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YEVGENY PRIMAKOV'S OPERATIONAL CODE AND RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY

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ABSTRACT

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Yevgeny Primakov was an important figure in both Soviet and Russian foreign policy circles throughout his lifetime until 2015. He was a critical leader in the 1990s holding positions of both Minister of Foreign Affairs and Prime Minister, which also coincided with times when Russia was charting a new foreign policy course. He reinvented a foreign policy school of thought called Statism which has been the most influential with Russian leaders for many years and continues to be so today. Current research has not adequately addressed his importance. This thesis set out to investigate his beliefs and worldview utilizing the operational code method using Alexander George's ten question model. Research was conducted based on Primakov's own writings, speeches and interviews.

Yevgeny Primakov has been called both a westernizing leader and a hard-liner, but it was found both of these labels are incorrect. Rather, he should be viewed as a patriotic pragmatist. His actions were motivated by advancing Russian interests of which one of the greatest was restoring Russia as a major player in international relations again. His attitude towards the United States was complex, viewing them as a rival, yet not as an enemy. He opposed American hegemony which had emerged after the fall of the Soviet Union. Primakov wanted Russia to get back in the great power game as an equal and came up with innovative and pragmatic strategies to make it happen. The most important of these strategies was a foreign policy concept called multipolarity which was intended to diversify Russia's foreign ties with other emerging powers and counterbalance the unipolar system he thought would cause instability and chaos in the long-run.

It was found that Yevgeny Primakov was more important for Russia's foreign policy formulation than first meets the eye. His ideas and efforts have been praised by both past and present Russian leaders, including Sergey Lavrov and Vladimir Putin. After comparing Putin and Primakov's operational codes they were found to be remarkably complementary. Putin has implemented many of Primakov's ideas and listened to his recommendations. This is perhaps because Putin himself lacks the qualities of a grand strategist, whilst Primakov embodied them. In the future, other scholars could use Primakov's operational code and the analysis presented here to evaluate if Russian leaders are putting into practice a "Primakov Doctrine," an idea which has sometimes been discussed, but not officially declared.

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*As a professor, I tended to think of history as run by impersonal forces.
But when you see it in practice, you see the difference personalities make.¹*
—Henry Kissinger

¹ Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, “Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In,” *International Security* 25, no. 4 (Spring 2001): 108.

1. INTRODUCTION

Yevgeny Primakov was an important statesman in both the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation. At the height of his career he held positions as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Prime Minister. He was also an academic who helped strengthen the role of Statism, a Russian foreign policy school of thought most prominent in Russia today. He believed Russia should seek to become a great power once again and came up with a vision for a new world order called multipolarity.

Due to his leadership roles and influence on past and present Russian leaders, understanding Yevgeny Primakov is important to understanding past and present Russian foreign policy. This thesis was written because Yevgeny Primakov's role in Russian policymaking has been largely ignored in the current literature on Russia. Constructing his operational code and shedding light on his contributions will hopefully provide new insights about Russian foreign policy development, offer a deeper understanding of a major foreign policy figure and open up new areas of research.

1.1. Primakov in the Context of Russian Foreign Policy

To begin understanding who Primakov was, one must first grasp the historical, social and political context in which he rose to power. Russia has never been a nation-state, but rather it has been an empire. Historically the people of Russia have always struggled with an identity crisis about who they are, where they belong and what their purpose is. These issues were brought to the surface once again in December 1991 when the Soviet Union rapidly disintegrated. As Nationalists and Democrats emerged as major ideological factions, both felt uneasy with the fact that some parts of the old Union were no longer part of the Russian Federation (Russia). At the same time, the old debates about Russian identity, whether they are European, Asian or perhaps Eurasian, bridging the two continents, re-emerged. Russia had to reinvent itself and look for a new direction and a new role in the international arena. Russia was battling the financial troubles of the Soviet Union, yet it was no longer a superpower with the resources and influence that come with that status. It could be argued that at the time it had lost even its great power status. The cards Russian leaders were left holding in their hands were not worth much. In the midst of all this, there was a popular insistence for a new official foreign policy formulation. Finally, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Kozyrev agreed to put something together.²

² Margot Light, "Foreign Policy Thinking," in *Internal Factors in Russian Foreign Policy*, ed. Neil Malcolm, Alex Pravda, Roy Allison and Margot Light (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 36-38.

Kozyrev was a Westernist, a foreign policy school of thought to be introduced in more detail in the following sections. Here it is sufficient to say he believed Russia should try to integrate with and become like the West (used throughout this research to mean Western Europe and North America). After a few years of little success and many failures he was replaced by Yevgeny Primakov, a Statist who had very different views of proper Russian foreign policy. As a Statist Primakov wanted Russia to be a strong and independent great power, a stark departure from his predecessor. He wanted to focus on the fact that Russia was a great power and worthy of the respect that comes along with that status. He advocated for a new world order in the form of multipolarity, a system in which there are many centers of power, not just the United States. Naturally, he desired Russia to act as a major influencer in this new system.³ Furthermore, Primakov was a robust supporter of Russian hard national interests and while understanding that the old Soviet states were gone for good he thought Russia should keep them close⁴.

As it turned out, however, holding on to interests even in the former Soviet areas proved to be a difficult task and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) expanded rapidly leaving many Russians feeling deceived about its intentions. They had hoped that the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) would have become the guarantor for European security instead of NATO. When the NATO expansion happened, Russia was still materially too weak to back up Primakov's newly assertive foreign policy doctrine. They instead chose to adapt to the situation by signing the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between Russia and NATO in 1997.⁵ To make matters worse from the Russian perspective, Russia was not able to jumpstart their economy and thus properly improve their armed forces. The government was forced to seek loans, for example from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which they had unsuccessfully tried to avoid. This meant that Russia became subject to more Western control at a time when their foreign policy was advocating the opposite. Primakov technically allowed this to happen, in the name of pragmatism, but his close supporters were not happy with it.⁶

³ Yevgeny Primakov, "Russia Is Restoring Its Great Power Status," *International Affairs (Moscow)* 53, no. 2 (2007): 67-69.

⁴ Andrei Poleshchuk, "Is an Expansion of NATO Justified?" *The Current Digest of the Russian Press* 45, no. 47 (1993): 11-13.

⁵ Andrei Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2013), 101, 105-106

⁶ *Ibid.*, 106-107.

Russia's struggles in the 1990s showed that some of Primakov's foreign policy goals and ideas were a bit premature since Russia did not have the material backing to act on more assertive policy goals. However, his ideas should be carefully revisited today. First, because he has been recently talked about by Russian leaders. And, second, today Russia is in a better position to act on his ideas and as a country Russia has gained more credibility. Simply put, times are different now and when asked about the change in Russian foreign policy after Putin's third presidential term Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov said in an interview that

as for the changes in the Russian foreign policy, yes, we have more domestic strength, if you wish. We have become stronger economically; we have been successfully resolving the social problems, raising the level of living — the standards of living — of the population. Yes, a lot is to be done. But the change is very much noticed. And we feel the change. And Russia feels more assertive — not aggressive, but assertive. And we have been getting out of the situation where we found ourselves in the early '90s when the Soviet Union disappeared and the Russian Federation became what it is — you know, with no borders, with no budget, no money, and with huge problems starting with lack of food and so on and so forth. It is a very different country now. And of course we can now pay more attention to looking after our legitimate interests in the areas where we were absent for quite some time after the demise of the Soviet Union.⁷

It is not just Lavrov who is impressed with Primakov's ideas, but also Vladimir Putin. Putin's intellectual dept to Primakov's ideas could be detected already in his speech to Russian ambassadors given in 2012⁸. It stressed the need for a more assertive foreign policy to guarantee that Russian interests abroad are taken care of and the importance of Russia as a balancer in the world. Many believe that Putin has put into practice a foreign policy line formulated by Primakov⁹. In a speech at Primakov's funeral in June of 2015 the Russian President admits to having sought advice from Primakov and having shared plans with him.¹⁰ Additionally, in 2018, in a greeting to participants of "Primakov Readings International Forum," a platform for foreign policy discussions, Putin stated that "interest in the rich intellectual heritage of Dr. Primakov is obviously not waning, due to the fact that many of his assessments and forecasts of international development have been confirmed and continue to be confirmed by reality."¹¹ There is nothing particularly surprising or shocking about Primakov's thinking, but if studying his thoughts help us better understand Russia's foreign policy,

⁷ Susan Glasser, "Sergei Lavrov and the Blunt Logic of Russian Power," *Foreign Policy*, April 29 2013, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/04/29/minister-no/>.

⁸ "Meeting with Russian ambassadors and permanent representatives in international organisations", Kremlin, accessed November 28, 2015, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/15902>.

⁹ Jeffrey Mankoff, "Russia and the West: Taking the Longer View," *The Washington Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (2007): 126.

¹⁰ "Funeral Ceremony for Yevgeny Primakov", Kremlin, accessed November 28, 2015, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49782>.

¹¹ "Greeting to Organisers and Participants of Primakov Readings International Forum," Kremlin, accessed July 31, 2018, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57590>.

we should not fail to do so. In fact, Russians are studying them too with great enthusiasm. It may only help us to understand what has happened in the past, but it might also help us map out more current ways of understanding Russian interests, what they could be, and how they could be better pursued.

1.2. Research Objectives

The first goal of this thesis is to shine light on Yevgeny Primakov, who was an important figure shaping Russian foreign policy, but also one who has been neglected in recent, serious research. The second goal is to reintroduce him to the field of foreign policy analysis by mapping out his operational code. By doing so his world view, impressions of opponents, interests and the best ways to achieve them, among other important issues, will be revealed. Analyzing Primakov's writings in a systematic way is critical to success, because he tended to use very vague and diplomatic language which might be hard to interpret if only encountered briefly or out of context of the larger whole. The operational code provides the systematic tool required for understanding a person's character and ideas, which also allows us to analyze their influence on the broader foreign policy scene. Thus, the third goal of this thesis will be to provide some limited and circumspect insight into current Russian foreign policy given that Primakov undoubtedly influenced policy formulation while he was active as a leader and later as a policy adviser.

1.3. Beliefs and Leaders

Primakov was a powerful individual throughout his lifetime whose beliefs left an imprint on Russian foreign policy debates. Thus, both beliefs and individual leaders are closely linked to this study. However, the study of individuals and leaders was largely ignored by many foreign policy scholars until after the Cold War when it gained more popularity.¹² Opponents of the study of individuals might suggest that studying individuals is either unnecessary, due to their small significance compared to the bigger picture, or that they are too hard to study¹³. If, however studying leaders is deemed beneficial, one logical way of doing it is to study their beliefs. One way this can be achieved is by using the operational code research method.

Many structural theories insist beliefs simply mirror reality. However, the cognitive theories utilized in this thesis assume that beliefs shape perceptions of reality and filter the information coming from

¹² Margaret G. Hermann and Joe D. Hagan, "International Decision Making: Leadership Matters," *Foreign Policy* 110, no. 110 (April 1998): 124-125.

¹³ Byman and Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men," 108.

the outside world.¹⁴ This insight makes studying individuals and their specific ways of understanding the world (beliefs) both fruitful and useful for the field of foreign policy studies. Scholars do not necessarily have to choose between system level analysis and individual level analysis, an issue which will be discussed in more detail later. For better results, these two levels of analysis can be combined and viewed as mutually beneficial.¹⁵ The focus of this thesis is to study one individual, Yevgeny Primakov and his beliefs, using the operational code as a research method. However, this will be done keeping the larger context of Russian foreign policy in mind; helping the reader to find information provided here more relevant.

1.4. Method

The operational code is a research method developed by Nathan Leites in the 1950s in the context of the Soviet Politburo.¹⁶ The purpose of this method is to map out a research subject's world view and how they see themselves within it. The advantage of this method is that it produces information benefiting not only academia, but also policy makers¹⁷. Leites' work inspired Alexander George in 1969 to come up with his own technique for constructing an operational code. George's method was based on ten questions about the research subject which are answered utilizing the subject's own speeches and texts. The first five questions he named philosophical and the last five instrumental. His operational code was simpler and easier to reproduce compared to the original texts of Nathan Leites¹⁸. George's ten questions are used in this thesis as a basis for putting together Yevgeny Primakov's operational code and to provide a context for anyone else who seeks to reproduce a similar study. The answers to George's questions come only from Primakov's own texts, speeches and interviews, translated from Russian or later published in a written English language context, or from his own books originally published in English.

The operational code method combined with Alexander George's ten question model proved to be the best choice for studying Yevgeny Primakov and his ideas about Russian foreign policy. Different

¹⁴ Mark Schafer and Stephen G. Walker, *Beliefs and Leadership in World Politics: Methods and Applications of Operational Code Analysis*. 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 248.

¹⁶ See: Nathan Leites, *The Operational Code of the Politburo leaders* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951). AND Nathan Leites, *A Study of Bolshevism* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1953).

¹⁷ Stephen Benedict Dyson and Matthew J. Parent, "The Operational Code Approach to Profiling Political Leaders: Understanding Vladimir Putin," *Intelligence and National Security* 33, no. 1 (2018): 85.

¹⁸ Alexander L. George, "The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision-Making," *International Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (1969): 193.

types of discourse analysis or the so-called Verbs in Context System (VICS), which is a computerized verb analysis tool for studying operational codes, may have been able to produce similar information. However, due to the fact that this research is done based on English language texts, and not texts in the research subject's native language, the operational code analysis used here proved to be the best option. It has also been used to study Vladimir Putin by Stephen Benedict Dyson in 2001,¹⁹ and Dyson and Parent in 2018²⁰ and in its original form by Nathan Leites²¹ to examine the Soviet Politburo. Analysis, for example, based solely on computerized algorithms might at first appear more scientific compared to merely interpreting the research subject's texts relying on ten questions. However, as will be discussed later, politicians like Primakov do not often reveal their true intentions on paper and it could mislead the researcher if only his words on paper are dissected and scrutinized.

It is more important to read multiple texts analyzed in their various contexts and consider the overall message stemming from them. Yevgeny Primakov has over time been interpreted both as a hard-liner and a Westernizing reformer^{22,23}. For example, Jeffrey Surovell has strongly argued for the latter by claiming, that in his texts and speeches Primakov appears to be a socialist hard-liner, but in practice he is the opposite²⁴. This thesis will take a stand on this issue too, but in order to do it properly one must analyze text as it is written in different contexts, but also compare it to practical actions taken by the individual and bring both together as the basis for final analysis.

1.5. Challenges

Some challenges facing this research stem from relying on translations from original texts, although a good portion of the material used was published in English to begin with. Meaning can be lost in translation and English publications present additional, unique complications. For example, Primakov directed some of his English language books toward an American audience to create a particular image of Russia, which does not necessarily help the researcher understand his most original ideas.

¹⁹ Stephen Benedict Dyson, "Drawing Policy Implications from the 'Operational Code' of a 'New' Political Actor: Russian President Vladimir Putin," *Policy Sciences* 34, no. 3/4 (2001).

²⁰ Dyson and Parent, "The Operational Code Approach."

²¹ Leites, *The Operational Code*.

²² Ariel Cohen, *The "Primakov Doctrine": Russia's Zero-Sum Game with the United States*. (Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation, 1997).

²³ Jeffrey Surovell, "Yevgenii Primakov: 'Hard-Liner' or Casualty of the Conventional Wisdom," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 21, no. 2 (2005).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 241-243.

Politicians such as Yevgeny Primakov, who was also an experienced diplomat, tend to carefully stick to their preplanned agenda and rhetoric.

These are all valid concerns, but ones that must be accepted if the operational code method is to be used. The study of individuals is tricky. However, when it is done carefully it can also provide insight into the larger system level context, which is one of the goals of this thesis.

1.6. Organization of Research

This thesis will start out by introducing the operational code as a method. Next, the reader will be familiarized with the study of leaders and beliefs in international relations. Then, three major Russian foreign policy schools of thought: Civilizationism, Westernism and Statism will be introduced briefly. The latter was one that Primakov promoted and helped develop²⁵. Understanding these schools of thought is important for being able to place Yevgeny Primakov in the right context within the landscape of Russian foreign policy thinking. Next, Primakov will be introduced as a person and some of his career highlights will be pointed out. This is followed by an explanation of Primakov's policy of multipolarity and his vision for a new world order after the Cold War. These are necessary elements to cover before digging into his operational code, which without this background information would be difficult to comprehend. Then we will proceed to answer Alexander George's ten questions which taken together form Primakov's operational code. His operational code will be followed by analysis where key elements from the answers to the ten questions will be discussed and dissected. Finally, the thesis will pull together the whole research in a conclusion.

²⁵ Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy*, 74

2. OPERATIONAL CODE ANALYSIS AS A METHOD

Nathan Leites was the first to use operational code analysis in his study *The Operational Code of the Politburo* which he later expanded into a more complete book *A Study of Bolshevism* both of which he wrote in the early 1950s.²⁶ The purpose of these studies was to figure out “the rules which Bolsheviks believe to be necessary for effective political conduct,” to figure out “the political strategy of Bolshevism,”²⁷ and “to portray the spirit of the Bolshevik elite.”²⁸ Leites’ work was published during times when behavioral approaches were increasingly used to study political elites. Previous studies in the field were asking new questions which traditional research approaches could not give answers to. However, the new research could not cope well with issues such as leaders’ political orientations, styles of calculation and behavior in general.²⁹ Leites attempted to go a step further.

The Operational Code of the Politburo was written under the Rand Corporation for the United States Air Force. In the 1950s, the Communist Soviet Union and its new leaders and their way of doing business was raising questions which Leites’ book sought to answer.³⁰ The findings of the original study were deemed so useful, that the book was used as a tactical manual by Americans when negotiating the truce during the Korean War³¹.

By studying mostly Lenin and Stalin’s recorded verbal accounts, Leites’ was able to analyze Bolshevik doctrine³². Since Leites’ studies were published, the operational code has been further developed into a standardized research tool. Generally speaking, the goal of the operational code analysis is to study the different beliefs that political leaders have based on their writings, speeches and occasionally interviews. Here, we will only focus on the research tool used by Alexander George, because his method of ten questions will be utilized in this thesis.

The operational code research paradigm did not immediately become a popular tool among political scientists. In 1969 Alexander George, Leites’ student, published an article with a telling title *The*

²⁶ George, “The ‘Operational Code’: A Neglected Approach,” 193.

²⁷ Leites, *The Operational Code*, xi.

²⁸ Leites, *A Study of Bolshevism*, 15.

²⁹ George, “The ‘Operational Code’: A Neglected Approach,” 192.

³⁰ Leites, *The Operational Code*, vii.

³¹ Daniel Bell, “Ten Theories in Search of Reality: The Prediction of Soviet Behavior in the Social Sciences,” *World Politics* 10, no. 3 (1958): 339.

³² Leites, *A Study of Bolshevism*, 15.

*'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision-Making*³³. He thought the basic idea behind Leites' original studies was intriguing, although he found them unnecessarily complex and difficult to read. He then decided to make the operational code more usable by reinterpreting and restructuring aspects of the code by coming up with ten questions which a researcher can use to collect and analyze their data from which the operational code can be deduced. What is further convenient is that the answers to the questions are intended to be collected from information that is usually readily available to political scientists.³⁴ Leites' book discusses a broad spectrum of issues and does not only focus on the operational code. George wanted to make his own approach simply about the operational code and redefined its boundaries. For example, he got rid of "the psychoanalytically based characterological aspect of operational code analysis and focused upon the 'maxims of political strategy' solely as beliefs", as Stephen Walker puts it³⁵. Another added benefit is that there is now a way to reproduce the research, an important aspect of academic rigor. Below are the ten questions broken down into George's two categories.

PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS

1. What is the "essential" nature of political life? Is the political universe one of harmony or conflict? What is the fundamental character of one's political opponents?
2. What are the prospects for the eventual realization of one's fundamental political values and aspirations? Can one be optimistic, or must one be pessimistic on this score, and in what respects the one and/or the other?
3. Is the political future predictable? In what sense and to what extent
4. How much "control" or "mastery" can one have over historical development? What is one's role in "moving" and "shaping" history in the desired direction?
5. What is the role of "chance" in human affairs and in historical development?

INSTRUMENTAL QUESTIONS

1. What is the best approach for selecting goals or objectives for political action?
2. How are the goals of action pursued most effectively?
3. How are the risks of political action calculated, controlled, and accepted?
4. What is the best "timing" of action to advance one's interests?
5. What is the utility and role of different means for advancing one's interests? ³⁶

By answering these two sets of questions we can find out which issues and aspects guide a research subject's way of determining which actions to take (philosophical beliefs) and what that person

³³ George, "The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach," 190-222.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 193-196.

³⁵ Stephen Walker, "The Evolution of Operational Code Analysis," *Political Psychology* 11, no. 2 (1990): 404.

³⁶ George, "The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach," 201-216.

believes to be the best strategy and tactics for achieving his goals (instrumental beliefs)^{37,38}. Leites never laid out these questions, but George derived them from his books and used them as a foundation for developing a new system for studying operational codes more efficiently. By coming up with these questions, George hoped to facilitate similar studies of other leaders and leadership groups in order to produce systematic comparative studies³⁹. These ten questions, while covering much of political life, also reflect the fact that humans have a need to simplify the complexity of the world around them in order to cope with it. The operational code only focuses on politics and does not take into account all possible beliefs and attitudes influencing an actor's behavior.⁴⁰

George found Leites' "operational code" name misleading since it "implies, incorrectly, a set of recipes or repertoires for political action that an elite applies mechanically in its decision-making."⁴¹ George did not come up with a new name but stated that for example "approaches to political calculation" would have been more appropriate⁴². Leites' explains in his own work that a person's beliefs serve

as a prism that influences the actor's perceptions and diagnoses of the flow of political events, his definitions and estimates of particular situations. These beliefs also provide norms, standards, and guidelines that influence the actor's choice of strategy and tactics, his structuring and weighting of alternative courses of action. Such a belief system influences, but does not unilaterally determine, decision-making; it is an important, but not the only, variable that shapes decision-making behavior.⁴³

According to Walker, the operational code paradigm is a variant of the classical rational-actor paradigm of decision-making, even though leaders are expected to behave differently and possess different beliefs. Yet, with the help of the paradigm we can map out an individual's own way of viewing the world and the boundaries of rational behavior within which the actor can be expected to operate. What makes the operational code analysis especially useful, is that it can account for the anomalies within the classical rational-actor paradigm (which assumes that all decision-makers approach rationality the same way).⁴⁴ This is because cognitive theories, such as the operational code, assume that a decision-maker's rationality is directed by his "system of beliefs" when identifying

³⁷ Ibid., 190-222.

³⁸ Schafer and Walker, *Beliefs and Leadership*, 4-6.

³⁹ George, "The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach," 199.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 197, 200.

⁴¹ Ibid., 191.

⁴² Ibid., 220.

⁴³ Ibid., 191.

⁴⁴ Walker, "The Evolution of Operational Code," 406-407.

ends and means⁴⁵. When discussing his own approach to rationality, Alexander George has said that “to describe behavior as ‘rational’ is to say little more than that the actor attempts to choose a course of action that he hopes or expects to further his values.”⁴⁶

The operational code research method gained in popularity after George restructured the premises, inspiring a whole generation of case studies on various leaders.⁴⁷ Some changes to the operational code study have been suggested after George’s reformulation had been introduced, but his ten questions have remained the industry standard for deducing actors’ operational codes ever since⁴⁸. Among these George-inspired studies are, for example, one about Vladimir Putin (Dyson)⁴⁹, Henry Kissinger in the context of the Vietnam War (Walker)⁵⁰ and Ayman al-Zawahiri (Jacquier)⁵¹.

The operational code analysis is a very useful tool for students of foreign policy, but like all methods it comes with some shortfalls. For example, one problem is that researchers are trying to form a wholistic picture of a person’s thoughts, patterns of thought and beliefs without ever going near them. Interviews are usually impossible to conduct, but even in a rare case of being able to get someone to sit down with a researcher, one could not trust that everything the interviewee says reflects truthfully on their character. The primary way of compiling someone’s operational code is to rely on speeches and written texts. But politicians are good at constructing images of themselves and carefully maintaining them. Another challenge for the researcher is to interpret available texts and speeches properly, so that the final work reflects the research subject and not the researcher themselves.⁵²

Regardless of possible problems, it is still worth studying individual leaders and their ways of viewing the world, which is linked to foreign policy decisions. Probably the best way to use these micro-level analyses is to comprehend them in their wider context, shedding light where other types of methods

⁴⁵ Schafer and Walker, *Beliefs and Leadership*, 6.

⁴⁶ Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective use of Information and Advice* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980), 67.

⁴⁷ Stephen G. Walker, and Timothy G. Murphy, “The Utility of the Operational Code in Political Forecasting,” *Political Psychology* 3, no. 1/2 (1981-1982): 24.

⁴⁸ James D. Jacquier, “An Operational Code of Terrorism: the Political Psychology of Ayman al-Zawahiri,” *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 6, no. 1 (2014): 22-23.

⁴⁹ Dyson, “Drawing Policy Implications.”

⁵⁰ Stephen G. Walker, “The Interface between Beliefs and Behavior: Henry Kissinger’s Operational Code and the Vietnam War,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 21, no. 1 (1977).

⁵¹ Jacquier, “An Operational Code of Terrorism.”

⁵² Stephen Dyson, *The Blair Identity: Leadership and Foreign Policy* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), 26-27.

fail to tread. As George himself puts it: “even provisional answers to the research questions encompassed by the operational code are likely to be useful.”⁵³

This thesis will analyze material by Yevgeny Primakov including speeches, essays in journals, newspaper interviews and his books to answer George’s ten questions. The operational code analysis is often used to map out a leader’s belief system in a way that we can predict what they might do in certain situations. In other words, the operational code analysis is sometimes used as a prediction tool.⁵⁴ In this particular thesis, these questions are used to map out Primakov’s operational code, but since he died in 2015, there is no use to predicting his behavior. Usually the operational code analysis is run on leaders who are still active in politics or at least still alive. However, this is not the first time the operation has been applied in this manner. An example of a similar study has been written about Mao Zedong as recently as 2005 (Feng)⁵⁵. This shows, that the operational code can be a useful tool even when the subject has passed away if only to shed light on the wider foreign policy environment which the subject helped to build.

⁵³ George, “The ‘Operational Code’: A Neglected Approach,” 221.

⁵⁴ Christer Pursiainen and Tuomas Forsberg, *Ulkopolitiikkaa norsunluutornista* (Tampere: Chan Puma House, 2015), 249.

⁵⁵ Huiyun Feng, “The Operational Code of Mao Zedong: Defensive or Offensive Realist?” *Security Studies* 14, no. 4 (2005).

3. BELIEFS AND LEADERS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Deriving information about Yevgeny Primakov is based on the idea that individual leaders matter and that they can be studied, utilizing for example George's ten question format, to produce important information for the International Relations field of study. So, we must address how leaders and beliefs are studied and thought about in the field and how the agent centered, and system level approaches relate to each other.

3.1. Leaders

*As a professor, I tended to think of history as run by impersonal forces. But when you see it in practice, you see the difference personalities make.*⁵⁶ -Henry Kissinger

Whether individual leaders really matter in international relations studies or not, due to the whole system being mainly influenced by larger factors such as anarchy, institutions and domestic politics, has been a question in the field for a long time. For some scholars, individuals are simply unnecessary to study since studies on them do not say much about the larger world, just the individual case in question. Alternatively, some find individual leaders too difficult to study in practice.⁵⁷ Other scholars find the entire idea of individuals as a focus troubling and point to certain systemic pressures and issues that ultimately make most leaders the same regardless of individual qualities. It could be argued that most leaders who have a chance at rising to the top in a particular country at a particular time all possess similar beliefs and values, and once in office are socialized by the system or alternatively find themselves otherwise constrained.⁵⁸

However, the idea of studying individuals is not a new one and, for example, Classical Realists Thucydides, Niccoló Machiavelli and Hans Morgenthau all have acknowledged their importance.⁵⁹ During the Cold War, the study of individuals in political science was pushed to the margins for the above-mentioned reasons, but also because in a bipolar system there was not thought to be much room for creativity. Foreign policy formulators were seen to be limited in their options when rationality was assumed. Once the Cold War was over however, scholars became once again interested in individual leaders. This could be explained by the change in the international

⁵⁶ Byman and Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men," 108.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 108.

⁵⁸ Robert Jervis, "Do Leaders Matter and How Would We Know?" *Security Studies* 22, no. 2 (2013): 155-156.

⁵⁹ Byman and Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men," 110.

environment and the “new world order” which had suddenly become more complex and more ambiguous.⁶⁰

There are certain specific conditions that, if met, make the study of individuals more beneficial. Individuals can be said to matter more in authoritarian states than in liberal democracies, though a system of government does not rule out this method in any case. Crisis situations or ambiguous conditions may also make the role of an individual more important, since top leaders are less likely to delegate tasks in these situations to lower level decision makers. Yet other situations call for expert help, rising certain individuals such as Henry Kissinger to a more prominent position making their individual characteristics and personalities more interesting to scholars. Lastly, diplomatic training, expert knowledge and an emotional connection to a certain area or topic can make a single individual important when studying decision-making.⁶¹

3.2. Beliefs

If, as scholars, we assume that it is indeed worthwhile to study individual leaders, one should also be concerned about how leaders view the world and examine leaders’ individual beliefs. Structural theory proponents among the Neorealist, Neoliberal and Constructivist schools of thought assume decision-makers’ beliefs mirror contemporary realities they are facing at home and abroad. What these realities are, depend on the theory in question. Neorealists focus on the balance of power, Neoliberals on economic and political institutions, while Constructivists may turn to international law and cultural norms.⁶² Cognitive theories depart from structural ones by assuming that beliefs are not simply mirroring reality, but rather steer individuals’ decisions by shaping perceptions of reality and acting as a filter through which information stemming from the outside comes in⁶³.

This means, that we cannot assume all leaders to act similarly in a similar situation. Cognitive theories assume bounded rationality which means that leaders are expected to act rationally, but that we must first map out a person’s way of viewing the world before we can understand the boundaries of rational behavior for that particular person^{64,65}. In other words, a person’s rationality may be different than

⁶⁰ Hermann and Hagan, “International Decision Making,” 124-125.

⁶¹ Valerie M. Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory* (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield, 2014), 40-41.

⁶² Schafer and Walker, *Beliefs and Leadership*, 4.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶⁴ Walker, “The Evolution of Operational Code,” 406-407.

⁶⁵ Schafer and Walker, *Beliefs and Leadership*, 6.

your own. Since rationality is not thought to be universal, unlike many structural theories assume, the scholar must work extra hard to get inside the heads of individual leaders. The operational code analysis utilized here approaches this issue by answering questions about a research subject's philosophical and instrumental beliefs. The first set of questions guide a research subject's way of determining which actions to take. The latter addresses what a person believes to be the best strategy and tactics for achieving his goals.^{66,67}

3.3. Bridging the System Level and the Agent Centered Approaches

System level analysis on one hand and individual leader level analysis (including cognitive analysis) on the other both contribute greatly to the field of International Relations and have earned their places. But they should not be viewed as two mutually exclusive methods of analysis. Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack argue that by only focusing on the system level, scholars end up missing the bigger picture. At the same time, the study of individuals on its own makes no sense. It must be a part of the larger whole to fully give credit to the complexity of international relations. Accepting this way of thinking makes the job of a scholar more difficult because it calls for the introduction of new tools such as biography and psychology.⁶⁸ Similarly, Schafer and Walker have argued, that the operational code analysis could enrich Neorealism, Neoliberalism and Constructivism and that the system level and agent centered approaches could achieve great results together⁶⁹.

As an example, Neoclassical realists have embraced both levels. They have resolved the power struggle between these two levels of analysis by assigning primary importance to the system level. Stephen Benedict Dyson, a proponent of this school of thought argues that personalities matter a great deal when it comes to foreign policy analysis; their goals, perceptions and decision style are all significant. However, in the Neoclassical realist view these issues come into play after considerations of the international system and power have first been taken into account.⁷⁰ Gideon Rose, the father of the Neoclassical realist school writes that, "the Neoclassical realists believe, that understanding the links between power and policy requires close examination of the contexts within which foreign policies are formulated and implemented."⁷¹

⁶⁶ George, "The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach," 190-222.

⁶⁷ Schafer and Walker, *Beliefs and Leadership*, 4.

⁶⁸ Byman and Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men," 146.

⁶⁹ Schafer and Walker, *Beliefs and Leadership*, 248.

⁷⁰ Dyson, *The Blair Identity*, 10.

⁷¹ Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998): 145.

The Neoclassical realist schools' logic is simple: internal factors (the intervening variable) are considered after systemic incentives (independent variable) are first taken into account. After these two levels are both accounted for in the right order, we finally can see how foreign policy has come to be.⁷² This means that systemic incentives do not directly translate into foreign policy, but that there is an important, added layer called internal factors that acts as a filter through which all considerations of foreign policy must go before realizing their final form. This filter may include different ideational, psychological or cultural factors which in turn influence leaders' perceptions of their own vis-à-vis other's capabilities in the international arena.⁷³

The logic of Neoclassical realism guarantees that we are able to study issues at the micro level and yet take the macro level into consideration without having to treat these two levels as completely separate. The realities from the macro that cannot be ignored follow to the micro and not vice versa. However, the intervening variables are important to study too, since they are the ones that ultimately will give final (foreign policy) outcomes their form.

This thesis does not directly utilize Neoclassical realism, but it is important to keep in mind a bigger picture into which the following analysis can be placed in the wider arena of international relations. A similar discussion could have been had in the context of Liberal or Constructivist schools. Understanding this context is vital to understanding the interplay between the different levels of analysis in this study, even though digging deeper into the structure level would be outside the scope of this thesis.

Russia is a great power led by very few and powerful individuals. Yet as a great power and a former superpower, issues such as balance of power, geopolitics and other system incentives should never be dismissed. This study attempts to draw light to an interesting personality not often talked about, and how he is closely linked to Russian foreign policy formulation. When this study is read and understood in the context mapped out above, it will be very useful and provide complementary information for the field of International Relations and foreign policy analysis.

⁷² Ibid., 154.

⁷³ Ibid., 168.

4. RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

It has been established that personalities and leaders matter when studying International Relations, especially when it comes to foreign policy formulation. Once this is accepted, we must also take into consideration various aspects of individual characteristics, such as beliefs. This thesis pulls all of this together to create Yevgeny Primakov's operational code. So, before proceeding any further, it is necessary to briefly take a look at the most influential foreign policy schools of thought in Russia and what some of these "beliefs" mean in that context. A primer on these schools provides a basis from which one can differentiate some of Primakov's beliefs versus his peers and rivals, as well as provide context for current trends in Russian foreign policy debates. Classifications are many, but generally speaking most of them describe distinct groups with their own justifications for their views. Below is a discussion of some of these classifications and groups. The most useful classifications for this research were termed by Andrei Tsygankov who groups the schools of thought into Civilizationism, Westernism and Statism. In addition, other somewhat different subgroups within these have been categorized and will be discussed.

4.1. Civilizationism

Civilizationism is the oldest of the Russian foreign policy schools of thought, dating back to the time of Ivan the Terrible and the Mongol conquests⁷⁴. This view holds Russia as a separate civilization possessing a unique set of values different from those in either Europe or Asia. Its adherents highlight an active struggle between themselves and the West.⁷⁵ Russia is not viewed as a passive player in world politics, but as one having a specific mission to carry out. This includes spreading Russian values abroad and aggressively responding to security threats⁷⁶.

In the nineteenth century, Russian identity as an empire was embraced by the czars who attempted expansion, but who also championed Pan-Slavism⁷⁷. In the early Soviet era Civilizationists called for a world revolution as a direct means of challenging the West⁷⁸. Later on, they justified the Soviet Union's own expansionist behavior by arguing that they, as a superior civilization, were merely

⁷⁴ Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy*, 25.

⁷⁵ Shavkat Kasymov, "Statism in Russia: The implications for US-Russian relations," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 3 (2012): 60-61.

⁷⁶ Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy*, 26.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

⁷⁸ Kasymov, "Statism in Russia," 60.

fighting the decadent West's imperialist attempts⁷⁹. Eurasianism, another expression of Civilizationism sees Russia as an expanding land power engaged in a struggle against sea powers⁸⁰. These groups hold the ideas that Russia has a unique destiny which translates into, for example, dominating Central Asia and the Caucasus and opposing American strategic control and liberal values from encroaching into Russia's sphere⁸¹.

Civilizationist type thinkers can also be called "Russian nationalists" who in turn could be grouped into Neo-Imperialists, proponents of a Russian sphere of influence, and ethnic nationalists according to the classification constructed by Kuchins and Zevelev⁸². These groups are interested either in physically integrating more land into the Russian state or adding more countries as dependent satellites into the Russian sphere of influence. Russian nationalists tend to look back in history for inspiration. They see no need for Russia to try to become a vibrant 21st century country like the Westernists would. A good example of a Civilizationist/Russian nationalist in today's politics is the founder and head of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy.⁸³

4.2. Westernism

Unlike both Civilizationists, and to some degree Statists, Westernists do not see Russia as being in a conflict with the West. Instead, the West is viewed as the most advanced civilization in the world, and something to be mimicked rather than despised or feared. Westernists do not see Russians as an independent entity distinct from both the East and the West like Statists do (see below). Nor do they view it as an isolated and separate civilization of its own like the Civilizationists do. Rather, they view Russia as a part of the West and promote deeper integration with it.⁸⁴ Members of this school of thought can also be called "zapadniki" or "Atlanticists"⁸⁵ but this thesis will utilize Andrei Tsygankov's terminology and simply refer to them as Westernists.

⁷⁹ Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy*, 25-26.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁸¹ Kasymov, "Statism in Russia," 61.

⁸² Andrew C. Kuchins and Igor A. Zevelev, "Russian Foreign Policy: Continuity in Change," *The Washington Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (February 2012): 151.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁸⁴ Andrei Tsygankov and Pavel Tsygankov, "National ideology and IR theory: Three incarnations of the 'Russian idea'," *European Journal of International Relations* 16, no. 4 (2010): 668, 607.

⁸⁵ Robert Legvold, *Russian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 111.

This kind of Western-oriented thinking in Russia dates back to Peter the Great and his military reforms. He found Russia technologically lacking and borrowed Western technology to advance his modernization efforts.⁸⁶ In addition to military reforms, Peter the Great also set forth other reforms that would turn the whole country upside down in a matter of just a few years. These reforms Europeanized the whole Russian society from military affairs, bureaucracy, industry, to elite dress, manners and language. A new capital bearing Peter's name was built closer to mainland Europe in the spirit of these reforms. And finally, when Russia emerged victoriously from the Northern War, his empire would be counted among European powers deserving of equal respect.⁸⁷ Some Westernists have also argued that Russia's distance from Europe does not matter and that the country must be a part of it since the ideals of progress and prosperity are so strongly identified with Europe⁸⁸.

