

The Hard Power Limitation: The Failure of Russia to Bring Back the Great Power Status

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ABSTRACT

This journal provides a comprehensive examination of the evolving dynamics surrounding Russia's rise in global power and the challenges it encounters in aligning with Vladimir Putin's vision. By using the Smart Power concept, which uses military power and diplomacy to achieve goals on the international stage, it is known as "Smart power". We examine how Russia has become more dominant in the military, economic and energy sectors over the past 20 years. However, Russia's influence is not as great as expected despite progress. Russia's strong military capabilities could neither create fear of the enemy nor form friendship as it should. In addition, this country's economy does not get the full benefits of alliances with other countries. Furthermore, Russia finds it difficult to build trust with other countries because Russia tends to use violence rather than discussions disguised in diplomacy. This analysis reveals a complex picture of Russia's future, highlighting the need to bridge the gap between hard and soft power in order to have a more unified and influential presence in the international stage.

Keywords: *Russia, Hard Power, Soft Power, Military, Economy, Diplomacy*

Introduction:

In the last two decades, the world has witnessed a significant transformation in the international scene, with Russia taking the center stage of global attention. Under the leadership of President Vladimir Putin, Russia has pursued an ambitious agenda of military modernization and expansion, demonstrating its determination to reestablish itself as a major player on the international stage.¹ In 1999, when addressing the Russian parliament, Vladimir Putin said, "*Russia has been a great power for centuries, and remains so. It has always existed and still has legitimate zones of interest. We should not drop our guard in this respect, neither should we allow our opinions to be ignored.*",² This demonstrates the desire to regain its standing as a great power on the international stage. Putin himself once said that to become a great power, a country must have a strong economy and be globally integrated.³

Over the last 20 years, Russia's material power has experienced a very significant increase overall. In the military field, since 2008, Russia's annual military costs have tripled from 1 trillion rubles

¹ Shinar, Chaim. "Vladimir Putin's aspiration to restore the lost Russian Empire." *European Review* 25, no. 4 (2017): 642-654.

² "Vladimir Putin: The Rebuilding of 'Soviet' Russia." BBC News, March 28, 2014. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-26769481>.

³ Feifer, Gregory. "Russia: Putin Says Russia Should Become 'Great Power.'" RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, April 9, 2008. <https://rferl.org/a/1103255.html>.

to 3.15 trillion rubles, which is currently almost \$35 billion US dollars.⁴ Russia has also strategically utilized its abundant natural resources to strengthen its position in the world economy, especially in oil and gas, to increase its economic strength.⁵ Furthermore, Russia's approach to diplomacy has also changed, focusing on defending its national interests abroad and elevating the country back onto the international stage.⁶ Next, Russia has played an essential role in many conflict resolution processes in the Middle East and Africa.⁷ Furthermore, Russia also showed its influence in its hemisphere, including the Balkan, by supporting its allies, especially after the collapse of Yugoslavia.⁸

However, despite progress in improving its power, Russia faces ongoing challenges in fully restoring the global status it once held during the Soviet era. By developing its power, Russia aimed to increase its influence in the international order. In fact, this development did not even give Russia a favor to fulfill their goal. International world remains "unbothered" by Russia's development of its power. This condition resulted in international order action towards Russia no different than before, which hedged its relations with Russia. This action is mainly caused by the different view on its political orientation to create the prosperous modern world. Subsequently, there is concern and distrust regarding Russia's intentions and actions in the international community as a result of its aggressive interference in other countries' affairs, including its involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, the war in Georgia, and the conflict in Ukraine in 2014.⁹

With the significant increase in power and capabilities pursued over the last 20 years, Russia should be able to recover its strength and become a great power in global politics. Thus, this journal will descriptively answer the research question, namely, "Why Has Russia's Increasing Power not Restored its Global Status in accordance with Vladimir Putin Vision?". This article examines the rise of Russia's power, categorizes the kind of power and how it is utilized in international politics using the lens of "*Smart Power*,"

Debate on Russia Power.

There are a lot of scholarly debates regarding the Russian state's efforts to restore its former glory. Scholars generally agree that Russia has approached its glory days again through the development of all elements of hard power or even smart power which have been enhanced after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Some scholars think that Russia is still not close to its glory days. Regarding these arguments there are debates among scholars regarding the factors behind Russia's failure to regain its status as great power.

