they fit within this narrative of anti-Westernism. Russian officials saw the West as the cause of the color revolutions and claimed that Western-funded NGOs were deliberately working to undermine the regimes of the color revolution countries, by aiding the activists and youth movements that propelled the demonstrations to victory. The color revolutions added to the feeling of Western encroachment on Russia's sphere of influence and contributed to Western involvement in the post-Communist domain, along with NATO and EU expansions in post-Soviet nations and United States' deals for basing rights in post-Soviet Central Asia. Because Russia feared the results of Western democracy-promotion and election-monitoring, officials attempted to thwart both activities and developed the narrative of sovereign democracy as a means of justifying their actions.

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RUSSIA'S REACTIONS TO THE COLOR REVOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The color revolutions, the popular democratic protests that occurred in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan from 2003–2005 and overturned the pro-Russian regimes in those nations, played a significant role in the development of Russia's relationship with the West. They created a narrative of a continuous wave of pro-democracy, pro-reform movements sweeping through the former Soviet Union (FSU) that had the potential to spread across the FSU, including to Russia itself. This thesis examines Russia's reaction to the color revolutions as they fit within this narrative of anti-Westernism. Russian officials saw the West as the cause of the color revolutions and claimed that Western-funded NGOs were deliberately working to undermine the regimes of the color revolution countries, by aiding the activists and youth movements that propelled the demonstrations to victory. The color revolutions added to the feeling of Western encroachment on Russia's sphere of influence and contributed to Western involvement in the post-Communist domain, along with NATO and EU expansions in post-Soviet nations and United States' deals for basing rights in post-Soviet Central Asia. Because Russia feared the results of Western democracy-promotion and election-monitoring, officials attempted to thwart both activities and developed the narrative of sovereign democracy as a means of justifying their actions.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
EU	European Union
FDI	foreign direct investment
FSU	former Soviet Union
GDP	gross domestic product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRI	International Republican Institute
KFOR	Kosovo Force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	non-governmental organization
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SCO	Shanghai Cooperative Organization
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WTO	World Trade Organization

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I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines Russia's reaction to one of the key events of the 2000s: the color revolutions of 2003–2005. The color revolutions, the popular democratic protests that occurred in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan from 2003–2005 and overturned the pro-Russian regimes in those nations, played a significant role in the development of Russia's relationship with the West. They created a narrative of a continuous wave of pro-democracy, pro-reform movements sweeping through states of the former Soviet Union that had the potential to spread to their neighboring countries, including Russia itself. These movements were a signal, to both Russia and the West, that corrupt, pro-Russian regimes would not be tolerated. Though many of the gains of the color revolutions were later reversed, the narrative they created had a significant impact on Russia. The fears engendered in Russia by the color revolutions, and Russia's subsequent decision to blame the color revolutions on Western instigation, contributed to the development of the anti-Western foreign policy that drove Russian interventions.

A. RESEARCH QUESTION

How has Russia reacted to the "color revolutions" of former Soviet countries, in the context of Russia's relations with the Western powers: the United States, European Union (EU), and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)? How successful was Russia at countering the effects of the color revolutions? This thesis examines the ways in which Russia's political institutions and its historical narrative of anti-Western paranoia has driven its response to the color revolutions. This thesis also examines the ways in which Russia has shaped its foreign policies to counter the Western countries that Russia perceives as being the instigators of the color revolutions. It concludes with an evaluation of the effect of Russia's strategies to counter the color revolutions and their potential for future use.

B. SIGNIFICANCE

In the past decade, Russia has reentered the international stage with an aggressive foreign policy of considerable concern to the United States. In 2008, Russia intervened in

Georgia to support separatists in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In 2014, Russia annexed the Crimean region of Ukraine and provided support to separatists in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. In the past year, Russia has escalated its intervention outside the former-Soviet sphere, by intervening in the Syria conflict on the side of the Assad government (while the United States has intervened on the side of the rebellion against the Assad regime). Because of Russia's international aggression, the 2015 United States National Security Strategy named Russia as a major threat to international security, which the United States is seeking to counter through diplomacy and military presence.[1]

Russian foreign policy has become important to the security interests of the United States. Thus, an examination of the contributing factors that have influenced Russian policy may help to guide the United States' response to Russia's increased international aggression. In examining the ways that the color revolutions have affected Russia's relationship with the United States, EU, and NATO, this thesis sheds some light on one of the possible underlying causes of Russia's resurgent foreign policy decisions. Understanding Russia's views of the color revolutions, and the actions that followed from them, will also be a factor to consider as the United States and other Western partners continue their tradition of promoting democracy and encouraging non-governmental organization (NGO) participation in countries of the former Soviet Union and elsewhere in the world.

Furthermore, the examination will focus on expanding an area of where there has been limited research. While much has been written about Russia's shift to a more aggressive foreign policy, there has been less mention of the effect of the color revolutions on the shaping of that policy. This thesis works to bridge the gap between events of the color revolutions, and Russian foreign policy that has emerged in their aftermath. In examining specifically the ways in which the color revolutions have influenced Russia's anti-Western narrative, this thesis can contribute to the larger body of work that has examined both the color revolutions and the Russian foreign policy of the last decade.

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[1] "National Security Strategy," White House, February 2015, http://nssarchive.us/national-security-strategy-2015.

C.   LITERATURE REVIEW

The color revolutions in the former Soviet republics of Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, all happening within a brief, two-year period, sent shock waves throughout the world. The Russian government, in particular, saw the color revolutions as a threat to its influence on the countries where the color revolutions took place, to their own regime, which could also be a target for a color revolution, and to its relationship with the West. Thus, Russia needed to take action in order to counteract the effect of the color revolutions. This literature review will begin with the revolutions themselves, followed by a look at how Russia has altered policies in the wake of the color revolution period of 2003–2005. It will examine the trajectory of Russia's policies in aftermath of the color revolutions, including Russia's policies toward the countries in which the color revolutions occurred. It also will examine how Russia has altered its domestic policies in response to the threat of internal revolution.

1.   The Color Revolutions

In 2003, Georgia's Rose Revolution toppled the government of Edouard Shevardnadze, a corrupt regime that had created massive economic problems within the country, despite a surplus of natural resources.[2] The elections in 2003 had serious irregularities, suspicious of a rigged election. The major opposition party declared victory, and was joined in protest by the other opposition groups. Massive demonstrations resulted in the president's abdication. Shevardnadze was replaced by Mikheil Saakashvili, whose government was much more opposed to Russian influence. According to Tristan Landry, the Georgians involved in the revolution did not act alone. They were supported with money, education, and training by American-affiliated NGOs, which worked closely with the Georgian youth movement, *Kmara!* to organize the protests that lead to Shevardnadze's defeat.[3] Georgia's attempts to Westernize have not had much success, and Georgia's new government continues to persecute its opposition.[4]

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[2] Tristan Landry, "The Colour Revolutions in the Rearview Mirror: Closer Than They Appear," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 53, no. 1 (2011): 8–9.

[3] Ibid., 7–8.

[4] Ibid., 20.

Following a year after the Rose Revolution, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine protested the rigged election of Victor Yanukovych to the presidency, to succeed the outgoing Leonid Kuchma. A new election, held after the demonstrations, saw the election of Victor Yushchenko, a major supporter of the Orange Revolution. Per Mark Kramer, Yanukovych had been strongly supported by the Russian government, and so the Orange Revolution was a bitter disappointment to Russia and to the eastern areas of Ukraine with large populations of ethnic Russians and Russophone Ukrainians, who had supported Yanukovych.[5] Ukraine still faced significant challenges after the revolution. Weaknesses in Ukraine's political culture and institutions prevented true reform from taking hold, and Ukraine's democratic movement was eventually reversed.[6] With the election of Yanukovych in 2010, it seemed that the gains of the Orange revolution would be completely undone. However, in the Euromaidan of 2013, Ukrainians again took to the streets in even larger numbers, and with better preparation than in 2004, to protest against Yanukovych and his deals with Russia, and again he was removed from power.[7]

The final color revolution in the wave was the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. Protesters in Kyrgyzstan ousted corrupt leader Askar Akayev and replaced him with Kurmanbek Bakiyev, who promised a democratic, anti-corruption regime. Unfortunately, Alexander Cooley argues that Bakiyev failed to live up to his promises; instead he actually increased the level of governmental corruption, along with repressive measures to eliminate his opposition.[8] The Tulip Revolution did not have the same intensity of impact on Russia as the previous color revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine, but it served to highlight the concept of the color revolutions as a wave of protests that could pose a threat to Russia.[9] Additionally, the Russian government was able to frame the Tulip Revolution to its citizens as linked to Islamic terrorism instead of democracy.

[5] Mark Kramer, "Ukraine's Orange Evolution," *Current History* (2008): 111–3.

[6] Michael Jaskiw, "Spinning the Color Wheel: Constitutional Reform in Ukraine," *Harvard International Review* 29, no.1 (2007): 34–37.

[7] Olga Onuch, "The Maidan and Beyond: Who Were the Protestors?" *Journal of Democracy* 25, no. 3 (2014): 44–46.

[8] Alexander Cooley, "Kyrgyzstan on the Brink," *Current History* (2010): 301.

[9] Stefanie Ortmann, "Diffusion as Discourse of Danger: Russian Self-Representations and the Framing of the Tulip Revolution," *Central Asian Survey* 27, no. 3–4 (2008): 369–70.

The uprising in Andijan, Uzbekistan shortly thereafter, which both Uzbekistan and Russia also blamed on radical Islam, helped to cement the connection.[10]

### 2.	Policies toward the Nations of the Color Revolutions

Russia's close ties with Georgia and Ukraine continued after the color revolutions. These ties, economic, social, and physical, could be used by Russia to put pressure on the governments of Georgia and Ukraine. When soft power failed to achieve Russia's goals toward those countries, Russia then had to resort to military intervention, which it did in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine in 2014. In Kyrgyzstan, per Yasar Sari, while the Tulip Revolution contributed to the perception of a "wave" of color revolutions sweeping across the states of the former Soviet Union, the Tulip Revolution did not lead to a pro-Western regime.[11] Unlike in Georgia and Ukraine, the movement in Kyrgyzstan was not seen as a move either toward or away from Russia. Thus, Russia was able to resume its relationship with Kyrgyzstan without any need to attempt to redirect the course of the country.[12] Therefore, this section of the literature review will focus on Ukraine and Georgia.

Russia's economic linkages with Ukraine and Georgia mean that it can use economic leverage to pressure the countries, and to punish them when they deviate from Russia's wishes. While Ukraine and Georgia trade with both Russia and the EU nations in similar amounts, they are highly dependent on Russia for energy supplies, which gives Russia a strategic advantage. The construction of the Nord Stream gas pipeline, which delivers gas from Russia to Europe via the Baltic Sea, greatly reduced Ukraine's access to the lucrative pipeline, which had formerly transited directly across it.[13] Furthermore, Ukraine and Georgia both send migrant workers to Russia. These migrants send remittances back to their home countries, which comprise a small but significant portion

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[10] Ortmann, "Diffusion as Discourse of Danger," 369–70.

[11] Yasar Sari, "Foreign Policy of Kyrgyzstan Under Askar Akayev and Kurmanbek Bakiyev," *Perceptions* 17, no. 3 (2012): 141–2.

[12] Ortmann, "Diffusion as Discourse," 370.

[13] Laurynas Jonavicius, "Why Ukraine and Georgia Have Not Used the 'Window of Opportunity'?: Neo-Institutional Analysis of Transformational Stagnation in Georgia and Ukraine," *UNISCI Discussion Papers*, 19 (2009): 27.

of those countries' gross domestic product (GDP). While these remittances are not a large part of the overall economy of Ukraine and Georgia, they create ties to Russia through physical and social links between the countries that are not present with the European Union.[14] Russia has also contributed foreign direct investment (FDI) to both countries. This not only gives Russia a stake in Georgian and Ukrainian businesses, but also imports Russian business culture and values as "spill-over" effects so that Russia can utilize FDI for political purposes.[15]

Both Georgia and Ukraine have minority populations that can be used by Russia for strategic gain. In Georgia, the Abkhazians and the South Ossetians attempted to secede in the early 1990s and have remained unhappily a part of Georgia until 2008.[16] In 2008, Russia supported those secessionist groups and occupied their territory. Putin used the minority status of the Ossetians and the Abkhazians to justify intervening in Georgia for their protection.[17]

In Ukraine, Russia also supported the secessionist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, along with the seizure of Crimea.[18] Russia can also take advantage of the shared language left over from the Soviet Union. Ukrainian media relies heavily on Russian media sources, which gives Russia major influence over Ukrainian journalism.[19] Georgia relies on Russian media as well, though to a lesser extent.[20]

As mentioned earlier, in 2008 Russia moved beyond soft power and intervened in Georgia, using the pretext of an attack by Georgian forces on Russian peacekeepers. Later, charges of Georgian human rights violations were also added to justify assisting

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[14] Jonavicus, "Window of Opportunity," 27.

[15] Ibid., 28.

[16] David Matsaberidze, "Russia vs. EU/US through Georgia and Ukraine," *The Quarterly Journal* (2015), 83–84.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Jonavicus, "Window of Opportunity," 29.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

with the secessionist movements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[21] Despite support of Georgia from the United States, EU, and NATO, Russia was willing to resort to force to prevent a loss of power and influence in Georgia.[22] When Russia perceived Georgia as attempting to secure membership in NATO, Russia deemed military force necessary. The potential Georgia-NATO alliance sent the message that, as Fareed Shafee writes, "Post-Soviet countries realized that Russia is still a mighty power, and the West is not willing to confront her for the sake of small post-Soviet states."[23] Furthermore, because the secessionist conflicts were one of the reasons preventing Georgia from NATO membership, Russia's support of the rebels would prolong the conflicts, leaving Georgia unable to advance in its pro-Western aspirations.[24]

Despite the electoral victory of Yushchenko in the aftermath of the Orange Revolution, a significant portion of Ukraine's population, who voted for Yanukovych, disapproved of the revolution. These voters were primarily located in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine. For them, the Orange revolution was a stolen victory, leaving behind a voting bloc that could see Yanukovych return to power.[25] When Yanukovych did return to power in 2010, he shifted foreign policy aims more toward Russia, making deals to ensure stable gas prices in return for extending the lease for the naval base in Sevastopol, and generally working to reduce the pressure on Ukraine from Moscow, and Russia was able to increase its soft power presence in the region.[26] Ukraine under Yanukovych became less democratic, "backsliding" into authoritarianism by methods similar to those seen in Russia.[27] Despite pressure from the EU and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to reform, Ukraine faced major obstacles to reform that made it vulnerable to

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[21] Fareed Shafee, "New Geopolitics of the South Caucasus," *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 4, no. 2 (2010): 185.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Matsaberidze, "Russia vs. EU/US," 83.

[25] Ararat L. Osipian and Alexandr L. Osipian, "Why Donbass Votes for Yanukovych: Confronting the Ukrainian Orange Revolution," *Demokratizatsiya* 14, no.4 (2006): 495–6, 511–2.

[26] Olexiy Haran, "From Victor to Victor: Democracy and Authoritarianism in Ukraine," *Demokratizatsiya* 19, no. 2 (2011): 98–100.

[27] Ibid., 105.

Russian influence. The Soviet legacy bureaucracy, a split society and national identity, patrimonial politics, and rampant corruption all contribute to Ukraine's failure to reform.[28] David Matsaberidze writes, "It could be argued that the quick action of Russia, first in Crimea and later in eastern Ukraine, was due to the surprising success of the Maidan and advancement of the Eastern Partnership Program to the Association Agreement, which was seen by Russia as a stepping stone to organizations such as NATO, whose eastward expansion was seen by Russian security officials as a major threat."[29] The West, significantly, has been unable to protect Ukraine and Georgia from Russian aggression.

While Russia was unable to prevent the color revolutions of 2003–2005, future democratic revolutions in former-Soviet countries may still be avoided. In Belarus, Putin and Belarussian leader Alyaksandr Lukashenka have cooperated in ways that protect Belarus from the onrush of democratic ideals.[30] Russia and Belarus maintained close ties after the collapse of the Soviet Union, those ties have enabled Belarus to avoid closer integration with the European community, as other Eastern European countries have done.[31] Belarus instead still ties its identity to a Slavic ethnicity and the Orthodox religion, as does Russia. The United States, the EU, and other European organizations have attempted to encourage a democratic transition in Belarus through the use of diplomatic, political, and economic incentives and punishments. However, because Russia is available to provide support to Belarus, the Western efforts have been stymied and democratization has not taken root.[32] Thus, far, Belarus is safe from a color revolution of its own.

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[28] Robert W. Orttung, "What Hinders Reform in Ukraine?" *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 166* (2011): 3–6.

[29] Matsaberidze, "Russia vs. US/EU," 83.

[30] Thomas Ambrosio, "The Political Success of Russia-Belarus Relations: Insulating Minsk from a Color Revolution," *Demokratizatsiya* 14, no. 3 (2006): 407–8.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., 414–421.

