

Assist. Prof. Dr. Selma Delalić

selma.delalic@ibu.edu.ba

PhD candidate Adem Olovčić

adem.olvacic@ibu.edu.ba

MA candidate Zerina Čaušević

zerina.causevic@stu.ibu.edu.ba

International Burch University / Internacionalni univerzitet Burč

Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences /

Fakultet za ekonomiju i društvene nauke

UDK 327 (47:497.11:497-15)

Pregledni naučni rad

**HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF OPPORTUNISM OF THE RUSSIAN
FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS SERBIA AND ITS REFLECTION
ON THE WESTERN BALKANS**

**HISTORIJSKI PRESJEK OPORTUNIZMA RUSKE VANJSKE
POLITIKE PREMA SRBIJI I NJEGOVA REFLEKSIJA NA
ZAPADNI BALKAN**

Summary

The paper elaborates on the history of the Russian foreign policy towards Serbia, with special emphasis on the national interests of the Russian state, which, in addition to undoubtedly strong traditional cultural and historical ties between the two Orthodox nations, still significantly guide Russian policies towards Serbia. In other words, the subject of the paper is numerous examples and evidence of opportunism in relation between these countries and its reflection on the countries of the Western Balkans. Namely, starting from the nineteenth century onwards, Russia has emerged as a strong foreign policy partner of Serbia, thus expanding its influence on other Western Balkans countries. In this way, Russia, as a great political power, capitalizing on its own power and strong ideological, historical and cultural ties, uses Serbia to strengthen influence in the region and beyond. Starting from the historical insight in this relationship, the paper focuses on the tendency to present opportunism and pragmatism of the Russian foreign policy, guided exclusively by the Russian national interests, which is visible, both from historical perspective, and in the last twenty years. The relationship between Russia and Serbia is presented through the military, economic and diplomatic cooperation.

Key words: *opportunism, foreign policy, Russia, Serbia, Western Balkans.*

Sažetak

U radu se elaborira historija ruske vanjske politike u odnosu spram Srbije, sa posebnim naglaskom na nacionalne interese ruske države, koji, pored nesumnjivo snažnih tradicionalnih kulturnih i historijskih veza dvaju pravoslavnih naroda, ipak bitno usmjeravaju politike Rusije spram Srbije. Drugim riječima, predmet rada su brojni primjeri i dokazi oportunitizma u odnosu ovih zemalja i njegova refleksija na države Zapadnog Balkana. Naime, počev od devetnaestog stoljeća naovamo, Rusija se pojavljuje kao snažan vanjskopolitički partner Srbije, čime širi svoj utjecaj i na druge države Zapadnog Balkana. Na taj način Rusija, kao velika politička sila, oslanjajući se na vlastitu moć i jake ideološke, historijske i kulturne veze, koristi Srbiju za jačanje utjecaja u regiji ali i šire. Polazeći od historijskog uvida navedenog odnosa, u fokusu rada nalazi se težnja da se prikaže oportunitizam i pragmatizam ruske vanjske politike, vođene isključivo ruskim nacionalnim interesima, a što je vidljivo kako iz historijske perspektive tako i u posljednjih dvadeset godina. Odnos između Rusije i Srbije predstavljen je kroz vojnu, ekonomsku i diplomatsku saradnju.

ključne riječi: oportunitizam, vanjska politika, Rusija, Srbija, Zapadni Balkan

Introduction - Historical Overview of the Relationship between Russia and Serbia

Russian policy towards Serbia and the Western Balkans should be viewed within its historical, traditional ties and, more importantly interests in this region. Russia can be considered as one of the countries which have had the strongest influence on Serbia and the overall contemporary positioning of the country. This came by virtue of diverse aids and assistances Russia has made available to its less powerful ally Serbia during different time periods. Throughout history, the two states have indeed functioned, coordinated and cooperated together on solving different issues. However, from a more critical and rational perspective, the history has presented Russia myriad times as having realistic views beneficial primarily to Russia. As Dimitar Bechev, a Bulgarian scholar, points out in his book *Rival Power* (2017) ties that keep Russia and Serbia together are far more complex from cultural and historical ones.

The relations of the two countries date back to the 16th century, when Ivan the Terrible had formulated first Russian foreign policy goals towards the Balkans region. However, the 18th century marked the birth of the idea of Russia being a “Protector of Serbia”. The First Serbian Uprising created a window of opportunity for Russia to enter the Balkan region. (Jovanović

2010) Following the October Revolution their relations have stagnated due to the opposing ideas of the communist ideology and the monarchy. Nonetheless, the period from the World War II until the dissolution of the Soviet Union marked both favorable and poor relationship taking turns one after the other. (Rock, 2002) When it comes to the public in Serbia, it has always been divided between those who favored Russia and those who viewed Russia with suspicion as a "*source of all evil*" that should be avoided. (Jovanović 2010) The logic behind this is the circumstances that influenced the belief that Russia strives and has always strived to occupy and colonize Serbia. In other words, Serbian population has long been divided between "Russophobes" and "Russophiles". Such divisions are the result of different contradicting events mentioned previously and addressed further throughout this research.

The progress in development of the relations between Russia and Serbia took place during the first Serbian Uprising from 1804 through 1813. This event created opportunity for Russia to penetrate more deeply into the Balkan region. (Denison 2018) Already in the second year of the Uprising, the Russian Tsar decided to help the Serbs financially. Noteworthy is the fact that the Serbian country initially intended to turn to the Austrian state for aid and assistance. Eventually due to the strong impact of Russia and the Orthodox Church, they eventually turned to Russia for assistance. The circumstances shifted in 1806, due to Russia warring against the Ottoman Empire which lasted until 1812. (Mulaosmanović 2015) The same year, Napoleon invaded Moscow and Russia had to withdraw from the war with Ottomans, and sign the Bucharest Peace Treaty with the Ottoman Empire, recognizing Ottoman rule over Serbia. This was exactly the time when the idea of having solely national self-interests, above everything else, surfaced, as well as perception of the South Slavic Orthodox population as being an appreciated argument in negotiations with the Ottomans. Russia has displayed itself as having interest in the formation of small orthodox states that will keep in a state of dependence and control.

Decline of the Ottoman Empire in the South Slavic area in return increased Russian influence. Russia fought again against the Ottomans in 1877, and the Bulgarians and Serbs provided significant assistance. (Mulaosmanović 2015) However, such a unified approach while having similar interests has not always been the case. An example would be the conflict of forces seen during the Serbian-Bulgarian war, when Austria supported Serbian demands, and Russia supported Bulgarian ones. Although the people of Serbia have sided, in many cases, with their so called "protector", providing them with a sense of self-importance and protection, the nineteenth century triggered

skepticism and awakening of Slavdom. Furthermore, the political upheaval in 1878 led to the initial stages of Russophobia in Serbian society. Throughout the 19th century, self-interest dominated the politics of both countries. During the early years of the 20th century, Serbia has been additionally weakened and destabilized by Russia. The full diplomatic relations between Yugoslavia and the USSR were established in the 1940s. Throughout World War II, the Soviets have been attempting to transform the Partisans with the aim of succeeding in negotiations with the West and its allies therein. (Petrović 2018) Consequently, the end of the World War II led to the Red Army influencing the victory of Yugoslav forces over the Nazis. In the post WWII time, the aim of Stalin was to have Yugoslavia under impact of the Eastern Bloc, and fully controlled by Moscow.

