

ANTIDIPLMACY IN RUSSIA'S POLICIES REGARDING RUSSIAN-SPEAKERS IN THE BALTIC STATES¹

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ABSTRACT

Though Russia is a classic realist power, Russia, as its recent actions in Ukraine reveal, frequently prefers hard power to powers of attraction. In addition to traditional economic pressure and military policy, Russia also employs antidiplomatic tools to influence the Baltic states. Though Russia officially proclaims itself a democratic state, it has been developing a broad spectrum of antidiplomatic methods to legitimise Russia's interests in post-Soviet spaces inhabited by large numbers of Russian-speakers. The clearest example of these methods appears in Russia's use of international and regional organizations' conferences to express and articulate its interests in protecting Russian diasporas—a phenomenon that first appeared in the Vladimir Putin's foreign policy as part of his efforts to construct a negative image of the Baltic states, affect the Baltic states' domestic policies, and subtly discredit their governments. Russia is positioning itself as the protector of a Russian diaspora wounded by the Baltic states' anti-Russian policies.

Keywords: Antidiplomacy, Russia, Baltic States, Russian-speakers.

INTRODUCTION

Exploring the concept of antidiplomacy in social history and in the history of theology and philosophy, where it appears explicitly, is a valuable heuristic exercise. Although the ontology and etymology of *antidiplomacy* derive from the French Revolution (as the notion of antidiplomacy appeared in modern history simultaneously with diplomacy), references to antidiplomacy in its early metaphysical conceptions can be found in Christian and Islamic theologies. Furthermore, a secularized reformulation of antidiplomacy was put forth by classic utopian thinkers and antidiplomacy has been examined by philosophers from Hegel to Marx (Cornago, 2013). Antidiplomacy is traditionally defined by contrasting it with diplomacy. James Der Derian defines diplomacy as the “negotiation between states while antidiplomacy is propaganda among people” (1987). In other words, “the purpose of diplomacy is to mediate estranged relations:

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antidiplomacy's aim is to transcend all estranged relations" (Der Derian, 1987). This plurality of meanings, and the opposition between diplomacy and antidiplomacy, impedes consensus on the definition of antidiplomacy. Because of this flexibility in defining antidiplomacy, antidiplomacy is used time and again in diplomatic statements, journalists' articles, political experts' discourse, academic papers and internet discussion groups.

In this article, Russia's foreign policy methods used in its relations with the Baltic states—Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia—presented by Russia as advocacy for Russian-speakers residing in these three states, will be considered antidiplomatic. In Russian studies, with few exceptions, the concept of antidiplomacy has hardly been used to interpret Russia's foreign policy. Łukasz Adamski offers one such exception; he notes Russia's extremely emotional and audacious attitude towards Poland, where Soviet monuments of gratitude to the Red Army have been dismantled (2015). In contrast, most analysts invoke soft power and public diplomacy approaches as they explore the relationships between Russia and its compatriots abroad (Grigas, 2012; Maliukevičius, 2013; Russkaya Soft Power analysis, 2014; Simons, 2014; Panova, 2015; Rostoks & Sprūds, 2015; Kuczyńska-Zonik, 2016). According to Joseph S. Nye (2014), however, Russia compels others to advance its interests through coercion and payment rather than attraction. Thus, Russia strategically combines soft power resources with hard power assets such as economic and military power, as was exemplified in Ukraine. Additionally, a few years ago, Russian military operations along the Baltic borders were viewed as insignificant (Żurawski vel Grajewski, 2011), whereas today they are deemed as potential threats to the governments of the Baltic states. Currently, Russia seems to be developing an alternative model of conduct in international relations and appears to be applying the concept of antidiplomacy. Russia's relations with its compatriots abroad in the Baltic states indicate Russia's intentions: to exert pressure on post-Soviet spaces.