First of all, Rumer and Wallander question the credibility of the Russian state's power through reviewing military, economic and even geographical aspects. Through reviewing these three aspects,

⁴ Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, "Доля современных вооружений российской армии составляет около 10 процентов" [The share of modern weapons in the Russian army is about 10 percent], <http://www.mil.ru/info/1069/details/index.shtml?id=60116>.

⁵ Stoner, Kathryn E. *Russia resurrected: Its power and purpose in a new global order*. Oxford University Press, 2020.

⁶ Liu, Fenghua. "Russia's Foreign Policy Over the Past Three Decades: Change and Continuity" *Chinese Journal of Slavic Studies* 2, no. 1 (2022): 86-99. <https://doi.org/10.1515/cjss-2022-0004>

⁷ Lewis, David. "Russian Diplomacy and Conflict Management." George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, 2021.

⁸ McBride, James. "Russia's Influence in the Balkans." Council on Foreign Relations, 2023. <https://www.cfr.org/background/russias-influence-balkans>.

⁹ Glantz, Mary. "Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia's Balancing Act over Russia's War in Ukraine." United States Institute of Peace, March 16, 2022.

Rumer and Wallander agreed that Russia cannot be the main actor in resolving complex and fluctuating global problems.¹⁰ The status of Russia's power, which has sparked controversy in the international world, whether it can be said to be a great power or not, was also reviewed by Fortescue through his journal. Fortescue argued that Russia could be categorized as a great power, but there were limitations in the use of its power.¹¹

Furthermore, Syawfi and Cahyadi mention in their study regarding Russia-Georgia relations, Russia failed to gain its position as benign hegemon since they construct Hobbessian culture in their relationship. Which that Russia depend on its hard power and capability to force other in their relationship.¹² Rutland and Kazantsev also included a pessimistic attitude towards Russia's rise in terms of the use of Soft Power in their research. They firmly stated that the Russian state's use of Soft Power is a reflection of their use of Hard Power on a small scale and can still be categorized as a projection of Russia's power in terms of Hard Power to restore its role in the international world.¹³

Meanwhile, in a journal written by Paul B. Rich, explores historically Russia's status as a great power in first the European and later the global states system. He stated through his argument that the glory of the Russian state was temporary or in other words not permanent.¹⁴ Rich also stated that Russia's role as a great power is just another form of aberration in the international order. This journal state implicitly that, to obtain the status or title of *Great Power*, Russia cannot only focus on increasing its military strength, but all aspects of statehood must also be developed to face this fluctuating international world.

The journals and articles above have different explanations and perspectives regarding Russia's military strength so far. The four journals above collectively have similar arguments where the credibility of the Russian state as a great power is questionable. In this way, this journal attempts to fill the gap in these groups of journals by including the use of the Russian state's smart power instruments. In this case, the position of our journal argument states that Russia has failed to influence the international world through the use of its smart power instruments to become a great power.

Theoretical framework: SmartPower

This paper uses the Smart Power theory to analyze how Russia has utilized its hard power well. Joseph Nye argues that *smart power* is an ability that can be carried out by combining *hard power* and *soft power* to become a more effective power.¹⁵ Based on many viewpoints and how they are used, soft and hard power can be evaluated as good or bad. The idea of *smart power* will make this evaluation process much more efficient. Many state actors worldwide possess exceptional hard and soft power but cannot effectively combine the two.¹⁶ Many state actors worldwide have extraordinary hard and soft power but are ineffective in combining these two powers.

¹⁰ Peter Rutland and Andrei Kazantsev, "The Limits of Russia's "Soft Power".", *Journal of Political Power*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (2016), 395-413

¹¹ Stephen Fortescue, "Can Russia afford to be a great power" *Lowy Institute for International Policy* (2017), 1-20

¹² Idil Syawfi and Robby Cahyadi, "Russia's Failure as a Benign Hegemon: The domination of Hobbessian Culture in the 2008 Russo-Georgian War", in *Global: Jurnal Politik Internasional*, Vol. 23. No. 1 (2021), 51-79

¹³ Peter Rutland and Andrei Kazantsev, "The Limits of Russia's "Soft Power"." in *Journal of Political Power*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (2016), 395-413

¹⁴ Rich, Paul B. "*Russia as a Great Power*", *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 20:2, 276-299

¹⁵ Nye Jr, Joseph S. *The future of power*. PublicAffairs, 2011.

¹⁶ *Ibid*.