Furthermore, following the above-mentioned great disturbances of the early 20th century, Russia realized that an alliance of Balkan Orthodox peoples could help it primarily against Austria, which emerged as its most serious adversary in the Balkans. One of the highly influential figures in this regard had been Nicholas Hartwig, the Russian ambassador to Serbia. He was the soul and the heart of the Balkan Alliance, a whole series of treaties and military conventions concluded between Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro in 1912. Consequently, Serbia occupied Kosovo in 1912 and therefore expanded territorially. The political as well as national self-interests of Russian and Serbian aspirations have not significantly shifted to differ from those in the previous century. National self-interests have always been in front of allies and close cooperation. As such, Russia declared war on Germany in 1914 because of Serbia, but also for clear political reasons. (Jovanović 2010) Specifically, the reasons included the point in case that had Serbia been handed over to Austria-Hungary that would cause a chain reaction that would spread to the entire Balkans. In order to prevent this, Russia sent sufficient amounts of military aid to Serbia. These relations entered a different stage following the October Revolution in 1917. This stage has been characterized by a new ideological matrix created so that the faith and tradition of cooperation did not matter much. And since 1948, it can be said that relations have been at a very low level. A majority of the time periods and events have led to an increased nationalism in Russia and in Serbia as well. (Vujačić 1996)

As we could see, the history is a complex puzzle, some parts of which depict Russia as a 'protector' of Serbia (the case of 1914), and the other as a 'traitor' (the case of San Stefano Peace Treaty and creating Greater Bulgaria in 1878). (Timofejev 2010) Thus, Russia has actually become a symbol that has a use value exclusively in Serbian political narrative and the ideological

struggles. Consequently, the long-lasting tradition of the Balkan area being known as an arena for overlapping clashes of various great powers has caused an increased interest of Russia and its politicians towards the Balkans, and Serbia in particular. The mainstream narrative in both countries about the ages-old brotherhood and friendships of Serbia and Russia, two orthodox countries is merely a myth. (Nikolić 2018) With the aim of elaborating on this idea, it is important to emphasize that smaller nations, in this case Serbia, have the tendency of creating ethnocentric, however unsuccessful imperialisms. (Mulaosmanović 2015) This is, most frequently, caused by the events or situations during which the smaller nation or state serves the larger, more successful one having the latter state's power considered as its own in return. One's own significance, strength and supremacy are being portrayed through the image of the stronger one. (Denison 2018)

Finally, the idea stating that there are no eternal allies, no perpetual enemies, only permanent interests used by influential figures such as Kissinger, Lord Palmerston and Churchill has the potential to explain the foreign policies of these two countries. Also, worth mentioning is one of Churchill's quotes stating that "*The Balkans produce more history than they can consume*". (Kraster 2017) The centre of this sentence revolves around the idea that the Balkans, Serbia and its people in this case in point keep holding on to historical events and therefore keep the predetermined prejudices. History is persistently sculpted to keep the pre-set prejudices "alive".

The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation in the Early 1990s

In order to fully understand Russian contemporary foreign policy and its relationship with Serbia and the Western Balkans we need to look at the situation in the country and the challenges it faced in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The breakup of the Soviet Union sent colossal geopolitical shock waves throughout the world. The borders of the once vast transcontinental empire have been reduced to those of the 17th-century, a quarter of the territory has been lost - vital geopolitical space, as well as half of the population and significant natural and infrastructural resources. (Allen 2014) With the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe, which had been a Soviet buffer zone for decades, this part of Europe broke loose from Soviet domination and soon after became part of Euro-Atlantic institutions. During this time, Russia, one of the two world's superpowers for more than half a century, has declined to the level of a third world country, a country with destroyed economy, crying

out for foreign aid. The country had also lost its international reputation and status. (Edele 2018 and Ploky 2014)

In addition, the brake-up of the Soviet Union altered the entire architecture of international relations. The arms race, animosity and fierce competition to expand the sphere of political influence were replaced by economic competition, geo-economics took precedence over geopolitics, the Internet caused a communication revolution, and globalization gained full momentum. The world practically overnight moved from a bipolar to a unipolar order dominated by the United States as the only remaining truly global superpower. (Lewkovicz 2018) In these circumstances, the world's largest economies have embarked on a serious task of redefining their national and strategic interests, taking into account new geopolitical and geo-economic realities. One of the most significant features of the new world order created by the fragmentation of the Soviet Union is the growing role of the economy in the global politics. (Coggan 2012)

A very serious, almost dramatic situation at home, burdened with numerous economic, political and social problems, have diverted the attention of Russian decision makers from formulating a foreign policy that would respond to the challenges of the new world order. The primary goal of the Russian Federation, in the early 1990s, was to establish partnership with the West through admission to the club of rich, advanced Western countries. As part of these efforts and in the absence of its own foreign policy, the Russian Federation has blindly followed the foreign policy initiatives and decisions of Western countries, primarily the United States. (Tsygankov 2012) A few diplomatic activities that Russia undertook at the time were aimed at introducing Russia into Western political and security structures. Well aware that these institutions are largely dominated by the United States, being, at the same time, extremely weak and without clear independent foreign policy priorities, Russia has fully followed the path traced by the United States. What characterizes Russian foreign policy in the early 1990s is its complete absence and at the same time dependence on the United States. In the words of Yevgeny Primakov: "Russia has become 'guided' through the navigable channel of the US policy." (Primakov 2010: 15)

However, in the second half of the 1990s, a new phase of the Russian foreign policy began, caused by Russian disappointment in the treatment by the West. What caused Russia to slowly leave the Western orbit and pursue its own foreign policy based on its national interests? Simply because nothing happened whatsoever. Russian integration into Western institutions has been extremely slow or non-existent. In order for Russia to achieve this ambitious goal, it necessitated large financial resources. What it expected from the

West was a kind of Marshall Plan for Russia, which the West was neither ready, nor willing to provide. After all, Clinton came to the White House with a plan to improve the American economy, not the Russian one. (Fink 2014) The door of the Western club was open, or rather slightly open, but in the 1990s, Russia's passage through that door was inconceivable. Instead, Eastern European countries, which, until recently, were under the direct influence and control of the Soviet Union, joined the Euro-Atlantic institutions one by one, causing disappointment, frustration and, at a later stage, severe Russian opposition. Unilaterally interpreting the end of the Cold War as the undisputed victory of the West, guided by the Cold War realpolitik and its own national interests, the United States-led West began expanding its geopolitical space to the detriment of the former Soviet-controlled space. (Sarasmö and Miklóssy 2012 and Nicolas 2018)

Vladimir Putin - Revival of the Russian State

The transition of the country with the largest planned economy in the world to the liberal free market economy was a very difficult task. Instead of progress, democracy brought chaos and a huge crime rate. In such a situation, nostalgia for the Soviet Union surfaced, the Russians began to long for a strong leader who would establish order in the country and make Russia a great power again. The situation was conducive for the emergence of several nationalist movements that advocated the return of traditional Russian values, the Orthodox Church and a strong leader who would restore Russia's former glory. (Bushkovitch 2011) And the Russians soon got the strong and the powerful leader – Vladimir Putin. When he came to power, in early 2000, Putin found a devastated and paralyzed country on the brink of an abyss. His strategic goal from the very beginning was to stabilize and strengthen the state, neutralize all alternative centers of power, revive the economy, restore Russian pride, and ultimately make Russia a great power. Putin, very pragmatically, with resolute strength and willingness, strict discipline and the iron fist, supported by immense oil and gas revenue, managed to achieve the set goals. Chaos and hopelessness had been replaced by hard work, order, discipline, but also authoritarianism. (Zimmerman 2014) Putin conducted a thorough redefinition of Russia's national and foreign policy interests to include preserving Russia's historical sphere of influence, its full participation in resolving regional and global conflicts, and strengthening its strategic positions. He also centralized and consolidated political power and took over all the levers of power. (Taylor 2011 and Masha 2012)

