Policy Takers or Policy Makers: Moscow's Aversion to Incorporating Western Values

Nicholas Roland Price

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Art in International Studies: Russian, East European and Central

Asian Studies

University of Washington

2020

Committee:

Christopher D. Jones

Niko Switek

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

International Studies – Jackson School

University of Washington

Abstract

Policy Takers or Policy Makers: Moscow's Aversion to Incorporating Western Values

Nicholas Roland Price

Chair of Supervisory Committee

Christopher D. Jones

International Studies – Jackson School

How did the western principles embraced by The Final Act of 1975 play a role in the downfall of the Soviet Union? To what extent have they had a subsequent, lasting influence on the policies of the Russian federation more recently?

Both before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, much of existing western scholarship on Soviet foreign policy has largely consisted of the isolating nature and militaristic tendencies of Soviet decision-making. This literature is in danger of eclipsing the very real desire of certain Soviet figures to do away with the hostile nature of the two-camp thesis that dominated the Cold War, and to try and begin to create a stable security framework that included all the nations of Western Europe, as well as the Eastern Bloc. Years later, the scholarship on Russian foreign policy that was published in the late 1990's and early 2000's reveals a sense of surging optimism that prevails in a wide selection of different works. Many scholars saw a bright future for relations between Russia and the west during the Yeltsin and early Putin years, so much so that it was generally expected that western style democratization would eventually, inevitably, come to the Russian nation. Scholars such as Sergei Medvedev had written that Russia was making "a normative choice in favor of westernization" (Medvedev 2004) and that:

> Russia is gradually becoming integrated into global markets at the levels of the state …Russia is increasingly compelled to shape her foreign policy in terms of international institutions, such as NATO, the EU, the Council of Europe and the World Trade Organization.

However in recent years, that optimism has been dashed by a complete turn-around in relations. Since the war with Georgia in 2008 and the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Vladimir Putin's Russia has made it clear that it has no intention of integrating with the western democracies or subscribing to western values, which many authors argue is central to unstable relations between Russia and the West. Within its neighboring territories, Russia has resorted

to using its vast energy resources as an economic weapon of exploitation rather than as a tool of mutual cooperation, choosing to demonstrate "the power difference between Russia and its neighbors" (Gomart, 2006).[I] They have embarked on a campaign of subversion and disruption within the western world, working to subvert democracy and disrupt international institutions such as the European Union and NATO. Scholars have argued whether this is truly a return to Cold War levels of tension, or something newer and more complex.

This paper's goal is to use a historiographical structure to observe the latest publications on this question of whether cooperation with the west is something to step towards or away from; to show how different authors understand and demonstrate how the USSR and later the Russian Federation have tackled the issue of incorporating western values since The Helsinki Final Act of 1975. The periods of history which will figure most prominently in this paper will be A historiography of recent publications by different prominent scholars is essential, because it helps present the view points of different authors on this complex subject. Because so much has occurred on this front within the last several years, between the annexation of the Crimea and the Russian hacking of US and EU elections, the selection of scholars will largely consist of ones who have made very recent additions to this body of literature. The progression of work discussed in this paper will show that Moscow's reluctance towards European cooperation can be traced back to the Helsinki Accords.

This paper will primarily point to the arguments made by scholars such as Michael Coty Morgan, Timothy Snyder, Stephen Cohen, William Pomeranz, Anders Aslund, William Hill and Angela Stent. Central to this study is also Michael Morgan's 2018 *The Final Act*, which sheds new light on how the Helsinki Final Act took the shape it did. Morgan does this in part by

presenting Leonid Brezhnev as the driving force behind the congregation, as well as framing the conversation of human rights within the context of western values.

Other authors will include Timothy Snyder and his discussion in his 2018 *Road to Unfreedom* of Russia's lack of democratic elements with its government. Stephen Cohen will also feature, who's book *Soviet Fates and Lost Alternatives* offers a dissenting view on the collapse of the Union that involves dismantling preconceived notions held by other scholars, as well as William Pomeranz who uses his book *Law and the Russian State: Russia's Legal Evolution from Peter the Great to Vladimir Putin* to discuss the constitutional crisis in the USSR during the Gorbachev years, and Anders Aslund with his *Russia's Crony Capitalism* which discusses Putin's economic changes in the Russian federation and how that pertains to western values.

Later this paper shows how William Hill makes clear in his 2018 publication *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989* that he understands that today's tensions can be traced back to the attempts at formulating a stable world security framework in the years following the collapse of the USSR. He does so to demonstrate to readers why there turned out to be "no place for Russia" in the European security structure after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Finally this paper will get to Angela Stent, who's book *Putin's World: Russia against the West and With the Rest* effectively demonstrates the incredible turn around in relations as a result of an aversion to western values brought on by emerging Eurasionism in the Russian Federation.

Chapter 1: Historical Context

When drawing connections between the methods of acquiring security of Soviet leaders from before and the leadership of the Russian Federation of today, it is important to understand the different ways in which different Soviet leaders have tried, their different styles and outlooks on the geopolitical landscape. Many past scholars on foreign policy have demonstrated a somewhat limited view of Soviet policy aims and goals in postwar Europe, or rather, one that has been reluctant to stray from the basic ideas of forceful expansion and consolidation, which are apparent in the histories of both Imperial and Soviet Russia. General assessments of foreign policy leave much to be desired for a number of reasons. American definitions of what Soviet security is has long been defined and dominated by George Kennan's Long Telegram to the Department of State, written shortly after Roosevelts death at the end of the Second World War. Kennan's analysis of the Soviet State was all based on the conviction that because of what Stalin had preached in his speeches about perpetual struggle with capitalistic society, that there were ideological barriers between the east and the west that would never go away, and so Soviet leadership concluded there could be absolutely no peaceful coexistence between the east and the west. As well as highlighting communist ideology, Kennan criticized western leadership for failing to understand and appreciate the importance of Russian history in explaining Russian geopolitical trends and behavior. Brezhnev's goals with the Helsinki Accords in 1975 are in direct contradiction with this conviction, and thusly demands a broader understanding of Soviet geopolitical thinking.

The significance of Brezhnev as the real driving force behind Soviet participation in the accords cannot be understated. He displayed great concern over the question of east and west Germany, and was afraid that a war could break out over it. Solving these problems, coming to

a consensus with the West, could end the Cold War by treaty. In order to understand the significance of this, a background of the foreign policy trends which came before is needed.

