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Transcript

RUSSIAN SOFT POWER: THE EVOLUTION OF A STRATEGY

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Transcript by Way With Words

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OLGA SHUMYLO-TAPIOLA: My name is Olga Shumylo-Tapiola. I am from Carnegie Europe, and I would like to welcome you all here today.

Our guests were concerned that rain may stop people from coming, but I see that people who live in Brussels don't really care about the weather when the topic is interesting and the discussion promises to be very heated.

I would like to welcome you all in Carnegie, and a special thanks and welcome to our guests from the US, Heather Conley and Professor Theodore Gerber, who travelled from Washington, through Tallinn, to be here with us.

I will say a few words about Heather and Theodore; Heather, prior to becoming a director and senior fellow at the Europe Program at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, worked as a senior advisor to the Centre for European Policy Analysis. From 2005 to 2008 she served as an executive director of the Office of the Chairman of the Board of the American National Red Cross. From 2001 to 2005 she served as a deputy-assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau for European and Eurasian Affairs and was responsible for 15 countries of Northern and Central Europe. She holds a BA in International Relations from West Virginia Wesleyan College and an MA in International Relations from John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

Our second guest, Professor Gerber, received his PhD in sociology from the University of California. He worked extensively with CSIS from 2001 as a consultant. His areas of expertise are survey research methods, quantitative methodology, contemporary Russian society, social stratification, and political sociology. Over the period from 1998 Professor Gerber has designed 18 large sample surveys that were conducted in Russia. Also, he conducted and observed numerous focus groups and in-depth interviews in Russia, after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Heather and Theodore, welcome. Now, about today - we'll be talking about one of the topics that occupy the minds of many in Brussels, which is Russia and Russia's soft power. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has been known for the use of hard power towards its immediate neighbours. When it came to the debate or discussions between the European Union and Russia, it was always about economy, energy or security. At the same time, the enlargement of NATO and the European Union of 2004 brought the EU and NATO closer to Russian borders, and Russians were pushed to look for alternative attitude and policies towards its immediate neighbourhood.

As we say, that known once as EU prerogative, soft power instruments started penetrating the minds of the Russian policy-makers who saw these tools as viable policy tools for dealing with the neighbourhood. One of the tools that we'll be talking about today - compatriot policy that was developed in the end of the 90s - basically aimed at establishing stronger links between Moscow and Russian Diaspora; and as the authors of the report that we'll be discussing today say, it's 35 million Russians living abroad and the half of them living in the former Soviet Union.

Yet Russia's soft power remains an unstudied issue and there are many myths about the subject, and that allows for keeping the discussion rather emotional when it comes to Russians abroad and Russia's soft power methods. Today we have a quite unique opportunity to look at Russia's compatriot policy in much greater detail. We will be able to understand what the real roles of this policy are, and also to see whether this policy is about soft power or soft propaganda, as I'm revealing how the authors put it in the report.

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Our guests will present the report which they just launched, which is called Russian Soft Power in the 21st Century. That provides us with the combination of an overview of historical issues that are confronting the relations between Estonia and Russia nowadays, but at the same time it will also give us an in-depth analysis of Russia's compatriot policy and its application in Estonia and other former Soviet republics. Estonia is a very interesting case because at the moment this is an EU member state, a NATO member state, and at the same time a country where Russian population or Russian ethnic minority accounts for 30%.

What is also interesting in the report, and I look forward to the presentation, is that it offers the results of the survey which was held with the participation of 16- to 29-year old Russians, Estonians, Russian ethnic minority in Estonia, but also youth in Russia. The importance of this survey is apparent, because these are the young people, many of whom who don't remember the glorious-to-gloomy Soviet past.

Many of them are the third generation Russians who live in Estonia and other former Soviet republics and who often don't really understand why they are treated in a certain way, but this part of society is about the future of Estonia. Basically, these are the people who can either help Estonia to go further up or to go down, so I guess that the numbers and the questions that we will be discussing today are extremely important.

Last but not least, the report also signals the possible challenges that the Estonian government may face if it doesn't take the issue of integration of Russian minority in a different way. I hope that Heather and Theodore will also be able to stretch their thinking to other neighbours of Russia, such as Latvia, which is another member state, but also Ukraine and Belarus, where the Russian minority is also quite a big number.

Without further ado, I will give the floor to Heather, who will make the presentation, please.

HEATHER CONLEY: Olga, thank you very much for that warm introduction and that very comprehensive overview. Thank you – I see many faces I recognise, and such a warm welcome. It's a delight, as always, to be in Brussels, but also to have such a distinguished audience, and we can really engage in some substantive discussion.

I want to just, again, thank Carnegie Europe - Jan, Olga, Anna. When you receive an email from a colleague, asking: would you mind if I present one of my reports... the answer was yes, and it was such a warm welcome, so I thank Carnegie Europe for a wonderful partnership and collaboration on the release of this report.

Indeed, we actually released the report yesterday in Tallinn, thanks in great part to a very generous grant by the Smith Richardson Foundation. CSIS was able to undertake a very comprehensive analysis of Russian soft power, through survey work, to determine its efficacy: was it having an effect? The focus is on the next generation and trying to tackle some tough issues, whether that's on history, language, citizenship, across the board; so I'm delighted...

What we thought we'd do to keep our part of the discussion to a minimum and get to the discussion and the dialogue, which is always the most interesting part, is frame for you our approach to this report. I think there are a lot of questions about what constitutes Russian soft power, so we'll give you our view on how to define that, take a look at how it specifically works.

Certainly, Estonia was our principal case study, but we will look at other post-Soviet states to see some similarities, some differences. Then I will turn the discussion over to Doctor Gerber, who will walk you

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through some fascinating details of the survey work that we conducted. Then I'll come back, at the very end, with some of our assessments of that efficacy of the soft power policy and then some recommendations. Again, we'll welcome your questions and your comments.

Let's begin with the soft power approach we took. We really took the classical definition of Professor Joe Nye's soft Power. What is soft power? It's the ability to get what you want through attraction, and it arises from attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals and policies. That was very much the framework in which we approach Russian soft power. We can certainly have a debate about that, but that was the overarching principle.

As we looked at Russian soft power, immediately what came to mind was the Russian compatriot policy. This has been an evolving strategy, really, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Russian Federation was really struggling with how to define a new concept, and as early as 1993 policies were tried to look at perhaps dual citizenship in these countries; there was a resettlement effort to try to bring Russian Diaspora back home. Both efforts were unsuccessful, particularly in the Baltic States as well as Ukraine; dual citizenship is not allowed. Resettlement – we just were finding that the Diaspora did not want to return to Russia.

In 1999 the Russian Federation developed its state policy towards compatriots living abroad; it's a very broad definition, if you will, of what a compatriot is: it could be a Russian Federation citizen who's living abroad; it can be a former citizen of the Soviet Union; it can be a Russian immigrant, from either the Russian Federation or the Soviet Union; it can be a descendant of a compatriot; and the broadest category: it can be a foreign citizen who admires Russian language and culture. I think many of us in this room would consider ourselves compatriots, those who certainly admire Russian culture.

The strategy has evolved, and as recently as last year there was a new twist, and I think this has some application to implementation of the Russian compatriot policy: a compatriot needed to be certified by a respected civil society organisation or defined by the activities that this individual was implementing to promote Russian culture and language. Again, a very broad definition, but we're starting to shape a more defined approach.

