

Geopolitical Struggle and Tensions in US-Russian Media Diplomacy

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Think tank basically standing on the government's standpoint and solving government problems that media diplomacy is mainly aimed at tracing the truth of events and systematically presenting different voices. Media people doing international news reporting must distinguish between international news reporting and tracing the truth. Media people need time to think about the thinking patterns of people who walked in and out of the revolving doors, such as Congress, government, political parties, and think tanks in the international community, to provide the country, the governments with realistic predictions.

Keywords: geopolitical struggle, media diplomacy, Putin

In development process of RT's management model is basically Americanized, but the core ideas still prioritize the interests of Russia, particularly in the context of the proliferation of think tanks in the US and the growing Republican-Democratic struggle in Congress, RT found more NGOs and non-mainstream think tanks that wanted to have a voice in the early stages of its development, and gave more support to Barack Obama, the first democratically elected president of the US. Until today, Obama's policies have been resisted by the government, Congress, think tanks, and pro-Republican consortia, and Obama was also rated as the worst president of the United States after World War II. However, the truth was that Obama did not send any troops in the face of complicated international situation, and many lower-level people in the United States had praised Obama's medical policies. The friendly relationship between RT and Obama played a key role in easing the current increasingly freezing relations between the United States and Russia. In the government's foreign policy, public diplomacy and the media complement help each other, and can even prevent the country from falling into a deadlock in the Cold War at critical moment in US-Russian relations.

Changing Media Rules and Audience Needs

Before 1949, Western newspapers were mainly pornographic news, and the audience's needs were relatively simple. After the beginning of the Cold War, Western audiences began to turn to hard news. In "Washington Post", "New York Times" and other major newspapers for the Watergate Incident pushed the authority of major newspapers to the apex and further improved the Western concept of the fourth right of the media. The fourth right of Western countries mainly refers to the circle of media people. This circle has a

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This paper has been sponsored by National Social Science Fund Project: Research on the Construction of Institutional Discourse Right in Global Governance — An Empirical Study Based on Sino-Russian Media Communication, No.16AZD05.

certain understanding and values of international events. Although it is different from the country it is commenting on, the media people will not admit the naivety of their perceptions, including the problem that has always existed with regard to China's cognition. With the persistence of the disintegration and the end of the Cold War in 1991, the appreciation and reading level of Western audiences had risen fatally, and they were no longer satisfied with simple news reports. At the same time, the audience's overall demand for news has also greatly increased. Unlike the demand for indoctrinating news, readers both in the West and the East have a substantial increase in the demand for in-person and guided news reviews. The popularity of talent shows and matchmaking programs that emphasize fan participation, as well as the fact that People's Daily's "Global Times" and "Reference News" rank among the top two newspapers in terms of reading volume reflect that the audience is very concerned about their country and diplomacy. In this case, the all-round media person in international communication is particularly important. In international issues, all-round media people must not only report international events to the country, but also achieve a full impact on international audiences. They must upload their own videos through their own Facebook and YOUTUBE, and they must also let local media people, NGOs, and non-mainstream think tanks appear on Chinese overseas media and influence the world can they tell the story of China clearly.

Today, the media is still the main ideological tool to defend national interests and promote national values abroad that communication scholars attach importance to the influence of the media, while political scholars attach importance to how to use the influence of the media to achieve the goal of defending national interests and government decision-making. The interactive relationship between the two has become an indicator of gaining public opinion. In the past, the home country was the field for the media in the class struggle, but now the international community has become a new field for the media to defend national interests. A strong global media network is an important means for survival and development in an international body with unbalanced information. Global information warfare has become a modern non-traditional strategic warfare that challenges the boundaries of national sovereignty. As an important role in non-traditional strategies, the media can achieve the effect of driving people without fighting. Losing the right to speak in the media means losing the weapon to express national stance and national dignity, and giving up the right to control media management means surrendering.

Theoretical Basis of Russian Media and Characteristics of Information Policy

In 1998, the Russian Ministry of Communications and Informatization (Министерство Российской Федерации по связи и информатизации) formulated the Russian terrestrial digital TV and broadcasting plan (О внедрении наземного цифрового телевизионного вещания в России). According to this, the Russian Ministry of Transport issued a strategic plan to gradually shift from analogue to digital broadcasting and TV ("Стратегия поэтапного перехода от аналогового к цифровому телевизионному и звуковому вещанию"). The plan mainly started in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Nizhny Novgo. The three cities were tested first. After that, Russia began the process of digitizing radio and television to improve the digital divide across Russia, including individual use gaps, investment issues, information gaps between the rich and the poor, gaps in infrastructure, imperfect policies, and so on.

According to the regulations from the Russian Printing and Mass Communication Agency (Приказ Роспечати от 12.03.2014г №47 "О внесении изменений в Правила предоставления из федерального бюджета субсидий федеральным государственным бюджетным учреждениям, подведомственным

Федеральному агентству по печати и массовым коммуникациям, на цели, не связанные с возмещением нормативных затрат на оказание государственных услуг") on March 12, 2014, Russia basically adopts a budget protection policy for public media and news reports, which mainly made the functions and attributes of the Russian media closely inseparable from the development of the country. In fact, as early as June 15, 2012, Regulation No. 177 (15 июня 2012 г. №177 "Об утверждении Правил предоставления из федерального бюджета субсидий федеральным государственным бюджетным учреждениям, подведомственным Федеральному агентству по печати и массовым коммуникациям, на цели, не связанные с возмещением нормативных затрат на оказание государственных услуг") began to regulate the Printing and Mass Communication Agency, specific news reports and the funding required by the media. If the media reports involve government policies and the subjectivity is the continuation of government policy, then the federal government must fund relevant reports in accordance with the law. In this way, the government and the media's guidance in news reporting and the use of funding regulations are regulated.

