

Russia as a Donor: What is Behind the Aid?*

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〈Abstract〉

In the mid-2000s Russia took measures to regain the status of a donor providing aid to developing countries. However, Russia's aid allocation patterns suggest that its motivations are different from the traditional donors which are more likely to tie aid to fostering democratic processes. This study examines empirically motivations of Russia's aid. The findings provide support for the argument that Russian development assistance evolved into a politically motivated tool tied to Russia's foreign policy. First, Russia changed its approach from multilateral aid provision to bilateral, and increased multilateral aid share for regional organizations, in which Russia plays a key role. Second, Russia provided a significant amount of aid to former Soviet Union countries in 2014, the year of the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine, suggesting that the aid was used to strengthen Russia's influence in the region. Third, it was found that countries that received aid from Russia were more likely to support Russia's position on the international stage. The findings suggest that Russia is closer to emerging donors which are more motivated by self-interests.

*Keywords: Russia, Foreign Aid, Strategic Motivations, Political Interests, Emerging Donors

I . Introduction

The shifts in global economy have brought changes to the development assistance trends. China Brazil, India, and Middle East countries started

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providing their aid to developing countries and emerged as new donors. The motivations of emerging donors are less explored in the literature and represent a new field for the research community. Few studies have already found that motivations of emerging donors are different from traditional donors such as the EU, the US, or any other OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member. For instance, scholars explored how China utilized debtbook diplomacy in its loans policies for achieving strategic goals (Parker & Chefitz 2018). In the mid-2000s Russia also entered the list of new donors even though its contributions were modest comparing to other leading donor countries. Russia represents a particular research interest due to its journey from the “donor” (as part of the Soviet Union) to “recipient” (Russia as a state) and strive to come back as a “donor” again. However, significantly limited number of studies was conducted to understand Russia’s aid. Since 2011 Russia directed large shares of foreign aid to Central Asian and Eastern European countries. In other regions, Nicaragua and Syria were among the recipients of significant amounts of aid. The aid was also provided to countries in Oceania: Fiji and Nauru. While aid allocation to the neighboring countries is quite predictable, the aid to other regions is lacking substantial explanation. This study aims to investigate what are the motivations behind Russia’s foreign aid provision. Such exploration allows to make inference on whether Russian aid is different from the Soviet Union one. In addition, this study contributes to the literature on motivations of new emerging donors.

The Russian case represents a particular interest of study as its assistance nature is less explored. Whereas its record as a provider of aid is not long, patterns of its evolution are showing that it is developing in a politically motivated direction. Considering Russian isolation on the international stage, due to its military aggression against Ukraine, it is likely to expect further utilization of assistance tool to better serve the interests of the government. This study in detail explores the evolution of Russian assistance and attempts to shed the light on its motivations.

The data for analysis come from the existing literature which recorded

Russian international development assistance (IDA)¹⁾ based on the data from the OECD DAC Statistics during the period of 2010-2019²⁾. The use of original data from the OECD is currently impossible as Russian ODA statistics were removed from the OECD database. In addition, the current study utilizes Russian official documents, media reports and official records of the United Nations General Assembly Plenary Meetings for examination of potential motivations of the Russian aid allocation.

The paper is organized in 6 sections. The first section explains the actuality of the current study and introduces the research question. The second section provides background on Russian regulatory framework regarding development assistance and describes general trends of Russian aid. The third section reviews existing literature on motivations behind foreign aid and literature on Russia's international development assistance. The fourth section introduces theoretical argument. The fifth section empirically explores motivations of the Russian aid focusing on analysis of the ratio of bilateral and multilateral aid, aid allocation patterns, and impact of foreign aid on the UNGA vote and recognition of Russia backed breakaway regions. Concluding remarks and contribution of the current study are provided in the sixth section.

II. Background on Russian International Development Assistance

Russian history of engagement in development assistance goes back to

1) In OECD terminology - ODA or foreign aid

2) Russia was in the process of accession to the OECD and had been reporting aid data to the OECD since 2011. However, its accession was postponed in 2014 due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and terminated in 2022 due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Despite the suspension Russia continued reporting its aid data to the OECD at least until 2018, according to author's knowledge. However, Russian statistics has been removed from the database according to the OECD decision. Therefore, the data in this article relies on data recorded in the existing literature (Yermolov 2021; Zaitsev & Knoble 2019; Zaitsev & Knoble 2020).

the Soviet times. During the Cold War the Soviet Union and the United States were using foreign aid to pursue their strategical interests (Guan-Fu 1983). Competitors utilized aid to keep allies close and refrain non-allies from allying the enemy. The Soviet Union provided aid particularly with the purpose to support communist states and largely in the form of technical assistance or academic programs (Asmus et al. 2017). The aid was directed to the Middle East and South Asia. In 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia, as well as other former Soviet countries became a recipient of foreign aid. For instance, since 1992, the US provided 28 billion USD to 12 former Soviet Union states with the purpose to facilitate transition to democracy, promote free market economy and foster security (Congressional Research Service 2007).

In the early 2000s Russian economy started recovering and Russia took measures to regain the status of donor. The turning point in Russian development assistance occurred in 2006, when Russia was hosting the G8 summit. Russian researches highlighted that Russia participated in the Summit as a “*donor country*” or “*partner-donor*” (Bylina et al. 2007). Already in 2007, the Russian government introduced its first Concept on Russia’s Participation in international development assistance (Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation 2007). The document stated Russia’s commitment to facilitate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In other words, the concept reaffirmed Russia’s intention to contribute to sustainable development, poverty reduction, and democratic world order. However, it has been also highlighted that Russia’s development assistance took into consideration foreign policy and security policy of Russia. The concept listed regional priorities for aid allocation:

1. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC) countries,
2. The poorest nations (partnership with Asian countries),
3. Africa (Sub-Saharan countries),
4. Middle East and North Africa countries,
5. Latin America.

Assistance to CIS and EAEC³⁾ countries was given priority to observe Russia's national interests and strengthen integration processes. However, Russia was still a recipient of aid that was striving to become a donor. For these reasons, multilateral assistance was set as preferable way of participation in IDA.

In 2014, Russian government approved the Concept of State Policy in the Field of International Development Assistance (Committee on International Affairs of the State Duma 2014). The new concept signaled the transition from the “*concept of participation*” to the “*concept of state policy*.” The concept was different from the previous one in three aspects. First, the state policy in the field of IDA became part of the foreign policy of Russia and political orientation became more obvious. Second, the preferable format of aid provision shifted towards bilateral. Third, the concept explicitly determined regional priorities. According to the concept of 2014, Russian development assistance could be provided to the following countries:

1. CIS member states, Abkhazia and South Ossetia⁴⁾, other Russia-friendly states, and states participating in Eurasia organizations along with Russia,
2. states with long-standing friendly relations with Russia,
3. states participating together with Russia in the implementation of joint economic and social projects of mutual interest,
4. developing states, cooperation with which serves the national interests of Russia.

The new concept provided the basis for more targeted distribution of Russian aid that was more in line with national interests. The CIS countries remained the prior recipients. However, the distinct feature of the concept was the inclusion of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are

3) The Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC) was transformed into the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) in 2015.

4) Abkhazia and South Ossetia are commonly referred to as breakaway regions or self-proclaimed republics and considered part of Georgia by international community.

breakaway regions, recognized by Russia and only few other states, but internationally considered part of Georgia. The actual distribution of bilateral aid in 2014 looked as follows: 40.55% to Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 29.76% to Latin America, 11.99% to South Asia/East Asia/South East Asia, 7.7% to the South of the Sahara, 4.58% to the Middle East and North Africa, 0.04% to Oceania, and 5.38% to others (Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation 2015). The concept of 2014 was amended in 2016 by introducing mechanism for policy coordination - the Sub-commission for International Development assistance under the Governmental Commission for Economic Development and Integration (Official Internet Portal of Legal Information 2016).

In March 2023, President Putin signed a decree, that introduced significant changes to the Concept of 2014 (Official Internet Portal of Legal Information 2023). While the first concept of 2007 set “*fostering democratic processes*” as one of its goals, and the second concept of 2014 focused on “*equality and democratization of the system of international relations*” and set “*developing democratic society institutions*” as one of priorities, the Decree of 2023 instead included another principle - “*the refusal to impose political conditions for assistance*”. Currently, Russia promotes the vision that recipient states can choose the model of socio-economic development independently. In addition, the decree linked the IDA more closely to trade and investment projects (Mikhnevich 2023). The list of regional priorities was also slightly adjusted:

1. Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) states,
2. members of the CIS, states on post-Soviet space, other Russia-friendly neighboring states,
3. states with long-standing friendly relations with Russia, and states, cooperation with which serves the national interests of Russia,
4. states participating together with Russia in the implementation of joint economic and social projects of mutual interest,
5. states included in the UN list of the least developed countries.

