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Abstract:

The discursive reconstruction of Eurasia has brought about structural changes, which have strengthened Russia's position internationally, and fortified its soft power. As such, the Eurasian project reflects Russia's broader approach to parties including BRICS and the EU. Russia's political elite routinely promotes specific conceptions of Russia's international identity and role with different partners as a means to facilitate cooperation. This creates significant geographical and policy overlaps and breeds inconsistency and competition, but nonetheless contributes to Russia's preferred low-cost, low-commitment version of co-operation. The Eurasian project therefore represents just one (albeit important) example of the Russian leadership's conversion of ideas about the international arena into political realities. By balancing competing roles and relationships, Russia maintains a 'multi-vector' foreign policy that is flexible, unencumbered by restrictive alliances, and oriented towards sovereignty, great power and strength.

List of abbreviations used in text:

BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States
CSTO – Collective Treaty Security Organisation
ECU – Eurasian Customs Union
EEU – Eurasian Economic Union
EU – European Union
EurAsEC – Eurasian Economic Community
G20 – Group of 20

IMF – International Monetary Fund
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
PCA – Partnership and Cooperation
Agreement
SCO – Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
WTO – World Trade Organisation

Competition for Co-operation: roles and realities in Russia's 'multivector' foreign policy

P N Chatterje-Doody

Introduction

Once, the concept of Eurasia was something of interest only to area specialists, but the recent efforts of Vladimir Putin and his counterparts in Belarus and Kazakhstan to deepen integration within the Eurasian Customs Union (ECU) and proposed Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), have brought it to increased public and academic attention. There has been much debate over the extent to which the Customs Union influences economic relations, with some dismissing it as the latest neo-imperial attempt at post-Soviet integration, offering little practical relevance. Yet whilst questions over the impact of the Customs Union are undoubtedly important, they omit one of the most intriguing aspects of the Eurasian integration project – the discursive production of the Eurasian region. For several reasons, this process is vital for understanding Russia's aspirations in, and for, the region. Firstly, foreign policy-makers' articulations of their nation's international role (role conceptions) are closely linked to governments' decisions and actions on the international stage (role performance), with different roles coming to the fore in different relationships and situations¹. In line with this, the conscious self-identification of Russia as a Eurasian power impacts upon its activities in such a way as to produce tangible, structural changes. Secondly, regardless of the economic potential of the region, the discursive production of Eurasia as relevant and significant in international politics means that Russia's claim to representation of that region contributes to its power and influence further abroad. Finally, from the Russian perspective, consolidation of the Eurasian idea (with Russia as the region's natural leader) can be read as evidence for the continued global relevance of Russian soft power, its capacity to attract and co-opt other state players to its way of approaching politics.

Consequently, the discursive construction of the Eurasian region is a key aspect of Eurasian integration, which has enabled Russia to achieve several tangible political and economic gains. Yet as will become clear throughout the following analysis, this is by no means a unique aspect of the current Eurasian project. In fact, the discursive construction of the Eurasian region is one example of a longstanding process by which the Russian political elite mobilises particular conceptions of Russia's international identity and role so as to promote cooperation with specific partners. The organisations within which this cooperation takes place often overlap in their geographical and policy areas, and frequently appear to pursue inconsistent, and competing ends. Perhaps counterintuitively, much of this competition is a deliberate device, which corresponds with Russia's broader foreign policy approach. In attempting to balance its role within competing and overlapping organisations, Russia opens up a space to pursue its preferred low-cost, low-commitment version of co-operation, which enables a high level of flexibility, avoidance of restrictive alliances, and the promotion of Russian sovereignty, great power and strength.

Whilst existing scholarship has examined the identity discourse of the Russian political elite and its relationship to policy², as yet there has been little work linking such insights with the current phase of Eurasian integration. This chapter attempts to bridge that gap, by situating Russia's approach to the Eurasian region within the context of the political elite's discourse on Russia's international identity. The first section introduces this discourse and is followed by an institutional overview of the Eurasian region. In the penultimate section, the discursive practices of Eurasia that take place within these institutions is examined. The final section analyses how this has brought about real-world implications.

