

The Problem of International Leadership and Russia's Great Power Elements: An Assessment

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“Control Your Own Destiny or Someone Else Will”²
— Jack Welch

Abstract

Leadership has turned into one of the major global problems as seen on many occasions such as Syrian refugee crisis. Nation-states and international organizations remain incapable of solving the world's problems. The world today needs a new leadership. It involves a capacity which goes beyond those of nation-states and international organizations. The new international leadership cannot be any more attained only through the use of hard power capabilities as often witnessed in global crises. From the vantage point of this article, the ‘new’ international leadership is the leadership with social dimension or ‘social purpose’. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia has again achieved a deserved global reputation through its active foreign policy in its near abroad and neighbouring regions like the Middle East. Russia's emergence as a great power again has been a major item on the agenda of world affairs. It has become clear that Russia pursues a policy of active involvement in the shaping of political order in neighbouring regions. In the face of the reality that Russia is now an emerging great power again, it deserves to be a subject of in-depth analysis and assessment. Special emphasis in the analysis of Russia will be placed on figuring out the distinguishing elements of the new international leadership such as social dimension, social purpose and a resilient state tradition in Russian foreign policy actions. Assessing Russia as a potential and emerging great power may contribute to grasp the true nature of Russia's foreign policy actions and that of the problem of the international leadership.

Keywords: *problem of international leadership, Russia, Russia's leadership elements, leadership with social dimension, social purpose.*

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² Quotation from <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/j/jackwelch379300.html>, (Accessed: May 12, 2016).

Uluslararası Liderlik Meselesi ve Rusya'nın Büyük Güç Unsurları: Bir Değerlendirme

Öz

Suriye mülteci krizi gibi birçok meselede ortaya çıktığı üzere liderlik, artık çok temel bir küresel mesele halini almıştır. Ulus devletler ile uluslararası kuruluşlar, bugünkü sorunlara yönelik olarak gerekli çözümleri geliştirmekte çoğunlukla yetersiz kalmaktadır. Dünya bugün yeni bir liderlik arayışı içerisindedir. Dünyanın aradığı yeni liderlik, ulus devletler ile uluslararası kuruluşların yeteneklerinin ötesindeki bir kabiliyeti ifade etmektedir. Yeni uluslararası liderlik, birçok küresel krizde tecrübe edildiği üzere günümüzde artık yalnızca çıplak güç imkânlarının kullanımı ile elde edilmekten uzaktır. Bu makalenin bakış açısından yeni uluslararası liderlik, sosyal boyut ya da 'sosyal amaç' yüklü bir liderliktir. Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasının ardından Rusya, yakın çevresi ve Orta Doğu gibi komşu bölgelere yönelik aktif dış politikası ile günümüzde de haklı bir itibar elde etmiştir. Rusya'nın yeniden bir büyük bir güç olarak ortaya çıkması, günümüz dünya meseleleri içerisinde başlıca gündem maddelerinden biri olmuştur. Rusya'nın komşu bölgelerde siyasi düzenin şekillendirilmesinde aktif rol alma amaçlı bir politika izlemesi, dikkatlerden kaçmamaktadır. Rusya'nın yeniden büyük bir güç olarak ortaya çıkışının belirgin işaretleri karşısında bu ülke derinlemesine bir tetkiki ve değerlendirmeyi hak etmektedir. Rusya'nın tetkiki ve değerlendirmesinde asıl vurgu, bu ülkenin dış politika faaliyetlerinde yeni küresel liderliğin ayırıcı unsurlarından olan sosyal boyut, sosyal amaç ve kesintisiz ve dayanıklı bir devlet geleneği gibi unsurları tespit etme ve belirginleştirme üzerine olacaktır. Yeni gelişen potansiyel bir büyük güç olarak Rusya'nın tetkik ve değerlendirilmesi, bir taraftan bu ülkenin, diğer taraftan ise uluslararası liderlik arayışının asıl doğasını anlamaya katkı sağlayabilecektir.

Anahtar kelimeler: *uluslararası liderlik sorunu, Rusya, Rusya'nın liderlik unsurları, sosyal boyutlu ve sosyal amaçlı liderlik.*

1. Introduction

Governments today are faced with the challenging task of delivering public services in shorter time frames of which they generally fail to perform. It is therefore common to see “large groups of citizens taking to the streets”³ and demanding an immediate change to improve public services in many countries of the world. Even Arab Spring was fuelled by bad governance and a lack of leadership. This turns the good governance and leadership into an urgent global problem.⁴ The present structure of the many international or supranational organisations, such as the G-20, NATO, the European Union (EU) and even the United Nations (UN) has failed to find solutions to the world’s problems. This fact is also true for the business world.⁵ The tough problems of today’s world have apparently far exceeded the ability of the present national and international political authorities, international organizations and business enterprises to cope.⁶ This widespread inability is a significant cause of almost all crises.