To be sure, there are certainly pieces within Kennan's analysis, perpetuated by scholars during the cold war, which turned out to be undeniably truths in the years ahead. Authors such as Roger E. Kanet, who wrote in the 1980's on the growing concern of Soviet expansionism and the Soviet military's increased role in policy formation, William E. Griffith, who contributed work in the years following Helsinki about Moscow's fear of Atlanticism, and Jonathan Alford, who has also touched on these subjects, have all described in their writings the chronic paranoia and insecurity Russia has exhibited when discussing dreams of security and stability:

> "With each frustration, Soviet security policy twists and turns, unable to escape from the reality that *total* Soviet security, absence of danger to the USSR, can only be purchased at the expense of insecurity for virtually the rest of the world- which, for obvious reasons, the rest of the world is unwilling to accept." (Alford, 113)

Kennan, Kanet, Griffith and other scholars all seem to agree that this insecurity stems from Russia's violent history dealing with nomadic conquerors and hostile powers. Up until the cold war the Russian state, being such a large country, had undergone some iteration of foreign invasion more than most other states: The Mongols, Poles, Lithuanians, Swedish, French, and finally the Germans in 1941, have all made attempts at subjugating the Russian people at one time or another. Compiled with Russia's size and thusly the instability of its borders, as well as with a diverse population of different cultures, Russia's physical and ontological insecurity issues become quite apparent. This in turn creates the need for heavy state involvement:

> By virtue of geography and nature, the state played a central role in Russian history, suppressing political and civil society as well as the market economy, and stressing strategic, territorial expansion and mobilization priorities. This phenomenon, called the "national-security state," included the pursuit of total control, territorial expansion and messianic goals in different parts of the world, from the "Third Rome" to the Third International. (Medvedev, x)

One way Russia has historically tried to solve this problem is by expanding into adjacent regions, thereby creating buffer-zones between hostile states and the Russian homeland. For this reason the military has often played an eclipsing role in Soviet history, and for this reason a great deal of Soviet economic strength was dedicated to maintaining the Red Army. This solution is reflected in Soviet foreign policy's beginnings. This paper will touch on this as we establish trends in Soviet foreign policy, but it is important to not let it distract from this paper's argument that there was a definite desire on the Soviet side for international cooperation and peaceful co-existence at one time. Part of the reason that this has been overlooked is because American scholars consistently view the actions of the Soviet Union in international affairs solely as a function of military force.

In regards to Stalin's policy aims, Kanet in particular confirms Kennan's assertion that efforts would need to be made to advance and consolidate Soviet influence in areas neighboring the Soviet Union.[II] In line with most of those who came after him, Joseph Stalin was loath to incorporating the Soviet Union into any global security structure, though in a break from Khrushchev and Brezhnev it should be noted, he showed little interest in parts of Africa which had once been colonies of western Europe.[III]

Whereas Stalin emphasized consolidation, Khrushchev as is widely known was much more of an expansionist inclination. For him, the growth of Soviet military capabilities meant the expansion of the USSR's role on the international stage. American commentators argued that this would not be possible because they believed that the destructive potential of the nuclear arsenals of the world would make conventional forces totally obsolete. Ironically it was this very fact that made the use of conventional forces possible: nuclear weapons were always dangerous, and by the 1960's there were so many of them that no one would dare start a thermonuclear conflict.

Soon after Brezhnev came to power in 1964, the Soviet Union had achieved both strategic and conventional military parity with the western world. American scholars have often presumed that this globally encompassing military determined the Soviet Union's global policy. They have often presumed that the rules which governed Soviet Policy narrowly center around conflict:[IV] divide enemies wherever possible, avoid open confrontation, especially a two-front one, and avoid committing Soviet troops to places to far away from Soviet controlled areas of the world.

Chapter 2: Helsinki

In this chapter I will present a picture of the Helsinki Accords as a failure in Soviet diplomacy. This version of Helsinki will show how it took the shape that it did, how it influenced the cold war, and most importantly will emphasize Brezhnev's role in in the conference's facilitation. It will establish his original motivations for having it take place, and generally demonstrate his very real interest in coming to some consensus with the Western allies. Critically, this chapter will also demonstrate the mistakes of the Soviet Government to

accomplish their political goals at the conference via treaty. The legacy of The Final Act, that is the spotlight on human rights that it casts, contributed to the collapse of the Union and for some is a testament to Russian distrust of what they see as western malevolent designs.

Morgan writes in *The Final Act* about how Brezhnev himself wanted the event to be a decisive moment in the Cold War, and was willing to stake his entire reputation on its success.[V] Over several years he went to great lengths in order to corral many countries on both sides of the Iron Curtain into agreeing to come to the table. In the event, 8 presidents, 16 prime ministers, 6 communist party leaders and 24 foreign ministers attended the negotiations.[VI] He went to these lengths because he harbored a profound commitment to peace, and in the years leading up to Helsinki he developed strong ideas about foreign policy and security. Brezhnev's desire to avoid another war at all costs was heavily influenced by his own experience during World War 2, something he repeatedly brought up in his speeches to drive his points home. His memories of the war had a heavy influence on his planning and his goals:

> "We at the front dreamed of the day when the cannonades would subside and it would be possible to go to Paris, to climb the Eiffel Tower, and to announce in a way that it would be audible everywhere, that it was all over, over forever!" (Morgan, 52)

In his view, he was on a mission to do what Stalin and Khrushchev had failed to do, which was to achieve peace and security in his time. It is something many scholars have overlooked about this period: Brezhnev genuinely believed that communist east and capitalist west, two ideologically opposed constructs, could be at peace with one another. On top of his very real sentiments for peace, Brezhnev also understood that the USSR desperately needed the

conference to be a success for domestic reasons as well as for physical security. By the 1970's many citizens living under socialism did not feel that they were about to achieve the prosperity that they had been promised for so many years. With so much of the USSR's GDP dedicated to defense expenditures, the Union needed some breathing room in order to raise living standards, to satisfy consumer expectations at home, and generally match the capitalist pace of development. Breathing space, if the conference was a success, in theory, could also coincide with greater economic cooperation with the west:

> "Our principled line with respect to the capitalist countries, including the USA, is consistently and fully to practice the principles of peaceful coexistence, to develop mutually advantageous ties, and to cooperate with states prepared to do so, in a strengthening peace, making relations with them as stable as possible" (Morgan, 55)

Despite their high hopes for negotiations, the Soviet government may have misread the geopolitical terrain, and went forward with a contradictory diplomatic strategy. They invited the west to the negotiating table at a time when they believed, rightly so for economic reasons, that the west was in crisis while the east was getting stronger. Morgan writes that, between a general economic downturn and popular outrage in the US over involvement in Vietnam, it seemed as though western colonialism as the Soviets saw it was showing signs of collapsing on itself. If the Soviets offered negotiations now and the west rejected them, they could claim that the west was responsible for a resurgence of tensions, further undermining popular support for institutions like NATO.[VII] The allies understood this, and so set about figuring out how they could exploit the conference.

Western governments were able to essentially guarantee that if such a conference were to take place, there would almost certainly be a discourse that targeted the Brezhnev doctrine and the more sensitive parts of the communist system of government. To arrive at the conclusion that the Brezhnev doctrine represented unacceptable geopolitical behavior meant the affirmation of "respect for territorial integrity, noninterference in domestic affairs, the sovereign equality of all states, and the right to neutrality."[VIII] Lines of attack on the Brezhnev doctrine included reaffirming existing legislation agreed upon by international entities, such as the United Nation's 1970 Declaration of Friendly Relations and on the Strengthening of International Security, as well as a general endorsement of human rights which could allow the West to obtain the moral high ground when criticizing Warsaw Pact ideas about limited sovereignty.[IX] If the West succeeded in getting communist leaders to say that self determination and nonintervention applied to all nations regardless of political, economic and social systems, rejection of what was implicit in the Brezhnev Doctrine would be assumed, and would remove the capability for the Soviets to justify a military intervention like the one in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

This would be made worse for Brezhnev given the fact that his grand vision for success was fraught with contradictions. The Soviets were hoping to assert that any declaration with the west was at one time both a "sacred document that imposed solemn obligations" and something "that their governments sovereign rights allowed them to violate" if they found things inconvenient.[X]

Prior to the conference in 1969, the American ambassador in Moscow told the chairman of the council of ministers Aleksei Kosygin that the US would participate as long as they were

able to promote the removal of barriers to and support the free flow of ideas, protections on human rights and the free circulation of peoples across borders.[XI] With this they were able to shift the topic of debate in their favor. As long as western diplomats were unwilling to make concessions on these issues, they had a chance of seriously undermining Soviet efforts to quell dissent within their own borders.