To understand further, smart power consists of two elements: hard and soft. Hard power itself is a fairly traditional concept because its implementation focuses on using a country's coercive power to influence other countries.¹⁷ The main aspects or instruments used in the Hard Power concept are military, military economy, coercive diplomacy, and alliances. Generally, this strategy is only implemented by Great Power countries or countries that have high capabilities in applying economic, political and military aspects to influence countries that are also dynamic in the international world. However, the trend of using state power through Hard Power capabilities possessed by a country tends to decline after the end of the Cold War conflict because it is considered less effective for a country in showing its "fans" on the international stage. Thus, cultural or economic aspects are not involved in implementing the hard power concept.

Meanwhile, Soft Power is the ability to achieve goals through attraction, not coercion, known as soft power, namely the ability to make other people want the results you want.¹⁸ Soft power uses attraction and persuasion to influence the behavior of others without creating a competitive or hostile environment. He also emphasizes the importance of style, saying that because soft power is about seduction, actions such as arrogance are likely to backfire and generate repulsion rather than attraction. Nye acknowledges that not all uses of soft power are beneficial; for example, propaganda is a kind of soft power, and he states that "distorting minds is not always better than perverting weapons".¹⁹ Thus, in international politics, hard power and soft power have the same and continuous interest in each other, namely to influence the behavior of countries on the international stage.

Thus, smart power is neither hard nor soft. It can only be obtained by states that have developed hard and soft power. Smart power is the combination of hard power and soft power into an effective strategy. True smart power can be achieved by complementing military, economic and diplomatic power with soft power that can attract others to tackle the global challenges.²⁰

Analysis

a. The Rise of Russia Power: Military, Economy and Diplomacy

i. Russia Military Power

Russia's military strength has increased over the last 20 years, driven by changes in force structure, personnel, and modernization carried out by President Vladimir Putin. This growth also increased with higher defense budgets and more robust foreign policies. Between 2010 and 2019, Russian military spending increased by 30%, totaling \$65.1 billion US dollars in 2019, representing 3.9% of its GDP.²¹ Russia has routinely ranked in the top five largest military spenders worldwide despite spending less on the military than its armed forces and operations.²²

¹⁷ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/hard-power>

¹⁸ Ibid.

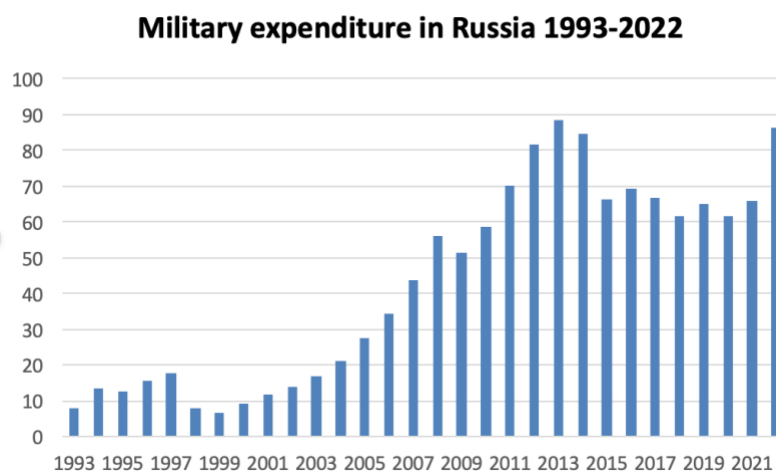
¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ See Joseph S Nye, Jr, "Get Smart: Combining Hard and Soft Power", in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 4 (July/August 2009), pp160-163.

²¹ Wezemen, Siemon. "Russia's Military Spending: Frequently Asked Questions." SIPRI. Accessed November 26, 2023. <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-background/2020/russias-military-spending-frequently-asked-questions>.

²² SIPRI. "Countries with the highest military spending worldwide in 2022 (in billion U.S. dollars)." Chart. April 24, 2023. Statista. Accessed January 19, 2024. <https://remote-lib.ui.ac.id:6499/statistics/262742/countries-with-the-highest-military-spending/>

The figure below shows the increase in Russian military spending over the last 20 years (2003-2023). It shows Russia's efforts to regain its military capability, especially after the 2000s. In 2003, Russian state expenditure in the military sector amounted to only \$16.97 billion US dollars and significantly rose to \$86.37 billion US dollars in 2022.²³ the highest expenditure by the Russian state in the military sector was in 2013, when Russia spent \$88.35 billion US dollars just for military needs alone, followed by 2022 with military expenditure of \$86.37 billion US dollars.²⁴ This fact is supported by the existence of a major phenomenon for Russia, where during that period, namely in 2013 and 2022, Russia experienced quite a tough conflict with Ukraine. However, Russian state spending in the military sector stagnated for 5 years, from 2015 to 2020.²⁵