Russia's policies regarding Russian-speakers in the Baltic states are neither complex nor ambiguous. The Baltic states' historic memories and regional interests render their relationships with Russia neutral at best and occasionally hostile. The great number of Russian-speakers residing in the Baltic states complicate Russia's relations with its Baltic neighbours. Russia has never fully abandoned the idea of bringing the Baltic states back into its sphere of "privileged interest" (Auers, 2015). Hence Russia's policy towards the Russian diasporas in the Baltic states is motivated by a Russian nostalgia for the USSR and a longing to build a historical, cultural, and linguistic transnational community—essentially, a longing to create a Russian world (or as this concept of a Russian world is known in Russian, a русский мир) (Laruelle, 2015). From the Russian perspective, this idea of building a Russian world justifies Russia's antidiplomatic engagement in post-Soviet regions as the concept reconnects Russia's Soviet past with the Russian diaspora's current situation. The Russian diaspora is a crucial instrument in Russia's articulation of its interests in international forums. In this paper, I cite examples of Russia's international and regional activities that confirm Russia's strategies are pursued an effort to destabilize the Baltic region. I apply content analysis method to these examples to examine the meanings, contexts, intentions, and influences of Russia's messages to the Baltics in order to identify and analyse Russia's: 1) techniques and antidiplomatic methods; 2) goals; and 3) relationships with the Baltic states and the international community.

1. ANTIDIPLMACY AS A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

The definition of antidiplomacy used in this paper is grounded in Corneliu Bjola and Markus Komprobst's (2013) representational perspectives for examining antidiplomacy. In this paper, antidiplomacy is defined as a set of practices, instruments, and processes that significantly challenge diplomatic competences in communication, legitimate representation, the management of public goods, and international cooperation, which implies the erosion of dialogical diplomacy. In other words, antidiplomacy aims to subvert or even delegitimize the sovereignty of political communities and may also challenge the security of these communities (Bjola, 2011).

While there is no consistent definition for the term *antidiplomacy*, it is usually recognized as an ideological and practical counterforce to diplomacy. In most common contexts, antidiplomacy is understood as a lack of cooperation and dialogue, a disrespect for other voices, or even aggression. *Antidiplomacy* can also be used to negatively qualify a government's foreign policy. Because of the term's plurality of meanings, it is difficult to objectively designate it. Der Derian (1987), instead of suggesting any straightforward definition of antidiplomacy, briefly compares diplomacy and antidiplomacy (Table 1). While diplomacy describes interactions among (more or less) equal states, antidiplomacy seems to recognize reciprocity among non-state entities. Der Derian treats states' foreign relations as relations of estrangement, expressed in cultural and linguistic differences. In contrast, antidiplomacy rejects any forms of distinction, as in Christian universalism and various utopian writings (Warren, 1989).

TABLE 1. Der Derian's comparison of diplomacy and antidiplomacy

	Diplomacy	Antidiplomacy
Relationship between subjects	Horizontal	Vertical
The nature of relationships	Between states	Between strata within states
Interaction conditions	Particular political entities—states—are estranged but mutually equal	Idealistic, utopian ideas—state boundaries and differences among entities are rejected
Aim	To mediate foreign relations	The destruction of segmentation

Source: Der Derian, 1987.

Der Derian adds an additional term, *paradiplomacy*, a form of antidiplomacy that can easily fall into the perversions of the revolutionary or even *terror diplomacy*, the latter being either the diplomatic practices of terrorist organizations or the endeavours of diplomats to destabilize countries or overthrow governments. Additionally, he points out that given new technological conditions, the old rules of the diplomatic game have changed and a new antidiplomacy has been generated (Der Derian, 1992).

For Martin Wight, antidiplomacy is not a political doctrine compatible with the realities of international politics, but a moral ideological attitude that could even bring about the abolition of diplomacy itself. Diplomacy can easily and peacefully transform into a dangerous antidiplomacy. The value of Wight's work lies in his recognition of the theoretical and practical

fluidity between some forms of utopian political doctrines and their possible effects, such as fascism and communism (Wight, 1991).

In his article, Noe Cornago (2013) circumscribes antidiplomacy's ambiguity by citing and examining various diplomatic notes, memories, historical narratives, literature, political papers, intelligence reports, academic writings, and internet discussions before concluding that the various meaning of *antidiplomacy* can be understood as complex connections between political beliefs, actions, and actual historical events. In tracing the use and meanings of *antidiplomacy*, Cornago references Polish writer and diplomat Jan Potocki's 1805 use of *antidiplomacy* concerning the reinforcement of Russia's diplomatic mission along the eastern borders of its empire; Potocki used the phrase "antidiplomatic manners," to describe Russia's progressive political force (Cornago, 2013:204). Cornago also cites Juan Valera's—former Spanish Ambassador to Portugal, Belgium, Austria, and the United States—use of the term in a diplomatic note in 1897. Valera referred to the evolution of events in Cuba as *antidiplomatic* and incompatible with some aspects of diplomatic culture (Cornago, 2013, pp. 195-196). Although a positive connotation of antidiplomacy emerged in 1840 when a patriotic people's movement was recognized as an "antidiplomatic congress" (Cornago, 2013, pp. 2015-206), the term *antidiplomacy* has been regarded as a criticism implying imperialism or foreign interventionism since the mid-nineteenth century. This negative connotation of *antidiplomacy* remains relevant to the United States, as the US's antidiplomacy negates governments' foreign policies towards powerless states (Cornago, 2013, pp. 206-209).

