

## THE WAR FOR THE SOUL OF THE NATION

Grzegorz ROSŁAN

Air Force Academy of Dęblin, Poland

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**Abstract:** *The rebirth of Russian statehood constitutes both an interesting and a difficult topic for consideration. Currently Russia is going through another groundbreaking moment in its troubled history, the moment which coincides with radical changes in international relations, the reevaluation of threats and possible causes of their origin, as well as with the process of shaping a new statehood. After the collapse of the Soviet giant in 1991, Russia faced the necessity to answer a number of fundamental questions, which were, inter alia, concerned with its future as a country and the world power, the prospects for its social and economic development, and finally, its attitude towards former allies from Eastern and Central Europe. For the Russian Federation the way to achieve the goals which have been referred to above and to strengthen idiosyncratic supremacy in the world, inherited from the Soviet Union, consisted not only in the policy adopted by the state but also in determined action. The conflict over Crimea and Eastern Ukraine shows that when it comes to Russia the West possesses no suitable instrument of pressure; Lack of any coherent policy towards Russia on both the U.S. ' and EU ' part, resulted in the occupation of Crimea.*

**Keywords:** *Russian Federation, the conflict over Crimea, the soul of the nation*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Soviet Union, accompanied by its allies, won *the hot war*, fought in years 1941–1945, but lost the *cold war*, which started in 1947<sup>1</sup> and lasted, varying in its intensity, until the collapse of the Soviet empire. The debris of the Soviet Union led the foundations for numerous independent countries, the largest of which was the Russian Federation, which took the function of the former USSR's successor.

The rebirth of Russian statehood constitutes both an interesting and a difficult topic for consideration. Currently Russia<sup>2</sup> is going through another groundbreaking moment in its troubled history, the moment which coincides with radical changes in international relations, the reevaluation of threats and possible causes of their origin, as well as with the process of shaping a new statehood.

1 B. Potyrała, H. Szczegóła, *Russian Army after the USSR's collapse (Armia rosyjska po upadku ZSRR) (1992 – 2000)*, Higher School of Pedagogy, Zielona Góra 2000, p. 4.

2 Nowadays the term 'Russia' is often used as the correlate of term 'The Russian Federation', whereas in the USSR's time this name was only used in its historical sense, since officially only the Soviet Union existed.

After the collapse of the Soviet giant in 1991, Russia faced the necessity to answer a number of fundamental questions, which were, inter alia, concerned with its future as a country and the world power, the prospects for its social and economic development, and finally, its attitude towards former allies from Eastern and Central Europe<sup>3</sup>. In the first decade of the young country's functioning, Russia had to struggle with its difficult heritage in order to be able to make up for the time it had lost and to catch up with other countries in terms of development.

It is in this period that the *Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Russian Federation* of 12<sup>th</sup> June 1990 and *Constitution of the Russian Federation* of 12<sup>th</sup> December 1993 were adopted. Those were the documents which, in the course of the process of building its own identity, defined national goals, interests and priorities in both domestic and foreign policy.

For the Russian Federation the way to achieve the goals which have been referred to above and to strengthen idiosyncratic supremacy in the world, inherited from the Soviet Union, consisted not only in the policy adopted by the state but also in determined action<sup>4</sup>.

3 Comp. *Studies on Russia (Szkiice o Rosji)*, eds: A. Stępień-Kuczyńska, J. Adamowski, Łódź-Warsaw 2000.

4 P. Wiczorek, *The United States towards the changes in Russia's military potential*, in: *Eastern Politics*

The component that played a special role in this process was Russian military potential, particularly, the nuclear one, whose main goal was to, broadly speaking, deter a potential opponent<sup>5</sup>.

In this period, having regard to the goal mentioned above, the Russian Federation wished to gain exclusive access to nuclear power created by the former USSR, which was reflected, for example, in Budapest Memorandum<sup>6</sup>. Moscow achieved this aim<sup>7</sup> and currently Russian nuclear arsenal, apart from fulfilling its basic role that is to guarantee the safety of the country, also plays a particularly significant role in the Russian Federation's global and vital interests. The man that was the face behind these changes was Boris Yeltsin, the first president in the country's history.