The stated objective of the Russian compatriot policy is to promote culture, the Russian culture and Russian language. Here's the important twist to the soft power approach, with particular application to Estonia and Latvia: it is to fight the falsification of history and to protect the rights of compatriots. That is where we'll start to see where this soft power works, particularly in the Baltic States.

Now, what are the benefits of Russian soft power if those are its publicly stated objectives? I think perhaps one of the greatest benefits, particularly in fighting the falsification of history, is to legitimise Soviet/Russian history, and that history is certainly the Soviet role during the Second World War, and then, again, specifically for the Baltic States, this very challenging idea of incorporation versus occupation.

I think what the soft power policy shows us is both Russia and, in this case, Estonia are very much willing to confront on this issue. The Bronze Night statue incident in 2007 showed us that this confrontation can get quite out of hand, potentially, so this is a strong ramification, if you will, of the compatriot policy.

It's always in many ways uniquely an effort to counter western criticism of Russia. What I enjoyed as I learnt more about the compatriot policy – we saw similarities to the British Council on how you promote culture and language, and the organisation De La Francophonie and other organisations culturally predisposed. It also mirrored techniques and tools that western governments use to criticise human

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rights, whether it's using the European Court of Human Rights or other institutions, to raise concerns about treatment of ethnic minorities. Certainly, a benefit of the Russian soft power is to exert political influence over governments, and this unsettles government policy; certainly we see that in Estonia, in Latvia.

Finally, the other benefit of Russian soft power is to keep the Russian Diaspora community or the ethnic Russian-speaking community very separate from the country. It is the separation, which we'll talk about in a little bit, that is the most troubling. It's not just the separation perhaps of older generations, it is the separations of the younger generations, and we'll talk a little bit about that in the survey work.

Again, very briefly, just to go back to what we were trying to do, we wanted to understand Russian soft power as it applied in Estonia, deep-dive into Russian compatriot policy, and then to quantify that impact; and that's what the survey work is going to do for us.

Ted's going to talk a lot about the methodology, particularly of the survey work. Again, I want you to focus on the fact that we were only talking to young people, ages 16 to 29. Many of them were not even born during the Soviet era, so their memory of occupation was not there, and they were certainly experiencing a transforming Estonia. Over 3,000 individuals were surveyed; that's a nice large group, so I think we found some very interesting data there.

How did we break down Russia compatriot policy in a soft power analysis? We took it in five chunks: the use of non-governmental organisations – in this case we looked very closely at the Russkiy Dom network, the Russia House network, and the Russkiy Mir Foundation as the two principal vehicles using non-governmental organisations; we looked at the media; we looked at political influence through political parties in Estonia.

We took another look at the use of legal action, and what I mean by that is I talked about one of the benefits of using western techniques to fight for the protection of minorities and diaspora, using these tools – it has a bit of a twist to it – quite extensively to raise awareness about the state of Russian Diaspora. Then, finally, the use of the Russian Orthodox Church, although that's an emerging trend in Estonia, where we see in other places, particularly in Ukraine, the use of the Church as a very strong and powerful tool in Russian soft power.

What I'm going to do is go in a little bit more detail into those five categories, very briefly. Non-governmental organisations - I have to say I was impressed with both the scale and the scope: the Russkiy Dom network, over 50 centres. Again, we don't know exact budget figures, so we're trying to make a pretty informed guess, but we think between \$26 million and \$30 million goes into these centres.

We see an expansion over the next several years; certainly, there'll be some expansion in the Baltic States. That also goes for the Russkiy Mir Foundation; it includes over 65 centres and an annual budget of \$17.5 million. Again, the goals of both the Russia House, the Russkiy Mir Foundation - culture, language, promoting, popularising... - again, I think you could make some very strong similarities of a variety of cultural instruments that other countries use.

What's been so interesting now about the NGO use - and this is why we focus so much on the youth, a very strong concentration on youth organisations - we see these foundations supporting sporting events, summer camps and exchanges. It is a very youth-focused endeavour. We see this as, actually, the primary vehicle by which Russian soft power is implemented, particularly in Estonia and the other former states.

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Media – this was fascinating, I have to say – it was stated in the Russian National Security Strategy that, quote, patriotic education is a national security imperative. What’s so interesting about the media, and we quote an Estonian official in the report who says, you know, when you get your information, your news, from a different source, in a different language, from an entirely different media channel, you tend to hear one side of the story and you never hear a different side of the story. That’s part of the separation tool, quite frankly. We certainly see a pretty expansion of Russian media outlets, particularly in Estonia.

What we’re seeing is a bit of a transition from printed media into a great use of television and radio; that’s where, I think, it’s most impressive in its dissemination. It’s a nice mixture, the radio in particular, popular music and then commentary - commentary about history, commentary about government policies – but it’s a nice, soft blend. I think it’s having, certainly, some effect.

We see an increase in broadcast, in advertisements. Television – we see the first Baltic channel as the primary spread of Russian news and information dissemination through the television. Again, this is a very effective tool, in my view, in Estonia, particularly.

Political influence – I would say this has been an area where Russian soft power has greatly evolved over the last ten years. I think initially it was very overt; it focused on very pro-Russian parties; the funding was very overt; but what was happening, these pro-Russian parties, particularly in Estonia and Latvia, were not doing very well in elections.

The strategy has evolved, and I think in a very sophisticated way; it has started to say, look, we want to have parties that are actually going to make it into government, that are going to influence. What we see now is that, through grants, through the Russkiy Mir Foundation and others, moderate parties are receiving funding, they’re spreading to a much wider audience, not just to the Russian-speaking populations, and these parties are actually now getting closer and closer to being in coalition.

We’re going to see next week in Latvia whether Harmony Centre will prove to be part of the government. We saw in the Estonian national elections in March the Centre Party, which was doing well, and then that more overt transfer of funds from the Russian Railways thwarted those efforts. Again, when it’s overt, I think it backfires; when it’s more subtle, more moderate it works, I think, fairly effectively. Again, effective, what I’m talking about, effective is influencing; that’s what Russian soft power’s about, influencing policies, and that’s done a great job.

Legal action - I’m going to give a big caveat here – the problem with tracking these numbers is, particularly for the European Court of Human Rights, you only know the claims against the country; you don’t know the origin of the claim. It was interesting that over 828 claims have been brought against Estonia in the European Court of Human Rights; 98% of those cases have been dismissed as inadmissible. I can’t tell you for sure how many of those cases originated from Russia, but I have a healthy sense that probably most of the cases did come from Russia.

We see Russia, and this is an official government policy, using a variety of bodies – in fact, a quote from the former Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, that Russia intends actively to use the podium of the UN rights bodies for drawing attention to the negative humanitarian situation in Latvia and Estonia, using the OSCE, using a variety of tools. This is to great effect, because what happens is, the Estonian and Latvian governments are constantly on the defence about defending their policies; it’s not proactive, it’s defence. I think this has actually had some impact in international opinion, through these vehicles.

Finally, the Orthodox Church; again, it’s a variation per country, but we are seeing official policy express that the Orthodox Church, according to President Medvedev, is a rallying point. What we found in Estonia

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is culturally blessing of new homes and new cars by the Church; it really has an impact on daily life, and so that's one way that the Church does have an impact. It's not as strong in Estonia, I would argue, but it's certainly quite strong and effective in Ukraine.