Perceptions of current international relations, however, suggest a clear opposition between diplomacy and antidiplomacy will no longer be observed. Despite their asymmetrical character, both notions will be frequently exchanged—or even reversed despite their seemingly distinct positive and negative connotations. For example, Michael Stohl (1984) uses the term *coercive diplomacy* and refers to elements of the "diplomacy of violence." Similarly, Noemi Gal-Or (1993), in her analysis of terrorist diplomacy as a special form of diplomacy consisting of elements of deterrence and coercion, assumes that limited political violence has become, at least, tolerable. She claims diplomatic methods are ambivalent as they are evolving into permissible antidiplomatic instruments of political activity.

Gal-Or's arguments about the contradictory nature of antidiplomacy are echoed on popular news websites. For website commentator Fiona Clark (2016), *antidiplomacy* is a synonym for the militarization of NATO-Russian relations. Yet Marc Owen Jones (2014) calls attention to another phenomena, *celebrity antidiplomacy*, or the immoral encouragement of human rights violations supported by actors, athletes, and musicians visiting authoritarian regimes.

2. THE EMERGENCE OF RUSSIA'S POLICY OF SUPPORT FOR RUSSIAN-SPEAKERS

It wasn't until the 1980s that the compatriots issue appeared in Russia's political discourse. Launched in 1989, the so-called Russian card was played to prevent the disintegration of the Soviet Union. For Gorbachev, guaranteeing protection to Russian diasporas, diasporas created with the collapse of the USSR, was a significant but difficult to implement priority. In contrast, the diaspora issue was, at least initially, less important to Yeltsin. During his first term as president

he only signed bilateral agreements, including the protection of the Russian diaspora's rights and freedoms in post-Soviet spaces. Later, in response to the military conflict in the Republic of Moldova and the Baltic states issuing their naturalization policies², Yeltsin's position changed and he sought to protect the Russian diasporas' rights (Horska, 2009). One of the first documents concerning this issue of the dispersion of Russian compatriots residing in what were now post-Soviet spaces was Russia's Compatriot Policy Act, issued under Yeltsin in 1994. In the act, Russia expressed support for Russians who wished to return to their motherland or obtain Russian citizenship. Further, the decree offered the Russian diaspora protections of their national identity by legal, political, diplomatic, economic, and cultural instruments (Compatriot Policy Act of the Russian Federation, 1994). By 1995, Yeltsin had founded the Council of Compatriots. However, Russia's productive actions were not justified as an extension of Russia's policies in favour of Russian-speaking diasporas until Vladimir Putin's presidential period; Putin achieved this by joining hard and soft powers with elements of Soviet style propaganda (Conley and Gerber, 2011). The diaspora has become a convenient tool for promoting a positive image of the Russian state and for articulating its interests in the international arena, particularly in Russia's areas of historic interests.

The current situation of the Russian-speaking diasporas in the Baltic states has been formed by cultural, historical, and political factors—the most important of these factors are associated with the Baltic states' Soviet periods and the Baltic states' naturalization policies. All of the factors have influenced the educations and the political, linguistic, and social statuses of Russian-speakers in the Baltics and are regarded as discriminatory and humiliating by Russia. Though Russia has not accepted its loss of the Baltic region, it has had to formulate a new foreign policy towards Russian-speaking residents in the region's three independent countries.