Centralized Information Space Policy of Russia

Putin has positioned the television media as a cultural cause since the second term of the president. He issued an order to reorganize the Russian Ministry of Publishing, Radio and Television, the Ministry of Press and Publication to operate independently, and the Ministry of Radio, Television and Culture to merge into the Ministry of Culture and Mass Communication for comprehensive development of Russia's national television station. The Russian government implements a management form of the state-owned media public service system. The Russian oligarchs have gone from absolute control to the loss of control in the field of mass communication. This is basically a process in which the media returns to the basic characteristics of the fourth power structure. However, at this time, the Russian media is more like a combination of state agencies and corporate organizations, such as the All-Russian State Television and Broadcasting Company (ВГТРК).

In September 2000, Putin issued a presidential order amending one of the original "On the Improvement of National Electronic Media Work" issued by President Yeltsin, which had given local governments the power to appoint the heads of local radio and television stations. The new order transferred the power of the local government to appoint the head of the local state broadcaster to the head office of All-Russian State Television and Broadcasting Corporation, which not only had the power to appoint the head of the local state broadcaster, but also had the financial power to prepare the budget and operate the revenue. This was mainly to prevent the abuse and waste of funds by the leaders of the local national radio and television companies. President Putin firmly controlled the local media through the centralized management of the All-Russian State Broadcasting and Television Corporation. At the same time, with the establishment of seven federal administrative regions, Putin appointed plenipotentiary representatives directly responsible to the president and responsible for organizing in the federal district and implementing the President's policy, regularly reporting to the President the security issues, socio-economic and political situation in the Federal District. Putin established a new form of media and political centralization to strengthen the authority of the central government and promote the integration of the country, and solve the local administration since collapse of the Soviet Union Separate governance and the dangers of separatism.

Putin's prerequisite and foundation for "information space integration" and "media centralization" were mainly that Russian journalists had strong on-site resilience, which was very suitable for the production method of live broadcast of the news section of "News". In addition, the news program had special reporters stationed

in the local area. These reporters had a relatively familiar grasp of local news and could truthfully and accurately reflected local news. Under Putin's "centralized media" environment, reporters were directly responsible to the central media, and local radio and television were also under central management. Second, although Putin implemented the "nationalization" policy of "information space integration" and "media centralization", this did not deviate from the principle of journalist professionalism, because the Russian media law actually granted journalists greater news. The right of collection provided reporters with relatively relaxed interview space. Therefore, Russian reporters actually enjoyed a lot of news autonomy. On the contrary, the Russian media law had more restrictions on media managers. Such a combination of news autonomy and management restrictions was mainly adapted to the general environment of the Russian media. In Putin's media management concept, it embodied a kind of thinking that both management and self-discipline existed at the same time.

Generally speaking, after the baptism of freedom of communication and the turbulence of the media transition period, the Russian media has basically cultivated its own new generation of journalists who are familiar with on-site reporting and good at writing. In addition, the Russian media management does not interfere with the news content of journalists under normal circumstances, and the news editorial department also enjoys greater autonomy in the news. Generally speaking, the boundaries of Russian news reports are not critical reports. The red line of news and the police demarcation area mainly lies in issues that "immediately and obviously" endanger national security and national interests.

Russian Electronic Media Is Closely Related to the Operation of State Capital

The relationship between Russian electronic media and state capital has often become a concern of media researchers and the press. In Western communication theories, the concept of political economy is invoked to explain the regime's manipulation of the media, and "state capitalism" and "state corporatism" are still influential in how the surrounding world views Russia and China.

Russia's state-owned media can be classified into three forms of ownership: "State media owned by the state", and its funds mainly come from the budget prepared by the government. "State-owned media owned by the state", the state government agencies and the private sector jointly hold shares, and the state government holds more than 51% of the equity. "State-owned media owned by state-owned energy companies", commercial media were purchased by state-owned energy companies in the process of "nationalization", and state-owned energy has its own media committee responsible for the management and operation of its media. Among the Russian media, the only state-owned media that has a budget is generally called "state media" in Russia. The state media in the field of radio and television mainly refers to the all-Russian television and broadcasting company group at the central federal level.

Putin mentioned in a speech at Columbia University in 2003 that the media could not be owned by two or three pockets. In Putin's overall vision of media reform, the media cannot be viewed solely from the perspective of profitability. If the media is controlled by commercial capital, then the media must give priority to commercial purposes, and the media will lose its social stability function. Therefore, the media must be owned by the state. The media must consider the major premise of the state and social interests if it is funded by the state, and the state must become the regulator of social interests. British "Financial Times" reporter Andrew Jack called it "liberal authoritarianism".

In conclusion, when the Russian state society is not yet completely stable, many problems must be solved by the state government rather than capitalists. At this time, the state needs the media to assist the government in identifying problems. Whether from Lenin or Stalin to Putin, the media is definitely a tool for Russia to become a world power. The media will not restrain the government from outside the system. This is not in line with Russian traditions.

Integrating Russian International Publicity mechanism, “RT” International News Agency Was Established¹

On December 9, 2013, President Putin signed the Presidential Decree “Several Measures to Improve the Operational Efficiency of State-owned Media” (О некоторых мерах по повышению эффективности деятельности государственных средств массовой информации).² According to the presidential decree, the establishment of the “RT” International News Agency (Международное информационное агентство “Россия сегодня”) was confirmed, and institutions such as RIA Novosti and the Voice of Russia Broadcasting Company were dismantled to improve the overall external operation efficiency of the state media. According to Putin’s presidential decree, it needs to be implemented as follows:

