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**The interaction between transnational American NGOs operating in Russia and
the U.S. government during the Reset Policy 2009-2014**

by

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Abstract:

The work and impact of NGOs has been widely studied and recognized. However, most of these acknowledgements are based upon perceptions, anecdotal evidence, and on mostly nonscientific assessments of NGOs work and impact. Currently, there is a rise in studies, by scholars studying NGOs and their behavior and interaction with states in the field of international relations, assessing the performances, effectiveness, and ultimate impact of NGOs on international relations and world politics. The best way to measure and establish the impact of the interaction between NGOs and government is by means of case studies. Studying the interaction between American NGOs and the U.S. government during the Reset Policy in Russia teaches us that NGOs can have a positive impact on the Reset Policy by supporting and implementing its democracy and human rights objectives through its activities, information sharing, agenda setting, and policy advice. However, the interaction also has a negative impact on the Reset Policy, which affects its main objective of improving U.S.-Russian bilateral relations. Due to their close interaction with the U.S. government the NGOs were perceived as agents for the U.S. whose goal was to undermine Russian authority and sovereignty. The NGOs lost their objectivity and credibility and the Russian government reacted by implementing NGO-laws to curtail the NGOs' activities. This made it difficult for them to reach their own objectives and the democracy and human rights objectives of the U.S. government's Reset Policy. Even worse, the works of the NGOs and their interaction with the U.S. government in Russia caused the further deterioration of the U.S.-Russian bilateral relations and played a part in the failure of the Reset Policy.

Keywords: NGOs, Reset Policy, U.S.-Russian Relations, U.S. Foreign Policy, Soft Power, Democracy and Human Rights Promotion, Public Diplomacy, NGO-laws, Impact of NGOs, Civil Society, Objectivity and Credibility, Values, Barack Obama, Vladimir Putin, Freedom House, Human Rights Watch, the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.

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Introduction

On May 19, the Russian Duma approved the third and final draft of legislation that criminalizes organizations that it refers to as “undesirable organizations.” If the Federation Council and President endorse this new bill, any foreign or international Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) can be banned from working in Russia. According to the legislation, any undesirable “foreign or international organization that presents a threat to the defensive capabilities or security of the state, to the public order, or to the health of the population,” can be registered as such (The Guardian May 2015). The organizations subsidiaries will be closed, its accounts frozen, and its supervisors and staff can even face civil and criminal penalties. This new legislation gives the Russian government the power to adjudicate NGOs which activities are considered to be “undesirable” (Meduza).

The bill is the latest in a string of measures in the Kremlin’s crackdown on civil society, which followed the widespread opposition protests on Putin’s return to the Russian presidency in March 2012. The Kremlin sees in these protests the hand of Western governments in an attempt to undermine the stability of the Russian Federation. On 26 March 2015, President Putin, in a speech to the FSB, said: “Western special services continue their attempts at using public, nongovernmental and politicized organizations to pursue their own objectives, primarily to discredit the authorities and destabilize the internal situation in Russia. They are already planning their actions for the upcoming election campaigns of 2016-18,” suggesting that the protests in Russia are initiated by NGOs supported by the West. Putin continues and explains: “We are ready for dialogue with the opposition and will continue our partnership with civil society in the broadest sense of the word, but it is pointless entering into a discussion with those who are operating on orders from the outside in the interest of some other country rather than their own” (Nechepurenko).

In an attempt to control the activities of foreign and international NGOs the Duma endorsed the “undesirable organization” bill. The explanation provided by the Kremlin and the approval and signing of legislation curtailing the activities of national and transnational NGOs by the Duma, raises questions on how and why the activities of transnational NGOs influence international relations and world politics.

In the study of international relations, the liberal paradigm recognizes states as important actors in world politics, however, it also sees an important role in

international relations for non-state actors such as NGOs and other international organizations and individuals (Knutsen 253). The work and impact of NGOs, both at the domestic and international levels, has been studied and recognized widely around the world. However, most of these acknowledgements are, according to Dr. Shimami Ahmed, based upon perceptions, anecdotal evidence, and on mostly nonscientific assessments of NGOs work and impact. Currently, there is a rise in studies, by scholars studying NGOs and their behavior and interaction with states in the field of international relations, assessing the performances, effectiveness, and ultimate impact of NGOs on international relations and world politics (Ahmed 2011, 817). This is not an easy task as assessing the impact of NGOs is anything but easy; still, NGO effectiveness has become an inquisitive topic for discussion and research. The best way to assess and study the impact of NGOs is by studying different case studies. By means of these case studies it is possible to show the interaction between NGOs and states and that the activities and works of NGOs have a significant impact on international relations and world politics, which fits the liberal paradigm.

Recent studies, by scholars such as professor Lloyed Hitoshi Mayer and Dr. Shimami Ahmed, studied the impact of NGOs in international relations. Mayer focused in his article “NGO standing and influence in Regional Human Rights Courts and Commission” (2011), on NGOs influencing different regional human rights courts and commissions, such the European Court of Human rights, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Inter-American Human Rights Commission, African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights. He looks at how NGOs attempt to influence these international human rights courts and how successful they are at it. Ahmed studies in his article “The impact of NGOs on International Organizations Complexities and Considerations” (2011), the influence of NGOs on international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the World Bank (WB). According to him the impact of NGOs, whether it is on international organizations, multinational corporations, on development, on environment, or on other areas in which NGOs operate depends on its power; the higher the impact, the higher the political power, and vice versa. If it has access to the different phases of the policymaking process (agenda-setting, decision-making, and implementation) it has the power to influence these.

The purpose of this study is to take a closer look at the interaction between NGOs and state governments and how and by which means this interaction has an impact on state foreign policies and relations. In order to assess the impact of NGOs, this study focuses on the interaction between American democracy and human rights NGOs operating in Russia and the U.S. government and how this relation has had an impact on the U.S. government's Reset Policy with Russia during the period 2009-2014. The Reset Policy, aimed at improving U.S.-Russian bilateral relations, proves to be a relevant case study as it is a good example of how NGOs and the U.S. government are entangled and what the consequences are of this interaction. It also shows how and by what means NGOs can assert influence and have an impact on the development of U.S. government policies. The selected period for the Reset Policy starts with the implementation of the Reset Policy in October 2009 and ends in March 2014 with the annexation of the Crimean peninsula. Although the U.S.-Russian relations had already worsened, the annexation of Crimea destroyed any hope for the improvement of the bilateral relation between the U.S. and Russia in the near future and a successful continuation of the Reset Policy.