Again, I'm going to take a brief pause and step out of Estonia for a little bit. What we see in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and I looked at Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, the implementation of all of those categories that I just described to you, but you see different points of emphasis and strength. For instance, in Lithuania, because of their citizenship policy – it's a very small Russian community – they don't have the overreaction on the human rights, the legal action; they don't have the language, citizenship, protection of human rights concerns. They do have a very strong... Russian media is very effective in Lithuania, and their culture as well, as you see that as an influencer.

For example, in Moldova, you have a very different set of policy prescriptions, where Russian language is very accepted, culture is very accepted, obviously, so it's an easier place for Russian soft power to enlarge its capacity. Now, what you see, and this is taking separation to an extreme, where in Estonia and Latvia it's separating the communities, in Moldova it's literally separatism, and so you keep the Transnistria, its separatist, separate Russian policies towards that. You obviously see that in Ukraine, somewhat in Crimea – separation keeping them apart. That's an important area.

Again, you see the network, the Russkiy Mir Foundation, the media... We're starting to see where the United Russia Party is having relationships now with political parties within the post-Soviet space, and that's again part of the influencing methodology.

Now I'm going to pause and let Ted tell you the wonderful survey findings that will either prove or disprove what I've just told you. Ted, over to you.

PROFESSOR THEODORE GERBER: Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here. My role in the project has been to oversee the data collection, and so let me just give you a little bit of background about our empirical approach to conducting this research in Estonia.

Prior to actually conducting the surveys, we conducted some focus group interviews with ethnic Russians living in Estonia, and I'll refer to them as Estonian Russians for now, and I'll distinguish Estonian Russians, who are Russian ethnics living in Estonians, from Estonians or Estonian ethnics; and then from Russian Russians, who are... well, you can probably guess.

We conducted focus groups with them to find out their concerns, their attitudes, and oftentimes we took some of the language that they used to describe their situation in the focus groups and put that on the survey to see how widespread their views were. Our intention was to try to conduct a survey simultaneously in Estonia and in Russia so that we could compare the views of the Estonian Russians both to their counterparts in Estonia, but also to their counterparts in Russia.

Basically, the logic here was we wanted to see how similar are ethnic Russians, who live in Estonia and have spent their whole lives in Estonia, to their Estonian fellow country-people versus Russians who live in Russia. One of the comparisons we make is already complex; we're comparing the Estonian Russians on the one hand, to Russian Russians on the other hand, to Estonians.

Also, within the Estonian Russian community we were interested in whether or not citizenship status matters; one of the issues that the Russian government has repeatedly raised in international circles is the stateless status of a large proportion of the Russian-speaking community in Estonia.

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Without going into too many details, in this current context – you can read about it in the report – about 8% of the population of Estonia today consists of stateless individuals, most of whom are of Russian background, who are not given citizenship in Estonia, even though most of them have lived their whole lives in Estonia, due to the Estonian government's citizenship policies. They can become naturalised, but to do so they have to pass a test, a language test and a test in civics and knowledge of Estonian history.

We were wondering whether or not, actually, it makes a difference, in terms of the attitudes of the Estonian Russians, if they actually attain citizenship or not. We sought to generate a sample consisting of equal parts, on the one hand, Estonians; on the other hand, Russians; on the other hand, Estonian Russians; and then, within the Estonian Russian community, we tried to get an equal balance between Russians who had become citizens and Russians who had not become citizens, who were stateless.

Now, it turned out to be extremely difficult for the survey research company in Estonia to find that last group, who we call grey passport-holders, because they literally have a grey passport, a non-citizen passport, in Estonia. A few gargantuan efforts on the part... and through a sampling strategy, over-sampling neighbourhoods where they're concentrated, they were able to generate 338 such respondents.

What you see before you is a list of the basic sample characteristics of the different groups. Then, within Russia, too, we had some mainly ethnic Russians, but also some non-ethnic Russians. Let me just point out a few things; first of all, as you can see, in Estonia, the vast majority of the Russian population was actually born in Estonia, whether or not they were citizens. The university education is actually more common among the Russian citizens of Estonia than among the Estonians themselves, but substantially less common among the non-citizen Russians in Estonia.

In terms of ability to speak Estonian, it's a little bit surprising, given that Estonian language ability is a criterion for citizenship, that only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Russians who are citizens of Estonia say that they can speak Estonian fluently. However, that is still considerably more than the 6.5% of the non-citizens.

Socioeconomic status is clearly related to citizenship status in Estonia, so to make it clear, look at the unemployment and the income statistics: the non-citizens among them, 23% are unemployed compared to only 13% to those who have naturalised. They're also less likely to be in the highest income quintile, more likely to be in the lowest income quintile. These statistics both reassure us that the survey data corresponds to what we would basically expect, according to some key parameters, but they also point to the relationship between socioeconomic status and citizenship status in Estonia.

Now, in the report we asked a whole bunch of questions about different attitudes, values and perceptions of the Bronze Night incident. Much of the data, but not all of it, is included in the report, so we refer you to there, but today in the presentation I'm only going to have time to just skim the surface, to paint in broad strokes what the main findings are.

One of the questions, as Heather pointed out, that has bedevilled relations between Russians and Estonians and also Russians and other ethnic groups in other former Soviet republics is the interpretation of the Soviet period, Soviet history, and the Soviet role in the Second World War. We have a number of questions which capture this, and the punch line is that in Estonia there are diametrically opposed assessments of the Soviet past, diametrically opposed on the part of, on the one hand, the Russians, and on the other part, the Estonians.

For the most part, citizenship doesn't really matter within the Russian community in Estonia, at least among the young people whom we focused on. Just to give you one example of that, we have a number of questions about attitudes towards Stalin and his role in history. Here is perhaps the most emblematic

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question of all; we read them the statement: Stalin may have made some mistakes, but overall he did more good than bad.

The green bars you see there represent the proportion of the Russian sample in Russia who strongly agree, agree somewhat, and so forth. The blue bars represent the Estonian Russians, and the red bars the Estonians. What you can see here is that in Russia itself, over 50% agree, either somewhat or strongly, with the statement that Stalin did more good than bad. In contrast, in Estonia, among the Estonians, 75%, or about three-quarters, disagree with that statement; so very different views of Stalin.

Where do the ethnic Russians in Estonia fit in? As you can see, they're much closer to the Russians in their assessment of Stalin than they are to the Estonians: 50% of them agree, either somewhat or strongly, that Stalin did more good than bad. This stark opposition of views applies to a lot of different questions related to the Second World War, related to the Soviet period, whether or not the collapse of the Soviet Union was a catastrophe and so forth.

Now we have some direct questions that tap very explicitly into the question of whether or not the Russian government should actually take steps to protect the rights of Russians in Estonia, which it has claimed for itself. Within the Russian Federation now...

I should pause for a minute and note that one of the problems we had when we were pre-testing the survey in Russia is that a lot of the Russian respondents in the pre-test got very frustrated because there are lots of questions about Estonia, about what's happening in Estonia, your attitude about this in Estonia, and a lot of them said, why are you asking me all of these questions about Estonia? I couldn't care less about Estonia; I don't know anything about Estonia; I don't follow the situation at all.