Russia primarily uses language to identify its diasporas in the Baltic states. Russian is the mother tongue of 8 per cent of the residents of Lithuania, 33.8 per cent of the residents in Latvia, and 29.6 per cent of the residents in Estonia (CIA, 2015). Although Russia is associated with tragic episodes of history in the Baltic states, Russian is still the most popular second language in Lithuania according to the Lithuanian Department of Statistics (True Lithuania, 2015). Likewise, in Latvia and Estonia, (Centrālā Statistikas Pārvalde, 2011; Eesti kultuurministeerium, 2015), most of the older generations are fluent in Russian because of its ubiquity and obligatory use during the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states. Nowadays, the use of Russian is decreasing. Today English is the most popular foreign language to learn (Eurostat, 2015). While private hotels and restaurants still offer menus in Russian and employ Russian-speakers, this is largely to accommodate the large number of Russian tourists who visit the Baltic states, a number that statistics reveal is declining (Lithuanian State Department of Tourism, 2016; BBN, 2016; BNN-NEWS, 2015).

² Latvia and Estonia granted citizenship only to those who had been citizens before June 1940 and to their descendants. As a result, a third of residents in Latvia and Estonia became non-citizens in the early 1990s (Smith, Aasland&Mole, 1994). While naturalization processes was introduced in the 1990s and prior to EU accession, it remains a very slow process.

3. RUSSIAN-SPEAKERS IN THE BALTIC STATES AND RUSSIA'S ANTIDIPLOMATIC TECHNIQUES IN THE BALTIC STATES

Though Russia is a classic realist power, Russia, as its recent actions in Ukraine reveal, frequently prefers hard power to powers of attraction. However, recent research (Grigas, 2012; Maliukevičius, 2013; Simons, 2014; Panova, 2015; Rostoks & Sprūds, 2015) has shown that in addition to applying traditional economic pressure and military policies, Russia has extended various instruments of influence in the Baltic states and has justified its interests in post-Soviet spaces as due to its advocacy for the Russian diasporas living there.

Russia uses international and regional organizations and conferences, appropriate forums for Russia to articulate its interests regarding Russian-speaking communities, to sway public opinion in its favour. In such forums, Russia portrays itself as the protector of a diaspora wounded by the anti-Russian policies of the Baltic states. In this context, Russia's statements to the international arenas regarding Russian-speakers in the Baltic states subtly discredit the governments of the Baltic states. This phenomenon has appeared simultaneously with Vladimir Putin's construction of negative images of the Baltic states intended to affect their domestic policies (Denisenko, 2015). Russian attempts to undermine the integration and adaptation of Russian-speaking diasporas in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia indicates that Russia prefers for these states to continue to grapple with internal national divides (Saari, 2014).

3.1. Accusations of human rights violations and ethnic discrimination

In the early 1990s, Latvia and Estonia's citizenship policies were met with particularly strong criticism from the OSCE, the EU, and the Council of Europe (Auers, 2015). The Russian government also actively participated in debates regarding the citizenship policies of the Baltic states and repeatedly accused the Baltic states of committing human rights violations. In 1999, after Tatyana Ždanoka's disqualification³ from running in Latvia's 1998 parliamentary and municipal elections, Russia's State Duma cited Ždanoka's exclusion as a human rights violation committed by the Latvian government (Russian Parliament in case of Ždanok Act, 1999). Russia made an international appeal for the condemnation of the Latvian government (European Court of Human Rights, 2006; Lich, 2008). The European Court of Human Rights ruled that Ždanoka's human rights were not violated (European Court of Human Rights, 2006).

The rights of Russian-speakers in Latvia and Estonia were among the most contentious issues the two countries faced during their ascensions to the EU. For instance, the EU recommended that Latvia and Estonia consider changing the minimum language requirements for elderly people and granting citizenship to children born in the independent states. Eventually, the governments of both countries were forced to accept a few EU institutions' demands, which made the EU less popular in Latvia and Estonia than it was in Lithuania. Russia's constant criticism of Latvia and Estonia's relationships with their Russian-speakers can be interpreted as a way to

³ Ždanoka was ruled ineligible to stand as a candidate in the parliamentary elections. Her exclusion was based on her former membership of the Communist Party of Latvia. She complained that her right to stand for election had been infringed upon.

question the effectiveness of the European institutions to ensure democracy and rule of law. An adaptation of Edward Lucas's whataboutism⁴ (2008) seems to be an element of Russia's broader public diplomacy strategy of trying to counter criticism of its increasingly authoritarian political system by deflecting attention to allegedly undemocratic practices within the EU.