3.   Domestic Policies

In light of the spread of color revolutions in a brief span of time, Putin's regime had to be concerned that Russia, too, might experience a color revolution of its own. Thus, the Russian government took steps to eliminate the danger of a domestic uprising. Finkel and Brudny argue that the Putin regime successfully prevented a Russian color revolution by coopting the democracy-promotion strategies and turning them to the benefit of the government.[33] The policies that Russia used to counteract the threat of a color revolution include isolationist policies and anti-Western propaganda, alterations to the electoral process, increased media censorship, restrictions on NGOs, and the development of a pro-regime youth movement.

In preventing a color revolution in Russia, Putin's regime first had to develop ideological strategies of anti-Westernism and state sovereignty to counter the pro-democratic movements. Gleb Pavlovsky, a Kremlin consultant used print media and Internet to spread the message against the color revolutions. Regime change through protest was condemned as a Western plot to build anti-Russian states that would threaten Russian sovereignty and destroy the region's culture.[34]

Putin and his allies in the Russian government claimed that a color revolution in Russia would be a return to Yeltsin's era of a weak state and economy.[35] Other officials claimed the color revolutions violated principles of national sovereignty and advocated a concept of sovereign democracy, which would better fit Russia that the Western conception of liberal democracy.[36] In blaming the West for the color revolutions, Russian officials were able to go further: were Russia to intervene in Georgia or Ukraine, it would be to help those countries regain their independence, not to overthrow a truly democratically elected government.[37]

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[33] Evgeny Finkel and Yitzhak M. Brudny, "Russia and the Colour Revolutions," *Democratization* 19, no. 1 (2012): 15–16.

[34] Finkel and Brudny, "Russia and the Colour Revolutions," 26–28.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

Furthermore, Russia has embarked on a course of deglobalization. Despite joining the WTO in 2012, the Russian government has commenced a program to undermine foreign trade and investment. Starting as early as 2006, with a takeover of foreign investment in Gazprom, Russia has prevented foreign investment in major sectors of the economy.[38] By 2012, Russia's economy slowed as oil prices and productivity flattened out. Instead of conducting reforms needed to energize the economy (which would endanger the elites' control of profits), Russia has increased its economic isolation by continuing to reduce foreign investment and imports.[39] This deglobalization increased sharply after the 2014 invasion of Crimea, where Russia responded to Western sanctions with countersanctions, and increased anti-Western propaganda to support Russian isolationism against a hostile world.[40] Moscow argued that reducing imports will allow Russian industry to flourish, but evidence suggests that Russia lacks the resources to compensate for its growing autarky, such as abundant investment capability, technology, and a large domestic market.[41] Russia's isolation is also seen in its export market, which has failed to grow over the past decade.[42]

However, the Putin regime has discovered that it can maintain popularity despite a failing economy, with the help of media propaganda. The media in Russia has become tightly controlled by the government. Opposition media, small in number, are unable to compete with state-controlled media for viewers and readers.[43] Government-influenced media have been used to encourage Russian nationalism and convince the public that Russia's economic woes are a result of external forces.[44] Both deglobalization and media control leave the Russian people increasingly isolated from the outside world, and increasingly hostile to the West.[45] Guriev writes:

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[38] Sergei Guriev, "Deglobalizing Russia," *Carnegie Moscow Center*, December 16, 2015, 1–2.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., 4–5.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

The new social contract, in which the government's legitimacy is based on propaganda rather than on prosperity, actually benefits from isolation. The less trade and investment there is, and the less contact with the West, the easier it is to convince the public that the West is to blame for Russia's hardships.[46]

Isolation also protects the Russian government from the Western efforts to monitor and ensure free and fair elections. After the color revolutions, Russia enacted electoral reform in order to prevent genuine opposition parties to take part in elections that might trigger demonstrations. Legislation enacted in 2005–2006 raised the electoral threshold from 5 percent to 7 percent.[47] It also got rid of the electoral alliances and the single-member district system, and it restricted party registration, party membership, and regional representation of opposition parties.[48] These changes reduced the representation of opposition parties in the legislature down to only one, and created great advantages for Putin's United Russia party.[49] The government has also worked to eliminate domestic and international electoral monitoring. Russia has reduced its domestic election monitoring to a single NGO, which has little power and operates in less than half the electoral districts.[50] On the international front, the OSCE declined to send election monitoring teams to Russia, citing government restrictions that would make it impossible to verify the election.[51]

The 2007 parliamentary elections in Russia illustrate the increasing backsliding away from democracy of Russian politics that has been exacerbated by the color revolutions. DeBardeleben writes, "The underlying argument is that the 'colour revolutions' that took place in other postcommunist countries since November 2003…offered a powerful impetus for Russian elites to 'manage' the 2007 Russian

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[46] Guriev, "Deglobalizing Russia," 5.

[47] Finkel and Brudny, "Russia and the Colour Revolutions," 17.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid., 18.

[51] Ibid.

parliamentary election even more firmly than they had in 2003."[52] The election "management" did not consist of overt voter fraud, but instead used election laws to restrict participants in the election, restricted the gatherings of opposition groups and their access to the media, and generally harassed oppositions leaders and voters in order to discourage their vote.[53] The impetus for these actions was to prevent a color revolution in Russia by avoiding the key ingredients of Ukraine's revolution: an election with divided elite support, a viable opposition party, perceived election fraud, and a society capable of rising up in protest.[54] A subtly managed election could eliminate the first two ingredients, while also avoiding the obvious election fraud that would incite public protest.

NGOs have come under fire in post-color revolution Russia. Shortly after the Orange Revolution, the Russian Duma created a draft of a law designed to significantly restrict the independence of the NGOs operating in Russia. While the law was eventually softened, it still placed substantial restrictions on the ability of NGOs.[55] Furthermore, in 2005 the government created the Civic Chamber, a state organization that was designed to aid interactions between NGOs, citizens, and Russian authorities. Membership to the Civic Chamber, however, was designed in such a way as to ensure that only authority-approved organizations were granted seats. Thus, the Chamber would not challenge the government authority in NGO-related matters.[56] It was further shown to have no power or ability to affect change with the government.[57]

Youth movements were shown to play significant roles in the color revolutions. *Kmara* in Georgia and *Pora* in Ukraine underlined the importance of civil society activism in the promotion of the color revolutions.[58] To counteract the possibility of

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[52] Joan DeBardeleben, "Russia's Duma Elections and the Practice of Russian Democracy," *International Journal* 63, no. 2 (2008): 277.

[53] Ibid., 276

[54] Ibid., 284

[55] Finkel and Brudny, "Russia and the Colour Revolutions," 17.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid., 16–17.

youth activism against the Russian government, Russian officials created their own youth movement—the Youth Democratic Antifascist Movement Nashi, commonly referred to as Nashi, meaning "Ours."[59] This group was officially designed to protect Russia's sovereignty by defeating foreign and domestic threats to Russia (and by extension, to the Putin regime), and to create an active civil society.[60] Nashi also copied the color revolution youth movements by engaging in rallies and marches with artistic and musical performances, dressing in costumes, and using social media to advertise their presence.[61] Within the Nashi Youth, members created a Voluntary Youth Militia, which was to assist police with patrols and guard the Nashi Youth's public events. These militia members were accused of several instances of physical violence against members of the opposition parties.[62] However, the Nashi Youth were ultimately unsuccessful in preventing the anti-regime demonstrations in 2011–2012, and have since been largely disbanded.[63]

D.   THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis assesses the ways in which Russian foreign policy toward the West changed in the aftermath of the color revolutions. It first examines the color revolutions themselves, looking at the causes of the demonstrations and the patterns that emerge from the ways in which the revolutions were conducted. The thesis then examines the reactions of the Russian government to the color revolutions themselves, and how those reactions led to policy changes. The main thrust of this research is to examine the ties between the color revolutions and the Russian foreign policy that was created shortly thereafter in order to examine the trajectory of anti-Westernism that arose in the aftermath of the color revolutions. Finally, the thesis draws a conclusion about the effect of the color revolutions on the Russian government's attitudes toward the West and the implications for Russia's future, and how that future may affect the United States.

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[59] Finkel and Brudny, "Russia and the Colour Revolutions," 18–22.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid., 24.

[63] Eva Hartog, "A Kremlin Youth Movement Goes Rogue," *Moscow Times,* April 08, 2016, http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/a-kremlin-youth-movement-goes-rogue/564935.html.

Three chapters follow this introduction. Chapter II examines how Russia apportioned blame to the West for the color revolutions, through Western involvement in NGOs, youth activism, and the color revolution demonstrations themselves. Chapter III examines Russia's historical narrative of the West's broken promises regarding the perceived expansions of NATO and the EU eastward toward Russia. Chapter IV examines Russia's increasing calls for national sovereignty in the aftermath of the color revolutions, including advocacy by Russian officials for the concept of sovereign democracy to counter Western democracy promotion and electoral monitoring. The thesis concludes with discussion of the findings of the previous chapters, implications for future relationships with Russia, and highlight areas for further research.

II.   BLAMING THE WEST FOR THE COLOR REVOLUTIONS

Kimberly Marten argues that leaders in patrimonial regimes are required to signal strength to their rivals in order to maintain their power. She writes, "This has an important implication for Putin's foreign policy: he can never be seen as giving in to Western pressure."[64] Thus, Putin's strategy has been to blame the West for the color revolutions and to castigate the West for expanding its presence into what the Russian leader considers the Russian sphere of influence. Specifically, Russia blames the color revolutions on Western funding and Western support for the activist groups that led the revolutions. Describing this Russian attitude toward the color revolutions, Yulia Nikitina writes, "The West's way of acting is through the financing of radical, nationalist, neo-fascist and fundamentalist forces, at least that is how it happens in the post-Soviet region, in the opinion of Vladimir Putin. Elections that take place after a coup are merely a cover for those who financed the overthrow."[65] The Russian government has used the idea that the West caused the color revolutions as a pretext to justify its own interventions into countries that have had a "Western-sponsored" regime change.

Russian leaders, in blaming Western influence on the color revolutions, focused their blame on the NGOs and the youth movements that were involved in the color revolutions. Russia claimed that NGOs and youth movements were tools the West used to incite the demonstrations that lead to the color revolutions. This chapter examines the role of NGOs and youth movements in the color revolutions, and the extent of their ties to the United States and the West in general. It also explores the actions Russia has taken to counter the influence of NGOs and youth movements at home and abroad.

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[64] Kimberly Marten, "Putin's Choices: Explaining Russian Foreign Policy and Intervention in Ukraine," *The Washington Quarterly* 38, no.2 (2015): 194.

[65] Yulia Nikitina, "The 'Color Revolutions' and 'Arab Spring' in Russian Official Discourse," *The Quarterly Journal* (2014): 98-99.

A. ROLE OF NGOS AND YOUTH MOVEMENTS IN THE COLOR REVOLUTIONS

Western democracy-promoting NGOs first gained access to the countries of the former Soviet Union following its collapse in 1991 and were mostly allowed freedom to operate as they wished within these countries during the following decade.[66] Pro-democracy youth movements were also enabled by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent opening of political participation in former-Soviet nations, which influenced the rising generation in favor of democratic values and economic liberalization. Furthermore, increased university enrollment through the 1990s concentrated youth activists where they could be mobilized for pro-democratic protest.[67] The prior presence of NGOs and youth activism in the former Soviet countries, the openness of those groups to democratic ideas, and their links to the West made them important factors in the color revolutions.

1. NGO Activity During the Color Revolutions

Western NGOs have played key roles in the color revolutions. U.S.-associated supporters of the color revolutions included the U.S. State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the National Democratic Institute of the Democratic Party (NDI), and the International Republican Institute of the Republican Party (IRI).[68] Two U.S.-associated NGOs, Freedom House and the Open Society Institute, were also supporting the color revolutions.[69] The NGOs provided funding to activists during the color revolutions, assisted with training and public relations, and conducted independent exit polling of the elections.[70] All of the color revolutions were aided by NGOs operating within those nations.

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[66] Sinikukka Saari, "European Democracy Promotion in Russia Before and After the 'Colour' Revolutions," *Democratization* 16, no. 4 (2009): 734-5.

[67] Olena Nikolayenko, "The Revolt of the Post-Soviet Generation: Youth Movements in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine," *Comparative Politics* 39, no. 2 (2007): 171-2, 176-7.

[68] Mohammad Soltanifar, "US—Russian Rivalry in the Caucasus: Towards a New Cold War?" *Global Dialogue* 7, no. 3/4 (2005): 11.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

While it is clear that the NGOs played a role in the color revolutions, the extent of this role is under question. Per Mohammad Soltanifar, Russia and some others argue that the presence of the NGOs undercuts the idea of the revolutions as popularly run. He writes that, "Western media tended to portray the 'revolutions' in Georgia and Ukraine as genuinely popular and indigenous upheavals, largely ignoring the role of U.S. funding and U.S. non-governmental organisations in supporting the anti-regime protest movements in both countries."[71]

U.S. NGO activity during the Rose Revolution was largely focused on election monitoring and reporting as the main form of support to the demonstrators. In Georgia, activists received support from Freedom House and from the Free World Institute, founded by George Soros.[72] During the elections preceding the Rose Revolution, Soros's NGO conducted independent exit polling that indicated results contrary to the official result. This evidence of electoral fraud played a major role in the lead-up to the mass demonstrations that ended up overturning the election results in Georgia.[73] USAID also increased its funding for election monitoring activities during the elections that preceded the Rose Revolution. The National Democratic Institute, also contributed to the election monitoring process.[74]

In Ukraine, many of the same NGOs—Freedom House, USAID, and NDI—also served to monitor for free and fair elections. The election monitoring and exit polling conducted by these and other independent Western-backed NGOs also showed the disparity between the official vote count and the exit polls.[75] Exit polling can be a critical tool in the hands of activists, who can use them as propaganda against the official vote count of the regime.[76] Furthermore, exit polling will appear first, prior to the official

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[71] Soltanifar, "US—Russian Rivalry," 11.

[72] Ibid., 11-12.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Povilas Zielys, "U.S. Security Interests and Democracy Assistance Programs in Georgia and Ukraine," *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review* 11, no. 1 (2013): 177.

[75] Soltanifar, "US—Russian Rivalry," 11-12.

[76] Ibid., 12.

count, giving activists the lead in reporting the votes and forcing the regime to respond to any subsequent discrepancies between the exit polling and the official results.[77]

The U.S. support for the Tulip Revolution and the desire for democratic reforms that it represented meant that Kyrgyzstan received a great deal of support for its revolution from NGOs already present in the country, who provided funding, coordinate with the youth movement, and conducted election monitoring.[78] The extensive financial assistance given to Kyrgyzstan in the 1990s by the United States and other Western countries led to the presence of a large number of NGOs already in Kyrgyzstan prior to 2005.[79] For example, the Open Society Institute spent $20 million in 2003 in order to back potential democratic movements in the five former Soviet nations of Central Asia, including Kyrgyzstan.[80] Tristan Landry argues that Western-interested parties, under the guise of NGOs, entered Kyrgyzstan for the 2005 elections and facilitated the mass demonstrations in order to protect U.S. interests in the Manas base and Canadian interests in the gold mines.[81] Whether or not it is entirely true that the United States directly contributed to the Tulip Revolution, the Bush administration in 2005 voiced approval for the Tulip Revolution and reiterated its strong commitment to democracy promotion in all of Central Asia.[82] This support furthered the perception that the U.S. government might encourage revolutions in other authoritarian nations.

2. NGO Activity After the Color Revolutions

After the color revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine, NGO participation in those countries did not end. In both countries, election-monitoring NGOs continued to function impartially and draw attention to inconsistencies in later elections.[83] U.S. funding for

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[77] Soltanifar, "US—Russian Rivalry," 12.

[78] Landry, "Colour Revolutions in the Rearview Mirror," 13-14.

[79] Shairbek Juraev, "Kyrgyz Democracy? The Tulip Revolution and Beyond," *Central Asian Survey* 27, no. 3-4 (2008): 255.

[80] Soltanifar, "US—Russian Rivalry," 11.

[81] Landry, "Colour Revolutions in the Rearview Mirror," 13.

[82] Eugene Rumer, "The U.S. Interests and Role in Central Asia after K2," *The Washington Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (2006): 149.

[83] Zielys, "U.S. Security Interests," 186.