- 1) Revocation of the federal budget agency “National Television and Radio Program Foundation” (федеральное государственное бюджетное учреждение “Государственный фонд телевизионных и радиопрограмм”) and transfer of its property rights to the Federal State Unitary Enterprise “All-Russian State Television and Radio Corporation” (Всероссийская государственная телевизионная и радиовещательная компания). Cancellation of the “Russian Book Commission” (Российская книжная палата) and transfer of its property rights to the “Ita-TAS” news agency.
- 2) The editorial department of “Russia” was reorganized, and the editorial department of “Motherland” magazine was merged into it. The establishment of the Federal State Unitary Enterprise “RT” International News Agency. To establish as the main basic policy of the international news agency “RT” to report abroad on the state policy and social life of the Russian Federation. It was confirmed that the general manager would be the sole executive agency of “RT” International News Agency, and his appointment and dismissal would be confirmed by the president.
- 3) The Russian state broadcasting company “Voice of Russia” (Российская государственная радиовещательная компания “Голос России”) was revoked and its property rights were transferred to the International News Agency of RT. The federal budget agency “Russian International News Agency” (РИА Новости) was abolished. Confirmed the cancellation of the International News Agency (РИА Новости), its founder rights would be transferred to the “RT” International News Agency, and its property rights would be transferred to the “RT” International News Agency.
- 4) According to the 2004 Presidential Decree “On Approval of Strategic Enterprises and Strategic Joint Companies” (“Об утверждении перечня стратегических предприятий и стратегических акционерных обществ”) list, RIA Novosti was changed and cancelled. The first point of the third paragraph of the Presidential Decree No. 30 of January 15, 1998 “On the inclusion of separate items

¹ “Introduction to Today Russia International News Agency”, *Russian News Network*, available online at: <http://rusnews.cn/about/>.

² Указ (2013, Декабрь 9), “О мерах по повышению эффективности деятельности государственных средств массовой информации”, *Администрация Президента РФ*, available online at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/news/19805>.

into the National Collection of Special Items of the People's Cultural Property of the Russian Federation" ("О включении отдельных объектов в Государственный свод особо ценных объектов культурного наследия народов Российской Федерации") was recognized to be invalid.

- 5) The Presidential Decree would enter the State Duma's legislative process within 15 working days. Ensure that the official operation of the "RT" International News Agency would be completed within one month. Financial support measures would be completed within one month. And other related measures will be completed within three months. The presidential decree would take effect immediately after it was signed.

"RT" International News Agency was mainly based on RIA Novosti and merged into the "Voice of Russia" radio station. According to this, RIA Novosti officially entered history at the end of February 2014, retaining the RIA Novosti brand. Since then, "RT" International News Agency, as the only official Russian foreign media propaganda machine, has become a new multimedia international media group that combines the functions of RT International News TV Channel, News Agency International Department and Radio Station. Dmitry Kiselev (Дмитрий Киселев) was appointed as the general manager of the agency, and Margaret Simonyan (Маргарита Симоньян) served as the editor-in-chief of the agency. The head office is the original site of RIA Novosti, located on Zubovsky Boulevard in Moscow. The position of the "RT" International News Agency is to convey Russian policies to the international community and report on Russian social life. "RT" International News Agency's corporate strategic partners include 550 companies including unitary enterprises and state-owned enterprises in the Russian Federation (Никольский А., 2014). The Russian State Duma had passed the annual budget of 268 billion rubles for the International News Agency "RT" for 2014–2015, and it was expected to remain at this level in 2015–2016.³

President Putin's press secretary, Dmitry Peskov (Дмитрий Песков, 2014), stated that any country and any status needed media that represents its own country's position and voice. Propaganda weapons were an indispensable tool. Kremlin administrative director Sergei Ivanov (Сергей Иванов, 2014) said that the establishment of the "RT" International News Agency could improve the efficiency of International Publicity, reduce and optimize domestic and local news resources, and concentrate on focusing on International Publicity. After the establishment of the agency, the primary publicity task was to report to the international community the 2014 Winter Olympics and Paralympic Committees in Sochi, Russia (Лебедева А., 2013).

RIA Novosti's original 69 news workstations across the country would be reduced to 19, and 150 reporters would be reduced to 20. The development focus of "RT" International News Agency is to compete with the Associated Press, Reuters and other international news agencies in the international information market. In this regard, the editor-in-chief of "RT" Margaret Simonian said that it was necessary to expand the amount of international information, to reduce the overlap with the TASS in domestic and CIS information, to optimize the overall structure of foreign news and to reduce the waste of overlapping resources. She also said that as a modern multimedia news agency, "RT" should provide the global news market with a strong and diverse news source option (Афанасьева А., 2014). "RT" International News Agency is the most visited Russian media platform. Every year, the press center organizes more than 1,500 news events. Participants include high-level state officials, representatives of large commercial and private businesses, representatives of the Russian Social

³ "Госдума разрешила передать 'России сегодня' бюджеты 'РИА Новости' и 'Голоса России'", Ведомость, 2014, Январь 24, available online at: <http://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/21836911/gosduma-razreshila-peredat-rossii-segodnya-byudzhety-ria>.

and Political Federation, and foreign guests.⁴

Regarding the reorganization and revocation of RIA Novosti, in addition to saving the country's overall internal news budget expenditure, the strength and effectiveness of international propaganda in the past ten years of the establishment of Russian TV Today is also the reason why Russia's International Publicity agency is moving towards internationalization, youth and modernization. The editor-in-chief of the "Komsomolskaya Pravda" (Комсомольская правда), Vladimir Songorkin (Владимир Сунгоркин, 2014), told the "Newspaper. RU website" (Газета.Ru) in the article "Information War Victims" that the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis was the last straw to overthrow RIA Novosti. Ukraine's internal division and support for integration with the European Union had caused great criticism of Russia's International Publicity mechanism. Many sources indicated that Moscow's top officials were dissatisfied with RIA Novosti's failure to do a good job in Ukraine's news and public relations and defend Russia's national interests. Songorkin believed that Russia had long been trapped in local interests while ignoring the international news market, and its capital investment in international propaganda was far less than that of many major countries. It was roughly estimated that EU NGOs invested at least 50 million euros in the Ukraine incident alone. In addition, the appointment of Kiselev's personnel showed that the upper-level had decided to strengthen media control over foreign propaganda. The former editor-in-chief of RIA Novosti Svetlana Mironyuk was a more liberal and social media leader. Serev belonged to the party's fighter and fighter, and was also Putin's hand-picked man. His leadership style was bound to move towards Putin's hope to strengthen Russia's international image and defend Russia's national interests (Брызгалова Е. & Фаляхов Р., 2014).