After all the hardships, ups and downs, Russia has indeed managed to get back to the international scene and regain influence in those parts of the world from which it had to withdraw in the early 1990s, making it clear to the rest of the developed world that ignoring and jeopardizing Russian national and security interests could be very dangerous. The Russian come back radiates power, strength, independence and self-confidence. The time of blindly following Western, especially American, politics is long gone. After Putin introduced an entirely new foreign policy concept, based on Russian national interests, Russia traced its own foreign policy path, independent of Washington's policies. Today, we are increasingly witnessing very harsh, even confrontational rhetoric in relation to the West. (Dutkiewicz and Trenin 2011) More importantly, the country has achieved economic prosperity, the life of the average Russian has improved significantly, the middle class has re-emerged, stability has been restored as well as Russian national pride. Unfortunately, this was not the case with democracy as Russia failed to establish fully functioning democratic society, as evidenced by numerous examples of serious violations of basic human rights and freedoms with special emphasis on freedom of speech, freedom of the media and freedom of religion. (Zimmerman 2014)

In the context of the country's recovery, it is important to emphasize that Putin recognized the strategic potential of Russian energy resources wisely, cleverly and in a timely manner, to such an extent that he dedicated his doctoral dissertation to the importance of minerals in Russia's economic development strategy. After all, Russia is the richest country in the world in terms of energy resources. It possesses the largest known natural gas reserves in the world and the rich deposits of many other strategic minerals. (Energy Information Administration 2020) Putin, indeed, made the most of the country's huge energy complex and the high energy prices toward making Russia a great power again. However, energy is also the most valuable foreign policy soft power trump card, a key instrument of domestic, foreign policy and diplomacy. (Taylor 2011) Energy has become a trademark of Vladimir Putin's power – means of rewarding obedient and punishing disobedient countries, geopolitical leverage, and a source of comparative advantage in global politics. Using energy resources and energy projects, Russia endeavors to exert greater economic and political influence on the former Soviet republics, but also on the entire European Union. Energy has been the backbone of EU-Russia relations for decades. (Esakova 2012) Year after year, Russia has been increasing sales of oil and natural gas to EU countries, so that today Kremlin uses significant European energy dependence as a means to achieve economic and political goals. Moscow's energy strategy is based on maintaining and expanding its dominant market

position in Europe and Eurasia. Russia endeavors to increase its economic and political influence in the European Union by improving bilateral relations with EU member states. Partnership with the European Union would in turn help Russia to reinforce its role as the preeminent power in shaping the new global political and economic system. (Van Harpen 2014 and Roxburgh 2012)

Putin's Russia is not guided any longer by ideology and hard military power, but by profit, geopolitics and soft military power. Only a month after the brake-up of the Soviet Union, the first Minister of Foreign Affairs of post-imperial and post-communist Russia, Andrei Kozyrev, pointed out: "Leaving messianism, we lay the foundations of pragmatism ... We suddenly begin to understand that geopolitics replaces ideology." (Brzezinski 2000: 94) First Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov, at a security conference in Munich in 2008, said: "We no longer export ideology - we only export goods and capital." (Ivanov 2008) Similarly, one of Russia's most famous oligarchs, Boris Berezovsky stated: "In my opinion, there are two types of power: the power of ideology and the power of capital. Ideology is dead today, so we are witnessing a transition from the power of ideology to the power of capital." (Remington 2004: 163)

Russia and the Geopolitical Significance of Serbia and the Western Balkans

In the early 1990s, domestic and foreign challenges, the country faced in the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, guided its foreign policy towards the Western Balkans. However, there is something that has dominated Russian geopolitical thinking over the centuries and at the same time strongly determined its relationship with Serbia and the Western Balkans, and that is the ambition to gain access to the warm seas. These aspirations pushed it into conflict with Western powers during the Crimean War, the liberation war against the Ottoman and Habsburg empires, and the Cold War, which was nothing more than a geostrategic competition to expand its zone of influence and access the Mediterranean. (Bushkovitch 2011) Even today, the war in Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea and Russia's military engagement in Syria, although complex and multi-layered, can be viewed in part through the same prism. (Shepard 2016)

After the end of World War II and the descending of the Iron Curtain, the Soviet Union imposed itself as a bastion of defense and protection to the new communist countries in this part of the world. However, behind the

transparent façade of altruism there were undoubtedly economic, military and geostrategic interests - access to the Adriatic ports as a springboard for reaching the Mediterranean. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Western Balkans gained a key role in the process of redefining Russian national and strategic interests and its relations with Western countries. "The wars in the former Yugoslavia for Moscow, as well as for the United States, were the motive for the first serious debate on foreign policy and national interests in post-bipolar international relations." (Guskova 1999: 67) Significance of the Western Balkans for Russia is best illustrated by President Putin's address to the Russian military peacekeepers contingent in Kosovo:

"The strategic importance of the Western Balkans lies not only in geopolitical factors but also in historical tradition, cultural and religious ties of our peoples and geographical proximity of this region with the Russian border. Russia views its Balkan policy in the overall context of creating a stable and democratic European security system. The basic task is to achieve lasting and just peace, as well as lasting security and stability in the region, based on the fundamental principles of international law and, of course, the decisions of the international community. First of all, I am thinking here of the Dayton Agreement and UN Security Council Resolution 1244. I must emphasize that consistent adherence to such a policy is crucial to securing a strong Russian position in the Western Balkans now and in the future. The role of the Russian Federation in this region is noticeable. Our partners encourage us to take a more active role in the affairs of the region. It is a question of the efficiency of our actions and the concrete Russian contribution to stability in the Balkans. The next priority is to strengthen the Russian economic presence here. There are good chances for that." (Putin 2001)

Relationship between Russia and the Serbs and Serbia in the Context of the War in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The very first leader of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, openly declared his approval and even backing of the idea of national self-determination and decided to deny support to the Serbs ahead of the breakup of Yugoslavia, especially given Milosevic's support for radical communist leaders during the failed August 1991 coup. Therefore, one of Yeltsin's first decisions was to recognize Croatia and Slovenia in February 1992 – even two months before the United States did so. Russia was also one of the first countries that recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina on 27 April 1992. Full

diplomatic relations between the two countries were established on 26 December 1996. (BiH Ministry of Foreign Affairs) At the beginning of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia, while still weak, supported all Western initiatives related to Bosnia and Herzegovina, including UN Security Council Resolution 857 on the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, UN initiatives to put pressure on Belgrade and Pale, and acknowledged that the Serbs bear the greatest guilt and responsibility for the war. In addition, Russia voted for economic sanctions against Serbia imposed in May 1992, as well as the extension of the mandate of UNPROFOR in BiH to continue delivering humanitarian aid, and, finally, supported a NATO-supervised no-fly zone in BiH. (Blank 2006 and Gowan 1999)

Although it was involved in the process of ending the war in BiH, within the Contact Group, Russia still couldn't find its place at the table of the decision makers. The realization made Russia so desperate that it was willing to do anything to be accepted into the family of developed western countries. Russia's own interests, i.e. functional relationship with the West based on partnership, were much more important than the Orthodox brothers in BiH and Serbia, to whom it turned its back without hesitation in the early 1990s. Participation in the implementation of the military part of the Dayton Peace Agreement, through engagement within SFOR and later on IFOR forces, was a historical moment for Russia. (Gowan 2000)

In an effort to win over Russian counterparts to this historic task, Americans have promised greater understanding and sensitivity to Russia's regaining control and a dominant role in the former Soviet space, particularly in Central Asia and the Caucasus. This was supposed to be a historic step forward in the cooperation of two Cold War superpowers and two fierce opponents. For the first time since World War II, the two countries would operate as allies under a single command. The Russians finally accepted joint engagement, but under American, rather than NATO command. (Lynch 2001) Russia has used Bosnia and Herzegovina as an opportunity to have its voice heard and to show that it was an indispensable partner of the West in resolving important international security issues. Nikolai Afanasievsky, official of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in his address on behalf of President Yeltsin, said: "Russia's non-participation in these operations would significantly reduce our ability to influence, not only the events in the Balkans, but in the whole of Europe." (Afanasievsky 1996) Of course, in the broader regional geopolitical and geostrategic context, Russia has sought to advance and consolidate its interests and positions in the region.