However, Russian experts still agree that the institutional system and legal framework for the development of state policy in the field of ODA is limited. The term of ODA or foreign aid in Russian context is often regarded as international development assistance or IDA, and is absent in Russian legislation. Moreover, there is no executive agency, like USAID in the US or SIDA in Sweden (*Center for Strategic Research*, 8 June 2018). Instead, the Russian government created the Interdepartmental Commission for International Development Assistance in 2020 to coordinate the implementation of the policy, and appointed deputy head of President's Administration as a head of the newly created Commission (*Kommersant*, 9 November 2020). The creation of such Commission placed Russia's aid directly under the supervision of the President.

In September 2022, Russian government approved "The Complex National Program on the International Development Assistance" until 2030 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2022a). According to the Complex National Program on International Development Assistance, the implementor of the program is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, co-implementor - the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo), while the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA) and the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs (Rosmolodyozh) are the participants of implementation. While appointment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as key implementor is a common practice for ODA, as well as the Ministry of Finance, inclusion of Rossotrudnichestvo as a co-implementor suggests quite unique approach. Rossotrudnichestvo is a federal agency for cultural diplomacy with vast network across the globe. However, Rossotrudnichestvo is also regarded as key player in foreign policy that facilitates pro-Russian narratives, and even is referred as an agent of the "Russian World" (Lutsevych 2016).

Over the span of almost 10 years Russian IDA doubled from 472

million USD in 2010 to 1132 million USD in 2019 (see Table 1). It is important to mention that some countries were owing Russia debts from the USSR era. This debt relief is also qualified as development assistance and is included into statistics. Russian media reported that as of October 2017, Russia has relived approximately 151 billion USD over the last 20 years (*MK*, 10 October 2017). Besides that, official statistics does not reflect the information on Russia's assistance to non-recognized regions backed by Russia, such as Abkhazia and South Ossetia. BBC reported that from 2009 to 2016 Russia provided 36.86 billion Ruble (614 million USD in 2017 exchange rate) to Abkhazia, and 52.45 billion Ruble (874 million USD in 2017 exchange rate) to South Ossetia (*BBC*, 8 August 2017). As of 2023, the assistance to Abkhazia increased to 110 billion Ruble or 1.3 billion USD in 2023 exchange rate (*RBC*, 19 August 2023). While this assistance is not qualified as the ODA as the money are transferred to breakaway region backed by Russia, this is a vivid example of money transfer from the government for political purposes.

Notably, in 2023, President Putin announced that Russia has written off 23 billion USD of Africa countries' debts. Oleg Vorobyov from *Delovaya Rossiya* argued that it is better to have an "ally" than a "debtor" (*Gazeta*, 28 July 2023). In addition, President Putin mentioned that Russia supplies weapons and technology to the region "to ensure the safety" (*Lenta*, 28 July 2023). The Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA) expert David Tereladze also argued that political concessions are the main reason of debt relief approaches (Novikov 2017). It is important to highlight the timing of debt relief to African countries - the time when Russia is waging a war against Ukraine and is facing global isolation. Such instances suggest that political and strategic motivation underpins Russia's aid and further empirical investigation is required.

〈Table 1〉 Amount of Aid to and from Russia (1993–2019) in Million USD

Year	Aid to Russia	Aid from Russia
1993	2420	-
1994	1847	-
1995	1610	-
1996	1282	-
1997	734	-
1998	1018	-
2000	1565	-
2001	1112	-
2002	1301	-
2003	1255	50
2004	1313	100
2005	-	101.3
2006	-	101.8
2007	-	210.78
2008	-	220
2009	-	785.02
2010	-	472.39
2011	-	478.99
2012	-	465.01
2013	-	713.66
2014	-	875.85
2015	-	1161.4
2016	-	1258.04
2017	-	1193.93
2018	-	999.08
2019	-	1131.69

* Source: 1993-2009 data from Beletskaya (2015), 2010-2019 data from Zaitsev & Knobel (2020)

III. Literature Review

Despite the main objectives of foreign aid such as assistance for development, stimulation of economic growth, democratization, the existing literature reveals that foreign aid motivations have been political.

Discourse about the political nature of the foreign aid goes back by decades. Particularly, the main message of Hans Morgenthau (1962) is that “*a policy of foreign aid is no different from diplomatic and military propaganda*”. Tracing the history of the transfer of money from one government to another, Morgenthau concludes that “*much of what goes by the name of foreign aid today is in the nature of bribes. The transfer of money and services from one government to another performs here the function of a price paid for political services rendered or to be paid.*” Among more recent studies one of the most cited works on motivations of foreign aid also argues that foreign aid is dictated by political and strategic considerations. Alesina and Dollar (2000), exploring the period of Cold War from 1970 to 1994, find that colonial past and political alliances are major determinants of foreign aid. They conclude that significant part of the US aid went to Egypt and Israel, France provided aid to its former colonies, while Japanese aid was correlated with UN voting patterns. Berthélemy (2006) explores the topic further and finds that aid motives of rich countries combine self-interested and altruistic objectives. Berthélemy’s study shows the empirical evidence that Japan and the United States are among the most “egoistic.” The premise of this study is consistent with the previous literature particularly in terms, that foreign aid from government to government has political motivations.

Another strand in literature examines the objectives and effects of foreign aid during the Cold War and the post-Cold war era. Reviewing the trends in aid literature Radelet (2006) points out that “*during the Cold War, both the United States and Soviet Union used aid to vie for the support of developing countries with little regard as to whether the aid was actually used to support development*”. Therefore, political motivations have been prevailing. Bermeo (2011) examines the period from 1992 to

2007 and finds the evidence that aid from democratic donors is positively associated with the probability of democratic transition. Although the study aims to find out the relationship between the regime type of the donor country and democratization in the recipient country, it is possible to interpret the results in another way, that aid has become less strategically oriented in the post-Cold war era, as it is more oriented toward a positive change in the recipient country.

Bearce and Tirone (2010) analyzing the impact of foreign aid argue that in the post-Cold war strategic benefits of foreign aid has declined and thus aid can bring positive changes in economic reform of recipient countries, because donors can threaten to curtail their aid. However, the drawback of this work is the focus on the traditional Western donors. Whether this argument is applicable to non-Western donors requires further examination.

Continuing the exploration of aid objectives, Dreher, Nunnenkamp and Thiele (2011) shed light on the motivations of emerging donors. In this work they analyzed whether the new foreign aid donors such as Middle East countries and China are different from established donor. They find that, on average, new donors care less for recipient need than old donors. Asmus et al. (2017) explored the motivations of BRICS members' aid. They find that BRICS countries observe the non-interference rule and focus on mutual benefits. Therefore, BRICS members are more likely to tie aid to goods and services, while Western aid conditions are more related to democratization and respect for human rights. In addition, BRICS members' aid appear to be more motivated by donor's self-interests.

Literature on Russian IDA is quite scarce due to the fact that Russia started providing aid only in the mid-2000s and available data is very limited. Few authors described Russia as an emerging donor (Gray 2011; Degterev 2013; Larionova et al. 2016). In 2006 Russia was hosting G8 that took place in Saint Petersburg⁵). Russia openly articulated its intention

5) Russia was suspended from the G8 in 2014 over its annexation of Crimea. Since then, the Group consists of 7 members.

to re-emerge as aid donor during the Summit. Russia announced its intention to commit to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and contributed 270 million through 2010 to reimburse the cost of all the Global Fund's projects in Russia (The Global Fund 2006). In September 2006 Russian minister of finance Alexei Kudrin announced that Russia would direct 60 million USD for the development of education in the "poorest countries." Among other initiatives, Russia took part in the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI) meeting in 2006 in Cairo as a country-donor. It was also stated that Russia relieved the debt of African countries (Bylina et al. 2007). It was a strong message from Russian government that Russia is not any more a "receiver" but a "donor." Significant was the fact that Russian media and government officials talking about recipients of Russian aid mostly emphasized its assistance to African countries, while the largest recipients of Russian aid at that time were Central Asian states (Gray 2011).

Gray (2011) examines this shift in Russian aid behavior from anthropological perspective and argues that Russia is "*resisting its recent subject placement in the global political economy*". Russia takes a position of refusing the role of recipient. Gray adds that for countries that are challenging for a higher position in world politics it is vital to show its commitment to global "good." Gray (2015) also viewed Russia as "recruited" donor, rather than an emerging one. Global agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the OECD-DAC and the World Bank took measures to enhance capacity of key Russian government actors and non-state actors, and consulted them regarding DAC-centric norms of development assistance. This "recruitment" was intended to influence Russia's internal dynamics by global community.