Brezhnev was prepared to carry on with the conference despite the fact that the allies were clearly averse to his view of European security. They saw that that the conference was attempt to "lock down the status quo on the continent," which would freeze borders, guarantee the existence of East Germany and therefore legitimize the Soviet Union as a global power.[XII] The US and its allies in response began thinking about ways in which they could get around these Soviet objectives, which they were able to do via semantics. They concluded that if they put enough language in the accords about how borders could not be redrawn via the use of military strength, it would leave the door open for a peaceful change of borders.[XIII] This language, ostensibly a general declaration, was specifically targeted at the German question; German reunification would not happen by military means, but the door was left open for peaceful integration. Up until 1975 the assumption that the USSR would resort to military measures to maintain the status quo had kept German reunification from occurring. So long as there were Soviet armed forces in East Germany, the Socialist Unity Party would remain in control of the country. This in turn prevented the peaceful change of borders outlined in The Final Act. So when the borders did change in 1990 and Germany became whole again, Gorbachev's policy of non-intervention was in line with western Helsinki norms.

To reinforce this, the Western allies planned to incorporate additional language which would delegitimize overt foreign military intervention in sovereign states and put safeguards in place to make it alright for states to leave alliances without consequence.[XIV] In the end, Brezhnev and his negotiators were willing to settle for less than they might have gotten, to allow the idea of peaceful change of borders in the accords so long as the principle of inviolable borders stood alone.[XV]

As with the inviolability of frontiers, the Soviets were also willing to bend on the issue of human rights, though not after significant resistance. It took the negotiators more than 50 individual sessions, but eventually they agreed that guarantees would be put in place:

> "to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of though, conscience, religion or belief… to recognize the universal significance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for which is an essential factor for… peace, justice and well-being." (Morgan 141)

Like Anders Aslund, who will be discussed later in this paper, Morgan also touches heavily on the economic question when speaking about the weariness of importing western concepts. In chapter 5 of *The Final Act* Morgan discusses how economic conditions and questions played into the priorities of the Helsinki conference. He recalls that the Conference for Cooperation and Security in Europe (CSCE) took place in background of a worldwide economic downturn on both sides of the Iron Curtain. The economies of the west had great difficulties coping with the volatile price of oil. To remedy the crisis in the east, there seems to have been little doubt among communist leadership that economic growth would be best achieved if closer cooperation with western economies could be established. What was in doubt was whether the

ideological solidarity of the eastern bloc would be compromised if closer cooperation was put into effect. Brezhnev himself was torn on this question: he wanted to secure western investments in eastern Europe and transfer western technology into eastern economies, but he was afraid it could deteriorate the communist system of centralized economic planning. In the 1960's at least a quarter of all imports into the USSR were from the west, with this figure being even higher for others in the eastern bloc; it would be difficult for Soviet leaders to stomach an increase in statistics such as this one. For those seeking to liberalize the USSR by economic means, the result of the CSCE offered some hope:

> Although they conceded a handful of principles that served western interests, they [The Soviet Union] got little of what they wanted in return. The outcome represented the victory of the communists political fears over their economic aspirations and reflected the tensions inherent in Brezhnev's economic strategy.[XVI]

Morgan talks about how Brezhnev and many scholars within the Soviet Union were at odds with the two prevailing western economic theories of the 1960's; the one of shared economic convergence and the other of assimilation. Those in the west who subscribed to the first believed that with enough cooperation the east and the west would adopt a unique and shared economic model that retained elements of the both the capitalist and communist systems.[XVII] Other western scholars said the fundamental weaknesses inherent in the Soviet system would mean the USSR would eventually have to assimilate to western principles.

Brezhnev could not accept either of these theories, but with the economy stagnating and living standards for Soviet citizens being at undesirable levels, it was impossible to ignore

public opinion. Economic growth was the best way to raise living standards, and Morgan demonstrates what happened when Communist governments attempted to do things as an independent economic unit. He uses the example of Poland, where the economic downtown from an inability to repay western loans led to the decision to raise the price of food, which led to a popular uprising which forced prominent communist leaders to leave office, to describe what was at stake for communist leaders if they didn't fix their economies.[XVIII] It was a difficult dilemma: signing any kind of agreement with western nations to revitalize the Soviet economies could threaten communist solidarity. Relying too much on the capitalist world for economic development could have consequences.

Being wary of a second Poland scenario, Brezhnev was tasked with balancing economic openness with economic self reliance, and the CSCE made him confront this. In the end, Brezhnev concluded that it was acceptable to make broad economic promises to the west, but his negotiators must to the best of their ability to avoid getting too deep into specific concrete commitments. Morgan concludes that it wasn't really possible for the Soviets to avoid incorporating western economic principles while simultaneously stimulating their economies in the long term:

> In the absence of structural reform, the Soviet bloc would remain on the periphery of the international economy. If the USSR and its allies hoped to increase their access to foreign goods and technology, the burden of action lay with them. It was not a matter of lowering barriers between the socialist and capitalist worlds, but of lowering barriers within the socialist world itself.[XIX]

In a brief departure from Morgan, who does not speak of events in the Russian federation's more recent history in his book, it is perhaps noteworthy to assess the current condition of the economics angle of incorporating western norms. The question of whether to import western economic principles, whether economic cooperation would take place on Moscow's terms or western terms, was one which plagued the Brezhnev regime and one that Putin would later blow past in the 21st century. Instead of being in a position of needing to take policy from the west, the Russian federation is now in a stronger position to make policy instead. Putin has arguably been more effective in some ways at keeping the Russian state from being in a position of taking too much policy by establishing its own economic entities with former soviet states, such as the Eurasian Economic Union, and to contrast from a time when Soviet leaders had to buy grain from the west in order to feed citizens, many countries in western Europe now rely on Russia for oil and natural gas. While Russia now nominally practices state capitalism, it does so as a much more independent economic actor, being outside the European Union.

Morgan writes in *The Final Act* that what happened at Helsinki alone is not what caused the Cold War to end. He does argue however, that it helped resolve the ideological and geopolitical points of contention over which the Cold War was waged by establishing a common set of values which were shared both in the east and the west.[xx] As Putin took control of the historical memory of the Russian state and worked to disown certain revisionist elements of its history, Morgan praised Gorbachev and his advisors for his rejection of old Soviet ideas about inevitable conflict and the relationship between the individual and the state. Gorbachev's obligations were reminiscent of the same western values promoted at Helsinki, and so it comes as little surprise that he "adopted the western interpretation of the document," unlike

Brezhnev and others before him.[XXI] Brezhnev could not have foreseen Gorbachev's rise to power, a reform oriented leader who seemed more than willing to take a document that was left ambiguous by design and submit to the western version of it. Morgan points to then advisor to the General Secretary Georgy Arbatov, who questioned the long held conviction that strength in the east required western weakness and instability. Whether Gorbachev was directly influenced by the westernized version of the Helsinki reforms or not, it is undeniable that his policies ran parallel to Helsinki norms.