The challenging nature of the world’s unsolved problems has changed the nature of international leadership. The new international leadership hardly involves the use of hard power capabilities only, but has acquired a new dimension which goes beyond that. In the face of challenging global problems, international leadership now means the ability to develop solutions to the world’s problems and to have a character to be followed as a role model.⁷ This makes the ability to deliver necessary services efficiently to the target public a matter of good governance and leadership. The consent of the target public or the masses or even that of the world public can be gained only through good governance. This consent is one

³ See Richard Dobbs, James Manyika and Jonathan Woetzel, “How do you govern a disrupted world?”, *McKinsey Global Institute*, May 2015, available at: <http://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/how-do-you-govern-a-disrupted-world>, (Accessed: June 2, 2016).

⁴ For a discussion about the consequences of bad governance, see Prof. Dr. William H. Newman, *Yönetim. İşletmelerde ve Kamu Yönetiminde Sevk ve İdare*, (Çeviren: Dr. Kenan Sürgit), Türkiye Orta Doğu ve Amme İdaresi Enstitüsü Yay., No: 186, 1979, pp. 1-4.

⁵ For an analysis of the lack and rivalry for leadership in business World, see Panos Mourdoukoutas, “The race for global leadership: Europe, the USA and Japan”, *European Business Review*, Volume 96, Number 4, 1996, pp. 7-13.

⁶ On the challenges facing the global governance and the need for a new leadership model, see James M. Boughton and Colin I. Bradford, Jr., “Global Governance: New Players, New Rulers”, *Finance & Development*, 44, December 2007, pp. 10-14.

⁷ Ian Bremmer, “The absence of international leadership will shape a tumultuous 2016”, *Time*, Vol. 186, No. 27-28, 2015, December 28, 2015-January 4, 2016, pp. 13-14.

of the most valuable assets for a governing authority or management.⁸ Leadership therefore has also become a major area for rivalry in today's international relations.

The search for a functioning structure and thus a new international leadership mission can also be observed in the UN's efforts to revise its mission. In addition, the UN is faced with the task and challenge of adapting itself to the new realities and finding itself a new definition of mission and a meaning for the world. In an attempt to achieve the UN objectives, it has developed a programme called *the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development*.⁹ These goals offer some response and solution to the challenging problems in the world and thus demonstrate that the UN still has a *raison d'être*, a mission for designing and regulating world affairs. The goals have a social purpose, which is to improve the human condition all over the world.

Russia has kept the world's attention by its foreign policy actions and its aspirations to become a great power again. Russia pursues an active foreign policy since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It is now apparent that Russia seeks to restore its great power status. This makes the Russian foreign policy actions and aspirations a priority research subject. The problem of international leadership also provides a significant and timely rationale to study Russia's great power aspirations. This article is accordingly an attempt to grasp Russia's leadership elements by examining at its foreign policy actions and aspirations. Russia as an emerging great power deserves an assessment and understanding. The significance of understanding today's Russia may well be summarised in the words of Winston Churchill, that "Russia is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma".¹⁰

This article begins with a reference to the need for an international leadership. In the face of clear need for an international leadership, it provides an account of the nature of the new international leadership. In line

⁸ On the relationship between good governance and getting the consent of the target audience, even that of the World public, see Munci Kapani, *Politika Bilimine Giriş*, Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Yayınları No. 371, Ankara, 1975. s. 28

⁹ For the contents of the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development, see <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1579SDGs%20Proposal.pdf>, (Accessed: March 5, 2015).

¹⁰ Cited by Dimitri K. Simen and Paul J. Saunders, "The Kremlin Begs to Differ", *The National Interest*, No. 104, November/December, 2009, p. 38.

with the definitions made by John Gerard Ruggie¹¹ and G. John Ikenberry¹² about the nature of the international leadership, this article refers to the concept of power which is the outer form of the international leadership. It then employs the concept of social dimension or social purpose, each of which forms the content of the international leadership. Power plays an important role to execute or realise the social dimension or social purpose. This fact is true in the example and practice of Russia. Russia's foreign policy actions or aspirations are in fact shaped by both power and social dimension. The concepts reveal the leadership dimension of distributing social benefits, mainly in form of economic transactions to the general public, even to world citizens, who are principally the target of any ruling authority. Finally, it will try to examine Russia's foreign policy actions and aspirations within the framework of an international leadership. It will also provide an illustration of Russia's competencies and elements for international leadership. From the vantage point of this article, a frame of reference consisting of two basic concepts will be used for assessing Russia's leadership elements.¹³

2. The Problem of International Leadership

Leadership has always been also one of the central focus areas of the academic discipline of management. Lack of international leadership is a widespread issue which also has negative consequences on business world as well. The leadership is also a prerequisite for running a successful business. Leadership apparently plays a critical role in successfully handling global business issues. It is in one sense a sum of all successfully accomplished tasks and responsibilities.¹⁴ In this framework, the title of international leadership can only be deserved if there is adequate level of experience of successfully accomplished tasks and responsibilities. This reminds Peter F. Drucker's definition of the nature of modern management. Drucker, founder of modern management thought, stated that management

¹¹ See John Gerard Ruggie, "International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order", *International Organization*, Vol. 36, No. 2, International Regimes (Spring), 1982, pp. 379-415.