Gorbachev could also be included in the Westernist school because of his reformist New Thinking policies that called for cooperation with the West and being counted as an equal member among them⁸⁹. His New Thinking included ideas such as defending universal values, recognizing the fact that the world is becoming increasingly interdependent and that since peace is the most important issue, a nuclear war must be avoided. These could be achieved through deeper cooperation with the United States and the rest of the world.⁹⁰ One of the most prominent Westernists in Russia was Andrey Kozyrev, the Federation's first Minister of Foreign Affairs under Yeltsin's presidency who also was Yevgeny Primakov's predecessor⁹¹. He was much more radical and pro-Western than Gorbachev ever was and he decided to completely leave behind the old Marxist-Leninist ideology. For example, he discussed integrating Russia into the democratic West, promoted independence and sovereignty in the old Soviet Republics and considered cutting defense spending because the West was no longer seen as a threat⁹². However, this pro-Western phase among Russia's top leadership was short lived. In fact, it had already lost its momentum by the mid-1990s.⁹³

Yeltsin and Kozyrev had assumed that due to Russia's newfound Westernist move, the West would accept Russia as one of its own and help it in the process. This policy did not work as desired, and popular support for it started to decline quickly. Some adjustments were made, but they did not seem

⁸⁶ Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy*, 23.

⁸⁷ James Cracraft, *The Revolution of Peter the Great* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 159-165.

⁸⁸ Light, "Foreign Policy Thinking," in Malcolm, *Internal Factors*, 36.

⁸⁹ Tsygankov, *Russia's foreign policy*, 27, 48-49.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 66,71

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁹² Legvold, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 4.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 111.

to be enough.⁹⁴ Soon both Statists and Civilizationist had more viable foreign policy suggestions and started to win ground⁹⁵. Their arguments seemed to make more and more sense as, for example, NATO started expansion without including or consulting Russia. By 1993 it started to become clearer that the sought-after integration with the West was not going to happen in the desired way and other Westernist goals started to seem more and more naïve. In the December elections that year the Russian popular support shifted towards the opposition.⁹⁶ A strong sentiment was that Westernists had disregarded Russian national interests in hopes of achieving something that they never did. Instead, the West seemed to have solely wanted to keep the new Russian Federation from becoming a new threat.⁹⁷ This provided Yevgeny Primakov with an important opening. Had the Westernists been more successful, Primakov would most likely have been relegated to the past and associated only with the Soviet system.

According to Kuchins and Zevelev, Westernizers can also be described as “Liberals” who focus on globalization, collective security and international organization membership. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Liberals have focused on different issues at different times, but when it comes to foreign policy formulation, Liberals too, have lost their influence. Today the only Liberals who still believe in their cause have become opposition voices such as Garry Kasparov and Boris Nemtsov.⁹⁸

4.3. Statism

When the Westernist school lost its prominence in the mid 1990s, one result was that Kozyrev was replaced by Yevgeny Primakov as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and who Tsygankov calls the father of Russia’s new Statism. Primakov had previously loudly criticized the Westernist foreign policy strategies and now had a chance to try out his own.⁹⁹

Statists want Russia to be a strong and independent great power able to maintain order and keep the country safe from threats coming from both the west and the east. However, unlike Civilizationism, it is not inherently anti-West by its nature.¹⁰⁰ Rather, Statist prefer “Derzhava” a term referring to Russia’s role as the holder of the international equilibrium of power. They believe that Russian

⁹⁴ Tsygankov, *Russia’s Foreign Policy*, 76-77.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 82-84.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁹⁸ Kuchins and Zevelev, “Russian Foreign Policy: Continuity in Change,” 148-149.

⁹⁹ Tsygankov, *Russia’s Foreign Policy*, 74.

¹⁰⁰ Tsykangov and Tsygankov, “National Ideology,” 669.

geopolitical interests and material interest in general should be safeguarded. In addition, they support keeping the near abroad areas close and see them as a vital interest for the Federation.¹⁰¹

Kuchins and Zevelev call Tsygankov's Statists "Great Power Balancers" and they point to Yevgeny Primakov as the founding father of this foreign policy school of thought. He is described as Russia's Henry Kissinger. Consequently, Statists see Russia as a great power that needs to balance against the West, which in turn is seen as overplaying their role in the world. However, since Statists believe that Russia could learn from the West they are not inherently anti-West like Civilizationists are.¹⁰²

Unlike Westernists, they believe that in order for Russia to occupy its rightful place in world politics, the role of the West must by definition diminish to give way for Russia. This stems from their belief in different power centers in international politics, a concept that Primakov returns to again and again in his writings. Unlike the Westernists/Liberals and Civilizationists/Russian nationalists, Statists/Great Power Balancers currently possess a primary role in Russian foreign policy formulation.¹⁰³ Today the most significant proponent of this policy school of thought is Vladimir Putin, but as Kuchins and Zevelev show in their research Putin has to some extent also been influenced by Russian nationalists¹⁰⁴. Others agree that Putin can in fact be viewed as a Statist with some Civilizationist/Russian nationalist elements influencing his thinking.¹⁰⁵

Understanding Civilizationism, Westernism and Statism are key factors for understanding Russian foreign policy debates now and in the past. Earlier it was established that individual leaders and their beliefs influence the way international relations are conducted and how policies are formulated. All three of these schools of thought are established belief systems that Russian leaders have been influenced by. Yevgeny Primakov revived and reinvented the Statist school's ideas into the dominant viewpoint in Russia today. Primakov's association with Statism formed part of his worldview. Next, we will dig into his early life, career and introduce his most famous policy suggestion, multipolarity, before beginning to investigate his operational code in more detail.

¹⁰¹ Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy*, 97.

¹⁰² Kuchins and Zevelev, "Russian Foreign Policy: Continuity in Change," 150.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 158.

¹⁰⁵ Kasymov, "Statism in Russia," 61.

5. YEVGENY PRIMAKOV

Yevgeny Primakov is a man who during his lifetime saw the transition of the Soviet Union into the Russian Federation and who held many important positions in both political systems. As a leader he helped Russia navigate through some of its most difficult times in recent history. Even when his active years as a politician were over, he remained in the shadows influencing Russian foreign policy until his death in 2015. It is true that there are many other foreign policy figures, schools of thought and ideologies, which have influenced Russian leaders and it is possible that in the future Russia will go back to being more Westernist or perhaps hardline Civilizationists/Nationalists will gain more power. Anything can happen and much of it will depend on the direction the Russian economy takes. However, Primakov has contributed greatly to the formulation of Russian foreign policy. As long as Statism remains the major school of thought in Kremlin, his ideas should interest students of Russian policy. For example, Henry Kissinger has shed light on his significance in a foreword he wrote for *A World Challenged: Fighting Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century* one of Primakov's books in 2004.

His world view clearly reflects mainstream Russian thinking— with all its complexities— on Russia's place in the twenty-first-century international system. This thinking is not always well understood outside Russia, and some of its elements are clearly not in full alignment with American interests and values. But so long as Russia remains a serious power that can affect vital U.S. objectives in areas such as the war on terrorism and nonproliferation, Russian views do matter and should be understood and, where appropriate, taken into account in order to make American foreign policy more effective.¹⁰⁶

5.1. Early Life

Yevgeny Maksimovich Primakov was born in Kiev in 1929, but grew up in Tbilisi, Georgia.¹⁰⁷ His mother was a physician and father a Soviet military man who was executed.^{108,109} Primakov says that he did not know his father and thus was raised by his mother whose last name he carries. His grandmother was Jewish and at some point in his career he experienced suspiciousness and some level of persecution because of this connection.¹¹⁰ Many of his mother's relatives were executed during Stalin's purges leaving her disillusioned about the supreme leader who she called "a bastard

¹⁰⁶ Yevgeny Primakov, *A World Challenged: Fighting Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), viii.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Daniels, "Evgenii Primakov: Contender by Chance," *Problems of Post-Communism* 46, no. 5 (1999): 29.

¹⁰⁸ Martin McCauley, *Who's Who in Russia Since 1900* (London: Routledge, 1997), 163.

¹⁰⁹ Daniels, "Evgenii Primakov," 29.

¹¹⁰ Yevgeny Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 17.

and a primitive murderer”¹¹¹ to the horror of young Yevgeny who never dared to revisit the subject. Despite his family background, Primakov did not shy away from politics.

Primakov went to the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies where he graduated in 1953 as an Arabist, which explains his future interest and expertise in the Middle East.¹¹² Later he defended his dissertation about capital exports into Arab countries at the Moscow State University at the Economic Faculty.¹¹³ For the better part of the 1960s, Primakov worked for the prominent newspaper Pravda (“truth”) as a Middle East correspondent. In his own words this was a position he was transferred to and was not his own idea, but he does not give further explanation for what exactly he means by this.^{114,115}

5.2. Career Highlights

In the 1970s and mid-to-late 1980s Primakov held the position of Deputy Director and then Director of the current Yevgeny Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), which he seems to be quite proud of based on his memoirs^{116,117}. Primakov characterizes the institute as a place that formulated new and fresh ideas and approaches. They for example got in trouble for projecting that the capitalist world would not have ceased to exist by the year 2000 and then again when they claimed that capitalism was subject to change.¹¹⁸ Due to the institute’s radical views, staff faced persecution together with scientists in general before the Gorbachev years. Primakov was very upset with these developments and the closed-mindedness of many old guard forces behind it.¹¹⁹

Primakov himself writes,

we realized the need to abandon the dogmatic approach in both foreign policy and the military-political area. In this connection a theoretical interpretation of the peaceful coexistence of the socialist and capitalist systems became a priority issue. Traditionally it was regarded as a “respite” in the relations between socialism and capitalism in the international arena. But with the development of nuclear weapons by both sides, weapons capable of

¹¹¹ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 19-20.

¹¹² McCauley, *Who’s Who in Russia*, 163.

¹¹³ Mikhail Roshchin, “Arabist and KGB Middleman, Director and Statesman,” in *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies*, ed. Michael Kemper and Stephan Conermann. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 105.

¹¹⁴ Daniels, “Evgenii Primakov,” 28.

¹¹⁵ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 17.

¹¹⁶ Daniels, “Evgenii Primakov,” 28.

¹¹⁷ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 20-21.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 19-21.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 22-24.

destroying not only the two superpowers but the rest of the world with them, peaceful coexistence between the two systems came to be treated as a more or less permanent condition. But we never failed to add that it by no means took the edge off the ideological struggle.¹²⁰

The Institute, together with other scientific centers, explored new foreign policy approaches that were hoped to “overcome tendencies that could lead to a thermonuclear war and at the same time to bring adequate defense spending into balance with the resources required to expand civilian production and develop the social sphere in the USSR.”¹²¹ A new term was coined: “reasonable sufficiency” that was contrary to the old approach that had put incredible strain on the economy by overemphasizing the role of the military-industrial complex and demanded matching every move the US made in like fashion¹²². Primakov writes that,

the USSR’s economy could not withstand the arms race under the rules we had accepted. IMEMO and a number of other institutes under the Academy of Sciences were scrupulously analyzing the activity of the United Nations, which in our opinion was to play an extremely active role in establishing a new world order. We were already considering various options for reforming the U.N. so that it could adapt to future realities.¹²³

Yevgeny Primakov wrote later in his memoir that even as the Cold War was drawing to an end he supported the changes gladly.

Yes, some lived in the past and even dreamed of returning to the days when the KGB practically controlled the country. But they were in the minority. The majority, to which I belonged, sincerely welcomed the changes, the spread of democracy and rejection of ideological fetters. This mood did not imply indiscriminate rejection of everything in the past or the naive notion that confrontation between the states had disappeared with the end of the Cold War. The substance and the form of that confrontation had changed, however, and those changes had to be recognized.¹²⁴

It is very important to understand Primakov’s mixed feelings about the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union. It is perhaps fair to argue that Primakov, like many other Russians, was traumatized by the events that followed the fall of the old superpower. He makes it very clear that no one lost the Cold War, but everyone came out as winners¹²⁵. Primakov makes the argument that a winner/loser way of thinking is based on the illusion that “some countries emerged from the Cold

¹²⁰ Ibid., 24.

¹²¹ Ibid., 25.

¹²² Ibid., 25.

¹²³ Ibid., 25.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 96.

¹²⁵ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 132.

War as victors, and some as losers. It is not that way. Nations on both sides of the ‘Iron Curtain’ through common efforts have saved themselves from the policy of confrontation.”¹²⁶

During the closing years of Soviet power, Primakov saw first-hand how Gorbachev tried to ease tensions between the two Cold War rivals. As a diplomat, he attended many high-level meetings with the American President Ronald Reagan. This exposure must have influenced his later views about the United States. He seems to suggest that Russians came to the talks with an open mind, but the Americans could not quite do the same^{127,128}. These turbulent years were very difficult for him and left him feeling that Russia had been mistreated, especially by the United States. He was actively involved in trying to fix Russia’s weak situation and experienced first-hand the embarrassment of having to receive help from the United States. In response to its weakness, Russia was, in his view, treated in a disrespectful and demeaning way adding salt to his wounds.¹²⁹ Russia was also given a backseat in the post-Soviet era and not included in decision-making processes in the international arena, as if they no longer mattered. To make matters worse, this attitude was also accepted and adopted by then Minister of Foreign Affairs Kozyrev of the liberal Westernist camp.¹³⁰

In one of his books, Primakov laments the situation.

Development after the Cold War might have been less chaotic and more harmonious, but such was not to be. The two former Cold War adversaries might have cooperated to work on formulating common policies. Instead, there was a period when Russia seemed to be relegated to taking only a supporting role. As the Russian Federation struggled to establish itself as an independent country after the fall of the USSR, this back-seat stance was advocated by the Foreign Minister at the time, who expressed it this way: he said the world was divided into the civilized part and the ‘riff-raff’. After losing the Cold War, Russia needed to make sure it gained admittance into the club of civilized countries by following their rules. The leader of this club, of course, was the United States. This approach was not sustainable.¹³¹

Primakov held many positions in different types of environments before entering the prime-time political scene, but all through his career he was very much oriented towards foreign policy.^{132, 133} He

¹²⁶ Yevgeny Primakov, “The World on the Eve of the 21st Century,” *International Affairs (Moscow)* 42, no. 5-6 (1996): 4.

¹²⁷ Daniels, “Evgenii Primakov,” 28.

¹²⁸ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 31-32.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 256-260.

¹³⁰ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 131-133.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹³² Roshchin, “Arabist and KGB middleman,” 107.

¹³³ Allen Lynch, “The Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy in the 1990s,” in *Russia After Communism*, ed. Rick Fawn and Stephen White. (Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002), 167.

acted as a director of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (when it ceased to be the KGB) after the fall of the Soviet Union. And, once Andrey Kozyrev's Westernist policies had failed and the administration looked for new directions, Yeltsin appointed Primakov as Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1996.¹³⁴ The change towards Statism took place partly because a changing security environment was taking shape and thus more emphasis was placed on great power thinking¹³⁵. After being appointed, Primakov stated that he considered his main task to be making sure the Foreign Ministry would better protect national interests¹³⁶. This was a major shift, since Kozyrev had not placed much value on Russian interests, a fact that greatly perplexed Primakov¹³⁷.

For many Russians, seeing Primakov replace Kozyrev was a relief, putting an end to a Westernist era and changing Russia's foreign policy objectives.¹³⁸ Primakov held very different views on Russian interests, and what their relations with the West should look like. He was personally a realist and a Statist and would execute pragmatic foreign policy that attempted to look for the middle road. He did not seek confrontation with the West, but was not pro-Western either.^{139,140,141} Additionally, he understood how weak Russia was, but wanted to restore its place in the world.¹⁴² Interestingly, Primakov was the only person who was able to work at the top levels of both the Gorbachev and Yeltsin administrations and continue to succeed^{143, 144}.

Primakov's appointment as the new Minister of Foreign Affairs aroused a lot of interest, not only because he was very different from Kozyrev, but also since in the past he had not been in the direct public eye. His exact political leanings were a bit unclear. Some indications of his policies at the time could be derived from unclassified Foreign Intelligence Service reports which were written under the leadership of Primakov. These documents dealt with suggestions for Russian foreign policy doctrine

¹³⁴ Daniels, "Evgenii Primakov," 28, 30.

¹³⁵ Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy*, 96.

¹³⁶ Yevgeny Primakov, "Primakov Starts with The CIS," Press Conference Excerpts, *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 48, no. 2 (1996): 12.

¹³⁷ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 126.

¹³⁸ Daniels, "Evgenii Primakov," 30.

¹³⁹ Lynch, "The Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy," 167.

¹⁴⁰ Daniels, "Evgenii Primakov," 30.

¹⁴¹ Legvold, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 180.

¹⁴² Daniels, "Evgenii Primakov," 35.

¹⁴³ Roshchin, "Arabist and KGB middleman," 108.

¹⁴⁴ Daniels, "Evgenii Primakov," 30.

with moderate great power tones detected.¹⁴⁵ Some in the West greeted the news of his appointment with uneasiness because of his background. In an interview Primakov described these feelings, “some people in the West consider me a conservative thinker, sometimes even a hard-liner. Granted, not in form but in substance. I do not disavow such descriptions, since I see nothing shameful in them.”¹⁴⁶ No wonder people were asking questions about his policies, since he was never very effervescent by nature. One article written at the time describes him preferring to operate from the shadows, being professionally unsociable, yet possessing personal charm and an ability to win people over¹⁴⁷. Neither was he excessively talkative about his preferences. He, for example, made it clear that he was not going to say anything negative about Kozyrev, his predecessor and a man he clearly did not often agree with¹⁴⁸.

In 1998 Primakov became the Prime Minister and it is said that this was the point when Russian foreign policy became truly Russian¹⁴⁹. As Prime Minister Primakov became very popular. Even though before this point he was not considered a possible Yeltsin heir, he became one. This, however, made Yeltsin jealous.¹⁵⁰ Primakov’s Prime Ministership was short lived and Yeltsin fired him already in 1999 because he was too popular¹⁵¹. It did not help Primakov that Yeltsin’s own popularity was in decline¹⁵². The fact that 81% of Russians disapproved of the firing shows how liked Primakov was among the public¹⁵³. Additionally, Primakov was viewed as a viable option to be the next president by many¹⁵⁴. However, in the end he decided to rally behind Putin and once he was elected, would frequently visit the new president. Putin then continued with a foreign policy that was quite similar to Primakov’s.^{155, 156}

¹⁴⁵ Konstantin Eggert and Maksim Yusin, “About Yevgeny Primakov, The Academician and Intelligence Officer Who Has Just Been Appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs,” *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 48, no. 2 (1996): 10-11.

¹⁴⁶ Yevgeny Primakov, “Long Familiar Job,” interview by Yegor Yakovlev, *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 48, no. 2 (1996): 13.

¹⁴⁷ Eggert and Yusin, “About Yevgeny Primakov,” 11.

¹⁴⁸ Primakov, “Primakov Starts With The CIS,” 12.

¹⁴⁹ P.I Tsitkilov, “The 243 Days of Evgenii Primakov,” *Russian Politics & Law* 38, no. 2 (2000): 36.

¹⁵⁰ Daniels, “Evgenii Primakov,” 32.

¹⁵¹ Lilia Shevtsova, *Putin’s Russia* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), 24-25.

¹⁵² Tsitkilov, “The 243 Days,” 46.

¹⁵³ Lilia Shevtsova, *Putin’s Russia*, 21.

¹⁵⁴ Daniels, “Evgenii Primakov,” 32.

¹⁵⁵ Lilia Shevtsova, *Putin’s Russia*, 48.

¹⁵⁶ Andrei Tsygankov, “From Belgrade to Kiev: Hard-line Nationalism and Russia’s Foreign Policy,” in *Russian Nationalism and the National Reassertion of Russia*, ed. Marlène Laruelle. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 196.

Yevgeny Primakov himself has stated that he had no chance of winning in the presidential elections since the mass media back then was manipulated against him by forces that did not want him to succeed¹⁵⁷. This shows his realism, and perhaps his preference to pull strings in the background, rather than possessing the need to occupy a specific public office at any cost. Primakov writes in his memoir that he and Putin developed a warm relationship before the later was elected president. He implies that this made it easier for him to not participate in the race himself. Primakov goes into much detail describing Putin's policies and his actions as the president. He clearly says that he likes Putin as an individual and that he thinks he has done good things for Russia, even though sometimes his good policies are not carried out the right way, mostly because of those around him. Primakov addresses many major criticisms of Putin, such as his supposed dictatorial rule, but explains away these accusations as merely propaganda or misconceptions. He praises Putin for having succeeded in shaking off any ties to those who helped him to rise to his position (the so called "Family", a force and group of oligarchs also behind Yeltsin). Overall, Primakov seems to believe that Putin is merely a human being, but having taken that into consideration, Russia could not have a better president.¹⁵⁸ He puts it like this, "the majority of thinking Russians understand that Putin is the best person to lead Russia today."¹⁵⁹

5.3. Yevgeny Primakov, Multipolarity and the New World Order

Before proceeding to construct Primakov's operational code, it is necessary to briefly introduce his concept of multipolarity and the new world order. It is perhaps the centerpiece of Primakov's thinking and one which will be referred to numerous times in the following sections.