In regards to the exportation of western values to Soviet spaces, Morgan writes that Gorbachev made a clear distinction between "western values" and what he called "universal human values" and was wary of the Western Powers trying to use the former to subvert the ideological foundations of the USSR as he tried to help build a new international order based on the latter, being drawn from the Final Act. This demonstrates that that the diplomatic maneuvering of the allied leaders at the conference- taking advantage of the Soviet's desire for a quick conference for extracting important concessions, the repurposing of Soviet proposals to suit western interests, the expanding of the CSCE's agenda "to include questions that played to their strengths"- was all part of a strategy of conversion rather than containment.[XXII]

Morgan writes that in the years that followed the collapse of the Union, officials of the government of the Russian Federation lamented that "the country had been stripped of its rightful place in the world and now demanded that it be restored," that the end of the war in one commentator's words, was "a kinder, gentler version of the Treaty of Versailles." This kind of rhetoric from the mid 90's of has been echoed by Putin, who now seeks to push back against these western values and to return Russia to that "rightful place" on the world stage.

Chapter 3: Perspectives on the Collapse of the Union Within the Context of the Helsinki Norms

Different scholars have presented different takes and theories as to why and how the USSR fell apart in 1991. While some have argued that it was from self-inflicted wounds, others point to foreign influences. Some writers try to make distinctions between what democratized states possess which the Soviet Union lacked, such as a stable succession process, to explain it. Others attribute the collapse to the decisions and doctrines of influential leaders. Still others view the collapse through specific lenses, such as with the rule of law. It is a perpetual debate as to which of these factors had a more profound influence over historical events. This chapter will attempt to dissect these perspectives on this debate.

This section will try to stay focused on Helsinki and not get carried too far by other questions. The topic of this thesis has many different rabbit holes that one can end up in if one does not stay streamlined, which can be a real problem. The goal here is not to answer the question of why did the Soviet Union collapse: this question is far too big in scope to be answerable here. Instead the focus will be on how western values relate to the events surrounding the disintegration which are noted in discussions of the USSR's collapse.

Snyder

In *Road to Unfreedom*, Timothy Snyder views the collapse of the Union through the lens of instability, which is the result of a lack of a healthy democratic structure. The key to how Snyder's piece relates to Helsinki and western values is arguing that democratic values are implicit in the ones outlined in the western interpretation of Helsinki; that is, a person's right to self-determination, respect for fundamental freedoms, access to information, and so on. It may

seem like a stretch at first, but when one considers that many leaders in the west sought to sow "the seeds for long term change by eroding the Soviet bloc's conceptual footings" as described by Morgan, the language that is inherent to their mission demonstrates that eventual democratization was assumed in importing western values. To be clear, Snyder's purpose with succession lies mainly with the Putin era, while for the Soviet era he discusses issues of reform to a greater extent. An argument can be made that the issue of leadership change is inherent to democratic values, which as we have demonstrated connect to the western values of Helsinki.

In *Road to Unfreedom* Snyder points to the lack of any kind of a succession principle, the foundation of democracy, when assigning causes to the collapse of the USSR. He notes that since its founding in 1922 the Soviet Union was ruled by the communist part as a direct result of the civil conflicts of that period, though in theory power lay with the working class.[XXIII] No succession process was ever put in place as a result of this, because the state had been born out of violence, a violence which eliminated the monarchy and had nothing with which to replace it. The Socialist plan to make the idea of the state obsolete was doomed when it became clear the state was never going to go away.

Snyder does acknowledge that the bloody purges that took place between the 1920's and 1960's did serve the purpose of a succession process. After the 1960's they did cease, but because there was still no stable process the leadership of the country simply aged.

It was into this political environment that Gorbachev came to power. His agenda prioritized "reforming" communism and building new institutions so that the Soviet Union could survive in the modern world, and so "he encouraged the communist leaders of the Soviet satellites in

eastern in eastern Europe to do the same.[XXIV]" Gorbachev's agenda was in line with Helsinki's westerns norms.

This agenda would backfire. In places where the USSR had influence, communists governments dealing with economic crisis like in Poland went along with Gorbachev's agenda and thusly held partially free elections in which communists parties ran against new political parties and promptly lost power.[XXV] The Union Republics then followed suit, and in turn their ruling communist elites were replaced by new ones. Snyder says that this is part of how Russia ended up with Boris Yeltsin, who is widely considered by most Russians to have weakened the Russian state.

Cohen

In his 2009 book *Soviet Fates and Lost Alternatives: From Stalinism to the New Cold War*, Stephen Cohen attempts to systematically dismantle the mainstream explanations for why the Union collapsed, pointing out the fallacies in arguments about the inevitability of collapse, discounting ideas about popular revolutions, and the role of an "unworkable economy." [XXVI] What he is left with has clear echoes of Morgan's perspective in two ways: the role of western values and the role of leaders in history. Cohen does not completely break away from the economic explanation, but focuses primarily on politics.

Just as Morgan emphasizes Brezhnev's role in taking the USSR to Helsinki, Cohen highlights Gorbachev as the principle catalyst for the Union's downfall. Cohen demonstrates that Gorbachev's reputation among some scholars as a feeble and superficial reformer are unfounded, that it was his will to embrace Helsinki norms for his agenda that led the Union to where it ended up:

> A passionate, unrelenting commitment to the reformation he called perestroika was the defining feature of Gorbachev's leadership, and many knowledgeable observers thought it caused him to introduce changes too quickly. With that almost evangelical reformism in mind, a onetime critic dubbed Gorbachev the "Apostle Mikhail," pointing out that he had used power "not for the sake of power" but out of "concern for the fate of the reconstruction of life he had begun.[XXVII]

According to Cohen it was the role of leaders- Gorbachev and as a result of him, Yeltsin, that dissolved the Union: Gorbachev as the willing reformer and Yeltsin as the willing power mongerer. Gorbachev was a firm believer in the idea that the USSR's survivability was dependent on democratic and economic reform, but was not prepared for what liberal democratization would lead to. Democratization "created a public space for all manner of long repressed discontents and newly aroused demands," something which was in line with Helsinki ideas about self-determination and freedom of thought.[XXVIII] Gorbachev had by 1991 created a lot of enemies in the government, between the nationalists who opposed his reforms and the intelligentsia who impatiently wanted his reforms to come more quickly. Cohen proposes that if Gorbachev had formed his own presidential political party that he would not have been so politically isolated, and outlines the process by which Gorbachev's reforms led to what happened at the Belovezh hunting lodge in 1991: First, political factors that led to instability in the economy led to democratization and decentralization reforms, which obviously necessitated a loss of some degree of centralized control over state resources and property.[XXIX] This paved the way for the clamor for sovereignty by the republics to gain a footing as they

gained more regional control. The other result of decentralization was of course privatization and the hoarding of goods. Seeing that reform would not suit his interests, Yeltsin opted to dissolve the Union, passing it off as a "transformation" of the union rather than a "liquidation."[xxx] Gorbachev, the energetic figure that he was, accepted western ideas of freedom of speech, self determination and general political freedom which were consistent with and in adherence to Helsinki norms. Cohen's general argument is that it was Gorbachev's leadership which contributed the most to the destruction of the USSR, and a significant portion of Gorbachev's leadership was the attempted incorporation of western principles to the Soviet system. This perhaps shows that accepting the western interpretation of Helsinki norms can make a crisis caused on a basis beyond the Helsinki process possible.