We ultimately decided we had to include a filter question, because we were afraid that too many of the surveys would be interrupted by angry respondents. You don't want to piss off your respondents; they're doing you a favour of answering a bunch of questions, and so we had a filter question where we asked them: how closely do you follow events in Estonia?

The categories ranged from: a great deal; somewhat; not much but a little; and then not at all, I pay no attention to Estonia. If they said, I don't follow Estonia at all, I pay no attention, then we didn't ask them all these detailed questions about Estonia because the information probably would've been worthless, anyway. If they don't pay attention they'd be making things up.

I should note that in this chart here, the Russian group, that corresponds to the 25% - there's literally only 25% of the Russian respondents who did not say that they pay no attention at all; so three-quarters said they pay no attention at all to Estonia. That in and of itself suggests that, in terms of domestic audience for the Russian government's claims about the sufferings of the Russian population in Estonia, they don't seem to have a whole lot of traction; it's not really a key issue within Russia itself.

Now, among the 25% who do say they follow Estonia at least somewhat, the majority of people in Russia, the majority of respondents in this age group, anyway, 85%, do think that the Russian government should intervene to protect Russians living in Estonia. A similarly large proportion, in fact 70%, of the Estonian Russians also agree with that statement. There is a sense among the Estonian Russians that the Russian government has a right and a responsibility to protect their interests, while the Estonian population does not tend to agree with this at all.

They have a right and a responsibility, and the right and responsibility part can be a mixed sword, so we also asked: does the Russian government do enough to protect the Russians living in Estonia? Here we

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see that with the view that the Russian government should protect them is also perhaps an expectation that the Russian government should do more.

About half of the Estonian Russians actually say that, no, the Russian government does not do enough to protect their interests. The Estonians themselves think that the Russian government actually does do enough; they probably think it does too much; we didn't have that as a category, unfortunately. There's a similar distribution in Russia. What this suggests is that it's a little bit risky to proclaim oneself to be the protector of a compatriot population; if the compatriots hear this they may expect the government to do more than it's actually able to do, realistically.

We also asked: what influence, actually, do the Russian government's statements and actions have on the actual situation of Russians in Estonia? Here the pink bars indicate those who see it as very positive; only 20% of the Russians in Estonia say that the Russian government's actions have had a very positive or somewhat positive effect; the majority, 54%, say no effect at all. Not too many Russians say it had a negative effect, at least, but still there's apparently a sense that Russian government really isn't doing all that much, tangibly, to help Estonians in Russia despite its stated intent to do so.

Another issue of soft power, and this is a more indirect measure, we asked a number of questions about how these different populations viewed one another's countries, different aspects; we asked them how they viewed the different ethnic groups. Again, the report provides more details, but here is one where I think you see some evidence of the effectiveness of Russian soft power efforts. We asked them: to what extent do the following phrases characterise Russia, to what extent do they characterise Estonia, and one of the question is a strong economy.

What's interesting here - in the top you see the breakdown by... and here is one case, one of the relatively rare cases, where there is a difference by citizenship status. These are the attitudes of the Estonian respondents and the Russian respondents about whether or not Russia has a strong economy. What's interesting here is that the Estonian Russians actually have a more positive assessment of Russia's economy than their counterparts in Russia do. They're much more likely... in fact, among the grey passport holders, the resident alien passport holders in Estonia, a full 80% agree that Russia actually has a strong economy.

That's some sense... where are they getting this view? They don't live in Russia, they probably haven't spent much time... they must be getting it from somewhere, must be representing a general success the Russian government are portraying through its media outlets of how successful Russia is as an economy and a society. That's one of the positives.

Now, finally, the last piece of data I'll present before I turn the floor back over to Heather to conclude: overall, the findings show a mixed picture, and here's an indication that the soft power policy of Russia is not entirely successful. One would think that if Russian messaging and so forth was successfully appealing and reaching Estonian Russians that Estonian Russians would identify with Russia as their homeland, they'd have a sense of connection with Russia.

We asked the respondents in both of the countries, we first told them people have different levels of identification with different places; some people may feel a closest connection with their city, with where they were born, with their country, with Europe, with Eurasia, with the Soviet Union - that one actually came up in the focus groups, when we asked that question - so what would you say is the most central place that you identify with yourself?

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Perhaps, surprisingly to me, it turns out that the present locality of residents turns out to be the most popular place of central identification, in both Russia and Estonia. That would suggest that if you live in Moscow, or in Pskov, or in Tartu in Estonia, or Tallinn that you first identify: I'm from Tallinn, I'm from Tartu, I'm from Narva, before you would have a larger supranational identity or superlocal identity. Locality of birth came second.

If you look a little bit at the third column there, that's the percentage which identifies Russia as their primary homeland. Even within Russia itself, only one-quarter chose that response. Among the Estonian Russians it was only 8%. In fact, Estonian Russians, 26% of them chose Estonia as their main place of identification, so even among the Estonian Russians, they're far more likely, over three times more likely, to identify with Estonia rather than Russia as their key home.

This has several implications; first, it suggests that, to the extent that the Russian government's efforts have been intended to try to sway loyalties or sway a sense of identification away from Estonia to Russia, it's failed. It also suggests to the Estonian government that their Russian population considers Estonia to be part of its future; there are other data sources which confirm this; we have other survey questions which also confirm this.

In other words, the problem is not going to go away. The Estonian government is going to be faced with a problem of how to integrate its Russian-speaking population, because even in this young group they tend to really be focused on their future within Estonia.

With that, I'll pass the floor back over to Heather.

HEATHER CONLEY: Thanks, Ted. Very, very briefly – if I were to be asked by the Russian Foreign Ministry to evaluate the efficacy of Russian soft power, specifically in Estonia, I would give it a mixed grade, I think. I think it's actually become much more sophisticated, much more influential, as far as the NGOs and the media, and I think this will only continue to grow, if, in fact, their budget allocation and their increase in this network continue.

I think, again, there are other data that show this, but I think, in fact, that the ethnic Russian-speaking population in Estonia does have a better view of Russia than Russians themselves does speak that this narrative does have a great potential and power. In that very small 25% of those in Russia who understood something about Estonia, they felt it was popular, too; it was the right thing to do, to protect minorities. There's some domestic resonance of popularity of this policy, and I think that, again, demonstrates the benefit of the soft power approach.

Finally, I think that the fact that the young people – again, as we're going through this, this is not an older generation; this is 16- to 29-year olds - this group remains deeply divided, historically as well as... We have other charts that show these young people don't interact; they may a little bit in the workplace see one another, but they don't have that connectivity; they are separate. If they're separate, getting separate news sources, separate information, they'll continue to not look at things together and combined.

I had always held the notion that the difficulties with the ethnic Russian communities, particularly in the Baltics, would end up becoming much less as that generation passed away. This report shatters that; this has now passed fully to the next generation, and I would argue, because of the networks now focusing a bit on youth, some of this is flirting with radicalism and extremism within this youth movement. This has some danger, potentially; now we've lost a generation. We have to keep working at this.