Source: SIPRI. "Military spending in Russia from 1993 to 2022 (in billion current U.S. dollars)"

This military development and modernization is also written in Russia's State Armament Plan or GPV, they focus on combat readiness, cooperation between military branches, and modernization of military hardware in the coming years. In the 2011-2020 GPV procurement package, Russia has spent on four different military aspects, namely: a) **Nuclear**: 8 strategic nuclear submarines with new Bulava (RSM 56 or SS-NX-30) ballistic missiles; new heavy ballistic nuclear land missiles Topol-M (SS-27) and RS-24 (replacing the Soviet-era SS-18 Satan, SS-19 Stiletto and SS-20 Saber ICBMs)²⁶; improving the capabilities of the Tu-160 Blackjack and T-95 Bear strategic bombers; development of a new generation of long-range bombers.²⁷ b) **Air Force and air defense**: More than 600 aircraft (including

²³ SIPRI. "Military spending in Russia from 1993 to 2022 (in billion current U.S. dollars)." Chart. April 24, 2023. Statista. Accessed December 03, 2023.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Connolly, Richard, and Boulègue, Mathieu, "Russia's New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027", Chatham House, 10 May 2018, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/russia-s-new-state-armamentprogramme-implications-russian-armed-forces-and-military>

²⁷ Cooper, Julian, "The Russian State Armament Programme 2018-2027", NATO Defence College: Russian Studies, May 2018, <http://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=1167>

Su-34; Su-35 and MiG-35 fighters; T-50 fifth generation fighter)²⁸; 1,000 helicopters (including Mi-26 Halo heavy transport helicopters, Mi-8 Hip, Mi-28 Havoc and Ka-52 Alligator attack helicopters)²⁹; An-70 and An-124 Ruslan (Condor) medium-range tactical heavy transport aircraft; 100 S-500 air defense systems and 56 S-400 systems. c) **Navy**: 20 conventional submarines; 100 ships (including fifteen frigates, 35 corvettes, landing ships and destroyers); four French Mistral-type amphibious assault helicopter carriers (two built in Russia).³⁰ d) **Army**: T-90 tank; light armored vehicles (from the Italian company Iveco); Iskander tactical ballistic missile system (replaces Tochka or SS -21 Scarab systems); new multiple rocket launcher system (replaces the BM-30 Smerch anti-tank missile system);³¹ mechanized artillery; increasing communications capabilities by upgrading the GLONASS satellite system and by deploying new digital communications and command and control systems; night vision equipment; and future warrior packs.

Even though Russia has experienced extraordinary military improvements to increase its security and strengthen its influence, Russia continues to suffer by taking a difficult path on its way to take back their throne on the international stage. By developing its military power in such a massive scale, other countries or even international organizations are being concerned and quite threatened by the projection of Russia's military strength. The assumption is that if Russia has reached its maximum point in the military field, it can create insecurity and instability in the Euro-Atlantic region.³² Broadly speaking, those kinds of assumptions came from the majority of countries in the western world caused by the oppositional political orientation towards the Russians. This is the perfect example of an arms race definition who has been actively putting competitive behavior and creating instability in the international order, a pattern of competitive acquisition of military capabilities between two or more countries.³³

Seeing Russia developing its military capabilities, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) is one of the parties that brought such a hard time for Russia's return to its former glory. Since the increase of Russia's military strength and its actions in invading the Crimea region, NATO has agreed to present multinational-scale battalion groups in the northeastern and southeastern regions of the alliance country.³⁴ In 2017, NATO formed four multinational battalion groups in Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland, initiated by Britain, Germany, Canada and the United States.³⁵ This action is aimed at responding to Russia's aggressive behavior.