5.3.1. The Cold War and Development Towards the New World Order

During the Cold War much of the world was divided into blocs dominated by either the United States or the Soviet Union. These countries were both superpowers, but once the Cold War drew to an end Primakov insists superpowers also ceased to exist.¹⁶⁰ Part of the argument is based on the idea that many countries no longer needed to rely on their old protectors; mostly the Soviet Union and to a lesser degree also the United States. For example, Western Europe stopped relying on the American nuclear umbrella because of the change in the security environment¹⁶¹. Most significantly, the world

¹⁵⁷ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 4.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 3-11.

¹⁵⁹ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 115.

¹⁶⁰ Yevgeny Primakov, "What Makes the Middle East So Special," *International Affairs (Moscow)* 52, no. 3 (2006): 19.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

started to slowly move from a bipolar system into a multipolar one¹⁶². According to Primakov, it is wrong to assume that some countries lost and others won at the break-up of the old world order. What really happened in his mind was that “nations on both sides of the ‘Iron Curtain’ through common efforts have saved themselves from the policy of confrontation”¹⁶³. When this is held to be a fact, one must then also accept that in the new system there should be no division into leaders and followers¹⁶⁴.

Primakov lamented that Cold War thinking still marked international relations and doctrines, coupled with the insistence that some had indeed emerged as winners¹⁶⁵. Primakov especially blamed American “neocons” for working against progress towards a multipolar world. The neoconservatives’ idea is the polar opposite: superpower ideology mixed with unilateralism.¹⁶⁶ Primakov believed monopolarity and unilateralism form the worst recipe for the world, provoking rivalry and chaos¹⁶⁷. Multipolarity, where there are many centers of power instead of just one was a better alternative in his mind. He is not alone with his ideas. In a speech in 2016 Vladimir Putin praised Primakov for his multipolarity concept. According to him, after seeing the first signs of a new unipolar world forming, Primakov “had truly strategic vision that enabled to look into the future and see how unviable and one-sided this unipolar model was.”¹⁶⁸

5.3.2. The United States and the New World Order

It is clear that Primakov thought the United States of America was Russia’s main rival and that the United State’s influence had to be undermined to lessen and balance their influence in world politics.¹⁶⁹ Primakov supported the creation of “the Big Triangle” (Russia, India and China) which started the RIC. It then became BRIC (add Brazil) and later BRICS (add South Africa). The rationale behind this creation was to counterbalance NATO and the United States more specifically in order to make the world’s division of power more equal.¹⁷⁰ Primakov also believed in diversifying Russian relations with other countries by maintaining good relations with many Asian and Middle Eastern

¹⁶² Ibid., 2.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 4.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 4.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 2-3.

¹⁶⁶ Primakov, “What Makes the Middle East,” 20.

¹⁶⁷ Primakov, “The World on the Eve,” 4.

¹⁶⁸ “Meeting of Primakov Readings International Forum,” Kremlin, accessed July 31, 2018, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53361>.

¹⁶⁹ Yury Fedorov, “‘Boffins’ and ‘Buffoons’: Different Strains of Thought in Russia’s Strategic Thinking,” *Chatham House* REP BP 06/01 (March 2006), 4.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 4.

states. In the Middle East, which he was an expert in, he differentiated between Muslim states and Muslim extremists. He wanted to have good relations with the official states in order to balance against extremism and Western influences in the area.¹⁷¹

Given that Primakov's ideas were more pragmatic and less ideological than Communist foreign policy was, they should not be understood as *inherently* anti-Western.¹⁷² The collapse of the USSR destroyed the bi-polar world and American hegemony emerged instead. Primakov's understanding of Russia being a great power simply means that Russia must get back in the game and fix the current imbalances; creating a counterbalance to the United States (not the West per se). According to Primakov, the new world order is understood in terms of the interactions of the main actors which are: Russia, Japan, China, the United States and integrated Europe.¹⁷³ Thus, the old distinction between Communism and Capitalism, the West and the Soviet bloc does not exist in Primakov's thinking.

Although the times of perpetual confrontation were over, certain old problems combined with new ones had to be given serious thought by the whole world community. Yevgeny Primakov found the problems around regional conflicts, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction to be some of the worst issues the world was facing in the post-Cold War era¹⁷⁴. He believed that in today's world all centers of the world should join their forces and collaborate to oppose these unfortunate issues faced by all. Despite the fact that the new situation was everyone's problem, Primakov felt that through their actions the United States had demonstrated it had little interest in joining this movement and instead acted unilaterally for their own benefit. This American attitude, combined with an almost unjust position as a hegemon as Primakov viewed it, was something that he always found irritating about the United States.

5.3.3. A New Role for Russia and the United Nations

Primakov argued that Russia shared the interests of the majority of the world community after the Cold War: security, stability and peace¹⁷⁵. He was also adamant that Russia would become one of the major centers of the new multipolar world despite certain developmental issues they might have been

¹⁷¹ Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy*, 104-105.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁷³ Fedorov, "'Boffins' and 'Buffoons,'" 4.

¹⁷⁴ Primakov, "The World on the Eve," 2.

¹⁷⁵ Yevgeny Primakov, "Russia: Reforms and Foreign Policy," *International Affairs (Moscow)* 44, no. 4 (1998): 1.

struggling with^{176,177}. These “centers” would arise naturally as power was distributed after the fall of the bi-polar system and would center around several large countries. What is more, Russia would not agree to be treated as a second-class power and accept a supporting role.¹⁷⁸ Primakov hoped that Russia would act as a counterbalance to the negative trends in the transitional period, such as certain countries trying to dominate the system before all the centers have fully established themselves¹⁷⁹. These other centers could be, for example, China, India and the EU¹⁸⁰.

Furthermore, Primakov wanted the United Nations to establish a role as the most important international organization dealing with security. He argued,

given the full importance of bi-lateral relations and regional organizations, the main mechanism capable of ensuring the unimpeded transition from the bi-polar, confrontational to a multi-polar, democratic world is the United Nations Organization. During the establishment of a multi-polar system, it is called upon to become a unique ‘safety net’, leading to a minimum of destructive consequences from changes and channeling them into the evolutionary, democratic direction. The UN’s main task remains supporting international security.¹⁸¹

Primakov would also have preferred if the new European security system would be based on the OSCE rather than NATO, because it was viewed a divisive remnant of the Cold War. He also did not want either NATO or the OSCE to absorb what he thought to be UN functions.^{182,183}

In short, Yevgeny Primakov hoped that the new world order after the tension-ridden years of the Cold War would have been marked by multilateralism in the form of multipolarity instead of American hegemony. He believed organizations such as the OSCE and the UN should be given a larger role and that Russia should assume a role of a balancer and a major center of power in the new system. The concept of multipolarity is a central part of Primakov’s thinking and will be touched upon frequently later on. In the following section, we will proceed to map out Yevgeny Primakov’s beliefs utilizing the ten question method and analyze his influence on the Russian Federation’s foreign policy development.

¹⁷⁶ Primakov, “Russia Is Restoring,” 68.

¹⁷⁷ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 131.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁷⁹ Yevgeny Primakov, “Russia Seeks a New Place in the World,” interview by Stanislav Kondrashov, *The Current Digest of the Russian Press* 48, no. 10 (1996): 14.

¹⁸⁰ Primakov, “What Makes the Middle East,” 19-20.

¹⁸¹ Primakov, “The World on the Eve,” 12.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁸³ Primakov, “Russia: Reforms,” 4-5.

6. GEORGE'S TEN QUESTIONS AND PRIMAKOV'S OPERATIONAL CODE

First, the five philosophical beliefs questions will be addressed and then the five instrumental questions. The philosophical questions deal directly with Yevgeny Primakov's way of determining which actions to take. The next set of instrumental questions address what he believes to be the best strategy and tactics for achieving his political goals.¹⁸⁴ Together, all of these questions are meant to produce new information about the research subject but piecing together an operational code is a developing story and some issues will be introduced in earlier questions and discussed in detail later on. Some repetition will thus inevitably take place. Once all questions are sufficiently answered, a section of analysis will follow in which the key elements are summarized and dissected.

6.1. Philosophical Questions

1. What Is the "Essential" Nature of Political Life? Is the Political Universe One of Harmony or Conflict? What Is the Fundamental Character of One's Political Opponents?

6.1.1. Opponents

Alexander George elaborates on this question by noting that

a political actor's belief system about the nature of politics is shaped particularly by his orientation to other political actors. Most important of these are one's opponents. The way in which they are perceived – the characteristics the political actor attributes to his opponents – exercises a subtle influence on many other philosophical and instrumental beliefs in his operational code.¹⁸⁵

In Yevgeny Primakov's mind, his personal opponents and Russia's major opponents were on the one hand oligarchs who mostly influenced domestic affairs inside the country and the United States on the other. This does not necessarily mean that Primakov viewed the United States as an enemy per se, whereas he tended to treat oligarchs consistently in a much harsher way and viewed them as personal political enemies.

Primakov was often personally opposed by either oligarchs or a force similar to them; the "Family" as Yeltsin's inner circle was called¹⁸⁶. According to Primakov, he was ousted from Yeltsin's

¹⁸⁴ Schafer and Walker, *Beliefs and Leadership*, 4.

¹⁸⁵ George, "The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach," 201-202.

¹⁸⁶ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 283-285.

administration by these forces when they realized that he was going to oppose corruption and economic crimes¹⁸⁷. He was determined to lock up people who were involved in such crimes, both government officials and oligarchs. Due to this, he was accused of taking Russia back to the times of the Great Purges in 1937 and apparently forged documents were presented in public to make the case for his removal more believable, hurting Primakov's image. Boris Berezovsky, an oligarch, was responsible for much of the dirt campaign waged against Primakov. This and other related issues resulted in the Family strong-arming Yeltsin into finally firing him.¹⁸⁸

Based on the materials researched it could be argued that for Primakov opponents were those who wanted to selfishly and arrogantly force their own will on others without regard to the bigger picture, even against their own good. This view applies narrowly to individuals and more broadly to entire countries. Among his opponents could be counted those countries and entities that choose to act unilaterally, only caring for their own interests, such as the United States. These forces strove to oppose the formulation of a new, more stable post-Cold War world order which was fairer, conflict free, democratic and one in which Russia had a say.

Yevgeny Primakov found especially troubling those who he believed disregarded all that Russia had done to distance itself from the past and to create a new, bright future; wanting instead to continue living as if things had not changed at all. According to Primakov, those who thought this way were still stuck in the Cold War era way of thinking. They had not woken up to the new era that started in the 1990s but continued to view the world as divided into blocks.¹⁸⁹ They saw Russia as an enemy, which in Primakov's opinion was ridiculous. He thought that due to the changes in the international system and Russia's democratization, it is mindless to view Russia as a threat to any other country.¹⁹⁰

As an example, Primakov writes,

the North Atlantic Alliance is creeping to our borders – this cannot but cause alarm. What is more that process is accompanied with anti-Russian rhetoric and the U.S fairly aggressive policies in the Soviet successor states. From Moscow this looks as a manifestation of discontent and irritation among certain Western circles with the fact that Russia while restoring its vast and promising potential is restoring its great power status as well. ---- I think that the West should ponder on Russia's role and place in the contemporary world; they should finally discard an image of Russia as a country that uses its energy resources as an instrument of imperialist policies. This is a wrong image. Real Russia has no intention to take orders from

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 293.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 294-301.

¹⁸⁹ Primakov, "Russia: Reforms," 4-5.

¹⁹⁰ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 130.

any other country, yet it is prepared to pool efforts with other states to combat international terrorism and WMD proliferation; it refuses to accept the idea of the world divided by civilizational or religious features; it is prepared to tap its unique potentials to cope with the volatile Mid-Eastern crisis. I am speaking of Russia that is pursuing a policy designed to cool the hotheads that failed to draw the lessons of the Iraqi adventure and are prepared to use the same disastrous tactics against other objectionable regimes.¹⁹¹

One way the world changed after the Cold War, according to Primakov, was the disappearance of permanent adversaries. In the new system enemies could appear wherever interests conflicted, but Primakov noted that also the field of mutual interests had expanded at the same time.¹⁹² This shows that a friend today may become an enemy tomorrow and vice versa.

So, Primakov's opponents included: the United States and their actions in the wider world, oligarchs inside Russia and corrupt officials who through their pursuit of their own goals destroy the new and improved Russia. It is justified to argue that the United States was often viewed as an opponent in Primakov's mind, but it would not be fair to omit the fact that Primakov *did* want to cooperate with them whenever possible and he applauded Vladimir Putin for being able to find ways to do so¹⁹³.

6.1.2. *Harmony or Conflict?*

It can be deduced from Primakov's texts and interviews, that he viewed the world as being in a state of conflict. This was partly because of the United States and its unilateralism. He believed that ever since the end of the Cold War, when the era of bipolarity came to an end, the international system had been transitioning towards a new system of multipolarity. While the old order was characterized by ideological and military confrontation, new threats had emerged. These threats included regional conflicts, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, all of which have not yet been addressed properly and therefore peace and stability have not descended on earth.^{194,195}

Primakov made it abundantly clear throughout his speeches and texts that neither Russia nor the United States can any longer be characterized as superpowers. He says, "only the strongest states able to keep together a conglomerate of other states, ensure their safety and impose its own rules on them

¹⁹¹ Primakov, "Russia Is Restoring," 69.

¹⁹² Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 96-97.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 315.

¹⁹⁴ Primakov, "The World on the Eve," 2.

¹⁹⁵ Yevgeny Primakov, "The Role of the Individual in History," interview by Vladislav Inozemtsev and N.N. Sibriakov, *Russian Politics and Law* 44, no. 1 (2006): 74-75.

can be called superpowers.”¹⁹⁶ He further argues that even though the United States after the Cold War was the strongest economically, politically and militarily,

its qualitative descriptions do not fit the “superpower concept”. At the same time the Cold War inertia, part and parcel of U.S policies preserved, to a certain extent, the “superpower” definitions as applied to this country even though the objective conditions have disappeared.¹⁹⁷

Through this lens not only is the United States acting as if they still are a superpower when they are not, but they are also trying to actively interfere with the natural evolution towards a multipolar world and to maintain their dominance by bypassing the United Nations with “its continual assertions of its right to unilateral use of force.”¹⁹⁸ This, Primakov finds especially maddening since in his view a multipolar world would be in the best interest of the whole world. He even makes a bold and almost arrogant claim that this would also be in the best interests for the United States itself. He continues by asserting that no other country approves of the push toward the unipolar world that the United States is advocating and, besides, in this “hypothetical” unipolar world no one could provide a counterbalance.¹⁹⁹

Thus, it can be argued that Yevgeny Primakov thought that the world is in a state of chaos and will remain so if the United States keeps behaving in a unilateral manner because,

attempts to bind others with unilateral decisions only provokes rivalry and in the end a chaotic, unpredictable drift of international relations. It is the worst recipe for a world in which economic, ecological and humanitarian mutual dependency is growing rapidly.²⁰⁰

Many issues would be better dealt with through cooperation and consensus²⁰¹. Here Primakov sees a clear mission for Russia: “During the transition from a bipolar to a multipolar world, Russia must play the role of a counterbalance to the negative trends that are manifesting themselves in international affairs.”²⁰²

¹⁹⁶ Primakov, “What Makes the Middle East,” 19.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁹⁸ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 100.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 100-101.

²⁰⁰ Primakov, “The World on the Eve,” 4.

²⁰¹ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 105.

²⁰² Primakov, “Russia Seeks New Place,” 14.

Primakov believed a multipolar world where Russia is one of the major centers would become a reality²⁰³. And that it would be the best option for Russia²⁰⁴. Primakov was a firm believer in the fact that Russia, like most of the world, was mainly concerned about security, stability and peace²⁰⁵. In the late 1980s he wrote in the Pravda newspaper “one can frequently hear it said: From the first days of Soviet power, our country has been struggling for peace among peoples... peace remains the main goal of the USSR’s foreign policy.”²⁰⁶ Surely Primakov understood that both the United States and the Soviet Union caused harm to other nations during the Cold War, even though he refused to start a discussion about who was worse²⁰⁷. Yet, it could be argued that he seems to have thought that it was actually just the nature of the Cold War that caused the problems and that once it was over everyone won.²⁰⁸ Russia transformed itself dramatically, but the United States continued living as if they were now the top dog and went on with their Cold War era attitudes and policies.²⁰⁹ Primakov probably kept on insisting that the USSR had not lost the war since he insisted that Soviet policy makers, himself included, saw the madness of the philosophy of confrontation and the possibility of a thermonuclear war and that they in fact came to their senses first and developed new peaceful attitudes (that ultimately made them “lose” the war). It is hard to say whether he truly believes the storyline “of no one lost, because we came to our right senses” (or something in between), but he is consistent about it throughout his texts.²¹⁰

The problem about Russia’s position as a member of the new club of major powers, according to Primakov, is that Russia is not being considered as an equal despite being the second largest nuclear power, their (recovering) economic and human potential, their size and resources and their unique position bridging two continents. Russia was not included in the club after the Cold War by other developed countries who were only concerned about, “pushing their own agenda and national interests to the exclusion of all else.”²¹¹ Had Russia been listened to, developments would have been “less chaotic and more harmonious, but such was not to be.”²¹² Instead, Russia was given a backseat which, at the time, was also supported by the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Kozyrev.

²⁰³ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 131.

²⁰⁴ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 315.

²⁰⁵ Primakov, “Russia: Reforms,” 1.

²⁰⁶ Yevgeny Primakov, “A New Philosophy of Foreign Policy,” *The Current Digest of the Russian Press* 39, no. 28 (1987): 1.

²⁰⁷ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 101.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 132.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 132-133.

²¹⁰ For example: Primakov, “A New Philosophy,” 1-4.

²¹¹ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 100-101, 131-132.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 132.

This approach to Russian foreign policy, however, was not sustainable and Primakov asserted that, “it is not appropriate for Russia to be relegated to playing a supporting role in world events.”²¹³ He did not think that this would inevitably lead to continued tensions between the United States and Russia. Confrontation was avoidable, “but only if Washington fully grasps how futile and counterproductive it is to try to turn Russia into a vassal subservient to U.S policy and will.”²¹⁴ Primakov wanted to see both countries cooperating for the common good, but in order for that to happen the United States would have had to help create a multipolar system and stop solving world issues by themselves while creating their own rules unilaterally. In his opinion, this option would have been ideal for pacifying a chaotic world, but Primakov expressed his doubts about its realism.²¹⁵

In 2004 Primakov outlined two scenarios for the first decade of the 21st century; one was unfavorable and the other favorable. According to the first scenario, the United States continues down the path of unilateral action, overstepping the UN and the rest of the world community, while continuing to deprive Russia of their place at the table helping make resolutions on varying world problems. Should this unfavorable situation materialize Russia would find itself forced into a corner trying to break free of their isolation and needing to protect their interests by means of tougher domestic and foreign policies. They would also have to look for new partners in China and India. Overall, the result of careless American decisions would lead to a new post-Cold War confrontation that would not go unnoticed around the world.²¹⁶

The second scenario is more benign, and the one Primakov prefers: steps towards the creation of a new world order are taken while mutual interests are accounted for. As mentioned above, these interests are fighting terrorism, dealing with regional conflicts, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and protecting the environment. Regional power centers would naturally emerge (multipolarity) and the major players, including Russia, would work out a common position leading to stability. Change would take place without conflict and force would only be used as a last resort with the permission of the UN Security Council. In fact, countries would join the United States and Russia in strategic arms reduction.²¹⁷

²¹³ Ibid., 132.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 132-133.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 135.