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There are some positives here, and, as Ted said, the fact that the Russian speakers identify with Estonia means that Estonia is home. Perhaps a better future is in store if they can work together, getting that unemployment rate down, working on economic growth; that's the future. The fact - and this would be the failing grade I would give Russian soft power - that the Russian community in Estonia does not feel that there's an impact on their daily life - what's daily life? That's employment, that's your children, that's your education and future. The compatriot policy doesn't really touch that. At least, we couldn't find that in this survey. What touches their lives is Estonia's economic prosperity, its society; that's what's going to make a difference.

Again, I would never be asked by the Russian Foreign Ministry to evaluate its soft policy, nor would I be asked to give recommendations, but I'll do it anyway. We have three recommendations, two are for the Estonians, and we will put this burden on the Estonian government, quite frankly. It is time to... obviously, going forward with their official policy, it's important that they have to promote these young people talking to one another: friendship networks, employment networks. If they don't talk to one another, they don't hear each other out, they'll always remain divided. That's really important to happen with young people; that's the focus.

We also thought, because of that, does this affect your daily life or not? It's really important for the Estonian government to give the Russian community the opportunity to participate in Estonia's very encouraging economic future, its economic growth, and they have to begin by bringing them into the workforce in building that future.

For the Russian government, our humble, humble recommendation is that this policy of separation - well, I know that is a benefit of the Russian soft power - that's not good for the Russian-speaking community in these countries. If you're truly trying to improve their status, their way of life, and you want them a stronger, better Diaspora, you want them to be part of this growing society. We would certainly encourage not the separation, not the separatism, but the integration and to be part of that whole process.

With that, we've gone on for a little long, but it's been a really fascinating study; I learnt a lot. I look forward to learning from you; I'm hopeful you'll have some comments for me and some discussions. Olga, thank you very much, over to you.

OLGA SHUMYLO-TAPIOLA: Heather, Theodore, thank you for this fascinating presentation, and I think we'll be moving - we have about an hour - to a question and answer session. I'll pose the first question: you just came from Tallinn where you presented this report, so what was the reaction of the authorities? Did you have anyone from the Russian community in the audience reacting to that?

HEATHER CONLEY: We did; we had a nice turnout, it was over 50 folks, and we had members of parliament, both from Russian-speaking communities, as well as the Estonian community. I have to say, I came at this quite apprehensively because part of our report described the Estonian-Russian relationship, we described the Bronze Night 2007 incident; I thought, oh, jeez, we're outsiders explaining a highly emotive situation, but it was a very, I thought, measured conversation.

The Estonians felt that they had really had a missed opportunity with their citizenship and their language requirements. I think that, retroactively, they would have slightly changed some of their approaches, but they are where they are. I think they're trying to look at exactly what we were talking about, these informal networks, that, again, they've been so focused on the numbers - how many citizens are taking the tests, how are the language... the number of schools that are engaged in this - and they're so busy

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defending themselves internationally, they're not focusing on integrating these young people into Estonia's future. I think there was some recognition by the Estonians of that.

The gentlemen who spoke, a member of parliament from the Russian community - sort of: here comes the question, I was ready for it – and, again, very measured; he gave us another sociological approach, to look at the compatriot policy through a nationalism prism, which was an interesting conversation, but it was not a contentious discussion. I think the Estonians themselves are reflecting upon where this policy is, where it needs to go. I think they appreciated, in a way, some of the survey data; that helped them see where they needed to go.

As I said, I'm not sure this would be fully appreciated perhaps in some circles in Moscow, but I think it's a conversation that, I hope, helped the larger debate. I don't know, Ted, if you had any... you took some fire from the audience.

PROFESSOR THEODORE GERBER: My impression was that the Estonians are very interested in this project, that they are a little bit frustrated with the difficulties they know they have with integrating the Russian-speaking population. They understand that the whole issue has been politicised, in part through the Estonian government's own missteps.

One could justify the actual action that the Estonian government took in the Bronze Night incident, which, for those who may not be familiar with it, happened in April 2007. The Estonian government removed a war memorial to the Soviet Army, took it from the centre of Tallinn and moved it to a military cemetery on the outskirts, along with the remains of some Red Army soldiers. The Russian population was upset with this and there were several nights of rioting as a result. It led to an international outcry, cyber-war and so forth. I think probably, in retrospect, the Estonian government feels not that it was a bad decision, but the way it was actually implemented was problematic and...

I think there's also some frustration we heard about the efforts that the Estonian government has made to integrate the Russian population more effectively. There are some recent studies by a group of Estonian professors which suggest that these programs have failed, that they haven't generated a common understanding. They're looking, I think, for new ideas, new approaches. They recognise that the problem is not going to go away, and so they're eager for constructive engagement and suggestions on how they might proceed to try to accomplish the goals of better integrating the Russian-speaking population.

OLGA SHUMYLO-TAPIOLA: Thank you. I would like to open the floor for questions. Please present yourself and keep your question as short as possible so that we can have as many questions as possible.

ANNA WODESKA: My name is Anna Wodeska [unclear], I work for New Europe magazine. I have a question to both our speakers; do you think that it was a fatal error not to grant all the citizens, after the failure of the Soviet Union, an Estonian passport? Do you think that creation of the social class of aliens who have no possibility to express themselves politically is still an obstacle to reconcile the society?

Do you think that if now the Estonian government will grant these people passports on softer conditions that would create a more favourable climate to reconcile, because as far as I understand, the young people might feel bitter for their parents who are still deprived of political democratic rights within European society, and that is seen by the young generation as a great injustice – so about this generation revenge? Do you think that there is, really, a political solution in distributing passports on softer conditions?

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HEATHER CONLEY: Thank you very much for that question. As Ted mentioned, I think there is some reflection in Estonian government circles about the citizenship and language policy and how it was implemented, although I think at the time they certainly had ample defence in creating those conditions. I think in a way they kept the intent, they may have perhaps implemented it in a longer transition period, perhaps done it a little differently, implemented it a little differently.

I think there are some incentives or disincentives now for the stateless to get citizenship, in part when the Commission allowed for visa-free travel for permanent residents, I believe.

PROFESSOR THEODORE GERBER: Permanent residents.

HEATHER CONLEY: I may not be getting my terminology right, so please feel free to correct me. That allowed travel, and the Russian government obviously allows visa-free travel, so there's no incentive... a passport would allow you to travel and engage; that incentive's now gone. That's one important part of, I think, what's making it more difficult for people to see citizenship...

Yes, the challenges are high in the language proficiency in the civil society, so I think rather than – and this was our comment to the government – rather than sticking so close to the official: here are the numbers this month, and how can we move this - start working on the informal. Stop making the citizenship requirements the litmus test and start bringing in other metrics, looking at how economic activity, joint ethnic Russian-Estonian economic cooperation in Narva can produce, try to bring down the unemployment rate, let the Estonian language use be something that is desired because of economic advantage, not because it's an enforced requirement.

Start building in positives for citizenship rather than what it looks to some stateless as a lot of very difficult, impossible hurdles, which I'm sure could certainly instil bitterness if you feel like you can never achieve that. That's the nuance of policy, not so much to only focus on that official goal about how you can get there if you're more positive needs.

PROFESSOR THEODORE GERBER: This is, of course, a very complex and thorny question: what should the Estonian citizenship policies be? I think one could make the argument both supporting their decision to go back to the pre-Soviet citizenship principle, which would exclude those who immigrated, either themselves or their families, during the Soviet period; and one can, of course, reject it on a number of different philosophical and moral grounds.