Pomeranz

The perspective on the dissolution of the Union taken by Russian Law Scholar and Georgetown Professor William Pomeranz falls partially into that category of arguments which Cohen chastises, as it operates under the assumption that reform was impossible for the Union because of the state's inherent rigidity. His 2019 book *Law and the Russian State: Russia's Legal Evolution from Peter the Great to Vladimir Putin* presents a compelling argument that highlights the role of the rule of law and the constitutional crisis at hand for what ultimately brought an end to the USSR. It is similar to Cohen's take in that it focuses on the political aspect of the Gorbachev era, and takes into account how the economic situation made state actors behave without prescribing outright blame on the state of the economy. Like Cohen and Morgan, Pomeranz understands the significant role of the decision makers, Gorbachev the reformer,

who “turned to political reform as his best chance to achieve...successes,”[XXXI] and Yeltsin the power hungry president, who for different reasons steered the direction of events.

Pomeranz outlines the timeline of the dissolution using the passage of legislation, beginning in 1987 with the new laws on state enterprises which allowed Soviet industries to go into joint ventures with foreign companies (as long as the foreign partner was the minority shareholder), followed by the 1988 Law on Cooperatives, which stated newly formed small businesses can own their own property, hire and pay employees, and generally gave a genuine taste of the sense of autonomy to privately owned businesses, which was a step towards reform.[XXXII] All of this cooperation was possible because of the Helsinki Final Act’s provisions on cooperation in the field of economics, as beforehand such things would have been the target of the Brezhnev doctrine.

At a time when he was fearing a loss of authority and aware of his diminishing support, Gorbachev then called for a socialist law-based state, which Pomeranz notes as being a term dating back to tsarist times, meaning that everyone within the governing body would answer to the constitution, and would further the cause of democratization.[XXXIII] Gorbachev’s vision of what such a state was supposed to look like was vague, and the result was many amendments in the Soviet constitution, which hadn’t seen any change since Brezhnev was in power. It is significant to note here that following the Helsinki Final Act, the first ten points of the Helsinki document were added to the constitution by Brezhnev and were still there when Gorbachev’s constitutional crisis took place. Pomeranz points out that during this time “the list of institutions with the right of legislative initiatives before Russia’s legislature expanded significantly”[XXXIV] to include a very wide array of state bodies, which along with the other

constitutional reforms, may have prevented Gorbachev from losing control had they been implemented sooner.

As acknowledged by many authors, allowing for democratizing elections to take place had allowed for questions of national sovereignty to be addressed all across the board. The rise of nationalism at this time gave way to what Pomeranz calls the "war of laws,"[XXXV] in which many of the Soviet republics, armed with their own constitutions and legal codes, opted to declare independence from and eventually move away from the Union. To counter this Gorbachev enacted the April 1990 law of secession, two years after Estonia and other republics issued declarations of sovereignty, in order to make the secession process as long and painful and foot-dragging as possible. The countries who wished to leave were to be subjected to a five year wait period, during which time they could resolve any pressing border disputes, and they had to have Soviet legislation written into their government. [XXXVI] Gorbachev's decisions to weigh down the secession process rather than go to whatever lengths possible to try and preserve the Union's power monopoly speaks to Gorbachev's upholding of Helsinki ideas about sovereignty and self determination. Pomeranz argues that enacting this law revealed Gorbachev's weakened position, a position Yelstin became acutely aware of, and Gorbachev himself knew it:

> From Gorbachev's perspective, he had been required to legalize a process that, if implemented, would end his rule. Meanwhile, the individual republics believed that Gorbachev had not acted in good faith and later ignored the law of secession when formulating demands for independence.[XXXVII]

While Pomeranz acknowledges the multitude of factors that were influential in the dissolution of the Soviet Union, he asserts that the constitutional crisis that shook the foundations of the long established political hierarchy within the Union was critical to the collapse:

> The collapse of the Soviet Union involves the confluence of crises- economic, political, national- that all occurred simultaneously and with cumulative effect. At each turning point, Soviet law was put to the test and, on its own terms, ultimately found deficient.[XXXVIII]

Chapter 4: Perspectives on the Early Years of the Putin Regime

After the Yeltsin period, spectators in the west were anxious to see whether the rising star of Vladimir Putin would be as receptive to western economic and political values as Yeltsin had. From the perspective of western governments, the first several years seemed to demonstrate a lot of common ground with the Putin regime, between a commitment to fighting global terrorism and the encouragement of economic growth via integration on some level with the EU, however in hindsight what scholars argue about is or isn't true of this period appears to be somewhat muddied by the conviction that Putin's goals may not have always been congruent with his actions. The following authors have addressed this issue of importing concepts from the west.

Aslund

In *Russia's Crony Capitalism*, Anders Aslund talks about some of the major economic structural changes that occurred in Russia in the early 2000's, placing a focus on the lessons learned from the financial disaster in 1998 which led to the emphasis on financial stability and fiscal

conservatism. While some authors have labeled Putin as an opportunist who's agenda would evolve depending on convenience, Aslund asserts that Putin has been averse to western values from the outset, throughout the time he pandered to the west with his appraisal of democracy.[XXXIX] Since the formative moments in Putin's life- the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian financial crisis of 1998, and the Orange revolution in Ukraine, Putin has shown great skill in "trying to be everything for everybody.[XL]" Aslund says the consolidation of power, and the movement towards a centralized personal authoritarian system has led to Putin's accomplishment of a *Vertical* of power, of a dictatorship through law.[XLI] It has also rendered Putin's words on western values quite meaningless.

One note that Aslund makes in his book is his agreement with other scholars about flipping the perspective: Russian studies in the west have, naturally, been framed as the west looking at Russia and trying to understand it, rather than thinking about how Russian leaders perceive the west. Aslund agrees with observations made by Fiona Hill and Cliff Gaddy that one of the greatest threats to stability in east-west relations is "how dangerously little Putin understand about us- our motives, our mentality, our values.[XLII]" In his distrust of western intentions and his war against the oligarchs and having been heavily influenced by his time with the KGB, Putin has a made a special place of power for Russia's various intelligence agencies. Many of Putin's colleagues from the KGB who served with him during the Cold War are now key players on the Russian security council. Aslund cautions that their heavy dependence, and Putin's, on intelligence reports renders them "vulnerable to internalize their biases and conspiracy theories.[XLIII]"

Aslund also uses this book to demonstrate how Putin understands the history of his country and how that shaped his restructuring of the government in the early 2000's. Putin has said "from the very beginning, Russia was created as a super centralized state. That's practically laid down in its genetic code, its traditions, and the mentality of its people.[XLIV]" This book illustrates Putin's personal beliefs, that rather than utilizing a western style of checks and balances, demand that he reinforce federal power in modern Russia. This is evident from his removal of the regional governors from the Federal Council so that senators would be more obedient to the Kremlin, from his work to make judicial courts dependent on the central government to function, and from his takeover and transformation of Russian media into a propaganda machine. Aslund summarizes this in the words of US Ambassador Michael McFaul: "The institutional defenses against authoritarianism such as a robust and independent media, a developed party system, and a vibrant civil society do not exist.[XLV]"

Aslund effectively demonstrates the timeline from Putin's 2001 commitment with the US to fight terrorism to his 2007 Munich speech and the slide into overt anti-Americanism.