Russian scholar Degterev (2013) addressed the issue of Russian aid from the perspective of identity. Degterev argued that there were three identity dilemmas in front of Russia: 1) great power or poor country (in terms of contribution to ODA), 2) G8 or BRICS, 3) development or redistribution. He found that Russia shares different common grounds with the G8 countries and with the BRICS countries at the same time, and

Russia as an international donor was focused more upon the paradigm of redistribution, however, with the time the focus can be shifted toward to corrective justice.

De Cordier (2016) had more precise look at Russian aid donorship, and objectives of its policies, as well as paying attention to Russian humanitarian aid to resistance-held areas. Cordier sees Russian ODA as a “*supplementary facet of a wider net and practice of Russian soft power and dividend seeking.*” De Cordier also points that aid has been provided to states that recognize the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia and Russian occupation of Crimea and Sevastopol. However, no empirical study has been conducted on this issue. Asmus et al. (2018) also noticed Russia’s money transfers to countries supporting Russia in the UNGA.

In other words, existing literature focuses on Russian re-emergence as a donor and the identity of Russian aid with glimpse on motivations behind its adoption. This study makes an attempt to examine empirically what motivates Russian aid more in detail.

IV. Theoretical Argument

The main argument of this paper is that 1) Russian international development assistance is politically motivated and 2) political motivation is tied to key Russian foreign policy issues. These hypotheses are tested empirically examining the share of bilateral and multilateral aid, actual allocation of aid, and aid correlation with Russia’s foreign policy issues.

An overview of Russian aid policy showed some evidences that are supporting the main argument of the study. First, Russia significantly reduced the proportion of multilateral and increased the share of bilateral aid over time. In more recent years, the share of bilateral aid reduced, however, distribution of multilateral aid among agencies shows another evidence, that political logic is still applied.

Second, Russia provided large amount of aid to CIS countries. This

period coincides with the revolutions that broke out in Eastern European and Central Asian states. The outbreak of revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan was perceived as a threat to Russian influence over the CIS space, Russia-led early Eurasia integration processes, and its expansion ambitions. Russian provision of aid can be assessed as an attempt to strengthen the coalition and to enhance the Russian influence over post-Soviet space.

Third, the countries that received assistance from Russia were in the list of those that supported Russia during the UNGA voting on issues critical to Russia, particularly, on the resolutions regarding Ukrainian territorial integrity and recognition of independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

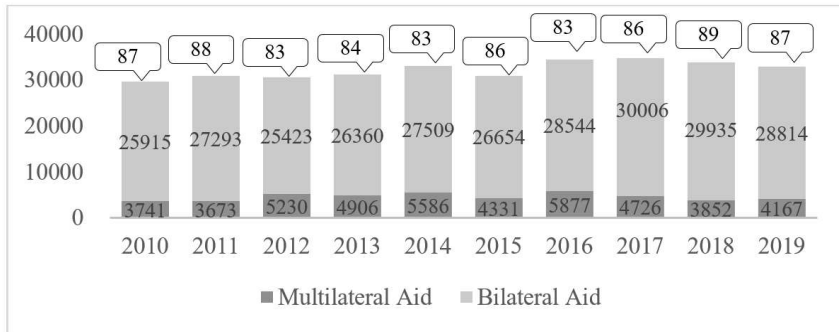
This work attempts to provide empirical evidence to the argument that Russian aid is strategically motivated.

V. Empirical Analysis

1. From Multilateral to Bilateral Aid

It is well known that countries tend to provide bilateral aid in bigger amounts than multilateral. The logic of such approach is clear, as the decision on allocation of bilateral aid is made directly by the donor country and does not bypass multilateral agencies' mechanism of allocation, therefore allows more control over the aid and more opportunity to utilize the aid for the benefits of the donor. Figure 1 and Figure 2 below show the share of multilateral and bilateral aid of the US and the UK during the period of 2010-2019 (OECD (n.d.)). Both countries are traditional donors and have been noticed using aid for strategic purposes as was already discussed in the introduction part of the paper. This period is chosen to facilitate the comparison with Russian aid data. During the period under examination, the share of the US bilateral aid fluctuated from 83% to 89%, while the UK bilateral aid from 58% to 69%.

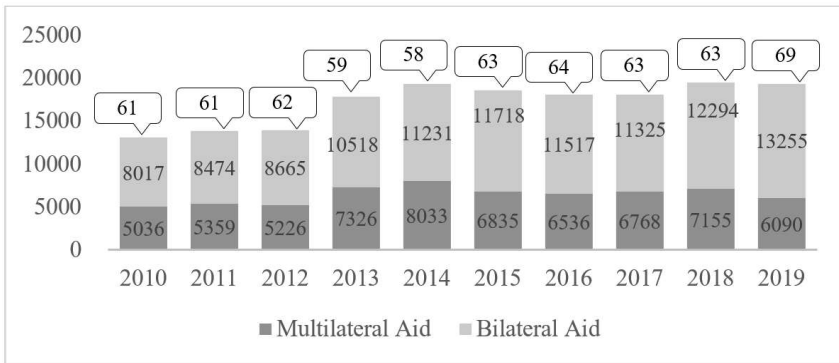
(Figure 1) US Multilateral and Bilateral Aid in Million USD, 2010–2019



* Source: (OECD n.d.)

** Notes: ratio in % is calculated for bilateral aid.

(Figure 2) UK Multilateral and Bilateral Aid in Million USD, 2010–2019



* Source: (OECD n.d.)

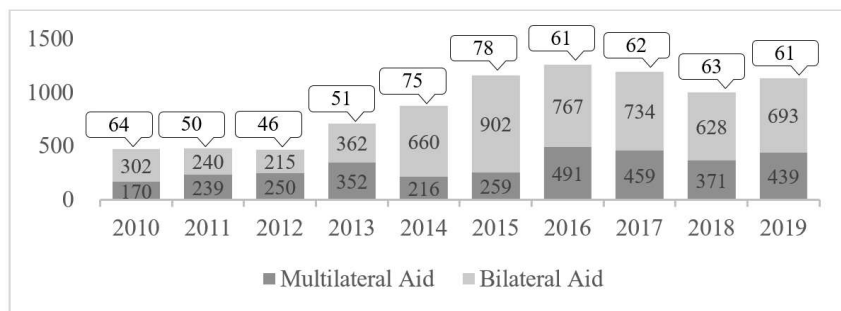
** Notes: ratio in % is calculated for bilateral aid.

The significance of bilateral aid is especially high in the cases when the donor country does not have sufficient influence on decision-making regarding allocation and lacks voting power in the agency. Russia explicitly emphasizes that bilateral aid has more political impact than multilateral aid provided via World Bank or IMF. This was stated by the chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Federation Council Konstantin Kosachev (Kosachev 2017). Senator Kosachev mentioned that multilateral aid has “*philanthropic and impersonal nature because it is*

mediated by such international organizations as the World Bank and the IMF.” According to Kosachev, the donor country carries significant costs and, in the end, there is no political impact. Russian worries about the multilateral aid are not groundless. Scholars found empirical evidence that major shareholders in the World Bank and the IMF have influence over the loans’ allocation. Thacker (1999) argued that politics affects the lending patterns of the IMF and found that political realignment towards the United States increases the country’s probability of receiving the IMF loan. Similar works have been conducted on the World Bank lending patterns. Russia has only 2.59% of voting shares in the IMF (IMF 2024) and 2.82% of voting shares in the IBRD (World Bank 2024a). Such numbers suggest that Russia is more prone to choose bilateral approach.

As it is shown in the Figure 3, the share of bilateral aid significantly increased in 2014 reaching 75% and peaked in 2015 recording 78%. This is a sharp increase from 46% in 2012, when the share of bilateral aid was even less than multilateral. This change occurred in accordance to the Concept of 2014, in which the bilateral format was set as preferential.

〈Figure 3〉 Russia’s Multilateral and Bilateral Aid in Million USD, 2010–2019



* Source: data from Zaitsev & Knobel (2020).

** Notes: ratio in % is calculated for bilateral aid

The distribution of Russian multilateral aid also underwent significant change, in 2016 the share of funds directed to regional banks increased from 3.1 million of USD in 2015 to 225.5 million USD in 2016 (Table

2). It signified reorientation of Russia to regional scope and activation of participation in Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Eurasian Development Bank (EDB), New Development Bank (NDB, former BRICS Development Bank) and other regional structures. Russia is a member of the AIIB since 2015 and its subscription share is 6.78% (AIIB (n.d.)), a member of the NDB since 2015 with a holding share of 18.98% (NDB (n.d.)), a member of the EDB since 2006 and its investment portfolio share is 44.8% (*Interfax*, 3 July 2023). Even though larger share of Russian aid is directed via bilateral channels, actual distribution of multilateral aid also shows that political interests are considered.

