

**CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY ELITE
CONCEPTIONS OF RUSSIA'S NATIONAL INTERESTS:**

“PEOPLE AND STATE” AND “STATIST” PERSPECTIVES

William Zimmerman
University of Michigan



The National Council for Eurasian and East European Research
University of Washington
Box 353650
Seattle, WA 98195

TITLE VIII PROGRAM

Project Information*

Principal Investigator: William Zimmerman
NCEEER Contract Number: 823-11g
Date: January 26, 2009

Copyright Information

Individual researchers retain the copyright on their work products derived from research funded through a contract or grant from the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research (NCEEER). However, the NCEEER and the United States Government have the right to duplicate and disseminate, in written and electronic form, reports submitted to NCEEER to fulfill Contract or Grant Agreements either (a) for NCEEER's own internal use, or (b) for use by the United States Government, and as follows: (1) for further dissemination to domestic, international, and foreign governments, entities and/or individuals to serve official United States Government purposes or (2) for dissemination in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act or other law or policy of the United States Government granting the public access to documents held by the United States Government. Neither NCEEER nor the United States Government nor any recipient of this Report may use it for commercial sale.

* The work leading to this report was supported in part by contract or grant funds provided by the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, funds which were made available by the U.S. Department of State under Title VIII (The Soviet-East European Research and Training Act of 1983, as amended). The analysis and interpretations contained herein are those of the author.

Executive Summary

This paper asks whether contemporary Russian foreign policy elites' conceptions of Russia's national interests, as articulated in March and April 2008 (immediately after Dmitry Medvedev's election) mesh with those of President Medvedev. Where pertinent, Medvedev's statements are compared with those entertained by foreign policy elites at the onset of then President Vladimir Putin's second term in 2004. The paper asks how the 2008 elite perspectives relate to major policy predispositions concerning the use of military power and energy resources for foreign policy purposes and about Russia's long term relations with Belarus and Ukraine.

In conceiving of Russia's national interests, Russian foreign policy elites had a broader physical domain in mind in spring 2008 than they did in 2004. A far higher proportion of Russian elites in 2008 than in 2004, but by no means a majority, has a global or nearly global conception of the domain of Russia's interests. I argue that those who define Russia's national interests more narrowly largely are drawn disproportionately from two divergent clusters of people: those whom we might depict as the military industrial complex (military officers and major figures in state dominated industries) and those from among the relatively small set of people who answer that Western style democracy is the political system most suitable for Russia.

Introduction

Virtually everyone favors the national interest, but people define the national interest in quite variegated ways. The Russian Federation President, Dmitry Medvedev, gave his definition of Russia's national interest at a press conference in August 2008 when he observed,

Our unquestionable priority is to protect the life and dignity of our citizens wherever they are. We will also proceed from this in pursuing our foreign policy. We will also protect the interests of our business community abroad...

He then added,

“[Moreover,] Russia, just like other countries in the world, has regions where it has its privileged interests. In those regions, there are countries with which we have traditionally had friendly cordial relations, historically special regions. ... [Question: Dimitry Anatolyevich, are those priority regions the territories bordering on Russia or-] Certainly the bordering regions. But not only that.”¹

This paper asks whether contemporary Russian foreign policy elites' conceptions of Russia's national interests, as articulated in March and April 2008 (immediately after Dmitry Medvedev's election) mesh with those of President Medvedev. Where pertinent, Medvedev's statements are compared with those entertained by foreign policy elites at the onset of then President Vladimir Putin's second term in 2004. The paper asks how the 2008 elite perspectives relate to major policy predispositions concerning the use of military power and energy resources for foreign policy purposes and about Russia's long term relations with Belarus and Ukraine. The central arguments of the paper are threefold: The first is that in conceiving of Russia's national interests, Russian foreign policy elites had a broader physical domain in mind in spring 2008 than they did in 2004. A far higher proportion of Russian elites in 2008 than in 2004, but by no means a majority, has a global or nearly global conception of the domain of Russia's interests.

The second is that Russian foreign policy elites in spring 2008 entertained two quite different conceptions of the national interest. One is very much a state oriented notion normally associated with elites of great powers. The other is what I am terming here a “people and state conception” of Russia’s national interests. The latter leads these elites, despite the fact that they assert Russia’s national interests should be confined within the boundaries of the Russian Federation, to be relatively more disposed to use force, military and otherwise, to protect Russian and putatively, human, rights elsewhere, matters which the other group relatively downplays in its calculus of when to spend Russia’s blood and treasure.