Elite Discourse

Presidents Yeltsin, Putin and Medvedev have all linked Russia's future fortunes with its inheritances from the past, and carefully represented the past in ways supportive of their preferred policy directions³. Though identity has long been a central debate in Russian academic and political discourse, recently, leading politicians have presented a narrative of Russia's past that is highly restrictive both

of content and representation, and which has helped to foreground and naturalise preferred identity themes that support the ruling elite and its approach to international relations⁴. Five recurring themes are helpful for understanding Russia's approach to Eurasian integration:

Great powerism: The historic greatness of the Russian state is frequently repeated, and variously presented as being linked with sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity amongst the peoples of the Russian state⁵.

Instrumentalised citizenry: Focus on the state's greatness gives rise to instrumentalisation of the Russian citizenry. Ethnic or national belonging is relegated under the importance of belonging to the Russian state, except for the Russian diaspora abroad, whose links to the state apparently remain. The citizenry is presented as a resource for achieving state strength, though historically, often at the cost of terrible suffering: The greatest advances in the country's past have paradoxically taken place at times of despotism⁶.

Russia as an international equal: In the international arena, there is a recurrent preoccupation with the need for equal and respectful treatment of Russia⁷. This is especially significant with regards to the rest of Europe, whose culture may commonly be perceived as distinct from Russia's but whose 'matchless' civilisation Russia has played an equal role in developing⁸.

First among (regional) equals: The Russian political elite represents Russia as a political and cultural leader within its region by crediting ethnic Russians (who are presented as tolerant by nature) as the historic defenders of peaceful ethnic, religious and linguistic cohabitation, who have civilised the Eurasian continent⁹. In contemporary politics, this is manifested as a shift towards soft power concerns, with focus on the enduring attractiveness of Russian culture and values. Far from simply relying on 'hard' policies of coercion, the soft power of selective partnerships and coalitions is presented as capable of helping to preserve Russia's greatness and strength¹⁰.

Eurasian Bridge: Over the years, much has been made of Russia's strategically unique geographical positioning at the junction of Europe and Asia, which has not only forged Russia's civilizing role, but has also facilitated Russia's cultural contribution to Europe and the rest of the world¹¹.

Institutional Overlap in 'Eurasia'

Many organisations have significant interests across the Eurasian landmass, and established players, such as the EU and NATO, vie for influence with Soviet successor organisations such as the CIS and EurAsEC, plus relative newcomers including the ECU. One week in June 2009 saw the summits of three international organisations – the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) and BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) - on Russian soil. Shortly followed by a state visit from China's Hu Jintao, these meetings were indicative of Russia's significance in the newly-emerging world order, and its preference for navigating this with a 'multi-vector' foreign policy¹². Whilst in name, at least, many of these organisations appear to have interests in different domains, in reality, their interests and jurisdictions often overlap and appear to compete with each other. Often Russia's different roles come to the fore in different institutions, which is how we see Russia's pursuit of great power politics coexist with its new rising power aspirations. Not only does this competition enable Russia to engage in international co-operation without sacrificing any of its sovereignty, but it also assists in the consolidation of a regional power base, which strengthens Russia's position on the wider international stage.

The CIS has the widest membership of the post-Soviet region's international organisations but this reflects the loose nature of its commitments and the lack of coherent shared outcomes¹³, so its value is more symbolic than practical. This chapter focuses on some of the organisations with fewer members, which share more coherent commitments. The Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEc), for instance, was formed in 2000, granted UN observer status in 2003, and made subject of a UN resolution on co-operation in 2008¹⁴. Its initiatives include the Eurasian Customs Union and proposed Eurasian Economic Union. The CSTO was created in 1992 on the principle that an attack on one

signatory constituted an attack on all. The forerunner to the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation was created in 1995, also to improve regional (military) security. Its current extended membership of dialogue partners (Belarus and Sri Lanka) and observers (Mongolia, India, Pakistan and Iran) chimes with Russian aspirations for multipolarity. Finally, BRIC(S), formally institutionalised in 2009, is also oriented towards the promotion of multipolarity.

Figure X.1: Russia's overlapping institutional memberships
Only full members are shown
(Customs Union members in bold text)

Though these overlapping organisational memberships present analytical challenges, they offer useful opportunities for contextualising Eurasian integration within Russia's broader range of coalition-building exercises. Given Russia's traditional preference for bilateral over multilateral agreements, these organisations can be seen as setting the context through which Russia negotiates its position in

relation to other state players in the region. Contemporary Eurasian integration demonstrates some well-established principles of post-Soviet Russia's approach to international relations, namely a flexible and interest-driven multivector foreign policy negotiated with the help of specific roles articulated in different institutional contexts. The discursive construction of the Eurasian region is therefore intimately bound up with Russia's broader geopolitical approach. After summarising the discursive trends at play in the Eurasian region, this chapter will analyse how such trends contribute to geopolitical action.