However, the unrestrainable expansion of EU and NATO into areas of key geopolitical and geostrategic importance to Russia, NATO military interventions in BiH and a few years later in Kosovo, opening of military bases in Russia's immediate neighborhood, support for colored revolutions in the former Soviet space, all this shattered illusions about Russian strategic partnership with the West. Russia saw these activities as a threat to its national and security interests and a threat to its political position in Southeast Europe. The nationalists and the communists in the Russian Parliament were particularly vocal in the case of Kosovo, portraying Kosovo Albanians as terrorists and Serbian crimes as the fight against terrorism and extremism. Dissatisfaction and unrest in nationalist circles also affected significant portion of the population. Loud voices calling for an end to NATO aggression and the protection of Serbia echoed throughout Russian political landscape. The airstrikes on Bosnian Serb positions coincided with the accession of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to NATO. (Tsygankov 2012 and Thomas 1996) Russia was not consulted on any issue related to Bosnia, which caused Yeltsin additional frustration. After the NATO military intervention in 1999, it became clear that the zone of Russian strategic, i.e. vital national interest was expanded so that it no longer included 'only' the former Soviet space and the countries of Eastern Europe, but also the entire Western Balkans. As a result, since the beginning of the 1990s, the Kremlin has begun to view the events in the Balkans as its sphere of vital interest and a region of great importance for achieving national security. (Lewkovicz 2018 and Thomas 1996)

As early as the mid-1990s, disappointed, humiliated, and frustrated, Russia realized that establishing a relationship based on equal partnership with the West was simply not possible. During this period, it started to define its own national interests and pave an independent foreign policy path. Along the way, it often came into serious conflicts with the West. In this situation, Russia began to turn to Serbia and take strong pro-Serbian positions, which Belgrade wisely used by skillfully lobbying in political and military, as well as in cultural, religious and intellectual circles. Thus, the exclusive guilt of the Serbs for the war was rejected, and the easing of the sanctions imposed on Serbia was called for. (Ibid)

A reflection of such a bitter Russian experience, from the 1990s has been displayed two decades later, in the well-known case of Resolution S / 2015/508, also known as the Resolution on the Srebrenica Genocide. The proposed Resolution was supposed to condemn the genocide committed against the non-Serb population of the small town in eastern Bosnia, Srebrenica, by the Republika Srpska Army assisted by special Serbian

military "Scorpions". The indicated event took place between 13th and 19th July 1995, in which 8,327 men and boys (mostly Muslim Bosnians) from the Srebrenica enclave were brutally massacred. However, in 2015, Russia, as a member of the United Nations, used its right of veto, thus blocking the adoption of the Resolution.

It has all been triggered during the month of June 2015, when the United Kingdom launched an initiative to adopt a resolution which will condemn the Bosnian genocide and war crimes against civilians during the Bosnian war. The document was based on the judgments of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) with recall of the primary responsibility of the Security Council in preserving international peace and security as well as expressing its determination in preventing genocide. (Nacrt rezolucije o Srebrenici koji nije usvojen u Vijeću sigurnosti, 2015) The very fact that this Resolution could be adopted, provoked sharp opposition and resentment from the Serbian political leadership in Bosnia and Herzegovina (i. e. Republika Srpska) and Serbia. While politicians from Republika Srpska, such as Milorad Dodik, publicly opposed the adoption of this document, emphasizing that it "does not contribute to reconciliation and is anti-Serbian" (Dodik 2015), a Serbian President Tomislav Nikolić sought political support in Russian foreign policy, aware of the fact that Russia is one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and, as such, has the ability to influence the final decision of the Council.

In a letter addressed to Putin, Nikolić called on Putin to veto the Resolution, without hesitation, because, as it was emphasized in the letter "The Balkans will be on the brink of a new war" if it is adopted, and that "only in that region almost 5,000 Serb civilians were killed, for whom no one seeks justice" (Nikolić 2015). Using well established diplomatic discourse and well aware of the consequences of vetoing the adoption of the Resolution, Russia first demanded an amendment to the draft resolution. On the other hand, as a proposer, the United Kingdom has amended the draft resolution seven times firmly insisting that the word "genocide" should not be removed from the resolution text. (Živković 2015) The final text of the Resolution had the support of most countries in the Security Council, where at the vote on July 8th, 2015, ten countries were in favor of the proposed text of the Resolution, four abstained, and only one was against-Russia which has vetoed, failing the adoption of a Resolution. (UN officials recall 'horror' of Srebrenica as Security Council fails to adopt measure condemning massacre 2015)

In the eyes of the world, such a Resolution displayed an opportunity for the whole world to condemn one of the most monstrous war crimes committed on the European soil following World War II, but for Russia, nothing more than another attempt to distance the Western Balkans from the EU and NATO, based on the harsh experiences of the late 1990s. In order to present themselves as the saviors of Serbia and the Serbian people in the Balkans, Russia's permanent representative to the United Nations, Vitaly Churkin, included in this process, elaborated this manifesto, using the words „that hundreds of thousands of Serbs had to leave their homes“ (Churkin 2015), and concluded that "Serbs suffered like others, if not more." (Ibid) As an ultimate argument, Churkin stated that "The approach according to which only one stands out from all war crimes is absolutely inappropriate and deepens the already divided society in BiH" (Ibid).

Noteworthy is the fact that Russia displayed hypocrisy, prompted by political disappointment, humiliation and frustrations from the 1990s. It is well established fact that Russia supported international sanctions against Serbia, and even the creation of an International War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. Churkin's "no" to the Resolution on Srebrenica is a commitment not only to one side that was defeated, but also to the policy of the 1990s, which was actually tried in The Hague. (Rusko 'ne' u UN i osporavanje istine o genocidu, 2019) This is, in fact, Russia's new ambivalent policy in the Balkans, of which the goal is to support the Serbian ethnic factor, within that territory. (Džidić 2015) On the other side, such an act by Russia has received Serbia's enthusiasm and the belief that Russia is their sincere ally just as Tomislav Nikolić stated: "Not only because the defilement of the entire Serbian people was prevented, in an attempt to declare itself genocidal, but because today Russia has shown and proved that it is a true and sincere friend." (Nikolić 2015). With these and similar actions, Russia continues to demonstrate significant and steady support towards Serbia in terms of securing a strong and long-lasting ally in the Western Balkans, while at the same time dispersing its geopolitical influence throughout the region.