Finally, I argue that those who define Russia’s national interests more narrowly largely are drawn disproportionately from two divergent clusters of people: those whom we might depict as the military industrial complex (military officers and major figures in state dominated industries) and those from among the relatively small set of people who answer that Western style democracy is the political system most suitable for Russia.

The Data Set

The data set on which this paper is primarily based stems from surveys conducted in March and April 2008 immediately after the Russian Presidential election in early March. It is the fifth survey of Russian foreign policy elites I have conducted since the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991. The previous surveys were conducted in 1993, 1995, 1999, and 2004. The result is that virtually the entire post-Soviet period has been covered.

The overall direction of this survey was again handled by Elena Bashkirova with whom I have had a professional relationship since the first elite interviews were conducted in 1993. She

¹ http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2008/08/31/1917_type63374type63379_205991.shtml

and I have co-authored papers that have been presented at scholarly conferences and submitted co-authored reports to NATO. Until recently, Bashkirova was a central figure at ROMIR (Rossiiskoye obshchestvennoe mnenie i rynok), a major public opinion institution in Russia. She and several others from ROMIR have recently formed Bashkirova and Partners. Trained interviewers supervised by her and other former members of the ROMIR staff conducted the surveys.

As in the past, all surveys were face-to-face. All respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the data and informed, in a manner approved by the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board, that participation was voluntary and that responses would be only used in generalized form. In all five surveys, persons were drawn from the media, the economy (including enterprises where the state does and does not own a major share), academic institutes with strong international connections, both the legislative and executive branches of the government, and the armed forces.

The 241 persons surveyed in 2008 were selected positionally. With minor qualifications, the positions have been constant over the five surveys. Those interviewed are powerful people who by virtue of their position would be thought of as members of the political elite anywhere: heads of directorates in the Presidential administration, ministers, deputy ministers, heads of governmental departments; Duma and Federation Council members of foreign policy committees; editors and deputy editors; directors and deputy directors of institutes; owners and CEOs of firms; colonels and above in the armed services. They might or might not be a person from the siloviki (security forces) or from St. Petersburg brought in by Putin. Persons are selected as a role occupant, say, as a directorate head in the Presidential administration, not by how they achieved that status. (While not to be dismissed out of hand, the role of the siloviki has

been overdone.²)

Those classified as elites were persons whose occupations suggested a prima facie expectation they would have substantial potential to affect policy. Given the selection criterion, their responses on foreign policy and security topics may not constitute what elites in general think about foreign policy. But they were sufficiently representative of the foreign policy elite that we can reasonably draw inferences about foreign policy elite orientations to foreign policy.

Identifying Russia's National Interests

In all five surveys respondents were asked, "Which of the two assertions below are closer to your point of view?"

1. The national interests of Russia should be limited, for the most part to its existing territory.
2. The national interests of Russia for the most part extend beyond its existing territory.

Somewhere between about 2/3 and 4/5 of the respondents over the years have asserted that Russia's interests extend beyond its borders and, conversely, somewhere between a fifth and roughly a third respond that Russia's interests should be limited to its existing territory (Table 1).

Table 1: Russian foreign policy elite opinions about the national interest: 1993-2008

	1993	1995	1999	2004	2008
National interest limited to Russian territory n=()	23% (44)	20%(36)	17%(35)	28%(74)	36% (85)
Broader	77 (149)	80 (144)	83 (168)	71 (191)	64 (151)

For question wording, see text. Tau c =.12, p<.001

² For a useful corrective, see Rivera and Rivera (2006).

On the basis of this question alone, a reasonable inference would be that a sizeable majority have viewed Russia's interests more broadly throughout the entire post-Soviet period. At the same time, to the limited extent that there was a trend in the data, it was that over time foreign policy elites have been more inclined to assert that Russia's national interests extend only as far as its borders. To gain greater insight into the domain respondents conceived as corresponding to Russian national interests, however, in 2004 we began asking a follow up question to those who said the boundaries of Russia's national interests extended beyond the boundaries of the Russian Federation, "And where is that exactly?" Appendices 1 and 2 illustrate the responses we received.

On examination, the open-ended responses grouped naturally into four groups: a.) those defining Russia's interests as being limited to the boundaries of Russia were coded as 1; b.) those who conceived of Russia's interests as limited to the non Baltic parts of the former Soviet Union or a part thereof, 2; c.) those who defined its interests as including all the countries bordering on Russia or who defined them as Asia or Europe, 3; and d.) those who showed a global/world power perspective by volunteering "Eurasia," or who gave first priority in their responses to places beyond the Eurasian mainland such as Venezuela, or the Middle East, 4. Table 2 and Figures 1 and 2 (at the end of the paper) show the breakdown of responses to these four classifications.