At that time Russia resigned from the rhetoric of confrontation while interacting with other powers. It considered itself the part of the West, as a result, contributing to the abolition of divisions created during the cold war. Unfortunately, the process of shaping a new identity, by following the example of the western countries, overwhelmed the Russian society. The lack of positive outcomes resulted in Russia's turning its back on the system's patterns followed in the West and as a consequence, led to Boris Yeltsin's crew resignation. In the period of Yeltsin's presidency Russia also used its weakened war machinery to defend the citizens of the former Soviet Union. Such a situation took place in Trans-Dniester, South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Nagorno-Karabakh. Furthermore, it intervened by supplying heavy tank equipment for Armenia, which does not border with the Russian Federation.

The groundbreaking moment in the history of the Russian Federation occurred when, in December 1990, Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin who was stepping down, pointed his successor – Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin.

5 H. Malon, *Post-Soviet nuclear weapon*, Warsaw 1995.

6 Budapest Memorandum on Safety Warrants – an international agreement without the status of treaty signed in December 1994 in Budapest, by the power of which the US, Russia and Great Britain obliged themselves to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and to withhold any threats of using force against its independence and territorial integrity, and Ukraine was obliged to pass strategic nuclear weapon on to Russia and join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

7 Comp: H. Malon, *Post-Soviet Nuclear Weapon*, Warsaw: 1995.

How come that Putin succeeded where others had failed, becoming in 2000 the President of the Russian Federation? From the perspective of time one can see that it was a thoroughly prepared propaganda operation, planned in the tiniest details and conducted with surgical precision<sup>8</sup>. It was the final tool of the internal battle for power, which for years had been fought by Russia's political elites.

When Yeltsin started the First Chechen War, he had two goals: to put an end to political destabilization in the region and to guarantee his reelection. The latter goal was about taking over the entire power. The winner took it all.

Yeltsin lost the first war, mainly in the media. Consequently, he had to step down. The second war, just like a number of other endeavors which were connected with it, became the beginning of Putin's visible activity. The war was planned in the last months of Yeltsin's presidency<sup>9</sup> and it became the gateway for the new authorities to take over, and until this day Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin continues to be their leader. It is worth mentioning that Vladimir Putin gained power thanks to the fact that during his first election campaign he referred to popular patriotic slogans and promised the Russians that he *would kill terrorists*. It happened during the second war in Chechnya<sup>10</sup>.

The second Chechen war was even more brutal and cruel than the first one. On the Russian side one could clearly sense the need for revenge. The need to punish the Chechens for humiliating Russians.

It was the first military confrontation of *Putin's crew*. It was also the first example of using the Russian propaganda machine in the form of the central media to the benefit of new Putin's crew. It aimed at shaping the public opinion to be favorable for the authorities. This machine, in its perfected form, continues to function until this day. That war also turned out to be Putin's first *war for the souls of the nations* – Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin's first victory. He was the actual winner.

8 M. H. van Herpen, *Putin's Wars. Chechnya, Georgia, Ukraine 2014*, Pruszyński i S-ka, Warsaw: 2014.

9 On Friday, 31st Dec. 1999, B. Yeltsin waived the function of The Russian Federation's President. Acting President, until the announcement of the election, was Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin.

10 The second Chechen War – a military conflict fought from 11th Oct. 1999 until 16th April 2009 between the Russian Federation and Chechen separatists.

One should point out the fact that the second Chechen war broke out on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1999 and the pretext for starting it was terrorist attacks in residential buildings in Buynasksk, Moscow and Volgodonsk.

Approximately 300 people were killed in these bombings. It is worth mentioning that at that time Federal Security Service (FSB<sup>11</sup>), which is Russian secret service, was led by a promising officer, V. Putin<sup>12</sup>.

## 2. MAIN PART

In the book entitled *Blowing up Russia: Terror from within*<sup>13</sup> written by Alexander Litvinienko and Yuri Felshtinsky its authors prove that terrorist attacks were conducted by FSB officers and constituted *casus belli*<sup>14</sup>, which was supposed to justify a military pacification in Chechnya.