(Table 2) Distribution of Russia's Multilateral Aid in Million USD, 2010–2019

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
UN	75.6	69.4	53.7	73.4	85.8	92.5	146.6	148.2	104.7	222.4	1072.2
World Bank Group	47.0	107.0	128.6	139.2	92.1	138.2	89.9	61.3	16.1	30.9	850.4
WTO						4.8	4.9	5.2	4.5	3.9	23.3
Reg. Banks	15.3	39.9	36.5	3.9	3.7	3.1	225.5	225.1	225.1	222.2	1000.2
Total mult. Aid	170.3	238.6	250.3	351.8	215.6	259.3	490.9	455.8	370.9	534.5	3337.9

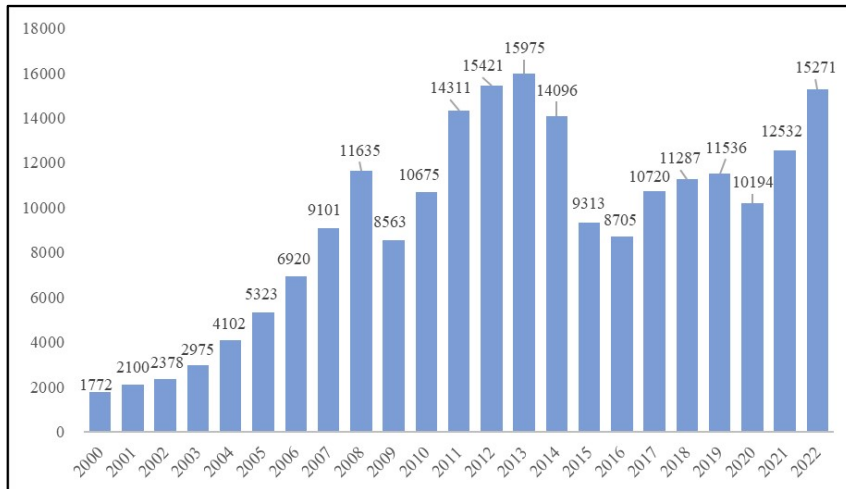
* Source: data from Yermolov (2021).

2. Aid for Eurasian Partners as a Coalition-Building Tool

An overview of economic situation provides a better understanding of the Russian development assistance trends. Its economy was recovering and in the mid-2000s, Russia set course for returning to the status of being a donor. Figure 4 shows the dynamics of Russia's GDP from 2000 to 2022 (World Bank 2024b). It coincides with the time when Russia was

taking steps to join both the WTO and the OECD. Russia was eager to show that it is a responsible international actor and Western powers in its turn also actively supported Russia's intentions. It was considered that involvement of Russia into global cooperation and international organizations would lead to democratization and economic transition in Russia, and therefore mitigate tensions.

〈Figure 4〉 Russia's GDP per Capita in Current USD, 2000–2022



* Source: World Bank (2024b)

From early 2000s there was also a shift observed in Russian foreign policy towards regional integration. As the CIS was not bringing expected integration outcomes and was rather a loose form of regional organization, Russia along with few other former Soviet states initiated the creation of the Eurasian Economic Community in 2001. In 2010 Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus formed a Customs Union with Armenia and Kyrgyzstan joining in 2015. In 2015, the Eurasian Economic Community was transformed into the Eurasian Economic Union. Integration processes added extra stimulus for Russia to contribute more to the development assistance.

However, the early 2000s brought challenges for Russia's Eurasian integration process efforts. Bartenev and Glazunova (2014) argued that the

Revolution of Roses in Georgia in 2003, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004, the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 hurt Russia's national security interests. However, it is important to point out that these revolutions laid the grounds for democratization in these countries. Anti-Russian moods and West-oriented policies were gaining support within the population of neighboring countries. In Russia's perception, such movements were regarded first, as a threat to Russia's influence over the region, second, were undermining Russia's national interests, and third, were raising the probability of unrest in Russia as well. Appropriateness of development assistance, including debt relief, as a tool of foreign policy got into focus of Russian government. As it is shown in Table 3, former Soviet Union (SU) members⁶⁾, including participants of Russia-led integration processes such as the CIS (8 former SU members)⁷⁾ and the EEU (4 former SU members)⁸⁾, received substantial share of total bilateral aid. Notably, share of bilateral aid provided to former SU members increased to 36% in 2014 and 43% in 2015. Russia's concept of 2014, prioritizing bilateral aid and assistance to the CIS members was adopted right after the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine in 2014. It is possible to assume that such a step was related to Ukraine's fight for democracy, which changed the course of Ukrainian history away from Russia and could serve as a catalyst of democratization in the region. The full list of recipients of Russian assistance is provided in the Appendix 1.

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- 6) Former Soviet Union members and recipients of Russian aid: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan; Estonia and Lithuania are the OECD DAC members; Latvia is a non-DAC donor country; information on aid to Georgia is not available, however, considering Russia's aggression against Georgia, it is unlikely to expect aid flows to the country; data on assistance to Ukraine since 2014 should also be viewed with scrutiny. It potentially can be an assistance provided to Russia-controlled self-proclaimed republics in the East of Ukraine.
- 7) CIS members: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- 8) EEU members: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia.

〈Table 3〉 Russia's Aid to Former Soviet Union Countries in Million USD (2012–2018)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total bilateral Aid	214.71	361.85	660.29	902.14	762.06	733.77	617.94
Aid to former SU	64.97	102.08	239.71	397.57	263.29	174.74	95.51
Aid to former SU (%)	30	28	36	43	34	23	16

* Source: data from Zaitsev & Knobel (2019).

3. ODA in Exchange for Support on the International Stage

Case 1. Russia's Aid and UNGA Vote on "Territorial Integrity of Ukraine"

As it was shown in the previous section, Russia's bilateral aid was largely provided to EEU and CIS members. However, as the data in Appendix 1 shows, Cuba, DPRK, Syria, Serbia, and Nicaragua were also among recipients of large amounts of Russian aid. In addition, among the recipients there were also countries that do not share borders with Russia, and do not have any economic or political ties, such as Nauru, Tuvalu, and others. If the support for the CIS states has solid grounds, the Russian motivation to provide aid to other countries needs to be explored.

Few countries that are recipients of the Russian assistance sided with Russia in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) during the vote in March 2014 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine⁹⁾. This vote was particularly important, because it tested who shared Russia's view on the "revision of borders." Within the course of the Revolution of Dignity, Russia utilized the political crisis in Ukraine, backed separatist movement in the Eastern part of the country (areas of Donetsk and Luhansk region) and annexed the Crimean Peninsula and Sevastopol City. In 2014 the UNGA

9) The Revolution of Dignity broke out in Ukraine in November 2013 when President of Ukraine refused to sign the economic association agreement with the EU and instead considered strengthening ties with Russia and integrating Ukraine into Russia-led Eurasian initiatives. President's betrayal of people, public anger over corruption and human rights abuses in the country, and use of violence against peaceful protestors led to mass protests calling for removal of pro-Russian President and reorientation of foreign policy towards the EU.

“affirmed its commitment to Ukraine’s sovereignty, political independence, unity and territorial integrity” by adopting a resolution on the “territorial integrity of Ukraine” (United Nations 2014a). 100 states voted in favour, 11 against and 58 abstained. Among the countries that voted against the resolution together with Russia were Armenia, Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, DPRK, Nicaragua, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe (United Nations 2014b).

Some countries have historically strong relations with Russia. However, these countries were also among those who received assistance from Russia in the form of humanitarian aid, technical and military assistance, or debt relief. As it is shown in the Table 4 below, Armenia, Belarus, and Cuba received larger assistance transfers in 2014 (year of the vote) and 2015 (year after the vote) compared to the years before the vote. The amount of aid to DPRK increased in 2014 and reduced in 2015, however still recorded higher numbers than in the years before 2014. As for Nicaragua, the amount dropped, but the country remained among the recipients of significant amounts of Russian aid. Official bilateral aid data does not reflect the Russia-Nicaragua relations fully. It is important also to take into consideration, that in 2004 Russia wrote off 344 million USD of Nicaragua debts, in addition to relief of 90% of 3.4 billion USD debt in 1999 (*Kommersant*, 26 July 2004). The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs also reported that Russia provided wheat, few hundreds of buses, and cars to the country in the form of assistance in 2012-2014 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (n.d.)).

Aid provided to Sudan and Syria dropped in 2014 and then increased again in 2015. Bolivia received 200,000 USD in 2014, the year when the UNGA Resolution on Ukraine was adopted (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2014). Besides bilateral assistance, Russia provided Bolivia 100 million USD in 2010 for purchasing Russian helicopters (*Lenta*, 3 April 2010) and 300 million USD for the construction of the Nuclear Science and Technology Center in 2016 (Zaytseva 2018).