The purpose of the first chapter is to provide the framework for the case study. It looks at the different definitions, types, goals and motives of NGOs to establish a definition of an NGO that can be used for this study. Secondly, it takes a closer look at the interaction between NGOs and states. It outlines the different modes of interaction, on an international level, between NGOs and states and explains the different aspects of the different modes. This is in order to develop a model that can be used to analyze the relationship between NGOs and states and see in what ways they can have an impact on the policymaking processes of states.

Chapter two explains the objectives of the U.S. government's foreign policy and its grand strategy abroad. It answers the question why democracy and human rights promotion is such a vital part of the U.S. foreign policy. The second part of the chapter focuses on U.S. democracy and human rights promotion and its relation with soft power, public diplomacy, and NGOs. It shows that democracy and human rights promotion are best promoted through soft power tools such as public diplomacy and that NGOs play an essential role in this.

The first part of chapter three elaborates on the U.S. use of soft power to promote American ideas of democracy and human rights in Russia before and after the Cold War. It also explains how the NGOs and their activities of promoting and

consolidating liberal ideas have been perceived in Russia and how this changed over time. The second part of the chapter focuses on U.S.-Russian relations and why it is important to have good bilateral relations with Russia. However, central will be the Reset Policy and how it evolved over time. At the same time it clarifies the role of democracy and human rights in this policy and why it is so important for the U.S. government in relation to Russia. The chapter also pays attention to the role of NGOs in the Reset Policy. The aim is to show that the Reset Policy is a relevant case study in which the interaction between NGOs and the U.S. government is clearly present.

Chapter four takes a closer look at the interaction between American NGOs operating in Russia and the U.S. government. The different modes of interaction that have been established in chapter one will be used to show how and in what ways the NGOs and the U.S. government interact with one another in Russia at the time of the Reset Policy. The second part of the chapter examines how the different modes of interaction between the NGOs and the U.S. government have a positive and a negative impact on the policymaking process and the Reset Policy.

Chapter 1

NGOs defined

Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) have become influential actors in international relations over the last three decades (Ahmed 2011, 817). NGOs have influenced state foreign policy significantly, especially when the governments' policies are related to their particular field of work. The interaction between NGOs and governments can be easily observed in the world. This chapter looks at the definition of NGOs and takes a deeper look into the nature of the relationship between governments and NGOs. The first part of this chapter, *NGOs as actors*, looks at the different definitions and notions of NGOs, the different types of NGOs, and NGOs goals and motives used by scholars in this field. The second part of this chapter takes a closer look at the interaction between NGOs and states. It shows the different modes of interaction, on an international level, between NGOs and states and explains the different aspects of the different modes. This is necessary in order to be able to analyze the relationship between NGOs and states and see in what ways they can have an impact on the policy making processes of states.

1.1 NGOs as actors

The concept of NGOs can vary widely as there are many ways in which we can define NGOs. Some people define non-state actors such as terrorist groups like Al-Qaida, IS, and Al-Shabab as NGOs as they work independently from the state. Others classify private hospitals and schools as NGOs as they are not a part of the governmental organizational structure and do not get any state support. Then there are also many differences in size, goals, organizational structure, and resources between NGOs that are considered to be the same type of NGO. As there are so many different kinds of NGOs it is important to first get a clear definition of what an NGO is, what kind of NGOs there are, and what their goals and motives are. This first part of Chapter one focuses on the different criteria and categories that define the different NGOs. This part will be subdivided into: the general criteria that define an NGO, the different types of NGOs, and what their goals and motives are. This will lead to a definition of what NGOs are and a list of NGOs whose interaction with the U.S. government will be analyzed in this study.

The definition of NGOs

In order to classify NGOs it is important to first come up with a definition of what an NGO is. NGOs are part of civil society and are referred to as the “third sector” or the “non-profit sector.” The term civil society is used to broadly describe all aspects that extend beyond the realm of the government and “private sector” (Yaziji 3). The term “nongovernmental organization” was first coined by the United Nations, which is an intergovernmental organization, in the 1950s to refer to certain approved, specialized international non-state agencies in order to distinguish them from governments. Through coining this term the UN awarded the observer status to these nongovernmental organizations at its assemblies and some of its meetings. Today, according to the UN, an NGO is a not-for-profit group, principally independent from government, which is organized on a local, national or international level with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring public concerns to governments, monitor policy and program implementation, and encourage participation of civil society stakeholders at the community level (United Nations Rule of Law). Peter Willetts, professor of Global Politics at City University London, sees a variety of organizations that are referred to as an NGO. According to him due to this variety there is no generally accepted definition of an NGO and the term carries different connotations in different circumstances. He does name some fundamental features that define an NGO as such. The most important feature is that an NGO must be independent from the direct control of the government. Other characteristics that he notices are that an NGO will not be constituted as a political party; it will be non-profit-making; and it will not be part of a criminal group, in particular it will be non-violent. He concludes that an NGO is defined as an independent voluntary association of people acting together on a continuous basis, for some common purpose, other than achieving government office, making money or illegal activities (Willetts). Shamina Ahmed, associate professor in the Department of political science and Criminal Justice at the Northern Kentucky University, and David Potter, professor of political science in the Faculty of Policy Studies at Nanzan University, narrow the definition of NGOs further down in their book *NGOs in International Politics* (2006). They agree to the aforementioned aspects of NGOs, however, according to them some groups should be excluded from the definition. According to them the definition of NGOs does not include political parties, religious groups, private hospitals, and schools, which better fit the broader

category of nonprofit organizations. (NPOs). It also excludes organizations such as sports clubs and fraternal organizations because they are not concerned with economic and political development issues. Furthermore, the term is not as broad as the term non-state actor, which is used in international relations. The term non-state actors refers to multinational corporations (MNCs), organized crime groups, international producers cartels, and organizations like the Palestine Liberation Organization that are not states but are not usually understood to be NGOs (Ahmed and Potter 8).

For the purpose of this thesis four of the above mentioned characteristics are used to define a NGO. The NGOs have to be non-profit-seeking, at least organizationally separate from the U.S. government, non-violent, and focus on humanitarian development.