¹² See G. John Ikenberry, "The Future of International Leadership", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 111, No. 3, Autumn 1996, pp. 385-402.

¹³ For a detailed account of the world's challenging problems facing national governments, international organisations and even international companies, see Tim Jones - Caroline Dewing, *Future Agenda. 2020 Yılında Dünya*, (Çevirenler: Elif Özsayar - Pınar Şengözer), Vodafone Telekomünikasyon A.Ş., İstanbul, 2010.

¹⁴ See Peter F. Drucker, *Management Challenges for the 21st Century*, Adobe Acrobat E-Book, Reader edition v.1, November 2002.

is not only business management. Management, according to Drucker's definition, comprises a vast area of human practices including even the management of church affairs. From Drucker's viewpoint, it can be concluded that the work of management also means the management of international affairs and international relations.¹⁵ A definition of management in business world interestingly stresses the completion of the tasks successfully which necessitates a leadership skill.

"Management means getting things done effectively through people to achieve the desired results. This requires a combination of leadership, communication and people skills."¹⁶

Every single organization is faced today with the difficult task of becoming a functioning organization. Functioning organization means, in Peter F. Drucker's terms, producing and providing solutions to complex human issues and needs which face every organisation including nation-states and international institutions as well as global companies. The result-producing effect is the main source of providing organizations a power of attraction in the face of other nations. It has turned out to become a major indicator and prerequisite of becoming a global power since there can be no talk of pure national issues and problems any more in a globalised world. In line of this definition, the true nature of international leadership can only be figured out with reference to its performance level in managing international affairs and its capacity to contribute to the global order. But today's worldwide problems go beyond the problem solving and administrative capacities of sovereign nation-states and international organizations. This fact has been apparently evidenced by the influx of refugees fled from the civil war in Syria to the Western European countries. The massive tide of refugees rushing the borders of the countries of the EU caught this organization incapable to manage this issue. The EU has, however, been renowned as having a well-functioning administrative system. Refugee problem revealed the EU's incapacity in handling widespread international crises.¹⁷ The refugee problem cannot be resolved by using hard power. It rather demands a sort of problem solving capacity which can be named as leadership. What is needed today is a transnational and even global problem

¹⁵ For a reading on Drucker's thoughts on this point, Peter F. Drucker, "Management and the World's Work". *Harvard Business Review*, September-October 1988, p. 68.

¹⁶ See Luke C. Ng, "Best Management Practices", *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 2011, p. 93.

¹⁷ Ian Bremmer, "The migrant issue is dividing Europe", *Time*, Vol. 186, No. 21, November 23, 2015, p. 12.

solving ability which can develop comprehensive solutions to major human issues. The comprehensive feature of the problem solving ability of any nation comprises a social dimension and a social purpose. The lack of leadership has thus become for some time a fundamental concern in the study of international relations. Many articles in the field of international relations have dealt with the problem of international leadership. The main concern of the writings on the topic of leadership in international relations has been the need for a suitable leadership model for the world.¹⁸ Ikenberry who had written on the future of international leadership revealed that the leadership the world awaits is not a leadership of hard power based on the possession of a mighty army equipped with advanced weaponry. What the world needs is a sort of social leadership which can develop solutions to the world problems. International leadership accordingly means rather a social dimension, as Ruggie stated.¹⁹ It is a leadership with social dimension or 'social purpose'. The concept of social purpose is, as defined by Ruggie and Ikenberry has a strong impact to exert on the global public than that of the hard power operations. In Ruggie's words, social purpose reveals the content of international order which is mainly shaped by the actions of an international leader. International leadership in this definition does not only mean possessing power. However power is the outer form or threshold for international leadership, it also has a further dimension, namely an ability of offering social purposes, for instance easing the economic transactions among companies and nation states. The new sort of leadership with a social dimension will attract the global public's attention and gain the hearts of the global public. This will supply a competitive advantage to the country possessing this ability.

3. Russia's Leadership Elements

Russia has always maintained a great power mentality even after the demise of the USSR. Russia has apparently a vision of becoming a full-fledged great power and achieving the rightful status it deserves alongside the U.S. and China.²⁰ Russia's intention and self-confidence that it possesses the necessary elements for international leadership can best be depicted in the following words of a Russian philosopher:

¹⁸ For a reading on the topic of international leadership in international relations, see G. John Ikenberry, op.cit., pp. 385-402.