NGO assistance to both countries declined in favor of directing funding toward strengthening state institutions, in the hopes of creating common goals between the NGOs and the government.[84] However, the consequence of this funding shift left the NGOs in Georgia and Ukraine unable to fulfill their function as watchdogs for democracy and human rights.[85] U.S. funding also decreased for Georgian and Ukrainian media in the aftermath of the color revolutions, leaving them dependent on local funding and threatening their ability to remain able to report objectively.[86]

In Georgia after the Rose Revolution, U.S. funding and NGO activities notably shifted toward activities that were focused on strengthening the legislative system, now that the candidate favored by the United States was in power. Instead of providing the same assistance to all the parties, the U.S. assistance favored Shevardnadze's ruling party, United National Movement, giving it exclusive access to significant NGO aid.[87] These failures of U.S. funding of NGOs are not a product of any U.S. plan, according to Povilas Zielys. He writes, "This inconsistency in U.S. democracy assistance can be explained by miscalculation rather than intentional bias in favor of incumbent 'rose' and 'orange' leaders….stemming from too rosy assessments of the pace and depth of democratic changes in post-revolution Georgia and Ukraine."[88]

Kyrgyzstan's relations with the United States worsened after the Tulip Revolution, despite the U.S. support for the Tulip revolution and the desire for democratic reforms that it represented. As the new leader of Kyrgyzstan, Bakiyev showed little interest in reaching out to the West. Educated and trained in the Soviet Union, he looked to Russia and China to consolidate his power.[89] Shortly after coming to power, he made a visit to Russia to confer with Putin and reaffirm their relationship and the primacy

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[84] Zielys, "U.S. Security Interests," 186.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid., 186-7.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Sari, "Foreign Policy of Kyrgyzstan," 142-3.

of their influence in Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy.[90] Bakiyev also prioritized Kyrgyzstan's membership in the Shanghai Cooperative Organization (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) over their membership in the more Western-dominated organizations.[91] He even withdrew from lucrative Western aid, rejecting membership in the Highly Indebted Poor Countries program of the IMF. Instead, Bakiyev received substantial loans from Russia.[92] Russia and China, being such close neighbors geographically, could perhaps be more relied on to aid Bakiyev if he ran into trouble maintaining domestic power.

Meanwhile, the United States was signaling that it might not be a reliable ally to the Central Asian regimes. By supporting the Tulip Revolution and in criticizing the Andijan crisis that occurred in Uzbekistan shortly afterward, the United States signaled to the Central Asian countries that democracy promotion would take precedence over maintaining relationships with the regimes in power.[93] The U.S. approval of the Tulip Revolution soured relations with other Central Asian countries, especially Uzbekistan, that feared for the stability of their own regimes.[94] Eugene Rumer writes, "If the United States was willing to break relations with Uzbekistan, its closest ally in Central Asia, and welcome the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan…what was the rest of the region to expect? Clearly, the United States was prepared to sacrifice stability for the sake of democracy, a trade-off that was unpalatable to Central Asian leaders."[95] The price of democracy promotion left Washington more reliant on Kyrgyzstan to achieve its mission in Central Asia—logistical support for Operation Enduring Freedom.

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[90] Sari, "Foreign Policy of Kyrgyzstan," 142-3.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Irina Morozova, "External Powers' Influence Upon the Reform and Political Elites in Present Kyrgyzstan," *Caucasian Review of International Relations* 3, no. 1 (2009): 92.

[93] Rumer, "U.S. Interests and Role in Central Asia," 141. In May 2005, Uzbek troops in Andijan fired on peaceful civilians protesting the trial of local businessmen who had been charged with Islamic extremism. The United States government criticized Uzbekistan's excessive use of force, which caused the deaths of hundreds of unarmed civilians.

[94] Ibid., 148.

[95] Ibid.

3. Youth Movements in the Color Revolutions

The color revolutions were each aided by youth movements within their respective countries, which played a major role in driving enthusiasm for democracy and free elections. These movements were dominated by university students, whose populations had been rising significantly in the past decade, providing a high concentration of students to create networks of protestors.[96] In Georgia, there was the *Kmara*! (Enough!) movement, formed in February 2003.[97] The *Kmara!* youth used a variety of means to attract followers to their cause: Get Out the Vote concerts, publications, and protests against the government and the police, who cracked down on the protests.[98] *Kmara!* also received funding from Western NGOs. Reports from Georgian media indicated that George Soros's foundations had given $5 million in funding to the *Kmara*! movement.[99]

In Ukraine, the youth movement was known as *Pora*, emerging less than a year before the Orange Revolution. *Pora*, meaning "It's time," rallied demonstrators using cell phones and text messages and used posters and flyers to spread the word of the demonstrations,[100] much like Kmara! did in Georgia. Along with demands for free elections, freedom of the press, the accurate reporting of the elections was also a main concern for *Pora*. The Ukrainian youth movement was distinct in that it relied heavily on local businesses for funding for printing, communication, and transportation, capitalizing on the frustrations of business owners, who disliked the excessive regulatory bureaucracy of the current government.[101] Along with local funding, the *Pora* youth movement also received funding from the Freedom House NGO.[102]

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[96] Nikolayenko, "Revolt of the Post-Soviet Generation," 179-81.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Landry, "Colour Revolutions in the Rearview Mirror," 8-9.

[100] Ibid., 11-13.

[101] Nikolayenko, "Revolt of the Post-Soviet Generation," 179-81.

[102] Landry, "Colour Revolutions in the Rearview Mirror," 12-13.

Kyrgyzstan's youth movement, called *Kelkel* ("Resistance"), was active during the Tulip revolution. Although *Kelkel* only numbered approximately 300 members, the Akayev leadership in Kyrgyzstan both feared the group and sought to undermine it in the months leading up to the Tulip Revolution.[103] Members of *Kelkel* acknowledged that their organization was modeled after the youth movements of the previous color revolutions and was poised to use the highly effective means of social mobilization used by its predecessors.[104] *Kelkel* in Kyrgyzstan is also claimed to have received money from the Soros Foundation.[105] Nonetheless, with so few members, the group ultimately had a limited effect on the Tulip Revolution; it was active only in Bishkek. Another youth group, called *Birge*, was also active during the Tulip Revolution, though to a lesser extent.[106]

Other informal youth movements in Kyrgyzstan played significant parts in the Tulip Revolution, especially in the restive southern regions of the country. In southern Kyrgyzstan, it is relatively common to see informal youth groups develop that serve as self-help associations between peers. These groups, called jo'ralar, were able to be co-opted by influential supporters of the Tulip Revolution and used to assist with the revolutionary demonstrations taking place outside the capital.[107] These youth groups, usually working with a politician or businessman representing the opposition to the current government as their support, participated in a variety of demonstrations in the regions near Osh, Jalalabad, Naryn, and Talas, covering most of the southern areas of the country.[108] These protests were not coordinated, but together, they were effective. The control of these groups by the opposition candidates prevented them from devolving into

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[103] Landry, "Colour Revolutions in the Rearview Mirror," 14-5.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Alisher Khamidov, "Kyrgyzstan's Revolutionary Youth: Between State and Opposition," *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 26, no. 2 (2006): 86-8.

[107] Ibid., 90-1.

[108] Ibid.

violence, which helped gain the support of the local populations and greatly contributed to their success.[109]

B.   **RUSSIAN REACTION TO THE TOOLS OF THE COLOR REVOLUTIONS**

According to Karrie Koesel and Valerie Bunce, a key aspect of Russia's reaction to the color revolutions is the worry over diffusion—that the ideas that have infected Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan will somehow spread into Russia itself, where protests could damage or destroy the Putin regime. Therefore, the Russian response to the color revolutions was to demobilize the same domestic groups that have the potential to create a color revolution in Russia.[110] Within Russia, NGOs, and youth movements, along with other political and domestic groups, have been either repressed or coopted. Putin has put laws into effect that restrict NGOs and civil associations within Russia.[111] He has also created a pro-government youth movement in an attempt to co-opt youth activism and cracked down on domestic protest.[112]

1.   **Russia's Reaction to NGOs**

Russian attitudes toward western NGOs were largely positive in the 1990s, and the NGOs, along with the Western democracies from which they originated, were willing to give Russia the benefit of the doubt as it appeared to be headed down a slow road to democracy.[113] Despite allegations of rigged elections in the 1990s, the West continued to support Yeltsin and overlook the nondemocratic events of his tenure.[114] Putin, too, was given the benefit of the doubt when first elected, and his pro-Western foreign policy met with little criticism from the West.[115] However, reports from NGOs painted a picture of

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[109] Khamidov, "Kyrgyzstan's Revolutionary Youth," 90-1.

[110] Karrie J. Koesel and Valerie J. Bunce, "Diffusion-Proofing: Russian and Chinese Responses to Waves of Popular Mobilizations Against Authoritarian Rulers," *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 3 (2013): 757-8.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Finkel and Brudny, "Russia and the Colour Revolutions," 22-26.

[113] Saari, "European Democracy Promotion in Russia," 736-42.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid.

consolidated elite power and a shift toward increasing authoritarianism as conflict arose between the NGOs and the Putin government.[116]

Both government officials and academics have been quick to paint foreign NGOs as regime-change agents of Western democracies.[117] While Russia has very limited ability to influence the NGOs operating in the other countries, Putin has introduced laws in Russia that prevent the formation and funding of foreign NGOs. In 2004, Putin claimed that NGOs were prioritizing acquiring funding from wealthy foreign donors over their primary missions. Since then, restrictions on NGOs in Russia have increased.[118] Nicolas Bouchet writes, "Russia's emerging take on countering color revolutions focused on neutralizing their 'soft power' channels, such as in information and communications, civil society and elections, rather than on 'hard power' prevention or suppression."[119]

The Putin regime is also countering NGOs domestically by attempting to create alternative institutions that would serve the same functions as NGOs. This effort began to be realized with the 2005 creation of an official state institution call the Civic Chamber (*Obshchestvennaya Palata),* which had the ostensible mission to serve as a mediator between NGOs, citizens of Russia, and state authorities.[120] However, the elections for members of the Civic Chamber were conducted in such a way as to ensure that membership consisted of only authority-approved people, who would not challenge the government.[121]

Russia is also countering Western NGOs through the creation of its own international organizations to challenge Western democracy-promotion efforts. In 2007, Russia established the Institute for Democracy and Cooperation, which included branches in Paris and New York (the New York branch closed in 2015). The stated goals of the

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[116] Saari, "European Democracy Promotion in Russia," 736-42.

[117] Koesel and Bunce, "Diffusion-Proofing," 757.

[118] Nicolas Bouchet, "Russia's 'Militarization' of Colour Revolutions," *Policy Perspectives* 4, no. 2 (2016): 2.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Finkel and Brudny, "Russia and the Colour Revolutions," 17.

[121] Ibid.

institute are to further the debate with NGOs and the public over election monitoring and the electoral process, along with rights of national minorities, children, and freedom of speech.[122] Additionally, Russia established the Russian World Foundation, which funds Russian international NGOs and finances organizations that work with Russian communities abroad.[123] Saari writes, "It is remarkable that while criticizing Western actors for funding civil society activity in Russia and thus interfering in its internal affairs, Russia is simultaneously openly stepping up its engagement in counter-promotion and anti-assistance."[124]

2. Russia's Reaction to Youth Movements

Russia perceives the risk of the youth movements in their capacity for diffusion from one country to another. The youth movements that Russia claims have been influenced by the West can continue to spread their ideas to other nations of the former Soviet Union, including Russia. Landry claims that this diffusion is already ongoing. He argues that the youth movements of the color revolutions have not arisen completely independently, but have grown and spread their messaging from each other.[125] He claims that the *Kmara*! movement in Georgia was trained in part by a previous youth movement, *Otpor*, from Serbia, which was in turn trained and assisted by Western-associated NGOs. Activists from *Otpor* also trained the *Pora* youth movement in Ukraine.[126] The diffusion of the youth movements then allows for their promotion of democratic reform, and the training that they received from the NGOs, to be exported to foment uprising against other undemocratic regimes in the region. With diffusion, the possibility that these youth movements, armed with Western training and funding, could further spread into Russia itself and replicate the color revolutions there, poses a significant threat in the eyes of the Putin regime.[127]

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[122] Saari, "European Democracy Promotion in Russia," 747.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Landry, "Colour Revolutions in the Rearview Mirror," 7-8, 12.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.

Alisher Khamidov declares, "Post-Soviet political elites share two common features in their attitudes toward youth: one, they fear youth involvement in politics, and two, they want to control it."[128] As a response to the youth movements of the color revolutions, in 2005 Putin created his own youth movement in Russia, called The Youth Democratic Antifascist Movement, or informally, *Nashi* (Ours), in an attempt to co-opt one of the means by which the color revolutions organized. *Nashi* was organized to fight the enemies of Russia, which consisted of, in their minds, a combination of liberals, fascists, Western sympathizers, international NGOs, and international terrorist groups, all united by their hatred of Putin and his leadership in Russia. Officially, *Nashi*'s goals were to fight these enemies and preserve Russian sovereignty.[129] Landry writes, "*Nashi* conducted an awareness campaign in universities to get students to think about the threat to Russia of a unipolar world dominated by the United States."[130]

Like the other youth movements, the *Nashi* activists held rallies, used social media, and conducted election monitoring and exit polling, though in this case in support of the incumbent regime.[131] Unlike the other youth movements, the *Nashi* youth also formed a military arm, called the Voluntary Youth Militia, whose official duties were to assist police forces in security during the public events conducted by the *Nashi* movement.[132] The militia forces, however, have been accused of using violent tactics against vocal opponents of the government.[133] *Nashi* remained active through the elections of 2008, and then faded from view as the color revolution threat became a distant memory.[134] Despite the cooption of youth by the government, a pro-democracy youth movement did briefly appear in Russia, called *Oborona* (Defense), but it failed to gain traction in the political realm.[135]

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[128] Khamidov, "Kyrgyzstan's Revolutionary Youth," 85.

[129] Landry, "Colour Revolutions in the Rearview Mirror," 22-23.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Finkel and Brudny, "Russia and the Colour Revolutions," 22-26.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid.

Russian officials also discouraged potential youth movements through a general crackdown on public demonstrations in Russia. While previous demonstrations in Russia were small and posed little threat to the Putin regime and the United Russia party, the police presence and the arrests of prominent figures during the demonstrations were effective in discouraging broader participation by the Russian public should they attempt color revolution style protests in the wake of a perceived fraudulent election.[136] DeBardeleben writes, "The Russian leadership undermined this potential by making clear that political protests would be punished, simultaneously raising the cost to those participating in demonstrations and impressing on the public that opposition parties were unlikely to prevail."[137] Even immediately after the color revolutions, however, a popular revolution in Russia that successfully manages to topple the Russian government seemed unlikely. Successful revolutions require well-coordinated action, and the Russian government had worked to disarm and co-opt youth movements and public demonstrations.[138]

C.   RUSSIA'S NEGATIVE FRAMING OF THE COLOR REVOLUTIONS

While the tension of East versus West is a prominent theme of the color revolutions as seen from Russia, it is not the only issue. Also at stake is a struggle within Russia over the constitution of Russian values and identity, and the conception of Russia as both a strong state actor and as a democracy. Since Russia emerged from the Soviet Union in 1991, democracy has been a major aspect of its identity, differentiating the new state from what came before.[139] Thus, Russian national identity was tied to both the idea of Russia as a Great Power and Russia as a democracy.[140]

The color revolutions challenged the idea of Russian democracy. Because they were, at heart, movements aimed at throwing out corrupt and undemocratic leaders aligned with Russia, what did that mean for Russia's claim to democracy? Per Stefanie

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[136] DeBardeleben, "Russia's Duma Elections," 286.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Marten, "Putin's Choices," 200-1.

[139] Ortmann, "Diffusion as Discourse of Danger," 364-5.

[140] Ibid.

Ortmann, in order for Russian leaders to maintain Russia's image as a democracy, they had to find another reason to oppose the color revolutions that did not implicate the Russian government as being against democratic movements and self-determination. Instead, they settled on a narrative that framed the color revolutions as instigated by the West, which countered the image of the color revolutions as popular, local uprisings, and also allowed Russia to imply that Western forces would conduct similar revolutions at home.[141] Ortmann writes, "However, the dominant narrative put forward by Kremlin insiders was that the Orange Revolutions was part of an American plan, implemented with the help of covert operations by foreign NGOs, the financing of opposition movements and logistical support for youth groups—and that the U.S. would attempt to export this revolutionary model even further."[142]

The color revolutions were further portrayed by the Russian government as illegal coups d'état, that can only occur in "young states" that still have fragile political institutions. Russian officials accused the United States and its allies of circumventing the normal democratic process in these countries by facilitating revolution instead of working within the existing government.[143] Furthermore, Russian officials began to challenge the Western standards of democracy and international democracy promotion, and to counter them with their own organizations. Saari writes, "It is remarkable that while criticizing Western actors for funding civil society activity in Russia and thus interfering in its internal affairs, Russia is simultaneously openly stepping up its engagement in counter-promotion and anti-assistance."[144]

The Tulip Revolution was not such a shock to Russian identity as were the revolutions in Georgia and especially in Ukraine, ancestral homeland of the Kievan Rus.[145] However, the Tulip Revolution, coming so soon after the other two, seemed to confirm suspicions that these revolutions were part of a "wave" that threatened to engulf

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[141] Ortmann, "Diffusion as Discourse of Danger," 368-9.

[142] Ibid., 368.