NATO's resistance towards Russia is also reflected in its actions to defend Ukraine in 2022. To respond to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, NATO has constructed three policies. First, NATO formed four new multinational-scale battalion groups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. Second,

²⁸ Barrie, Douglas, "Russian Aerospace Forces reform and its Syrian role: the view from Moscow" IISS Military Balance Blog, 06 December 2018, <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/militarybalance/2018/12/russian-aerospace-reform-syria>

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Crane, Keith, Olikier, Olga, and Nichiporuk, Brian, "Trends in Russia's Armed Forces: An Overview of Budgets and Capabilities", RAND Corporation, 2019, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2573.html

³¹ McDermott, Roger "Shoigu Reflects on Russian Military Advances in 2019", Jamestown Foundation, 15 January 2020, <https://jamestown.org/program/shoigu-reflects-on-russian-militaryadvances-in-2019/>

³² Nato. "NATO's Military Presence in the East of the Alliance." NATO, March 15, 2023. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_136388.htm.

³³ Joseph Maiolo, "Arms Race in International Politics", <https://academic.oup.com/book/8562/chapter-abstract/154447817?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

NATO member countries have agreed to deploy their forces through battalion groups that have been formed if there are indications of the use of Russian military force aimed explicitly at Ukraine. Third, NATO member countries agreed to send troops, ships, and aircraft to strengthen or ensure the security and stability of the eastern part of Europe.³⁶ Through the creation of eight groups of battalions on a multinational scale, which were created in less than ten years with all the capabilities possessed by these military groups, it can be concluded that the international community fears the increase in the Russian military and is not respected at all.

ii. Russia Economic Power

In the economic aspect, Russia has experienced ups and downs over the last 20 years. Despite several obstacles, including the financial crisis, sanctions, and the COVID-19 outbreak, Russia has been able to attract foreign investment and maintain its position on the international stage.³⁷ Russia's economic success is primarily due to its use of natural resources, particularly energy commodities. Russia has been one of the largest borrowers of US debt due to its dependence on sales of gas, oil, and other resources, which allows Russia to earn a lot of funds.³⁸ However, Russia's heavy dependency on energy commodities also makes it vulnerable to changes in global energy prices and economic policies.

Russia's capacity to use its economic resources drives its economic growth and power. Russia has achieved its geopolitical goals and exerts influence in the international arena by keeping its economy strong. Not only that, Russia's economic expansion has allowed it to increase military spending, which has militarized government spending.³⁹ Russia's ties with China are also increasing as China emerges as a significant buyer of Russian energy commodities and supplier of high-tech products.⁴⁰

Apart from that, Russia has also become a significant player in the global energy sector due to its immense natural resource reserves and strategic geographical location. Russia is one of the world's largest producers and exporters of oil, natural gas, and coal, making European countries very dependent on its resources. Russia's oil reserves are estimated at 80 billion barrels, while its natural gas reserves are the largest in the world, namely around 1,688 trillion cubic feet.⁴¹ Below graph shows Russia crude oil and condensate exports by destination, that mainly exported to Europe and Asia. Through Gazprom, a state-owned company, Russia has succeeded in controlling most of Europe's natural gas supplies, which covers around 48% of regional consumption. Not only natural gas Russia is also the second largest coal exporter in the world.⁴²

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ellyatt, Holly. "5 Charts Show Russia's Economic Highs and Lows under Putin." CNBC, October 11, 2021. <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/10/11/russias-economy-under-president-putin-in-charts.html>.

³⁸ "Economic Change in Russia: Archives." CSIS. Accessed December 26, 2023. <https://www.csis.org/programs/europe-russia-and-eurasia-program/archives/economic-change-russia>.

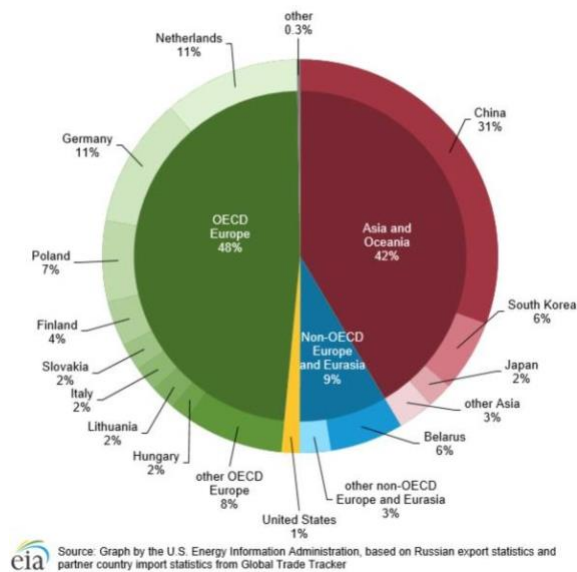
³⁹ Prokopenko, Alexandra. How sanctions have changed Russian economic policy - carnegie endowment ..., 2023. <https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/89708>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Oil and Gas Journal. "Worldwide look at reserves and production." *Oil and Gas Journal* (2020): 16.