It is FSB agents who reputedly set bombs under residential buildings to provoke the outbreak of the second Chechen war, since the first one was lost by the Russians.

Putin's next war for *the souls of the nations* was the conflict around South Ossetia, the conflict which started at the time of USSR's collapse. As early as November 1989 first clear tensions between Georgians and Ossetians occurred. After a bloody, but short, war which broke out at the beginning of the nineties, Ossetians and Georgians signed a truce which froze the conflict for a few years.

Throughout the nineties both sides were reluctant to change the situation in the region. Georgians, due to lack of power and actual economic and political dependency on Moscow, did not dare pacify the separatists, whereas the insurgents from Tskhinvali were satisfied with their *quasi* state status.

The situation was not the same when the authorities changed and when Georgia made an effort to integrate with the West<sup>15</sup>. Today at our disposal we have knowledge from which it results that this conflict was not provoked in a day, but it was preceded by many months of skillfully masked actions, from which the following ones should be referred to:

- cybernetic attacks conducted from Russian servers targeting servers which supported the websites of the Georgian government,

- military maneuvers: *Caucasus 2008*, which started the day before the conflict at the Georgian border,

- presence of the journalists from the leading Russian media in the area where the conflict originated,

- presence of regular Russian troops in the area in question.

The catalyst for the Georgian-Russian conflict in 2008 was the referendum held in January, in which over 60% of the Georgian society supported the accession to NATO structures. After military action had started, Russian propaganda machine was launched and the local inhabitants were affected by Russians' ruthlessness, perfidy and cruelty.

Russian actions, both propaganda and military ones, resulted in the support of the experts favorable to Kremlin.

They were mainly the participants of the Valdai International Discussion Club<sup>16</sup>, which is often referred to as the club of *Putin's worshippers*.

On the 21st November 2011, Dmitry Medvedev, who was the President of the Russian Federation at that time, made a speech, during his visit to Vladikavkaz, in which Moscow's official standpoint from 2008 – which was concerned with a humanitarian intervention aiming at the protection of South Ossetia's population – was replaced by the need to hinder Tbilisi's ambitions of entering NATO.

11 FSB, the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (Russian: Федеральная служба безопасности Российской Федерации, ФСБ) – since 1995 Russia's special service. It is the direct successor of KGB (mainly II, III and V Boards). After Putin gained power, its competences have been significantly expanded.

12 25th July 1999 V. Putin became the Director of FSB.

13 Comp.: A. Litvinienko, Y. Felshtinsky, *Blowing up Russia*, Rebis, Poznań 2007.

14 Lat. *casus* – case, occurrence; *cadere* – occur; *belli* – Genitive of *bellum* – war – the reason or pretext for the declaration of war.

15 A. Micek, Georgian-Russian War of 2008 (*Wojna gruzińsko-rosyjska z 2008 r.*), [at:] /home/windmaker/domains/militis.pl/public\_html/plugins/content/sexybookmarks.php, [access 7.07.2014].

16 Valdai International Discussion Club – the annual meeting of renowned experts who specialize in Russia's domestic and foreign policy. The Club was established in September 2004 by *RIA Nowosti*, The Council on Russia's Foreign and Defence Policy, *The Moscow Times* and journals *Russia in global politics and Russia Profile*.

It was the second victorious war *for the souls of the nations*. At this point it is worth mentioning that as early as in August 2007, Russia committed cybernetic attacks whose aim was to block the websites of several Estonian banks. It was the first time when a mass cyber-attack against an independent country occurred.

Russian politicians, gathered around Putin, meticulously took advantage of the situation by repeating the old pattern which had worked out before and with which not only Poles but also Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians or Finns were familiar.

In 1939 Moscow reduced its aggression to *granting internationalist assistance* to fellow Ukrainian and Belarusians. The part of the public opinion in the West bought these both in 1939 and now. How come? The reason is that they did not know much about this part of the world. Poland and other countries located between Germany and Russia knew it all too well.