Table 2: The domain of Russia’s interests: 2004 and 2008

	2004 First response	2008 First response	2008 with 2nd response
Russia itself	28% (74)	36% (85)	36% (85)
Commonwealth of Independent States	51% (136)	28% (66)	23% (55)
All borders, just Europe OR Asia, CIS	10% (27)	10% (23)	14% (34)
Eurasia and beyond, global implications, “anywhere that...”	10% (28)	26% (62)	26% (62)

The totals do not equal 100% due to rounding.

Had I been writing in 2004, I would have said there was evidence that Russian elites were becoming used to being a regional power and call the reader’s attention to Table 1 and column 1 in Table 2. It indicates that four out of five Russian foreign policy elites defined Russia’s national interests as either within its borders or that of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Moreover, it turned out that the armed forces officers who were interviewed were even more disposed than other respondents to consider Russia itself or the CIS as the boundaries of Russia’s interests. Fully 90% of the officers (n=40) defined the domain of Russia’s sphere of interest as being Russia itself or the CIS. None was coded as having a world power perspective.

I would also have reported that conceptions of national interest were not a robust predictor of important foreign policy attitudes. It turned out that the list of foreign policy questions asked with which conceptions of the national interest did not correlate was quite long indeed. Using the four-fold categorization described above,³ none of the items used in the analysis of foreign policy perspectives for 2008 in this paper correlate in bi-variate analysis with

³ If one simply dichotomizes those who said that Russia’s national interests should be limited to its own borders and those who defined its interests more broadly there was for 2004 a weak correlation ($p=.10$) between conception of national interest and views about the desirability of unification with Belarus.

the national interest measure for 2004: This includes questions relating to whether Russia should use force, if asked, to come to the aid of countries formerly part of the Soviet Union or for other countries, whether use of force was legitimate to support Russians in formerly Soviet republics or elsewhere, to protect Russia's friends abroad, to protect with force Russia's economic interests, and whether Russia should unite with Ukraine or Belarus or whether the latter two should be independent states. I would instead have referred readers to my 2005 article⁴ where I argued that how Russians lined up on the classical question whether Russia should follow the example of the West or pursue its own path was a highly robust predictor of Russian foreign policy attitudes.

National Interest Conceptions in 2008 and the Use of Force

But the 2008 data yield different results. We have already adverted to one important point. In 2004, the concept of national interest was of limited utility in identifying divergent perspectives on key foreign policy questions. The 2008 data provide us with ample illustration of the divergences in perspective among Russian foreign policy elites that are grounded in different conceptions of the national interest. In particular, there are statistically significant differences in respondents' views about the use of force, about the use of Russia's natural resources for some foreign policy purposes, and about Russia's links to Ukraine and Belarus.

Second, as Table 2 and Appendices 1 and 2 indicate, foreign policy elites surveyed in 2008 have a considerably broader conception of the domain of Russian national interests than they did in 2004. I have included the first response elites gave (column 2 of Table 2) and then incorporated their second response as well (column 3). Unlike mass publics who often have

⁴ Zimmerman, "Slavophiles and Westernizers Redux: Contemporary Russian Elite Perspectives," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 21, No. 3 (July-September) 2005, pp. 183-209.

difficulty coming up with answers to open-ended questions, elites almost always give at least one answer to any question, open or closed, and in this instance one in six of the respondents gave a second answer as well. (There were an additional 18 responses spread across third, fourth, and fifth responses.) In what follows, I focus on the respondents' first answer. As Table 2 indicates, taking into account the 2008 respondents' second answer broadens slightly the coding of the domain of the respondents' conception of Russia's national interests but not appreciably.

While Russian elites by a majority continue to define Russian interests regionally, we also discern a sizeable increase in the proportion of Russian elites asserting that Russia's interests are global or nearly thereto, but it remains only a quarter of the sample. It is noteworthy that the military are among those with the most restricted conception of the national interest. No military respondent was coded in 2004 as having a world power conception of Russia's national interest and only 9 percent (3 of 35) were so coded for 2008. By way of comparison, consider President Medvedev's answer (cited in the first paragraph of this paper) to essentially the same question. On the basis of his first response he would have been coded a 4, an assessment that would have been re-enforced by his amplificatory remarks.

Spending Blood and Treasure

To better understand what various Russian foreign policy elites have in mind by the national interest I turn to the question of what matters do various elite members consider warranting expending blood and treasure. Uniform answers about the connection between broadening the domain of Russia's national interests and the use of force do not emerge from the data.