The discursive space of Eurasia

The identity of the contemporary Russian state occupies an uneasy space between the institutional memories of Soviet power, and the diminished status that followed a messy transition period, plus the economic crises of 1998 and 2008. Russia's approaches to various regional institutions clearly display the contradictory impulses at play, with attempts to pursue traditional great power politics and regional leadership in some areas offset by Russia's re-articulation as a new, rising economic power.

Energy has long been considered a key component of Russia's great power status. Putin's doctoral thesis drew links between the state of the economy (particularly in the energy sphere) and the strength of the state¹⁵, and successive documents on foreign policy¹⁶ and national security¹⁷ have reiterated the strategic importance of regional economic initiatives for preserving Russia's leading role. Vladimir Putin's 2011 *Izvestia* article promoting the Eurasian Customs Union argued that historical and geopolitical legacies provided the justification for economic integration in the region¹⁸, and despite questions being raised over the ECU's practical role, the organisation nonetheless displays significant symbolic potential. Firstly, as well as demonstrating Russia's soft power of attractiveness as a model in the region, it strengthens Russia's role as first among equals by situating it as the representative of a regional coalition in external negotiations¹⁹, thus boosting Russia's international influence. Despite its wider membership, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) has also contributed to the

promotion of Eurasia as a geopolitically relevant region. It issues many statements that have no binding force, but which nonetheless assist in the discursive production of the 'Eurasian' region, a necessary process for the success of Russia's soft power-building exercise²⁰.

One of the earliest examples of this came in the organisation's early days, when it agreed clear, linked definitions of the 'three evils' of terrorism, extremism and separatism. All members see these issues as a threat to the survival of their ruling regimes, and by extension, their states, so the shared definition of the 'three evils' enabled transnational cooperation on issues as diverse as counter-terrorism, counter-trafficking and border security, and infrastructural projects²¹. That many have questioned whether these programmes might be more concerned with maintaining power for the region's ruling elites, than with countering genuine security threats²², merely reinforces the importance that the discursive construction of the Eurasian region has had for facilitating this.

Russia's renewed emphasis on Eurasia falls within a broader discursive pattern promoting international political evolution towards multipolarity, or polycentrism²³. Politicians have repeatedly and enthusiastically articulated Russia's position as a new, rising power, in contrast to a Europe in relative decline. With this in mind, Russia's membership of multiple multilateral organisations is seen as a way to ensure continued Russian influence during the transition. Whilst strongly promoting the BRICS group of rising economic powers (and Russia's position within it), the Russian leadership has critiqued the pro-Western orientation of international organisations, and has sought to redress the balance in order to improve stability in the coming multipolar world. In the interim, Russia seeks to keep all of its options open, and the ECU is the perfect setting for Russia to act as the unique Eurasian bridge linking a stagnant EU and a rising East Asia²⁴.

Putin's championing of the ECU as compatible with WTO and, by extension, EU norms is intended to present the institution as complementary to EU integration²⁵. The vehicle for ensuring Russia's continued regional leadership is thus presented as a facilitator for its equality with Europe, firstly, by passing responsibility for negotiating the successor to the expired EU-Russia Partnership and Co-

operation Agreement (PCA) to the Eurasian Economic Commission (and thus balancing the previously asymmetric negotiating relationship), and secondly, by demonstrating Russia's remaining soft power. The ECU's reliance on trade rules and regulations without democratic conditionality constitutes a normative challenge to the dominance of the EU model which clearly holds some attraction²⁶. Whilst Belarusian dependence on Russia demands its membership of the ECU, the membership of Kazakhstan, a strong and economically relatively liberal state, lends weight to Russia's soft power aspirations, as do the stated accession plans of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Armenia²⁷.