Today's Russian TV channel has successfully built the most popular international TV channel in the United States and Europe. Public diplomacy is a supplement to one-track diplomacy, and media diplomacy will first go international. Media that can influence international public opinion is a prerequisite for telling Chinese stories. The media pursue the truth in international reports, and make good use of the obligation of media people to maintain the government's position in international reports. Finding the truth about any event can supplement the source of information in diplomatic decision-making. Cultivating omnimedia people who influence the world is also a major issue facing China. Simonian, the general manager of RT, has set many first records in Russia in external publicity, and has successfully built the most popular international TV channel in the United States and Europe. Obviously, the future function of the "RT" International News Agency is toward the policy of fully concentrating its firepower to propagate Russian policies to the international community.

Integration of RTTV and International Publicity System

Since collapse of the Soviet Union, before 2000, the Russian media was basically controlled by an oligarch and served the oligarchic economy. From 2000 to 2006, the Russian media entered the stage of professional media personnel. At this time, the media personnel and the government were combined, and the government mainly controlled the signal rights of TV stations and radio stations, newspaper printing plants and equipment imports. In 2006, the media, the government, and state-owned enterprises were fully integrated. However, due to the chaos in the early stage of the development of the Soviet and Russian state systems, TASS, state television, and newspapers faced major problems in management and funding sources. To this end, Putin focused on reshaping RIA Novosti, Russian State Television, Voice of Russia, Komsomolskaya Pravda, and

⁴ Available online at: <http://rusnews.cn/about/>.

Moscow Komsomolskaya News. However, the development of the world's media had become more entertaining and sensational in reporting. It was difficult for the media to cooperate with the rise of Russia, because the three issues of Russia's rise (integration of the CIS countries, cooperation between Russia and the European Union, and Russia's role in Asia) were hardly the subject of the audience's main concern in Russia. Therefore, how to make use of the experience and management of RT TV, which had been engaged in Russian foreign propaganda as a commercial media, became the main problem facing Putin's team.

RT is an all-English broadcast international television station established in 2005 supported by the Russian government with a grant of 33 million US dollars. Its role is equivalent to the British Broadcasting Corporation of the United Kingdom, France 24 of France, the German Voice of Germany and the Public Broadcasting Corporation of the United States. The RT International English Channel was launched in Moscow in December 2005. It was Russia's first all-digital TV network channel, employing more than 100 journalists from all over the world. Margaret Simonian, who was only 25 at the time, became the youngest editor-in-chief of a major Russian television network. Putin visited the RT New Media Building in the summer of 2013 to meet with reporter representatives and stated that RT would break the Anglo-Saxon media monopoly (Timothy McGrath, 2014).

In June 2007, RT began to place the best programs of its own TV station on YOUTUBE, becoming the first Russian TV station to cooperate with YOUTUBE. RT Editor-in-Chief Margaret Simonian said that the contract with YOUTUBE was in response to the majority of viewers who were accustomed to watching TV programs online through computers, and RT provided free programs to all YOUTUBE users. These were all for RT's expansion of the global audience.⁵

RT mainly adopts the operation mode of a public relations company to provide TV stations with topic issues. In the early stage of its operation in the United States, it established various topics suitable for American society and invited people from all walks of life in the United States to participate in related projects, and distributed research funds according to the projects to establish the source of guests after the establishment of RTTV in the future. RT relies on Russian and international professional media professionals to go deep into NATO countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Israel. Looking for guests from related activities, establishing relevant lobbying mechanisms in some breaking news or hot news reports in the future, and using the media and guests to form a certain degree of public opinion pressure, this makes non-mainstream groups in the United States attach great importance to the opinions from RTTV.

However, RTTV is a commercial operation. Unlike RT, RTTV is a TV content provider and a platform for discussion by American political and economic figures. It itself does not hold any position on American issues. RTTV exists in the United States and other Western countries in the form of a company, relying on news topics to attract the attention of non-mainstream think tanks and NGOs in the United States, and presenting its own views on related topics in TV programs. Its guests and content basically serve the non-mainstream society in the United States. Because of the lobbying of interest groups, Washington represents mainstream political opinions and New York represents economic interest groups. Although these interest groups are small in number, they have huge influence.

In the process of working for the rise of the country, Russia put the media on the same important basis as energy and weapons to rectify. The "RT" TV station internally represents a comprehensive combination of

⁵ Телеканал RT открыл филиал на YOUTUBE. Лента.Ru, Июнь 4 2007, <http://lenta.ru/news/2007/06/04/YOUTUBE/>.

professional media, think tanks, government and state-owned enterprises. Externally, it combines international media personnel, non-governmental organizations, lobbying groups and local operators, so that “RT” TV station specializes in landing countries’ non-mainstream public opinion and develops into the most influential international publicity system, and the international multimedia opinion channel which is different from Western mainstream media. With the tension and confrontation between the United States and Russia in the Ukrainian crisis, RT US Taiwan has become the target of the United States’ use of judicial investigations as a means of attack. How does Putin use RT to counteract the offensive propaganda of the United States in international public opinion, and also tend to conduct preventive media diplomacy against the offensive propaganda of the United States. From 2013 to 2014, as Putin returned to the global layout of the Kremlin, he integrated the major International Publicity machines such as RIA Novosti and Voice of Russia into the organizational structure of RT International News Agency. The goal is to develop RT into the world’s largest The multimedia international outreach system. The Ukrainian crisis belongs to the fiercest battlefield in which the Russian foreign propaganda system and the American media are competing for geopolitical superiority at this stage.