However neither the European Court of Human Rights nor the UN Human Rights Council has found evidence of the systematic abuse of human rights or ethnic discrimination in the Baltic states (Conley and Gerber, 2011). Amnesty International (AI), which due to its non-government status may more independently observe Russian-speakers in the Baltic states, has criticized the citizenship policies of the Baltic states as discriminatory. AI has also criticized the three countries' language and education policies as restrictive for Russian-speakers. Finally, AI pointed to the unfavourable economic situation of Russian-speakers in the Baltic states caused by limited political rights and social factors—such as the Russian-speakers lacking the ability to speak the national language of the particular Baltic country they reside in (Amnesty International, 2006). In a 2009 report, AI condemned the Estonian government force used to quell demonstrations in the capital in April 2007 (Amnesty International, 2009). Although the number of Russian-speakers in Estonia lacking Estonian citizenship has decreased, thanks to the Estonian government's effective policy of adaptation, in February 2011, Russia criticized an Estonian citizenship policy as discriminatory at a meeting of the UN Human Rights Council. Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov described designating Russian-speakers as non-citizens in Estonia as a "shameful phenomenon" that "demands greater attention"⁵ (NEWS ERR EE, 2011).

In February 2012, Latvia held a referendum on whether to amend the Latvian constitution—which held that the only official state language was Latvian—to adopt Russian as the country's second official language. Seventy per cent of Latvian citizens participated in the referendum and almost seventy-five percent voted against making Russian Latvia's second official language. According to the representatives of the Russian-speakers in Latvia, the referendum's outcome did not reflect the actual situation as Latvia's almost 300,000 Russian-speaking residents (non-citizens of Latvia) did not have the right to vote. The Russian Federation's delegation did not have observer status at the referendum, which the Russian government qualified as Latvian ignorance of international law (TVP.INFO, 2012; Gazeta Prawna, 2012). Russian-speakers accuse the Baltic governments of implementing anti-minority education policies that reduce the availability of instruction in the minority language (Buzayev, 2013). While bilingual instruction was offered at every level of education when the Baltic countries were part of the Soviet Union (Batelaan, 2002), almost all subjects are taught in the national language in public schools (and private municipal schools in Lithuania and Estonia as well) (The Baltic Times, 2015a; Zarenkov, 2013).

In Riga in September 2014, Konstantin Dolgov, the Russian foreign ministry's commissioner for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, took part in a conference of Russian-speaking

⁴ The concept defines a Soviet tactic: when being criticized by the West for Afghanistan, martial law in Poland, imprisonment of dissidents, or censorship, the Soviet Union answered "What about..." (apartheid South Africa, jailed trade-unionists, the Contras in Nicaragua) (Lucas, 2008).

⁵ Non-citizens in Latvia and Estonia are not defined as stateless according to the national legal definitions, and their rights and obligations significantly exceed the minimum rights set by 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (Jeffries, 2004).

communities from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Dolgov criticized the Baltic states' treatment of Russian-speaking groups as that of second-class citizens. Specifically, he criticized Estonia and Latvia, where it is difficult for Russian-speakers to attain citizenship (Pravfond, 2014). Accusing the governments of Latvia and Estonia of adopting regulations that denigrate the status of the Russian language, Dolgov pointed out that Russian-speakers in the Baltic states cannot communicate with state officials in Russian (The Baltic Times, 2015b).⁶ Ukrainian journalists noted that Dolgov's 2014 statements during the Baltic conference of Russian diasporas were eerily reminiscent of speeches he made regarding minorities in Crimea before Russia's 2014 occupation of the region. "This is the latest indication that Moscow may be planning an invasion into the Baltics in the near future" Centore and Babiak said (Centore and Babiak, 2014).

Dolgov has repeatedly called attention to human rights violations committed against Russian-speaking populations in the Baltic states (Russian MFA, 2012). He called the situation faced by Russian-speakers residing in Latvia and Estonia "absolutely intolerable" (Dolgov, 2012). Dolgov indicated that he believed some Latvian and Estonian documents aimed to fully and unconditionally assimilate the Russian-speaking population (Dolgov, 2012). He also warned that the policies of the Baltic states were driven by extremist sentiments such as nationalism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, racial and religious intolerance, and neo-Nazi ideas propaganda (Dolgov, 2012).