¹⁹ John Gerard Ruggie, op.cit., p. 302.

²⁰ For more on Russia's future prospects, see Dmitri Trenin, "Russia Leaves the West", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 4 (July – August), 2006, pp. 88-89.

“Greatpowerdness is not determined by the size of the territory or the number of inhabitants but by the ability of people and their government to assume the burden of great international tasks and deal with these tasks creatively. A great power is the one which, while asserting its existence and interest..., introduces a creative and accommodating legal idea to the entire community of nations, the entire ‘concert’ of peoples and states.”²¹

Many authors dealt with the issue of Vladimir Putin’s imperial intension. Putin’s political performance has even led some authors to classify him as a new tsar or emperor.²² Russia’s intentions to become again a new global or imperial power cannot be thought without leadership elements consisting of social dimension and social purpose. Since Russia seeks international recognition as a great power, it needs some stable success stories. Success stories have an impact on mentalities as they can only be realized through a sort of enchanting efforts which others fail to perform. Russia is obviously aware of the fact that a real impact will only be delivered on the world public through managing regional or global crises successfully.²³ As Thomas Gomart points out that Russia has always tries to follow a foreign policy based on great power mentality. Russia’s great power understanding can be summed up in the concept of *derzhavnichestvo* meaning that “Russia is either a great power or it is nothing at all”.²⁴ Similarly Dmitri Trenin pointed out that Russia should undertake a role of producing global public goods for restoring its status as a great power again.²⁵ Russia has a long experience with respect to social purpose beginning from its early history.

In this framework, it cannot be wrong to say that Russia’s foreign policy actions are designed with social dimension. Russia is no more a state of only hard power, but also has an orientation of social dimension and social purpose. In terms of social dimension or social purpose, Russia’s foreign

²¹ Sergei Lavrov, “Russia’s Foreign Policy in a Historical Perspective”, *Russia in Global Affairs*, No. 2, 30 March 2016: Lavrov’s article can also be reached through the following web site: <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/Russias-Foreign-Policy-in-a-Historical-Perspective-18067>, (Accessed: May 10, 2016).

²² Schuster, Simon, “The Imperialist Vladimir Putin”, *Time*, Double Issue, Vol. 184, No. 24-25, December 22-28, 2014, pp. 72-76.

²³ See Philipp Casula, “Russia between Diplomacy and Military Intervention: The Syrian Conflict through Russian Eyes revisited”, *Russian Analytical Digest*, No: 175, October 2015, p. 10. The paper can also be reached through the following link: http://www.laender-analysen.de/russland/rad/pdf/Russian_Analytical_Digest_175.pdf, (Accessed: November 1, 2015).

²⁴ Thomas Gomart, “Russia Alone Forever? The Kremlin’s Strategic Solitude”, *Politique étrangère*, Vol. 73, Special Issue: World Policy Conference 2008 (Autumn) 2008, p. 31.

²⁵ Trenin, Dmitri, “Russia Reborn: Reimagining Moscow’s Foreign Policy”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 6 (November/December), 2009, p. 78.

policy actions and aspirations include, in the context of this article, mainly the elements of social dimension and social purpose. Nevertheless, as it is stated above, this article represents the thesis that social dimension or social purpose elements of the international leadership cannot be executed without the necessary state power. Power has a value of forming the content of the social dimension of the leadership. This article accepts Russia's resilient state tradition and army as its primary elements of international leadership. These elements will be briefly explained.

3.1. Hard Power and Army.

Since power predict the form of international order, it can be concluded that state actions even those of economic transactions can never be performed without the use of hard power. A well-functioning and capable army is also prerequisite for participating in peace-making operations. Russia is an active player in Syrian conflict and no one can predict a peaceful solution to Syrian crisis without the consent of Russia. Putin stresses the lack of competence and ability of the West in handling global crises and its failure and incapacity to stop the insurgencies of ISIS in Syria. Putin uses a technical language when he refers to the need and responsibility for handling the global crises. This technical language is a reflection of the crucial role of a capable power for handling regional or international crises. Russia has a competent military power to reckon on for designing regional affairs and peacekeeping missions in the near abroad and neighbouring regions.²⁶ The annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014 has been realised through the utmost trust in the Russian army. Putin has made great investments for modernizing Russian military. Russia's military expenditure has risen to a level of 4.6% of Total GDP Gross domestic product in 2014.²⁷

Exhibit-1: Russia's Military Power 2016.

Defence Budget USD (\$)	Active Frontline Personnel	Total Aircraft	Number of Tanks	Total Naval Strength
4.600.000.000	764, 055	3,547	15, 398	352

Source: Data compiled from http://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=russia, (Accessed: June 11, 2016).

²⁶ Marvin Kalb, "Putin takes on Syria and makes Russia a global again", *Time*, October 12, 2015, pp. 7-8.

²⁷ See World Bank, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS/countries/1W-RU?display=graph>, (Accessed: June 20, 2016).