⁴² EIA. "Russia Energy Profile: Third-Largest Producer of Petroleum and Other Liquids – Analysis." Eurasia Review, December 20, 2021. <https://www.eurasiareview.com/20122021-russia-energy-profile-third-largest-producer-of-petroleum-and-other-liquids-analysis/>.

Russia's crude oil and condensate exports by destination, 2020



Source: Graph by the U.S. Energy Information Administration, basen on Russian export statistics and partner country import statistics from Global Trade Tracker

With increased trade and dependence on energy resources, Russia has economic opportunities and risks for European countries. Although there are some economic advantages for European countries, this makes Europe very vulnerable because Russia's energy dominance allows Russia to influence European policy and exert political pressure. Price fluctuations and geopolitical tensions between Russia and Europe can also cause uncertain economic conditions, disrupting regional stability.⁴³

Although the Russian economy has increased drastically, what is the Russian state's policy in implementing its economic improvements to gain influence in the international world? Most countries in the world, especially on the Western axis, are worried about this significant change. These concerns are due to Russia's power in world energy markets, especially oil and natural gas supplies. Russia's energy sector has become more prominent as its economy has grown, making other countries wary of relying too heavily on Russian energy supplies. This concern stems from Russia's past, where Russia used energy exports as a political "tool" and could use its economic power to influence state behavior both regionally and even globally.⁴⁴ As Richard Anderson stated that "The EU and greater Europe will soon find themselves in an extremely dangerous position due to the ever-increasing dependence on Russian natural gas".⁴⁵

⁴³ Lough, John. *Russia's energy diplomacy*. London: Chatham House, 2011.

⁴⁴ Luhn, Alec. "Russia's Economic Influence: Energy, Diversification, and Geopolitical Positioning." *Global Economic Review*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2023, pp. 45-62.

⁴⁵ Richard J. Anderson, "Europe's Dependence on Russian natural Gas: Perspectives and Recommendations for a Long-term Strategy", George C. Marshall: European Center for Security Studies Occasional Papers, <https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/occasional-papers/europes-dependence-russian-natural-gas-perspectives-and-recommendations-long-term-strategy-0>

Furthermore, Russia's economic expansion has allowed it to expand beyond the oil sector, elevating it to important positions in the technology, agriculture, and arms export sectors. Russia's ability to provide various commodities and services to other countries occurs because of Russia's diversity, which encourages dependence on the economic sector.⁴⁶ In establishing relations in the economic field itself, there is a risk of dependency when countries enter into economic agreements with Russia because there will be the possibility of difficulty in breaking away from their network of economic ties. To limit this, many countries choose to limit their trade with Russia or look for other suppliers of goods and services because they are worried about the stability of the Russian economy.

The European Union, which understands the value of energy security and the necessity of diversifying its energy supply, has also been influenced by Russia's energy policy. By establishing a liberalized energy market and investing in new suppliers like LNG, the EU has attempted to lessen its reliance on Russian energy. Though the EU has been hesitant in putting economic penalties on Russia's energy sector, Russia has been able to continue supplying gas to the EU due to its dominating market position in the energy sector.⁴⁷

Russia's economic power is also strengthened by its geopolitical location, particularly in Eurasia.⁴⁸ Russia has a platform to increase its economic influence by including former Soviet states in partnerships such as the Eurasian Economic Union. Despite concerns about dependency, countries in the region feel compelled to create greater economic ties with Russia for geopolitical reasons.⁴⁹ Russia is a powerful player due to its economic growth, diversity, and strategic location. As a result, other countries are wary of getting too involved in Russia's affairs or becoming too dependent on it.

Thus, it is true that Russia is experiencing significant changes in the economic field. However, to answer whether Russia has succeeded in influencing the international world through improvements in the economic field, the answer is affected, but not in a positive connotation. It is often found that in its implementation, instead of establishing cooperative relations, whether bilateral or multilateral, Russia uses its country's economic power in a coercive or threatening manner if it is not in line with Russia's national interests. The essence of a country's economic power is how it makes its economic capabilities appear as a promising project in the eyes of the international community.