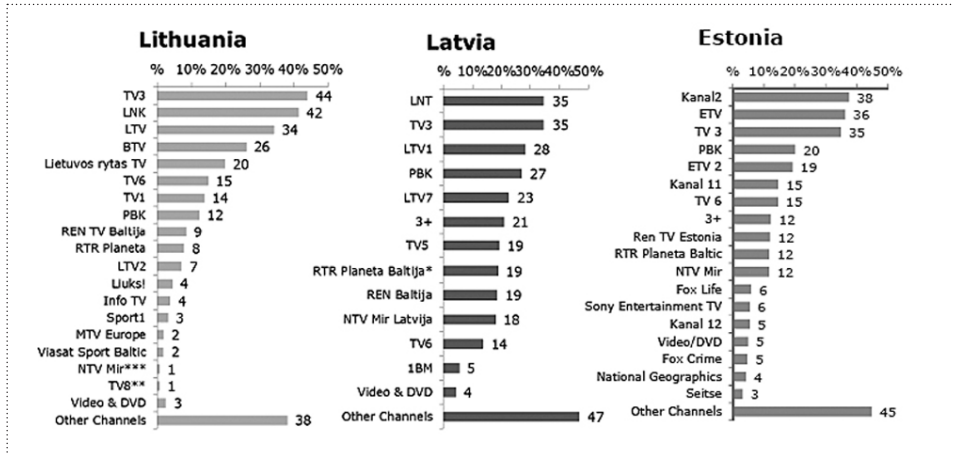
3.2. *Russian propaganda in the media*

Russian-speaking media is one of the most influential Russian instrument in the Baltic states. Table 2 shows the reach of TV channels in the Baltic states. The fourth position of Russian-speaking PBK in Latvia and Estonia indicates both its popularity and the size of the Russian-speaking television audiences in Latvia and Estonia (MAVISE, 2013). Russian-speaking channels are less popular in Lithuania. In fact, Lithuania banned the Russian RTR Planeta broadcast in 2015; Lithuania accused the broadcasters of inciting hatred between the Russia and Ukraine, of encouraging violence, and of violating Ukraine's territorial integrity. Lithuania's ban was precedential in the EU, (Lapėnienė, 2015; Reuters, 2014). Later, Latvia and Ukraine's instituted bans to counter risks to their national and informational security (OSCE, 2015). Similarly, Gazprom-owned NTV Mir was banned in Lithuania in 2014 for three months for broadcasting a documentary, *The Damned: Trap for the Alpha Group*, on the eve of the anniversary of Lithuania's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union. The documentary falsely reported that Lithuanian civilians killed by Soviet troops during the country's struggle to attain independence were actually killed by undercover Lithuanians, not Soviet troops. In response to Lithuania's bans on Russian media, Russia turned to the EU and OSCE. Dunja Mijatović, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, responded by cautioning governments from responding to Russian propaganda by banning or blocking Russian radio and television signals, denying entry to Russian

⁶ A recent statement from Latvia's State Language Centre urging the use of Latvian at work was portrayed in the Russian media as a ban on speaking Russian in workplaces in Latvia. According to the centre, the initial statement was made in response to customers' complaints about overhearing Russian in personal communications between service personnel (The Baltic Times, 2015b).

journalists or evicting Russian journalists from governmental press centres in Ukraine (OSCE, 2015). She made it very clear to all OSCE members that propaganda should not be countered with censorship, “Only a well-functioning open, diverse and dynamic media environment can effectively neutralize the effect of propaganda” (OSCE, 2015).

TABLE 2. Television channels’ daily reach, per cent



Source: TNS, Baltic Media Overview, 2011.

3.3. Accusations of Nazism and fascism levied by Russia against the Baltic states

Russia has been keenly and officially focused on anti-Nazism since 2005, when Russia began submitting an anti-Nazism resolution—a resolution firmly against pro-Nazi demonstrations and the glorification of Nazism—to the UN General Assembly. However, the motion did not receive support from the other member states. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov specifically accused Latvia and Estonia of frequently allowing parades in honour of Waffen-SS veterans in their celebrations of veterans from the Latvian Legion and the 20th Estonian SS Division (RT, 2012).