Russian International Publicity System Related With Rising of Nation

From collapse of the Soviet Union to 2000, the Russian media was basically controlled by an oligarch and served the oligarchic economy. After Putin became the president of Russia in 2000, the first problem he faced was how to obtain funding sources and master the ideological propaganda machine, in order to regain Russia’s national strength and popular confidence from the economic and psychological levels. Putin’s idea of a powerful country was to place the three major industries of media, energy, and weapons under government control, squeeze the oligarchs out of these areas or become supporting actors, and force the oligarchs to concentrate on economic activities rather than political operations. The nationalization of large industries was Putin’s first step in governance. From 2000 to 2006, the Russian media entered the stage of professional media professionals. Professional media professionals did not need to consider business and economic issues too much, so that they could better exert their own professionalism and policy analysis capabilities. At this time, the combination of media people and the government became a characteristic. The government mainly controlled the signal rights of television stations and radio stations, newspaper printing houses and equipment imports. After 2006, the media, the government, and state-owned enterprises were fully integrated. However, due to the chaos in the early stage of the development of the Soviet and Russian state systems, TASS, state television, and newspapers faced major problems in management and funding sources. To this end, Putin focused on reshaping RIA Novosti, Russian State Television, Voice of Russia, and “Russia”, “Komsomolskaya Pravda” and “Moscow Communist Youth League” as the primary targets of media service government policy propaganda and interpretation. After 2008, think tanks joined the media diplomacy system and became the source of major decisions in Russia and abroad. At the end of 2013, RT became Russia’s largest international news agency, striding forward to the world’s largest multimedia outreach machine. The Ukrainian crisis was the fiercest battlefield in which the Russian outreach system and the American media were competing for geopolitical superiority at this stage.

Wu Fei and Hu Fengyung (2006) believed that Putin’s media development approach was consistent with international relations, that was, the Russian government must protect existing natural resources. Natural resources should be a powerful weapon for the rise of Russia which should be a powerful weapon for Russia’s

rise, and likewise the media must serve as an ideological weapon for shaping Russia's ideology, which cannot be developed overnight (Wu Fei & Hu Fengyung, 2006). As the world's media development was increasingly focusing on entertainment and reporting, it was difficult for the media to cooperate with the rise of Russia. The rise of Russia is mainly divided into three parts: the integration of the CIS countries, the cooperation between Russia and the European Union, and Russia's role in Asia. It can be said that these three topics were hardly the main concerns of the audience in Russia. In this way, how to draw on the experience and management of RT TV, which has been specializing in Russian foreign propaganda through commercial media, has become the main problem facing Putin's team. In 2013, Putin set out to build RT into Russia's largest multimedia platform. It was necessary to reorganize RT's successful international influence experience with domestic media resources to make the Russian media fully internationalized with the most effective and cost-saving methods. On the one hand, Russia's internal media must serve as the backing of Russia's international propaganda; on the other hand, the process of international propaganda could interact with domestic public opinion at any time to maintain the familiarity of domestic public opinion with international issues, reduce the gap between domestic and foreign public opinion, and prevent internal a crisis that could seriously polarise internal opinion when it was attacked by international opinion. This role had been effectively played in the Ukrainian crisis. The high level of Russian diplomacy had formed the idea that the color revolution was to use the divided public opinion of other countries and the media propaganda machinery to cause huge public opinion pressure inside and outside other countries, until the pressure of public opinion was loosened or the regime is disintegrated. This seemed to have become the latest diplomatic offensive weapon of the United States, and what Russia wanted to carry out is preventive diplomacy.

Konstantin Kosachev (2012), President Putin's plenipotentiary representative of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the editorial board member of the Russian in Global Affairs, believed that the international competition in the 21st century had transformed from hard power to soft power, and the damage and cost of hard power had been overwhelming. Therefore, competition in geopolitics on the international stage had already been a policy tool and diplomatic method to shape or destroy the enemy through culture and information.

Kosachev gave the example of how intervention by force in Saddam Hussein's and Ghadafi's regimes, despite having only a small number of supporters in Russia, was a way that caused great concern within Russia and was difficult for Russia to accept. The Western media portrayed Russia as a supporter of these regimes and an ideological enemy of anti-Western values because Russia did not agree with the overthrow of these regimes by force, and the same pattern applied to the interpretation of Russia's attitude towards the Assad regime in Syria, where the Western media portrayed Russia and China as opposed to Western values for not opposing the Assad regime on ideological grounds. The dual struggle of "supporting or opposing Western values" carried out by the Western media has resulted in seldom different views in the international mainstream media news, thus forming a monopoly of Western information on the interpretation of international events. The current concept of how international events are formed in people's minds has become the field of soft power struggle between countries, which is similar to the concept of class struggle as a historical driving force in Marx's theory (Kosachev K., 2012, pp. 47–48).

RT as the International Operating Model of the Primary Outreach System

RT's global landing process and its international operating model are the most representative in the United

States. RT America was developed with the help of Alexei Yazlovsky, the Russian-born business operator of RTTV America in the United States. RTTV America itself is a commercial operation media content production and technology transmission company. RT operates in the manner of a public relations company and established the “RT” American station. Its programs are international TV channels that directly contact the audience. The reporters are entirely from the United States and composed of international journalists, RTTV America itself is a US company, and RTTV America can avoid disputes with US laws when it invests and cooperates with it. Then, behind the commercial operation, RTTV America began to raise relevant capital. In this way, in the early stage of RTTV America’s operation in the United States, RTTV America would set up various issues suitable for American society. These issues existed in the form of related projects. The project would invite many people from all walks of life in the United States to participate, including holding various types of seminars. These seminars would invite a large number of researchers from the United States to attend and distribute funds which estimated to be between US\$5,000 and US\$10,000 to these researchers in accordance with the project. This method of contact had laid the foundation for the future operation of the guests behind the RT America program. RT has different roles and relationships with RT America and RTTV America, and there are very big organizational differences: RT is the boss of the Russian outreach system; RTTV America is the provider of TV content and channels, becoming a platform for contacting local relations; RT America has become a platform for discussion by American political and economic figures, as a TV channel to provide audiences with hot topics in the future. RTTV America itself does not hold any position on American issues. First, it exists in the United States as a company; then RT America relies on news topics to attract the attention of non-mainstream think tank researchers and NGOs in the United States, and invited them to TV programs, putting forward the unit’s views on related issues; after that, RT became the most well-known foreign TV brand concerned by non-mainstream audiences in the United States. RT America’s rise because its guests and content basically served the non-mainstream society of the United States. Due to the lobbying of interest groups in the United States, in the mainstream society of the United States, Washington represented the mainstream political opinions and New York represented economic interest groups. The group had a small number of people, but its influence was huge. Therefore, RT America has become the most popular international TV channel that attracts non-mainstream opinions from the United States.