My own view is that it made more sense early on to have the very strict restrictions when Estonia was... there was a lot of uncertainty about how the collapse of the Soviet Union was going to play out, about whether or not Estonia would be a viable nation state. I think at this point it would be a sign of justified confidence on the part of the government to show that it's no longer worried, it no longer feels like it has to have this exclusionary – let's just call it what it is, exclusionary policy – in that. For that reason alone... Also, it would defuse a lot of the criticism that Estonia has faced from Russia and its defenders in international circles.

I myself would advocate... I think by and large it would benefit the Estonian government. It wouldn't really hurt them that much to actually reform the policy to make it easier to get citizenship, as you suggest, and that's just my own personal view.

Is it politically possible in Estonia? I'm not sure. I think the Estonians themselves, if you ask them the question on the survey, a lot of them blame the Russians themselves for not getting citizenship. They just point out: look, if they want citizenship, let them learn the language; it's not impossible to do, we all have

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done it. I don't think there would necessarily be a lot of political support among the Estonian population for this.

I also think it wouldn't in and of itself solve the problems. One of the surprising general findings, to reiterate, is that there's really not a lot of difference between the citizens and the non-citizens in terms of attitude. There is socioeconomically, indeed, but in terms of attitudes, it...

I speculate that the Bronze Night incident and the conflict surrounding that had the effect of uniting the Russian-speaking community in its anger towards the Estonian government. We're still maybe seeing the aftermath of that.

I don't think that by granting citizenship to the Russians automatically that's going to solve the problems that we've detected here, the segregation, the conflict, the disagreements, the alternative views, but I still think it would probably be to the Estonian government's benefit, in the long run, to do it, anyway.

ANNA WODESKA: Don't you think that it damages the European Union as a whole that there is such a group as non-citizens? Because we model Europe, ourselves, as a very developed democracy, that allows, let's say, the adversaries of the European Union to criticise the whole model, that there is a group of people who have no political rights? For example, in debates with China, it's very difficult to defend; the European Union has difficulty defending itself because they say, but look at yourself; you're criticising Tibet and our problems, but you have in Baltic republics the whole class of people who have no passports.

I think that wouldn't it be, really, more helpful to align themselves with European policies in that sense and give passports, because it makes...?

OLGA SHUMYLO-TAPIOLA: Excuse me - we want to give the floor to other people as well. I think you are asking too long a question. If our guests can answer the question, and then we'll...

HEATHER CONLEY: I would just comment that I think, again, the OSCE, the High Commissioner for National Minorities, Ambassador Knut Vollebaek and others are still very engaged in this process of citizenship, of language requirements to make sure that it does meet those standards. This is going to be a work in progress, and as Ted mentioned, politically the government has to, under requirements - Council of Europe, OSCE principles - move forward, and it's being monitored.

I think there's confidence that the government is working closely with these authorities to get to a better place; I think it's just the implementation, and the difficulties of that, will be a longer-term struggle, for sure.

OLGA SHUMYLO-TAPIOLA: I think we'll take three questions: Victoria Pirkka and Marie, and then I will take another round. Victoria, please.

MARCEL VAN HERPEN: Thank you very much for your very interesting introduction. My name is Marcel Van Herpen, Cicero Foundation. I have two questions; the first question is, if your soft power, as you call it, if you take it not too broadly, for instance, saying that the Kremlin wants to take influence on political parties... we have seen that Mr Savisaar, the mayor of Tallinn, who is also the chief of the Centre Party, has got \$1.5 million to build an Orthodox Church in Tallinn, and that he had asked also for \$1.5 million of Yakunin, the chief of the Russian Railways, for his party, for the elections. I think this is soft power; soft power is attraction, and this is real: bribing people and bribing elections.

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The second question is: your third recommendation is the Russian government should actively encourage the engagement of the Russian minorities in Estonia politically, economically and socially. This is, of course, very nice and good, wishful thinking, but do you think that the Russian government is really interested in the wellbeing of the minorities? These minorities, wherever they are, are used as instruments of, let's say, foreign policy of the Kremlin, so I think this recommendation will end nowhere. Thank you.

VICTORIA HUDSON: Victoria Hudson from the Centre for Russian and East European Studies at Birmingham University. Thank you for your presentation. I'm interested –in the report you make a distinction between an organic kind of soft power and propaganda; I wonder how we can distinguish clearly, coherently and consistently between these two ideas, and, indeed, can we? Thank you.

PIRKKA TAPIOLA: Good afternoon. Pirkka Tapiola from the EAS, but formerly, in the 90s, having worked with the OSCE in the Baltics. I wrote a Master's thesis in the mid-90s on Russian policy towards the Baltics and it focused on the minority issue at its beginning. However, I didn't use Joseph Nye, I used Hans Morgenthau, and at that moment labelled this as part of a realist policy and as part of traditional geopolitics.

In a way, when I heard that you were thinking about a report card to the Russian Foreign Ministry, they would probably see it, if – now I'm speaking on a personal capacity, not representing my employer – but they would probably see their policy as rather successful, because if the goal has been separation, whereas the one thing the Baltic States have wanted is recognition of their interpretation of history, this has been successful.

I do remember in the 90s that whenever Estonia or Latvia would take a step towards liberalising restrictions, the criticism from Moscow would grow. Therefore, as the policy looked at it, was to keep the separation and make sure that people do not apply for citizenship, and to also... You had, in the media, in the press, discussions on: okay, it's too difficult to get, and failure stories of exams.

Now, this has perpetuated as a defence mechanism, the policies of the Baltic States as well, probably mistakenly; your research shows that people's attachment to the countries and the cities they live is quite strong. Now here comes my question; because you do have this risk with the young generation, who don't remember the Soviet Union any more, one way out would be to tie citizenship to finishing high school or finishing school, which is something I've tried to discuss with a number of Baltic States, where people do learn about the constitution, history and the language at school, and make it an option and avoid the exams. Was this as part of any of your discussions? Thanks.

MARIE MENDRAS: Marie Mendras from Sciences Po University in Paris. If I may, Olga, I have two questions...

OLGA SHUMYLO-TAPIOLA: Can we have one and then [overtalking]?

MARIE MENDRAS: They, I think, follow up also on what Pirkka just said. The first one is: I think your report is extremely interesting because it shows that even the younger generation is reproducing this situation of separation, and I'd like to stress that the problem in Estonia is that those two populations - Russian-speaking, Estonian-speaking – don't live together.

The key question is, and this is really my first question, majority of Russian speakers in certain towns and cities – who votes? Voting is absolutely crucial. You mentioned it in passing, Russian support for political

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parties, but could you tell us exactly who votes in local elections, regional elections, national elections and at the European Parliament election? I'd be very, very interested.

My second question is, really, how can you assess whether Russian compatriot policy is effective or not if you don't state what you think the objectives are? What is the objective of Russia in Estonia, or what are they looking for? I'm not sure I know, but I'm sure you know a little better than we do, because you spend time studying... but I think it is really important to know whether they have a short-term, a long-term objective.

Also, if I may, just one comment: I haven't read the report yet, but I'm very eager to read it; if you put together a study involving Baltic States that are member states of the EU, and Moldova or Ukraine, that are not member states of the EU, I think – and I don't know how you dealt with it writing the report – to us European citizens it certainly makes a big difference. Thank you.