There is no data on Russia’s official aid flows to Venezuela. However, Venezuela is one of the largest importers of Russian military equipment and is in debt to Russia. For instance, Russia provided 2.2 billion USD in

2010 (*BBC*, 2 April 2010) and 4 billion USD in loans to Venezuela in 2011 for the purchase of Russian military purpose products (Sotov 2011). However, Venezuela could not pay back the loans in 2016 and the return deadline was shifted to 2027. While there is no data on Venezuela's total debt to Russia, Reuters estimated that Russia and Rosneft provided 17 billion USD in loans and credits since 2006 (Parraga & Ulmer 2017). For these reasons, Venezuela is assumed to be a state receiving aid from Russia and is included into the analyses below.

〈Table 4〉 Amount of Russian Aid in Million USD to Countries that Voted Against the UNGA Resolution 68/262

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Armenia	5.79	5.26	5.86 ↑	37.37 ↑	40.33	15.63	17.6
Belarus	0.11	1.47	2.5 ↑	2.97 ↑	2.87	2.25	2.8
Bolivia ¹⁰⁾			0.2 ↑				
Cuba	5.58	2.76	176.98 ↑	351.97 ↑	352	353.83	352.77
DPRK	15.5	33.61	68.42 ↑	59.77 ↓	58.63	57.71	58.13
Nicaragua	10.86	36.4	17.24 ↓	5.56 ↓	12.04	14.01	7.57
Sudan	0.01	2.56	0.05 ↓	1.54 ↑	0.01	1	
Syria	11.17	12.95	7.33 ↓	22.1 ↑	4	20.53	2.33
Venezuela ¹¹⁾							
Zimbabwe ¹²⁾							

* Source: data from Zaitsev & Knobel (2019) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (2014).

- 10) No data on Russia's assistance to Bolivia is available. According to the Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russia provided 200,000 USD in humanitarian aid in 2014. This amount is included in the table (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2014).
- 11) No data on Russia's bilateral assistance to Venezuela is available. It was reported by media that Russia provided 2.2 billion USD in 2009 and 4 billion USD in loans to Venezuela in 2011 for purchase of Russian military purpose products (Sotov 2011; *BBC*, 2 April 2010).
- 12) No data on Russia's bilateral assistance to Zimbabwe is available. However, Zimbabwe received 157 million USD direct investment from Russia in 2014 (Yermolov 2021). In addition, Russia provided 1.5 million USD in 2019 through the World Food Program (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2020).

Russia's bilateral assistance to Zimbabwe is also not reported officially. However, Zimbabwe received 157 million USD direct investment from Russia in 2014 (Yermolov 2021). In addition, Russia provided 1.5 million USD in 2019 through the World Food Program (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2020). Moreover, both countries are under sanctions imposed by the US and allies, which makes them seek more alignment in relations. This is the reason for inclusion of Zimbabwe in below analysis. Table 4 summarizes a list of countries that voted against the resolution and the amount of aid received from Russia during 2012-2018.

To analyze whether aid had an impact on voting behavior of the states, each recipient country is matched with a non-recipient of Russian aid in 2014, which is of a similar economy size, is located in the same geographical region, is having diplomatic relations with Russia¹³), and that voted different than “against,” which is “in favour,” “abstained” or was absent. In this resolution case, vote “against” means siding with Russia. The World Bank country classification by income is used for measuring the size of the economy: low income corresponding to 1,025 USD or less, lower middle income corresponding to 1,026 - 3,995 USD, upper middle income corresponding to 3,996 - 12,375 USD, and high income corresponding to 12,376 USD or more. This study uses data from the calendar year 2018 (World Bank (n.d.)). The classification of regions also comes from the World Bank: East Asia and Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, North America, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. The purpose of the application of this method is to find whether there were countries that did not receive aid and, therefore, did not support Russia.

Through the analysis it was found that there were multiple states that did not receive assistance from Russia in 2014 and voted in favour of the resolution, abstained, or were absent. The detailed results of the analysis are provided in Table 5. In case of Syria and DPRK, there was no other country

13) As of 2018, Russia did not have diplomatic relations with Georgia, Bhutan, and Solomon Islands. As of 2022, Ukraine and Micronesia also severed diplomatic ties with Russia.

in the region with low-income level. For this reason, the pair comes from the lower middle income level countries set. Armenia and Belarus also represent a difficult case to find a pair because states in the region are either members or candidates of the EU (Eastern Europe) or recipients of Russian aid (Central Asia). Besides that, there were also countries that received aid in 2014, however, did not vote against the resolution (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Fiji, Ghana, Guinea, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Serbia, Somalia, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uzbekistan, and Yemen). Nevertheless, it is too early to dismiss the effect of the Russian aid on voting behavior. Many of these countries sided with Russia in other resolutions such as on the situation of human rights and militarization of the Ukrainian territories temporary occupied by Russia, status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia and South Ossetia, withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova¹⁴⁾, and other resolutions related to Russia's invasion of Ukraine (See Appendix 2, Appendix 3, Appendix 4). However, data scarcity is a serious challenge that significantly limits the scope of the analysis. In addition, confounding variables, such as aid from the EU and the US might have affected voting behavior as well. More detailed examination of the case of “abstaining” or being absent can bring new insights on the matter. These questions are left for further research on Russian aid.

〈Table 5〉 Comparative Analysis of Recipients and Non-Recipients of Russia's Aid and Impact of Aid on the UNGA Voting

No.	Recipient in 2014	UNGA Vote	Income	Non-recipient in 2014	UNGA Vote	Income
1	Armenia (Europe and Central Asia)	Against	Upper middle income	Albania (EU candidate) Bosnia and Herzegovina ¹⁵⁾ Bulgaria (EU) Montenegro (EU candidate) North Macedonia (EU candidate) Romania (EU) Turkey (EU candidate, donor) ¹⁶⁾ Turkmenistan (<i>aid in 2015</i>)	Other	Upper middle income

14) In this context foreign military forces are Russian forces.

No.	Recipient in 2014	UNGA Vote	Income	Non-recipient in 2014	UNGA Vote	Income
2	Belarus (Europe and Central Asia)	Against	Upper middle income	Albania (EU candidate) Bosnia and Herzegovina Bulgaria (EU) Montenegro (EU candidate) North Macedonia Romania (EU) Turkey (EU candidate, donor) Turkmenistan (<i>aid in 2015</i>)	Other	Upper middle income
3	Bolivia (Latin America and the Caribbean)	Against	Lower middle income	El Salvador Honduras	Other	Lower middle income
4	Cuba (Latin America and the Caribbean)	Against	Upper middle income	Argentina Belize Brazil Colombia Costa Rica Dominica Dominican Republic Ecuador Grenada Guatemala Guyana Jamaica Mexico Paraguay Peru St. Lucia St. Vincent and the Grenadines Suriname	Other	Upper middle income
5	Nicaragua (Latin America and the Caribbean)	Against	Lower middle income	El Salvador Honduras	Other	Lower-middle income

15) Bosnia and Herzegovina became the EU candidate in 2022.

16) Turkey is both recipient and donor country and is excluded from the matching pair.

No.	Recipient in 2014	UNGA Vote	Income	Non-recipient in 2014	UNGA Vote	Income
6	DPRK (East Asia and Pacific)	Against	Low income	Cambodia Indonesia Kiribati Laos Micronesia Mongolia (<i>aid in 2015</i>) Papua New Guinea Philippines Timor-Leste Vanuatu ¹⁷⁾ Vietnam (<i>aid in 2015</i>)	Other	Lower middle income ¹⁸⁾
7	Sudan (Sub-Saharan Africa)	Against	Lower middle income	Angola (<i>aid in 2015</i>) Cabo Verde Cameroon Comoros Congo, Rep. Côte d'Ivoire Eswatini Lesotho Mauritania Nigeria São Tomé and Príncipe Senegal Zambia ¹⁹⁾	Other	Lower middle income
8	Syria (Middle East and North Africa)	Against	Low income	Djibouti Egypt (<i>aid in 2015</i>)	Other	Lower middle income ²⁰⁾

17) RNZ mentioned that Russia offered Vanuatu 50 million USD in 2010 (RNZ, 18 March 2013).

18) There is no other low-income country in the region.

19) Zambia received 0.5 million in 2012 and 2.5 in 2013 according to Yermolov (2021).

20) There is no other low-income country in the region.