A World Without Nazism (WWN), the Russian political organization founded in 2010 that presents itself as an international human rights protection movement is another means for the Russian state to present its values and interests in the international forum. A Word Without Nazism got its start at two international conferences—in 2009 in Berlin, and in 2010 in Riga—in which the members of veteran organizations as well as youth and regional associations, including several dozen from the Baltic states participated. The conferences were attended by over 360 members from 136 organizations in 28 countries (WWN, 2015). The organization’s title and motto, “A world without Nazism” refers to its work to halt the “false assessment” that the organization argues is the appropriation of WWII ideologies that render Nazism as heroic and restrict the cultural and religious rights of national minority groups. The idea of preventing the danger of ideological emptiness after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the need for protection from the harmful liberal policies of the West was supported by the Russian-speaking

national groups, extreme leftist and communist groups, and their affiliated youth and veteran organizations. WWN's stated mission is to counter threats of Nazi and fascist forces in central and eastern Europe, threats supported by the governments of the countries in the region. There is no doubt the WWN's creation was motivated by a Russian vision of the past, including the Third Reich's responsibility for the outbreak of WWII and false accusations of the Soviet Union's collaboration in these events. The symbolic date of the organization's establishment—June 22—is recognized by the Russian government as the anniversary of the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War. The organization provides Russia with opportunities to bring charges of discrimination against national minorities, especially in the Baltic states, to the attention of the Council of Europe, the UN, and other international institutions. The pseudo-independent institution often provides ways for Russia to pursue its own interests and to influence other countries (Kirchick, 2015). As the so-called war against terrorism served Russia's actions in Chechnya, the WWN is another of Russia's instruments of disinformation, propaganda, and falsification of history employed to convince international institutions that Russia must take radical action to protect security, stability, and peace in Europe.

3.4. Russia accuses the Baltic states of spreading disinformation about Russia's intervention in the Baltic states

The protection of the rights of Russian compatriots residing in Ukraine was the legal basis for deploying the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to the Ukraine "in connection with the extraordinary situation" and due to "the threat to citizens of the Russian Federation" (Kremlin, 2014). Fears of a Russian military intervention in the Baltics are frequently based on analogies to the conflict in Ukraine (Person, 2015). However these fears are also based more firmly in populist rhetoric than in a realistic threat. So far, there is no evidence that Russia will soon target the Baltic states to protect its diaspora. Former Kremlin Chief of Staff Sergei Ivanov—who served from 2011 to 2016—has described the threat of Russian military interventions in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania as "nothing but raving nonsense" (The Financial Times, 2015). In an interview with *The Financial Times*, Ivanov suggested that only those with "a psychological disorder" would say that Russia will invade the Baltic states (The Financial Times, 2015). Expressing concern over the NATO activities near Russian borders and denying claims of involvement in Ukraine's internal affairs, Ivanov accused the Baltic states' governments of overplaying the threat of Russian intervention for their own financial benefit—to elicit money from NATO member states. According to Moscow, the Baltic states' governments have been increasing defence spending and asking NATO members for assistance in response to an alleged "Russian threat".

3.5. Undermining the legal sovereignty of the Baltic states

At the end of June 2015, two Russian parliamentary deputies—Evgeniy Fedorov and Anton Romanov, both members of the ruling political party, Yedinaya Rossiya—asked the Russian prosecutor general's office (the Genprocuratura) to review the legality of the State Council of the USSR's recognition of the three Baltic states. In their point of view, recognizing the legality of independence of the Baltic states the State Council "violated the sovereignty of the vast

country” and “launched a mechanism for the collapse of the state” by its decision (Petrov, 2015). According to the deputies, the State Council’s rejection of a large and strategically important territory from the Soviet Union carried weighty consequences for the Soviet state, including the loss of seaports and the severing of economic ties with the former Baltic republics.

Lithuania’s foreign ministers described the Russian deputies’ request as an “absurd provocation” (BBC, 2015). Earlier, in late June 2015, the Genprocuratura announced that the transfer, within the Soviet Union, of Crimea and Sevastopol from the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1954 had been illegal. The announcement was made in response to a query posed by Sergei Mironov, leader of the Russian political party, Spravedlivaya Rossiya (A Just Russia) (Mironov, 2015). It was admitted that the transfer had been unconstitutional and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR had not had permission to transfer territories that were part of the RSFSR (Mironov, 2015). The Genprocuratura’s decision has a significant impact on Russia and Ukraine’s relations because it provided a legal basis for annexation. In other words, the Genprocuratura’s ruling legalized and legitimized Crimea’s current status, based on the referendum of 16 March 2014, when the peninsula became a part of the Russia Federation.