OLGA SHUMYLO-TAPIOLA: We'll go for the answers now.

HEATHER CONLEY: Some wonderful questions! Thank you so much. You're absolutely right on our soft power definition; it notes attraction without coercion or payment – you got me. This is where you see an overt political financing of political parties that is payment, that is coercion. My argument, though, in the Savisaar case is that when it's exposed it backfires.

When it's more nuanced, more covert, there's a... when the Russkiy Mir Foundation gives a grant to a political party to advocate for bilingualism that's something a little more subtle to the approach. However, you're absolutely right; that was the one place where I didn't think the Nye definition did as well with that exception.

I take your point; our recommendations – this is where think tanks get to make recommendations, although we know they're not realistic at all, and I'll tie that, ultimately [unclear], to your question. Russian soft power – the objectives are very clear and the Russian government states them very clearly: to promote the Russian culture and language, to thwart attempts to falsify history, and to protect diaspora; [overtalking] that is their public objective.

PROFESSOR THEODORE GERBER: That's the official...

HEATHER CONLEY: You can trace, yes, the lines go back to those four objectives; but, again, what is this really about? It's absolutely long-term; that's why this is a generational, a youth-focused activity.

I think, number one, quite frankly, and we talked about this a bit in Tallinn, it's to legitimise – I'll use this terminology, a Russian colleague would not – to legitimise the national myth of the Soviet role in the Great Patriotic War and following that. It is to continue that history will recall that moment, and anyone who contests or confronts that, they will respond very strongly, because that is part of their national narrative. It's to counter, then, western criticism of Russia's own human rights record, in my view.

What are they really trying to do? I think by separating these communities, it's to unsettle governments; it's to continue to underneath the surface, and when it becomes too overt, it actually, I think, becomes a problem – but to constantly... it's a self-confidence issue, that government never feels quite confident. It's always concerned; it's concerned about what the international community thinks.

A colleague of mine said, boy, you know, do you watch Russia Today in the United States? I said, no, not really, we don't watch it. Well, do you pay attention to what they say about Estonia? Hmm, not really.

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They're worried; they're worried about the EU thinks; they're worried about what the international community thinks; and they're worried about what this is doing inside to their own political struggle, their own economic struggle. It is a crisis of confidence that this policy continues to feed, to feed, to feed.

That's what happens particularly in Estonia and Latvia. Lithuania's a very different case, because they took a very different approach and have a different historical situation. The non-EU member states – Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia – situationally, it's completely different. There is no Russian media influence in Georgia because they have banned all Russian media, so, okay, take that one out. There's no influence of the Church. The common denominators certainly don't work very well in Georgia. Moldova - they work extremely well. Ukraine – it's very mixed; the Church... Crimea – you're seeing more of a separatism type of issue, but it also can backfire if it's too overt.

They're different focuses and different emphasis on different things, but the shape of that policy is the same, and that's what we're trying to argue through that. There is an official stated policy, and it is true: all of that works towards that, but the unofficial benefits of that policy, I think, we will see, and continue to see, and the EU will have to see to this day.

Finally, organic soft power, propaganda – we tried to be cute and say this is soft power in the 21st century, which is basically saying it's a smart, savvy propaganda that uses the internet, the media, the social networks; it's a sophisticated propaganda. Quite frankly, for my American colleagues, American public diplomacy is our soft power; that's how we influence, that's our propaganda; it's just that we don't use that terminology. We all do it, all guilty, but I think what we have to be obviously aware of, and this is what I think the study is, it has certain forms of soft power. It can have very devastating consequences on a society and on international relations, and that's what we were hoping to pull out with this report.

Finally, on the local elections question: stateless can only vote in the local elections; they cannot vote – keep me honest here – on the national and, certainly, the European, but once a citizen, can vote, I believe, for local, state and European levels. That's my understanding; if anyone has better information please correct me.

PROFESSOR THEODORE GERBER: I don't have much to add; I think Heather covered... I will say: the question about trying to distinguish, empirically, in a systematic fashion, between organic soft power and propaganda is, of course, a very difficult one. It's hard to come up with a set of reproducible criteria that you could use to have a reliable cross-observer distinction.

We did ask the question in the survey of the respondents; we asked them precisely this question: do you think that the Russian government officials who make these statements about Estonian Russians are genuinely concerned about their welfare, or do you think they have other motives? Among the Estonian Russian population, 40% agreed that they are genuinely concerned, and the rest either didn't know or were suspicious of their motives.

I guess I would say that the difference between propaganda and organic soft power is everybody knows propaganda when they see it; organic soft power is more subtle, more deceptive. Perhaps one way to measure would be to ask the people in these countries, do you think this is genuine or not?

I will say, okay, well, we're not so naïve as to really think that the Russian government really is truly concerned about the wellbeing and that's what drives the policy. I certainly agree that some of the foreign policy considerations and also some of the domestic considerations inspired the increasing reliance on this policy, and that, indeed, one of Putin's great successes as president of Russia was making Russians feel positive about themselves as a nation, as a country, again.

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In contrast to the 1990s, I think he understood how important it was for Russians to have this sense of their greatness as a nation. The soft power project certainly plays into that, and that's one of the motives to help construct this view, not just about the Second World War, although that's a crucial component of the discourse of Russia's greatness historically, but, more generally, to promote the idea that Russia is a nation with a rich and glorious history and culture.

Maybe we should put this policy recommendation quotations or something or we should...

HEATHER CONLEY: We have to try.

PROFESSOR THEODORE GERBER: Maybe what we're really trying to do is draw attention to the gap between the stated goals of the Russian government and the actual intent of this policy, which is, indeed, to cause trouble, to make it difficult for the Estonian government and to counter western criticisms of Russian human rights policies, which have been numerous over the decades since the Soviet collapse.

Now, I like the idea of having high school graduation be a criterion; it sounds like it would be promising, it would be a way to depoliticise, de-linguisticise it, so to speak, although one does also have to keep into account that the language policy, in terms of the Estonian education system, has also shifted, so that up until four, five years ago it was still possible to attend Russian language secondary schools, but the government in the last several years has really moved to try to quash those and to make it so that you can't really get a high school degree without having Estonian at a rudimentary level.

It's a little bit complicated; it's... on the surface I think it would be a way of at least formally de-linking...

PIRKKA TAPIOLA: It could incentivise, also have influence [unclear] [inaudible].

HEATHER CONLEY: We actually talked about doing something with young people on history, a history project where they're bringing both of their views, but having a very uninformed and neutral conversation, and that perhaps does look at educational reform on how Estonians teach history. To make that part of an integrative project could be a nice way to begin: to have a conversation about history, but listening to both sides, and walking from there.

PROFESSOR THEODORE GERBER: In fact, if I could just add briefly – I'm sorry, I know people have more questions – I want to point out on that particular topic, one of the reactions in Tallinn, several people have said, well, you're telling us we should have more of these integration projects. We tried that, it didn't work at all. The Russians still don't see history the way we see it and...

From the focus groups, I have a slightly different take on that; it's not the case, and this really came out... the focus groups are in-depth group interviews where you get a richer sense than you can from surveys about what the participants really think, and what struck me is it seemed like many Russians in these focus groups, when I said, well, how do you feel about the Estonian view that they were occupied by the Soviet troops as a foreign power, they would say, well, actually, we understand why they feel that way. We understand that, to them, they were a small, weak country, and they were taken over by this giant, powerful country, and this system was imposed on them, and they're upset about that, but I don't care. I'm still... I disagree; my grandfather fought in the war, and my grandfather was...