The ECU's contribution to Russia's soft power (and remaining great power) aspirations helps Russia to challenge the EU as the sole voice of Europe. Russia considers itself an equally significant historical contributor to European culture, whose contemporary involvement is unfairly sidelined. The debacle surrounding Medvedev's 2008 draft European Security Treaty exacerbated this, when the lack of EU support obliged Russia to accept the established security system centred on the OSCE and NATO. Unable ever to accede to NATO, and thus to attain the all-important veto powers that the role of a great power demands, Russia came out of the episode with its great power aspirations dented, and with questions over its ability to play the role of international equal. In 2011, Dmitry Rogozin, then Russia's envoy to NATO, went so far as to question whether the new President would be interested in attending the next NATO-Russia Council²⁸. With a renewed emphasis on Eurasian integration occurring around a similar time, it is clear that the intended impact of the project extends beyond the immediate region to a wider audience.

These discursive practices not only show how Russia's ruling elite views its role in an evolving international system, but in altering conceptions of which geographical or policy areas are considered significant, they facilitate structural changes that help to bring this evolution about.

The geopolitical reality of Eurasia

The Russian leadership is well aware of the possibility of converting discursive entities into geopolitical realities, through its association with the BRIC(S) rising powers. All of the group's members have used their regional 'power bases and spheres of influence' to project power on the global stage²⁹ and they have effectively worked as a great power concert within organisations such as the G20³⁰ in order to achieve the kind of multipolarity beneficial to their continued development. As well as attempting to renegotiate existing trade and environmental regulations³¹, they have successfully lobbied for better representation of developing and emerging economies in global institutions such as the World Bank and IMF, where three per cent and five percent respectively of voting shares were redistributed in their favour³². Plans are also currently underway for the establishment of a BRICS development bank³³, so it is clear that objections over the conceptual coherence of a group or its membership cannot preclude a practical geopolitical impact.

The ECU provides an interesting example of how the real-life implications of discursive practice can diverge significantly from those implied in the rhetoric. In the context of stalling negotiations over a successor to the PCA agreement with the EU, Vladimir Putin repeatedly emphasised the Customs Union's compatibility with WTO (and hence EU) norms. He not only saw the ECU as capable of facilitating broader European cooperation, but also as a way to mitigate the inherent asymmetry of the PCA successor negotiation process and reassert Russia's equality with Europe. Yet whilst Russia's equality with the rest of Europe demanded the conclusion of a full treaty, the EU's reservation of treaties for agreements between members made this impossible. The transfer of negotiation responsibility to the Eurasian Economic Commission that resulted from the establishment of the ECU did not rebalance the asymmetrical negotiating relationship, but complicated negotiations with a second multinational body that the EU then failed to recognise, causing a vacuum of representation³⁴. Whilst the freezing of PCA negotiations enabled continued pragmatic cooperation on specific issues despite the absence of more significant political consensus, it symbolised the same crisis of relations

that saw the European Security Treaty rejected. Aside from the damage to Russia's credibility as a European equal, this highlighted fundamental rifts between the two parties over the appropriateness of existing mechanisms of European security. They increasingly came into conflict over issues such as the recognition of Kosovo by the EU, of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by Russia, and Russian military action in Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (2014). Over the same period, the expansion of NATO, increased American unilateralism, and the missile defence initiative all encouraged the pursuit of alternative directions.

NATO provides the main external referent for the CSTO, an institution designed for collective defence against aggression. Russia's massive joint exercises with Belarus in 2013 were followed by NATO's largest live fire exercise since 2006, and announcement of planned exercises 6 or 7 times larger in 2015³⁵. Theoretically, the CSTO's 15,000-strong rapid reaction peacekeeping force can be deployed on members' territory without the need for a specific UN resolution³⁶, but this has not prevented unilateral Russian troop deployments, or exercises, such as the 2013 dummy attacks on Sweden, Poland and Lithuania. The CSTO's security remit overlaps somewhat with that of the SCO, despite the latter's lack of legal basis for collective defence against external aggression. Originally conceived to improve regional security, the SCO's common definition of the 'three evils' of terrorism, extremism and separatism has facilitated a transition from concern with the negotiation of common borders to practical cooperation on border security, counter-terrorism, counter-trafficking and infrastructure, and even joint military exercises³⁷. Here again, the discourse of the Eurasian and Central Asian regions has practical significance, since in promoting multilateral security cooperation in an area that was previously dominated by bilateral initiatives, smaller states are afforded far greater potential for independent choices³⁸. Thus despite the desire of China and Russia to create a space free from US influence, the SCO both counteracts a tendency towards dependence on Russia and facilitates continued strategic relationships with partners external to the region, such as the USA. It is unlikely, therefore, ever to be developed into a military alliance³⁹.