For example, Russia was able to force other countries to comply with its demands or take a more impartial position in the war against Ukraine by limiting its oil shipments.⁵⁰ Restrictions on oil imports, resulted in a significant decline in oil revenues, indicating a coercive use of economic power when its interests were threatened. In this context, the term "coercive use of economic power" refers to Russia's capacity to use its control over oil exports as a negotiating tool to influence the policies of other countries. This is a form of implementation of a country's economic power that is misused by a country. Instead of using a more friendly approach such as forming alliances, Russia uses its economic power to intimidate the friendly neighbourhood international system.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Korteweg, Rem. "Energy as a tool of foreign policy of authoritarian states, in particular Russia." (2018).

⁴⁸ Rossbach, Niklas H. *The Geopolitics of Russian Energy. Gas, oil and the energy security of tomorrow*. Swedish Defence Research Agency FOI, 2018.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Impact of sanctions on the Russian economy - consilium, October 12, 2023. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/impact-sanctions-russian-economy/>.

iii. Russia Diplomatic Power

In diplomacy, Russia produced THE CONCEPT of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, which has been approved by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation Number 229 dated March 31, 2023. It stated Russia's stance in maintaining foreign relations through policies or regulations and highlighted that its national character is peaceful, open, consistent, and practical.⁵¹ These characteristics are based on universally recognized principles and norms of international law.⁵² Russia has taken action in line with the above document by showing its openness through international or regional cooperation to advance common interests. This can be proven through Russia's integration with several international organizations such as SCP, BRICS, UN, G20, etc.

Besides that, Russia is also involved in several occasions and issues. Russia is using its diplomatic efforts in the Middle East. Russia acts as a mediator in the Syrian conflict and successfully negotiates with Iran and Turkey.⁵³ Russia creates ties with the Asia-Pacific region through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. These countries have collaborated strategically, emphasized common interests in resisting Western domination, and supported multipolarity.⁵⁴ Russia is also involved in dynamic relations with the European Union. The economic engagement with the European Union helps diplomacy and encourages discussion and cooperation on issues ranging from trade to security. The Nord Stream pipeline project is a strategic example of Russia's use of energy infrastructure to improve diplomatic relations and economic cooperation with European countries.⁵⁵

It can be seen that Russia has made improvements and demonstrated its commitment to using soft power instruments through diplomacy. The many dynamics carried out by Russia, both on a regional and even international scale, which are oriented towards the use of soft power, have given rise to many benefits for countries that collaborate with Russia, both bilaterally and multilaterally. When talking about gaining strength for a country through the concept of soft power, Russia should have become one of the leading countries that influences the international world through Russia's actions in carrying out its diplomatic efforts. Moreover, Russia has become a central actor in various international forums and in several international organizations.

However, when talking about Russia's diplomatic practices, it is true that Russia has been active in various international forums and has even played a role in creating economic organizations such as BRICS. However, the big question has not been answered: is Russia's role in international forums or even the creation of economic alliances aimed at creating world peace or world fear?.⁵⁶ Charles Ziegler argues that Russia under Putin put emphasis on coercive use of power which relies on the threat of force rather than persuasion. Discourse that developed by Putin is resistance to the status quo and aspiration for changes in the international system, that bring concern to many countries.⁵⁷

⁵¹ The concept of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, 2023. https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/fundamental_documents/1860586/.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Perry, Tom, and Layla Bassam. Russia helps mediate local deals with rebels in Syria: Minister, 2016. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-ceasefires-idUSKCN0VK1CT>.

⁵⁴ Aris, Stephen. "Russian-Chinese Relations through the Lens of the SCO." *Russie. Nei. Visions* 34 (2008): 1-20.

⁵⁵ "EU Trade Relations with Russia." Trade. Accessed December 8, 2023. https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/russia_en.

⁵⁶ "The Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation," 31 March 2023. https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/fundamental_documents/1860586/.