*Humanitarian intervention aiming to protect the interests of the inhabitants..* is a scenario which has been present in the history of the USSR. In 1939, the year which has already been mentioned, W. Churchill referred to the Soviet Union as *the puzzle inside a riddle wrapped in an enigma*<sup>17</sup>.

It is also worth mentioning that in 2007, as if anticipating the conflict with Georgia, President Vladimir Putin signed the special decree to suspend the execution of *Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe*. This very decision was made due to *exceptional circumstances violating the safety of Russian Federation and requiring immediate steps* – this was Kremlin's official statement. One may assume that already at that point *Putin's crew* predicted military actions in Crimea.

The five-day war with Georgia in August 2008 became the real catalyst for the reform of Russian armed forces. It may have ended with the indisputable victory of the Russian Federation, but it showed that its Armed Forces had significant difficulties in conducting military actions. Russian troops suffered losses which were disproportionate in relation to the opponent's military potential. The commanding system proved to be inefficient.

What also turned out to be a very serious problem was Russian army's poor mobility.

Moreover, the transport air forces had too few planes to secure the redeployment of the land troops and basically, it was used only for the movement of subdivisions of airborne troops<sup>18</sup>.

The analysis of the course of the conflict shocked both political and military authorities in Russia.

The decision was taken to conduct immediate and radical reforms of Russian Federation Armed Forces, which basically embraced all the aspects of their functioning. The Russian Army was to be shaped in accordance with the requirements of the contemporary *fight space* – the so called *novyoblik*<sup>19</sup>.

The Russian Federation's attempts to regain the position of the real power in the world also resulted in Dmitri Medvedev's signing a new *Russia's National Security Strategy* in May 2010 and *Russia's Military Doctrine* in February 2010.

The listed documents were the Russian response to the changes caused by the international situation as well as by the internal transformation of the country – inter alia, in the field of foreign policy and army.

The analysis of the content of the subject literature allows to state that the new *Strategy* constitutes a seeming attempt at re-cataloguing and organizing the challenges concerned with Russian Federation national security. Moreover, it is used to shape the views of the Russian political elites and propagate the ideology of power. The doctrine which has been referred to above explicitly defines NATO as Russia's main opponent (which is a significant constraint in comparison to the previous documents of that kind). Furthermore, the main threats for Russia's safety were unequivocally associated with the western direction and North Atlantic Treaty. Simultaneously the military part of the document consisted of general announcements concerned with creating modern armed forces. The doctrine also contained statements proving that Russia considered its military potential as a factor which helps to consolidate its influence zone in the countries of the former USSR<sup>20</sup>.

18 *Nowaja Armia Rossiji*, ed. Michail Barabanov, Moscow 2010, p. 23.

19 This term is usually encountered in materials referring to the reform of the Russian Armed Forces, literally it means 'new shape' (image).

20 *The Russian Federation's War Doctrine*, Eastern Studies Centre, Warsaw 2010.

17 E. Laurent, *Moscow in Wall Street*, published by POLONIA, Warsaw 1990, p. 5.

The fundamental goal of the reform of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces was their transformation – from the traditional Soviet mass army, based on conscription and mobilization – into modern, smaller but mobile and flexible armed forces. Military and political authorities in Russia stated that under contemporary conditions numerous soldiers and a lot of equipment cannot compensate for their low quality.

The transformation of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces, which is currently executed, was divided into three main stages:

- Stage I (2008–2010) included: the essential changes in the structure of organization and vacancies, which mostly consisted in the reorganization of the commanding system, the reduction of the number of the soldiers in the Armed Forces and introduction of new ranges of responsibility of particular commanders and staffs;
- Stage II (2011–2012) included: reformation of the brigades within the Land Army and the Navy and the reorganization of naval and army aviation <sup>21</sup>; modification of roles and ranges of responsibility of the commanders in the Armed Forces;
- Stage III (2013–2020) includes: the correction of the changes introduced in Stages I and II, intensification of the supplies and implementation of modern armor and military equipment in order to conduct complete rearming of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces.