Russian Pragmatism and Opportunism Today

After myriad ups and downs, quite a long non-existence of independent foreign policy on the one hand, and political dependency on the most powerful Western countries, on the other, the recovered Russia is back on the international scene, but now as one of the largest exporters of hydrocarbon resources. By the end of the first decade of the new millennium, Russia had

returned to the international political scene pursuing policy that emanated self-confidence. It was a completely new policy, a policy closely linked to the Russian national interests, especially its economic interests. As a market economy, although with some Russian characteristics, it has managed to integrate into the global economy more strongly than the Soviet Union has ever managed. Finally, it managed to regain some of the attributes of a great power. Russia is behaving like a great power today, clearly showing the West that it can no longer neglect Russian interests on the global stage. Humility and tamedness of the end of the last century is a distant past. Today, the West sees Russia with different eyes, cognizant that no significant international problem can be solved without Russia taking active part. The rhetoric is getting hotter and the relations colder. (Dutkiewicz and Trenin 2011 and Zimmerman 2014)

Russia is showing a novel strength and determination in its efforts to position itself geopolitically and geostrategically in the region that was pushed out in the 1990s and, finally, to establish its dominance. Today, we are witnessing Russian vigorous competition with the West for supremacy over the Western Balkans, and strong affirmation of its security, economic and political goals. This can be supported by the fact that the major goal and aim of Russia in terms of the region is to trouble and dishonor the existing institutions which have been established by the West and place the EU and US under pressure. (Bechev 2017) On the other hand social movements and the media intertwined with Kremlin display Russia as an influential power led by its capable leader, Vladimir Putin. (Ibid) Russia has returned to the region of the Western Balkans as a very important actor, and its economic penetration and influence is as strong as its political one. What we see today is Russian revenge for the humiliations it experienced from the West in the early 1990s, the defeat in the Cold War and the transfer to the western orbit of a region of strategic national interest for Russia. We have practically the same situation as in the early 1990s, when the West took advantage of Russian weakness and pushed it out of this region. (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung 2012) Today, Russia uses the West's lack of interest in the region to geostrategically position itself in this part of the world. Affirming its political and economic interests, it seems that Moscow, through its natural allies, Serbia and entity Republika Srpska, goes for the West. Since some countries of the Western Balkans are already members of the European Union, while others have aspirations to become one, the indisputable conclusion is that Russia, through its satellites or the pawns, Serbia and the entity Republika Srpska, is trying to increase its presence and influence in the European Union. (Govella 2012 and Shepard 2016)

One could claim that the Russian relationship with Serbia strengthened with the question of the independence of Kosovo, making this political dilemma the midpoint of interest at the beginning of the new millennium (Leo-Paul 2017). Based on the standpoint that independence of Kosovo represents a violation of international law and, at the same time, a threat to the integrity of Serbia, both Serbian and Russian policies were directed against Serbian integration to NATO. As Strobe Talbott, the American foreign policy analyst emphasized, “NATO and Russia have an extremely profound disagreement on the subject of the use of force” (2007). These policies have been founded on the theses of “cultural insecurity” (Brzezinski 2001: 98) and “political fears” (Ibid), viewing NATO as a project of weakening and political isolation of the Russian state in the context of international politics, as well as the threat to its national security. The sense of insecurity and fear felt by the government and public opinion, has been created mainly on the basis of the NATO bombing of Serbia, and also due to “ideological misperceptions, emotional judgments and irrational thinking” (Gligorijević 2013), which has made Serbian politics indecisive in terms of their relation with the West.

Although military cooperation of Serbia with NATO is more significant, thanks to the Kremlin’s media influence it looks as if the country’s cooperation with Russia takes priority. (Bechev 2017) With an effort to secure its own position in the Western Balkan region, Russia signed with Serbia dozens significant agreements on strategic partnership, based primarily on common political, economic and military interest, which had compelling consequences on Serbian foreign and domestic politics. When it comes to its military neutrality, Belgrade increased military cooperation with Russia, which was not in line with the conditions for joining the EU. Based on the Strategic Partnership Agreement on military cooperation (2013), and with an aim to maintain their strong ties, the Agreement provided several joint military exercises in 2016 known as "Slavic brotherhood" and "Brotherhood of the aviators of Russia and Serbia" (Cf. Dragojlo 2016). However, despite such cooperation, the fact is that Serbia conducted much more military exercises with Western powers and NATO (45) than with Russia (only six), what made this country a double player in military politics. In order to maintain its relations and cooperation with the West, within the Partnership for Peace framework, Serbia adopted an agreement with the Transatlantic Alliance based on power sharing (Leo-Paul op.cit), well aware of the significance of economic and political strength of the West.

Therefore, the image of Serbian indecision is only a matter of illusion, which made it obvious that both Russia and Serbia are primarily driven by their own interests in a contemporary global system, rather than by common historical and/or cultural ties. Furthermore, the interest driven image is

visible not just in military, but also in economic aspect of cooperation. In the chapter “Playing the Energy Card”, the previously mentioned scholar Bechev portrays us a precise image of how Kremlin strengthens its relations with business elites and governments as well as how it plays its energy card with the goal of advancing its political and economic aims. For that purpose, as the author states, Moscow offers national companies and governments’ price discounts and improved terms. With the aim of presenting a more vivid understanding of Russian foreign policy through the region of the Balkans, companies such as Gazprom and Lukoil play a significant role to the comprehension of Russia’s power. (Bechev 2017)

Furtherly discussing oil companies, immediately after Kosovo declared independence, Serbia sold the Serbian Oil Industry - NIS for 400 million euros, a company with an annual profit of several billion. Many serious political analysts saw this transaction as a gift to Russia and the gratitude for the support on the Kosovo issue. Aleksandar Vučić is also aware of the extent to which this transaction was unfavorable for Serbia, and in 2014, six years after the sales of NIS was concluded, he ordered for the government working group to review the NIS deal. Since the early 2000s, Russian gas and oil companies have invested heavily in the country, making Serbia completely dependent on Russia for the imports of natural gas and oil. Ironically, most investments from Russia came to Serbia during Boris Tadic’s presidential term. With the coming of Tomislav Nikolić and later on Aleksandar Vučić to power, Russian investments were drastically reduced. (Demostat 2018)

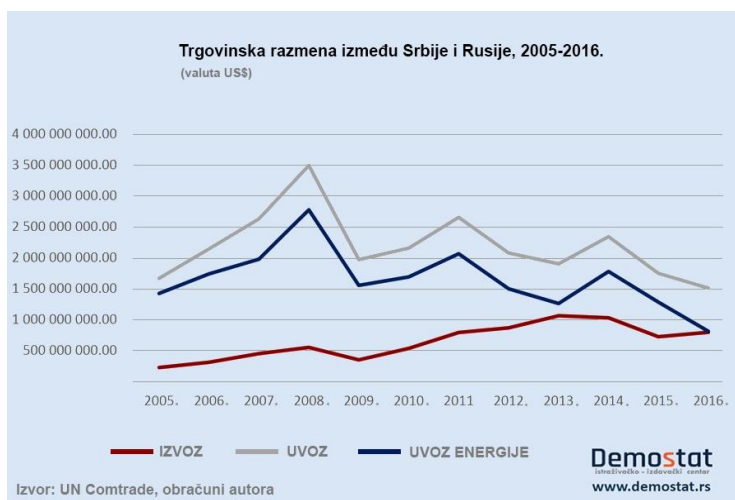


Figure 1: Trade exchange between Serbia and Russia 2005-2016, Source: <https://demostat.rs>

According to the Republic Statistics Office of Serbia, two thirds of Serbia's trade in 2017 is accounted for by EU countries (Italy, Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria), then the Western Balkans, led by Bosnia and Herzegovina, followed by Russia and China. (Republic Statistics Office of Serbia 2017) <http://stat.gov.rs>