> Incidentally, Russia- we- are constantly being taught about democracy. But for some reason those who teach us do not want to learn themselves. I consider that the unipolar model in not only unacceptable, but also impossible in today's world.[XLVI]

Aslund does not rule out the possibility that distrust of the west was present in Putin's mind even before the Orange Revolution in 2006 and the American retreat from the ABM treaty, which is consistently defined by Putin as the ostensible breaking point in US-Russia relations. Putin's disgust with the west was high in 2007, and Aslund seems to hint that it is no

coincidence that the first of Russia's known cyber attacks, on Estonia's government and its commercial banks, took place a few months after the Munich speech.[XLVII]

Hill

In discussing Russia's transformation into a nation-state in *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions Since 1989*, William Hill touches on all the same points as Aslund, however he also frames this transformation within the broader context of international security and the movement of western ideas. Instead of choosing a decisive point of no return for East-West relations, Hill argues that the current state of relations are the result of a series of small decisions made over the course of the early 2000's. While he asserts that Putin's main concerns in the first years of office were domestic, the reasons for this internal concern came partially from Putin's considerations about foreign elements.

Hill shows that Putin's early years were all about obtaining understanding and respect for Russia from the prevailing power structures in Europe and the US: he wanted Russia to be seen has a world power, capable of managing itself, and not as a state struggling to emerge into the 21st century successfully as other European states had. When he invited the Secretary General of NATO to the Kremlin shortly after he became president in 2000, Putin expressed that he wished to "repair Moscow's relationship with NATO and noted decisively his view that Russia was a part of Europe.[XLVIIII]" Putin was quick to make good relations with the west's key players of the period, such as French President Chirac and German Chancellor Schröder (he later theorizes that Putin's initiative to expand dialogue with EU members may have been carried out in an attempt to drive a wedge between the US and EU- to deal with each partner

separately[XLIX]). Hill makes the note that other scholars have noted Putin's "quick expression of support for the United States after the September 11th attacks" when demonstrating how Putin hoped the US would now better understand Russia's fight with the Chechens, which in his view ran parallel to the situation faced by the US. An official joint effort on terrorism would have been beneficial to the Putin regime, and for the first few years the US and Russia had a generally understanding: Russia would welcome an American military presence in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to support the war on terror in Afghanistan, they would share intelligence and would not object to Baltic inclusion into the NATO alliance, which Putin perhaps saw more as a tool for combating terrorism and less as a western security institution with global ambitions[L]. In return, the US would establish a planned reduction of nuclear weapons, and on the economic front the Bush administration would support reform in Russia by encouraging Russian entry into the World Trade Organization.

The US never fulfilled its promises. Hill demonstrates that when the economic problems plaguing Russia started to go away, thanks partially to a rise in the price of oil, Russian foreign policy began to place an even greater emphasis on security, and tolerance for what was seen as western interference and influence in eastern Europe decreased drastically.[LI] Putin became very critical of the OSCE Chechnya Assistance Group, lamenting that they weren't doing a good enough job. His approach to the near abroad and the west was changing.

In regards to 9/11, Hill shows the OSCE response, brought on by US leadership "in directions that had steadily less to do with defense of European territory or security and stability" and more to do with what Hill describes as "full blown neo-wilsonianism... the defense and spread of democracy around the world[LII]" as ultimately more un-welcome importations of

western values in post soviet areas. In other words, it was a global shift towards interventionism, unilateralism, and democratic transformation. This was a world that Putin more and more viewed as unacceptable.

The dissent against the OSCE did not just emanate from Russia. Hill shows that in the early 2000's countries began to dislike the OSCE's presence within their borders because it was viewed as an intrusion on sovereignty. Their hosting was seen by some as the mark of a struggling nation, a perception that leaders were not fond of.

Another straw on the camels back leading up to the color revolutions in the mid 2000's was the growing realization of NATO's global aspirations. In 2003 both NATO and the EU agreed that their security demands the possession of expeditionary forces, military elements that can be deployed anywhere in the world at any time. This added to Putin's uneasiness about the spread of democracy, and convinced him more and more that regime change in Russia brought about by foreign elements was a real possibility. The combination of criticisms of domestic political institutions in Russia, the western worlds perceived affinity for democratic regime change, and the aspirations by NATO to expand the size and capability of its military capacities all served to make Russia deeply distrustful of western intentions by 2006. Hill concludes that it was these factors that began to erode cooperation between east and west, both in OSCE and the security framework of the EU.

Hill argues that by 2006 OSCE activities, primarily staffed by westerners, in post soviet spaces were doing more harm towards relations with the Russian state than with NATO expansion. Russian officials clashed with the OSCE over various points of contention: the Russian sponsored settlement plan for Moldova, the negative evaluations of elections in former

soviet states, and most importantly the various color revolutions that were taking place all across the post soviet bloc.[LIII]

One of the main points of Hill's arguments that is well highlighted in this section is not only about Putin's growing fear of regime change in Russia, but also his frustration at being denied a more free hand in the geopolitics of the near abroad. Hill gives two examples of this: the failed Kozak Memorandum that Putin supported, and the election and revolution in Ukraine that brought Yushchenko into power. Putin and the Moldovan President Voronin tried to get the OSCE to sign on to the Kozak memorandum, which would have allowed Russian military elements to remain in Moldova. The OSCE was not made aware of the fullest extent of what was in the memorandum until not long before it was due to be signed, and they flatly refused the document. Putin was enraged at the west for what was in his view "sabotaging a successful Russian effort in conflict resolution," as it cast yet more doubt on the role of the Russian state in post Soviet spaces.[LIV]

The OSCE's role in keeping the election honest seems to be what really set Putin over the edge in terms of mistrust of western intentions. Moscow sent advisors to help Yanukovich with his political campaign while Putin personally campaigned for him, as he was the most congenial candidate to Russia's interests. At the same time Yushchenko was poisoned and disfigured, saved only by medical assistance from a hospital in Vienna. Many westerners believe Russia was behind the attempted assassination, though it has not been proven. Many Russians, on the other hand, were convinced that the popular uprisings which followed Yanukovich's victory were staged by the US, and deepened their belief that the United States aimed to support subversive regime change in eastern Europe:

> "Open intervention of many western countries and organizations such as the OSCE and the EU for a level playing field (and thus in effect against his [Putin's] candidate) was interpreted by the Kremlin as de facto support for Yushchenko and regime change."[LV]

It was the combination of these events, plus the added paranoia from the exile of President Akaev from Kyrgyzstan in 2005 and the US position on President Karimov's massacre of hundreds of civilians the same year, that led to the first of Russia's restrictions on NGO's. These had been seen as instruments of political change and subversive reform, and it had become abundantly clear to Russia that the US, using these instruments, had a vested interest in "replacing Russian influence in the near abroad."[LVI] Hill says that as Russia's economy became stronger thanks to a boom in oil wealth, Putin became more self-confident in his criticisms and was not afraid to challenge this emerging security structure which clearly was not serving Russian interests.

Chapter 5: Eurasianism

If Vladimir Putin's Russia were to turn around and support a whole-hearted unification with Europe, to import western values, the playbook for how to govern the Russian federation would have to be completely overhauled. Putin has enjoyed a great deal of personal power as his own style of autocrat. Russia as it stands will not allow itself to become a junior partner with anyone, or to give up the superiority it has so often enjoyed in bilateral negotiations.