Different types of NGOs

The different types of NGOs can be classified on the basis of different factors such as level of organization, purpose and orientation, and geographical location. One way of classifying NGOs is by their level of organization. According to Willetts there are different levels of organization. In his article "What is a Non-Government Organization," he explains that the classical model of categorization is of a membership organization, coordinated in a geographically defined hierarchy depended on their area of project coverage. These categories are: local, provincial, national, regional, and global NGOs. The NGO projects based on the local level usually only focus on the community while provincial projects cover a wider area of multiple communities. National NGOs cover a whole country and regional and global NGOs cover projects based in more than one country. The later two types of NGOs have been referred to as International NGOs (INGOs) until the early 1990s. The World Bank acknowledges the classifications of NGOs on the basis of their level of organization. However, the World Bank identifies three levels of classification in which the five categories of Willetts fit perfectly:

- Community-based organizations (CBOs) which serve a specific population in a narrow geographic area in individual developing countries;
- National organizations which operate in individual developing countries;
- International organizations - which are typically headquartered in developed countries and carry out operations in more than one developing country

(Greensmith).

Youngwan Kim, assistant professor with a PhD in Political Science at the University of Iowa, identifies geographical location as another point of categorization. He bases his argument on Malyukivska who points out that people perceive NGOs differently depending on where they live. People living in so-called developed countries perceive NGOs as non-profit organizations that they donate money to. These donations will in their turn be used to help people in developing countries. People living in developing countries see NGOs as organizations that they can get benefits from (Kim 14). Internationally there are Northern and Southern NGOs. Northern NGOs (NNGOs) are based in the industrial democracies and Southern NGOs (SNGOs) are based in developing countries (Ahmed and Potter 8). NNGOs are international NGOs that have international operations in developing countries. SNGOs usually indicate organizations that operate locally in developing countries (Kim15).

NGOs can also be categorized by their main purpose. The World Bank distinguishes between NGOs on the grounds of their main purpose. They qualify two types of main purposes, which are operational, and advocacy. The primary purpose of an operational NGO is the design and implementation of relief and or social and economic development-related projects (Ahmed and Potter 40). While relief and development orientations are regarded to be nonpolitical by government and publics, NGOs can also take on a political role. These NGOs are referred to as advocacy NGO and they design and implement development related projects to defend or promote a specific, usually political, cause. As opposed to operational project management, these organizations typically try to raise awareness, acceptance, and spread knowledge by lobbying, publishing, activist events, and agenda Setting (Greensmith; Ahmed and Potter 43).

NGOs' Goals and motives

As there are many different types of NGOs the working goals and motives of NGOs cover almost every area in the field development aid. Because of this it is necessary to give an overview of the different goals and motives of NGOs. According to Nye many nongovernmental organizations claim to act as a “global conscience” representing broad public interests beyond the purview of individual states. Where at first, during most of the twentieth century, these goals were usually identified with

charity and relief this came to change during the course of the century. Although charity and relief still are one of the main objectives of NGOs others have emerged. Ahmed and Potter agree with this view and identify three main objectives of NGOs that include relief, social and economic development, and political roles (Ahmed and Potter 38-54).

Giving charity and relief still remain key goals of NGOs today according to Kim. When due to a natural disasters such as the deadly Indian Ocean Tsunami struck many countries in South-East Asia in 2004, the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, or the Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013, the people were in distress and NGOs were among the first international actors to offer help. The government did not function to improve the situation and the efforts of other nations were limited compared to the efforts performed by NGOs that provided emergency relief (Kim 16).

Although NGOs have been trying to help the world through relief and emergency support they have come to realize that this only addressed the short-term needs but does nothing about long-term issues of development. It is preferred to help communities that have been struck by disaster or conflict to help them in a way that can rehabilitate them in the long run. It is therefore that NGOs establish long-term humanitarian and development projects in order to improve and change countries' social and economic conditions. This can be done through projects related to economic development, education, public health, community development, water sanitation, etc. (Kim 15). Thus social and economic development can be perceived as another goal of NGOs.

Another objective of many NGOs is to influence governments or other actors politically. Relief and development works tend to be perceived as nonpolitical by governments and the public. Many NGOs see their work as specifically technical and therefore not aimed at challenging existing political, economic, or social arrangements beyond their project's' objective. However, these days more and more NGOs are defining their development objectives in political instead of economic terms. Gradually they have become important political actors in international politics advocating policies to states, corporations and IGOs, setting political and social agenda, educating the public and raising consciousness awareness, and monitoring international agreements and national policies. At the public level, they help mobilize support for certain policies, widen participation in international policy, attract attention on important global issues such as human rights and environmental

problems, frame issues, and set policy agenda's. At the individual level NGOs provide information, consciousness-raising education, and resources to individuals to support them in their efforts to improve their lives (Ahmed and Potter 54). Due to all these efforts and the ability of NGOs to influence actors in society for their objectives they very much are an important political actor and governments and the public in many countries have come to work with them in the fields of human rights, environment, foreign aid, and other fields of development.

NGOs defined

The main goal of this research is to look at the interaction between NGOs and state governments and what their impact is on states' foreign policy behavior towards other countries in the field of democracy and human rights promotion. For the purpose of this research, not all the non-state actors that influence international relations will be studied. This research will limit itself to specific categories of NGOs. The general characteristics of NGOs are non-profit, independent, non-violent, and focusing on humanitarian developments. By applying these characteristics, multinational corporations, any organizations that are part of a government's organizational structure, and terrorist or criminal organizations are excluded. In terms of level of organization this study focuses on international NGOs. NGOs that intend to influence foreign policies behaviors in the field of democracy and human rights promotion and act internationally will therefore be the main focus. Geographically the focus will be on northern NGOs and more particular on US-based NGOs as this study hopes to understand how NGOs based in the U.S. try to influence the U.S. government's foreign policy. Fourth, in terms of main purpose and specific goals the focus will be on NGOs whose main purpose is advocacy in the field of democracy and human rights promotion.