Perhaps the most useful way of addressing the question of the links between conception

of national interest and relative propensity to use force involves comparing two pairs of questions that directly address the circumstances in which Russia should use its military power. To get at the question, “What warrants the expenditure of treasure?,” I then consider an example which illustrates the divergent views concerning the goals that warrant the use of Russia’s raw materials to further particular foreign policy goals. Let us consider these in turn.

To address the first of these questions, respondents were presented with a battery of questions concerning the legitimacy of the use of force. Two pairs of questions bring home the divergent implicit conceptions of Russia’s national interest concerning the commitment of blood and treasure abroad. One set of questions concerns the willingness to use force in response to a request from a state member of the former Soviet Union or from a state outside the former Soviet Union. The other pair are ones that asked respondents whether it was legitimate to use force to protect the interests of Russians living abroad, first, in the former USSR and second, somewhere else (Table 3).

The comparisons are striking. For both pairs of questions, Russians are more disposed to provide support to former Soviet republics than to other locations. Those Russian foreign policy elites interviewed in the spring of 2008 who responded that the national interests of Russia should be limited to the boundaries of Russia are relatively more opposed both to coming to the aid of a country that was formerly part of the Soviet Union and rendering such aid to another country. They are much less willing to use force for this purpose than are elites from the other three categories. On the other hand, they are more inclined to view as legitimate the use of force to protect the interests of Russians abroad than they are to sending troops if asked to another country whether or not it be a former Soviet republic. And, they are considerably more disposed than are other elites to view the use of force as legitimate to protect the interests of Russians

elsewhere, again both within former Soviet republics or in another country.

Table 3: Bases for intervention by Russian forces: Percentage agreeing or legitimizing, 2008

Conception of national interest	Send military aid to former Soviet republic if asked	Send military aid to other country if asked	Legitimate use of force to protect interests of Russians in former Soviet republics	Legitimate use of force to protect interests of Russians elsewhere
Russia itself	39% (32)	29% (24)	62% (51)	48% (39)
CIS	72% (46)	48% (30)	43% (27)	20% (12)
All borders, just Europe or Asia, CIS plus the Balkans	74% (17)	43% (9)	46 % (11)	30% (7)
Eurasia and broader, global implications, “anywhere that...”	87% (50) ¹	64% (32) ²	46% (26) ³	29% (17)

1. $Tau_c = -.43, p < .001$

2. $Tau_c = -.28, p < .001$

3. $Tau_c = .15, p < .05$

4. $Tau_c = .17, p < .05$

By the same token, respondents in the other three categories are most disposed to use force to come to the aid, if asked, of another country, and uniformly less inclined to view as legitimate the use of force to defend the interests of Russians abroad than are those who define the national interests of Russia by reference to its borders. Those whose conception of the span of Russia’s national interest is global or nearly so are most inclined to resort to force, if requested, both in response to a request from an erstwhile Soviet republic or from another country than are all the other respondents.

At the same time, those (whether they have the CIS, all of Russia’s borders, or a much broader scope, in mind) who define the national interests of Russia as being broader than the Russian Federation’s borders are not distinguishable with respect to the proportion considering the use of force to protect the interests of Russians in the former Soviet republics or elsewhere.

These quite different views about what warrants resort to force bespeak differing underlying concepts of Russia's national interest. Those who answer that Russia's national interests should be limited to Russia's territorial boundaries turn out to have what, for want a better term, may be termed a "people and state" conception of Russian national interests. For them, national interest is as much based on concerns with protecting people as it is defending or expanding the power of the nation state. By contrast, those in the latter three categories (CIS, all Russia's borders, globally or nearly global) construe national interests in a more normal, state-centered, way that is primarily a product of inter-state relations. In the Western literature theirs would be characterized as a realist or neo-realist conception of national interest.⁵

If this is so, we should be able to find other aspects of the 2008 survey that parallel the divergent assessments given to providing military aid to countries and the protection of Russians outside Russia, whether they be located in former Soviet republics or elsewhere. This turns out to be the case. The difference in the two conceptions of national interest shows up nicely when we correlate conception of national interest with the proportion of respondents saying that it is legitimate to use Russia's natural resources to defend human (by which they almost certainly mean Russians') rights. The monotonic relation between delimitation of the geographical domain of Russia's national interests and support of the use of Russia's natural resources to defend human rights abroad is brought home by Table 4.

⁵ Among the usual suspects, see Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1987); John Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War," *International Security*, Summer 1990, 5-56; Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (New York NY: Knopf, 1954) and many others.