3.2. A Resilient State Tradition

Russia possesses a long experience of state tradition and know-how of governance gained through the hard experiences and encounters of many revolutions, threats of invasions and tides of transformations. The first Russian state, for instance, was destroyed by Mongols in 1240. The Russia had experienced even an attempt of invasion which had been known as Napoleon's March on Moscow in 1812. However the Russians have always managed to overcome almost all threats, turmoil and attempts of invasions targeted at Russian organizational and political existence. Russian experience of overcoming many existential problems has equipped this country with a power of resilience. This power means for Russia a valuable asset to govern their state and organizational entity particularly in hard times as experienced during the economic sanctions imposed on Russia by the European Union due to its annexation of Crimea in March 2014.²⁸ Russia had managed to survive its existence even after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.²⁹ It should be remembered here that Vladimir Putin described the dissolution of the Soviet Union as the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century.³⁰ Parallel to uninterrupted Russian survival which went through numerous upside-downs and transformations, it also have developed a sort of further resilient character of living in an ineligible climate conditions which are generally used to be known as Siberian colds. Russia as a resilient state represents a leadership character for the countries in near abroad in particular and in the world in general. From the long and hard experiences of Russia, it can be concluded that it has developed a resilient state tradition, which knows no give-up. The resilient character of Russian state existence is attracting a growing attention in the world as regard to predict the meaning of its actions.³¹ Russia's resilient state tradition might be best illustrated in the picture of Russian soldiers carrying cabbage heads in their hands given them as their monthly salaries. That picture of Russian soldiers was originally published in an Austrian daily newspaper on January 12, 1996, a few years later, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

²⁸ For an analysis of the implications of the EU sanctions on Russia and its survival policy, see Peter Rutland Middletown, "The Impact of Sanctions on Russia", *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 157, 17 December 2014, pp. 2-7.

²⁹ For more on his point, see Michael G. Roskin ve Nicholas O. Berry, *Uluslararası İlişkiler: Ul'nin Yeni Dünyası*, (Çeviren: Özlem Şimşek), Adres Yayınları, Ankara, 2014, pp. 109-129.

³⁰ See "Putin deploras collapse of USSR", 25 April 2005, *BBC News*, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4480745.stm>, (Accessed: June 21, 2016).

³¹ For a brief analysis of Russia's foreign policy orientation, see Ivan Krastev, "What Russia Wants", *Foreign Policy*, No. 166 (May – June 2008), pp. 48-51.

Exhibit-2: Cabbage as a Wage for Russian Soldiers.



Source: Egbert Apfelknab, *Weltpolitische Entwicklungen. Eine Bestandsaufnahme über globale und regionale Konfliktszenarien aus wehrpolitischer Sicht*, Eine Information des BMLV Büro für Wehrpolitik, April 1997, Wien, p. 13.

3.3. Know-How of Administrating a Diversity of Nations

Russia is also the name of a federation of diverse nationalities. Russia maintains a legacy and know-how of administrating diverse nations since from its early history. This legacy provides Russia the necessary skills and valuable know-how of good-governance of diverse nations and ethic structure.³² This fact has been once again obvious during the opening of the Moscow Mosque in September, 2015. In his speech at the opening of Moscow Mosque, Putin stressed Russia's multi-cultural structure with following words:

“Right from its creation, Russia has always been a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional country. This mutual enrichment of different cultures, traditions and religions has always been our country's distinguishing feature and strength. (...) Today, traditional Islam is an integral part of Russia's spiritual life”³³

³² For a detailed account of Russia's governance of transnational issues and affairs, see Muammer Öztürk, “Russia's Capability of Managing Transnational Issues: The Use of the Imperial Legacy”, *Avrasya Etüdleri*, No. 44/2, 2013, pp. 7-26. The article can also be accessed at <http://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/2015/Prestij/avrasya%2044.pdf>, (Accessed: May 4, 2016).

³³ <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50351>, (Accessed: May 20, 2016).

3.4. Design of Regional Affairs and Regional Organizations

Russia has maintained a vision of global mission especially in its direct neighbourhood. Russia is determined to be active in designing a new world order as it has been shown by its involvement in the Syria's civil war. The Middle East has always thought to be a crucial part of Russia's direct neighbourhood as stressed by a high-ranking Russian General with the following words: "[T]he Middle East is "sovsemryadom"—right next door".³⁴