RT mainly relies on Russian and international professional media professionals to penetrate into NATO countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Israel, and then relies on RT’s corporate operating model. In the early stage, it mainly adopted the operating model of a public relations company and found the guests needed by RT in the future in some related activities. These program guests could first legally obtain relevant research funds through legal activities, and in the future, under the premise of some breaking news or continuous news reports, relevant lobbying mechanisms can be established. Using the media and guests to form a certain degree of public opinion pressure, this model made non-mainstream groups in the United States attach great importance to the opinions from RT America. During the Ukraine crisis, the relationship between the United States and Russia deteriorated and it withdrew its ambassador to Russia. With the annexation of Crimea into the Russian Federation, the United States began to jointly impose economic sanctions on Russia with Western countries. The battle of public opinion had been fierce, and the United States also begun investigations against RTTV America, which was based in Washington. The Russian “Kommersant” (Газета Коммерсантъ) published an article on April 8, 2014, titled “America’s Eyes on RT” (В США присматриваются к телеканалу RT). The article pointed out that the head of RTTV America Aleksei Yazlovs

Ji was prosecuted by the US authorities, accusing him of tax fraud and attempting to conceal \$26 million in income. In 2014, the RTTV tax fraud case was heard by the Federal Court of the Western District of California.

Alexey Yazlovsky was a participant in the Russian puzzle game show KBH. He also participated in the talk show “Good night with Igor Ugornikov” (Добрый вечер с Игорем Угольниковым), which was broadcast on Russian TV station RTR in cooperation with RIA Novosti and International Film and Television Company. Yazlovs immigrated to the United States in the late 1990s and became a US citizen in 2002. He registered an animation and film production company-RTTV America in Washington, DC in 2005. The company has four offices in Washington DC, New York, Miami and Los Angeles.⁶

RT Editor-in-Chief Margaret Simonian (2014) told Kommersant that RTTV was a commercial company, and RT was a contractual commercial partnership. RT had no right to interfere with the company’s tax payment. It is precisely because the company was related to RT that this matter had been hyped up as a “barbaric scandal” by the Western media. She said that the commercial contract between RT and RTTV would be terminated. Yazlovsky was only RT’s contractor, and RT did not participate in the company’s accounting operations. However, the article still pointed out that RT America was actually operated by RTTV, and the registered address was also the same as that of the company. Roman Tokman (коммерческий представитель RT Роман Токман), RT’s commercial representative in Washington, told the online publication “The Washington Freedom Beacon” of the American non-profit organization “Center for American Freedom”, a non-mainstream non-profit organization that adheres to conservatism, that Yazlovsky was not responsible for RT America. He only provided commercial services for program shooting, broadcasting and technical equipment. RT was the buyer of RTTV products, and the owner of RT America. Margaret Simonian said that they disagreed with the US authorities’ allegations that the RTTV tax issue had anything to do with them, which damaged the reputation of their television station.⁷ According to the “The Washington Freedom Beacon” report, the head of RTTV America Alexei Yazlowski would face a three-year prison sentence, and his trial would be postponed from June 2014 to December 5th. Currently, he was cooperating with US federal investigators. Alexey Yazlowski’s RTTV America company hired “RT” TV station staff in the United States, and his other company, International TV Service (Intl. TV Services), employed “Voice of Russia” (VOR) radio station staff to work in the United States. “Voice of Russia” is being investigated by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for racial discrimination in employment (Goodman A., 2014).

RT America is positioned on the RT covering US news page as a report from a Washington DC studio, completely different from mainstream American television’s polemical coverage of news, features and talk show discussions. While reporting the other side of the story, it is not necessary to make any conclusions, but to ask questions that have not yet been answered.⁸ Following the RT America news program “Breaking the set” hostess Abby Martin in her own program made remarks against Russian military interference in Crimea. RT America’s other female anchor Liz Wahl in 2014 On March 5, 2005, followed the same pattern and issued a brief resignation statement in the live news, stating that she could not continue to work on the television station established by the Russian government.

⁶ В США присматриваются к телеканалу RT. Газета Коммерсантъ, 2014, Апрель 8, available online at: <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2447620>.

⁷ В США присматриваются к телеканалу RT. Газета Коммерсантъ, 2014, Апрель 8, available online at: <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2447620>.

⁸ On Air, RT, available online at: <http://rt.com/on-air/rt-america-air/>.

However, in an interview with CNN, Abby Martin was later asked if she had been accused or suppressed by the news from the upper echelons of RT. She stated that she was not accused or controlled by the editor-in-chief of the unit. She claimed that she could be free to express her views in the program she hosted. On the contrary, she received the understanding and support of the editor-in-chief. Criticism on the other hand, the influence of the US government on the US media also occurred in the US military intervention in the war in Iraq. From this perspective, Abby Martin argued that the US commercial corporate media was also a propaganda machine for the US government and criticizes the same US military interventions that people did not agree with. The combination of RTTV America and RT America and non-mainstream organizations in the United States gained recognition from the news media and non-mainstream organizations in Occupy Wall Street activities.