The aforementioned playbook Putin uses, contains a lot of the building blocks behind Eurasianist International Relations theory, which has figured largely in recent

publications seeking to understand policy decisions under today's Russian Federation. Angela Stent highlights the significance of Eurasianism in regards to Putin's adoption of it in her 2019 publication *Putin's World*. Eurasianism came about during the 1920's among anti-communist conservatives who were exiled from Russia, people who dreamed of waking up one day to a "conservative utopia."[LVII] Eurasianism has seen an emergence in Putin's Russia in recent years, as it was one of the few IR concepts left in the theoretical vacuum after the collapse the USSR that had a substantial pool of proponents supporting it.[LVIII] It rose to prominence during this time as the first serious alternative to Yeltsin's pro-western policies, which had been largely to blame for the economic crisis of the late 90's. Stent writes that Yeltsin's government's affinity for what Andrei Kozyrov has described as "the generally accepted rules" of capitalist society, as well as their readiness to adhere to them, went against centuries of Russian ideological and cultural tradition.[LIX] The specialists in IR theory within Russia as a result found it impossible to accept western concepts, and so turned to Eurasianism as an alternative to a Western-Eurocentric world view. The Eurasianists were initially divided into two distinct camps: Eurasianist Reformists Democrats and Eurasianist Slavophiles.

The Democratic Reformists were politicians and military figures who might have been willing to follow a integrationist policy, though nonetheless expressed their dissatisfaction with western countries who seemed to be averse to the idea of vigorously incorporating Russia into its institutions.[LX] They came to perceive the potential dangers of relying too heavily on the west for support, and felt that as though the Russian government had lent too much consideration to its policy towards the West.

The number one priority of the Reformists was to strengthen the ties between Russia and the former Soviet Republics (i.e.: the Common Wealth of Independent States), to turn its attention more east and south than to the far and away west.[LXI] This was put best by former foreign advisor to the Yeltsin presidency Sergei Stankevich in 1992:

> There is no getting away from certain facts. One of them is that we are now separated from Europe by a whole chain of independent states and find ourselves much further from it, which inevitably involves a definite and, indeed, a quite substantial redistribution of our resources, our potentialities, our links and our interests in favor of Asia and the Eastern sector.

The biggest contrast between the Reformists and the Slavophilic Eurasianists is that the Slavophiles do not share the same penchant for Democracy that the reformists do. While they do share the need to stress Russia's distinct nature and identity from both Europe and Asia, this vein of Eurasianism calls for the establishment of a strong central authority, and its supporters, Putin among them, will not shy away from a revival of the Russian empire.[LXII] They are vehemently opposed to any kind of Western assistance, as well as integration with European economic, political, and military institutions on any level because it in their view restricts Russia's sovereignty. This line of thinking has echoes of Timothy Snyder's "politics of eternity," in the idea that Russia was always and must always be an independent nation, and that integrating into European society would be an unholy detriment.

Chapter 6: Putin's Resulting Agenda

How does the Soviet failure at Helsinki, in it's goals and execution, relate to Vladimir Putin's mission to make Russia a great power, to make it "great again," feared and respected by the world over? The answer to this question reflects the answer to the other great question of current IR theorists: Why have relations between the East and the West deteriorated so much? It has already been established that the Russian mistrust of the West and the world at large goes way back. It goes back certainly well beyond the Eurasianists of the 1920's, who simply gave this mistrust something ideological to counterbalance it with, gave it structure, somewhere it could have a concrete place in ideology, and something that could justify authoritarian rule.

The Helsinki Conference's most important aspect was that it created space for and precedent to western values, that is, human rights and self determination of peoples, in writing for both side of the Iron Curtain. For smaller countries this created a moment in which they could solidify and protect their own national autonomy. US officials understood that they could help liberalize the USSR if they promoted three things: one, the free flow of ideas and remove barriers to such flows, two, protections on human rights, and three, the free circulation of peoples.

In the great game of civilization, autocratic systems of government are obliged to avoid lending credence to human rights at all costs, as it delegitimizes the regime that is in power. As Morgan argues, this is a significant part of the explanation for why the great Soviet empire ultimately collapsed from self-inflicted wounds, because it was unable to address issues of self-determination and hold together as one entity at the same time. By allowing the western powers to insist on "human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of

thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,[LXIII]" Brezhnev had made dissent against himself, the state and the sacredness of Soviet history, which until now had been totally unacceptable, conceptually legal in the eyes of the law. Through the years leading up to the formal demise of the USSR, it allowed the Soviet Republics to one by one establish their own sovereignty and break from the Union. The promise of democracy and modernity, which was seen by many soviet republics as a way out from under the Soviet umbrella, had been responsible for the loss of so much territory. For many Russians it was a particularly humiliating experience. This was one thing that Westerners missed early on after the Soviet collapse, when assumptions were drawn about Russia's willingness to want to integrate into capitalist democratic society.

As discussed, there was a brief period from 2000 to 2004 in which Putin "sought integration into the global economy."[LXIV] It was early on in his presidency, before he had started to exhibit convictions about what consequences there would be for his position of power if integration and westernization began to take place in Russia. In this way Putin has been described as having a committed political agenda while simultaneously being an uncommitted, self-preserving opportunist.

This promise of democracy and economic mobility was something that many in post Soviet spaces shared significant desire for during the early 2000's. For former communist countries in central and eastern Europe, joining the EU and NATO would have been hugely beneficial, as it was seen as a way to get closer to Europe and to diversify their economies. The success of countries which had already become a part of it encouraged states such as Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine to want to follow a similar path. In an attempt to create stronger ties with

nations who had yet to integrate, EU representatives hosted a series of EU Eastern Partnership summits, whose goal, as described by Lawrence Freedman, was to build "a common area of democracy, prosperity, stability, and increased interactions and exchanges" (Freedman, 2019) with the non-members who were invited, which included Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.[LXV] What came of these talks was the possibility of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTA'S between nonmember states and the EU), which would require the "consolidation of democratic institutions, protections of human rights, promotion of a market economy, and gradual adoption of EU rules and regulations" (Freedman, 2019).

This is exactly what Putin had feared. The USSR had collapsed partially thanks to the emergence of self-determination, the Russian state was now perceived as weak and uninfluential, and now the EU was trying to use democracy to create its own sphere of influence in Russia' backyard:

> We have every reason to assume that the infamous policy of containment, led in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, continues today. [Western Countries] are constantly trying to sweep us into a corner because we have an independent position and we do not engage in hypocrisy. (Vladimir Putin on the annexation of Crimea, March 2014)[LXVI]

Putin's response was first to attempt to make his own international economic entities to mimic the European Union's, beginning with the future establishment of the Economic Customs Union (later renamed to the Eurasian Economic Union) which included Kazakhstan and Belarus. Balancing Russian hegemony with meaningful cooperation was a challenge; Putin needed

Armenia, Moldova, and most importantly Ukraine to make it work, and all these countries were, in his view, fraternizing with the EU.

The pressing question was how to keep these states in line and preserve the status quo of Russian dominance in the east. Putin moved to penalize former Soviet spaces who got too close to the west through an economic system of rewards and punishments.[LXVII] First, he placed a ban on imports from Lithuania in 2013, who had joined the EU prior, to demonstrate to Armenia, whose economy was totally dependent on exports to Russia, that dealings with the west would not be tolerated. Armenia, understanding the message, fell into line and walked away from the EU summits and joined the Eurasian Economic Union two years later. Meanwhile, Moldova was subjected to a direct ban on wine imports to Russia, but however continues to regularly attend the EU Eastern Partnership summits.

Ukraine was and continues to be a different matter altogether. Russia did its best to use economic coercion to try to force Ukraine away from the EU and towards the EEU, and for a very brief moment Putin believed he had succeeded. When President Victor Yanukovych walked away from the EU association agreement he was presented with in November 2013, it seemed like perhaps integration with the west would not come to Ukraine, and the liberalizing influences could be kept from it.[LXVIII] Putin had not accounted for Ukrainian public opinion however, as it was very shortly after this that the Euromaidan protests took place, which resulted in Yanukovych having to flee the country and new elections being held in Ukraine. What followed was Russia's annexation of the Crimea.