The SCO is seen as a key forum for economic cooperation in Eurasia, an objective of great importance to China, which currently only has bilateral strategic partnerships with Russia (1996) and Kazakhstan (2005) and uses the SCO for multilateral engagement with CIS countries. Despite the discussion of many initiatives within the organisation, and its dedicated loan facility, its implementation record is patchy. The Russian Foreign Ministry has been reluctant to contribute economically, and China has concluded bilateral energy agreements with Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and bilateral loans of US\$15 billion to Kazakhstan and US\$25 billion to Russia⁴⁰. The strength of the Russian energy sector is in question, so the 'historic' gas deal signed with China in 2014 was a necessary boost, despite the political unease over Chinese investment that stems from China's population growth and Russia's corresponding decline⁴¹. China's trade importance for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan now exceeds Russia's⁴², and the revitalisation of the ECU is in part an attempt to redress this balance through an organisation in which Russia's leading position goes unchallenged.

Although the idea for the Eurasian Customs Union first came about in the mid-1990s, Putin's *Izvestia* article promoting the institution gave it real momentum⁴³. In just two years from 2010-12, Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan launched a common customs tariff and territory, removed their internal physical border controls, and launched a regulatory body for their union⁴⁴. The decisions of this body, the Eurasian Economic Commission, are automatically incorporated into the legal base of the Customs Union and Common Economic Space, without needing additional ratification⁴⁵. It is planned that the ECU will transition to a fully-fledged economic union by January 2015⁴⁶. The ECU boasts a 167 million-strong population, a combined GDP of US\$2 trillion and a goods turnover of US\$900 billion, but Russia makes up approximately nine tenths of the ECU's joint economic potential and is by far its strongest member⁴⁷.

Several structural factors aid in the ECU's promotion of Russia's leading regional role. Not only does the organisation rely upon the use of Russian norms and standards, but it also incorporates Russia's WTO obligations within its legal structures⁴⁸. The activities of the organisation so far have further

served to exacerbate this. Many remaining exclusions and exemptions ensure that the ECU is still far from being a full customs union, including the duties that Russia imposes on oil sent to Belarus that is not for domestic consumption, plus its plans to impose duty on all of the oil sent to Kazakhstan from 2014⁴⁹. In basing the greater part of the ECU's common external tariff on the higher Russian levels, Belarus and Kazakhstan have seen their EU and Chinese imports displaced by expensive but inferior Russian goods⁵⁰. Whilst the dependence of Belarus on Russian subsidies makes its membership of the ECU a necessary choice, the picture for Kazakhstan is more complex. Membership is hoped to increase access to energy markets, and to Russian energy transit routes to Europe⁵¹, but in the short term at least, Kazakhstan appears to have suffered. The most economically liberal of the founder ECU states, it has experienced real losses in income, wages and returns on capital⁵². Yet the fact that this state, economically strong in its own right, would voluntarily accept the short-term setbacks in exchange for the perceived long-term benefits of the project, constitutes a significant diplomatic success for Russia, especially in respect to China⁵³. In the short-to-medium term at least, the ECU is proving to be a valuable institution for assisting in the practical consolidation of Russia's leading regional position.

It is no surprise, then, that the Russian leadership is keen to expand the territory of the Customs Union, and to achieve Putin's goal of a co-operative space stretching from the EU to the Asia-Pacific⁵⁴. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Armenia have all announced plans for ECU membership⁵⁵. Whilst Kyrgyzstan's GDP is less than half of one per cent of Russia's, its membership is vital to extend the borders of the ECU to Tajikistan⁵⁶, facilitating Russian access to Tajik-Afghan border security⁵⁷, and to supplies of aluminium, cotton and labour. Together, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan provided 23 per cent of Russia's migrant labour force in 2010⁵⁸, and despite domestic concerns over Central Asian immigration, it is arguably less controversial than the Chinese option. From the perspective of the prospective members, also, membership has benefits. The economies of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia are all heavily reliant on remittances, mostly from Russia⁵⁹, and the need to circumvent Russia's January 2014 tightening of migrant labour regulations gives ECU membership a strong pull. In light of the Ukraine crisis, the Armenian leadership sought to gain additional concessions from Moscow, but

nonetheless expressed a desire to accelerate its accession⁶⁰. Ultimately, the shared cultural, educational and linguistic heritage of the post-Soviet region makes Russia an attractive employment option for many workers in the ECU prospective member states. This being the case, Russia is in a very strong position to wield its soft power through the institutional mechanism of the ECU.