Regarding the two female news anchors of RT America publicly criticizing the Russian government's military operations in Crimea, RT's editor-in-chief Margaret Simonian (2014) published an editorial on the RT website entitled "About Abby Martin, Liz Wahl and media wars". In the article she mentioned that Abby Martin did not agree with the position of the United States and she was proud for the freedom of expression that she enjoyed in RT, but Abby Martin could not get the approval of the American mainstream media. In less than a day, the American mainstream media went from praising her to reprimanding her. While Liz Wall's resignation was praised as a hero by the American mainstream media. The American mainstream media claimed that we planned the entire incident (Simonyan M., 2014). In March 2012, RT was blocked by YOUTUBE for reporting on the Occupy Wall Street movement. At that time, YOUTUBE explained that it was a technical failure. Coincidentally, in March 2014, it was blocked by YOUTUBE due to reports of the Ukrainian crisis. YOUTUBE explained that it was due to many factors and serious violation of YOUTUBE playback policy, etc. RT was being surrounded by Western governments and media mainly because of RT's influence in international news, indicating that Western media were not comfortable with the rapid development of media in emerging countries, and at the same time, they were also very concerned about RT's inspiring role for media from other developing countries, including China, India, and Brazil, to play a unique role in the world's communication system.

RT America opposes the so-called mainstream views of the United States. By increasing the opportunities for communication with the mainstream U.S., taking advantage of the characteristics of the U.S. political mainstream being controlled by Jewish groups, and the principle of dealing with tough opponents, it eases relations between Moscow and Russian Jews. Putin also hosted Jewish groups in Russia and had good relations with Israel. From 2008 to 2012, as Russian President Medvedev and Obama came to power at the same time, Medvedev represented the direction of relief for Russia and the West, especially the United States. At this time, it coincided with the non-mainstream public opinion represented by US President Obama and his concern about domestic affairs, bringing an unprecedented environment of relaxation to RT. RT America and Barack Obama have remained relatively friendly, with RT America being less critical of Obama's policies, mainly rebutting White House policies with practical examples, but being confrontational with Congress and the Pentagon, and somewhat cooperative with the State Department. Among them, RT America basically criticized the Pentagon for its completely incomprehensible attitude on the issue of NATO's eastward expansion. The relationship between RT and the United Kingdom is to use information from the United States as much as possible on some issues, making it impossible for the British and American media to cooperate fully on the Russian issue to generate a substantial threat. RT and Germany basically adopt an attitude of mutual cooperation and basically

support the operation of their EU, but basically adopt a more cooperative attitude towards Germany's actions in NATO.

Ukraine Crisis Intensifies Russian-U.S. International Controversy Machine

In February 2014, the Russian International Affairs Committee (RIAC) held a round table on "Journalism and Diplomacy" in response to international media coverage of the Sochi Winter Olympic Committee and the Ukrainian crisis, aiming to explore the objectivity of international news and its role in shaping the image of the country. The meeting was attended by the chairman of the conference, former Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov and CEO Andrei Kortunov, as well as the president of the Russian Foreign and Defense Policy Committee and the editor-in-chief of the Russian in Global Affairs Fyodor Lukyanov. Fyodor Lukyanov believed that the media was like the reflection of the two sides of a coin and a mirror. Many things had been distorted by media reports, and they had broken away from the truth of the original facts. Andrei Kortunov argues that the current polarization of the media, both at home and abroad, the tug of war between those who sought to enter the world community and those who feared changing the international status quo, made the media reflect the seriousness of international trends themselves. Igor Ivanov extended this view, arguing that politicians and diplomats relied on international information every day, and the responsibility of international journalists was becoming more and more important. How to make people with a background of international affairs professionals continue to invest in the state media was still Russia's current challenge (Rozin I., 2014).

Pavel Sharikov, director of the Center for Applied Research of the Institute of American and Canadian Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, believed that online media was the most effective communication tool and platform for revealing information in Ukraine's information public opinion war. Its characteristic was that it used information attacks to shape public opinion and purpose was to break the confidence of the enemy. He believed that Russia's loss in the information war lied in the loss of support and trust from the West. Russia used a more flexible action to report the correctness of its position, and the effect was not obvious, let alone whether it had enough soft power to achieve the set goals. The reason was that, first of all, the polarization of Russian society was worrying: the support of the government authorities and the opposition had a clear stand. However, the opposition is more skilled in the operation of online media than the government. Sharikov believed that there was no doubt that the Alexei Navalny team, the head of the website, mainly manipulated public opinion in Moscow to achieve its political goals. The result was that the more these people opposed the Russian authorities, the trust they received in the West far exceeded that of Russian government officials. One example was that the US sanctions listed for Russian officials was based on an article published by Navalny in the New York Times. Sharikov believed that Russia lost the international public opinion war. The Russian-Georgian war was an example. At the time, international public opinion accused Russia of attempting to restore the Soviet Union. This was represented by the former US national security adviser Brzezinski (Sharikov P., 2014). According to the report of the fact-finding commission established by the European Union, the conflict started in Georgia.⁹

⁹ Regarding the conflict in the Russian-Georgian war, the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia (IIFFMCG) formed by the European Union had an in-depth report in 2009, from history, geostrategy, energy interests, and whether it violated International human rights law and many other aspects to judge the whole story of the Russian-Qiao war conflict. This report pointed out that the United States had invested a considerable amount of military and funding in Georgia, and the European Union also had economic assistance. The conflict between the Georgian authorities and the autonomous regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia had deteriorated after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The relationship between Russia's