[143] Nikitina, "The 'Color Revolutions,'" 88-9.

[144] Saari, "European Democracy Promotion in Russia," 747.

[145] Ortmann, "Diffusion as Discourse of Danger," 368-9.

all of the former Soviet sphere. It also served as further "evidence" that the United States was involved in conducting regime changes in order to facilitate its goals of spreading democracy and U.S. influence.[146] One revolution is upsetting, a second revolution could be a coincidence, but a third revolution constituted a disturbing pattern that needed to be addressed to prevent further spread.

Russia has succeeded in convincing its public that the color revolutions were unsuccessful. A mere 3 percent of Russians believe that life improved in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan following their revolutions, and only 6 percent believe the same about the Ukrainian revolution.[147] This campaign has been most successful with Russian youth, 72 percent of whom are opposed to any version of the democratic movements of the color revolutions taking place in Russia.[148]

In order to show strength in the wake of the color revolutions, Russia needed to take steps to prevent the further spread of the color revolutions. Koesel and Bunce argue that both Russia and China used negative framing of the color revolutions to distance their own regimes from the events of the color revolutions. They also argue that the negative framing helped the regimes in Moscow and Beijing to provide further legitimacy by showcasing their ability to protect their own countries from destabilizing Western interference and to promote stability.[149] Koesel and Bunce write, "Measures that seek to contain the contagion effects associated with waves of popular uprising in other authoritarian regimes send a clear signal to ordinary citizens, opposition groups, and regime allies that authoritarian leaders are worried about their hold on power.[150]

D.   CONCLUSION

Sharon Wolchik argues that Russia errs in blaming the United States for the color revolutions. She writes, "It is clear that the successful removal of semi-authoritarian

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[146] Ortmann, "Diffusion as Discourse of Danger," 369.

[147] Koesel and Bunce, "Diffusion-Proofing," 756.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Ibid.

[150] Ibid.

leaders in the region was not…engineered by outside actors, chiefly the United States. On the contrary, domestic actors played the most important roles. It was they who did the tedious, difficult, and at times dangerous work of implementing this model."[151] That said, it is also clear that the domestic actors did not work alone. They did receive funding and training from NGOs, and were able to capitalize on the experience granted by previous successful demonstrations. Domestic activists were taught Western techniques for their campaigns against the regimes. Western election monitors were brought in to monitor the disputed elections. In Georgia and Ukraine, domestic activists could advance the possibility of achieving membership in NATO or the EU as a way to encourage support for democratic electoral reform.[152] The external support received during the color revolutions did make a large impact on both the successes of the demonstrations, and on their ability to spread between countries.[153] Wolchik continues, "In no case did external actors work alone—they always acted as part of transnational coalitions that included domestic oppositionists and civil society organizations as well as veterans of earlier successes."[154]

Russian blame for the color revolutions, however, lies squarely on the West. Moscow used this blame to frame the color revolutions as illegitimate Western-sponsored coups, ensuring that the majority of the Russian population views the color revolutions negatively. Furthermore, leaders used the same the tools of the color revolutions to prevent the occurrence of domestic unrest. Blaming the West for the color revolutions also allows Russian officials to justify any interventions in these and neighboring countries, thus preserving Russia's sphere of influence in the post-Soviet space, and countering expanding Western democracy promotion.

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[151] Sharon L. Wolchik, "Putinism Under Siege: Can There Be a Color Revolution?" *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 3 (2012): 66.

[152] Ibid.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Ibid.

III. RUSSIA'S REACTION TO WESTERN ENCROACHMENT ON RUSSIA'S PERCEIVED SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Fyodor Lyukanov writes:

The wave of "colored revolutions" that swept Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan; the disorder in Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan; and the criticism of the post-Soviet regimes for the absence of democracy or for violations of human rights—these are all parts of Washington's plan to drive Russia out of its sphere of influence and to establish control over it.[155]

Russia has attempted to tie the color revolutions to a Western pattern of encroaching on Russia's sphere of influence, because Russian leaders consider the U.S. democracy promotion efforts as a means of expanding into states within the Russian sphere. Russia has reacted to this perceived Western encroachment by first attempting to counter Western influence through economic and cultural means, and then ultimately by military intervention in Georgia and Ukraine.

This chapter examines Russia's reaction to the perceived encroachment of the West into Russia's sphere of influence. It begins with a discussion of the context for the fear Western encroachment that arose between the collapse of the Soviet Union and the color revolutions: the expansion of NATO membership to Ukraine, the Kosovo Conflict, and the terrorist movement in Chechnya. This chapter then examines the Russian reaction to Western involvement in the specific nations of the color revolutions, culminating in Russian interventions in Belarus, Georgia, and Ukraine.

A. HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE FEAR OF ENCROACHMENT

Russian fears of Western encroachment have a long history. Thomas Graham writes, "That Russian leaders' fear for the survival and territorial integrity of their country must sound odd to most Westerners, fed a steady diet of warning about Russian neo-imperialism, particularly after the 2008 war against Georgia."[156] Still, he asserts,

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[155] Fyodor Lukyanov, "America as the Mirror of Russian Phobias," *Social Research* 72, no. 4 (2005): 860.

[156] Thomas Graham, "The Sources of Russia's Insecurity," *Survival* 52, no. 1 (2010): 55.

they do. He goes on to argue that a major contributor to Russian territorial insecurity is its geopolitical setting and the historical experiences of contested borders, fears of domestic unrest, and a historical experience of systemic collapse, most notably in 1917 and 1991.[157] As expanding NATO alliances absorbed members of the former Soviet Union and drew closer to Russia's borders, domestic terrorism spiked in Chechnya, and Russia feared the possibility of NATO forces overriding the UN and intervening in Russia itself, in order to address accusations of Russian human rights violations in their campaign against Chechen terrorism.[158]

1.   NATO Expansion Toward Ukraine

Russia viewed the eastward expansion of NATO as a security threat—and the closer NATO approached to the former constituent republics of the Soviet Union, the more acute the perceived threat. If Ukraine and Georgia joined NATO, no "buffer zone" would lie between Russia and the Western powers. The maintenance of this buffer zone is a major goal for Russia.[159] Whether or not NATO would have accepted the membership of these countries, Russia viewed the possibility as dangerous enough to demand a muscular response.[160]

From 2002 to 2010, Ukraine's government had been moving toward the possibility of NATO membership. Its 1996 Constitution, written under President Kuchma, did not restrict Ukraine from NATO membership.[161] The NATO-Ukraine Action plan was signed in 2002, which expanded cooperation between Ukraine and NATO, despite a considerable tilt toward Russia in Ukraine's foreign policy at the time.[162] In 2003, Kuchma oversaw the passage of a national security law that proclaimed the Ukrainian desire to join NATO, which added to Russian fears that Ukraine would

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[157] Graham, "Sources of Russia's Insecurity," 56–62.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Matsaberidze, "Russia vs. EU/US," 81.

[160] Ibid.

[161] Haran, "From Victor to Victor," 99.

[162] Kramer, "Ukraine's Orange Evolution," 117–8.

move toward favoring the West over its relationship with Russia.[163] Also in 2003, Kuchma sent Ukrainian forces to participate in the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq, despite strong public opinion against the war in Ukraine. This move was an attempt to maintain good relations with the West, especially because Kuchma wanted to avoid Western criticism should he attempt a third term in office.[164] After the Orange Revolution in 2004, the Yuschenko government also remained on friendly terms with NATO.[165]

After the 2010 elections, Ukraine began to reverse its position toward NATO. Although the Yanukovych government in Ukraine engaged in pro-European rhetoric, its foreign policy was moving toward Russia and away from the West. Under Yanukovych, Russia was reassured of Ukraine's loyalty with the passage of a 2010 law that proclaimed Ukraine's status as a non-aligned nation.[166] Russia's fears were not entirely ameliorated, and the Medvedev government suggested the creation of a commission in order to monitor Ukraine's relationship with NATO.[167] Russia also created financial incentives in the form of a $15 billion aid package to entice the Yanukovych regime into rejecting proposals for closer ties with the West in favor of continuing to align with Russia.[168]

Putin and other Russian officials have claimed that Russia was given assurances by the United States that NATO would not expand eastward after the unification of Germany in 1990.[169] Thus, the expansion of NATO and the extension of NATO partnerships into the former Soviet sphere added to Russian concern that it would lose its influence over the former-Soviet states. While states like Georgia and Ukraine might not have a quick path to NATO membership, it seemed likely that NATO would continue to expand toward Russia, which fed into Russian fears of encroachment by the West.[170]

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[163] Kramer, "Ukraine's Orange Evolution," 118.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Ibid.

[166] Haran, "From Victor to Victor," 99.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Shaun Walker, "Vladimir Putin Offers Ukraine Financial Incentives to Stick with Russia," *The Guardian,* December 18, 2013. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/17.

[169] Matsaberidze, "Russia vs. EU/US," 79.

[170] Ibid.

Putin used this narrative of broken promises as one of the justifications for the annexation of Crimea. He stated that since the West had promised not to enlarge NATO east of post-reunification Germany, the expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe was a broken promise that had humiliated Russia in front of the world.[171] Thus, the annexation of Crimea could be seen as Putin's revenge for the past humiliation of the eastward expansion of NATO.

2. The Kosovo Conflict of 1999

As a result of its non-aligned status during the Cold War, the Yugoslavian region of the Balkans has been of interest to both NATO and Russia. Events in the former Yugoslav republics interested Russia, because it wished to include them in its sphere of influence.[172] During the Cold War, Yugoslavia had been non-aligned, choosing to side neither with NATO forces or join the Warsaw Pact. After the Cold War ended, Russia still felt that the former Soviet Union nations fell under its sphere of influence.[173] Russia also hoped to expand its influence into the Balkans, or at least preventing NATO from gaining influence there, and maintaining the buffer zone that had existed during the Cold War. NATO's interest in the Balkans left Russia feeling vulnerable to NATO encroachment.[174]

In 1998, following outcry over ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, NATO began an intervention against Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević's regime, despite the lack of official sanction from the UN Security Council. Russia, while indicating their willingness to veto a UN resolution in support of the NATO campaign, was not willing to openly support the Serbian regime.[175] NATO conducted a campaign of airstrikes, and, in the face of Russia's unwillingness to intercede on his behalf, Milošević acceded to the UN

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[171] Matsaberidze, "Russia vs. EU/US," 79.

[172] Derek Averre, "From Pristina to Tskhinvali: The Legacy of Operation Allied Force in Russia's Relations with the West," *International Affairs* 85, no.3 (2009): 577.

[173] Ibid.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Mark Webber, "The Kosovo War: A Recapitulation," *International Affairs* 85, no. 3 (2009): 451–2.

and NATO military and peacekeeping intervention into Kosovo.[176] After the airstrike campaign, Russia wished to be involved in the resolution of the conflict, and so both NATO and Russian peacekeepers were part of the UN Kosovo Force (KFOR), and narrowly avoided conflict with each other during the operation.[177] Relations between NATO and Russia over the Kosovo conflict have been fraught. Competing spheres of influence left over from the Cold War meant that both NATO and Russia claim the Balkans as an area of interest. NATO's intervention, without UN sanction, was seen by Russia as an attempt to bring Kosovo under NATO control.[178] Russia did not want NATO establishing footholds in a formerly neutral region near Russia's own border.

NATO's own explanations of Operation Allied Force (OAF) did not help ease Moscow's misgivings. NATO was grappling with two contradictory principles—state sovereignty versus human rights—and had to make the determination when the latter might override the former. The international law was not clear in this area, and NATO did attempt to resolve the contradiction.[179] Derek Averre writes:

> There was a conspicuous lack of legal arguments put by NATO itself in defence of OAF. Was the operation an exceptional deviation from international law, an action based upon a new interpretation of the UN Charter in line with contemporary international law, or an attempted shift to a new position where, in humanitarian crises, the sovereignty of states yields to the protection of peoples?[180]

Russia's reactions to the Kosovo conflict were markedly different from NATO's. Russia was concerned with this potential change in international law, which had negative implications for its own national sovereignty. Furthermore, Russia felt threatened by the willingness of NATO to disregard the requirement for UN approval before unilaterally intervening in a sovereign nation.[181] However, by eventually joining the Kosovo

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[176] Webber, "The Kosovo War," 451–2.

[177] Averre, "From Pristina to Tskhinvali," 576.

[178] Ibid.

[179] Ibid., 578.

[180] Ibid., 578.

[181] Ibid., 580.

intervention, Russia eventually gave its implicit consent to the effort.[182] Russia wanted to enforce a policy of state sovereignty, which would prevent interventions into another state, even under conditions of human rights violations.[183] Russia also wished to prevent what it viewed as the spread of NATO influence further into central and eastern Europe.[184]

Years later, the Russian justification for the intervention in Georgia in 2008 echoed NATO's justification for intervention in Kosovo in 1999. From NATO's Operation Allied Freedom, Russia came away with the perception that NATO, in intervening without the sanction of the UN Security Council, was defying traditional norms of state sovereignty and instead promoting its own interests in Serbia and Kosovo. NATO justified the intervention in Kosovo as a matter of humanitarian rights, using the Responsibility to Protect Doctrine.[185] When Russia intervened in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the Russian government used the same justifications for its violation of a sovereign state.[186] In Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia, Russia appeared more amenable to violating a nation's sovereignty in the name of human rights when it worked in Russia's favor.

3.   Terrorist Threats in Chechnya in the Early 2000s

The ongoing separatist conflict in the Russian territory of Chechnya, which had begun in the 1990s and experienced a violent resurgence from 1999 to 2006, exacerbated Russia's territorial insecurity. The breakup of the Soviet Union had left Russia fearful that further breakup would occur within Russia. After all, there were still many ethnicities left in the Russian republics—perhaps one of those might start its own liberation force and seek independence from Russia.[187] Chechnya, a majority Muslim

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182 Averre, "From Pristina to Tskhinvali," 577.

183 Ibid.

184 Ibid., 576.

185 Ibid., 590.

186 Ibid.

187 Nikolai Petrov and Darrell Slider, "Regional Politics," in *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain,* edited by Stephen K. Wegren, 6th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 66–7.

region in Russia, had declared independence from Russia in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse, and, upon Russia's sending a military force into the area, had conducted an insurgency campaign against the Russians from 1994–1996 that was surprisingly effective. Russia's military, historically trained for conventional war against European adversaries, was ill-suited for countering the Chechnyan insurgency.[188] In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Islamic fundamentalist groups had combined with the Chechnyan separatist movement to attempt to break away from Moscow and establish both Chechen independence and spread Islamic fundamentalism in the region.[189]

The Chechnyan insurgency became more virulent starting in 1999, when insurgents began a campaign into the neighboring Russian region of Dagestan, and committed acts of terror in several major Russian cities. As the Chechnyan terrorism increased through 2004, the blame for the rise of the Chechen terrorists was also attributed to the West.[190] Lukyanov writes, "In other words, terrorists are only an instrument in the hands of Russia's geopolitical rivals, above all the United States, which seem to attain their goals, including the partition of Russia."[191] Furthermore, the terrorist threat gave rise to another fear: that Western organizations would view Russia as unable to control the situation in Chechnya. If the Chechnyan conflict worsened, it could force international involvement in the ongoing crisis, perhaps dictating a settlement that would either give Chechnya autonomous power within the Russian Federation, or even granting Chechnya outright independence.[192] Like the intervention in Kosovo, the Putin regime could imagine NATO forces entering Chechnya to counter reported human rights violations, at the expense of Russia's territorial sovereignty.[193] Russia also worried about the spread of violence into other regions of Russia, particularly Dagestan and Ingushetia, destabilizing a large area in Russia and leading to further secession movements.[194]

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[188] Petrov and Slider, "Regional Politics," 66–7.

[189] Graham, "Sources of Russia's Insecurity," 65.

[190] Lukyanov, "Russian Phobias," 862–3.

[191] Ibid.

[192] Graham, "Sources of Russia's Insecurity," 65.

[193] Ibid.

[194] Ibid.

In 2006, Russian officials declared victory over the Chechen threat, but militant Islamic groups have continued to spread in the North Caucuses region of Russia, which contains Chechnya and several other federal republics within Russia. Violence in the North Caucuses also has the potential to link up with the separatist movement taking place in the South Caucuses nations of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and continue to cause instability in the region.[195] Also, Russia fears that militant Islam could spread further into Russia itself, especially into the heavily Muslim-populated areas of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, which are located in a region through which run vital connections between Moscow and the Russian Far East. Terrorist disruptions in Tatarstan or Bashkortostan could cause major disruptions to the Russian state.[196] The threat of domestic terrorism is still very present in Russia.