The Russian deputies’ arguments against recognizing the Baltic states’ independence are based on the State Council of the USSR not abiding by the Constitution of the USSR. At the first meeting, the State Council acknowledged the independence of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, but noted that the constitution had not officially been amended to reflect their independent status. Moreover, the deputies claim that referendums over the union republics’ secession from the USSR have not been held in the Baltic states, as they should have, according to Soviet law in 1990 (USSR Act, 1990). Given that Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were occupied by the Soviet Union from 1940 until its collapse in 1991, it is not unreasonable for the residents of these countries to ask, “Will Russia view and act in the Baltic states in the same way that it has in Crimea?” Investigating the legalities of past events may show unexpected, astonishing, or inconvenient results. Likely, the Baltic states’ independence would also be declared illegal. Although the Russia’s authorities officially undermined the Baltic states’ independence, explaining that they does not support the deputies, the Genprocuratura started to investigate the issue (Petrov, 2015), but later dropped the investigation.

3.6 Official protest against domestic policies in the Baltic states

Despite the fact that Russia claims it has a friendly relationship with the Baltic states, Russia has engaged in supporting Russian-speaking diasporas, even in opposition to the Baltic governments. In 2000, Putin sent a letter to Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga to protest the Latvian court’s decision to convict a former Soviet partisan, Vasily Kononov, as a war criminal. On January 21, the Riga District Court sentenced seventy-seven-year-old Kononov to six years in prison. In Putin’s response to Kononov’s conviction on his official website, he writes, “I have received numerous messages from human rights and veteran organizations, as well as individuals, asking me to intervene on the side of justice and prevent a person from being convicted for fighting Nazism. This is the first time such an event takes place in world practice” (Official

Internet Resources of the President of Russia, 2000). Moreover, in 2003, Putin sent a letter to a schoolboy from Riga after the child asked Putin to help him receive an education in Russian (Official Internet Resources of the President of Russia, 2003). Putin's interventions favour and encourage division in the Baltic states and reflect Russia's desire to undermine the integration and acculturation of Russian-speaking communities in Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania. In fact, the idea of protecting the rights of Russian-speaking groups in the Baltic states, as articulated by Russia in the international arena, subtly discredits the governments of the Baltic states.

CONCLUSION

Russia's policies towards Russian-speaking communities in post-Soviet spaces are complex and frequently unclear. Is Russia's support for its diaspora just a propaganda technique to divert attention from Russia's foreign policy and actions—like the 2014 attack on Ukraine? Does Russia's focus on Russian-speakers in the Baltic states indicate that Russia cannot forgive and reconcile with the Baltic states now that they have regained their independence? A "Ukrainian scenario" in the Baltic states seems improbable, however, it is hard to predict what the consequences of Russia's actions in Ukraine will be in the near future because Russia's compatriot policy is inconsistent and contradictory. However, the research has revealed the following conclusions:

1. Russia uses antidiplomatic methods and instruments to significantly challenge diplomatic communication among states. These methods include, but are not limited to: criticizing, levying accusations against, negating the legitimacy of, undermining the rule of law in, and staging or supporting protests in post-Soviet states. Though Russia will use diplomatic instruments, like international organizations rooted in democratic values, it does not apply or abide by democratic rules. Russia's antidiplomatic strategies contradict Joseph Nye's (2004) concept of soft power, because it relies on disinformation, falsification of history, and the devaluation of Western values.
2. In its relationships with the Baltic countries, Russia executes an antidiplomatic political strategy that is designed to: a) subvert the power of the Baltic states in the international arena; b) delegitimize the sovereignty of the Baltic states; c) undermine the Latvian, Lithuanian, and Estonians' perceptions of their respective government's authority; and d) destabilize the Baltic information space to generate division and promote misunderstandings.
3. Russia's antidiplomacy has influenced international relations in the Baltic region. As Russia intensifies its use of authoritarian strategies, its relationships with the three Baltic states deteriorate. Yet, according to Russia's prime minister, the hostile relations between Russia and the Baltic states have not improved since the USSR collapsed because the governments of the Baltic countries continue to promote images of Russia as an enemy (RG, 2015). However antidiplomatic strategy is not as effective as Russia wants it to be; Russia's antidiplomacy impacts on the Baltics states, but not on international area.

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