²¹⁶ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 316-317.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 317.

With this scenario, the role of the UN is strengthened, and Russia and China are allowed to integrate into the world economy unhindered. In this new world order no civilizational divides between Muslims and Christians are allowed to take precedence and thus major civilizational splits are prohibited from emerging. This would, for example, mean that Muslims would be welcomed as partners to help fight terrorism. Primakov believed these were all positive and necessary developments towards the well-being and stability of the whole world and ones which the United States could not pursue on their own.²¹⁸

Consequently, Yevgeny Primakov believed in the possibility of both a chaotic and a harmonious world and that the actions of major players, such as the United States, determine which would eventually emerge. During the Cold War the system by nature was chaotic and volatile. Once the old system came to an end there was a good chance to create something new and more peaceful, where threats could be better managed. A new, harmonious world where some sort of an equilibrium could be achieved through multilateralism and multipolarity should be set as a goal. Policies that take everyone's interests into account should be adopted. Russia according to Primakov was working hard to create a world such as this. Yet, something at the time that was slowing down developments towards Primakov's ideal world order was a push toward a unipolar, American centered world which he thought was unacceptable to the rest of the world and would only cause a return to the era of global confrontation.

To conclude, Primakov's view on the state of the world could be characterized as being somewhere between chaotic and harmonious. He hoped it would develop into the direction of more harmony, but feared certain leaders, especially in the United States, would at least slow down this progress if not halt it completely.

2. What Are the Prospects for the Eventual Realization of One's Fundamental Political Values and Aspirations? Can One Be Optimistic, Or Must One Be Pessimistic on This Score, And in What Respects the One And/or the Other?

Primakov was not an ideologue and fancied himself a realist. He would not have set goals that he thought were unattainable. As a seasoned diplomat, he also understood that making progress takes

²¹⁸ Ibid., 317-318.

time and careful navigation between one's own and others' interests. His most significant political goal was the formation of a multipolar world in which Russia plays a significant role. He was fairly optimistic about reaching this goal but took into account possible resistance by other major players. This resistance was viewed as against the interests of the whole world community and, in the end, might destroy his plans as previously elaborated on.

Yevgeny Primakov sketched out two likely scenarios in the world for the first decade of the 21st century in his memoir *Russian Crossroads, Toward the New Millennium*. He wrote, "the future development of all major events in the international arena depends to a large extent on the course the United States steers toward Russia." He believed that their relationship should not be tainted by the past, nor be a mere continuation of past practices since Russia had changed, and too often his countrymen have been misunderstood.²¹⁹ It is difficult to say what kind of a veiled threat Primakov hides behind his words, especially when mentioning that the future of all major events in the international arena are up to how Russia is treated by the United States. The above quoted statement is a fundamental one, because it goes far beyond bilateral relations. It reveals Primakov's belief that the way the United States treats Russia has major implications on Russian foreign policy as well as immense potential for both good and bad on third parties. At the same time, it shows that he is not completely positive about the realization of his aspirations for a multipolar world.

Primakov often reminded his audience that although the United States has acted in a manner that Russia cannot approve of, Russia has not adopted an anti-American stance. They have only tried to facilitate cooperation whenever possible.²²⁰ He understood that a more aggressive stance would not be helpful to Russia, since it does not seem to be a popular policy. Aggression would only send many European countries, who have recently become more independent of the United States, back to its arms. Accommodating the United States whenever they can places Russia in a better position vis-à-vis influencing their policies and helps Russia to maintain a stronger international role. This in turn keeps hopes alive for a better world for everyone.²²¹ Primakov appears to make the argument that Russia's misunderstood interests equal the world community's interests, and that the interests of the United States are often harmful, even to themselves.

Russia's desire to play an active role in the global community should not be misinterpreted. Russia's desire to keep its status as a great world power has absolutely nothing to do with aspirations for empire building, a motive that is occasionally attributed to us. Rather, this

²¹⁹ Ibid., 314.

²²⁰ Ibid., 315.

²²¹ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 134.

desire stems from our knowledge that Russian foreign policy can do much to help stabilize conflict situations in regions around the world. Russia is certainly as interested in this as any other nation of the world, perhaps more so.²²²

Overall, Primakov's realism made him doubt the United States' interest in supporting his preferred world order²²³. In particular he blamed American neoconservatives for their obsession with unilateralism²²⁴. However, the United States was not the only problem since he also blamed some other Western countries (without naming them) for trying to keep Russia from influencing developments outside its immediate borders²²⁵. Yet, Primakov remained hopeful that the world was still moving towards a multipolar world, one in which Russia would again become great and restore its place in world politics.

It should be reiterated that the United States is not an evil empire in Primakov's mind. However, he placed a huge emphasis on their responsibility to choose the right course, because he thought Russia had already done everything that it can, and more, to make the world a better place. The ball is now in the United States' court.²²⁶ Additionally, he understood that Russia is no longer a superpower, but again he placed a disproportional emphasis on their significance in world affairs. It is as if he wanted to say, "We can do this the easy way or the hard way. Either case, if you choose wrong and we do not like it, the blood will be on your hands not ours." It is clear that Primakov thought that if everyone wanted to do the right thing then his goals would be reached. If not, chaos would ensue. He is careful to never make direct threats and to rarely name exact Russian interests outside the obvious peace and stability that he kept repeating. In all his writing, he sounded like a career diplomat giving the impression that he is not saying everything he thinks.²²⁷

In short, Primakov was often doubtful about the quick realization of his hopes for a multipolar world. He depicts the difficult position he finds Russian policymakers facing. In his words, all they want is to help stabilize the system, but their efforts are frustrated and misunderstood time and time again. Sometimes he is more hopeful, but when he feels less so he expresses veiled threats about how Russia could make life difficult for those who opposed his plans. It is also important to note that he sees Russian interests aligning with the interests of the whole world.

²²² Ibid., 135.

²²³ Ibid., 135, 97-98.

²²⁴ Primakov, "What Makes the Middle East," 20.

²²⁵ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 99.

²²⁶ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 135.

²²⁷ See for example Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 132-133.

3. Is the Political Future Predictable? In What Sense and to What Extent?

Yevgeny Primakov would probably have argued that surprises happen, but that you can expect to see certain events take place. People and countries can shape their destiny, but it is not entirely up to them because much depends on others. Primakov believed in certain historical trends whose organic fulfilment he expected to take place. For example, Primakov's statements include ideas such as: Russia has been and remains a great power with a nuclear capability; Russia has historical ties with the Commonwealth of Independent States and Europe; and its unique geopolitical position between East and West allows it to work as a bridge between the two.^{228,229} For Primakov, these facts guaranteed Russia a special place in the world. Yet, he admitted that certain issues, such as the state of the Russian economy, are subject to fluctuations. The economy was in a rough shape during most of the 1990s and Primakov admitted that it negatively impacted the role Russia could play in world politics. Despite temporary setbacks, however, it was not enough to change Russia's role as a significant player.²³⁰

Primakov pointed out in one of his speeches in 1998, that the immediate years after the fall of the Soviet Union were not extraordinary in Russian history. Similar events had taken place in the mid 1800s when Russia lost the Crimean War and was offered a reduced status. Then Foreign Minister Gorchakov refused to accept a lower rank and insisted that Russia could still act as a leading great power even after a devastating defeat. Primakov intended to do the same 200 years later. He argued, that Russia's geopolitical position, nuclear arms, being a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Russia's economic potential, military production and simply its history and might make it an important leading state in the world regardless of short-term difficulties.²³¹

To show how exactly Primakov in his own words used this reasoning in relation to Russia's interests, let us look at how he formulated an argument for Russia's continued, significant role in the Commonwealth of Independent States after the fall of the Soviet Union.

It would be quite naive to assume that Russia would stop playing that role. It is a case of historical patterns. History shows that Russia has never been a secondary power in a space that it, in fact, created. We should not ignore the fact that Russia created both the Russian

²²⁸ Primakov, "The Role of the Individual," 76, 79.

²²⁹ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 131.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 113, 131.

²³¹ Yevgeny Primakov, "Russia in World Politics A Lecture in Honor of Chancellor Gorchakov," *International Affairs* 44, no. 3 (1998): 7,10.

Empire with its periphery and the Soviet Union with its national republics. It was the center. Now it has a different role, of course. No one is talking about reviving the Soviet Union or the Russian Empire. But the Russian Federation is the most powerful entity in the post-Soviet space. It has the largest population and the largest territory in the CIS. Another point is also important. Although each people has its own culture and civilization, and we should not disdain them, Russian culture had the most substantial effect on the cultures of the national republics.²³²

As mentioned before, Primakov depicted two alternative scenarios for the first decade of the 21st century in his memoirs. For him, the difference between the two is mostly up to the behavior and choices of the United States.²³³ This is quite typical of Primakov. He also seems to have believed in solid historical trends based on past events and status, which he used especially to justify Russia's current actions and demands in relation to Russian interests. Primakov, for example, has expressed that

Russia has been and remains a sovereign state with an ancient and rich history. There is no doubt about this. The Russian state institutions are specific in the same way as the mentality of Russians and other peoples living in our country. When moving toward the universal human values and democracy Russia is following its own road determined by its traditions, the past, its multinational nature, and geography.²³⁴

Yet, in other instances Primakov acknowledged that reality did not always correspond to his model and often pointed to the United States as the source of unpredictability. He understood that the United States was free and able to cause problems for Russia's hopes for the future, but then fell back to his insistence on historical trends and how it is almost morally wrong to oppose his understanding of how events should progress. It seems that although he prided himself as an academic, he still liked to use arbitrary intellectual arguments that may conflict with his own logic used previously in other settings. It is as if he is at least subconsciously willing to build his arguments based on whatever suits his purposes at a given time. This is revisited in detail in the cognitive dissonance section below.

Primakov was not against change, however. He seems to have welcomed the formation of the Russian Federation and European integration, both of which came as surprises to many²³⁵. Even so, he believed strongly in both historical continuity and the need to guide, influence and even control developments. That is the subject of the next question. Continuity of events could not be left to take

²³² Primakov, "The Role of the Individual," 76.

²³³ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 314.

²³⁴ Primakov, "Russia Is Restoring," 67.

²³⁵ Primakov, "The Role of the Individual," 78.

shape on their own and is discussed more below in question four to help shed light on Primakov's seeming dualistic understanding of progress and development.

Throughout his texts, Primakov discusses state interests extensively. Specific state interests dictate certain paths and directions that countries are expected to follow. In this sense, if we know about Russia's national interests, we can predict their actions. For example, he often highlights mutual interests, but acknowledges that other states might work against Russian interests which would likely result in a conflict^{236,237}. Elsewhere he stated that Russia has responded to the geopolitical changes around its borders in a much softer way than what would have been expected when the USSR was still around. He then added "but this should not be taken as a sign that Russia will not defend its national interests. Russia will continue to seek new ways to protect and achieve its interests that are more appropriate in today's world."²³⁸

In summary, Primakov's understanding of the predictability of the political future is more complex than meets the eye. On the one hand he holds on to historical continuity as something sacred especially when it has to do with Russia's right to a great power status. In this instance going against the "inevitable" would put one almost in an immoral position and an example would be the United States disrupting developments towards a multipolar world. Yet on the other hand, Primakov was eager to see change when the continuation of old patterns would be less ideal for Russia's interests. Finally, it can be argued that one predictable aspect of Primakov's own world view and politics was that everything started with Russia's interests and aspirations and all else, including supporting arguments, would follow as secondary. Now we will investigate question four to see in more detail how this reasoning and narrative construction is intended to play out.

4. How Much "Control" or "Mastery" Can One Have Over Historical Development? What is One's Role in "Moving" And "Shaping" History in the Desired Direction?

As was established before, Yevgeny Primakov believed in certain historical trends and constants, such as state interests, but also in the need to, and feasibility of, directly influencing events. When asked about why Russia would support specific presidential candidates in neighboring countries over

²³⁶ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 105.

²³⁷ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 96.

²³⁸ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 75.

others, he answered that individuals are important and that their role in history is great²³⁹. This statement reveals two things. One, that he believed in the significance of individuals and their ability to influence developments. Two, he believed that the world cannot be left to take shape on its own; control and micromanaging are necessary to reach satisfactory results (despite his insistence on historical patterns in certain situations). First, we will focus on Primakov's ideas about control and the importance of order on the domestic and micro levels. Then, we will proceed to answer the question at its intended macro level. Proceeding in this order is necessary, because Primakov had strong opinions on this issue when it comes to the domestic sphere which must be understood before discussing how they are linked to mastering historical developments on the macro level.

6.1.3. The Micro Level

Yevgeny Primakov was a supporter of significant state control over areas such as the economy. In one of his articles he wrote “after a long tug of war we have finally discarded the idea that at the dawn of the market economy, before a civilized market has become fully developed, the country can do well without the state's purposeful interference in economy.”²⁴⁰ In the same article, written in 2006, he argued that state involvement in the economy was still badly needed and highlighted problems such as Russia's demographic crisis and uncompetitive Russian products which could be fixed by more focus on innovation technologies. The government is needed to fix these issues, but also to make sure that growth benefits everyone equally and not just the rich. Primakov viewed these as problems that needed to be addressed by the state since the private sector is not, for example, going to do anything to keep remote economically important regions populated.²⁴¹

As touched upon before, Primakov was always keen on fighting corruption and organized crime, both of which he believed surfaced during the chaotic years of the 1990s. He supported strong state opposition to the oligarchs and their power within both the economic and political spheres. To show his distaste for the system that developed in the 1990s Primakov called it “oligarchic capitalism”²⁴².

Primakov was careful to not glorify the Soviet past, but he clearly found many of its aspects appealing, especially after having witnessed the wild, early years of the Russian Federation. When asked about

²³⁹ Primakov, “The Role of the Individual,” 77.

²⁴⁰ Primakov, “Russia Is Restoring,” 63.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 67-68.

the selection and promotion of administrative staff in Russia, he said that the current system could be improved.

You want to compare all that with the Soviet period. It seems to me that the party system of that period, regardless of all its minuses, also had some pluses. Through the Komsomol and the Party, strong leaders of the economy and the strongest managers won promotion. Promotion was less likely to be based on cronyism.

He then brought up a few problems that made selection processes often unfair such as information used against job candidates that they themselves were not aware of²⁴³.

Primakov also did not shy away from harsh measures to bring about stability and order, which he valued quite highly. In his book *A World Challenged: Fighting Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century* his discussion on the situation in Chechnya reveals something about his thoughts regarding control and stability. He would have liked to see someone from the Federal Executive branch managing everything: reconstruction, military operations and assistance to the local government. This person should have had authority over the Ministry of Defense, Internal Affairs and FSS offices and made sure that the President's orders were properly executed in Chechnya. He explained, "having all authority in the hands of one individual with direct access to President Putin would avoid inconsistent action, tighten discipline, and increase the accountability for everyone involved in Chechnya."²⁴⁴ Primakov thought the role of the government should be increased leading him to suggest measures, such as depicted above, and which are in line with him being a Statist.

Primakov was aware of the challenges with more state control and commented about navigating between dictatorship and chaos based on his own experiences.

When I became prime minister and for some time afterward, the most important task was to find a path between dictatorship and chaos. I think we found it by strengthening the role of the state and increasing its effectiveness. For a market economy and society in general the danger lies not in a strong state that relies on the law and democratic processes, but in a weak government that, even with the best intentions, tries to interfere in private life and in the workings of the society and becomes a tool of influential groups. As FDR used to say: 'A strong, active state will never degenerate into a dictatorship. Dictatorship always replaces a weak and helpless government.'²⁴⁵

It is clear that Primakov was not especially nostalgic for the Soviet times nor a strong proponent for dictatorship. He often talked about the virtues of Russia's newly found democracy and freedom, but

²⁴³ Primakov, "The Role of the Individual," 68.

²⁴⁴ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 122-123.

²⁴⁵ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 229.

his desire for both stability and order are important when constructing his operational code and should not be overlooked^{246,247,248}. However, one does find it difficult to pursue maximum freedom while insisting on tight discipline, order and stability. It should be remembered that the Russian Federation found itself in a very chaotic state after the collapse of the Soviet Union and because of that, this balancing act between order and freedom was indeed a very tricky one. Having gotten a taste for Primakov's views on control and one's role in shaping history and developments on the domestic level, we can move on to discuss his views on the same topic, but at the macro level. Having started with the domestic before moving to the international is important because his views of the issue on one level directly translate to the other.

6.1.4. Moving on to the Macro Level

Yevgeny Primakov believed that the world is governed by certain constants that bind political action, but within that framework a person can set goals and achieve them, for example, through diplomacy and collective action. And, since he was an experienced diplomat, it is interesting to examine what kinds of tactics he used to construct a narrative that would help Russia advance national interests in the international arena. Put in other words, how he wanted to shape history in a desired direction.

Promoting multipolarity is one tactic utilized by Primakov to move history in the desired direction. This goes hand-in-hand with his calls for a more significant role for the UN and attempts to create a new world order opposed to the US-led hegemonic world order. This American system according to Primakov, is opposed by virtually everyone²⁴⁹. Regardless of Primakov's arguments that the United States is not a global hegemon, he was fighting windmills about it. He denied that the United States is a superpower, while at the same time opposed their hegemonic world order. It cannot be both. This is one of the examples where it is hard to say whether he knew of the contradiction and tried to make the argument anyway, or if he truly believed in his narrative. The United States has clearly not yet shown significant signs of absolute decline from its dominant position in the 1990s²⁵⁰. While it is true that the American-made world order is opposed by some countries, saying that most countries prefer something else is a stretch. Primakov did not shy away from making two additional arguments: that a multipolar world would be in the interest of virtually everyone, including the United States, and

²⁴⁶ Primakov, "The Role of the Individual," 68.

²⁴⁷ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 161.

²⁴⁸ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 96.

²⁴⁹ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 101.

²⁵⁰ For example: Josef Joffe, "The Default Power: The False Prophecy of America's Decline," *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 5 (2009).

that a unipolar system would be even less stable and more prone to conflict than a bipolar system as existed during the Cold War²⁵¹.

Primakov thought that a conflict would be sparked by countries that attempt to oppose the US dominated system by attempting to level the playing field and make the world a more equal place with multiple power centers²⁵². Whether Russia should be counted among one of these potential conflict countries is not completely clear, but hints of this can be found between the lines of Primakov's texts. Yevgeny Primakov wanted to see the United States give up its status for the common good, but if it did not, Russia would do what is necessary to claim a seat at the table anyway. This is clearly part of his strategy; to argue that Russia is only for stability, the US for instability. And, in order to fix this, Russia is in practice willing to engage in a conflict in the name of rebalancing. A conflict for which the US would be the only party to blame according to his narrative.²⁵³ This is typical Primakov. If hard decisions or actions must be undertaken by Russia, an argument must be constructed according to which Russia is still supporting peace and the common good. It is possible that he has learned some tricks from working for Pravda, including how to control the narrative to benefit yourself while holding on to certain facts and constants, but rejecting others.

6.1.5. Practical Examples of Controlling Historical Developments

Without a doubt Primakov had a realistic view of the world, but he tends to explain whatever he can from a point of superiority. Shortly after he became the Minister of Foreign Affairs he said,

despite the current difficulties, Russia has been and remains a great power, and its policy toward the outside world should correspond to that status... In advocating partnership relations with our former cold war adversaries, we proceed from the need for an equitable – and I want to put special emphasis here on this- equitable and mutually advantageous partnership that takes each other's interests into account.²⁵⁴

He also wanted to highlight the fact that he thought Russia did not lose the Cold War, but that everyone came out of it as winners, having saved themselves from the policy of confrontation^{255, 256}.