Criteria	Categories	NGOs defined
General characteristics	Non-profit-seeking, organizationally separate from government, non-violent, focus on humanitarian development	All included

Level of organization	Local, provincial, national, regional, international	International
Geographical location	NNGOS, SNGOS	NNGOS (U.S. based)
Main purpose	Operational, advocacy	Advocacy
Specific goals	Relief, social and economic, political roles	Political roles (democracy and human rights promotion)

Table 1.1 NGOs defined

To continue this research four NGOs have been selected that comply with the aforementioned characteristics: Freedom House, Human Rights Watch (HRW), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). All four NGOs interact, in one way or another, with the U.S. government and influence its policies in Russia. Some cooperate with the U.S. government through the implementation of programs to strengthen civil society others oppose the U.S. government by being critical of the U.S. policies towards Russia. However, it must be noted that it is hard to come by all the exact information in regards to which NGO has access to the U.S. government or which NGO gets how much funds, etc. For this reason the NGOs and their relation with the U.S. government within the different modes of interaction must be seen complementary to each other in this study; this in order to paint a clear picture of the interaction between the NGOs and the U.S. government. Still, more research is needed.

In 1941, Freedom House has been founded as one of the first American organizations to champion the advancement of freedom around the world. As an advocacy organization it supports and reports on the position of democracy, political freedom, and human rights worldwide (Giannone 73). The organization is well known for its annual Freedom in the World report, which assesses each country's degree of political freedoms and civil liberties. Through its activities, Freedom House speaks out against the main threats to democracy and empowers citizens to exercise their fundamental rights. It analyzes the challenges to freedom; advocate for greater political and civil liberties; and supports non-violent activists that defend human rights and promote democratic change (Freedom House "About").

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has originally been founded under the name Helsinki Watch in New York in 1978. Its main task has been to monitor the former

Soviet Union's compliance with the Helsinki Accords. Today, the organizations' is not only involved in the human rights situation in the former Soviet Union as it has broadened its scope to the world. HRW's main activities are the reporting on and advocacy of the human rights situation worldwide. The organizations' mission statement states: "Human Rights Watch defends the rights of people worldwide. We scrupulously investigate abuses, expose the facts widely, and pressure those with power to respect rights and secure justice. Human Rights Watch is an independent, international organization that works as part of a vibrant movement to uphold human dignity and advance the cause of human rights for all" (Human rights Watch "Our History").

In 1983, the International Republican Institute (IRI) has been established to promote democracy in closed societies around the world (McIntire). The specific areas that IRI's programs focus on are teaching and assisting center-right political party and candidate development, democratic governance practices, development of civil society, civic education, women's and youth leadership development, strengthen electoral process through reforms and monitoring, and support political expression in societies where these rights are under pressure or being violated. The organization's mission statement is to "expand freedom throughout the world" (International Republican Institute "FAQs"; "What we do").

Similar to IRI, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) has been founded in 1983. The organization focuses on increasing and strengthening democratic institutions and supports citizen engagement in politics at the regional and local levels. The specific areas that the organization focuses on are citizen participation, elections, debates, democratic governance, democracy and technology, political inclusion of marginalized groups, and gender, women and democracy. NDI's mission statement is to "support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government" (NDI "About"; "What we do").

These NGOs and their activities and interaction with the U.S. government and its Reset Policy will be analyzed and assessed in chapter four of this study to paint a clear picture on how these NGOs interact with the U.S. government and how they influence U.S. foreign policy. However, not all NGOs will get the same amount of attention during every mode of interaction as some NGOs do not interact on, for

example, opposing bases with the U.S. government or because there is not enough information available to give a good and reliable assessment of the NGOs' activities. The reason why the four aforementioned NGOs have been selected is that they belong to the most important and influential American NGOs operating in Russia during the Reset Policy. For this reason, and in line with Ahmed, the most important NGOs have higher political power and therefore a higher impact on U.S. policies (Ahmed 839).

1.2 Interaction between NGOs and states

In international relations nation-states are usually identified as the main actors. Besides states, international organizations, such as Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), in which nation-states are still the most important actors, are seen as other important actors. This is because realism has been the dominant paradigm in international relations for the last half century, and it is a theoretical approach that is indifferent to non-state actors. Kenneth Waltz, a prominent realist scholar, best exemplifies this in the following statement that the realism approach is indifferent to NGOs as objects of study: "States are not and never have been the only international actors. But then structures are defined not by all the actors that flourish within them but by the major ones" (Waltz 88).

As states are seen as the central actors of international politics, non-state actors have been somewhat neglected. However, as over the last several decades, NGOs, transnational networks and coalitions, experts and epistemic communities, foundations, multinational corporations, multi-stakeholders, and social movements have gained more power, scholars have begun to pay more attention to how non-state actors influence international politics (Kim 21). In international relations theories such as liberalism, where domestic political values help to form foreign policies, and constructivism, which accentuates the role of ideas and identity in the forming of foreign policies, seem to be a better fit (Schmidt 11, 13). In these theories there is more attention for the role of NGOs and on how they influence international politics and civil society through their interactions with one another and with other actors that are transnational and potentially transformative. The NGOs' activities are carried out above and below interstate relations and often with the aim of redefining what is appropriate in the conduct of international and interstate relations (Ahmed and Potter 15). However, it remains important to understand that NGOs operate in a world community that is ordered by states and that they (the states) are the basic actors in

international relations. Thus even though NGOs have gained more power and influence they still have to live and operate within a world system that is established by and for the interests of states, which makes them dependent on the governments of these states (15).

In their relation with states, NGOs can interact with governments in several ways. NGOs can work as complements to governments in a partnership relationship, operate independently as supplements to governments, or engage in an adversarial relationship of mutual accountability with governments. In short, NGOs can be cooperative, supplementary, or opposing to governments and their policies (Young 2000, 149-150). Many NGOs work in cooperation with governments. This means that the NGOs and the government are engaged in a partnership or contractual relationship in which the government provides the finances and the NGOs deliver the services (153). According to Dennis Young, professor at the Department of Public Management and Policy, Nonprofit Studies Program at Georgia State University, state-agencies see NGOs as organizations capable of implementing official policies. NGOs provide social and other services on behalf of states because they enjoy the advantage in terms of flexibility, efficiency, and proximity to target populations. Therefore, NGOs are good partners for governments to outsource the work to help implement and fund social and development programs. The cooperation is beneficial for both parties. NGOs gain advantages because the cooperation gives them access to public funding through state subsidies and grants so they can implement and develop large-scale projects. On top of that, close cooperation with the government provides NGOs with legitimacy for their actions, programs, and projects (Young 153-155). The cooperation can be beneficial to governments for several reasons. Both domestic and foreign publics and governments are sometimes skeptical of other government's intentions and therefore they are mistrusted. Some NGOs enjoy more trust from the public than governments due to two unique characteristics. First of all, NGOs work within the framework of social issues and are considered to be independent from state interests. Therefore, the public may consider information circulated by NGOs to be less biased than information disseminated by states and state-controlled structures. States are sometimes perceived to push an agenda favorable to its own interests at the expense of others. Second, there are issues, such as environmental issues and human rights, which can only be solved on a regional or global scale. Therefore, in setting global policy agendas, NGOs, as transnational actors, are often able to contribute

more effectively than states to efforts surrounding these issues (Risse 268). As NGOs have legitimacy and credibility among foreign publics and governments, they can be useful channels of transnational communication and support for governments and their policies. NGOs can help governments to change the behavior and attitude of a country towards itself, hence, NGOs are considered as a useful tool of public diplomacy (Ahmed and Potter 244-250).