In line of the Russian understanding of global mission in the direct neighbourhood, Russian Orthodox Society has opened 74 schools in Syria in 1905. Russia had also provided military and economic assistance in worth of \$ 294 million to Syria in 1958.³⁵ This fact provides evidence for Russia's imperial vision which has a social dimension and social purpose. Russia sees the Syrian crisis not only about Syria itself, but it has many consequences about Russia's standing in the world and its mission as a global player. Russia's intervention in Syrian crisis has been its first military operation beyond its neighbourhood after the demise of the USSR.³⁶ Russia is apparently very sensitive to the regime change through the famous western tool of democracy promotion in the countries of interest to Russia.³⁷ Russia seeks to set a functioning example for handling conflicts in the Middle East.³⁸ Russia's intention to actively involve in shaping regional affairs means that Russia has a word to say to the world. Russia's whole attempts including the annexation of Crimea are targeted towards establishing an alternative to the Western model of liberal democracy.³⁹ Russia has often involved actively in Ukrainian affairs. The reason for Russian involvement in Ukrainian affairs lies in its geostrategic position. Ukraine as a borderland territory "serves to protect Russia from any potential military intervention by the Western powers".⁴⁰ Ukraine

³⁴ Keir Giles, "Russia and the West: The Longer View", *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 173, 12 October 2015, p. 6.

³⁵ For a short account of Russian Interest in the Syrian affairs, see Timothy Ubelejit Nte, "Arabian Uprisings As Harbinger Of Cold War", *IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, Volume 9, Issue 2 (March – April 2013), p. 84-85.

³⁶ Philipp Casula, op. cit., p. 6.

³⁷ Alexander Sergunin, "SWOT Analysis of U.S.-Russian Relations", *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 178, 11 January 2016, p. 3.

³⁸ Philipp Casula, op. cit., p. 8.

³⁹ For a brief account of Russia's intentions for a global leadership, see Simon Schuster, op. cit., p. 76.

⁴⁰ Andrei Tsygankov, "The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy", *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 158, 18 December 2014, p. 2

has also a crucial economic meaning for Russia since it provides a direct connection to the West. This connection provides Russia to sell its natural resources, particularly the Russian gas to the West through the pipelines over Ukrainian territory.⁴¹

The post-World War II system was established by the United States. The United Nations system and event International Standardization Organization (ISO) was established by the US in 1947. However there is a notable suspicion about the future of the hegemony of the West in general and the US in particular. Some authors have pointed to the eroding power of the US and the future role of the US. The suspicion of the future role of the US in the world affairs has led to subject of many articles written by Western authors.⁴² Russia's intention and orientation towards being a great power again can also be illustrated in its attempts for establishing regional organizations. Russia has undertaken an active role in establishing regional organizations since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The regional organizations established in the post-Soviet era were designed principally with an aim of contributing to regional peace-keeping.⁴³ Russia has most recently realized the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) which has been thought to have a similar function as that of the EU. Russia has performed well in establishing regional organizations as Commonwealth of Independent states (CIS) and Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the EEU.⁴⁴ The appealing power of the regional organizations which were created by Russia's initiative or its direct involvement can be observed in the number of countries which applied for membership. According to an analysis, 40 countries have applied for membership to

⁴¹ Andrei Tsygankov, *ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴² See for example Ian Bremmer, "What Does America Stand For?", *Time*, Vol. 185, No. 20, June 1, 2015, pp. 16-21; G. John Ikenberry, "The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive?", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 1, Jan.-Feb. 2008, pp. 23-37; G. John Ikenberry, "America's Imperial Ambition", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 5, September – October 2002, pp. 44-60; G. John Ikenberry, "The Future of International Leadership", *op. cit.*, pp. 385-402.

⁴³ For an analysis of the peace-keeping role of the regional organizations established after the dissolution of the USSR with Russia's active participation or by its direct initiative, see Stefan Meister, "Russland als Ordnungsmacht im postsowjetischen Raum. Regionalorganisationen als Instrumente für «Friedenseinsätze»", *Russland-Analysen*, Nr. 216, 2011, pp. 5-7. A digital version of the article can be reached through the link <http://www.laender-analysen.de/russland/pdf/Russlandanalysen216.pdf>, (Accessed: May 10, 2016).

⁴⁴ For a detailed list of the regional organizations established after the dissolution of the USSR with Russia's active participation or by its direct initiative, see "Die wichtigsten Regionalorganisationen im postsowjetischen Raum", *Russland-Analysen*, Nr. 216, 2011, pp. 8-11. A digital version of the article can be reached through the link <http://www.laender-analysen.de/russland/pdf/Russlandanalysen216.pdf>, (Accessed: May 10, 2016).

the EEU.⁴⁵ This is apparently an indicator for the efficiency of the regional organizations established in the post-Soviet era by Russia's initiative or its direct involvement. Diversity of the regional organizations provides necessary evidence for Russia's organizational ability.