When it comes to foreign aid, or, technically “official development assistance” also known as ODA, it should be emphasized that it represents a significant investment by developed countries aimed at advancement and promotion of good political governance and economic growth of less developed countries. According to Bechev, Russia strengthens its soft power by sponsoring protest movements and social activism. In addition to that it supports extreme right-wing and ultranationalist parties opposing the EU and NATO in Southeast Europe. (2017) Foreign aid has also been used as a “soft power” instrument for spreading political influence. (Michael et al. 2013) However, Russian development assistance is not channeled through any official development agency, unlike the United States and the European Union. Instead, development and assistance programs have been implemented on a bilateral basis and under the authority of the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations (EMERCOM), the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs (CIS), also known as Rossotrudnichestvo, or through international multilateral organizations such as the World Bank. (Brezhenva and Ukhova 2013)

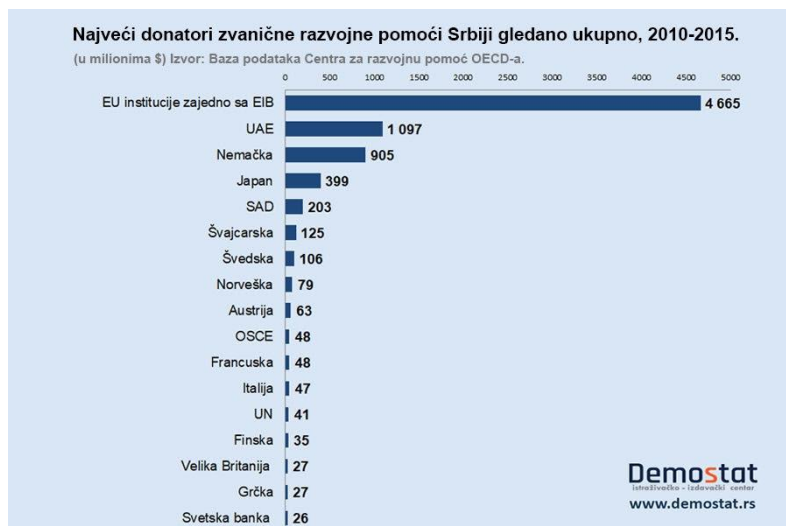


Figure 2: The biggest donors of the official development aid to Serbia, 2010-2015, Source: <https://demostat.rs>

Based on the European Union official data, "Serbia is one of the largest beneficiaries of EU funds in the world ... In other words, the European Union is the largest single provider of official development assistance to Serbia in the amount of over 4 billion US dollars." These data refer to the period 2000-2015. (Demostat 2018) <http://demostat.rs>

It seems that the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, has no doubts when it comes to Serbia's membership in the EU: "There is nothing else that would bring us greater benefits from joining the EU ..." (Vučić 2018: 13) However, the openly declared orientation of the ruling regime in Serbia towards joining the European Union, 'threatens' to further jeopardize economic relations with Russia. Namely, the condition for Serbia to become a member of the European Union is to annul all free trade agreements with Russia. (Nova Srpska politička misao 2018) According to the academician, Kosta Čavoški, the propaganda machinery of both Serbia and Russia seeks to present an idyllic picture of cooperation, brotherhood and unity of the two countries, while the reality, but also the perception of the people of Serbia, is diametrically opposite, so opposite that "Russia risks for the first time in history to lose the last bastion in the Balkans - the Serbian National Corps." Proof of this lies in the relentless figures already shown. Namely, Serbia has indeed recorded a significant increase in investments in recent years, but these investments, contrary to media and propaganda reporting, do not come from Russia, but from Turkey, China, European and Arab countries. Opposed to national interests, strategic companies are taken over by foreign, in this case, non-Russian companies. (Nova srpska politička misao 2018)

Allegedly, Russian interest in the region is to keep cultural ties and develop economic trade and investments. However, something else lies behind this political rhetoric. Russian intentions, as mentioned earlier, are to disrupt the processes of democratization and hinder EU integrations in the Western Balkans region. Serbia, is currently between East and West, and by gravitating towards one side, complicates relations with the other. (Vojvodić and Medić 2018) According to Dragan Šutanovac, President of the Strategic Policy Council and the former Serbian Defense Minister: "Russia's projection of power in the Western Balkans serves exclusively its geostrategic positioning and strengthening" ... and "pursuing its own goals, one of which is to prevent further expansion of NATO, through the integration of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina into the Alliance." (Šutanovac 2019: 15)

When it comes to elaborating on the Relations among Russia and Serbia during the past decade, it may be stated that their political relations have gained significant momentum since 2008 which is most adequately displayed by the number of visits from officials from Belgrade to Russia and the other way round. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister of Russia and two Russian presidents have visited Serbia eight times until 2015, whereas Moscow has been visited by Serbian officials nine times. Such statistics highlight the impression that Serbian officials often visited the Russian president prior to the elections in Serbia in order to provide support for the pro-Russian and nationalist part of the electorate. (Velebit 2019) Their cooperation has been persistent in the same intensity and degree until today. However, Russia is also perceived as seeing Serbia as a Russian testing ground in Europe for Putin's demonstration of power and balance of power with the West in this part of the world. An example and evidence of this is a visit by Vladimir Putin to Belgrade in 2014, when a military parade was organized in Belgrade at a time of strained relations between the European Union and Russia due to the Russian annexation of Crimea. During that time, Putin's visit, coupled with the military parade, was inconvenient for Serbia because of the European path, which was shown by the absence of a clear foreign policy orientation of Serbia. (Velebit 2019) Despite its efforts to expand its influence where it can, Russia should be aware of its limitations in our region and in Serbia, which geographically, economically and culturally belongs to Europe.

Prior to that, a representative office of the Russian Institute for Strategic Research and the Russian House Cultural Center has been opened in Belgrade in 2013 and in 2014 several foundations were active in Serbia, including the Strategic Cultural Foundation, the Gorchakov Public Diplomatic Fund, the Center of National Glory, and the Fund for the Russian Necropolis in Belgrade. (Szpala 2014: 4) Moreover, an increase in the number of events taking place in Serbia under the sponsorship of Russian organizations and funds, such as the Forum of Young Leaders in Novi Sad has been noticed. (Szpala 2014: 4) Russia also acts as an ally and protector in security matters. Russian engineers have been cooperating since April 2009 in the removal process of bombs dating back to the bombing of 1999. (Petrović 2010: 28b) And in the devastating floods of 2014, Russia sent noteworthy amount of convoys of humanitarian aid to help the victims.

As has been previously mentioned, several spheres of Russian influence may be encountered in its ally Serbia. These include the fields of defense and security, energy, economy and most significantly the sphere of politics. Their interstate relations may be frequently sensationally and emotionally framed

by the domestic public using the image of Vladimir Putin while the factual analysis of their relations is very difficult to be comprehended. Hence, certain partially unanswered questions regarding what the cooperation between Serbia and Russia is based on, how friendly the relations are, what tends to be the scope of such cooperation and finally what is the price Serbia pays in the name of Russia's support for the Kosovo issue arise.

Conclusion

Although there has been a good deal of discussion about traditional, historical and cultural ties between the two Slavic peoples, the Russians and the Serbs, the truth is that opportunism, pragmatism, and national interests dominate their relationship in practice, although of course one must not neglect the cases of friendly co-operation and assistance, which go back several centuries. In other words, ambivalence is the most expressive characteristic of the relationship between Russia and Serbia. Belgrade looks on Moscow as a convenient ally with the permanent seat at the UN Security Council and the possibility of vetoing UN resolutions. But whenever suits them, the Serbs have been willing, without much thinking, to reject Russian diplomatic initiatives, even at the cost of damaging international reputation of Russia. The extent to which national interests guide Serbian foreign policy is best illustrated by the example of Kosovo. Even when portraying Kosovo as the cradle of Orthodoxy, a symbol of Serbian religious and national pride, Belgrade actually has in mind its rich mineral resources, which include zinc, lead and other metals, in addition to the Trepča complex, the largest gold mine in this part of the world.