Due to the fact that NGOs enjoy more trust and have more credibility and their policies are viewed as legitimate among foreign publics and governments, they are considered useful tools for governments to reach their national interests (Nye 2008, 105). Furthermore, governments want to use and benefit from the expertise and knowledge of NGOs that are active in the field and can get the government more information on a particular country or region in the world. When NGOs work supplementary to the government they operate independently as a supplement to governments and their policies in a certain region of country. This means that they do not receive any funding or are in any other way part of the government or its policies. However, the NGOs do provide voluntary services from which the government can benefit (Young 151). NGOs can be transnational and they can more easily penetrate states without regard to borders. Also, they often involve citizens who are well placed in domestic politics of several countries. For these reasons NGOs can share valuable information with, for example, the State Department especially when the U.S. has no diplomatic relations with that particular country. NGOs can then help to set up projects and implement policies for the government building support for their country's government in this they can often act independently and with consent from the government as they act as an independent lengthening piece of the government.

There are, of course, some potential problems with the cooperation between NGOs and governments. First of all, there is the fear that a state's government will simply take over the NGO sector and use it carry out public functions that it is unwilling or unable to implement on its own. Michael Barnett agrees to this idea. According to him, due to the fact that NGOs work together with governments, they sometimes forget about their founding principles such as neutrality, independence, impartiality, etc. They start working together with states thereby politicizing their agendas (Barnett 723). By working together with governments, NGOs more effectively obtain their objectives but at the same time this interaction causes them to compromise their basic principles. Ahmed and Potter see a problem with the way

government agencies look at the world and fear that this can affect efforts to facilitate cooperation with NGOs. Government agencies are arranged vertically, which means decisions are taken at the top and will be disseminated down through standardized procedures to the implementation level. NGOs tend to be organized more horizontally, which gives room for bottom-up decision making instead of top-down as is the case with government agencies. It also makes the NGOs more flexible and more adaptive to changing situations and circumstances. According to Ahmed and Potter this difference in operating styles can affect effective cooperation between state agencies and NGOs (Ahmed and Potter 64-65). Furthermore, when NGOs promote objectives closely related or associated with the objectives of a particular government they can lose their objectivity and credibility in the eyes of foreign publics and/or foreign governments. This can affect the NGOs activities and also undermine the bilateral relation between two states.

Obviously, NGOs do not have to cooperate with governments and may choose to oppose them. In certain areas, as for example human rights, states and governments often come into conflict with each other. This is because many non-state actors see for themselves a political role as watchdogs over state policies and actions. By monitoring and criticizing the government NGOs hope to change government policies they oppose. NGOs can oppose the state in several ways. First of all, they can oppose state policies through direct action campaigns. Through these action campaigns NGOs can steer public opinion and educate the public on government policies. These campaigns can get a lot of media coverage, which will reach a large audience and hopefully mobilize public opinion for their cause. A second manner through which NGOs can oppose and undermine governments is when they are more effective at accomplishing results compared to the government. This will affect the states' hegemony and credibility. A third way in which NGOs can undermine state authority is by redefining key international norms that support state sovereignty. States often think that their sovereignty gives them a free hand to treat their citizens in the way they please. According to those states, international actors, like human rights organizations, have no right to interfere with their domestic policies. Human rights organizations have played an important role in the changing of the international laws and in the process of making human rights become universal. This means that human rights NGOs can play an important role in countries where human life and civil rights are threatened (Ahmed and Potter 65).

As models and modes of interaction are fluid and not fixed and sometimes the different modes overlap. Therefore, I want to argue that there are other, very subtle, ways in which NGOs can oppose a government's policy and in which cooperation is an important aspect. NGOs can also oppose government policies, not so much by criticizing state policies, being more effective than the state, or by redefining key international norms but through effective cooperation with the state. As mentioned before the different modes of interaction are fluid and sometimes a mode of cooperation can have an opposing effect. Also, NGOs can be critical of certain policies and oppose these through their policy advices. There still is a form of cooperation but also a clear mode of opposition towards a certain policy or an aspect of a policy.

It is important to keep in mind that the modes of interaction between NGOs and governments, aforementioned, are not exclusive categories. Depending on the circumstances NGOs and governments interact and engage with each other in different ways at different times. The modes are fluid and so is the interaction between NGOs and states.

Chapter 2

U.S. foreign policy, democracy and human rights promotion and NGOs

The purpose of this chapter is to link democracy and human rights NGOs to the U.S. foreign policy motives and objectives in order to show how NGOs can be and are an essential part of the U.S. government's foreign policies. The first part of the chapter explains the U.S. grand strategy abroad and the place of democracy and human rights promotion in this strategy. Also, it takes a look at the question why democracy and human rights promotion has had such a prominent place in U.S. foreign policy throughout the American history. The second part of the chapter focuses on U.S. democracy and human rights promotion and its relation with soft power, public diplomacy, and NGOs. It shows that democracy and human rights promotion are best promoted through soft power tools such as public diplomacy and that NGOs are an important part of the U.S. public diplomacy machine to advance its national interests. However, it must be noted that NGOs, although used by the U.S. government and in that sense a part of U.S. foreign policy, are not a part of the U.S. government organizational structure, nor is it a fixed part of its foreign policy. NGOs have their own agenda and their own policies and in that sense they are "independent." Still, through their activities and interaction with the U.S. government develops and they can become, on a voluntary bases, part of the U.S. government foreign policies and programs.