Table 4: Percentage supporting use of Russia’s natural resources to defend human rights abroad

Russia itself	46% (38)
Commonwealth of Independent States	34% (21)
All borders, just Europe OR Asia, CIS	29% (6)
Eurasia and beyond, global implications, “anywhere that...”	18 % (10)

Tau_c =.24, p <.001

One would also hypothesize, if the distinction I am drawing makes sense, that those whose conception of core national interests involves the protection of individuals as well as the territorial integrity of the state would be less favorably disposed than others to the unification of Russia with either Ukraine or Belarus. Correspondingly, those with a state-oriented conception of national interest would presumably view unification more favorably than do others.

Table 5 provides support for this argument. Those with what we are terming a “people and state” conception of national interest are strikingly less enthusiastic than others about unification with either Belarus or Ukraine. Other elites very likely think more in classic “normal” great power terms of augmenting Russian power. Table 5 shows the proportion of each group giving either a 4 or 5 response when presented with a scale where 1 is that Russia and the country in question should be completely independent and 5 is they should be a single country.

Table 5: “4” and “5” responses in 2008 on a scale where 1 signifies that Russia and Belarus or Ukraine should be completely independent countries and 5 completely united.

Domain of Russia’s national interests	Belarus	Ukraine
Within Russia’s boundaries	40% (34)	34%(29)
CIS	77% (5)	62% (40)
All borders, just Europe or Asia, CIS plus the Balkans	80% (32)	66% (35)
Eurasia and broader, global implications, “anywhere that...”	77% (46)	57% (34)

In contrast with the previous example where the relationship between view of the domain of Russia's national interests and support for human rights abroad was monotonic, in this instance, quite typically in the data, there is little difference among those who define Russia's interests regionally in terms of the CIS, all of Russia's borders, or have a global perspective. Overwhelmingly, they favor unification, whereas those who respond that Russia's national interests should be confined to the borders of the current day Russian Federation largely mean it—except that they are more committed to using energy resources to improve the status of persons abroad.

Two other items in the 2008 survey of Russian foreign policy elites re-enforce the sense of differences between those elites who respond that Russia's national interests should be limited to its territorial boundaries but nevertheless care more than other Russian elites about Russians abroad and those Russians with what we have termed a great power, state oriented, conception of Russia's interests. The former, as we have seen, are more concerned about Russians abroad than are others. The latter care more about the growth of the Russian state. This shows up in the 2008 survey when elites were asked whether Russia and the Ukraine or Belarus should be completely independent countries or unified into a single country. Presented with a five point scale where 1 signifies complete independence and 5 a single state, half (51%) select either 4 or 5 with respect to Ukraine and almost two-thirds (64%) choose 4 or 5 on the five point scale in the case of Belarus. Those whom we have seen care relatively more about Russians abroad than do other Russian elites but conceive of Russia's national interests in terms of its current boundaries say what one would predict of such people. Likewise, the state- and great-power oriented are also consistent in their responses. Only about a third (34%) of the former favor unification (4 or 5 on the scale) while well more than half (56%) of the latter favor unification ($\tau_c = .21, p < .001$). The

same distribution is observed regarding Belarus. Two-fifths of those defining Russian national interests in terms of its current boundaries (40%) endorse unification whereas three-quarters (75%) of those coded as great power and state oriented favor Russian unification with Belarus.

Whence the Differences

What explains why Russian foreign policy elites conceive Russia's national interest differently? To address this question I ran a series of binary logistic regressions in which I dichotomized (a.) those who had said Russia's national interests should be limited to its boundaries and those that did not; (b.) those whom I coded as having a world power conception of Russia's national interests versus the remainder of the sample; and (c.) compared those who gave regional answers (the CIS or all Russian borders) and those who took a more global perspective. As independent variables I included income by quintile, whether or not respondents answered the income question,⁶ CPSU membership in Soviet times, religiosity, a composite scale of Russian identity (excluding "Orthodox" having compared being Christian with non-believers under the rubric, religiosity),⁷ political system preference (which turned out to correlate highly with erstwhile CPSU membership),⁸ age, and elite group (military, Duma member, media, etc.) membership. I classified group membership in three ways: civilian versus military elites, military and representatives of state enterprises versus others, and military and state enterprise elites, the remaining civilian elites, and the governmental elites drawn from both the legislative and

⁶ About half declined to answer the income question. I compared those respondents who answered and those who did not and detected little or no difference in their responses.