It seems that the new era of enhanced relations between Russia and Serbia started in the aftermath of Kosovo independence. On the surface, the two countries have been united in common interests, with common security, economic and diplomatic processes. However, beneath the surface, Serbia, as a double player, cooperates with Russia and the West, while Russia is hampering Serbia's progress towards the European Union and NATO, thus imposing itself to the West as a still significant world power. In addition, as the history and the recent examples have shown, whenever it served its interests, Russia did not hesitate to distance itself from the most significant ally in the Western Balkans region. Furthermore, Russian policy - even after taking a pro-Serbian stance in the mid-1990s - has remained within the parameters of an international consensus.

In the last two decades, the distinguished characteristics of the Russian foreign policy, has been a fierce opposition to the West, led by America. There are also many serious concerns that Russia supports ultra-right movements and political parties in Europe, whose goal is not strengthening the European Union, but rather its disintegration. What made Russia so revisionist? Well, following the break-up of the Soviet Union, the West headed by the United States, made the most of the power vacuum and the weakness of the Russian Federation to expand its sphere of influence as far east as possible, overspreading Western Balkans region as well. Recovered Russia is determined not to let that happen again using all available means. Additionally, the idea of integration and strategic partnership between Russia and the Western countries is as little realistic today as it was in the early 1990s. There has been a strong belief in the West that Russian efforts to establish partnership with the West had nothing to do with honesty, principles, justice and morality, and that Russia would return to Cold War behavior as soon as it restores power, and it did so. Moreover, their relationship threatens to escalate into a serious conflict.

The question is whether Russian aggressive and expansionist behavior in international relations could have been prevented? Perhaps, had the Western countries had more empathy and sensitivity for the situation in Russia, a country with a thousand-year imperialist tradition, which faced existential problems in the 1990s. Misinterpretation of the end of the Cold War and the lack of misunderstanding of the very difficult situation in which the former superpower found itself have resulted in a wrong policy towards the Russian Federation, which seems to be coming back like a boomerang. Had the West had more understanding for Russian national interests and the situation in which it found itself in the early 1990s, Russia probably would not have become so revisionist. The Churchill's statement from the beginning of this paper, emphasizing that in context of international relations, there are no long-lasting friends or enemies but rather sole interests has, undoubtedly, proven to be true.

Bibliography

1. Allen, J., 2014. *The Former Soviet Union, Then and Now, The Russian Federation, Then and Now*. San Diego, CA: ReferencePoint Press.
2. Bechev, D., 2017. *Rival Power*. Yale: Yale University Press.
3. Blank, J. S., 2006. *The NATO-Russia Partnership: A Marriage of Convenience or a Troubled Relationship?* United States Army War College Press, Strategic Studies Institute.
4. Brezhneva, A. and Ukhova, D., 2013. *Russia as a humanitarian aid donor*. Oxfam Discussion Paper.
Available at: <<https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/dp-russia-humanitarian-donor-150713-en.pdf>> [19 June 2020].
5. Brzezinski, Z., 2012. *Strategic Vision: America and the Crisis of Global Power*. New York: Basic Books.
6. Bushkovitch, P., 2011. *A Concise History of Russia*. 1st ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
7. Bžežinski, Z., 2001. *Velika šahovska tabla: američki primat i njegovi geostrateški imperativi*. Podgorica-Banja Luka: CID-Magistrat.
8. Coggan, P., 2012. *Paper Promises: Debt, Money, and the New World Order*. Cambridge: Public Affairs.
9. Crump, T., 2013. *Brezhnev and the Decline of the Soviet Union*. Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
10. Denison, B., 2018. *The Myth of Ancient Friendship: The Instrumentalization of Russia-Serbia Relations*. [online] Balkanist.
Available at: <<http://balkanist.net/myth-ancient-friendship-instrumentalization-russia-serbia-relations/>> [8 June 2020].
11. Dragojlo, S., 2016. *Serbia to Host Two Military Drills with Russia*.
Available at: <<https://balkaninsight.com/2016/08/18/serbia-s-hosting-two-joint-military-exercises-with-russia-08-17-2016/>> [19 June 2020].
12. Dutkiewicz, P., Trenin, D., 2011. *Russia: The Challenges of Transformation (Possible Futures)*. New York: NYU Press.
13. Džidić, D., 2015. Rusija Uložila Veto Na Rezoluciju O Srebrenici. [online] Balkan Insight. Available at: <<https://balkaninsight.com/2015/07/08/rusija-ulo%C5%BEila-veto-na-rezoluciju-o-srebrenici/?lang=sr>> [Accessed 28 November 2020].
14. Edele, M., 2018. *The Soviet Union: A Short History*. New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell.
15. Esakova, N., 2012. *European Energy Security: Analysing the EU-Russia Energy Security Regime in Terms of Interdependence Theory* 1st ed., VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
16. Fink, L., 2014. *The Lond Gilded Age: American Capitalism and the Lessons of a New World Order*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
17. Fox, M., 2015. *Crossing Borders: Modernity, Ideology, and Culture in Russia and the Soviet Union*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
18. Freedman, L., 1996. Why the West Failed, In: *Foreign Policy*, No. 94, Winter 1994-95;

19. Gessen, M., 2012. *The man without a face the unlikely rise of Vladimir Putin*. New York: Riverhead Books.
20. Glenny, M., 1996. *The Fall of Yugoslavia*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
21. Gligorijević, S., 2013. "Russia, Serbia and NATO." In: *Russia Serbia Relations at the beginning of XXI Century*, 37, pp. 95-100. Available at: <<https://www.isac-fund.org/download/Russia-Serbia-Relations-at-the-beginning-of-XXI-Century.pdf>> [17 June 2020].
22. Gowan, P., 1999. *The NATO Powers and the Balkan Tragedy*, New Left Review.
23. Gowan, P., 2000. *The Euro-Atlantic origins of NATO's attack on Yugoslavia*, Masters of the Universe, London: Verso.
24. Guskova, J., 1996. *Evolucija ruske spoljne politike na Balkanu u devedesetim godinama dvadesetog veka*. Beograd: Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu.
25. Info-ks.net. 2015. Sraman Govor Ruskog Ambasadora U UN: Srbi Su Patili Kao Drugi, Ako Ne I Više. [online] Available at: <<https://www.info-ks.net/vijesti/svijet/56577/sraman-govor-ruskog-ambasadora-u-un-srbi-su-patili-kao-drugi-ako-ne-i-vise>> [Accessed 28 November 2020].
26. Ivanov, B. S., 2008. *Where is Russia Heading? New Vision of Pan-European Security*, Munich Conference on Security Policy, February 10, 2008. Available at: <<http://www.securityconference.de>> [3 June 2020].
27. Joksimović, J. 2017. Ulaskom u EU prestaju da važe svi sporazumi o slobodnoj trgovini sa zemljama van unije, uključujući i onaj sa Rusijom. In: *Nova srpska politička misao*. Available at: <www.nspm.rs/kosovo-i-metohija/rezim-aleksandra-vucica-igra-neiskreno-prema-rusiji-kao-sto-je-to-cinio-i-milo-djukanovic-u-crnoj-gori.html> [1 July 2020].
28. Jovanović, M., 2010. Dve Rusije: o dva dominantna diskursa Rusije u srpskoj javnosti. U: Žarko N. Petrović (ur.) *Odnosi Rusije i Srbije na početku XXI veka*, pp. 9-18. Beograd: ISAC fond, Centar za međunarodne i bezbednosne poslove.
29. Knežević, G., 2016. *Wanting The Best Of Both Worlds: How Serbs View Russia And EU*. Available at: <<https://www.rferl.org/a/wanting-best-both-worlds-serbs-view-russia-eu/27733200.html>> [18 June 2020].
30. Kraster, I., 2017. *EU Goes Back To The Future In The Balkans*. [online] Ft.com. Available at: <<https://www.ft.com/content/620509da-0968-11e7-ac5a-903b21361b43>> [15 June 2020].
31. Léo-Paul, J., 2017. "Keys to Understanding Russia's Relationship with Serbia." In: NAOC, 2017. Available on: <<http://natoassociation.ca/keys-to-understanding-russias-relationship-with-serbia/>> [16 June 2020].
32. Lewkovicz, N., 2018. *The Unites States, the Soviet Union, and the Geopolitical Implications of the Origins of the Cold War, 1945-1949*. London: Wimbledon Publishing Company-Anthem Press.
33. Lucas, E., 2013. *Deception: Spies, Lies and How Russia Dupes the West*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC.
34. Lynch, A. C., 2001. The Realism of Russia's Foreign Policy. *Europe-Asia Studies*, University of Glasgow, Vol. 53, No. 1.