It is worth noticing that in terms of legal aspects and organization, the greatest endeavor was to introduce radical changes in the organizational structure of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces.

All military units were reformed into permanent combat readiness units, equipped for 'W' time (with both military equipment and human resources).

Moreover, the combat readiness maintenance system changed – in all units combat readiness was introduced which allowed taking actions in 1 to 6 hours.

Additionally, in the all of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces new and precise ranges of duties for a given position were implemented.

21 Unlike in the majority of other armies, in the Russian Armed Forces Land Army Aviation is the part of the Air Forces.

The modification of the organizational structure was also introduced in other types of the military.

The most significant reorganization occurred in the Russian Federation's Land Forces.

What one should also draw attention to is the fact that from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 the Russian Federation's Ministry of Defense started to significantly raise the remuneration in the Russian army.

Hence, as a result of the raise, the platoon commander (in the lieutenant's rank) earns approximately 50 thousand rubles, whereas the battalion commander (the lieutenant colonel rank) earns around 100 thousand rubles.

Until the raise, depending on the position held, the salary for lieutenants and lieutenant colonels amounted for, correspondingly, 14 and 18 thousand rubles (approximately, depending on the vacancy held)<sup>22</sup>.

A comprehensive analysis of the reform of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces allows us to make hypothesis that the political and military management in Russia represented the standpoint that in the current international situation the occurrence of a conventional global conflict (or a large-scale conflict) was not very likely.

Therefore, it was agreed to radically reduce the size of the Russian Army and prepare it to undertake effective actions in local conflicts. Conflicts whose aim is to win the *souls of the nations*.

The beginning of Stage III in mid-February 2013 resulted in the increased activity of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces, which expressed itself in a number of unannounced exercises and tests of military readiness, as well as presence of Russian ships in the Mediterranean Sea extending over the period of several months.

Those endeavors had not been included in the previous training applied in the Russian Army.

In terms of the forces and resources which were involved, the exercise area, the number of exercises, as well as when and in what mode they were organized, those endeavors had no precedent in Russia's contemporary history.

Last military readiness tests of that nature took place in the Russian Army in the 1980s.

22 Compare: P. Cieřlik, G. Rořlan, *The Reform of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces 2008-2011*, Zeszyty Naukowe AON, 2012.

The activity of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces as well as all the changes which occur within them, have been and still are constantly in the field of direct interest of Russian authorities, with Vladimir Putin, the current president, in the fore-front. Already at that time one could make a probable assumption that those events heralded another *war for the souls of the nations*. The lack of effective tools hindering Russia's ambitions resulted in the third *war for the nations' souls*.

The third war, which was the most sublime one, was disguised in the slogan with which we are already familiar: *Humanitarian intervention aiming to protect the interests of the inhabitants....* It also constituted an actual upgrade of the previous wars.

Nothing heralded the events which were to take place. At night 21/22 November 2013 the proponents of European integration gathered in Maidan Independence Square in Kiev. The protesters announced that they would remain in Kiev's main square until the government changed their decision. Protests were also organized in Lutsk and Ivano-Frankivsk, as well as in Donetsk and Kharkov. Was it the moment when Putin's crew 'glued the envelope' which said 15 billion in Ukrainian treasury bonds, and 'opened' the envelope with the title *crisis in the Ukraine?*

There is no need to describe the facts which are now common knowledge. However, there is one event which stopped *little green men*<sup>23</sup> with Russian weapons – Putin's Winter Olympic Games in Sochi.

Winter Olympic Games in Sochi should be considered a great PR success for both Russia and its president who used his 'five minutes' in a calculated way. It was another, this time bloodless one, war for *the souls of the nations*. The Olympics showed the world that Russia can be open to cooperation.

President Vladimir Putin claimed that *the entire world saw modern and friendly Russia which is willing to cooperate*.

Kremlin's host, in his hypocrisy, said that those who earlier had been afraid of Russia should use the example of the Olympics and understand that *the Russian society has significantly changed for the better*<sup>24</sup>.