2.1 U.S. foreign policy and democracy and human rights promotion

Defining U.S. foreign policy and how it is developed is a difficult task. There are many different factors that affect it and many different theories on what shapes U.S. foreign policy. All these different factors and theories make it hard to grasp. Over the years many different theories have been formed around the question on what shapes U.S. foreign policy. To mention a few, scholars that adhere to the liberal paradigm tend to highlight the role of ideology and American values such as democracy and the free market. Others tend to focus more on American self-interest in the form of national security; capitalist investment and trading opportunities; and the pursuit of prestige have given shape to the U.S. foreign policy. While, some scholars stress the American political environment, constructivists tend to put more

emphasis on the importance of the role of American ideas and identity in shaping its foreign policy (Schmidt 14-16, 22).

When it comes to studying U.S. foreign policy, scholars often refer to five so-called pillars that fairly describe the U.S. grand strategy abroad. This grand strategy clearly shows a combination of material interests and cultural interests, which have as main goal to safeguard the U.S. leading position in the world. The most important pillar of the U.S. grand strategy is promoting democracy and building the democratic peace and world community, which have influenced most of the US foreign policy initiatives since the end of the Cold War, especially during the Bush presidency, and ties together the other four pillars of US foreign policy. It shows the importance of democracy and human rights promotion within U.S. foreign policy although at the same time it also proves the idea of American exceptionalism. Which can be perceived as American arrogance as the U.S. promotes its ideas and values abroad as being the best ideas values. The four other pillars of U.S. foreign policy are U.S. national security, maintaining a favorable balance of power among the great powers, punishing rogue actors, and investing in good governance and allied capabilities abroad. All these initiatives together need to avoid outside threats and help to guarantee U.S. national security and other interests, such as business, trade, and economic interests, at home and abroad, which is the essence of U.S. foreign policy (Miller 2012, 7).

Throughout the twentieth century, national security and preventing, or when necessary, defending the American homeland from being under attack has been an important objective of the U.S. (Fukuyama 2014, 260) Currently, the United States faces three principal threats that threaten its homeland security and affect its foreign policy. The biggest threat to the United States is the presence of strong autocratic states armed with nuclear weapons. These days, there are at least five possible threats that either possess nuclear weapons or that have the capabilities of developing a nuclear arsenal. These countries are the Russia, China, North Korea, Iran, and in the future possibly even Pakistan. The second threat are the failed states and rogue non-state actors that operate from them. The third threat Miller points out is the rise of 'global Islamist insurgency,' a term that entails campaigns by violent jihadist militants and terrorists who reject Western influences in 'Muslim lands' and want to overthrow secular governments and replace them with jihadist regimes. In response to these threats the U.S. needs to ensure the physical safety of the American territory and

its citizens. This is the first pillar of U.S. foreign policy. In order to ensure this pillar, the U.S. needs to develop appropriate defensive capabilities, including border-, port-, and cyber-security measures, and missile-defense system. However, protecting the homeland by improving defense capabilities is not enough as there are still many threats looming abroad (Miller 2012, 11).

The second pillar of U.S. foreign policy is to maintain a favorable balance of power to preserve its own independence by checking the power of other states (Schmidt 2008, 12). It is better to manage relations with foreign powers through diplomacy and alliances to counterbalance threats. That is why the U.S. needs to pursue a series of interlocking, reinforcing, and tailor made strategies of balancing and engagement with not only the great (nuclear) powers but also with the smaller countries in the world. The balancing of powers is a necessary and vital objective in U.S. foreign policy, as it helps prevent rival states from acquiring enough power to threaten the United States, its allies or the liberal world order. This foreign-policy objective focuses on preventing alliances between rival states; as such alliances would seriously endanger the United States' national security and interests and also its freedom of action. Secondly, the policy should focus on preventing other great-power rivals or nuclear autocracies from illegitimately expanding their influence through conquest, subversion, or intimidation. To prevent such scenarios from taking place the U.S. and its allies need to align themselves and rely on diplomacy and capable statesman in order to balance against such dangers (Kissinger 361)

Great-power rivalry and traditional state-centric threats are not the only threats that endanger U.S. interests and security. Especially in the Middle East and Africa, new, emerging and unconventional threats from hostile non-state actors operating in weak and failed states (Al-Qaida, IS, and Boko Haram), including pirates (Somalia), and terrorists pose a threat to the U.S. security. However, dangers threatening U.S. interests and security also loom closer to home. Drug and human traffickers, and organized criminal organizations, especially in Colombia and Mexico, are a major concern to the U.S (Nuclear Threat Initiative). The third pillar of U.S. foreign policy is to counter the threats from hostile non-state actors through law-enforcement and military operations. Due to the development of new technology, globalization, and state failure these threats have become more dangerous. New technology developments, such as the Internet and social media, have made it easier for these non-state organizations to communicate and recruit new members. Also, due to the

process of globalization, it has become easier to travel and also obtain weapons and technologies. In states, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, state failure has given organizations such as Al-Qaida and IS the opportunity to operate without impunity and cause terror and mayhem regionally and globally (Miller 2012, 21-24).

The fourth pillar of the U.S. grand strategy is to invest in good participatory governance and allied capabilities in order to address the causes of poverty and state failure and to foster the growth of responsible, accountable and participatory governance (Kissinger 362). This can take place by means of civilian aid and development assistance for states that do not have the financial means to develop such program. But also in the case of states that recovering from conflict, for example Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq, it can also take place in the form of peacekeeping, reconstruction and stabilization operations. By investing in stability, even in regions of marginal strategic importance, can eventually create the opportunity to invest in democracy and help to create a future U.S. friend and ally (U.S. Department of State 2015).