B.   COUNTERING WESTERN INFLUENCE IN UKRAINE AND KYRGYZSTAN

Another Russian response to the color revolutions was to work to ensure that the countries involved would stay economically dependent on Russia, another area in which Russia could exert its influence over the region. However, the economic vulnerabilities of these countries also contributed to the fragility of their governments in the face of the color revolution uprisings.[197] Lucan Way notes that: "Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine all lacked key economic and organizational resources, which made these regimes particularly vulnerable to elite defection or modest opposition mobilization—even in the midst of robust economic growth, as in Georgia or Ukraine."[198]

Russia has used economic means to increase its soft power in the region. Russia has also increased its soft power in the former Soviet states through its role as the largest migrant-receiving country in the world, mostly from the other former Soviet states.[199]

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[195] Graham, "Sources of Russia's Insecurity," 65.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Lucan Way, "The Real Causes of the Color Revolutions," *Journal of Democracy* 19, no. 3 (2008): 67.

[198] Ibid.

[199] Jonavicus, "Window of Opportunity," 27.

These migrants send remittances back to their home nations, which both aid their economies back home and also give Russia important social and psychological links with the people who work as migrants or who are supported by the remittances.[200] Jonavicus writes, "Image of Russia as the country in which it is possible to earn more money than in your own country significantly increases Russia's 'soft power'…which allow to earn more and live better."[201] This stands in contrast with the EU, which restricts the number of migrant workers from outside its borders.[202] This further strengthens ties between non-EU member nations of the former Soviet Union and Russia.

1.   Energy Conflict in Ukraine After the Orange Revolution

After the Orange Revolution, Russia used economic pressure on Ukraine as a means of influencing Ukrainian policy toward greater cooperation with Russia. Jonavicus writes, "External trade structure and economic relations in both Ukraine and Georgia are very interrelated with Russia due to common soviet history. Even though the trade balance is almost equally distributed between Russia and the EU, strategic relationship (especially in the energy sphere) is clearly more beneficial for Russia."[203] Ukraine especially has an unbalanced trade relationship with Russia. Ukraine relies on Russia for energy, and also relies on Russia as a key consumer for Ukrainian exports. Russia, on the other hand, has the ability to sell energy to other states and make up for the loss of Ukrainian trade.[204] Thus, Russia has the upper hand when negotiating trade deals.

After the Orange Revolution, Russia enacted a major shift in its energy policy toward Ukraine. Ukraine has an economy that is a major consumer of energy (three times that of Germany's energy consumption per unit of GDP), and heavily dependent on Russia as the supplier of that energy in natural gas and oil. Prior to 2004, Ukraine received energy subsidies and relaxed payment deadlines from Russia, leaving Ukraine

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[200] Jonavicus, "Window of Opportunity," 27.

[201] Ibid.

[202] Ibid.

[203] Ibid.

[204] Ibid.

little reason to try to reduce its energy dependence.[205] After the Orange Revolution, Gazprom and the other Russian energy companies threatened to rescind their deals with Ukraine, and cut off Ukraine's energy supplies if the country did not pay the new higher prices.[206] Pricing disputes went on until 2006, when Gazprom followed through on its threat to cut off energy supplies to Ukraine for several days, convincing Ukraine to resolve the dispute in Russia's favor. Not only did the Russian energy companies receive payments on their higher prices, Gazprom also received control over all of Ukraine's imports of natural gas via a shell company.[207] Furthermore, Russian energy companies have been using their profits to purchase equity stakes in Ukrainian companies that control large sectors of the country's economy, and increase their influence in Ukraine.[208]

The Yanukovych government was able to reverse the higher prices in exchange for greater cooperation with Russia. In 2010, Ukraine and Russia signed a deal in which Russia would reduce the price of gas for Ukraine by one-third, in exchange for a 25-year extension on the lease to the naval base in Sevastopol, despite the fact that hosting foreign troops permanently on Ukrainian soil violates the Ukrainian Constitution.[209] Russia's willingness to use energy prices as a bargaining chip for greater influence in Ukraine seemed largely successful even in the wake of the Orange Revolution, and especially under the Yanukovych government.

2. Economic Influence in Kyrgyzstan After the Tulip Revolution

After the Tulip Revolution, Russia used economic means to secure further influence in Kyrgyzstan that the Russia-friendly Bakiyev regime was happy to accept. Russia has taken advantage of the massive corruption present in Kyrgyzstan's energy sector. In 2008, Kyrgyzstan officials announced the privatization of the nation's gas company, Kyrgyzgaz, in preparation for its potential sale, along with other hydroelectric

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[205] Kramer, "Ukraine's Orange Evolution, 116."

[206] Ibid.

[207] Ibid.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Ibid.

and telecom companies.[210] Russia's gas giant, Gazprom, immediately purchased a stake in the company, and agreed to assist with the privatization of Kyrgyzgaz.[211] Ultimately, Gazprom purchased Kyrgyzgaz outright, in exchange for covering Kyrgyzgaz's $40 billion in debt, and secured a deal that allows them the rights to all gas exports out of Kyrgyzstan for the next 25 years.[212] In 2009, Bakiyev received a generous loan package from Russia, including debt forgiveness, hundreds of millions in low-interest loans, and support for a $1.7 billion hydroelectric dam.[213] Russia was willing to expend serious financial aid to reassert its influence in Kyrgyzstan with the new post-revolution government, and they were happy to accept.

Toward the end of Bakiyev's presidency, relations with Russia soured. Bakiyev, perhaps confident of his power consolidation, turned toward the United States after the 2009 elections.[214] Russia had offered Kyrgyzstan $2 billion in emergency relief as Kyrgyzstan had called for the closure of the Manas Transit Center, a facility being used by the United States in order to transport troops into Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom. Once Bakiyev changed course and signed a new deal with the United States for the Manas Transit Center, Russia rescinded the emergency relief, but not before the damage to Russia's regional influence and prestige was noticed.[215] Russia was unhappy with change, and Putin accused Kyrgyzstan leaders of failing to keep their promises to Russia.[216] In retaliation, Putin used Russian TV stations (popular in Kyrgyzstan) to publicly accuse Bakiyev and his family of corruption.[217] Furthermore, Russia rescinded preferred customs taxes to Kyrgyzstan, creating price increases on important imports

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[210] Erica Marat, "Criminalization of the Kyrgyz State Before and After the Tulip Revolution," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 6, no. 2 (2008): 19.

[211] Maria Kiselyova, "Russia's Gazprom Signs MoU on Kyrgyzgaz Stake Sale," *Reuters,* October 9, 2008, http://www.reuters.com/article/gazprom-kyrgyzstan-idUSL965572620081009.

[212] "Gazprom buys out Kyrgyzgaz for $1," *Russia Today,* April 10, 2014, https://www.rt.com/business/gazprom-kyrgyzgaz-buys-out-580.

[213] Sari, "Foreign Policy of Kyrgyzstan," 143.

[214] Alexander Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 66.

[215] Ibid.

[216] Sari, "Foreign Policy of Kyrgyzstan," 144.

[217] Ibid.

from Russia, especially oil. This had a severe impact on the country's economy and political instability.[218] Perhaps due to the worsening relations between the Russian and Kyrgyzstan governments, Russia did not intervene in Kyrgyzstan to prevent the collapse of the Bakiyev regime in 2010, either solo or through the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) (an organization of which both Russia and Kyrgyzstan are members), despite pleas from Kyrgyzstan's interim president for aid.[219]

C.   BUFFER ZONES: RIVALRY IN THE FORMER-SOVIET SPACE AFTER THE COLOR REVOLUTIONS

The threat of the color revolutions has contributed to the Russian fears of regional instability. In an article for the Rossiiskaya Gazeta, Putin alluded to the perceived fear of instability caused by the color revolutions and other mass uprisings, writing, "We continue to see new areas of instability and deliberately managed chaos. There also are purposeful attempts to provoke such conflicts even within the direct proximity of Russia's and its allies' borders."[220] Russia's desire to maintain its sphere of influence in the post-Soviet space also serves to protect Russia from what it sees as potential threats from the West. Russia sees encroachment into these spaces in Ukraine's closer ties with the EU, with U.S. democracy-promotion efforts in the Caucasus nations, and with U.S. agreements in Central Asia that facilitate troop movements to Afghanistan

1.   Countering Western Influence in Ukraine

The events of the Orange Revolution upset Russia's own intervention in Ukrainian politics. The Putin regime was involved in the 2004 elections in Ukraine that lead to the Orange Revolution. Putin favored the election of Victor Yanukovych as an essential means of securing a pro-Russian government in Ukraine, so Russia provided both funding and political advisors to Yanukovych's campaign.[221] The subsequent events

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[218] Sari, "Foreign Policy of Kyrgyzstan," 144.

[219] Cai Wilkinson, "Giving the State a Bad Name? Kyrgyzstan and the Risk of State Failure," *Global Dialogue* 13, no. 1 (2011): 112.

[220] Vladimir Putin, "Being Strong: National Security Guarantees for Russia," *The Official Site of the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation,* February 20, 2011. http://premier.gov.ru/eng/events/news/ 18185.

[221] Saari, "European Democracy Promotion in Russia," 74.

of the Orange Revolution prevented Yanukovych from assuming power and also humiliated Russian leaders, who felt their influence in Ukraine slipping away.[222]

Ukraine's view of both the United States and Russia remained fairly positive even after the Orange Revolution. In 2007, a majority of Ukrainians (54 percent) held favorable views of the United States, despite a drop in favorability that occurred in the aftermath of the U.S. decision to invade Iraq, and despite a decline in support for NATO after the Kosovo conflict.[223] Also in 2007, Ukrainian perceptions of Russia were even better, with 81 percent of Ukrainians expressing a favorable view of Russia, despite the events of the previous years.[224] Kramer writes, "Nor have Ukrainians' favorable perceptions of Russia been eroded by bilateral tensions surrounding the Orange Revolution, Russia's interference in Ukraine's 2004 elections, and the January 2006 cutoff of natural gas supplies to Ukraine."[225]

After the Orange Revolution, Ukraine's friendliness to the West caused Russia to fear Ukraine might be incorporated into the EU. Matsaberidze writes, "This is the main security threat to the Russian state: with the incorporation of Georgia and Ukraine into the EU and NATO, the so called 'buffer zone' between Russia and the West will disappear and the military block will border Russia itself."[226] Were Ukraine and Georgia to join the EU, there would no longer be a "buffer zone" between Russia and the Western powers. The maintenance of this buffer zone is a major goal for Russia.[227] Whether or not the EU would have accepted the membership of Ukraine, Russia viewed the possibility as dangerous enough to provoke a response. In 2009, the EU began a program called the Eastern Partnership, which was designed to enhance the relationships developed by the European Neighborhood Policy with several countries of the former

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222 Saari, "European Democracy Promotion in Russia," 74.

223 Kramer, "Ukraine's Orange Evolution," 117.

224 Ibid.

225 Ibid.

226 Matsaberidze, "Russia vs. EU/US," 81.

227 Ibid.

Soviet Union: Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.[228] In 2010, however, pro-Russian Victor Yanukovych was elected to the presidency of Ukraine, who was willing to enact closer ties with Russia in exchange for financial incentives from Russia.[229] This soothed Russian fears that Ukraine would chose to partner with the West instead of with Russia.

2.   Rivalry in Georgia After the Rose Revolution.

The United States increased its influence in Georgia after the Rose Revolution. Soltanifar writes:

> The battle for influence in the region is fiercest between Russia and the United States. Russia is seeking to foster its longtime political, economic and military domination of the Caucasus, while the United States has invested in the Caucasian energy sector and developed military co-operation with a number of Caucasian countries, undoubtedly in the hope of boosting its penetration of the region.[230]

In 2005, the United States policy toward the nations of the Caucasus is to encourage national independence of the former Soviet republics, and to prevent the increase of Russian, Iranian, or Chinese influence over those nations. They also sought to increase access to energy resources, continue democracy promotion activities, and prevent the spread of radical Islam.[231] Washington was also encouraging the idea of NATO expansion into the Caucasus region, opening the door to the possibility of NATO membership for Georgia, along with neighboring Armenia and Azerbaijan.[232]

U.S. democracy promotion in the Georgia also benefits U.S. national security interests in the region. Soltanifar writes, "In backing the independence of Caucasian and Central Asian nations…Washington seeks the emergence of wealthy and democratic countries that are oriented towards the United States and that will be hospitable towards

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[228] Graham, "Sources of Russian Insecurity," 65.

[229] Haran, "From Victor to Victor," 98–100.

[230] Soltanifar, "US—Russian Rivalry in the Caucasus," 8.

[231] Ibid., 9–10.

[232] Ibid.

its objectives in the region."[233] These goals undermine Russia's influence in the region. With U.S. backing and funding Russia cannot use economic incentives and punishments as leverage to control these nations.

Russian influence does not have the same strength in Georgia as it does in Ukraine. Georgia is not as dependent on Russian energy, has a smaller population of ethnic Russians, and is less connected to Russian sources of media.[234] Jonavicus hypothesizes that the relative lack of Russian influence in Georgia was a contributing factor to Russia's decision to undertake military intervention in the country in 2008. He writes: "Since Russia's contemporary identity is based on the notion of the one of the centres of the international politics in the multi-polar world, the spread of its distinctive political, economic, and cultural way of life is seen as a natural and organic way to sustain its traditional sphere of influence."[235] When Russia's inability to successfully influence Georgia via soft power failed, Russia then resorted to all other means to retain its position over a key former-Soviet nation.

3.   Battle for Post-9/11 Basing Rights in Kyrgyzstan

After the September 11 attacks, the United States, in need of transport routes into Afghanistan, turned its attention to the nations of Central Asia. Thus, after 2001 the United States presence in Kyrgyzstan was focused not on democracy promotion, but on the maintenance of the Manas Transit Center, which the United States used to transport troops and material to Afghanistan. Russia initially approved of U.S. presence in the region, due to a shared fear of the danger of al-Qaida and the spread of militant Islam.[236] This initial friendliness would not last after the events of the Tulip Revolution.

Kyrgyzstan's relations with the United States worsened after the Tulip Revolution, despite the U.S. support for the Tulip revolution and the desire for democratic reforms that it represented. Despite the events of the Tulip revolution which

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233 Soltanifar, "US—Russian Rivalry in the Caucasus," 10.

234 Jonavicus, "Window of Opportunity," 29–30.

235 Ibid., 30.

236 "Russia Re-Evaluates Security Ties in Central Asia," *Stratfor,* March 3, 2016. https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/russia-re-evaluates-security-ties-central-asia

brought him to power, Bakiyev showed little interest in reaching out to the West. Educated and trained in the Soviet Union, he looked to Russia and China to consolidate his power.[237] Shortly after coming to power, he made a visit to Russia to confer with Putin and reaffirm their relationship and the primacy of their influence in Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy.[238] Further complicating matters for the United States, the Karshi-Khanabad (K2) airbase in Uzbekistan, the only other facility that was available for transport of U.S. troops and supplies in the region, was closed in 2005. This occurred after long-deteriorating relations between the United States and Uzbekistan finally collapsed in the wake of the critical U.S. reaction to Uzbekistan's handling of the Andijan crisis, where Uzbek troops opened fire on civilian protesters.[239] The closure of K2 left the Manas Transit Center as the only transport facility for the United States in Central Asia, a vital staging area for U.S. forces operating in Afghanistan. The United States needed to remain on good terms with Kyrgyzstan to keep the base open.

After 2005, Russia feared that the United States would use its military presence to establish a permanent presence in Kyrgyzstan, and worked to counter U.S. influence.[240] Russia had been agitating for increased military cooperation with Kyrgyzstan, and after the Tulip revolution, they were granted their request. After the United States won the right to use the Manas Transit Center, Russia, too, negotiated for military basing rights in Kyrgyzstan, and were granted use of the Kant air base, a mere 30 kilometers from Manas.[241] The Kant air base officially falls under the auspices of the CSTO, to provide Russian air support for counterterrorism operations and air control of the Central Asian region.[242] However, Russia's emphasis on creating bases in the Central Asian region reflects on their interest in maintaining a political and military presence in the region, and preventing the United States from winning over Central Asia. After the Tulip Revolution,

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[237] Sari, "Foreign Policy of Kyrgyzstan," 138–40.

[238] Ibid.

[239] Rumer, "U.S. Interests and Role in Central Asia after K2," 141–2.

[240] Cooley, *Great Games,* 58.

[241] Ibid.

[242] Ibid.

Moscow put pressure on the Russia-friendly Bakiyev regime to close Manas to the United States, and leave Russia as the main military influence in the region.[243]

Under Bakiyev, the Manas Transit Center was threatened with closure several times. In the 2005 SCO summit, shortly after the Tulip revolution, Kyrgyzstan made a declaration calling for the closure of the Manas air base to the United States. Donald Rumsfeld was sent to Kyrgyzstan to negotiate, and the base remained open.[244] Less than a year later in 2006, the Bakiyev government raised the rent on Manas for the Americans, from $2 million to $200 million, and threatened to close the base to the United States if the new rent were not paid. After further negotiation, Kyrgyzstan's leaders settled for a $17 million rent instead.[245] Again in 2009, Bakiyev called for the closure of the Manas Transit Center, shortly after concluding a major financial deal with the Russian government, and shortly before the presidential election. After the election, however, negotiations with the United States again allowed for the base to continue operation, with another rent increase.[246]

D. RUSSIAN INTERVENTIONS IN BELARUS, GEORGIA, AND UKRAINE

When Russia was unable to counter Western influence through economic and culturally means, Russian leaders took more direct interventions to prevent the spread of Western influence. Russian leaders acted to prevent a color revolution in Belarus using non-military means. In Georgia and Ukraine, where Russia has previously tried softer methods of influence, Russia was willing to engage in military intervention in order to reassert their power in the region.