No.	Recipient in 2014	UNGA Vote	Income	Non-recipient in 2014	UNGA Vote	Income
9	Venezuela (Latin America and the Caribbean)	Against	Upper middle income	Argentina Belize Brazil Colombia Costa Rica Dominica Dominican Republic Ecuador Grenada Guatemala Guyana Jamaica Mexico Paraguay Peru St. Lucia St. Vincent Suriname	Other	Upper middle Income
10	Zimbabwe (Sub-Saharan Africa)	Against	Lower middle income	Angola (aid in 2015) Cabo Verde Cameroon Comoros Congo, Rep. Côte d'Ivoire Eswatini Lesotho Mauritania Nigeria São Tomé and Príncipe Senegal Zambia	Other	Lower middle income

In conclusion, all countries that received Russian aid in one or another form in 2014 were the countries that sided with Russia in the UNGA vote on territorial integrity of Ukraine. Comparative analysis of recipients and non-recipients of Russian aid were conducted to see whether aid

influenced the voting behavior. At least in 8 out of 10 explored cases (No. 6 and No. 8 excluded for not meeting the income condition) there is a country that matches all the comparison criteria identified (same region, same income level, diplomatic relations with Russia, and no aid). In other words, countries that did not receive Russian aid also did not support Russia during the vote. Such results support the main argument of the study that Russian aid is used for political purposes. This study focused on a single resolution. Further studies can be conducted utilizing other resolutions on Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova.

Case 2. Russia's Aid and Recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia

Among recipients of Russian aid are such countries as Nauru, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, which do not have strong economic and political ties with Russia. However, it has been noted by media that Nauru, Vanuatu, Tuvalu recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia, breakaway regions recognized only by Russia and few other states, but internationally considered part of Georgia. As it has been mentioned previously, Russia emphasized these two regions in its Concept of State Policy in the Field of International Development Assistance adopted in 2014. Russia was the first country to recognize independence of the Abkhazia and South Ossetia and established diplomatic relations in 2008 in the aftermath of the 2008 Russo-Georgian War.

The question is what has motivated the states to recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, when the majority of UN member are not recognizing them. Among the states that recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia were Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Syria, Nauru, Vanuatu, Tuvalu. However, Vanuatu and Tuvalu withdrew its recognition in 2013 and 2014 respectively. As it is shown in the Table 6, all states that recognized independence of breakaway regions received Russia's aid in different periods of time from 2010 to 2018.

(Table 6) Countries Recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia and Russian Assistance in Million USD, 2010–2018

Recipient	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Year of Rec.	W. of Rec.
Nauru ²¹⁾ (Rec. of A. and S.O.)	10(50)		4.6		0,5					2009	
Nicaragua (Rec. of A. and S.O.)			10.86	36.4	17.24	5.56	12.04	14.01	7.57	2008	
Syria (Rec. of A. and S.O.)			11.17	12.95	7.33	22.1	4	20.53	2.33	2018	
Tuvalu ²²⁾ (Rec. of A. and S.O.)	3			0,06						2011	2014
Vanuatu ²³⁾ (Rec. of A.)	50(?)									2011	2013
Venezuela ²⁴⁾ (Rec. of A. and S.O.)	2200		2000		2000					2009	

* Source: Nicaragua and Syria data from Zaitsev & Knobel (2019).

** Notes: Rec. of A.: recognition of Abkhazia; Rec. of A. and S.O.: recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia; Year of Rec.: year of the recognition; W. of Rec.: withdrawal of recognition.

- 21) Nauru received 10 million USD in 2010 from Russia according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (2022b). However, according to other sources, the amount was 50 million USD (*BBC*, 16 December 2009). 4.6 million USD were provided in 2012 and 0.5 million USD in 2014.
- 22) In 2011 Russia provided the aid in the amount of 3 million USD to Tuvalu via the International Civil Defence Organization. In 2013 Russia provided 60,000 USD to Tuvalu in the form of financial humanitarian aid according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (2022c)
- 23) RNZ citing Vanuatu official mentioned that Russia offered Vanuatu 50 million USD in 2010 (*RNZ*, 18 March 2013).
- 24) While there is no official data on Russia's assistance to Venezuela, it is known that Russia provided 2.2 billion to Venezuela in 2010 (*BBC*, 2 April 2010), and 4 billion in loans according to the agreement of 2011 for purchase of Russian military purpose products (Sotov 2011).

Few scholars already assumed that Russia is engaged in checkbook diplomacy via foreign aid (Asmus et al. 2018). However, available data is too scarce to find solid evidence to the claim and it is also unlikely that Russia would openly report the data in such situations. Besides official bilateral aid, Russia provided loans for purchase of Russian military purpose products. For example, Venezuela is the largest importer of Russian military equipment and is receiving debt restructuring. As the data shows, Nauru and Tuvalu received aid from Russia around the year of recognition of both breakaway regions. However, there is no official record whether Russia indeed provided the money to Vanuatu. The absence of the money transfer might explain the withdrawal of recognition of Abkhazia few years later. Syria received around 21 million USD assistance in 2017, the year before the recognition. While in 2016 the amount of aid was only 4 million USD. Nicaragua recognized the independence of both regions in 2008, however no data around that period is available. Such preliminary review of Russian aid flows to countries recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia provides only partial support of the assumption.

The recognition of the breakaway regions is not the only favor that might be negotiated in exchange for aid. The United Nations General Assembly has passed 16 resolutions on the “Status of internally displaced persons (IDP) and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia” from 2008 to 2023. These resolutions reaffirm the right of IDPs and refugees to return to their home regions of Georgia. While Russia has strategic interest in the regions, it insists on independence of the regions and therefore voted against the resolutions. Nauru, for instance, voted along with Russia from 2010 and 2019, skipping the vote only once in 2011. It is not difficult to find other recipients of Russia’s aid in the list of countries that voted against the resolutions. Full information on the UNGA Resolutions on Georgia is presented in Appendix 2.

VI. Conclusion

The 2000s brought new actors to the field of development assistance and many scholars concentrated on China and Middle East countries. Russia also took steps to regain its position as a donor. Russia went through the way from the “donor” during the Soviet era to the “recipient” after the collapse of Soviet Union and strived to return to the stage of donors since the mid-2000s. This study focuses on motivations of Russian foreign aid and provides empirical evidence to the argument that Russian development assistance is politically motivated. However, due to the data limitations some assumptions are supported only partially and require further investigation.

First, it was found that Russia reoriented its foreign aid toward the bilateral format, because the political impact of this approach is more tangible. The share of bilateral aid peaked in 2015 reaching 78%, right after Russia announced the Concept of State Policy in the Field of International Development Assistance in 2014, in which the bilateral format was stated as the preferred. The examination of actual distribution of multilateral aid also showed that the share of funds directed towards regional banks increased dramatically, signaling increased interest in regional organizations related to integration initiatives, which Russia can influence. Second, significant amount of aid throughout the examined period was directed to former Soviet Union countries, and particularly to CIS and EEU members. It is important to point out that it was the time after the Revolution of Dignity occurred in Ukraine. For Russia, it was important to keep neighbors in the orbit of its influence utilizing the means of aid. For this reason, the aid allocation was dictated by Russia’s Eurasian initiatives. Third, Russian aid has been used as a tool to ensure support on the international stage on critical issues against Russia. For instance, the countries that received assistance from Russia were also in the list of those that voted against the UNGA resolution No. 68/262 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine in 2014, that was in line with Russian

position. Many of recipients of Russian assistance were also consistent with Russia during the vote on other Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova related resolutions. However, more detailed examination of this matter is required. This study also attempted to make the connection between Russian aid flows and recognition of regions of Russian interest, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Data scarcity indeed represented a challenge, however, using data reported by media, Russian government and research organizations, the current study finds partial support of the argument. These results do not necessarily suggest that assistance directly leads to political alignment. The results highlight that Russian aid allocation is politically motivated and political motivation is tied to key Russian foreign policy issues.

The latest amendment to the Russian Concept of State Policy in the Field of International Development Assistance clearly states that Russia refuses to impose political conditions for assistance. Such policy change and the evidence provided in this research show that Russian aid is motivated by self-interests. Even though Russian aid is an extreme case, the findings of this article are consistent with the existing literature showing that aid of emerging donors is strategically motivated.

Furthermore, right after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Russian government published the list of friendly and unfriendly countries (*TASS*, 7 March 2022). From Russian perspective, unfriendly countries are those that impose sanctions against Russia. This list may also serve as a future basis for Russian allocation of foreign aid with its efficiency being evaluated by measuring how well the aid serves the interest of the donor, rather than the needs of the recipient.