As mentioned earlier, the last and most important pillar of the U.S. grand strategy, which ties together all the other four pillars, is democracy and human rights promotion. Spreading democracy is the overarching goal of U.S. foreign policy efforts to achieve international order and stability (632). By investing in good governance and allied capabilities and helping to set-up democratic governments reduces the danger of non-state insurgencies and hereby it helps to stabilize the country. Furthermore, democratic states share the same ideals and have common interests and are therefore less inclined to fight each other, as they will apply their domestic norms of peaceful dispute resolution. Also, democracies are better at promoting economic development, preventing hunger, protecting the environment etcetera (Lundestad 12). For these reasons it is assumed that the spread of democracy and free markets will create a just, peaceful world (Kissinger 364). This ideal is referred to as the democratic peace theory. Democratically governed states are more likely to secure peace, deter aggression, expand open markets, promote economic development, protect American citizens, combat international terrorism and crime, uphold human and worker rights, avoid humanitarian crises and refugee flows, improve the global environment, and protect human health (Miller 2012, 28-30). By helping countries to develop into democracy, they will be more on the same wavelength as the U.S. than non-democratic countries, hereby, being less threatening

to U.S. national security. In short, democracy promotion helps to create a more secure, stable, and prosperous international arena in which the United States can advance its national interests. According to the U.S. Department of State the U.S. needs to seek to:

- Promote democracy as a means to achieve security, stability, and prosperity for the entire world;
 - Assist newly formed democracies in implementing democratic principles;
 - Assist democracy advocates around the world to establish vibrant democracies in their own countries; and
 - Identify and denounce regimes that deny their citizens the right to choose their leaders in elections that are free, fair, and transparent.
- (U.S. Department of State 2015)

A short history of U.S. democracy and human rights promotion

U.S. democracy and human rights already played an important role during times of the Founding Fathers. They held the idea that America was a unique country, which was based on the ideals of liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, republicanism, democracy, and laissez-faire. Alexis de Tocqueville first coined the idea of the U.S. being an exceptional nation for its democracy in his work *Democracy in America*. In the 1840s the idea of American exceptionalism was tied to idea of Manifest Destiny. Manifest Destiny was a belief that was widely held in the U.S. that American settlers were destined to expand through the American continent to spread their ideas, values, and democratic institutions and to remake the West in the image of the East. From World War I on, when the U.S. started to leave its policy of isolation for a more engaged role international affairs, promoting democracy became an element of U.S. foreign policy. On 2 April 1917, President Woodrow Wilson went before a joint session of Congress to seek a Declaration of War against Germany in order “to make the world safe for democracy” and ensure an enduring peace (Freidel and Sidey). It can be argued that from this moment onward the advancement of democracy around the world has been, in different degrees, a defining feature of U.S. foreign policy among the different administrations (Epstein, Serafina and Miko 1)

Thomas Carothers, vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, argues that democracy and human rights promotion are

intertwined in complex ways with American security, sociopolitical and economic interests (Carothers 2012). This started under President Ronald Reagan when he formulated his policy of democracy promotion to counter the Soviet Union around the world. He founded several democracy promotion organizations and programs among which the National Endowment for Democracy to promote democracy in Latin America. President George W.H. Bush sr. continued this policy to support democratic transitions in the post-communist world after the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) and the dissolution of the Soviet Union (1991). President Bill Clinton, in his effort to redefine America's security profile and global outlook in a post-Cold War world, settled upon democratic enlargement as one of his key themes and engaged in support for democracy activities in many parts of the world such as Africa and Eastern Europe (Mousavi 112). The commitment of the Clinton Administration in advancing democracy and human rights and other humanitarian interests is clearly formulated in the National Security Strategy 2000: "because our values demand it. Examples include responding to natural and manmade disasters; promoting human rights and seeking to halt gross violations of those rights; supporting democratization, adherence to the rule of law and civilian control of the military; assisting humanitarian demining; and promoting sustainable development and environmental protection."

Under the presidency of George W. Bush democracy became an important instrument for promoting peace and combating terrorism (Epstein, Serafino and Miko 1). He declared that the U.S. should actively support democratic governments around the world. This becomes clear in his State of the Union Address in 2003 where he declared: "Americans are a free people, who know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation. The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world, it is God's gift to humanity." Also in his second inauguration address on January 20, 2005, he emphasized the central role of supporting the enlargement of the democratic society in combatting terrorism: "Now it is the urgent requirement of our nation's security.... So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world" (Bush Jr.). Condoleezza Rice, the Secretary of State, on her nomination hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on January 18, 2005 announced three top priorities for her administration's diplomacy: "First, we will unite the community of democracies in building an international system that is based on shared values and the rule of law.

Second, we will strengthen the community of democracies to fight the threats to our common security and alleviate the hopelessness that feeds terror. And third, we will spread freedom and democracy throughout the globe. That is the mission that President Bush has set for America in the world and is the great mission of American diplomacy today” (Epstein, Serafino and Miko 2). Thus, by advancing democracy in the world U.S. national security can be increased, as democracies tend not to attack each other according to the Democratic Peace Theory. This idea is also formulated in National Security Strategy 2006: “Because democracies are the most responsible members of the international system, promoting democracy is the most effective long-term measure for strengthening international stability.” Despite good intentions of promoting democracy, combatting terrorism and tyranny, and establishing peace, the U.S. foreign policy during the Bush Jr. administration has been widely criticized. Especially the idea of advancing democracy and human rights abroad and establishing friendly democratic states through military intervention and regime change, as for example in Afghanistan and especially in Iraq (2003), have harmed the international image of the U.S. and its message of promoting democracy and human rights abroad. In these interventions democracy promotion and military intervention have been linked to each other. Due to the linkage to military intervention the idea of democracy and human rights have become less attractive (Nye 2004, 14). However, these two need to be delinked, as military intervention to achieve democracy promotion and establish democracies through regime change is a means from the most extreme and unusual case. The idea of the U.S. forcing its own ideals of democracy and human rights in a unilateral way on other countries angered a lot of people and governments in the world. This resulted in a decline of the U.S. reputation as a global symbol of democracy and human rights as well as rising fears of a broader democratic recession in the world was the inheritance Bush Jr. left his successor President Barack Obama (Carothers 2012, 5).