If he was to prevent liberalization and true democracy from reaching the Russian State, as it was already beginning to infiltrate former Soviet spaces as discussed, it was imperative

that Putin find a way to demonstrate to the Russian people how flawed western style democracy truly was, how fragile it could be, and how it ultimately would never work. Not only has Putin succeeded in doing this, but he has also made many westerners question their own democracies.

Distrust of the United States, an aversion to progressive democracy culminated in 2016 with the Russian cyber campaign against western democratic elections, specifically the infiltration of American Democratic Party official's email accounts.[LXIX] Intelligence agencies in the west concluded that:

> "Russia's goals were to undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency. We further assess that Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump."[LXX] (Stent, 2019)

Hillary Clinton was always a big critic of Russian domestic foreign policy and Putin as a leader, particularly after Putin annexed the Crimea in 2014. There was a general consensus that she was going to win the election, mainly because it seemed ludicrous to some Americans that a reality TV show host could become president of the United States. Putin wanted to support him for several reasons. Firstly if Hilary had won, the far reaching financial sanctions on Russian oligarchs would have remained in place, as she had repeatedly made clear in her speeches what position she would take on Russia ("Now if this sounds familiar, its what Hitler did back in the 30s" ~Hilary Clinton in response to Putin's annexation of the Crimea[LXXI]). Second, Hilary would have been the first women elected president in the history of the US, which would not only have been a win for her but also a big achievement for American democracy, promoting

equality and showing that women could obtain the highest positions of power. Once again, Putin's goal was to show that democracy could not deliver the freedoms laid out in the OSCE's Final Act. Third, perhaps most importantly was that Putin saw what Trump represented to many living in the world of democracy and globalization; as a huge step back.

Conclusions:

The endeavor to comprehend the reasons for policy decision making in the Soviet Union and later the Russian Federation has been subject to much scrutiny, particularly in recent memory as relations with the west continue to deteriorate. While most Cold War era scholarly work has a view largely limited to military expansion and consolidation, with contentious ideas about security and insecurity like that of Roger Kanet, William Griffith and Jonathan Alford, the publications of the last several years, from scholars just has Michael Morgan and William Hill among others between 2010 and 2020, have cast new light on this complicated subject. They demonstrate that what is central to this comprehension of policy behavior has been the aversion of both the Soviet Union and the Russian State towards the adoption of western values, which have been described as democratization, liberalization, freedom of movement and the guarantee of basic human rights. Were the liberalizing influences of the west instrumental in the collapse of the Soviet Union, as some Russians believe? The body of work presented in this paper demonstrates that the values embraced by both east and west in Helsinki in 1975 did indeed play a role in the collapse of the Union. Other questions to remain, over which authors do not always agree: was the collapse inevitable in this regard, as hinted by William Pomeranz, or avoidable, as suggested by Stephen Cohen? Does or did Vladimir Putin have an anti-western agenda from the very beginning as Anders Aslund asserts, or is it more

believable that he is a geopolitical opportunist? It is clear that Moscow's reluctance towards European cooperation can be traced back to the Helsinki Accords, and that the current state of relations is not the result of any decisive moment in recent or far off history, rather the result of many factors and decisions made over decades of Soviet, Russian, and Western leadership. There is a strong argument that the struggle with for or against these values has had a subsequent, lasting influence on the policies of the Russian Federation in recent years. Understanding where western values fit (or rather, do not fit) into Slavophilic Eurasionist ideology will help scholars understand the complex and sometimes volatile nature of Russian policy decisions. Do western values pose a serious threat to autocratic rulers generally? Is there a formula that can be applied? If they do pose a threat, then what are the strategies employed by leaders like Vladimir Putin to stay in power? Finally, once Putin is no longer in control of the Russian Federation, will Russia embrace the west as others have done, or will a place for Russian in Europe continue to be elusive?

References

[I] Dr Thomas Gomart. (2006). *Russian foreign policy: Strange inconsistency.* ()

[II] Kanet, R. E. (1982). *Soviet foreign policy in the 1980s*. New York, NY: Praeger. Pages 3-5

[III] Martin McCauley. (1983). *The soviet union after brezhnev*. New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, inc. Page 112

[IV] Kanet, 19

[V] Michael Cotey Morgan. (2018). *The final act*. US: Princeton University Press. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvc774nj. Page 1

[VI] Morgan, 2

[VII] Morgan, 90

[VIII] Morgan, 93

[IX] Morgan 126

[X] Morgan, 13

[XI] Morgan, 93

[XII] Morgan, 124

[XIII] Morgan, 125

[XIV] Morgan, 126

[XV] Morgan, 131

[XVI] Hill, 146

[XVII] Hill, 147

[XVIII] Hill, 148

[XIX] Hill, 159

[XX] Morgan, 235

[XXI] Morgan, 236

[XXII] Morgan, 254

[XXIII] Snyder, page 38

[XXIV] Snyder, page 44

[XXV] Snyder, page 41

[XXVI] Cohen, S. F. (2011). *Soviet fates and lost alternatives*. New York: Columbia University Press, page 160.

[XXVII] Cohen, Page 176

[XXVIII] Cohen, Page 154

[XXIX] Cohen, Page 169

[XXX] Cohen, Page 180

[XXXI] Pomeranz, W. (2019). *Law and the russian state*. London ; Oxford ; New York ; New Delhi ; Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic. Page 108

[XXXII] Pomeranz, Page 108

[XXXIII] Pomeranz, Page 109

[XXXIV] Pomeranz, Page 110

[XXXV] Pomeranz, Page 111

[XXXVI] Pomeranz, Page 111

[XXXVII] Pomeranz, Page 112

[XXXVIII] Pomeranz, Page 114

[XXXIX] Anders Aslund. (2019). *Russia's crony capitalism*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Page 34

[XL] Aslund Page 34
[XLI] Aslund, 54
[XLII] Aslund, 34
[XLIII] Aslund, 37

[XLIV] Aslund, 39
[XLV] Aslund, 41
[XLVI] Aslund, 46
[XLVII] Aslund, 46
[XLVIII] Hill, & William. (2018). *No place for russia* (1st ed.). New York: Columbia University Press. Page 173

[XLIX] Hill, 217
[L] Hill, page 175
[LI] Hill, page 176
[LII] Hill, page 179
[LIII] Hill, 227
[LIV] Hill, 228
[LV] Hill, 232
[LVI] Hill, 234
[LVII] Stent, A. (2019). *Putin's world* (First hardcover edition ed.). New York ; Boston: Grand Central Publishing. Page 40-42

[LVIII] Sergunin, A. (2016). *Explaining Russian foreign policy behavior*. Stuttgart: Columbia University Press. Page 71

[LIX] Stent, 40-42
[LX] Sergunin, page 86
[LXI] Sergunin. Page 87
[LXII] Sergunin. Page 90
[LXIII]
[LXIV] Segunin, 47-48
[LXV] Freedman, L. (2019). *Ukraine and the art of strategy*. New York, NY, United States of America: Oxford University Press. Page 66

[LXVI] Stent, page 17
[LXVII] Freedman, page 71
[LXVIII] Freedman, page 69
[LXIX] Stent, 315-16
[LXX] Stent, 316-17
[LXXI] Stent, 316-17