Conclusions

Despite the fact that Eurasian integration has long been an objective in the post-Soviet space, the various institutions that have emerged in that capacity have been incomplete, overlapping and balanced with relationships that extend beyond the region⁶¹. Far from being simply a consequence of poor design or inadequate deliberation, this corresponds with a multivector foreign policy, something that in recent years Putin has increasingly come to articulate in terms of multipolarity and an evolving world order, crediting multilateral institutions with the capability to help create a more stable world economy⁶².

Not satisfied to remain an observer in this process of transition, Russia seeks to fortify its position as one of its architects. The Russian leadership has proven adept at converting ideas about the international arena, and Russia's role within it, into concrete political gains. By balancing its position within multiple overlapping international institutions, Russia has been able to effect changes to global institutions' voting allocations, consolidate its soft power, and coordinate regional anti-terrorist measures, whilst seeing them gain acceptance as a legitimate aim in the broader international community.

The Eurasian integration project represents the latest incarnation of this approach. It combines the articulation of a particular, politically-relevant identity with targeted initiatives to convert that into a forum for practical political cooperation. Yet in many ways it bears striking similarities to Russia's patterns of interaction with established actors, such as the EU – a low-cost, low-commitment version of co-operation, limited to specific concerns and objectives, and always balanced with a consideration

of how evolving relationships can help or hinder in the fulfilment of the various roles that the Russian ruling elite prioritises for the country.

The large number of international institutions operating in the Eurasian space create the potential for multiple competing objectives in the region, such as the differences between the rhetoric and reality of the free trade regime, the changing roles of the different states contingent on the specific institutional setting and the attempts of the different institutions to negotiate their roles and objectives in the area. This competition fits within Russia's broader foreign policy approach, enabling greater flexibility, the avoidance of restrictive alliances, the maintenance of Russian sovereignty, great power and strength. As well as solidifying Russia's position as a regional leader, Eurasian integration offers justifications for Russia's continued great power status internationally by institutionalising its stock of soft power, and implying Russia's position as a regional representative further afield.

The Eurasian Customs Union has already proven to be the most successful of the attempts to create integrative post-Soviet structures, and has played a more significant role than even seasoned observers, such as the EU, had expected, but it is by no means free from problems⁶³. There are significant differences in the aspirations of the founding members' leaders. Furthermore, the Ukraine crisis has resulted in popular reluctance in some of the prospective member states. It should not be forgotten that as yet, the institution is not a fully-fledged economic union, nor even a complete free trade area, due to the various exemptions and tariffs still in place. The extent to which the Eurasian Customs Union achieves its stated objectives, and the timescales necessary for the fulfilment of the plans for the Eurasian Economic Union both remain to be seen. Currently the Eurasian project has the potential to develop in its position as the most significant integrative initiative of the post-Soviet period. However, given Russia's preference for bolstering its own chosen international roles by balancing co-operation through competing institutions, it seems likely that this specific Eurasian integration project will remain one, albeit important, element in a complex of initiatives aimed at pragmatic gains on the international stage.

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⁶ Putin (2004) *Inaugural Address*; Yeltsin (1991) *Inaugural Speech*; Surkov (2006) *Natsionalizatsia budushchego*; Medvedev (2008) *Inaugural Speech*; Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013) *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*, http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D, date accessed 18 March 2014; D. A. Medvedev (2009) *Rossiia Vpered!* <http://www.kremlin.ru/transcripts/5413>, date accessed 04 May 11.

⁷ Yeltsin (1991) *Inaugural Speech*; Medvedev (2008) *Inaugural Speech*; Putin (2004) *Inaugural Address*; Putin (2000) *Inaugural Speech*

⁸ Surkov (2006) *Natsionalizatsia budushchego*

⁹ Surkov (2006) *Natsionalizatsia budushchego*; V. V. Putin (2005) *Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation*, <http://archive.kremlin.ru/text/appears/2005/04/87049.shtml>, date accessed 20 July 2011.

¹⁰ Surkov (2006) *Natsionalizatsia budushchego*; Medvedev (2009) *Rossiia Vpered!*

¹¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2000) *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation*,

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¹⁵ K. Oskanian (2013) *FPC Briefing: Putin's Eurasian Union- from pre-electoral sideshow to quest for empire?*

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