⁵⁷ Charles E. Ziegler, "Russian Diplomacy: Challenging the West, in Andrei P. Tsygankov (ed), 2018, *The Routledge of Russian Foreign Policy*, (London: Routledge),

This is caused by Russia's failure to analyze the urgency of using its power. Russia often uses hard power instruments in its actions. If a country wants a big influence in the international world, the use of force must be smart, combining hard and soft power concepts. Evidently, in the last 20 years, Russia has created conflicts with several parties, especially in the failure of the Minsk agreement, where this agreement was projected to create peace between Russia and Ukraine. The Minsk agreements, which sought to bring about peace in the fighting in the Donbas. Ukraine, Russia, and the OSCE signed the accords in 2014 and 2015, but they were unable to even temporarily bring stability in the area. The absence of context surrounding Russia's continued control over the land and its ability to retain military power made diplomacy ineffective and unlikely, which was the fundamental reason for the Minsk agreements' failure.⁵⁸ The failure of the Minsk agreement caused the international community in Russia's efforts to realize world peace through the power of diplomacy to fade, because it was deemed not to have committed to its policies which had been said in law THE CONCEPT of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation.

b. Stagnancy and Not Developing

Despite a remarkable increase in Russia's power over the analyzed period, a deeper analysis shows stagnation and a lack of development in key elements, thus preventing Russia from influencing the global world through smart power capabilities. Concerning military technology, these improvements arouse more fear than interest. The Russian military has not yet developed the power necessary to turn raw power into a convincing weapon for collaborating or building coalitions and becoming a reliable partner for other countries. Russia's ability to build constructive partnerships on the international stage is prevented by the perception that its military power is a frightening factor rather than a unifying factor.

In the same way, Russia's use of power in the economy appears to be aimed more at hampering the economies of competing countries than at increasing attractiveness. Despite apparent economic progress, failure to present itself as an attractive partner prevents the country's potential to create diplomatic and meaningful relationships with other countries. Russia's ability to use its economic power to change global dynamics is weakened by the lack of a strategy that makes Russia a desirable economic friend.

Regarding diplomacy, Russia continues to participate more in international forums, although its stance on conflict resolution often favors the use of force. Although diplomatic platforms provide a platform for soft power projection, Russia's tendency to use coercive measures makes it more difficult to form coalitions and create trust. Instead of being seen as a diplomatic partner seeking cooperative solutions, Russia is seen as a force to be reckoned with when using hard-power solutions in diplomatic relations.

It is clear that Russia's hard power has increased in the last 20 years, but the creation of smart power is still being held back by the inability to keep up with the proportional increase in soft power and hard power components. The approach used by Russia appears to emphasize domination and deterrence rather than cooperation and attraction, making it very difficult for Russia to create a more effective and balanced global impact.

⁵⁸ Powirska, Lydia. "Through the Ashes of the Minsk Agreements." Epicenter At the Heart of Research and Ideas typeset in crimson and black, May 18, 2022. <https://epicenter.wcfia.harvard.edu/blog/through-ashes-minsk-agreements>.

Conclusion

Overall, after discussing comprehensively Russia's efforts to restore its status as a major player in the international world through a research question namely "Has Russia succeeded in implementing and utilizing its hard power in accordance with Vladimir Putin's vision to become a major player in the international system?" by using the concept of smart power theory. It can be concluded that Vladimir Putin's goal of re-elevating Russia as a major player on the international stage has still not been fully achieved, despite very significant progress in military strength, economics and dominance of the world's energy sector. There is still a gap between Russia's military power and the country's capacity in practice to gain international influence or cooperation, based on an analysis of the development of its military power over the last 20 years. Despite improvements in the military economy to modernize the country's defense equipment, Russia is still unable to use its military power effectively to attract the attention of other countries. Through smart power theory, there is still a gap in combining the components of hard and soft power, so this still cannot be combined into the smart power Russia needs to achieve global influence.

In addition, Russia's economic expansion, which is largely due to Russia's dominance in the energy sector, has not resulted in increased global cooperation. Many countries are reluctant to depend on the Russian economy. This shows a lack of trust in Russia, thereby weakening Russia's ability to use its economic power as a balancing tool. Russia has a powerful economy, but its influence worldwide is limited by its inability to establish itself as a partner other countries can trust. This proves how important soft power and diplomatic initiatives are in developing economic partnerships beyond simple economic domination.

Even though Russia has a strong capacity and status in various international organizations and forums, it still has not made progress in leading and influencing international forums, which indicates stagnation in the field of diplomacy. This can be seen from some of its behavior in invading Ukraine and Crimea, where actions like this make Russia less respected in international forums. Because of this, an environment has been created where countries do not view Russia as a cooperative and reliable partner, and the international community is worried about Russia's closeness. To fulfill Vladimir Putin's vision of re-establishment as a major international player, Russia must close the gap between its economic power, military might, and soft power capacity. Therefore, to achieve a more balanced and stronger global position, it is necessary to overcome the lack of diplomatic relations, ensure military power is used effectively, and instill trust in relations.

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