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(Appendix 1) Recipients of Russian Development Assistance (2012–2018)

No.	Country	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
1	Afghanistan	0.45	0	4.95	2.56	0.04	0.04	1.01	9.05
2	Angola	0.28			0.06	6.37		0.37	7.08
3	Armenia	5.79	5.26	5.86	37.37	40.33	15.63	17.6	127.84
4	Azerbaijan	1.73		0.48	0.01	0.05	2.49	0.69	5.45
5	Bangladesh	0.1						1.35	1.45
6	Belarus	0.11	1.47	2.5	2.97	2.87	2.25	2.8	14.97
7	Brazil	0.01						0.37	0.38
8	Burkina Faso	0.1						0.98	1.08
9	Burundi	0.14					0.04		0.18
10	Cambodia	0.09				0.15	0.37	0.37	0.98
11	Chad	0.09						0.98	1.07
12	Congo	0.28			1.21		1	1.97	4.46
13	Cuba	5.58	2.76	176.98	351.97	352	353.83	352.77	1595.89
14	DPRK	15.5	33.61	68.42	59.77	58.63	57.71	58.13	351.77
15	Egypt	0.07			0.78		0.03		0.88
16	Ethiopia	0.04	2.08		0.21	1.81		0.41	4.55
17	Fiji			0.13		0.02	0.01		0.16
18	Ghana	0.19		2.37				0.37	2.93
19	Guinea	0.97		16.79	6.25	6.32	3.72	3.8	37.85
20	India	0.06	0.01			0.38	0.46	0.37	1.28
21	Indonesia							0.55	0.55
22	Iran	0.1		1.3	1.3				2.7
23	Iraq	0.41	0.55	1.07	0.23	1.58	1.59	0.18	5.61
24	Jordan	2.6	5.44	3	4.99	0.5	1.67	0.66	18.86
25	Kazakhstan	1.6	0.08	0.55	0.57	0.32	0.48	1.36	4.96
26	Kenia	2.88	2.19	2			1		8.07
27	Kiribati						0.01		0.01
28	Kyrgyzstan	36.92	76.73	202.87	322.81	198.81	129.81	59.54	1027.49
29	Laos	0.23					0.17	1.51	1.91
30	Madagascar	0.06				9.89	8.89	8.75	27.59
31	Marshall Islands						0.01		0.01
32	Moldova	0.64	0.39		0.78	1.53		0.37	3.71
33	Mongolia	7.92	0.01		0.23	0.21	1.16	1.4	10.93
34	Morocco	0.08	1.98	1.5	0.6		4.16		8.32

35	Mozambique	0.09	13.05	8	8	8	8	7.87	53.01	
36	Myanmar			0.05	0.08			0.17	0.04	0.34
37	Namibia	0.09	0.46		0.06		1.5			2.11
38	Nepal	0.18					0.2	0.25		0.63
39	Nicaragua	10.86	36.4	17.24	5.56	12.04	14.01	7.57		103.68
40	Palau							0.01		0.01
41	Peru							0.4		0.4
42	Serbia	9.49	36.47	16.21	11.25	11.7	6.87	7.19		99.18
43	Somalia	2.04	1	1		1	1	1.97		8.01
44	Sudan	0.01	2.56	0.05	1.54	0.01	1			5.17
45	Suriname							0.02		0.02
46	Syria	11.17	12.95	7.33	22.1	4	20.53	2.33		80.41
47	Tajikistan	15.21	17.12	19.48	21.76	13.66	16.1	11.48		114.81
48	Tanzania	0.07	3.37	1.37	1.37	1.37	1.37	1.35		10.27
49	Tonga							0.01		0.01
50	Tunisia	0.04	1.98	1.65	1.12		5.66			10.45
51	Turkmenistan	0.9			0.78	0.05		0.42		2.15
52	Ukraine ²⁵⁾	1.15	0.69	6.82		5.62	5			19.28
53	Uzbekistan	0.92	0.34	1.15	0.52	0.05	2.98	2.25		8.21
54	Vietnam	2.56	0.4		0.16	0.2	6.93	3.33		13.58
55	Yemen	1.5		0.36	2.36		1	1.97		7.19
	Other countries	13.74	5.82	27.65	20.02	16.97	60.42	46.9		191.52
	Total bilateral aid	214.71	361.85	660.29	902.14	762.06	733.77	617.94		4252.76

* Source: data from Zaitsev & Knobel (2019)

** Notes: in million USD.

25) Data on assistance to Ukraine since 2014 should be viewed with scrutiny. It potentially can be an assistance provided to Russia-controlled self-proclaimed republics in the East of Ukraine.

〈Appendix 2〉 UNGA Resolutions Related to Georgia and Votes Against (2008–2023)

No.	Res. No.	Year	Resolution Content	Countries that Voted Against	N*
1	62/249	2008.04.15	Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia	<u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , DPRK, India, Iran, Myanmar, <u>Russia</u> , Serbia, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela.	11
2	63/307	2009.09.09	Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia	Algeria, <u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Bolivia, Cuba, DPRK, Ecuador, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Laos, Myanmar, Nicaragua, <u>Russia</u> , Sri Lanka, Syria, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe	19
3	64/296	2010.09.07	Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia	<u>Armenia</u> , Cuba, DPRK, Laos, Myanmar, <u>Nauru</u> , Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, <u>Russia</u> , Serbia, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe	17
4	65/287	2011.06.29	Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia	<u>Armenia</u> , Cuba, DPRK, Laos, Myanmar, Nicaragua, <u>Russia</u> , Serbia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Vietnam	13
5	66/283	2012.07.03	Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia	<u>Armenia</u> , Cuba, DPRK, Laos, Myanmar, <u>Nauru</u> , Nicaragua, <u>Russia</u> , Serbia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe	15
6	67/268	2013.06.13	Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia	<u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Cuba, DPRK, Laos, Myanmar, <u>Nauru</u> , Nicaragua, <u>Russia</u> , Serbia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe	16
7	68/274	2014.06.05	Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia	<u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Cuba, DPRK, Laos, Myanmar, <u>Nauru</u> , Nicaragua, <u>Russia</u> , Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Vietnam	13
8	69/286	2015.06.03	Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia	<u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Burundi, Cuba, DPRK, Laos, Maldives, Myanmar, <u>Nauru</u> , Nicaragua, <u>Russia</u> , Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe	16

9	70/ 265	2016. 06.07	Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia	<u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Burundi, Cuba, DPRK, Laos, <u>Nauru</u> , Nicaragua, <u>Russia</u> , South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe	15
10	71/ 290	2017. 06.01	Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia	<u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Burundi, Cuba, Laos, <u>Nauru</u> , Nicaragua, Philippines, <u>Russia</u> , South Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe	14
11	72/ 280	2018. 06.12	Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia	<u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Burundi, Cuba, DPRK, Laos, Myanmar, <u>Nauru</u> , Nicaragua, Philippines, <u>Russia</u> , South Sudan, Sudan, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe	16
12	73/ 298	2019. 06.04	Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia	<u>Belarus</u> , Burundi, Comoros, Cuba, DPRK, Laos, Myanmar, <u>Nauru</u> , Nicaragua, <u>Russia</u> , Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe	15
13	74/ 300	2020. 09.03	Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia	<u>Belarus</u> , Burundi, Cuba, DPRK, Laos, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Philippines, <u>Russia</u> , Sudan, Syria, Vietnam, Zimbabwe	13
14	75/ 285	2021.06 .16	Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia	<u>Belarus</u> , Burundi, Comoros, Cuba, DPRK, Laos, Nicaragua, <u>Russia</u> , Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe	14
15	76/ 267	2022. 06.08	Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia	<u>Belarus</u> , Burundi, China, Cuba, DPRK, Laos, Nicaragua, <u>Russia</u> , Sudan, Syria, Vietnam, Zimbabwe	12
16	77/ 293	2023. 06.07	Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia	<u>Belarus</u> , Burundi, Cuba, DPRK, Nicaragua, <u>Russia</u> , Sudan, Syria, Zimbabwe	9

* Source: United Nations Digital Library (n.d.a) Voting Data, Georgia.

** Note: former Soviet Union countries underlined, N: number of votes against.

(Appendix 3) UNGA Resolution Related to Moldova and Votes Against (2018)

No.	Res. No.	Year	Resolution Content	Countries that Voted Against	N
1	72/282	2018.06.22	Withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova	Armenia, <u>Belarus</u> , Bolivia, Burundi, Cuba, DPRK, Iran, Myanmar, Nicaragua, <u>Russia</u> , South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Zimbabwe	15

* Source: United Nations Digital Library (n.d.b) Voting Data, Moldova.