Russia's re-emergence on the world political scene can be depicted in its participation in peace-making missions. It is a fact that no peace talk can be foreseen without Russia's participation or in other words, without inviting Russia to participate in the peace talks. This may not be seen as a mere result that Russia is a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Russia after the demise of the Soviet Union has a word to say to the world. Russia has actively participated as a mediator in settling international and regional crises since the demise of the Soviet Union. Russia had been an active member of the P5+1 group which consists of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and Germany in Iran nuclear talks. Russia's global impact and role as a mediator in peace-keeping and crisis management negotiations have also been shown by its success in its role in Iran nuclear negotiations, which ended in Vienna on July 14, 2015.⁴⁶ Russia has apparently managed to change the US attitude towards Iran not to object its participation in the negotiations in Vienna on October 23, 2015, which was organized to find a solution to Syrian conflict. Russia also convinced German Chancellor Angela Merkel that Assad has a critical role to play in the fight against the ISIS, and should not be overthrown since there is not any better alternative for the time being.⁴⁷ Russia has managed to a certain degree to set an alternative model for handling conflicts in the complex region of the Middle East.⁴⁸ Putin has managed to capture the world's attention through his use of the UN mechanism to declare his peace proposal for Syria. He thus also portrayed Russia as a country of skilful diplomacy and intermediary. Russia's active participation in peace talks and negotiations provides the necessary foundation that Russian approach towards world crises and can also develop solutions with social dimension.

⁴⁵ For this reference, see Maria Lagutina, "A Global Eurasian Region in a "Regiopolar" World-Order Test", *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 170, 7 July 2015, p. 8. The analysis can also be accessed via the https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/192447/Russian_Analytical_Digest_172.pdf, (Accessed: April 13, 2016).

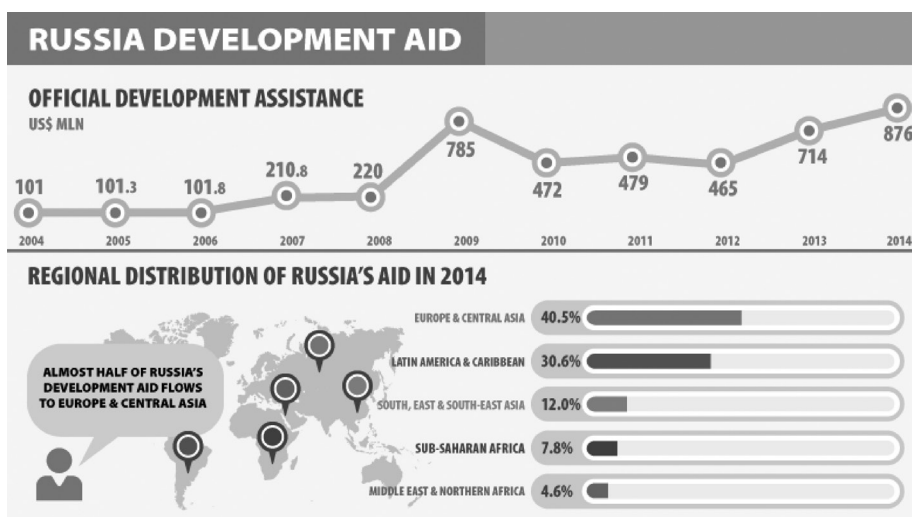
⁴⁶ For more on Russia's role in Iran Nuclear Talks, see Maria Stromova and Alastair Jamieson, "Iran Nuclear Deal: Russia Hails 'Positive Step' for Middle East", *NBC News*, 14 July 2015, The Report available at: <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/iran-nuclear-talks/iran-nuclear-deal-russia-hails-positive-step-middle-east-n391686>, (Accessed: June 14, 2016).

⁴⁷ Mark N. Katz, "Russian Intervention in the Syrian Civil War", *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 175, 16 November 2015, p. 3.

⁴⁸ See Philipp Casula, op. cit., p. 8.

Russia is also a special economic meaning for post-Soviet states. Russia is the country where the citizens of post-Soviet states can find job and earn money. For instance, about 2, 9 million Ukrainian guest works working in Russia made money transfers from this country to their homeland Ukraine in 2013. The transferred amount by the Ukrainian guest workers equals to and forms 10% of Ukrainian national budget.⁴⁹ Russia's development aids also show indicators of social dimension and social purpose of its leadership concept. Russia's great power intention can also be observed in its aid spending which aims at creating influence and improving its reputation in the world. Russia appears to be an emerging donor as well. Russia is also active in terms of delivering financial aid to neighbouring countries.” Russia's Official Development Assistance steadily increased from about \$100 million in 2004 to \$876 million in 2014.”⁵⁰ The following graph exhibits the distribution of the amounts of Russia's development aid.

Exhibit-3: Regional Distribution of Russia's Development Aid over Years.



Source: The World Bank, “Russia and the World Bank: International Development Assistance”, *Brief*, 5 November 2015, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/russia/brief/international-development> (Accessed: May 30, 2016).

⁴⁹ Matthias Schepp, “Von heiligen russischen Orten”, *Der Spiegel*, 13, 2014, p. 79.