What seemed to me is that the reaction of the Russians to this alternative narrative about the Soviet experience was really an emotional, personalised reaction more than it was a distanced, rational, intellectual response. On the one hand, you could say that it's discouraging, this sense of [unclear], no

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matter how many history lessons you have and joint projects, that you're never going to get over this deep emotional difference between Estonians and Russians and how they understand this.

On the other hand, it is some progress, the fact that the same people who had this emotional reaction could preface it by saying, I do understand why the Estonians feel the way they do; that is progress compared to a situation where there is actually incomprehension. I don't think there's incomprehension on the two sides; there's just an emotional barrier which led me to think it wasn't a waste of time, all those integration programs.

OLGA SHUMYLO-TAPIOLA: Thank you. The next round, please raise your hands; we want to [inaudible] hands. Then we'll hand it over to the next.

ISKRA KIROVA: Thank you very much. Iskra Kirova, International Crisis Group and also Public Diplomacy graduate from USC. Thank you very much for a very interesting presentation on a subject that indeed is not very much studied.

My question is about Russian public diplomacy in Moldova and Georgia, and specifically the separatist territories there, as you said that you've look into that briefly as well. I wonder if all of these instruments – NGOs, Russkiy Mir Foundation, etc – are also applied there, and to what extent. Certainly, Russia has a different role in these territories as a security guarantor, provides economically for the territories, so do they also feel the need to expand some efforts on the soft power track, or do they really function more as the hard economic power in these regions? Thank you.

OLGA SHUMYLO-TAPIOLA: Thank you. More questions? If not, then I will have one from me. As a Ukrainian, I'm thinking now a lot about who Ukrainians are and where they're moving as well, and how soft power from Russia comes to my country. My question will be: when you have a country like Ukraine, where people don't have a very strong national identity, and when I cannot say that Russians or Russian-speaking people – and myself, I'm Russian-speaking – are the minority in Ukraine, how do you then apply your methodology, and what methods can Russians use to be successful, because you can really separate people? Crimea is too little a place to have big impact, although you can destabilise the country. What would be the answer for Ukraine?

HEATHER CONLEY: Thank you. As I said, we focused on Estonia, but I tried to pull back and take a look at what else was going on. I think the difference in Moldova and Georgia, and I'll specifically say in Moldova, what separates Russian soft power policies versus the Baltics - again it gets back to the payments part, where we're seeing a policy in Transnistria where its passports, its pensions, that's payment; and that's a very overt policy to remain separate. That's very distinguished and a difference in soft power towards Moldova; it is a literal payment. Again, I think you have receptivity in Moldova because of the language.

Again, it's a bit of a reorientation of history, of trying to remove the narration of Romania's role; it's about Russia's role there. Again, I think, as we said, the benefit, or the implications, of the soft power is that Tiastropov [unclear] responds to Moscow, not to Chisinau, although the Moldovan government has taken, certainly, an approach trying to be accommodative to Moscow so they can solve their problems, so it's not an adversarial role, necessarily, and, again, it's a strong cultural and language affiliation; so that's unique.

Georgia – I think we almost have to put in a separate category post the Georgia-Russia conflict. This is where all of the compatriot soft tools... they're gone; it's hard tools, and it's about separation, but you saw the passports, and that part is to keep separate. I think at this point it's so difficult to even analyse Georgia in the parameters that I've laid out, but it is there and will continue to be there.

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Ukraine – what’s so interesting – again, it’s about what’s the Russian historical narrative? For Ukraine, it’s not the historical, the confrontation, it’s about the commonality, that Ukraine is so essential to Russia’s identity, and so that’s how the separatism, I think, isn’t a strong theme, and that’s where the Church plays such a strong role, even though that’s obviously a divided church construct; but that’s where identity becomes very, very important.

Again, we do see the Russkiy Mir, the network, that NGO network, active in all of the countries, the three Baltics, as well as Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia. With the exception of Georgia, a wide use of media; there’s partnership with political parties and things like that. There are similarities, but for Ukraine it seems to me there’s a strong Russian soft power tool that maintains that Ukraine will always be part of Russian identity.

The other historical narrative – it’s a small narrative – Russian foreign policy has certainly intervened to prevent anyone attempting to suggest that the Great Famine was a genocide. Again, that’s similar to the work that the Russian soft power’s attempting to do about fascism and neo-Nazism in the Baltic States. When the historical narrative disagrees, like the Famine, they’re working against that so the UN would not recognise that as a genocide, something like that. There are some threads you could pull, necessarily, but Ukraine is certainly a unique case, in my view. Ted, you may have some reflections as well.

PROFESSOR THEODORE GERBER: Yes, I can speak a little bit about it, to the Ukraine question in particular. Ukraine, of course, has a... not just over the Holodomor, but also about issues of World War Two, collaboration and so forth, and it’s a deeply divided society within itself. The divisions don’t necessarily correspond neatly to ethnic background as such, and many Ukrainian citizens are Ukrainian by ethnicity but they mainly speak Russian, or vice versa; it’s a very complex shifting set of identities I think you have in Ukraine.

I do think that the Orange Revolution was a signal moment in terms of Russian’s policy towards Ukraine, and that... Of course, as you recall, the Russian government tried hard power, in the sense that it invested a lot of money in Yanukovich’s campaign. Ultimately, when that failed, that set off alarm bells in Moscow. The Russian authorities went to great extents to portray the Orange Revolution as a CIA-backed foreign intervention, and there was lots of...

I remember conducting focus groups in Russia, on a completely different set of topics, shortly after the Orange Revolution and listening to the Russian respondents talking about how there were pogroms committed against Russians by Ukrainians and how the CIA had taken over Ukraine... there was really a very serious sense that the Russian public, by and large, bought this image of what happened during the so-called Orange Revolution.

Of course, things have changed a lot in Ukraine since the Orange Revolution, and I haven’t followed Ukrainian politics closely enough to say so, so if Russia played any role in the ultimate electoral success of Yanukovich - I think a lot of it had to do with divisions between Tymoshenko and Yushchenko and so forth, and the failure of the western-oriented group to really coalesce and come up with a coherent set of effective policies when they had the chance, but to the extent that Russia was involved in some way, that didn’t make headlines and didn’t involve expenditures on [unclear].

That would suggest that maybe there was some soft power going on that... again, you see this test, that if it’s effective, then that means a soft power; if it’s not effective, then it’s propaganda. Well, maybe the Orange Revolution election was propaganda and the more recent presidential one was a case of soft power.

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OLGA SHUMYLO-TAPIOLA: Thank you. Any more questions, please? The weather doesn't affect attendance, but sometimes it affects moods or maybe the question session. I want to thank you very much for your presentation. Thank you for coming. I want to invite the guests to look at the website of CSIS, where the report should be available. It will soon be available on Carnegie Europe website as well. I want to wish you good luck, and, hopefully, to see you in Moscow, where you can deliver your recommendations. Thank you.

HEATHER CONLEY: Thank you very much.

PROFESSOR THEODORE GERBER: Thank you.