23 *Little Green men* – the term which has been used to describe unknown, professionally armed Russian separatists, who officially have nothing to do with Russian Armed Forces

24 *Putin: The Olympic Games showed new Rus-*

The Olympics finished on 23th February 2014, and just three days later, a group of Russia's armed proponents in unmarked uniforms took the buildings of the Crimean government and parliament.

Almost simultaneously, Russian armored personnel carriers appeared not far from Simferopol. In the course of the days that followed armed individuals dressed in military uniforms occupied the airport in Simferopol and Sevastopol. The consequence of those events was Declaration of Independence of the Crimean Parliament and the referendum to join Crimea to Russia. The first time that Vladimir Putin admitted that Russian troops had stayed in the Crimean Peninsula both before and after the referendum was 17th April 2014. The Russian President stated *their aim was to provide the conditions to conduct the election correctly* and added that *our soldiers accompanied the local defense forces. Their conduct was correct and professional*<sup>25</sup>.

On 18th March this year in Kremlin there was an understanding signed between the Russian Federation and Crimea's self-appointed authorities. The war for the souls of the Crimean population was over and the war for the souls of Eastern Ukraine's citizens began. The activity of *the little green men* of Russia has shown that the Russian Federation's Armed Forces have at their disposal a relatively numerous group of units of various armed forces and types of troops which in the initial period of the reforms have achieved the expected level of military readiness. Those units are able to undertake tasks in the areas situated far from their permanent redeployment, without long-lasting and visible preparations. According to Adam Rotfeld, the former Poland's Minister of Foreign Affairs, President Putin has been waging the war for his nation's soul for at least seven years<sup>26</sup>. This is how he gains support, adoration and enthusiasm. He continues to execute his plan in a cold-blooded way, which was referred to much earlier in various official documents, and the West is still at a loss trying to find a good solution to tame Russia's attempts to rebuild its imperial influence zone.

*sia*, <http://www.bankier.pl/wiadomosc>, [access: 25.02.2014].

25 *Putin: 'Little green men in Crimea is us*, <http://wmeritum.pl/>, access 17.04.2014.

26 *Rotfeld: Russia had been preparing for the conflict for at least seven years*, <http://wyborcza.pl/>, [access: 25.03.2004].

The events which have been referred to in this paper illustrate these endeavours.

The conflict over Crimea and Eastern Ukraine shows that when it comes to Russia the West possesses no suitable instrument of pressure; Lack of any coherent policy towards Russia on both the U.S.' and EU' part, resulted in the occupation of Crimea and probably in the foreseeable future, in modernization and development of Russia's Black Sea Fleet. It will also lead to next claims, for example, to Kaliningrad Oblast transit.

### CONCLUSIONS

Russia is an experienced political player. However, it does not mean that it is possible for Russia to be as powerful as it was during the Soviet times. The conflict over Crimea has proved that Russia is the main playmaker in the Post-Soviet area. It has also shown the weak position of the United States in the world. It has also shown that the European Union is powerless and is not ready (fails to come up with an idea) to solve such crisis situations.

Currently, Russia has been strengthening its position in the geopolitical Post-Soviet area. Simultaneously, we have received a clear signal that if someone from the Post-Soviet area, which Moscow considers its influence zone, does not include Kremlin's opinion, it might have tragic consequences.

Fundamental changes in the balance of political forces in Eastern Europe 1990 resulted in the fact that the countries located in this region are implementing their transformation in the situation of local instability, which is the case scenario that is being written by the crew situated in Kremlin.

The recent events have proved beyond doubt that one needs to be skeptical when it comes to finding *modus vivendi*<sup>27</sup> between the main political players of the broadly defined West (Poland included) and Russia.

The process of guaranteeing the safety for the Russian Federation can be divided into two stages: one concerned with concepts and decisions and the other one focused on implementation.

The first stage defies the form and character of the implementation stage.

The fundamental part of this stage is its ideological layer<sup>28</sup>.