** Notes: former Soviet Union countries underlined

(Appendix 4) UNGA Resolutions Related to Ukraine and Votes Against (2014–2023)

No.	Res. No.	Year	Resolution Content	Countries that Voted Against	N
1	262	2014.03.27		<u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Bolivia, Cuba, DPRK, Nicaragua, <u>Russia</u> , Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Zimbabwe	11
2	71/205	2016.12.19	Situation of human rights of Crimea and Sevastopol	Angola, <u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Bolivia, Burundi, Cambodia, China, Comoros, Cuba, DPRK, Eritrea, India, Iran, <u>Kazakhstan</u> , Nicaragua, Philippines, <u>Russia</u> , Serbia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Zimbabwe	26
3	72/190	2017.12.19	Situation of human rights of Crimea and Sevastopol	<u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Bolivia, Burundi, Cambodia, China, Cuba, DPRK, Eritrea, India, Iran, <u>Kazakhstan</u> , <u>Kyrgyzstan</u> , Myanmar, Nicaragua, Philippines, <u>Russia</u> , Serbia, South Africa, Sudan, Syria, <u>Tajikistan</u> , Uganda, <u>Uzbekistan</u> , Venezuela, Zimbabwe	26
4	73/194	2018.12.17	Problem of the militarization of Crimea and Sevastopol	<u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Bolivia, Burundi, Cambodia, Cuba, DPRK, Iran, Laos, Myanmar, Nicaragua, <u>Russia</u> , Serbia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, <u>Uzbekistan</u> , Venezuela, Zimbabwe	19

5	73/ 263	2018. 12.22	Situation of human rights in Crimea and Sevastopol	<u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Bolivia, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, China, Comoros, Cuba, DPRK, Eritrea, India, Iran, <u>Kazakhstan</u> , <u>Kyrgyzstan</u> , Myanmar, Nicaragua, <u>Russia</u> , Serbia, South Africa, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Uganda, <u>Uzbekistan</u> , Venezuela, Zimbabwe	27
6	74/ 17	2019. 12.09	Problem of the militarization of Crimea and Sevastopol	19: <u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Burundi, Cambodia, China, Cuba, DPRK, Iran, <u>Kyrgyzstan</u> , Laos, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Philippines, <u>Russia</u> , Serbia, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Zimbabwe	19
7	74/ 168	2019. 12.18	Situation of human rights in Crimea and Sevastopol	<u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Burundi, Cambodia, China, Cuba, DPRK, Eritrea, Guinea, India, Iran, <u>Kazakhstan</u> , <u>Kyrgyzstan</u> , Myanmar, Nicaragua, Philippines, <u>Russia</u> , Serbia, Sudan, Syria, Uganda, Venezuela, Zimbabwe	23
8	75/ 29	2020. 12.07	Problem of the militarization of Crimea and Sevastopol	<u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Cambodia, China, Cuba, DPRK, Iran, <u>Kyrgyzstan</u> , Laos, Myanmar, Nicaragua, <u>Russia</u> , Serbia, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Zimbabwe	17
9	75/ 192	2020. 12.16	Situation of human rights in Crimea and Sevastopol	Angola, <u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Burundi, Cambodia, China, Comoros, Cuba, DPRK, Eritrea, India, Iran, <u>Kazakhstan</u> , <u>Kyrgyzstan</u> , Myanmar, Nicaragua, Philippines, <u>Russia</u> , Serbia, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Zimbabwe	23
10	76/ 70	2021. 12.09	Problem of the militarization of Crimea and Sevastopol	<u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , Bolivia, Cambodia, China, Cuba, DPRK, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, <u>Kyrgyzstan</u> , Laos, Mali, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Philippines, <u>Russia</u> , Serbia, Sri Lanka, Syria, Venezuela, Zimbabwe	22

11	76/ 179	2021. 12.16	Situation of human rights in Crimea and Sevastopol	<u>Armenia</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , <u>Burundi</u> , <u>Cambodia</u> , <u>China</u> , <u>Comoros</u> , <u>Cuba</u> , <u>DPRK</u> , <u>Eritrea</u> , <u>Ethiopia</u> , <u>India</u> , <u>Iran</u> , <u>Kazakhstan</u> , <u>Kyrgyzstan</u> , <u>Mali</u> , <u>Nicaragua</u> , <u>Philippines</u> , <u>Russia</u> , <u>Saudi Arabia</u> , <u>Serbia</u> , <u>Sri Lanka</u> , <u>Sudan</u> , <u>Syria</u> , <u>Venezuela</u> , <u>Zimbabwe</u>	25
12	ES- 11/1 ²⁶	2022. 03.02	Aggression against Ukraine	<u>Belarus</u> , <u>DPRK</u> , <u>Eritrea</u> , <u>Russia</u> , <u>Syria</u>	5
13	ES- 11/2	2022. 03.24	Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine	<u>Belarus</u> , <u>DPRK</u> , <u>Eritrea</u> , <u>Russia</u> , <u>Syria</u>	5
14	ES- 11/3	2022. 04.07	Suspension of the rights of membership of the Russian Federation in the Human Rights Council	<u>Algeria</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , <u>Bolivia</u> , <u>Burundi</u> , <u>Central African Republic</u> , <u>China</u> , <u>Congo</u> , <u>Cuba</u> , <u>DPRK</u> , <u>Eritrea</u> , <u>Ethiopia</u> , <u>Gabon</u> , <u>Iran</u> , <u>Kazakhstan</u> , <u>Kyrgyzstan</u> , <u>Laos</u> , <u>Mali</u> , <u>Nicaragua</u> , <u>Russia</u> , <u>Syria</u> , <u>Tajikistan</u> , <u>Uzbekistan</u> , <u>Vietnam</u> , <u>Zimbabwe</u>	24
15	ES- 11/4	2022. 10.12	Territorial integrity of Ukraine	<u>Belarus</u> , <u>DPRK</u> , <u>Nicaragua</u> , <u>Russia</u> , <u>Syria</u>	5
16	ES- 11/5	2022. 11.14	Furtherance of remedy and reparation for aggression against Ukraine	<u>Bahamas</u> , <u>Belarus</u> , <u>Central African Republic</u> , <u>China</u> , <u>Cuba</u> , <u>DPRK</u> , <u>Eritrea</u> , <u>Ethiopia</u> , <u>Iran</u> , <u>Mali</u> , <u>Nicaragua</u> , <u>Russia</u> , <u>Syria</u> , <u>Zimbabwe</u>	14
17	77/ 229	2022. 12.15	Situation of human rights in Crimea and Sevastopol	<u>Belarus</u> , <u>China</u> , <u>Cuba</u> , <u>DPRK</u> , <u>Eritrea</u> , <u>Ethiopia</u> , <u>Iran</u> , <u>Kazakhstan</u> , <u>Mali</u> , <u>Nicaragua</u> , <u>Russia</u> , <u>Sudan</u> , <u>Syria</u> , <u>Zimbabwe</u>	14
18	78/ 221	2023. 12.19	Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine	<u>Belarus</u> , <u>Burundi</u> , <u>China</u> , <u>Cuba</u> , <u>DPRK</u> , <u>Eritrea</u> , <u>Honduras</u> , <u>Iran</u> , <u>Mali</u> , <u>Nicaragua</u> , <u>Niger</u> , <u>Russia</u> , <u>Sudan</u> , <u>Syria</u> , <u>Zimbabwe</u>	15
19	ES- 11/6	2023. 02.23	Comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine	<u>Belarus</u> , <u>DPRK</u> , <u>Eritrea</u> , <u>Mali</u> , <u>Nicaragua</u> , <u>Russia</u> , <u>Syria</u>	7

* Source: United Nations Digital Library (n.d.c) Voting Data, Ukraine.

** Notes: former Soviet Union countries underlined.

26) ES: emergency special session

국문요약

대외원조 공여국으로서의 러시아: 원조를 제공하는 동기

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2000년대 중반에 러시아는 개발도상국에 원조를 제공하는 공여국의 위상을 되찾기 위한 조치를 시작했다. 그러나 러시아의 원조 배분 패턴은 원조를 제공하는 동기가 민주주의 발전을 지향하는 전통적인 공여국과 다르다는 것을 보여준다. 본 연구는 해당 주장을 입증하기 위해 러시아의 원조 동기를 실증적으로 검토하여 러시아 개발 지원이 러시아의 대외정책과 연계된 정치적인 도구로 발전되었다는 것을 보였다. 첫째, 러시아는 원조 제공 방식을 다자간 지원에서 양자간 지원으로 전환했고, 러시아가 주요 역할을 하는 지역 기구에 대한 다자간 원조 비중도 늘려왔다. 둘째, 러시아가 우크라이나 존엄의 혁명의 해인 2014년에 구소련 국가들에 원조 규모를 늘렸음을 보임으로써 원조가 해당 지역에서 러시아의 영향력을 강화하기 위해 사용되었음을 밝혔다. 셋째, 대외 원조의 영향과 관련하여 러시아의 원조 수혜국들은 국제무대에서 러시아의 입장을 더 지지할 가능성이 높음을 알 수 있었다. 공여국으로서의 러시아는 자기 이익에 동기를 부여하는 신흥공여국에 더 가깝다는 것을 보였다.

주제어: 러시아, 대외 원조, 전략적 동기, 정치적 이해관계, 신흥 공여국