⁷ Respondents were asked, "Which of the following is very important... [etc.] when they think of the country? Being born in Russia, to have Russian Citizenship, speak Russian, to be ethnically Russian, to respect the Russian political system and laws. They are also asked whether they fully agreed... [etc.] with the idea of "Russia for Russians!" The items were simply added up to make a scale. These questions were designed in consultation with Kirill Kalinin.

executive branches.

When those with global or nearly global conceptions of the domain of Russia’s interests are compared with all the other respondents in the sample, three predictor variables facilitate distinguishing among the attributes of those with global conceptions: elite grouping, erstwhile CPSU membership, and religiosity. Likewise, when we attempt to identify differences in the composition of those with global perspectives and those with regional ones (CIS and all Russian borders), elite grouping and identity predict to conception of domain regardless how the groups are combined.

Taken as a group, those who conceive of Russia’s national interests in “people and state” terms differ noticeably from the other foreign policy elites surveyed. Table 6 summarizes the statistically significant predictors of the differences between those with a narrowly constrained conception of the national interest and the remaining foreign policy elites surveyed.

Table 6: Statistically significant predictors whether respondents view Russian national interests as being limited to Russia’s borders or whether they view its interests more broadly

	B	S.E.	Sig.
Political system	-.835	.391	.033
Religion	1.797	.624	.004
CPSU	-1.240	.542	.022
Elite grouping	.744	.449	.098

Those who consider either the present system or Western democracy suitable for Russia are more likely to conceive Russia’s national interests narrowly than are those who opt for “the Soviet system but in another, more democratic form.” Similarly, those who identified themselves as Orthodox or Christian were more prone to affirm that Russia’s national interests should be limited to its territorial boundaries. Erstwhile CPSU membership also still matters in defining

⁸ Which political system in your view is most suitable for Russia? 1. The Soviet system before perestroika. 2. The Soviet system, but in another, more democratic, form. 3. The current political system. 4. Western style democracy. Only six

orientation to Russia's national interest, while age per se did not. Finally, the elite grouping from which the respondent came mattered some: as we have seen, those in the military and those working in state industries were more inclined to view Russian interests in a relatively circumscribed fashion than were respondents in the media, in the more or less private business sectors, and in key research institutes. They in turn were more disposed to construe Russia's national interests as being limited to its boundaries than were elites from the legislative or executive branch of government.

Concluding Remarks

This paper has argued that contemporary Russian elite perspectives on the national interest are neither uniform nor stable. There has been some increase in the number of foreign policy elites—to be found disproportionately among the military industrial complex and among the few that assert Western democracy is the system suitable for Russia, who respond that Russia's national interests should be limited to its current borders. In practice, they care more than do others about Russians and others abroad and are more willing to back some of their preferences with military force or the political use of oil and other natural resources to achieve their conceptions of the national interest. A diminishing number of other foreign policy elites define Russia's national interests by reference to the CIS or more generally to those countries on its borders. It, however, has been the proportion of those who think in global great power terms that has doubled in the four years, 2004 to 2008, who have broadened the mean conception of the domain of Russia's interests.

President Medvedev's statement concerning Russia's national interests with which we began this paper is thus not atypical of views of the national interest entertained contemporarily

respondents answered 1 so I combined 1 and 2 for analytic purposes.

by Russian foreign policy elites, especially among those in the government, whether as legislators or in the executive. At the same time, two points bear emphasizing as well. These world power conceptions are shared by only a quarter of Russian foreign policy elites; the growth in the number entertaining such views has probably been driven by a burgeoning, resource driven economy, and very likely reflect the old adage, relevant to many great powers, that the appetite increases with the eating. The proportion of such global conceptions of the national interest might diminish with equal rapidity in a world where natural resource prices have diminished substantially.

Regardless, in assessing Russian foreign policy behavior it is important to distinguish among the conceptions of Russia's interests animating those most likely to seek recourse to the use of force internationally. These differences play out in divergences in views about which international events warrant resort to blood and treasure.

Appendix One

Figures 1 and 2: Histograms comparing Russian elites conception of the domain of Russia's national interest, 2004 and 2008

Which of the two assertions below are closer to your point of view?

1. The national interests of Russia should be limited, for the most part to its existing territory.
2. The national interests of Russia for the most part extend beyond its existing territory.
If 2, then where exactly?

In the two histograms, 1 represents those who said Russia's national interests should be limited to its own borders; 2, the national interests extend to the CIS or one of its members; 3, any of the countries bordering on it, Europe OR Asia; and 4, Eurasia, wherever Russians are, places outside of Europe (Venezuela, the Middle East).