²⁵¹ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 100-101.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 100-101.

²⁵³ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 317.

²⁵⁴ Primakov, "Primakov Starts With The CIS," 11.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁵⁶ Primakov, "The World on the Eve," 4.

It is also worth mentioning again Primakov's claim that when the bipolar world came to an end (in other words, the Soviet Union fell), both the former USSR and the United States lost their position as a superpower²⁵⁷. Similarly, he makes the case that when the Soviet Union lost their grip of their satellites, the United States also lost some control of their protectorates who in turn no longer depended on the United States' nuclear umbrella²⁵⁸. Russia had reformed their economy and became democratic which benefited the whole world²⁵⁹. They had renewed themselves, ridding themselves of their past sins, while the United States was still stuck in backwards Cold War era thinking. Interestingly, this type of reasoning was already used by Primakov in a Pravda article in 1987²⁶⁰. This way of presenting these issues is beneficial for Russia, because they help put in context Russia's economic problems and present them as the morally superior party. When constructing this narrative, Primakov was able to mix and match: do away with the obvious issues that would logically stand in the way of demanding a more significant portion of the pie while playing the victim card which earns pity points.

In the preface to his book *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, Primakov described the 9/11 terrorist attacks and how horrific they were. He then continued to discuss the developmental gap between the wealthy West and the rest of the world due to globalization which can be linked to the rise of terrorism. (This is perhaps a subtle way of saying that this particular issue is not caused by Russia, but that Russia will certainly help to fix the problem). Once this point is made, he argued that countries should not *solely* focus on their own and their allies' security nor on establishing regional and global stability. Instead, the main focus should be put on fighting terrorism.²⁶¹ And in order to do so, Primakov made the case that

it is imperative that the world's constructive forces unite. The struggle against terrorism will be ineffective without Russia's participation. A strong Russia, that is. A weak country torn apart by internal conflicts and in possession of a huge nuclear arsenal is unstable and unpredictable. Such a Russia threatens the interests not only of its own people but of the rest of the world. A strong Russia should not be seen as a threat to world stability. The idea that Russia represents a threat can result only from inertia, from survival of the Cold War mentality, and from underestimation of the changes that have taken place in Russia and are taking place now. Russia must be seen as it actually is if the international community is to seize every opportunity to resolve the issues common to all of us in our turbulent world.²⁶²

²⁵⁷ Primakov, "What Makes the Middle East," 19.

²⁵⁸ Primakov, "The World on the Eve," 2.

²⁵⁹ Primakov, "Russia: Reforms," 1.

²⁶⁰ Primakov, "A New Philosophy," 1-4.

²⁶¹ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, vii-viii.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, viii.

It is no accident that this particular book was published in the United States. Primakov explained in the preface to the book that his intention was to expound Russian political and social life which he had experienced first-hand.²⁶³

His book's preface, which has been quoted in part above, illustrates something very telling about Primakov which repeats itself throughout his texts, but is here in a very compact and holistic manner. He liked to discuss important and concerning matters with the occasional blaming finger pointed towards the United States, albeit here less so, than in other contexts. The main point is always that there are many issues that must be dealt with, but that cannot be solved without the help of Russia. Russia is both a new, and at the same time still an important, player that has been ignored for a long time. But, now for the sake of the common good, peace and stability, Russia "must be seen as it actually is."²⁶⁴ It is interesting that, to repeat parts of the above quoted text, he also mentions Russia having to be "strong" while hinting that "a weak country torn apart by internal conflicts and in possession of a huge nuclear arsenal is unstable and unpredictable".²⁶⁵ This, as already touched upon, seems to be one of Primakov's strategies for moving and shaping history in the desired direction and how he brought his narrative to its conclusion. Step one: rise concerns for the whole world's well-being and make the case that Russia must be allowed to rise to its past glory to make things better again. Then, step two, issue a veiled threat: or else everyone will suffer as a result.

In summary, Yevgeny Primakov believed in the significance and ability of individuals and countries to influence historical developments. As a Statist, he believed in a big government that should guide and control developments domestically, which translated into similar views on the international level. Even though he often spoke about historical continuity, he still did not think the world could be left to take shape on its own. The UN was an entity that in his mind should be given a bigger role in international relations. He also wanted to move the world order away from American dominance towards multipolarity where Russia would be seen as a major player. Primakov believed in Russia's right to occupy such a position and constructed narratives to support this claim.

²⁶³ Ibid., viii.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., viii.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., viii.

5. What is the role of "chance" in human affairs and in historical development?

When reading Yevgeny Primakov's texts, one gets a sense that he did not believe chance to dictate historical development in any major way. He believed in shaping events based on one's own interest and in historical trends. For example, as Russia develops its institutions and democracy it will happen in a Russian way, taking their own interests into account²⁶⁶. For Primakov, surprises seemed to be anomalies but when they happened they too would have organically grown from previous developments and would soon be woven into the pre-existing fabric of history. For example, Primakov said in an interview in 2006 that

Europe is becoming increasingly integrated. Twenty years ago, none of us anticipated the euro. We thought that the talk of an integrated European currency was just that—talk. Now it has become a reality. I think that integration will continue, but it will not change the national character of the European states. After all, the French will not start referring to themselves as German-French, nor will the Germans start calling themselves Franco-Germans.²⁶⁷

Primakov thought that, usually, events do not simply happen; they are made to happen. Controlling political events is crucial and as he said, "the role of the individual in history is great."²⁶⁸ Given this, carefully conducting diplomacy is essential and a skilled professional can do a lot to move things in the desired direction. In his accounts of past diplomatic developments, he always mapped out reasons for why things went a certain way and what it would have taken for them to have turned out differently. For example, Primakov believed that Russia deserved the status of a great power, but to maintain that required careful planning and maneuvering. If Russia was to let go of their position, someone else would take over. This was to be avoided by preventive action. One is to either take a backseat and let events take shape on their own, or alternatively participate in shaping one's surroundings towards favorable outcomes. His detailed accounts show his long-term thinking and commitment to the rigorous work required to get things done the right way.²⁶⁹ Sometimes failures are inevitable, but they can always be explained by differing interest or other similar reasoning and for Primakov chance was rarely one of them.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ Primakov, "Russia Is Restoring," 67.

²⁶⁷ Primakov, "The Role of the Individual," 78.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 77.

²⁶⁹ Primakov, "Russia in World Politics," 7-8, 10.

²⁷⁰ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 31-33.

6.2. Instrumental Questions

1. What is the best approach for selecting goals or objectives for political action?

Primakov was careful to not provoke an unnecessary conflict by ignoring common international interests. He implied that Russian interests must come first, and political goals must start with a careful consideration of one's own interest. "We should try to find solutions that will neither sacrifice Russia's vital national interests nor lead to confrontation."²⁷¹ Primakov preferred to frame Russia's pursuit of interests in a way that they could be argued to fall in line with the interests of others, making them seem like "the right thing to do." In short, all political goals must be viewed as stepping stones for enhancing Russian interests and restoration.

This way Russia could be portrayed as a country that pursues the common good, such as stability and peace among nations while formulating a narrative differentiating Russia from the United States as the morally superior country. Primakov used this type of rhetoric when describing the late years of the Soviet Union. He compared the intentions of the former Soviet Union as wanting to cool down the arms race to some elements in the West who just focused on breaking down the USSR by accelerating the race and causing instability²⁷². This way of framing issues gives Russia much more leeway to go for their own interests. The policy of supporting a multipolar world system is a good example of this.

Some have argued that Russia should first concentrate on domestic reforms and development and only then engage in an active foreign policy, claiming a status as a major player in international politics. For Primakov, this approach leads nowhere. He preferred a different one, where foreign policy was understood in a remarkably wide context.

Without an active foreign policy it would be difficult or impossible for Russia to carry out radical reforms domestically, preserve its territorial integrity and security, and become integrated with the world economy as a full and equal participant.²⁷³

Elsewhere, Primakov argued for a multidirectional policy, which reached out to a variety of countries instead of just a few that were considered the most important ones. He also implied, that Russia must

²⁷¹ Ibid., 126-127.

²⁷² Ibid., 25.

²⁷³ Ibid., 127.

pick their friends based on what benefits Russia's interests, and not subject themselves to unequal partnerships at any cost, just because the other party happens to be a major player.²⁷⁴

When Primakov talked about reclaiming Russia's status as a major player in the international arena, it implied it was a necessity to consider which objectives would be best to help increase Russia's prestige and influence. It could be said that Primakov took a practical approach regarding his best practices for selecting goals and objectives for political action. Much of it had to do with selecting and creating the best possible narrative for a given situation, a subject that keeps coming up frequently when formulating his operational code. In 1998 Primakov declared that "there are no constant enemies but there are constant national interests."²⁷⁵ He advocated for a flexible approach for reaching Russian interests leaving no room for ideology, which according to him, often got in the way of rational pragmatism in the Soviet Union²⁷⁶. This could be interpreted as implying that for Primakov, even his cherished concept of multipolarity might not have been an end in itself, but rather a well-calculated means for getting to an even more important end: Russia becoming a legitimate great power again. In short, Primakov selected goals based on Russia's interests. They were often realistic, but sometimes required some narrative creation in order to sell them to a wider international audience.

²⁷⁴ Primakov, "Russia in World Politics," 10-11.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

2. How are the goals of action pursued most effectively?

Perhaps the most important lesson to learn from Yevgeny Primakov regarding the methods for pursuing his political goals is what could be called the “fake it until you make it” principle. Meaning, behave in such a way as if Russia had already reached the position of a major player in world politics. Put another way, Primakov seemed to want Russia to appear stronger than it is, in order to reach a better negotiating position. It could also be argued that constructing a preferable narrative about one’s own position versus others’ is part of pursuing political goals for Primakov, especially when it pertains to attaining the legitimacy of being a major power. Lastly, Primakov attempted to reinvent the rules and conditions of the international arena to make it fairer for Russia.

How then can legitimacy and the status of a major power be achieved most effectively? The best examples come from Primakov’s own texts. One way is to hold on to high morals, appearing more virtuous than one’s opponents. Already in 1987 Primakov made the claim, that since its birth, the USSR had been “struggling for peace among peoples,” and that “peace remains the main goal of the USSR’s foreign policy.”²⁷⁷ In the same Pravda article Primakov discussed new, more peaceful proposals for Soviet foreign policy such as not viewing regional tensions through the United States-USSR rivalry and focusing on avoiding a nuclear Armageddon. According to Primakov, the Soviet Union was willing to pursue a new line of policy but made it clear that he did not believe the United States was ready to follow suite, quite the contrary. He highlighted the difference between the two rivals to make the argument that the USSR was for peace and the United States was not.

Of course, the situation is still a long way from one in which these new approaches and the new political thinking are adopted by the American leadership. More than that, the US is putting up a fierce resistance to the Soviet course. Militarism doesn’t surrender so easily, and it isn’t going to surrender its positions.²⁷⁸

In fact, he thought that public opinion in the West was becoming more and more favorable towards the Soviet Union. “It is becoming more and more difficult for the anti-Sovietees in the West to maintain their artificially created image of the USSR as a bellicose undemocratic state that threatens the world and thinks about nothing but expansion.”²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷ Primakov, “A New Philosophy,” 1.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 4.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 4.

Primakov used almost identical language about the situation in the Middle East in 1984 in his article *USA: Policy of Destabilization in the Middle East*. He compared American and Soviet policies in the area: the United States was militaristic, exploiting the area and manipulated the Arab countries into thinking that the Soviet Union is a threat to them, when in reality it was United States-backed Israel. The Soviet Union was presented as a benign friend of the Middle East with only realistic and common-sense solutions to the hot situation.²⁸⁰ In a familiar tone Primakov wrote,

two lines have clashed in the Middle East: one is the consistent line of the Soviet Union directed at a general settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the interest of all the peoples populating the region. The other is the US line directed at ensuring an opportunity for Israel to retain the Arab territories seized in 1967 with a simultaneous strengthening of American position in the Arab world.

He concluded the article with a warning. The destructive United States' policy was potentially going to not only hurt the region but could also "jeopardize universal peace."²⁸¹ These examples of course were written back in the Soviet period, but Primakov's more recent statements did not significantly differ from the arguments presented here although his arguments later were a bit more polished and diplomatic.

Another narrative that Primakov liked to repeat made Russia stand apart from the more aggressive and stuck-in-the-Cold-War-era West, was to argue that Russia is no longer a threat (or like in the previous article mentioned, that the Soviet Union could not possibly be a threat to the region).²⁸² This allowed him to argue that those who suggest there was any reason to still regard Russia as such were backwards and militaristic. As early as 1993 Primakov criticized NATO for not having transformed its role in the new "post confrontational period."²⁸³

Another reality was the fixed nature of stereotypes of bloc thinking, which is especially characteristic of a number of representatives of the military leadership in the Western countries and in the alliance as a whole. One of these stereotypes is associated with the fact that the USSR, the nucleus of which was Russia, was regarded for many years as the main source of military danger to the very existence of Western civilization.²⁸⁴

He added that trying to break this "psychological mindset" is hard due to, for example, resistance from the military-industrial complex and certain leaders. Also, during the arms race it was vital to

²⁸⁰ Yevgeny Primakov, "USA: Policy of Destabilization in the Middle East," *International Affairs* 30, no. 3 (1984): 41, 42, 44.

²⁸¹ Primakov, "USA: Policy of Destabilization," 47.

²⁸² Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, viii.

²⁸³ Poleshchuk, "Expansion of NATO," 12.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

maintain a certain image of the enemy for the sake of the public. According to him, these were facts that may explain why Russia is still viewed through the dated Cold War prism²⁸⁵. This narrative creation is interesting, because it automatically makes the scholar wonder whether Primakov was completely serious about his suggestions, or if it is all just a calculated game. One could assume that back in 1993 it would have been too early to expect Western countries to think Russia would be completely different from the Soviet Union.

How then does Primakov attempt to make Russia look stronger and more relevant than it actually was? As has already been suggested, Primakov believed diplomacy, collective action, and appealing to shared and universal interests to be good ways to effectively pursue one's goals in the new post-Cold War era. One way to get there is to paint Russia as a new alternative; a new mature big brother in world politics. Primakov of course did not use such language, but his texts could be interpreted to at least hint towards such an alternative. In his writings and statements, Russia was often presented as the more virtuous of the old Cold War rivals. And, that the United States has been unjustly angling for a dominating position in world politics. Primakov made sure to criticize their actions drawing direct comparisons to them and Russia of which we have already seen some examples. A look at some more recent articulations is revealing.

Primakov criticized the United States for invading Iraq when it was a secular state and for turning it into a divided, Islamic country with a significant Al-Qaeda presence. They did so unilaterally, in defiance of common sense and with an arrogant assumption that they could just export democracy^{286,287}. Furthermore, the United States exercised aggressive policies in the Soviet ex-satellite countries antagonizing Russia and jealously resisted Russia's emergence as a main stabilizing force in the world²⁸⁸. The idea behind these comparisons is clear: the United States is an immature, aggressive bully that only cares about itself, whereas Russia is the opposite.

Through this lens, whereas the United States is angling for unilateralism and dominance, Russia is striving for multipolarity and collective action by assuming "the role of a counterbalance to the negative trends" in current world politics^{289,290}. Russia is a peaceful and a better alternative whose

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 12.

²⁸⁶ Primakov, "What Makes the Middle East," 21.

²⁸⁷ Primakov, "Russia Is Restoring," 68.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 69.

²⁸⁹ Primakov, "Russia Seeks New Place," 14.

²⁹⁰ Primakov, "Russia: Reforms," 5.

national interests of security, stability and peace happen to be the same as the interests of the whole world²⁹¹. Furthermore, Russia's democratic transformation is important for the rest of the world too, but it cannot be achieved without an active foreign policy²⁹². Primakov made it clear that issues of security, stability and peace cannot be effectively solved without Russia²⁹³. It might be argued that by doing this Primakov was trying to create a narrative according to which the Russian position was described as true and legitimate.

According to Primakov, issues such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and regional conflicts still persisted after the end of the Cold War²⁹⁴. These issues called for a multilateral response and when it comes to terrorism, for example, Primakov was able to make a strong claim.

The struggle against terrorism will be ineffective without Russia's participation. A strong Russia, that is. A weak country torn apart by internal conflicts and in possession of a huge nuclear arsenal is unstable and unpredictable. Such a Russia threatens the interests not only of its own people but of the rest of the world. A strong Russia should not be seen as a threat to world stability. The idea that Russia represents a threat can result only from inertia, from survival of the Cold War mentality, and from underestimation of the changes that have taken place in Russia and are taking place now. Russia must be seen as it actually is if the international community is to seize every opportunity to resolve the issues common to all of us in our turbulent world.²⁹⁵

Similarly, Primakov tried to recreate the existing rules of international behavior to better fit Russian purposes when he criticized NATO. In an article *The World On the Eve of the 21st Century* Primakov called for a new collective security structure for Europe, but issued a warning: "again, such architecture will collapse if in Europe new dividing lines appear or if in the basis of the model of security not such a universal organization as the OSCE, but say, NATO, is included, even if it has been linked with Russia though 'special relations.'"²⁹⁶ In the same article Primakov laid out "conditions for the transition to a new world order." Most of these conditions essentially are designed to make the world more accessible and fairer for Russia²⁹⁷.

He also came up with somewhat artificial rules that allowed Russia enough wiggle room to protect their interests in ways they saw fit. For example, in the article quoted above, he engaged in a lengthy

²⁹¹ Ibid., 1.

²⁹² Ibid., 1, 3.

²⁹³ Yevgeny Primakov, "Our Policy Can't Be the Policy of a Second-Rate State," interview by Tomas Kolesnichenko, *The Current Digest of the Russian Press* 48, no. 51 (1997): 5.

²⁹⁴ Primakov, "The World on the Eve," 2.

²⁹⁵ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, viii.

²⁹⁶ Primakov, "The World on the Eve," 11.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 3-5.

discussion of collective security and the UN being the only organization that is allowed to use force and levy sanctions²⁹⁸. But he then also says “collective security, of course, to no degree denies the sovereign right of any state in the system to use independent efforts to protect its own security.”²⁹⁹ This interesting double standard will be discussed in more detail later in the analysis section. In the context of achieving goals, Primakov shows a willingness to make exceptions.

Primakov did not believe in meritocracy when it came to international status, but that Russia by virtue of its history belonged to the “aristocracy” of great powers entitling them to demand and receive respect from others. In summary, Primakov believed the best way to achieve goals was a combination of pretending to be what one desires to be, creating morally superior narratives and, when necessary, making exceptions to rules.

3. How are the risks of political action calculated, controlled, and accepted?

Yevgeny Primakov was more willing to take political risks than it may first appear when reading his texts or speeches. Themes repeatedly found in his texts are the importance of not letting events spiral out of control and trying not to cause a conflict even when protecting one’s interests³⁰⁰. However, these rules are subject to the belief that Russian interests cannot be tread on and advancing them does pose a risk of confrontation. What exactly that means and how far Primakov would personally have gone protecting these interests is not completely clear from his very diplomatic language.³⁰¹ One might wonder though, whether his calls for respect for others’ interest and flexibility were directed more at the outside world and their actions towards Russia than toward Russian behavior itself. If this reasoning is accepted then it could be speculated that Primakov would have been quite willing to practice brinkmanship in pursuit of Russian interests, especially if he felt that others had infringed on them.

In 1996 Primakov argued,

today Russia has perhaps a greater interest than ever before in protecting its national interests. But the dialectics of politics consist in that the protection of these interests must not lead to a

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 13.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 11.

³⁰⁰ Vladimir Katin, “Primakov on Russia and NATO,” *The Current Digest of the Russian Press* 48, no. 9 (1996): 23.