1. Political Intervention in Belarus

After the color revolutions of its fellow former Soviet states, Belarus was seen as a prime candidate for a color revolution of its own. There had been many protests against its authoritarian president, Alyaksandr Lukashenka, resulting in severe police crackdown.

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243 Cooley, *Great Games,* 58.

244 Sari, "Foreign Policy of Kyrgyzstan," 142.

245 Ibid., 143.

246 Ibid., 143–4.

The United States sanctioned the government due to its undemocratic policies, and listed it in 2005 as Europe's "last outpost of tyranny."[247] However, a color revolution in Belarus failed to eventuate. What made Belarus different from Georgia, Ukraine, or Kyrgyzstan?

While several former-Soviet countries failed to be affected by democracy promotion and color revolutions failed to materialize, Belarus is a notable case wherein Russian influence worked to counter the possibility of a color revolution. Thomas Ambrosio argues that the close relationship between Russia and Belarus insulated Belarus from Western efforts to promote democracy there and disincentivized democratization for the people of Belarus, by offering an alternative to greater integration with Europe.[248] Historically, Belarus has been closely tied to Russia, as a part of the historic Russian empire. Furthermore, because of the elimination of the Belarusian cultural elite under Stalin, and the subsequent russification of Belarus under Communism, Belarus claims only a weak national identity, and support for integration with Russia is high.[249]

Russia has supported Belarus in a variety of ways in order to achieve its goal of protecting Belarus from the West. Russian trade policies and subsidies to Belarus have propped up Belarus's economic system and protected it from Western trade sanctions.[250] A Russia-Belarus alliance has prevented military isolation and provided the Lukashenka regime an alternative to seeking EU membership, which would require significant democratic reform, and likely lead to the end of the Lukashenka regime.[251] Russian media had portrayed the Lukashenka government in a positive light and Russian officials had shown their support for his regime.[252] Russia has also offered Belarus a better deal on natural gas imports, allowing Belarus to pay less for natural gas than Ukraine, with the

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[247] Soltanifar, "US—Russian Rivalry," 12.

[248] Ambrosio, "Russia-Belarus Relations," 407–8.

[249] Ibid., 413.

[250] Ibid., 423–7.

[251] Ibid.

[252] Ibid.

implication that Russia will reward nations that cooperate, and punish those who seek greater alliance with the West.[253]

Russian influence on Belarus culminated in the success of the Belarussian elections in 2006. Russia had provided political cover for earlier elections in 2000/2001 and 2004, which consolidated Lukashenka's power and increased Belarus's isolation from the West.[254] Russia's influence in Belarus's 2006 elections were essential for heading off another color revolution. The election was widely criticized by Western international observers for failing to meet the democratic requirements of a free and fair election. Despite these criticisms of the election from Western observers, election observers from Russia and other CIS states denied the allegation of irregularities in the elections, and declared the elections fair.[255] Russian media, also carried in Belarus, discounted the legitimacy of the opposition and the accusations of electoral malfeasance.[256]

The media also carried stories that charged Ukraine, Georgia, and the West with interfering in the Belarusian election and other internal affairs.[257] During the election, Pavel Borodin, state secretary of the union of Russia and Belarus, praised Lukashenka and declared him a great leader on par with Leonid Kuchma, Askar Akayev, and Eduard Shevardnadze. Akayev, Shevardnadze, and Kuchma's successor Yanukovych, are the leaders ousted by the color revolutions.[258] Ambrosio concludes, "Given Russian policy up to and after the 2006 Belarusian 'election,' it is reasonable to predict that it is in Russia's interest to prevent the occurrence of further 'color revolutions.'"[259]

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[253] Ambrosio, "Russia-Belarus Relations," 423–7.

[254] Ibid. 427.

[255] Ibid.

[256] Ibid.

[257] Ibid.

[258] Ibid., 428.

[259] Ibid.

2.   The 2008 Russia-Georgia War

Despite Russia's prior pronouncements of the importance of state sovereignty, the Russian government supported the separatists from the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in their fight for independence, leading to the Russian-Georgia conflict of 2008. South Ossetia, a region of Georgia composed of both ethnic Georgians and ethnic Ossetians, advocated separation from Georgia as early as 1989, and has been a source of conflict ever since, including the presence of a Russian peacekeeping force in the region.[260] Abkhazia, another multiethnic region in Georgia with nationalist leanings, has experienced conflict and allegations of ethnic cleansing.[261] In 2008, Russia engaged in conflict with Georgia in alleged support of these two regions. Russia used language justifying their actions that was similar to NATO's in Kosovo, highlighting the importance of intervening in a situation involving human rights violations. Heisbourg writes, "The independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia was portrayed as the functional equivalent of the Western policy vis-à-vis Kosovo."[262]

The 2008 war tarnished the image of the West as a protector for the post-Soviet states. They realized that, despite verbal support from the United States, the EU, and NATO, these organizations were not willing to confront Russia over the fate of the non-NATO-member post-Soviet states and risk coming to blows with Russia.[263] Russia, in turn, demonstrated their commitment to maintaining their influence in these states, and their willingness to use force to do so. Russia also showed that, for these states, attempting to gain NATO membership was viewed by Russia as a threat, and thus Russia would threaten their sovereignty in order to prevent its loss of influence.[264] Matsaberidze writes:

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[260] Rick Fawn, "The Kosovo—and Montenegro—Effect," *International Affairs* 84, no. 2 (2008), doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2346.2008.00703.x, 273.

[261] Ibid., 274.

[262] Francois Heisbourg, "Preserving Post-Cold War Europe," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 57, no. 1 (2015): 32, doi:10.1080/00396338.2015.1008293.

[263] Shafee, "New Geopolitics of the South Caucasus," 185.

[264] Ibid.

Arguably, the wars of 2008 and 2014 could be seen as reactions to the success of the velvet revolutions that encircled the Russian Federation in the region….the aforementioned wars were not revenge for the velvet revolutions—a sign of the rude interference of the West in Russia's near abroad—but the reaction to Russia's international humiliation.[265]

3.   The 2014 Euromaidan and the Annexation of Crimea

In 2014, Ukraine again experienced a popular uprising against Russian-aligned Victor Yanukovych, who had defeated the remnants of the Orange Revolution coalition in the 2010 presidential election. This uprising, referred to as the Euromaidan, resulted in the exile of Yanukovych and a change of government. Russian officials have referred to the 2014 Euromaidan in Ukraine as a coup d'état—a revolution, instead of a mere shift in the governing party.[266] As such, the Putin regime has claimed that Ukraine is now a new state, and so the 1994 Budapest Memorandum is no longer in effect.[267] The Budapest Memorandum was a document in which Ukraine, along with Kazakhstan and Belarus, signed on to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and gave up the nuclear stockpiles that had been left in their territory after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In return, the three nations were given security assurances of political independence and territorial integrity from Russia and the United States.

Russia's claim that the new Ukrainian government had nullified the Budapest Memorandum opened the door for the Russian annexation of Crimea, since the assurance of territorial integrity would no longer apply.[268] Furthermore, Russian officials argue that, just as the West recognizes the results of the Euromaidan uprising as a lawful expression of popular self-determination, so should they recognize the Crimean referendum to join Russia, which occurred shortly after Russian intervention in the region, as a similar act of lawful self-determination. This argument by Russia is notably

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265 Matsaberidze, "Russia vs. EU/US," 85.

266 Nikitina, "Russian Official Discourse," 96.

267 Ibid.

268 Ibid.

hypocritical—Russia itself recognizes the Crimean referendum but does not recognize the legality of the Euromaidan.[269]

Putin justified the annexation of Crimea as a defense of Russia's national interests, and described Crimea as a sacred place for Russians, similar to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, a place of national and religious heritage that must be protected.[270] Marten writes:

> Ukraine—especially Crimea and the southeastern regions of the country—played a central role in Russia's conception of its own great power identity dating back to the time of Catherine the Great. Her expansion of the Russian empire into "Novorossiya" in the late 18th century marked the true emergence of Russia as a force to be reckoned with on the European stage.[271]

Marten argues that it was not politically possible for Putin to been seen as giving in to Western pressure regarding Ukraine. Putin's political patron-client network requires him to signal strength frequently to both the public and his network members.[272] After reaching out to the West early in his presidency, he came to feel disrespected by Western leaders over the course of his terms in office. His feelings of being disrespected by the West over presumed Western interventions into the color revolutions, and in the Russian elections of 2011, left him no longer willing to compromise with the West on the issue of Ukraine.[273]

Matsaberidze argues that, despite the interventions in Georgia and Ukraine, Russia has no wish to conquer those nations. Instead, Russia is fighting a proxy war against the West, using those countries as leverage. Russia is really fighting against the spread of Western-backed liberal democracy in the former Soviet region.[274] The spread of Western democracy and closer relationships with Western Europe, seen in the

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[269] Nikitina, "Russian Official Discourse," 96.

[270] Andrei Kolesnikov, "Russian Ideology After Crimea," *Carnegie Moscow Center* (2015): 5.

[271] Marten, "Putin's Choices," 195.

[272] Marten, "Putin's Choices," 194–6.

[273] Ibid.

[274] Matsaberidze, "Russia vs. EU/US," 84–5.

European Neighborhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership initiatives, are a threat that Russia fears will cause the countries to defect to the West. He writes regarding Russia's willingness to use its power to influence Georgia and Ukraine, "It has demonstrated this in the gas war with Georgia and Ukraine following the velvet revolutions of 2003 and 2004 (soft power) and through the military interventions in Georgia and Ukraine in 2008 and 2014 (hard power)."[275]

Because Putin has portrayed the conflict in Ukraine as a response to NATO encroachment of Russia, Marten cautions against any further escalation by Western military forces or through increasing sanctions, which would provide more legitimacy to Putin's claim of NATO encroachment. She writes, "He could even use such an escalation, in combination with his recent rhetorical shift, to explain to the Russian public why open Russian military intervention in Ukraine is now necessary to preserve Russian sovereignty against NATO expansion on its borders."[276] The concern is that if NATO and the EU continue to entertain the idea of new members in the former-Soviet region, Russia may continue to escalate with uses of forces similar to the Ukraine conflict in order to prevent what it sees as Western encroachment in the rest of the world.

E.   CONCLUSION

Russian leaders fear that the United States is not only guiding the color revolutions in order to encircle Russia, but will also use the color revolutions as a template for the creation of a similar regime-change revolution within Russia itself. Russia's "besieged fortress" mentality sees sinister Western encroachment from all directions.[277] They blame Russian weakness following the collapse of the Soviet Union, which allowed the United States and other Western powers to assert their authority in the former Soviet sphere in the 1990s and early 2000s. They then argued that, as the Russian economy recovered and domestic issues within Russia are resolved, Russia will be able to

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[275] Matsaberidze, "Russia vs. EU/US," 84–5.

[276] Marten, "Putin's Choices," 200.

[277] Ibid.

stand up to the West and reassert its authority in the former Soviet sphere.[278] Kolesnikov writes, "Russians think they are living in a besieged fortress. While some believe that they have been taken hostage, others seem to enjoy their imprisonment."[279]

From Russia's perspective, the history of post-Cold War Europe has been one of Western advancement into Russian territory, and Western intrusion into the affairs of nations of the former Soviet bloc. It has also seen U.S. intrusion into the Central Asian states of the former Soviet Union. Russia has used its influence, especially its control of vast energy resources, in attempt to preserve its influence in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, along with other former-Soviet nations. However, Russia's fears of encroachment have shown no signs of abating.

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[278] Marten, "Putin's Choices," 200.

[279] Kolesnikov, "Russian Ideology After Crimea," 6.

IV.   RUSSIA'S IDEOLOGY OF SOVEREIGN DEMOCRACY

In a 2005 interview, Vladimir Putin was asked about the consequences of the color revolutions in the former Soviet sphere. He responded, "My greatest concern is not that dramatic events are taking place there, but that they are going outside the framework of the existing legislation and constitution. We all need to understand that democracy means, among other things, a sound, correct law and the ability to obey this law and live by it."[280] To the Russian leaders, it was more important to uphold the sovereign rights of a nation than to intervene in that nation in order to aid an oppressed populace, which they expressed through the concept of "sovereign democracy."

This chapter explores the Russian government's efforts to develop sovereign democracy in the wake of the color revolutions. The concept of sovereign democracy emerged from Russia's emphasis on national sovereignty and its opposition to the democracy promotion and election-monitoring activities of Western NGOs. Sovereign democracy holds that state sovereignty is the foundation of international law, and that nonintervention in the affairs of sovereign states takes priority over interventions in the name of human rights violations.[281] It includes the idea that nations whose sovereignty is violated, for any reason, have the authority to defend their sovereignty through military means.[282] Developed just after the events of the color revolutions, sovereign democracy was deployed in the Russian reaction to the Tulip Revolution, as part of a campaign to discredit the revolution as undemocratic.

In the official Russian discourse, the color revolutions are presented as a destabilizing force, largely because Russian officials do not perceive such popular uprisings as legitimate means of regime change—instead seeing the color revolutions and the regime changes that followed them as weakening governmental structures and

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[280] "Interview with Putin on Bush-Putin Summit," *Scoop World Independent News,* February 25, 2005. http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO0502/S00695/interview-with-putin-on-bush-putin-summit.htm.

[281] Derek Averre, "'Sovereign Democracy' and Russia's Relations with the European Union," *Demokratizatsiya* 15, no. 2 (2007): 180-1.

[282] Ibid.

adherence to national law.[283] In opposing the color revolutions, Russian leaders wished to voice disapproval of what they viewed as the alien elements that played a role in fomenting the color revolutions, while still voicing approval for democracy itself.[284] To counter the what Russia viewed as the creeping Western influence of democracy promotion efforts by Western NGOs, Russia needed an alternate ideology that would stand in opposition to its view of Western-style democracy and that Russia could use to justify its rejection of the practices of democracy promotion that the Western states were advocating.

A.   RUSSIA'S EVOLVING NARRATIVE ON THE MEANING OF DEMOCRACY

Sovereign democracy evolved from Russia's desire to promote national sovereignty. Stefanie Ortmann writes, "The use of democracy in Russian official discourse reflected the political context within which it as used, and this meant that references to liberal democratic principles had already become much weaker; nevertheless 'democracy continued to be used to describe the identity of the Russian state."[285] Because it remained important for the Russian public and the international community to see Russia as a democracy, the Putin regime needed a way to separate the concept of democracy from the Western style of foreign policy that the regime was speaking and acting against. The development of a Russian ideology of sovereignty and a strong state needed to continue to be seen as democratic, even as it was influenced by authoritarian ideals. The combination of strong state and respect for sovereignty without completely turning away from democracy, was turned into the concept of sovereign democracy by Russian thinkers and officials.[286]

The concept of sovereign democracy was introduced in 2005, shortly after the last of the color revolutions, the Tulip Revolution. The idea of democracy was fraught for Putin's Russia. The concept of democracy had long been identified with Western liberal

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[283] Ortmann, "Diffusion as Discourse of Danger," 369-73.

[284] Ibid.

[285] Ibid., 367.

[286] Ibid.

thought, and with Western (and especially US) dominance in the sphere of global politics.[287] As Putin's relationship with the United States soured in wake of disappointment with the lack of respect it was receiving from the United States and allies in the Kosovo campaign, the War on Terror, and the NATO expansions, Russia's definition of democracy also began to shift.[288] Sovereign democracy emerged as a counter to the color revolutions, and especially to the notion that the color revolutions were driven by Western sponsorship. Ortmann argues that sovereign democracy is not in direct competition with Western-style democracy. Instead, it is an expression of Russian insecurity over the stability of the Russian state, and fear of disorder that might threaten its viability.[289]

Sovereign democracy allowed the Putin regime to create a political and ideological slogan around which it can formulate policy. The goal of sovereign democracy was to provide ideological legitimacy for the ruling party, and give the party the initiative to control the ideological narrative.[290] Joan DeBardeleben writes, "The underlying argument is that the 'colour revolutions'…offered a power impetus for Russian elites to 'manage' the 2007 Russian parliamentary election even more firmly than they had in 2003."[291] The development of sovereign democracy in the 2005–2006 period set it up as a unifying message for the party to continue its consolidation of power in the 2007–2008 elections.[292] The sovereign democracy ideology explicitly laid out Putin's goals for Russia and for Russian foreign policy, and gave the Putin regime additional authority in domestic politics.