Natalia Burlinova, the host of the Russian Gorchakov Foundation's Public Foreign Policy Program, pointed out that after the Russian-Georgian war, the Russian government realized that it must strengthen the propaganda work of international public opinion. Therefore, RT had introduced international news coverage in Spanish and Arabic, in addition to an all-English channel, and The Voice of Russia's multi-language plan had also been strengthened, showing that the Russian government had begun to pay attention to the influence of international radio and television media on the international community. Regarding how to develop Russia's soft power diplomacy in terms of think tanks, in 2010, the President of Russia Medvedev ordered the establishment of the Gorchakov Foundation with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the same time, the Russian International Affairs Commission (RIAC) was established with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education. This was Russia's first modernized national think tank, whose main goal was to enhance the research integration among Russian experts and to enhance the status of Russian experts in the world (Burlinova N., 2013). The chairman of the Russian International Affairs Committee was former Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov. The main role of this think tank was to combine Russia's international media and national think tanks as a new way to enhance Russia's soft power diplomacy. Relation University served as the cornerstone of providing international reserve talents and supporting the overall leadership decision-making mechanism of the think tank system, in order to promote the cooperation and connection of talents between schools and think tanks, and to form the research foundation and core strength of Russia's overall soft power diplomacy.

After 2000, the All-Russian State Television and Broadcasting Company which the largest official media group in Russia, began to reorganize, with the goal of improving Russian cultural identity as the development of local industries. In recent years, the federal budget for the main development of media has been invested in modernization of infrastructure and digital transmission.¹⁰ Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov believed that the West was manipulating the global audience's interpretation of the events in Ukraine. In response to U.S. Secretary of State Kerry's claim that RT was Putin's advocate, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov said that RT was to reverse the unilateral anti-Russian ideological propaganda carried out by Western media such as CNN

peacekeeping role and Georgia had deteriorated after the 2003 Color Revolution. After Saakashvili took power, military expenditures increased eight times compared with Shevardnadze's period, from 1% to 8% of GDP. The issue of the legality of the use of force by both parties was a very controversial place. The Georgian authorities violated the law first, and the Russian peacekeeping forces legally counterattacked in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, but the invasion of Tbilisi was illegal later. The report believed that the tensions and conflicts in the South Caucasus region could only be eased after coordination and consensus had been reached among various interests. This report can be found at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/30_09_09_iiffmge_report.pdf.

¹⁰ According to the latest analysis report of the "Report on the Russian Television Industry: Current Status, Trends and Development Prospects" (Телевидение в России. Состояние, тенденции и перспективы развития. Отраслевой доклад) published by the Federal Information and Mass Communication Agency under the Ministry of Information and Mass Communication of the Russian Federation for the period 2012–2013, Russian television Development was mainly the continuation of the accumulation of development in the past ten years, reflecting the momentum of the modernization process of Russian society. The report believed that the most important concern is still the improvement of the overall social mechanism that takes into account professional cooperation, national media, advertising market, legislative environment, and the needs of people from all over the country. In particular, television still played the most important national social and communication system. It was characterized by the manifestation of various forms of language, culture and religion, as well as the role of preserving the overall unity of society, ensuring that the majority of the Russian people had access to the main communication channels of the Federation, as well as maintaining the integration of the Russian information space and implementing the goal of integration. One of the most important tasks was to complete the digitalization project of TV transmission. The industry report on "Report on the Russian Television Industry: Current Status, Trends and Development Prospects" can also refer to the report published on the website of the Federal Agency for News and Mass Communication under the Ministry of Information and Mass Communication of the Russian Federation. The URL is: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/30_09_09_iiffmge_report.pdf.

and BBC, in order to provide an independent and balanced report with different views (Kabeev V., 2014). In fact, the problem facing Russia's international news was the issue of Russia's international status. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the old tradition was destroyed and the new propaganda system was undergoing transformation. The 2008 Russian-Georgian war determined that Russia's International Publicity system moved towards a more offensive, globalized, and public-relative media diplomacy strategy.

In the Ukraine crisis, the United States adopted a complete confrontation on the news battlefield, but most think tanks in Russia believed that they could not fall into anti-American or isolate themselves. Therefore, regarding the impact of the Ukraine crisis, Russia's main official think tanks engaged in soft power diplomacy include: The Russian International Affairs Council, Gorchakov Foundation for Public Diplomacy Support, The Russkiy Mir Foundation, and The National Committee for BRICS Studies. They looked at this matter from the perspective of Russian talent mobility. Experts from these units said that the impact and harm of the US economic sanctions on Russia should be minimized, with the goal of maintaining the attraction of foreign talents from Russia to return to domestic services, and continuing to promote the direction of economic integration to retain Russia's economic and energy advantages. This would prevent an exodus of Russian scientists as a result of the economic downturn following the US sanctions. During the period from 1989 to 2004, at least 30,000 Russian scientists had been hired to work abroad with high salaries, which would continue to cause major harm to Russia's national security (Koshkin P., 2014).

Pavel Koshkin, the editor-in-chief of the newspaper "Russia Direct", a Russian official think tank, and Ksenia Smertina, a researcher on European security issues at The Russian Center for Policy Studies, believed that the soft power research on how to improve Russia's national image has become the most common topic of concern among journalists, diplomats and politicians (Smertina F., 2014). Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Russian Policy Research Center has been concerned about the control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The center looks at US-Russian relations from the perspective of getting rid of the ideological shackles of the Cold War and establishing Russia's role in the larger international strategic security. The Ukrainian crisis became a victim of US-Russian geopolitics, but the resolution of elevated international conflicts in the context of the need for greater international strategic cooperation has prompted the US and Russia to reflect on the possibility of reconciliation, a view held by the Russian Commission on International Affairs, which looked at the resolution of international conflicts and crises from a diplomatic path and the key role of information in the negotiation process. For example, Yury Dubinin, a professor at the Moscow State University of International Relations and former Soviet ambassador to the UN Security Council, believed that diplomacy was a creative path and art for peacefully solving problems, and its primary task was to collect information, which could clarify both parties. Information could clarify the goals of negotiations between the two parties, measure the scope of compromise, and put forward a bargaining chip for asking prices, so he believed that "information is power" (Dubinin Y., 2013).

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