³⁰¹ For example: Yevgeny Primakov, “A New But Long Familiar Job,” interview by Yegor Yakovlev, *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press* 48, no. 2 (1996): 13.

slide toward confrontation. Russia will do everything in its power to prevent such a slide and to see to it that its interests are protected in a civilized manner.³⁰²

Then he adds, “However, NATO’s plans for expansion are creating a situation that is dramatically worse for us in every respect – politically, psychologically, militarily and geopolitically.” He ends in a plea, “since every country has its own national interests, allow Russia to have such interests, too, and allow it to protect those interests if it believes they are threatened by the prospect of NATO expansion.”³⁰³ What kind of risks Primakov was willing to take in order to protect these interests remains a mystery.

Conflict prevention seemed to be a theme that Primakov liked to return to frequently. When Primakov became the Minister of Foreign Affairs, he was asked about objective difficulties waiting for him. He answered, “Preventing the struggle for Russia’s interests from growing into a confrontation with those we won’t allow to violate those interests.” He continued to explain, that a great power is expected to be involved in all areas of world politics, but that not everyone likes the idea. “It will not be easy to get universal Russian involvement accepted without conflict.”³⁰⁴ It is hard to unpack these statements to tell what exactly they entail. Perhaps a warning that Russia is willing to take risks if certain conditions are met. Perhaps, based on the quote in the next paragraph, it could be argued that Primakov places much responsibility in the hands of other states, especially the United States. He also could be viewed as setting ultimatums which if broken would free Russia from all restraint.

In his book *The World Challenged* Primakov recalls the end of the Cold War when Russia was at its weakest. The United States took advantage of the situation and instead of formulating common policies, they only gave Russia a supporting role in the back seat. It was as if Russia had to apply for a membership at a club headed by the United States. Describing the situation Primakov wrote the following.

It is not appropriate for Russia to be relegated to playing a supporting role in world events. This leads, then, to a question: if Russia is unwilling to play a subordinate role to the United States, will this result in continuing tension between Russia and the United States? I think not—but only if Washington fully grasps how futile and counterproductive it is to try to turn Russia into a vassal subservient to U.S. policy and will. I dare say not one Russian leader would last long in power if he took this approach... I believe that all this is dependent, to a considerable extent on U.S. policies.³⁰⁵

³⁰² Katin, “Primakov on Russia,” 23.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 23.

³⁰⁴ Primakov, “A New But Long Familiar Job,” 13.

³⁰⁵ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 132-133.

Taken at face value, the above statement implies Primakov would have taken significant risks in order to achieve his goal of a Russia in its rightful place.

Diplomatically too Primakov was willing to take risks when he felt Russia's pride demanded it. Once Primakov was on a plane heading to the United States to discuss economic issues. The meeting was planned well in advance and was to include a session with the American President. However, while over the Atlantic, Al Gore and Primakov had a phone conversation during which Primakov learned of airstrikes on Yugoslavia which Russia did not approve of. Primakov then made a decision to turn the plane around over the ocean to make it seem like Russia would not in any way support this decision.³⁰⁶ This u-turn was later dubbed "the Primakov loop".³⁰⁷

Based on this, one must conclude that contrary to what Primakov said about his distaste for conflict and resorting to it only after exhausting all political means possible, he was actually at least in some cases willing to support its use if Russia's status or interests were threatened. He seemed willing to take risks and push other's limits if one could give the impression that Russia is acting defensively and fighting a clear injustice.

4. What is the best "timing" of action to advance one's interests?

Primakov clearly argued that the best timing for his active foreign policy, and by implication for advancing Russia's vital interests, was here and now.³⁰⁸ However, taking advantage of favorable circumstances was useful and should be pursued within the context of active advancement of interests. There is some evidence in Primakov's statements and texts that suggest he believed a good time to advance one's interests was when the United States had first made a move that was potentially received negatively around the world. Or, when any other situation arose where Russia could look better compared to the United States. This gave Russia a good chance to advance their interests with greater ease. An added benefit was that merely being able to compare oneself to the alleged "hegemon" positively fulfilled an interest in itself. For example, when the United States was acting unilaterally in the Middle East, Primakov preferred to highlight Russia's desire to move towards collective action and multipolarity³⁰⁹.

³⁰⁶ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 264-269.

³⁰⁷ Lilia Shevtsova, *Putin's Russia*, 22.

³⁰⁸ Primakov, "Russia: Reforms," 3.

³⁰⁹ For Example: Primakov, "Russia Is Restoring," 67-69.

Sometimes it might be in Russia's interest to try to block American plans when Russia cannot quite keep up by framing American interests as sources of instability and division. Primakov discussed American plans to develop a space-based antimissile defense system and linked it to another important matter: fighting terrorism. He argued that it not only did not help counter-terrorism efforts but made them more difficult by dividing nations and "setting their interests at odds." He then described a scenario in which, if the United States would succeed in building such a system, more aggressive elements in the country would likely be encouraged to act even more unilaterally and cause an arms race that would render everyone more insecure.³¹⁰

In conclusion, Primakov did not think Russia had time to grow stronger before assuming the role of a major power and to act on interests that came with that status. He often compared Russia to the United States. From this interplay, he timed justification for advancing Russia's interests with when current events were most favorable. These fortuitous situations could arise from the American side or alternatively be put into motion first by Russia.

5. What is the utility and role of different means for advancing one's interests?

Primakov preferred to attempt to establish the moral high ground using conciliatory language and multilateralism while at the same time engaging in veiled, ambiguous threats to ensure others understood he was serious. Primakov of course did not overtly advocate for such a dualistic way of advancing one's interests, but he himself was often found using it. It is a good tactic since so much focus was put on peaceful and cooperative aspects of actions, making possible threats sound less aggressive. When this type of rhetoric is directed at the United States it gives the impression that should Primakov's Russia act forcefully, they would do it reluctantly and only because they had no other options. Additionally, Primakov's rhetoric made it impossible to predict exactly when he would like Russia to use force and how that would look like in practice, but perhaps that had utility on its own.

Primakov also engaged in narrative creation. He not only painted a positive picture of Russia as a peace-loving country, but also explained one's own position in such a way that certain interests simply naturally flowed from it. This allowed Primakov to criticize American unilateralism, while

³¹⁰ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 105-106.

elsewhere making the argument that Russia would of course be the main player in the CIS because of historical patterns³¹¹. Similarly, Primakov painted a picture of Russia as a responsible big brother who knew what the best course of action was from everybody's point of view. For example, he talked about developing the CIS for their own good.³¹² And additionally, how a multilateral world would in fact be in the best interest of the United States (even though Primakov thought they were actively trying to stop its development)³¹³.

Primakov's narratives also touched upon certain common, negative associations placed on Russia by other countries. They were explained away with examples of Russia's interest in peace, while pushing any negative alternative narratives under the carpet as mere misunderstandings. For example, he said that

Russia's desire to play an active role in the global community should not be misinterpreted. Russia's desire to keep its status as a great world power has absolutely nothing to do with aspirations for empire building, a motive that is occasionally attributed to us. Rather, this desire stems from our knowledge that Russian foreign policy can do much to help stabilize conflict situations in regions around the world. Russia is certainly as interested in this as any other nation of the world, perhaps more so.³¹⁴

This comparison can be viewed as a useful means of making Russia look better; helping them advance their interests. As mentioned previously, Primakov often compared Russia to the United States, especially to make the case that Russia was superior in many ways. This is done by picking unfavorable aspects about the other side and presenting them vis-à-vis something positive in relation to Russia³¹⁵.

Perhaps the most important way to advance one's interests was Primakov's "fake it till you make it" approach. Once the Soviet Union fell and the Russian Federation came to replace it, Primakov did not accept defeat. He wanted Russia to continue acting as a major player though, given the circumstances, it was not a status they truly deserved or could defend. He did not accept Russia being sidelined in international politics even when the country was going through a fundamental reorganization and major economic, social and political struggles. This is because he held the view that Russia is a major player by nature, no matter the circumstances. Lastly, he did not think that

³¹¹ Primakov, "The Role of the Individual," 76.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 77.

³¹³ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 100-101.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

³¹⁵ For example: Primakov, "Russia Is Restoring," 69.

Russia should wait for their economy to recover in order to engage in an active foreign policy³¹⁶. This attitude required a well thought out approach to international relations that has been described in detail above.

³¹⁶ Primakov, "Russia: Reforms," 3.

7. ANALYSIS

7.1. A Westernizing Leader or a Hard-Liner?

Yevgeny Primakov has been a controversial figure among Western analysts for the past twenty years. Interpretations of his policies and intentions have varied from him being a westernizing leader to a hard-liner who was no stranger to conflict. For example, Jeffrey Surovell complained in 2005 that Primakov had been misinterpreted as a leftist hard-liner who was also anti-West. According to his interpretation, Primakov had more right-wing tendencies because he supported many of President Putin's policies that have widely been viewed as authoritarian or even fascist. However, Surovell also argues that Primakov only came across as a hard-liner in his texts and speeches when in practice he did not even oppose NATO expansion. Nor was he anti-West in other ways.³¹⁷ Surovell brings up an often-heard explanation that Russian leaders have submitted to many Western policies such as NATO expansion, because Russia has been too weak to put up a fight. Using dependency theory, Surovell shows that Russia has in fact been dependent on the West and argues that is because Russia's westernizing leaders, such as Yevgeny Primakov, brought Russia into that situation to begin with. Therefore, actual resistance and anti-Westernism could not take place.³¹⁸

In 1997, Ariel Cohen argued for a very different view of Primakov. He depicted a man whose "Primakov Doctrine" was an attempt to create a partnership between Russia, China and Iran to counterbalance and challenge American power, and who was threatening to "turn Russia's relations with the United States into a zero-sum game"³¹⁹ and who threatened world peace. Cohen saw this policy as dating back to the Cold War and Primakov himself as a "quintessential Soviet establishment insider" who was trained by the KGB as an Oriental scholar. He is also depicted as a supporter of Saddam Hussein, Hafez al-Assad, Muammar Qaddafi and Yasser Arafat. Cohen did not then believe Russia to be strong enough to truly challenge the United States but saw Primakov's attempts as dangerous and hindering Russia's integration with the West.³²⁰ He sums up Primakov's "neo-Soviet foreign policy" as "one of nurturing geopolitical tensions, imperial grudges, and as-yet-unfulfilled great power ambitions."³²¹

³¹⁷ Surovell, "Yevgenii Primakov," 241-243.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 228, 242-243.

³¹⁹ Cohen, *The "Primakov Doctrine"*, 1-2.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 2, 6.

³²¹ Cohen, *The "Primakov Doctrine"*, 6.

The difference in interpretations between these two men's analysis on Yevgeny Primakov is striking. Based on the research conducted above for Primakov's operational code, neither one of these views is correct. Additionally, the views expressed in these two articles are overly simplistic. Primakov was a complex figure who held important government positions during difficult times in Russian history. His views cannot be analyzed based solely on his statements nor solely on his actions. We must also be careful to not study Russian leaders, or others for that matter, from a black and white perspective or as "good" or "bad" from a Western point of view.

Jeffrey Surovell observed Primakov's pragmatism and positioning in an impossible situation after the collapse of the Soviet Union when he was forced to "allow" NATO expansion and submit to other Western policies. He argued that Primakov was a westernizing leader who himself guided Russia into this very situation. This is a mistake. The fact that Primakov supported the new Russian Federation, democratization and other reforms may make him appear pro-West at first glance, but it did not make him a westernizer like Andrei Kozyrev. He was a reformer who no doubt saw an opportunity to change much of the system and who did not desire to return to the Soviet times. Yet, we must analyze his intentions within his own, Russian context and avoid interpreting them from our own, Western point of view. For example, when discussing democracy, which he strongly supported in his texts, he formulated it like this, "when moving toward the universal human values and democracy Russia is following its own road determined by its traditions, the past, its multinational nature, and geography."³²² Here and in many other contexts, Primakov wanted to do things the Russian way, not follow in the footsteps of any particular country or ideology. It can be argued that Primakov and other Russian leaders could not have played their cards much differently in the late 1990s if the scholar is to take a pragmatic stance on their policies. The fact that they "allowed" certain Western policies to pass without a confrontation does not mean that they in any way were comfortable with the situation. Understanding how Primakov, as a Statist, felt during these times is key to understanding later Russian actions and policies when the country found itself in an improved situation politically and economically.

Ariel Cohen was also wrong in his analysis on Primakov by seeing all of his views and policies aimed threateningly toward the United States. Cohen also failed to see the end of the Cold War from Russia's point of view. He instead viewed everything as a continuation of Soviet policies in a different wrapping. Primakov's attempts to undermine American influence and his support for a multipolar world should not be viewed as directed against the United States the same way Soviet policies often

³²² Primakov, "Russia Is Restoring," 67.

were. From this point of view Russia did have a legitimate need to diversify their relations with the rest of the world’s power centers to counterbalance the hegemonic system that had emerged after the Cold War which undoubtedly put Russia in an extremely unfavorable situation. Primakov does not appear to have had an innate need to deliberately put Russia at odds with the United States unless the United States had first pushed for it. Understanding Primakov’s motivation behind his idea for multipolarity is very important and more complex than it might appear at first glance. He wanted to do what was best for Russia as a major power and execute this policy in a Russian way without strong ideological pulls from any side.

The purpose of this thesis was to partly investigate, what this “Russian way” meant for Primakov and how he viewed the world. Primakov operated from a Statist point of view, a foreign policy school of thought still often followed by President Putin. Kuchins and Zevelev call Statists “Great Power Balancers” and point at Primakov as the founder of this school of thought which falls between the extreme schools of “Pro-Western liberals” and “Nationalists”³²³. In Tsygankov’s classifications, these groups are Westernizers, Statists and Civilizationists. Perhaps in the West there is a tendency to either group Russian politicians in one or the other of the more extreme groups. However, most of the recent policies in the country have been in line with the middle group, the Statists. Yevgeny Primakov should not be viewed as a threatening hard-liner, nor as a Westernizer. He is something in between.

7.2. Key Elements in Primakov’s Operational Code

7.2.1. Operational Code Summary Table

Key Elements from the Philosophical Questions	
1. What is the "essential" nature of political life? Is the political universe one of harmony or conflict? What is the fundamental character of one's political opponents?	For Primakov, opponents are those who selfishly and arrogantly try to force their own will on his preferred system of governance and world order against the interests of all. This included Russian oligarchs and the United States when acting unilaterally. The world according to Primakov had the potential to become more harmonious if a multipolar system was to develop. However, due to the United States’ opposition to this better world order and old persisting threats that were hard to control in a unipolar world, such as

³²³ Kuchins and Zevelev, “Russian Foreign Policy: Continuity in Change,” 149-150.

	terrorism, regional conflicts and weapons of mass destruction, the world is more chaotic than it has to be.
2. What are the prospects for the eventual realization of one's fundamental political values and aspirations? Can one be optimistic, or must one be pessimistic on this score, and in what respects the one and/or the other?	One of Primakov's most fundamental aspirations was the formation of a multipolar world. He thought that it would be possible, but that the United States was the factor that would either block it or help it come about. However, during the first decade of the 20th century the United States showed no interest in creating a multipolar world. Also, Primakov wanted to see Russia restore their great power status to which multipolarity was a means. This was a hope which was also often frustrated by the United States by not treating them as an equal player.
3. Is the political future predictable? In what sense and to what extent?	Primakov holds on to two different sets of beliefs at the same time: the importance of historical continuity and trying to guide developments in the desired direction. Usually the road that leads to the most efficient fulfilment of Russia's goals is the one chosen.
4. How much "control" or "mastery" can one have over historical development? What is one's role in "moving" and "shaping" history in the desired direction?	Individuals and countries can shape historical developments according to Primakov. Domestically the government should occupy a major role and internationally a group of major countries with the United Nations should assume the same job. Russia should be one of these influential states. Primakov personally pushed for a strong government at home and a bigger role for Russia internationally.
5. What is the role of "chance" in human affairs and in historical development?	Primakov did not believe chance had a major role in historical development. Events are either rooted in historical trends or are made to happen.
Key Elements from the Instrumental Questions	
1. What is the best approach for selecting goals or objectives for political action?	It is important to try to navigate between causing a conflict and effectively advancing Russia's interests. Also framing interests in a way that they appear to match shared interests was common for Primakov. One way that helps Russia gain legitimacy for their interests, used by Primakov, is to frame Russia as a more responsible country compared to the United States in pursuit of common goals, peace and stability.

<p>2. How are the goals of action pursued most effectively?</p>	<p>A good way Primakov believes Russia's interests can be effectively pursued is to act as if Russia had already reached the position that it actually is still trying to achieve. It helps to appear more moral and virtuous than the United States, argue that Russia cannot pose a military threat to anyone and try to change the rules of the game to better fit Russia's purposes when possible.</p>
<p>3. How are the risks of political action calculated, controlled, and accepted?</p>	<p>Primakov often expressed his will to do whatever possible to avoid a conflict. But after a thorough examination of his texts, there is reason to believe that he was not unwilling to push the limits of conflict if Russia's interests were threatened. He also stuck to a stance where he washed his hands of all responsibility for things to follow if the United States was first seen as provoking a conflict by intentionally stepping on Russia's toes.</p>
<p>4. What is the best "timing" of action to advance one's interests?</p>	<p>Primakov did not think that Russia had time to wait for economic recovery before engaging in an active foreign policy. The best time to advance interests was now. He also seemed to suggest that good times for advancing interests were for example when Russia could do something that positively differentiated them from the United States.</p>
<p>5. What is the utility and role of different means for advancing one's interests?</p>	<p>Primakov engaged in dualistic rhetoric. On the one hand he trumpeted peaceful coexistence and shared interests and on the other dropped hints of Russia's potential aggressive reactions if their interests were hurt by others. He also created narratives according to which Russia was painted in a positive light vis-à-vis their rivals based on which he could demand certain developments that would make it easier for Russia to reach their goals.</p>

7.2.2. A Patriotic Pragmatist

If Yevgeny Primakov should not be viewed as a westernizing leader nor as a hard-liner, how then should we describe him? This is not an easy task because over the years, he has been labeled many things and most of them paint a rather extreme picture in one direction or the other. For example, he believed in and advocated for some values that can be classified as liberal and that has led to some

treating him as one. Among these liberal values were wanting a strong United Nations and calling for the creation of a multipolar world where issues can be tackled together based on mutual interests and cooperation. This was partly a reaction to American unilateralism around the world. He also strove for a harmonious world and did not want major power relations to slide into a conflict. Another belief was that Russia should act as a responsible major power advancing the interests of all, such as fighting terrorism, calming down regional conflicts and preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction. However, it would be naïve to assume that the above listed policies stem from a benevolent and self-sacrificing point of view. At the same time claiming that these positions are only a smoke screen from a hard-liner would not be true either.

A more accurate way to explain Primakov's world view is to say that he was a patriotic pragmatist, with some opportunism mixed in. He had no strong ideological ties. His actions were motivated by protecting and advancing Russian interests with the lowest possible cost to everyone involved. For example, a stronger United Nations meant less United States and more Russian influence. The case with multipolarity was the same and included elements such as cooperation. This was a very subtle way of demanding more say in world politics without having to resort to aggression. Also, declaring Russia as an entity that is concerned about terrorism, regional conflicts and weapons of mass destruction is a great platform for raising Russia's international profile and allows intervention where it otherwise would be harder to justify. Lastly, Primakov's insistence on always trying to find a route that does not lead to confrontation should not be blindly taken at face value. One can argue that at least sometimes this call was mostly directed toward others as a warning with the subtle implication that if they were to push Russia too far, making them engage in a conflict, Russia would not be responsible for the results.

Yevgeny Primakov had no intention to deliberately hurt others. Means chosen for advancing interests were selected based on a desirable end goal. Primakov believed in democracy and living in harmony with as many people as possible, but if Russian interests were threatened they took precedence over liberal values, whatever they may be. In these cases, Primakov may have engaged in narrative creation or attempted to frame Russian policies in a way that they appear more virtuous and legitimate than they really are. But, this was not about going back to the ways of the Soviet times. In fact, he often expressed his distaste for ideological stupidity that led to irrational decisions.