Russian democracy became tied to its identity as a Great Power, and the independence and sovereignty that Great Power status could bring. Sovereignty then became associated to democracy, as it was sovereignty that guaranteed freedom and self-

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[287] Ortmann, "Diffusion as Discourse of Danger," 367.

[288] Ibid.

[289] Ibid.

[290] DeBardeleben, "Russia's Duma Elections," 277.

[291] Ibid.

[292] Andrei Okara, "Sovereign Democracy: A New Russian Idea or a PR Project," *Russia in Global Affairs* 5, no. 3 (2007): 10-11.

determination.[293] Ortmann writes, "'Sovereign democracy' was put in the context of a narrative, in which the US was undermining the sovereign independence of states through the promotion of democracy abroad, 'regime change' with the ultimate aim of creating regimes loyal to the United States—by force, as in Iraq, or through the export of revolutions."[294] In the Russian narrative, this placed the color revolutions and their Western supporters in opposition to sovereign democracy.

Putin claims to be pro-democracy, but his sovereign democracy has cast doubt on democratic movements. By emphasizing the rights of national sovereignty, he can then conclude that any domestic movement that is associated with foreign actors violates that sovereignty and is therefore illegitimate.[295] To the West, the color revolutions are legitimate democratic movements. Russian leaders disagree, and they use the concept of sovereign democracy to illustrate their position on the undemocratic nature of the color revolutions. Because the color revolutions contained outside influence, sovereignty has been violated and therefore they cannot be democratic.[296] Instead they portray the color revolutions as leading to a regime dominated by foreign actors. Regarding this Russian view, Okara writes that the post-color revolution regimes "do not set themselves the goal of attaining genuine sovereignty and hence exist under the patronage of other states."[297] Thus, Russian leaders can use sovereign democracy to undermine democratic movements.

B. ARGUMENTS FOR SOVEREIGNTY

In the 2000 elections, Putin and his party, United Russia, were considered non-ideological candidates, adhering not to any specific political agenda other than a generic label of conservativeness. Putin's lack of political ideology was in stark contrast to Putin's most competitive opponent, who ran as a member of the Communist Party.[298] To

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[293] Ortmann, "Diffusion as Discourse of Danger," 368.

[294] Ibid.

[295] Okara, "Sovereign Democracy," 15.

[296] Ibid.

[297] Ibid.

[298] Finkel and Brudny, "Russia and the Colour Revolutions," 26.

avoid being seen as a continuation of Yeltsin's regime as well as to distance himself from his opponents, Putin and United Russia won the elections while choosing not to align with any overarching political ideology.[299]

While Putin was in office in the early 2000s, he maintained the legitimacy of his regime without linking his government to any specific political ideology, instead highlighting the achievements of a growing economy and successful international policies to build political legitimacy.[300] The color revolutions, however, changed the political elite's taste for non-ideology though certain challenges remained. Russian leaders were unhappy with the role democracy promotion played in the color revolutions, in the guise of NGOs, youth activism, and election monitoring.[301] The Putin regime wanted to denounce those activities while still proclaiming support for democracy in general. Supporting democracy, even while engaging in anti-democratic rhetoric, gave Putin better standing in the international arena and played favorably among the Russian public, who liked the idea of democracy but lacked full understanding of the concept.[302]

Instead, Putin sought to redefine democracy in such a way as to make it compatible with his anti-democratic goals. A Russian conception of democracy emphasized the importance of a strong state, national sovereignty, and maintaining domestic order. Other democratic ideals, such as freedom of the press, freedom of association, and minority rights were disregarded and subject to attack by the Putin regime.[303] Furthermore, Putin had to distinguish his party from both the Communist party and various nationalist movements, which had been advocating for creating authoritarian governments in Russia for the past decade. [304] Thus, in creating its new ideology, the Putin regime had a fine line to walk. Finkel and Brudny write, "In other words, official ideology had to be both anti-democratic and sufficiently distinct from communist and

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[299] Finkel and Brudny, "Russia and the Colour Revolutions," 26.

[300] Ibid., 26-7.

[301] Ibid.

[302] Ibid.

[303] DeBardeleben, "Russia's Duma Elections," 283.

[304] Finkel and Brudny, "Russia and the Colour Revolutions," 26.

nationalist versions of an authoritarian creed."[305] Putin needed a to redefine democracy in a way that could be seen by the public as distinct from both the West and from authoritarian movements within Russia.

1.   "An Apologia of the Westphalian System"

In the aftermath of the color revolutions, however, Russian officials challenged Western democracy-promotion in a much more open and concerted way than they had before. Finkel and Brudny show that Russian leaders used widespread internet and print media stories to spread delegitimizing messages about the color revolutions. They write, "In these publications, the very principle of regime change through revolutionary means was condemned as illegitimate, financed by Western money and aimed at building puppet anti-Russian states on its borders, destroying the unique cultural identity of Eastern Europe and undermining the sovereign nature of political institutions in the region."[306] As noted elsewhere in this thesis, Russian officials specifically blamed Western NGOs for financing activists in the color revolution countries and using democracy promotion efforts and election monitoring to encourage the demonstrations.

The first emergence of a new ideology to counter the Western efforts at democracy promotion was an article by Valery Zorkin, the Chief Justice of the Russian Constitutional Court. His article, "An Apologia of the Westphalian System," makes the case that the principles of state sovereignty and self-determination, first established during the treaties of the Westphalian peace in 1648, were threatened Western organization insistent on enforcing human rights at the expense of national sovereignty. [307] Zorkin argues that the United Nations, which he sees as a successor to the Westphalian system, is being assailed by "many voices," which seek to alter the UN Charter in order to promote global governance over the existing principles of non-interference in sovereign domestic affairs.[308] Zorkin writes, "The Westphalian system is

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[305] Finkel and Brudny, "Russia and the Colour Revolutions," 27.

[306] Ibid., 26.

[307] Valery Zorkin, "An Apologia of the Westphalian System," *Russia in Global Affairs,* no. 3 (2004), http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_3371.

[308] Ibid.

being attacked from two directions. First, the principles of state sovereignty and territorial integrity are being placed in opposition to human rights and nations' right to self-determination. Second, nation states are being blamed for their inability to ensure effective governance under conditions of globalization."[309]

To Zorkin, human rights and self-determination for minority groups are a threat to Russian national security. He argues that the greatest threat to the Russian Federation is the success of a minority nationalist independence movement, and the disintegration of the state and the loss of sovereignty that would follow.[310] He further argues that the idea of state sovereignty being overridden in favor of human rights and nationalistic self-determination caused the collapse of both Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union and thus could be a threat to the stability of Russia, which still contains restive minority ethnic groups in areas like Chechnya.[311] Thus, nationalistic and human rights movements within a multinational state can pose a threat to the security and the territorial integrity of that state, by facilitating a violent breakup and inviting the intervention of outside nations.

Writing to a domestic audience, Zorkin claims that any attempt to divide the sovereignty of a state will inevitably lead to violence and human rights violations, alluding to the ethnic violence in Bosnia and Kosovo that arose from the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.[312] He also claims that, since September 11, 2001, many states have used the threat of terrorism to attack the idea of national sovereignty and even create laws that override human rights. This claim aims to point out the hypocrisy of the actions of the United States and its coalition partners, which have participated in interventions against nations that violate human rights, as in the Kosovo campaign, and yet violate those rights in Afghanistan and Iraq in the name of their own security.[313]

Zorkin uses this argument to undermine the position of the United States and NATO as advocates of human rights in the international arena. He also alludes to the

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[309] Zorkin, "Apologia of the Westphalian System."

[310] Ibid.

[311] Ibid.

[312] Ibid.

[313] Ibid.

color revolutions by stating that he believes national sovereignty should not be overridden by issues of human rights or democratic self-determination of particular groups within a nation.[314] Zorkin is articulating a fear repeatedly cited among Russian officials that an international organization (the UN, NATO, etc.) will determine that Russia is committing human rights violations or failing to recognizing the self-determination of Russia's minority ethnic groups, like the Chechens. Then, according to the principles that Zorkin lays out in this article, these states will disregard Russia's territorial sovereignty in order to rectify these violations, just as NATO has done in previous conflicts.[315] This intervention could lead to the formation of semi-independent entities within the Russian state, or even ultimately lead to full independence for those regions—at the obvious cost of a coherent Russian state.

The Russian public is not averse to the re-defining of democracy away from the western ideal. Surveys of Russian public opinion of various concepts associated with democracy emphasize achieving a high standard of living, maintaining order and law, and citizens' rights. Russian public opinion ranks support for free press, pluralism, and minority rights much lower.[316] DeBardeleben writes:

> Data from surveys undertaken by Yurii Levada's independent survey organization indicates that the Russian public seems to have some sympathy for the view that western variants of democracy may have limited applicability in Russia, and that Russia would develop its own understanding of the concept.[317]

Thus, the Russian public is willing to follow the Putin government as it creates an ideology distinct from its conception of the liberal democracy of the West.

2. Arguments Against Western-Style Democracy

Russia takes exception to what it sees as the West's fomenting of revolutions and regime changes in order to advance democracy. Russia sees Western democracy promotion activities as inappropriate for nations not yet ready (or possibly not ever

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[314] Zorkin, "Apologia of the Westphalian System."

[315] Ibid.

[316] DeBardeleben, "Russia's Duma Elections," 283.

[317] Ibid.

ready) to handle full Western-style democracy.[318] Russia argues that the imposition of what it sees as Western-style democracy is not compatible with the culture and traditions of these post-Soviet nations. Instead of stable democracy, these attempts to impose Western standards lead to chaos, violence, an unstable government, and further regime changes as the governmental system fails.[319]

Russian officials have pointed to the struggles of the post-color revolution regimes in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, where the leaders of those nations were both ousted in 2010 after failing to address the corruption that drove the original demonstrations, as proof that the color revolutions were not ultimately beneficial to those countries.[320] Given the Russian theory that the West actively fomented the color revolutions, it seems that Western forces are willing to undertake revolutions even in states where the leadership is attempting to conciliate with the opposition or maintain Western relationships, as Shevardnadze was doing prior to the Rose Revolution. Thus, Russia believes that Western leaders will conduct regime change without regard to loyalty, and that supporting the West will not guarantee protection from Western-sponsored regime change.[321]

Russia has also been critical of what it considers the Western overemphasis on human rights. In a 2012 article, Putin argued that overriding state sovereignty for human rights concerns was not always a good thing. He wrote, "When state sovereignty is too easily violated in the name of this provision, when human rights are protected from the outside and on a selective basis, and when the same rights of a population are trampled underfoot in the process of such 'protection,' including the most basic and sacred right— the right to one's life—these actions cannot be considered a noble mission but rather outright demagogy."[322] He continues by entreating the UN to counter the actions of "some countries," later named as NATO members and especially the United States, that

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[318] Nikitina, "Russian Official Discourse," 96-7.

[319] Ibid.

[320] Ibid., 96-8.

[321] Ibid.

[322] Vladimir Putin, "Russia and the Changing World," *Russkiy Mir,* February 27, 2012. http://www.russkiymir.ru/en/publications/139698, 2.

would violate the sovereignty of other nations on the behalf of human rights. He further accuses the United States of using these humanitarian interventions as a way of seeking the security of absolute invulnerability by intervening in any nation that it deems to be a threat.[323] In Putin's view, the United States and its allies are acting not out of an ethical imperative when intervening in human rights violations, but out of their own self-interest.

Putin also criticizes what he refers to as the privatization of the human rights agenda by Western nations that control the human rights monitoring process. He claims that Western states use the agenda of human rights as a means to exert pressure on Russia and other states, subjecting the Putin regime to undeserved criticism of its governing practices in an attempt to influence Russian domestic politics by turning the Russian citizens against their government and casting doubt on its legitimacy.[324] He writes, "But when we are subjected, again and again, to blanket criticisms in a persistent effort to influence our citizens, their attitudes, and our domestic affairs, it becomes clear that these attacks are not rooted in moral and democratic values."[325] Russia has responded to the perceived Western criticisms by withdrawing from Western democracy promotion efforts, and working to undermine these efforts in its neighboring countries, starting with Western election monitoring.[326]

3. Russia's Opposition to Western Election Monitoring

Russian leaders had opposed international election monitoring of Russia's neighboring states before the color revolutions, but they resisted even more after the Orange Revolution in Ukraine.[327] Russia and other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) formed their own election monitoring program and adopted the Convention on Election Standards, Electoral Rights and Freedoms in the Member States of the CIS in 2002, to counter the results of Western election monitoring groups.[328]

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[323] Putin, "Russia and the Changing World," 2-3.

[324] Ibid., 16.

[325] Ibid.

[326] Averre, "Sovereign Democracy," 180.

[327] Saari, "European Democracy Promotion," 745.

[328] Ibid.

While the Convention document established standards very similar to its Western counterparts, the practice of the election monitoring differed considerably. The CIS election monitoring was first used during the 2003 Duma elections in Russia, which they declared free and open, unlike the observations of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, which both disagreed.[329]

Russia, along with other members of the CIS, protested the actions of Western election observers, arguing that they inaccurately portray the results of elections in the CIS region. In 2004, Russia and eight other CIS members accused the OSCE of using its election monitors, and its accusations of unfair elections, to impinge on the sovereignty of the CIS states.[330] The CIS document accused the OSCE of focusing too much on human rights and democracy in the CIS elections, and not enough focus on security issues.[331] As Ukraine's 2004 elections approached, Russian officials accused the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), which contains the election monitoring program, of interfering with the Ukrainian election.[332] Saari writes:

> These comments were the first signs that the Russian challenge to democratic norms was gradually becoming more explicit than it had been before. The Georgian Rose Revolution in 2003 and the European perceptions of Russia's elections in December 2003 and March 2004 annoyed Russia, but it was only after the Orange Revolution that Russia took the challenge to another.[333]

Later that year, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov argued that outside election monitoring could be used as a tool to manipulate elections and to increase destabilization in vulnerable countries, and implying that this had occurred in Ukraine's elections and subsequent Orange Revolution.[334] This narrative that Western election-monitors were manipulating election in the former Soviet spaces allowed Russia to cast doubt on the impartiality of the election monitors and their verdicts.

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[329] Saari, "European Democracy Promotion," 745

[330] Ibid.

[331] Ibid.

[332] Ibid.

[333] Ibid.

[334] Ibid., 745-6.

Russia has also proposed changes to the way the OSCE/ODIHR election monitoring system conducts its business. Moscow argues that European elections should be held to a significantly lower standard than they are currently required to achieve free and fair status. Some newly democratized states, they argue, cannot realistically achieve such high standards, given the limitations of their governmental institutions. These states should have a lower bar to clear in order for their elections to be deemed free and fair.[335]

Russia, along with six other countries of the former Soviet Union, proposed a draft declaration in 2007 that argued for a reorganization of the OSCE election monitoring.[336] In this proposal, the Permanent Council of the OSCE, a body which requires unanimous approval from all 56 participating nations for decisions, would control the ODIHR, thus allowing Russia and its allies to block the actions of the ODIHR. The proposal would also limit the number of observers that could be sent to monitor an election to 50 people, a huge decrease from the 450 observers present at Russia's 2003 Duma elections.[337]

Despite Russia's claim that it was trying to remove politics from the election monitoring process, giving the Permanent Council involvement in election monitoring would have the opposite effect, creating opportunity for vastly increased politicization. By reducing the numbers of election observers, the proposal would also leave fewer unbiased reporters to witness the actual election processes.[338] This proposal from Russia and its allies met with little approval from the Western members of the OSCE and ODIHR officials, and was not put into action.[339] These proposals for changing the process of election monitoring illustrate how Russia would like to see less election monitoring and a relaxation of the standards of free and fair elections.

Russia's goals with these proposals do not seem designed to convince the West that they have merit. Instead, they are focused on audiences in the other CIS countries.

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[335] Saari, "European Democracy Promotion in Russia," 745-6.

[336] Ibid., 746.

[337] Ibid.

[338] Ibid.

[339] Ibid.

While the OSCE declares fraudulent elections in CIS countries such as Belarus and Kazakhstan in the international press, the Russian-backed observers can declare them free and fair, and it is those CIS observers whose reports are portrayed in the domestic media of their countries.[340] Saari writes, "This kind of 'forum-shopping' is becoming an established practice in the semi-authoritarian states of the former Soviet region."[341] With Russia available to pronounce elections as free and fair, these former Soviet states can then denounce the OSCE's verdict of unfair elections as biased or politically motivated.

Russia then went a step further by making conditions unfavorable enough to prevent the OSCE from even observing Russia's elections. During the Russian elections of 2007 and 2008, Russian officials delayed the entry of the ODIHR observers, issuing invitations and visas at the last minute, and establishing restrictive conditions under which the ODIHR would be allowed to observe the elections.[342] Ultimately, the ODIHR refused to observe the elections, citing the delays and restrictions as political maneuvers to prevent fair monitoring of the elections.[343] Thus, Russia could conduct elections, and certify them free and fair, without any dissenting report from outside observers.