Figure 1

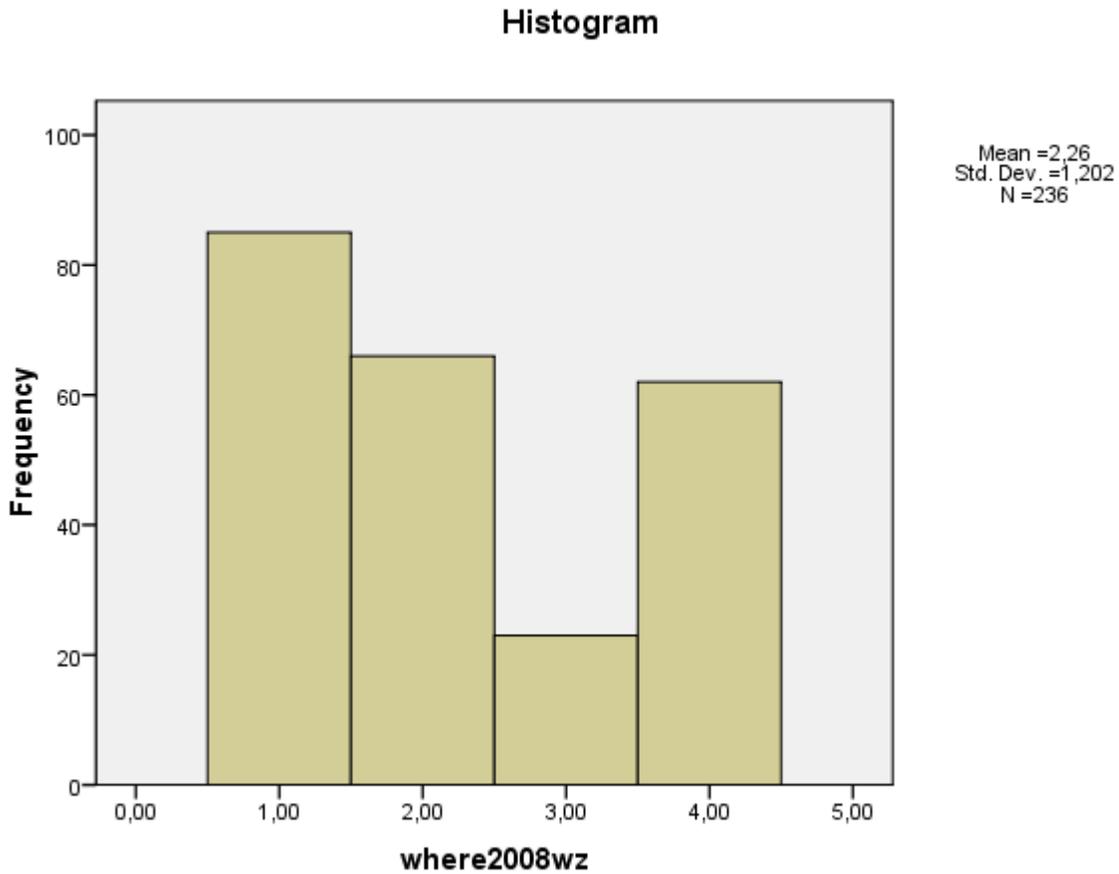
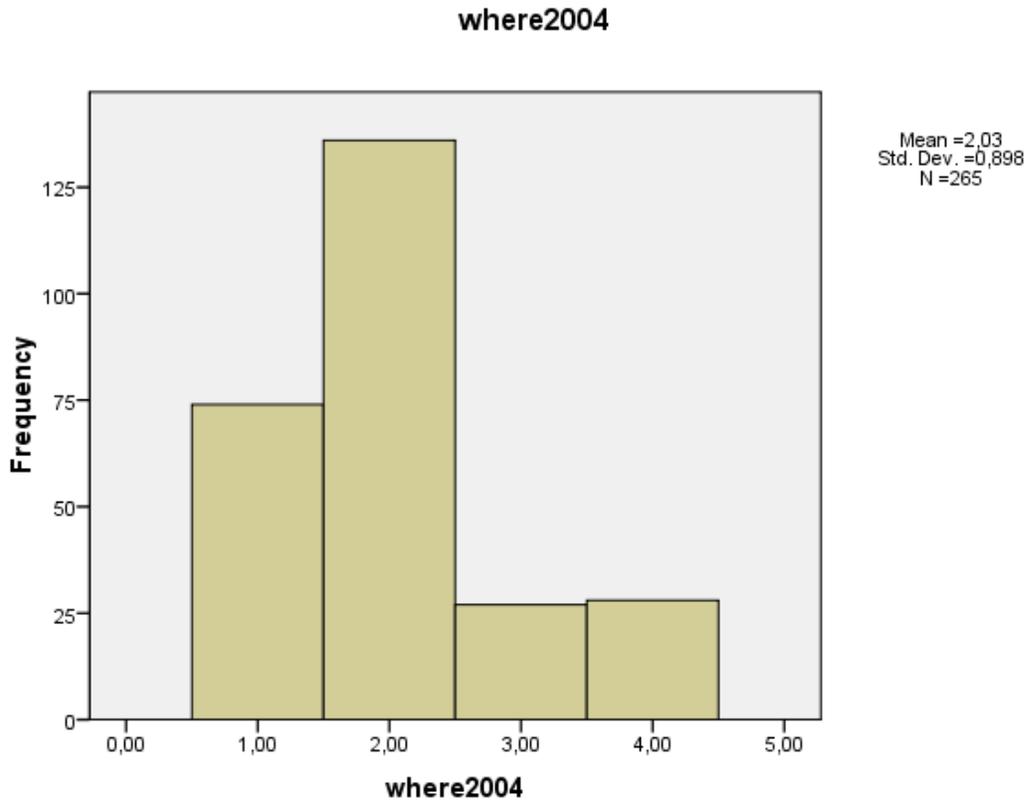