35. Michael, B.M, Hartwell, C.A., and Nureev, B., 2013. Soft Power: A Double-edged Sword? In: *BRICS Business Magazine*, 5, pp. 58-64.
36. Mulaosmanović, A., 2020. *Osvrt Na Povijest Odnosa Srbije i Rusije*. [online] Preporod.com. Available at: <<https://www.preporod.com/index.php/sve-vijesti/drustvo/aktuelno/item/2090-osvrt-na-povijest-odnosa-srbije-i-rusije>> [10 June 2020].
37. Myers, S., 2015. *The New Tsar: The Rise and Reign of Vladimir Putin*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.
38. Petrović, Žarko N. (2010b) Rusko-srpsko strateško partnerstvo: sadržina i domašaj. U: Žarko N. Petrović (ur.) *Odnosi Rusije i Srbije na početku XXI veka* (pp.25-40). Beograd: ISAC Fond, Centar za međunarodne i bezbednosne poslove.
39. Plokhy, S., 2014. *The Lat Empire: The Final Days of the Soviet Union*. New York: Basic Books.
40. *Politička analiza, Bosna i Hercegovina – Ruska Federacija (ekonomski rakurs bilateralnih odnosa)*, Vanjskopolitička inicijativa BiH, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Sarajevo, mart 2012, str. 20-34.
41. Primakov, J., 2010. *Svet bez Rusije? Čemu vodi politička kratkovidost*. Beograd: Službeni glasnik.
42. Putin, V., 2001: *Speech to the Russian Military Contingent of the International Peace-Keeping Force in Kosovo*, Pristine, June 17, 2001. Available at: <<http://www.president.ru>>
43. Radio Slobodna Evropa. 2015. Nacrt Rezolucije O Srebrenici Koji Nije Usvojen U Vijeću Sigurnosti. [online] Available at: <<https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/rezolucija-o-srebrenici-koja-nije-usvojena-u-vijecu-sigurnosti/27117027.html>> [Accessed 28 November 2020].
44. Radio Slobodna Evropa. 2019. Rusko 'Ne' U UN I Oспорavanje Istine O Genocidu. [online] Available at: <<https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/godi%C5%A1njica-ruskog-veta-u-vije%C4%87u-sigurnosti-na-rezoluciju-o-srebrenici/30043259.html>> [Accessed 28 November 2020].
45. Rainbow, D., 2019. *Ideologies of Race: Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union in Global Context*. Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queen's University Press.
46. Remington, F. T., 2004. *Politics in Russia*. 3 ed. Emory University, Pearson, Longman.
47. Rock, S., 2002. *Militant Piety': Fundamentalist Tendencies in the Russian Orthodox Brotherhood Movement*. In: Digitalcommons.georgefox.edu. Available at: <<http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1648&context=ree>> [8 June 2020].
48. Roxburgh, A., 2012. *The Strongman: Vladimir Putin and the Struggle for Russia*. London: I. B. Tauris.

49. Sarasmo, S., Miklossy, K., 2010. Reassessing Cold War Europe. *Routledge Studies in the History of Russia and Eastern Europe*. Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
50. Satter, D., 2016. *The Less you know, the better you sleep. Russia's road to terror and dictatorship under Yeltsin and Putin*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
51. Shepard, J., 2016. *The Expansion of Latin Europe, 1000-1500, The Expansion of Orthodox Europe: Byzantium, the Balkans and Russia*. Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.
52. Spoljnotrgovinska-robna razmjena Srbije veća za 13,2 odsto. Available at: <<http://rs.n1info.com/Biznis/a287553/Spoljnotrgovinska-robna-razmena-Srbije-veca-za-13-2-odsto.html>> [1 July 2020].
53. Szpala, Marta (2014). *Russia in Serbia—soft power and hard interests*. OSW Commentary, 29. Pdf
54. Šutanovac D., *NIN*, Beograd, 10.10.2019, pp. 15.
55. Talbot, S., 2007. *The Russia hand: A memoir of presidential diplomacy*. Random House.
56. Thomas, T. L., 1996. *Russian Lessons learned in Bosnia*, Military Review, Fort Belvoir VA, September/October 1996.
57. Timofejev, A. J., 2010. Crvena armija i jugoslovenska vojska u otadžbini tokom jeseni 1944 – nesuđena saradnja. In: *Istorija 20. veka*, pp. 85-103.
58. Trgovina sa Rusijom-istraživanje. 2018. In: demostat.rs. Available at: <<https://demostat.rs/sr/vesti/istrazivanje/trgovina-sa-rusijom/333>> [2 July 2020].
59. Tsygankov, A. P., 2012. *Russia and the West from Alexander to Putin: Honor in International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
60. UN News. 2015. UN Officials Recall 'Horror' Of Srebrenica As Security Council Fails To Adopt Measure Condemning Massacre. [online] Available at: <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2015/07/503712-un-officials-recall-horror-srebrenica-security-council-fails-adopt-measure#.VaD81F-vHIU>> [Accessed 28 November 2020].
61. Van Herpen, M. H., 2014. *Putin's Wars: The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
62. Velebit, V., 2019. *20 Godina Putina – Srbija i Rusija između mita i stvarnosti*. Talas.Rs. [online] Talas.rs. Available at: <<https://talas.rs/2019/11/29/20-godina-putina-4/>> [Accessed 29 November 2020].
63. Vinod K., Govella, K. (eds), 2012. *Responding to a Resurgent Russia: Russian Policy and Responses from the European Union and the United States*. 1st ed. New York: Springer-Verlag.
64. Vojvodić Medić, F., 2018. *How to Downsize Russia in the Balkans*. Available at: https://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2018/02/23/how_to_downsize_russia_in_the_balkans_112721.html [10 June 2020].
65. Vučić A., *Oslobođenje*, 08.02.2018, p. 13.

66. Vujačić, V., 1996. Historical legacies, nationalist mobilization, and political outcomes in Russia and Serbia: A Weberian view. In: *Theory and Society*, pp.763-801.
67. Zimmerman, W., 2014. *Ruling Russia - Authoritarianism from the Revolution to Putin*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
68. Živković, Z., 2015. Ruski veto blokirao Rezoluciju o Srebrenici, Oštre reakcije SAD i Britanije. [online] Radio Slobodna Evropa. Available at: <<https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/rezolucija-o-srebrenici-nije-proslar-usija-ulozila-veto/27116786.html>> [Accessed 28 November 2020].