Russia's future conduct in the international arena can be forecast inter alia on the basis of the new national security policy<sup>29</sup> designed by Putin's crew. From this document it results that Russia's strategic aim is to build a multi-polar world in which Russia would be one of great powers. The strategy of the authorities is also to lay the foundations for the national approval of solving Russia's main problems, which are contained in the populist slogan to rebuild a strong country<sup>30</sup>.

*The Russian Federation's national security strategy*, signed in May 2009, presents the country's goals which have not changed for years; however, the document does not specify how Russia is going to achieve them.

The collapse of the USSR caused the feeling of emptiness in the Russian society, which first of all, resulted in the crisis of values. It expressed itself, inter alia, in the loss of fundamental ideological goals and presence of pessimism and negative moods in the society.

Putin's presidency is a number of Russia's successes – both economic and political ones. The years of Putin's domination have led to the increase in Russia's significance, particularly in comparison to the nineties (the decade of Yeltsin's presidency. It is worth pointing out that since the end of the nineties one has observed economic growth in Russia which directly translates into the improvement of living conditions for the population (for example, pension benefits paid on time, etc.). Moreover, since 2000 unemployment has decreased in Russia. Ever since Putin became President in 2000 the Russian nation has been more and more consolidated.

This consolidation embraces all the areas which are focused on national traditions and values. Russia's desire to hold a significant position in the world results from its historic heritage, imperial traditions and the ambitions of Kremlin's authorities.

28 See.: *Studies on Russia*, eds: A. Stępień-Kuczyńska, J. Adamowski, Łódź-Warsaw 2000.

29 D. Jankowski, *The Russian Federation's new national security strategy*, [http://stosunkimiedzynarodowe.info/artukul,525,Nowa\\_strategia\\_bezpieczenstwa\\_narodowego\\_Federacji\\_Rosyjskiej](http://stosunkimiedzynarodowe.info/artukul,525,Nowa_strategia_bezpieczenstwa_narodowego_Federacji_Rosyjskiej) (2009-11-03).

30 S. Saradzjan, *Putin's return: back into the past (article in Polish)*, [http://www.Stosunki\\_miedzynarodowe.Info/artukul,1146,Powrot\\_Putina\\_szybko\\_z\\_powrotem\\_do\\_przeslosci](http://www.Stosunki_miedzynarodowe.Info/artukul,1146,Powrot_Putina_szybko_z_powrotem_do_przeslosci) (2011-11-03).

27 *modus vivendi* - pl. modi vivendi 'way of living' – establishing an international accord on the basis of a temporary compromise.

Moreover, it is not a coincidence that it is nowadays that this heritage is so emphasized. It inter alia expresses itself in making references to important events in Russia's history, the USSR's history included.

Currently Russia spends 3,7% of its GDP on armaments. Both strategic rocket and nuclear forces are reinforced, as well as particular segments of conventional forces. What Russian authorities have been particularly focusing on is the activity of special troops and air forces. Simultaneously the analysis of the scenarios of recent exercises clearly shows that a conflict might be triggered by the events of national grounds.

The operation 'The return of Crimea to the motherland' to was supposed to be a practical test of Russian Armed Forces' professionalism. Millions of Russians feel nostalgic about the empire they lost. In his address to the parliament Putin said that the most tragic event of the twentieth century was the collapse of the USSR. Not World War I or II, not fascism in Germany and communism in Russia, but the collapse of the USSR. In the Ukraine Russians tested a new kind of conflict towards which the West turned out to be helpless.

Neither bombers nor rockets mattered; it was the feelings of pro-Russian population that were of significance.

Since the very first day Putin's crew gained power, their activity has not been focusing on winning the public opinion in the West; on the contrary, Putin does not take this opinion into consideration at all. Putin's aim is to *win his nation's soul*.

This is how he gains support, adoration and enthusiasm. XXI World Championship in 2018 will be organized in Russia. It is the first world championship tournament that is scheduled to take place in Eastern Europe.

One can safely assume that it is going to be another great PR success for both Russia and its president, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin. It will be another, this time bloodless one, *war for the soul of his own nation*.

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