⁵⁰ The World Bank, “Russia and the World Bank: International Development Assistance”, *Brief*, 5 November 2015, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/russia/brief/international-development>, (Accessed: May 30, 2016).

3.5. A Charismatic Leader: Putin

Putin as a state leader possesses more than being a mere president. Vladimir Putin is a famous figure building the Russian leadership. He is a dedicated keen representative of Russian revival who was honoured by the Moscow cardinal⁵¹ Putin's intention and determination to restore the great power status of Russia⁵² has earned him the title of the 'collector of Russian earth', (*Sammler russischer Erde*).⁵³ The character and charisma of the Russian president Vladimir Putin build one of the main elements of Russia's global leadership.⁵⁴ Putin's leadership characteristics have supplied him a relatively high place in the ranking of World Leaders. According to the "world's most admired" poll for 2016⁵⁵ conducted by *YouGov's* ranked the Russian president Putin sixth out of the top 20 most admired men across the world. The *Forbes* Magazine placed Vladimir Putin in the first place in the 2015 ranking of the World's Most Powerful People.⁵⁶

3.6. A Sense of Global Moral Values

Putin is known to be a leader who declared his concerns for moral issues. Putin has concerns about the moral decadence in the West and particularly in Europe, by which he means the EU. Putin's declaration about moral decadence in the west, particularly in Europe, is a distinctive feature priority in his leadership conception. By insisting on ethical or moral values Putin conveys the impression to the global public opinion that his leadership conception has a human aspect, a social dimension.⁵⁷ Russia under Putin has set itself a new mission of restoring the cultural and moral awakening and returning to the Christian-occidental path in

⁵¹ Matthias Schepp, op. cit., p. 79.

⁵² For a reading on Putin's great power aspirations, see Michael Crowley and Simon Schuster, "What Putin Wants", *Time*, Vol. 183, No. 19, May 19, 2014, pp. 20-23; Simon Shuster, "The World According to Putin", *Time*, Vol. 182, No.12, September 12, 2013, pp. 18.-23.

⁵³ Matthias Schepp, op. cit., p. 79.

⁵⁴ For an analysis of the roots of Putin's leadership characteristics, see Michael Crowley and Simon Schuster, op.cit., pp. 20-23.

⁵⁵ For the details of the poll, see <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2016/05/07/wma-2016/>
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/vladimir-putin-more-admired-across-the-world-than-dalai-lama-and-pope-francis-according-to-poll-a7020261.html>, (Accessed: May 11, 2016).

⁵⁶ "The World's Most Powerful People", *Forbes*, 2015, The Ranking is available at: <http://www.forbes.com/powerful-people/list/#tab:overall>, (Accessed: May 11, 2016).

⁵⁷ Sergei Lavrov, op. cit.

Europe.⁵⁸ Russia's orientation towards a more human foreign policy with social dimension can also be traced in Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's words. Lavrov has also stressed the importance of moral values for establishing a universal human solidarity.⁵⁹

4. Conclusion

The world's search for a new international leadership has become a major issue on international relations agenda. It stemmed from the unsolved global problems as experienced in the most recent example of Syrian refugee crisis. Russia has caught the world's attention by its active foreign policy since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It is essentially seeking to restore its great-power status to become a great power status. Russia's foreign policy actions have coincided with the world's search for a new international leadership. That makes this case an interesting and valuable subject of inquiry. To this end, this article was designed to assess Russia's efforts towards becoming a great power again and figure out its leadership elements. By doing so, this article sought, on one hand, to get a proper understanding of Russia's foreign policy aspiration and actions. It aimed, however, figuring out Russia's leadership elements and the profile as an emerging great power. The article was written to initiate a new look on the future of international leadership problem which may trigger further research on the same subject.

It can be concluded that Russia's foreign policy aspirations and actions are targeted towards being a great power again.⁶⁰ Russia maintains an ability of proper reading the world affairs. It is aware that becoming a great power again requires being active in the resolution of regional crises and shaping the international affairs. Russia is well aware that great power status requires taking on some economic, military and security burdens. Russia's existence after the dissolution of the Soviet Union has closely got to do with facing domestic, regional and global tasks and challenges. The meeting of these challenges and completion of the tasks will provide the necessary indicators for its leadership capacity. Leadership will only be performed through the completed domestic, regional and to some extent

⁵⁸ See Jens Siegert, "The Return of Ideology – Russia's New Sense of Mission", *Russian Analytical Digest*, No. 148, 2 May 2014, p. 10.

⁵⁹ See Sergey Lavrov, op. cit., p. 5.

⁶⁰ For a brief analysis of Russia's foreign policy orientation, see Ivan Krastev, op. cit., pp. 48-51.

global tasks. Russia thus pursues an active foreign policy in the post-Soviet republics and in the neighbouring regions. It never abstains from involving in the affairs in neighbouring regions. It can be thus concluded that securing international leadership has the same meaning for Russia with becoming a great power again.

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