It could be argued that Primakov's support for many liberal values, including democracy, was based on the belief that they advanced Russia's interests, but he was not an ideological adherent to these values. This is another example of his pragmatic use of available means to meet an end. So, it would

be wrong to argue that he faked support for liberal values, because he genuinely believed that they would help Russia become strong again. And, it would be equally wrong to assert that he was a liberal Westernizer, because he was not an ideological adherent. He was in fact the opposite; using these values mainly as a means of advancing Russian interests. Using an ideological label, such as liberal or neo-Soviet is destined to fail in creating an accurate picture of the man, because he lacked strong ideology. This was one of the pitfalls in previous analysis. Understanding Primakov as a patriotic pragmatist creates a complete picture of the man, combining both his staunch support for making Russia great and his cherry picking of both Western and illiberal methods.

7.2.3. Cognitive Dissonance and Double Standards

When constructing Yevgeny Primakov's operational code, it becomes apparent that he may have suffered from cognitive dissonance, which refers to holding two or more conflicting beliefs at the same time³²⁴. This is similar to double standards and comes up often when studying Primakov's texts. Taking this into consideration is critical to understanding him, because without it he appears confusing, insincere or both.

Yevgeny Primakov wrote that in a conflict situation a political resolution should always be tried first before resorting to the use of force. If force was the only option left, it could be used only after a decision by the United Nation's Security Council.³²⁵ Elsewhere, after having repeated the same strict conditions and praising the importance of the United Nations, he adds that "collective security, of course, to no degree denies the sovereign right of any state in the system to use independent efforts to protect its own security."³²⁶ This is a clear example of a double standard. In another context Primakov discussed Iran's uranium enrichment and how Russia had proposed political and diplomatic measures to resolve the matter, whereas the United States wanted to put more pressure on Iran. He wrote, "The United States insists that the issue should be moved to the UN Security Council to discuss it in the political context. This is wrong."³²⁷ He ends in a warning about dividing the world along religious and civilizational lines. It seems that the United States was merely trying to resolve an issue they had with Iran's actions in a way advocated by Primakov. But, since Russia wanted to be Iran's protector, Primakov opposed the suggestion to discuss it at the Security Council.

³²⁴ Jack Williams Brehm, *Explorations in Cognitive Dissonance* (New York: Wiley, 1962), 3-4.

³²⁵ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 164.

³²⁶ Primakov, "The World on the Eve," 13, 11.

³²⁷ Primakov, "What Makes the Middle East," 24-25.

When it comes to bloc thinking in Europe Primakov thought that it belonged to the past and he also thought that NATO had little reason to exist when nothing threatened Europe anymore³²⁸. Yet, in his memoir Primakov laments American double standards when they thought they have a special right to Latin America, and even Europe, when they do not recognize that Russians had the same right in the ex-Soviet states. “They are unwilling to concede, that Russia’s special interest extends to the former Soviet republics – not to impose its will on them but to ensure that no threat to Russia’s interests and security exists along its borders.”³²⁹ The rejection of bloc thinking but wanting recognition for special interest zones are an inherent contradiction of their own. In addition, Primakov went further in another source by saying that “Russia has an interest in the security and stability of its Baltic neighbors and is ready to guarantee their security.”³³⁰ Here Primakov seems to have extended Russia’s interest zone to the Baltics and in addition brought up guaranteeing their security during times when no such agreements should have been necessary.

Finally, Primakov supported strong measures in Chechnya to stabilize the region³³¹. He expressed his frustration with the rest of the world not understanding the complexity of the situation³³². This falls in line with his Statist tendencies and beliefs in a strong government and order. Yet, in light of his multiple complaints of American actions in the Middle East, one can only wonder if this could be characterized as another example of his cognitive dissonance.

It is not clear, whether Primakov truly has a case of cognitive dissonance, or if he expressed these views understanding their contradictory nature. Whatever the case, for students of his policies and beliefs, it is important to take into consideration that these issues come up in his texts and must be put into a larger context. It should also be understood that it is common for most people, regardless of position, to possess some level of cognitive dissonance. When mapping out a person’s belief system this becomes much more apparent.

Cognitive dissonance has been linked to Russian politicians in other contexts too. For example, Lilia Shevtsova writes in a 2014 article about cognitive dissonance and Russian policies. She pointed out certain aspects of Russia’s attitude towards the situation in Ukraine. Minister of Foreign Affairs Lavrov for example discussed respecting Ukraine’s freedom of choice while at the same time making

³²⁸ Primakov, “Russia: Reforms,” 4-5.

³²⁹ Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 99-100.

³³⁰ Yevgeny Primakov, “A Multipolar World and the United Nations,” *International Affairs (Moscow)* 43, no. 6 (1997): 8.

³³¹ Primakov, *A World Challenged*, 122-123.

³³² Primakov, *Russian Crossroads: Toward the New Millennium*, 241.

the case that Ukraine had no right to want to join Europe. Shevtsova concluded her article by saying that while normally people try to reconcile their differing ideas, Russian politicians do not seem to bother.³³³ This is an interesting observation. Cognitive dissonance is natural to people and perhaps more so for leaders in high politics. Whether it is more prominent in Russia compared to other countries should be further researched, but in either case when studying Primakov, it is necessary to be aware of its existence.

7.2.4. Making Russia Great

One of the key elements of Yevgeny Primakov's operational code is his mission to help Russia regain their position as a respected great power with a seat at the global table. He supported many innovative strategies for Russia to follow to reach this goal which, with good reason, can be considered the most important national interest for Primakov. Among these strategies are the idea of a multipolar world, changing the rules of the game to benefit Russia and creating narratives to make Russia appear as a benevolent great power. These strategies are easily misunderstood and the motivations behind them are easily misjudged. This is partly due to cognitive dissonance in Primakov's reasoning, and partly due to the strategy being carefully crafted so that certain elements of it are meant to be somewhat deceptive.

These findings correspond with Anne Clunan's conclusions. She suggested in her book *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests* that Primakov supported a social creativity strategy which ignored the material power asymmetry between the United States and Russia. Instead, he reinvented the basis for evaluating great powers by which the United States was acting in a dangerous and revisionist manner whereas Russia was more responsible and maintained international order.³³⁴ Similarly, Clunan asserted that Primakov's vision for multipolarity, constant referencing of the United Nation's Security Council and Russia's role within it where part of this social creativity strategy aimed at elevating Russia's position³³⁵. These findings strengthen the ones made in this thesis and suggest, that Vladimir Putin has partially adopted Primakov's strategy of what Clunan calls social creativity and multipolarity and changed parts of it to fit his personal preferences³³⁶.

³³³ Lilia Shevtsova, "Cognitive Dissonance in Russian Politics," *Carnegie Moscow Center*, February 18, 2014, <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/54539>.

³³⁴ Anne Clunan, *The Social Construction of Russia's Resurgence: Aspirations, Identity, and Security Interests* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 91-92.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 127-128.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

These narratives and framings are one of the most intriguing aspects of Yevgeny Primakov's views and ideas. They are manifestations of his opportunism and belief in shaping history in desired directions. These ideas are not all original to Primakov. For example, comparing Russia to others, which historically has been Europe, and insisting that Russia must be a great power has been around for centuries³³⁷. However, Primakov was able to put together a functioning concept that worked at home and abroad and has continued to be used after his active years in politics ended. Regaining Russia's past glory was perhaps Primakov's most important goal. To reach it, he utilized many innovative strategies.

7.3. Toward a Primakov Doctrine?

Yevgeny Primakov has been dead only since 2015, but there has already been discussion of a "Primakov Doctrine" which is a new term and not yet widely used. Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov has stated that

I believe that in the not so distant future, historians will formulate the concept of a Primakov Doctrine. His arrival at the Russian Foreign Ministry brought about a U-turn in the nation's foreign policy: it got out of the rut into which its Western partners had tried to push it after the disintegration of the USSR, and embarked on an independent course. This is the main thing, but certainly not the only thing that Yevgeny Primakov accomplished. He is also the author of our foreign policy principle, which had been followed in the Russian Empire and in the USSR, but disappeared in the post-Soviet era (in the first half of the 1990s), namely, the multi-vector principle, in particular, the striving to develop mutually beneficial relations with all countries that are interested in this, and abandoning the approach where the eastern and southern vectors of Russia's foreign policy were undervalued.³³⁸

Time will of course tell if "a Primakov Doctrine" becomes a recognized term used to describe some areas of Russian foreign policy thinking in the future. This might never happen, or perhaps some compilation of these ideas might become known as a doctrine named after Primakov. Whatever the case, it is possible to detect many of his policy suggestions in the way today's Russia conducts foreign policy. This is not a coincidence since we know that Putin and Lavrov are well aware of Primakov's ideas and not afraid to say so. Russian foreign policy has recently become more "assertive" as Lavrov put it, and they have gained more self-confidence. During Primakov's time Russia did not have the means to bring his policies to their conclusion, but Putin has found himself in a more favorable

³³⁷ Iver B. Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations*. Second ed. (London: Routledge, 2017), 185.

³³⁸ "Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's interview with the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company regarding the birthday of Yevgeny Primakov. Moscow, 28 October 2014" The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, accessed November 27, 2015, http://archive.mid.ru/bdomp/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcbb3/b1ef6036bfc71092c3257d8000224d9d!OpenDocument.

position. This does not mean that Putin and Lavrov are taking orders from Primakov's handbook, nor to say that other figures and ideas have not influenced current policy. However, their actions in general seem to be following a logic very similar to what Primakov tried to advocate during his lifetime.

Ariel Cohen used the term Primakov Doctrine to describe a policy of partnership between Russia, China and Iran which he believed would jeopardize world peace. He believed that the objective of the Primakov Doctrine was to water down United States influence and increase Russian influence in Eurasia and the Middle East.³³⁹ According to A. Pushkov, the Primakov Doctrine is one version of Russia's European role and falls between two extremes. According to him, one of these extremes is a Westernist version that follows American lead and was tested by Andrei Kozyrev with disastrous results. The other extreme is supported by Nationalists and Communists and suggests that Russia should offer an alternative to those disenfranchised with the West. The third and most natural alternative for Russia is what the Pushkov calls the Primakov Doctrine. This is a policy of pursuing good relations with the West while independently expanding relations with others in the Eastern hemisphere.³⁴⁰

What in this thesis is referred to as a new multipolar world order partially touches upon what others have called "the Primakov Doctrine". Vladimir Putin has been said to have continued this policy and it seems, that out of all Primakov's ideas dissected in his operational code, multipolarity is truly original to him. As seen above, Primakov's multipolarity has been understood in the past as both limited and broad in its application. However, the basic idea is to diversify Russia's relations and thus take a step back from foreign relations being mainly between Russia and the United States. The outcome of this policy can be defined as increasing Russian influence around the world while decreasing American influence in the same areas. The term "Primakov Doctrine" has not yet become a mainstream concept and it does not have a strictly defined meaning. Yet, the way it is currently understood by many scholars and even Sergey Lavrov suggest that it is still being implemented as a foreign policy strategy. Perhaps the Primakov Doctrine could also be expanded in the future to comprehend more elements or other doctrines could be coined which pay tribute to Primakov. However, more research is needed, and this thesis and Yevgeny Primakov's operational code can act as a good starting point for future research. Alternatively, if Russian leaders start to refer to a group of policy objectives as a "Primakov Doctrine" it would become an established and official doctrine. It remains to be seen whether this will happen in the near future or not.

³³⁹ Cohen, *The "Primakov Doctrine"*, 2, 6.

³⁴⁰ A. Pushkov, "'The Primakov Doctrine' and a New European Order," *International Affairs* 44, no. 2 (1998): 11-12.

7.4. Comparing Yevgeny Primakov and Vladimir Putin's Operational Codes

Lastly, we will take a look at Putin's operational code which Stephen Benedict Dyson published already in 2001, and an updated version in 2018 coauthored with Matthew J. Parent. These two pieces of research will be compared to the findings of this thesis to see how similar Putin and Primakov actually are based on their operational codes. At first glance, Putin and Primakov may sound like very different individuals because sometimes Putin may use language that is quite harsh whereas Primakov tended to be much more diplomatic and calculating. Yet, both men have those critics that claim them to be hard-liners operating on zero-sum thinking³⁴¹. However, we should not let style differences distract us because both men's operational codes are quite complimentary. Dyson and Parent argue that overall Putin's thinking is quite mainstream³⁴². Interestingly, after studying both men's operational codes, it becomes apparent that they both try to stay away from ideologies³⁴³.

For Putin, political life is harmonious if governed by rules, norms and laws³⁴⁴. For Primakov the world could become harmonious if everyone worked together towards a multipolar world, including the United States. For both men, order and control were important positive attributes³⁴⁵. Perhaps more so for Putin. Thus, striving for a world that is as harmonious as possible from the Russian point of view was a top priority for both. The means for reaching this goal are somewhat different. Putin's interventions in Chechnya, Ukraine and Syria were found to ultimately be about fighting state weakness and preventing chaos³⁴⁶. For Primakov, pursuing a multipolar world had similar motivations. Additionally, both Primakov and Putin were concerned about building a stronger state domestically³⁴⁷. Interestingly, their concern about preventing chaos renders their worlds quite fragile.

Primakov's opponents were oligarchs, who were working only for their own good, against the interests of others. He also viewed the United States as a rival and kept constantly comparing Russia to them. Putin's opponents are those who have stepped outside the law such as terrorists, corrupt businessmen and officials³⁴⁸. Terrorism seems to bring out the most hostility from Putin³⁴⁹. He is

³⁴¹ Dyson and Parent "The Operational Code Approach," 90.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 91.

³⁴³ Dyson, "Drawing Policy Implications," 343.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 334.

³⁴⁵ Dyson and Parent "The Operational Code Approach," 92-93.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 93.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 93.

³⁴⁸ Dyson, "Drawing Policy Implications," 335.

³⁴⁹ Dyson and Parent "The Operational Code Approach," 91.

quite obsessed with rules and obeying them, with the caveat that if someone breaks them, all bets are off and they can be treated even in a violent way as a punishment for their misbehavior³⁵⁰. For Primakov, it was important that people work towards the common good and that no one stepped on each other's toes when it comes to interests. He too had a similar idea with punishment: that if someone has worked against shared and/or Russian interests, Russia could retaliate, and the opponents could then only blame themselves. Both Primakov and Putin seemed to think that one way or another, their opponents were responsible for Russia's reaction to their misbehavior³⁵¹. For them, the ball is always in the other court, and especially Putin makes it clear that others are treated well if they first treat him well³⁵². Putin was especially vocal about terrorists when it comes to retaliation, whereas Primakov was more fixed on evaluating American behavior, which was not very prominent in Putin's operational code by Dyson.

Putin was said to reconcile breaking rules in Chechnya to fight terrorism by his strong belief in order and dislike of chaos took precedence over everything else. According to Dyson, Putin's behavior is not a contradiction, but rather about his priorities: chaos must be prevented.^{353,354} Primakov could be argued to have had similar tendencies when it comes to the liberal values he so often advocated versus Russian interests, which took precedence over everything else.

Dyson and Parent argue that Putin is more of an opportunist and a tactician than a grand strategist³⁵⁵. Primakov has earlier been said to possess some opportunistic tendencies, but an overview of his ideas and policies show that he was more of a grand strategist. Since Primakov was not very ideological, instead motivated by interests, he was willing to match creative means to his ends. Overall, it must be remembered that an operational code analysis cannot possibly comprehend a person's whole belief system. This means that when comparing two different operational codes, we are actually comparing two incomplete assessments.

Despite this we can conclude that Yevgeny Primakov and Vladimir Putin's operational codes are remarkably complementary. They both strove towards harmony and order with similar ideas about how to deal with those who stood in their way. Putin cannot stand rule-breakers and Primakov was irritated by those who worked against common interests. Putin respects Primakov and his

³⁵⁰ Dyson, "Drawing Policy Implications," 343.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 336.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 344.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 343.

³⁵⁴ Dyson and Parent "The Operational Code Approach," 95.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 93-94.

contributions to Russian foreign policy and neither one of them is particularly ideological. Comparing their operational codes partially helps explain why Putin has relied on Primakov's advice so much in the past. Additionally, we can speculate that perhaps Putin has adopted many of Primakov's ideas because he himself lacks the qualities of a grand strategist, an area where Primakov was remarkably good at with his long-term vision approach.

8. CONCLUSIONS

This thesis was written because Yevgeny Primakov has not been given enough credit for his contributions to Russian foreign policy despite his long career in politics and because he has been largely misunderstood. Not only was he a seasoned politician and a diplomat, but he also had a major influence on the Russian Federation's foreign policy formulation during the critical early years of the 1990s. Surprisingly, no one has conducted a thorough investigation of his operational code before. This opened up a good opportunity to reveal his thinking and worldview through this very useful tool. Over the years, differing interpretations about his significance and policies have been presented. This thesis was able to take part in the conversation by coming up with a new way of understanding Primakov as a man, how he thought about Russia vis-à-vis the rest of the world, and what kinds of beliefs he held. Understanding Primakov's operational code will provide new insights into Russian foreign policy development and open up new areas of research.

Instead of calling Primakov a hard-liner or a westernizer, describing him as a patriotic pragmatist is a more accurate term. Primakov's actions were mostly motivated by protecting and advancing Russian interests with the lowest acceptable cost to everyone. He was opportunistic and sometimes wrapped his intentions in liberal sounding motivations and, while not insincere, he did not have ideological undertones.

Policymakers and foreign policy scholars should pay more attention to Yevgeny Primakov's influence. This study has found that Primakov indeed heavily influenced Russian foreign policy, not only by reinventing the Statist school of thought and helping to make it the mainstream policy line for years to come, but also by putting forward foreign policy ideas that have been put in practice in recent years. Even though many of his ideas and the policies derived from them are not original to him, he managed to mix and match them to create functioning policy options. The most prominent of these is the idea of a multipolar world with the intention of improving Russia's standing in international affairs and helping them to reach the status of a great power again. Primakov's ideas are studied in Russia today with the encouragement of Vladimir Putin. Starting in 2016, IMEMO began

hosting an annual Primakov Reading summit to study his ideas. His importance to Russia has been specifically highlighted by Putin at these events³⁵⁶. Primakov and Putin share fairly similar operational codes, but the latter is most likely to look for guidance in the former's ideas because Putin is more of a tactician whereas Primakov was a grand-strategist.

Investigating Yevgeny Primakov's operational code proved to be very fruitful. Alexander George's ten questions are well formulated to bring out important aspects of one's way of viewing the world and his method was found to be a very good tool in the context of this thesis. However, because this was a qualitative study which left much room for interpretation, results cannot be taken as 100% accurate. Studying individuals is very difficult, as mentioned earlier, but undertaking such studies should not be avoided because it is challenging. In order to gain deeper understanding of Russian foreign policy, one must at times pick small parts to study in order to understand the bigger picture at the domestic and, ultimately, at the international level. In the future, similar studies on Primakov could be undertaken. For example, it might be beneficial to conduct a study where the evolution of Russia's great power thinking and Statism are thoroughly investigated and their link to Primakov researched. Similarly, in the future other scholars may want take a look at the so called "Primakov Doctrine" and determine whether the current administration is implementing it or not.

Primakov was most active in Russian high politics during a transition period for the country when Russia was seeking a new direction. It could be argued that because of this special period in Russia's history the role of individuals regarding foreign policy development was more prominent when compared to past periods. During normal times Russia does not tend to have a very high turnover rate at the top levels of government, putting even more emphasis on specific individuals and their efforts to advance their preferred policies. Undoubtedly, Yevgeny Primakov with his beliefs and worldview has been one of the most influential, yet almost forgotten, figures in Russian foreign policy circles.

³⁵⁶ "Meeting of Primakov Readings International Forum."

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