Figure 2: 2004



where2008wz			Frequency
	Valid	98 Do not know	3
	Missing	System	2
	Total		5
1,00		Within Russian boundaries	85
2,00	Valid	10 CIS territory, CIS states	48
		21 Crimea	5
		24 Abkhazia	1
		25 Belarus	5
		28 Ukraine	1
		29 Central Asia	3
		33 The Caucasus	2
		38 Kazakhstan	1
		Total	66
3,00	Valid	6 The whole territory of the former socialist block	1
		8 In the states of the former Soviet Union and the East states (China, Japan)	1
		14 Eastern and central Europe, the Balkans, Far East region, Korea, Japan	1
		15 Near abroad, China	2
		16 Former USSR territory, the Arctic Ocean	3
		17 CIS, China with economic cooperation	2
		20 Near Russian border territories of the adjacent states	2
		22 Europe	2
		26 Poland	1
		37 Arctic Region	1
		41 The whole region surrounding the country	1
		42 European Economic Community	1
		44 All the states having common borderlines with Russia	4
		47 The Baltics	1
		Total	23
4,00	Valid	1 All over the world	17

2	South-East, Afghanistan, Korea	1
3	In former states of a socialist block and developing countries: India, Venezuela, Brazil	1
4	All over the world, including CIS countries, the Baltic states	8
5	Europe, Asia	7
7	They must stand up for their national interests all over the world and in all the states of the world	1
9	CIS states, Eastern Europe, the Third World states (Africa, Middle East, Asia)	5
11	States of the former USSR, China, India	2
12	All over the world, in Southeast Asia	2
13	Asia, Africa	4
18	Countries with Russian-speaking population residing	6
19	South, West - CIS states	1
27	Middle East	3
35	Global dimension	3
43	South America (Venezuela)	1
	Total	62

Appendix 2: Open ended responses in 2004 to Question Concerning National Interest and Where Exactly is That?

where2004		Frequency	
	Valid	98 DK	2
	Missing	System	13
	Total		15
1,00 within RF boundaries			74
2,00 CIS including non-Baltic former Soviet states	Valid	6 Transcaucasia	2
		11 central Asia	1
		12 Crimea	5
		18 Ukraine	7
		19 Kazakhstan	5
		20 Belorussia	4
		24 Commonwealth of Independent States	104
		26 Baltic States	1
		35 Caucasia	2
		36 Tadzhikistan	1
		37 Kirgizia	1
		57 Abkhazia	1
		61 Belorussia and Ukraine	1
		63 Armenia	1
		Total	136
3,00 bordering on Russia anywhere	Valid	4 Asia	5
		7 Europe	7
		28 all country West and East those around one Russia	2
		30 China	1

		34 Eastern Europe	6
		41 Caspian Sea	1
		44 limitrophe [RF borders]	1
		47 tsarist Russia	1
		52 Balkan	1
		68 contiguous States	2
		Total	27
4,00 Eurasia, "everywhere that...." other parts of world besides E or A	Valid	1 all over the world	20
		2 anywhere wherever located citizenry of Russia	5
		5 the Middle East	1
		39 regions of economic interest	1
		45 where we sell oil	1
		Total	28