4.   Russia's Role in the International Arena

Russia's reemergence as a rising power in the 2000s necessitated a new international role, no longer the Cold War superpower or the failing state of the 1990s, but as a rising power aspiring to regain great power status. Russian policymakers have sought to ascend to the ranks of the major international policymakers, and play key roles in resolving international issues. At the 2006 G8 Summit, hosted in St. Petersburg, Russian officials positioned themselves as policymakers on a wide-ranging set of international issues: energy, education, anticorruption, antiterrorism, diseases, and nonproliferation.[344] Averre writes, "Russia's governing elite accepts some of the principles on which current international relations are based but perceives external

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[340] Saari, "European Democracy Promotion in Russia," 746.

[341] Ibid.

[342] Ibid., 476-8.

[343] Ibid.

[344] Derek Averre, "'Sovereign Democracy'" 177.

attempts to reshape Russia's political, economic, and social models, including the 'political technologies' of advocacy networks, as an imminent threat to its sovereignty, statehood, and influence."[345] Therefore, Russia must create a foreign policy ideology that can support its aspiration to greater international prominence and also counter what they perceive as the Western dominance of the foreign policy arena.

One way of balancing the Western international presence is for Russia to put more effort into its own international coalitions. Russia has also worked to position itself as a regional power, including prominent roles in regional organizations, notably the CIS, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and the Shanghai Cooperative Organization (SCO). The CSTO is also concerned with order and sovereignty, providing political support to the regimes of its member nations in order to avoid color revolutions and similar political uprisings.[346] These organizations have the potential to serve as a balance to US influence in the Eurasian region, though China also serves as a power in the SCO.[347] Averre writes, "The SCO's fifth anniversary declaration reads as a kind of manifesto for 'sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity' of states in the region, allowing them to maintain security cooperatively and on their own terms without interference from outside and the imposition of external models and values."[348] Russia can use these international organizations to both increase its regional influence and spread Russia's narrative of sovereignty.

Additionally, Russia sought to balance against the United States and the EU in the international arena through increased military power. Russia embarked on an expansive program of military modernization beginning in 2008, aimed at modernizing its aging, Soviet-era equipment and transitioning to a modern, volunteer force. Russian officials have touted their military modernization as a means of protection from the possibility of Western interference in Russian internal affairs, or from assaults on the sovereignty of

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[345] Averre, "'Sovereign Democracy'" 182.

[346] Ibid., 179.

[347] Ibid.

[348] Ibid.

other former-Soviet states.[349] A modern, effective military serves as both protection of Russia, and also as a power that can be used to influence Russia's neighbors, as seen in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014.

C.   USE OF SOVEREIGN DEMOCRACY AFTER THE TULIP REVOLUTION

Shortly after the development of sovereign democracy, the ideology was deployed in the aftermath of the Tulip Revolution to portray the revolution in a negative light. For Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolution, Moscow made an even stronger case about the color revolutions creating disorder instead of democracy. The Tulip Revolution was followed shortly after by the Andijan massacre in Uzbekistan. Although there existed little, if any, connection between the two events, they allowed Russia to tie together the fear of disorder from the color revolutions and the threat of Islamic extremism in Central Asia, confirming the need for greater security in the region.[350] This narrative of the Tulip Revolution as causing disorder also ties into the narrative that the US involvement in regime change in that region of the world, as in Afghanistan, brings increased terrorism threats.[351] Russian officials went so far as to call the Andijan uprising a failed color revolution, and to tie it to US democracy promotion efforts.[352] Thus, Moscow attempted to tie together the color revolutions and US democracy promotion with Islamic fundamentalist terrorism, to portray the color revolutions as chaotic and dangerous.

By the time the Tulip Revolution occurred in Kyrgyzstan, the concepts of sovereign democracy were able to be put into use by Russia to counter the narrative of democratic reform coming out of Bishkek.[353] Specifically, Russia blame the United States for inciting domestic unrest. Russia also blamed Islamic terrorism for the Tulip Revolution and the Andijan uprising that occurred shortly thereafter, echoing Russia's

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[349] Averre, "'Sovereign Democracy'" 179-81.

[350] Ortmann, "Diffusion as Discourse of Danger," 370-1.

[351] Ibid.

[352] Ibid.

[353] Ibid.

fears of Islamic terrorism in Chechnya and the southern Caucuses.[354] Furthermore, by delegitimizing the Tulip Revolution, Russia could also cast doubt on the legitimacy of the color revolutions that preceded it.

If Western influence instigated the Tulip Revolution, then it lacked the self-determination component required for it to be truly democratic. Instead, Russia framed the Tulip Revolution as creating disorder, not democracy.[355] Thus, Russia could oppose it while still claiming to be a democratic country and to value democracy elsewhere. Former foreign affairs minister Igor Ivanov called the color revolutions "regime change by nondemocratic and unconstitutional means."[356]

Kremlin PR consultant Gleb Pavlovsky blamed the United States for testing a "technology of a loss of national sovereignty" during the Tulip Revolution, claiming that the perceived actions of the United States in Kyrgyzstan was undermining Kyrgyzstan's democratic elections.[357] Russian political commentator Andrannik Migrainian blamed the United States' involvement in the Tulip Revolution for increasing destabilization in Central Asia. He argued that the Central Asian leaders no longer view the United States as bringing peace to the region, but instead as causing more problems for the region than they solve.[358] Ortmann writes, "The move of representing the 'wave of revolutions' as a destabilizing factor, rather than an issue of values, and especially the securitization of the Tulip Revolution, resonated with very real fears about disorder and the breakdown of the state."[359] Russia's reframing of the Tulip Revolution was also the creation of a narrative for the previous color revolutions as a 'wave of revolutions' that were destabilizing instead of democratic.

Russia's narrative of the color revolutions as a threat has been largely successful in advancing Russia's foreign policy aim of reducing U.S. presence and influence in

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[354] Ortmann, "Diffusion as Discourse of Danger," 370-1.

[355] Ibid.

[356] Nikitina, "Russian Official Discourse," 95.

[357] Ortmann, "Diffusion as Discourse of Danger," 369.

[358] Ibid., 373.

[359] Ibid., 372.

Central Asia, leaving Russia as the main power broker. In the 2005 Astana Declaration, written just months after the Tulip Revolution, the member states of the SCO (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Russia, and China) requested the United States and its coalition partners set a timeline for removing troops from temporary basing in Central Asia.[360]

Uzbekistan's leaders, already angry with the negative U.S. reaction to the Uzbekistan's Andijan massacre, latched on to the narrative of U.S. interference in Central Asian sovereignty. They expelled the U.S. forces from the K2 airbase they had been using to stage troops entering the Afghanistan theater, and entered into new, friendly agreements with Russia and the CSTO in lieu of U.S. aid.[361] The Kyrgyz leadership brought into power by the Tulip Revolution also sought closer ties with Russia, and moved away from the democratic ideal espoused by their movement. Kyrgyzstan's relations with the United States soured as Kyrgyzstan repeatedly threatened closure of the Manas facility in the years following the Tulip Revolution.[362] Russia has reengaged with Kyrgyzstan through investments, largely in their energy sector, which has now fallen almost completely under Russian control.[363] Russia's success in Central Asia may strengthen its image of itself as a Great Power, one that is able to influence and project power within its sphere of influence.

D.   CONCLUSION

Jonavicus, looking at the outcomes of the Rose and Orange Revolutions in 2009 writes, "Euphoria of the coloured revolutions hasn't been sufficient to build genuine 'western-style' democracy. By the means of non-traditional and informal influence Russia has managed to form new political regimes in Georgia and Ukraine after its own 'sovereign democracy' model."[364] The more recent events of the Arab Spring showed Russia that pro-democracy uprising had not come to an end with the color revolutions.

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[360] Rumer, U.S. Interests and Roles in Central Asia," 150.

[361] Ortmann, "Diffusion as Discourse of Danger," 372-3.

[362] Ibid.

[363] Ibid.

[364] Jonavicus, "Window of Opportunity;" 31.

Russian officials were concerned about the rise of these events, and the perception that they were being guided by Western nations using soft power to accomplish foreign policy goals of inciting regime change.[365]

Putin claimed that this soft power was used to provoke both the color revolutions and the Arab Spring, and to manipulate the domestic politics within the affected nations. He goes on to criticize "pseudo-NGOs," who are funded by outside groups and work, not in the interest of the local people, but instead try to destabilize governments for the gain of their home nations.[366] By 2012, with Russia seemingly no longer feeling threatened by color revolutions, sovereign democracy had fallen out of favor in Russia, though Russian officials continue to appeal to sovereignty when arguing against Western influence in more recent popular uprisings around the world.[367] Its replacement appears to be a rising ideology of nationalism and conservatism, the fate of which remains to be seen.

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[365] Nikitina, "Russian Official Discourse," 97-9.

[366] Putin, "Russia and the Changing World," 5.

[367] Finkel and Brudny, "Russia and the Colour Revolutions," 30.

V.   CONCLUSION

The Russian reaction to the color revolutions was largely successful in the long term: the progress made by the color revolutions was stymied, relations between Russia and the color revolution countries returned to the status quo, and Russia used the color revolutions to promote its anti-Western ideology of sovereign democracy to the world. While the color revolutions succeeded in their immediate goals of overturning rigged elections and replacing corrupt regimes, the color revolutions failed to produce lasting democratic reform, especially in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, each of which experienced further uprisings in the decade following the revolutions. While the outcome of the Rose Revolution in Georgia has been a relatively stable government, it still failed to improve on the Soviet-style political institutions and corruption of the previous regime, and is still only rated "partly free" by the Freedom House ratings.[368] In Ukraine, Victor Yanukovych, whose election to the presidency was prevented by the Orange Revolution, became president in 2010 after the coalition put in place by the Orange Revolution fell apart, and was later ousted by the 2014 Euromaidan after presiding over an increasingly corrupt government.[369] In Kyrgyzstan, the Tulip Revolution put Kurmanbek Bakiyev in the presidency, and he was ousted in 2010 after enriching himself and his family through governmental corruption.[370]

While the color revolutions changed the parties in power, they did little to address the underlying institutional and cultural issues that encouraged corrupt practices in the governments. Shafee writes, "The latest trend shows that post-Soviet countries cannot be reformed quickly, and a change is not simply about the removal of one leader for the sake of another. The process of democracy requires a profound transformation of all layers of society, the gradual modification of political and social institutions, and comes with

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[368] Laurynas Jonavicus, "Window of Opportunity," 23-4.

[369] Onuch, "The Maidan and Beyond," 44-6.

[370] Scot Radnitz, "What Really Happened in Kyrgyzstan?" *Journal of Democracy* 17, no. 2 (2006): 142.

generational shifts."[371] These nations appeared unable to free themselves from the institutions and cultural practices left over from the Soviet Union, despite aid from the West. Furthermore, Russia encouraged dependence of these nations through trade and energy deals, aid, and shared media and culture.[372]

Russian officials saw the West as the cause of the color revolutions. They claim that Western-funded NGOs, especially those involved in democracy promotion and election monitoring, were working deliberately to undermine the regimes of the color revolution countries, and aiding the activists and youth movements that propelled the demonstrations to victory. Blaming the West for the color revolutions did not gain much traction in the international arena, but it did provide fodder for the anti-Western domestic narrative in Russia. This discourse could then be used to foment popular opinion against the West within Russia, advance a repressive domestic agenda, and lay the groundwork for Russian intervention within those very same countries.

The color revolutions added to the feeling of Western encroachment on Russia's sphere of influence, ongoing since the collapse of the Soviet Union. They seemed to fit within a pattern of Western involvement in the post-Communist sphere, along with the NATO expansions, the increasing presence of NGOs in post-Soviet nations, and the U.S. deals for basing rights in post-Soviet Central Asia to aid in the US and NATO military action in Afghanistan. Russia was also threatened by the evolution of human rights interventions into sovereign nations, including the NATO interventions in the Balkans, and the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq to fight terrorism. These actions caused Russia to fear intervention into its own fight against Chechen separatists, which included both acts of terror and alleged human rights violation by the Russian forces. Russian fear of encirclement by the West served as a contributing factor to the decision to take more active measures to prevent further spread by intervening politically, economically, militarily in the color revolution countries.

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[371] Shafee, "New Geopolitics of the South Caucasus," 185.

[372] Jonavicus, "Window of Opportunity," 26-30.

Because Russia feared the results of Western democracy-promotion and election-monitoring, officials attempted to thwart both activities in the post-Soviet sphere, and developed the narrative of sovereign democracy as a means of justifying their actions. Russia worked with the other states of the CIS to thwart Western election monitoring activities in their region. Russia also enacted domestic reforms by restricting NGO activity, tightening electoral party qualifications, and coopting a youth movement, in order to prevent the potential spread of the color revolutions into Russia itself. Proposing an alternative to Western-style democracy promotion allowed the Russian government to create a narrative that would enable it to inhibit democracy promotion and fair elections while still maintaining the appearance of support for democracy to its domestic audience.

In more recent years, Russia has continued to accuse the West of inciting regime change and color revolutions. However, recently there has been a shift toward formalizing these concerns in Russian national security documents and military doctrine, along with statements from public officials indicating that Russia may intervene in other nations to help them defend against Western-backed movements.[373] Furthermore, Russian initiatives to upgrade and modernize the military forces show that Russia is gaining the capability to carry out possible interventions. As Bouchet writes, "In other words, the Russian authorities are moving from securitizing the issue of anti-regime protests to militarizing it."[374]

The policies and practices created by Russia's reaction to the color revolutions have continued into the 2010s, even as Russia has shifted its message away from sovereign democracy. As the Russian economy has declined in the face of falling oil revenue, the Russian government has turned to other means to secure its popularity. Using propaganda and censorship, the Russian government has been working to convince its people that the causes of Russia's economic woes can be blamed on the West, and that the solution is not to work on reducing Western sanctions, but to establish even further economic isolation.[375] Guriev writes, "The new social contract, in which the

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[373] Bouchet, "Russia's 'Militarization' of Colour Revolutions," 1.

[374] Ibid.

[375] Kolesnikov, "Russian Ideology After Crimea," 10-11.

government's legitimacy is based on propaganda rather than on prosperity, actually benefits from this isolation. The less trade and investment there is, and the less contact with the West, the easier it is to convince the public that the West is to blame for Russia's hardships."[376] Russia's anti-Western narrative shows no signs of abating in the near future.

Russian interventions have continued and expanded. The annexation of Crimea in 2014 showed the efficacy of hybrid warfare as a means of intervention that did not prompt military retaliation from the West.[377] More recently, Russia has expanded its military reach beyond the post-Soviet borders with its engagement in Syria on behalf of the Assad regime. By supporting the regime in Syria, Russia was also able to claim that it was standing up for national sovereignty over the accusations of human rights violations by the Assad regime that lead the United States to provide support for anti-Assad rebels.[378]

Engaging in Syria also gives Russia the appearance of being or remaining a Great Power, a nation that can intervene and direct the affairs of other nations on the world stage. Russian involvement has required that the United States and other nations recognize Russia as a key player in the Middle East.[379] Signaling the potential for future engagement in the region, the Russian aircraft carrier *Kuznetsov* made a stop in Libya, to welcome aboard a leader of one of the factions opposing the current UN-backed government, which was put in place after the NATO campaign of 2011.[380] In the future, Russia may continue to undertake military intervention abroad in order to increase its role as a major player in the international arena, with aspirations of regaining its role as a great power.

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[376] Guriev, "Deglobalizing Russia."

[377] Marten, "Putin's Choices," 201.

[378] Lewis Sanders IV, "Russia: US Deployment Violates Syria's Sovereignty," *World Affairs,* April 29, 2016, http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/content/russia-us-deployment-violates-syrias-sovereignty.

[379] Robert Nalbandov, *Not by Bread Alone: Russian Foreign Policy Under Putin* (Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, 2016), 429-30.

[380] Aidan Lewis, "Russia Turns to Libya with Show of Support for Eastern Commander," *Reuters,* January 17, 2017, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-russia-idUSKBN1510KT.

The color revolutions illustrated to Russia the dangers of Western democracy-promotion, but also the ways that it could be countered. Russia could use public opinion, by blaming Western incitement of the color revolutions, by attempting to show a pattern of Western encroachment into the post-Soviet region, and by advocating for alternative approaches to democracy and national sovereignty. And when these options fall short, Russia has shown its willingness to intervene in the nations threatened by revolution, through the use of soft power, and escalating through the use of military force. Nicolas Bouchet writes, "The key issue here is not whether Russia's leaders believe their rhetoric about color revolutions or whether they would use this as an excuse when they have other motives for intervening abroad. Either way, Western governments must take seriously the fact that Russia has upgraded its official messaging about color revolutions and developed justifications for a military response."[381] Given the success that Russia achieved in countering the color revolutions, it is likely that Russia will continue to engage in what has been so far a winning strategy.

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[381] Bouchet, "Russia's 'Militarization' of Colour Revolutions," 4.

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