President Obama inherited a democracy promotion policy, which was badly damaged due to its association with, in the eyes of many people, illegitimate military interventions to force regime changes in the Middle East. His foreign policy team responded by stepping back, in rhetoric, from the ideological core of the Bush doctrine of democracy and freedom promotion abroad. By doing this he changed the predominant foreign policy narrative in Washington and the administration readjusted the role of democracy promotion in U.S. foreign policy. On top of that the

administration engaged with nondemocratic governments such as Russia, Venezuela, Syria, and Iran in an effort to improve the bilateral relations with these countries and secure its own interests of security and economic well-being. Hereby, the Obama administration accepted the realities of a multipolar world with a less dominant role for the United States and stepped away from Bush' unilateral approach (46). However, from the second half of 2009 onward, the U.S. once again became more engaged in promoting democracy and human rights abroad in both rhetoric and action. In different addresses such as in Cairo on June 4 2009, Obama emphasized the importance of freedom of speech, rule of law, and transparent governments. He referred to these values as not being "just American ideas" but as universal human rights. The administration came with its own approach to democracy policy, emphasizing multilateral engagement and various initiatives to improve the broader normative and institutional framework for democracy support (Obama). In May 2010 secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, gave a speech at the Brookings Institution in which she called democracy and human rights "central" to the U.S. security strategy (Al-Jazeera). In the National Security Strategy 2010 Democracy and human rights promotion abroad remained an important topic but, as mentioned before, these were seen as universal values that the U.S. wants to help advance: "The United States supports the expansion of democracy and human rights abroad because governments that respect these values are more just, peaceful, and legitimate. We also do so because their success abroad fosters an environment that supports America's national interests. Political systems that protect universal rights are ultimately more stable, successful, and secure" (National Security Strategy 2010, 37). Although at first, it looked like the administration took a step away by not emphasizing primarily on democracy promotion as did the administrations before it, the U.S. remains engaged in democracy and human rights promotion, as it had been for decades. Although it has not been as prominent on the foreign policy agenda as under the Bush Jr. administration there still can be detected a line of continuation.

2.2 U.S. democracy and human rights promotion and its relation with soft power, public diplomacy, and NGOs

As the previous sub-chapter has pointed out, democracy and human rights promotion has long been an important aspect of U.S. foreign policy. For the Financial

year 2014 the U.S. Congress fully funded the administration's \$47.8 billion request for base international affairs. This request represented a 6% reduction from the financial year 2012 funding levels and a 14% reduction from the financial 2013 request. The total foreign affairs budget represents less than 1% of the annual U.S. budget. The funding for democracy and human rights in 2014 represented 9% of the total request for foreign assistance. This is less than one tenth of the 1% of the total U.S. budget for foreign affairs. Although these budget figures may not sound like much, the funds support important initiatives that help to protect en promote democracy, rule of law, and human rights around the world (Trister 1). This helps the U.S. to reach its democracy and human rights objectives in the world. This objective of U.S. foreign policy is best promoted by means of soft power such as public diplomacy. It is therefore that public diplomacy is considered an important tool in the U.S. promotion of democracy and human rights abroad.

What is public diplomacy? According to Philip Seib, professor of journalism and public diplomacy at the University of Southern California, public diplomacy is a deliberate act designed to communicate with the public in foreign countries. Thereby, it bypasses the more formal diplomatic channels as it is targeted directly at the public. Connecting it to the U.S. foreign policy of objectives discussed above, it can help reach these goals by helping to built global friendships and diminish hostility by making foreign publics and governments more friendly towards the United States. The power of the U.S. as being the most powerful nation would mean little if this power was solely based on its military strength and capabilities. As the times are changing and technology is rapidly advancing in the twenty-first century, international influence will be based on the ability to cooperate with states, non-state actors on all sorts of matters such as preserving the environment, adapting to the expanding number of economic powers, protecting against global pandemics such as Ebola, and ensuring that access to nuclear, chemical, and biological weaponry is controlled of which the new nuclear deal with Iran is a good example (Seib 2009, ix). Getting support among people and states is therefore an important goal to reach and it should be an essential part of U.S. foreign policy, which has not always been the case and its capabilities have not ben used to its fullest extend.

As mentioned before public diplomacy is a deliberate act, which can – and often does – make use of soft power. The American political scientist Joseph Nye was the first one to link soft power and public diplomacy in his book *Soft Power* (2004).

In order to understand soft power one first needs to have an idea of what the concept of power means. Nye defines the concept of “power,” as the ability to influence others to get the outcomes one wants.” According to Nye someone’s behavior can be affected in three ways: threats of coercion, inducements and payments, and attraction that make others want what you want. The first two are examples of hard power, which represents change through force with the threat of military and/or economic sanctions. The latter one represents soft power, which is explained as the ability to get others to want the outcomes you want and make them cooperate rather than coerce them. Nye explains the concept of soft power in the following way: “A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries want to follow it, admiring its values, emulating its example, and/or aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness. In this sense, it is important to set the agenda and attract others in world politics, and not only force them to change through the threat or use of military or economic weapons. This soft power – getting others to want the outcomes that you want – co-opts people rather than coerces them. Soft power is the ability to shape the preferences of others... Soft power is not merely influence, though it is one source of influence... It is also the ability to entice and attract.” He continues by explaining, “soft power rests on a country’s culture, values and policies“ (Nye 2004, 5). William A. Rugh, associate at Georgetown’s Institute for the Study of Diplomacy and an Adjunct Scholar at the Middle East Institute, further defines these categories in three types of soft power resources: culture, (political) values, and foreign policies (Rugh 9).

According to Rugh, soft power can derive from American culture if that type of culture is admired and respected abroad. Culture can be divided in to high culture and popular culture and includes education, literature, art, performing arts, and music. The most important sources of U.S. soft power are American films, TV-programs, music, and education. Cultural diplomacy and education of U.S. culture are ways through which American values and perceptions can be spread around the globe. The most important sources of U.S. soft power are America’s political values and its foreign policies. American values and its democratic political system are attractive to many people in other countries where democratic rights do not exist or are limited. America’s electoral process, the accountability of political leaders, transparency of government, the court system and the legal protections of citizens, access to power by minorities, and guarantees of free speech and assembly are not present everywhere in

the world. The United States also lead as it is seen as a land of opportunity where a merit system usually prevails and anyone regardless of race, religion, gender, or national origin has a chance to succeed in a profession or activity of his or her choosing. U.S. foreign policies can generate positive or negative soft power. Important in this are the priorities and concerns of each specific foreign group, and whether that group regards the policy as consistent with its interests or not. The U.S. economic assistance and humanitarian developments programs generate positive soft power as it shows the American generosity and that it is prepared to share its wealth to help other countries to develop. Other policies such the American policies towards the rebuilding of Iraq and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict cause negative soft power. For many the situation in Iraq, after the fighting of an illegal war, seems to have worsened and it is still seen as a very unstable state. The Palestinian-Israel conflict also causes negative soft power as most Arab nations and other nations worldwide to criticize the U.S. for its unfair bias in favor of Israel. Foreign groups believe that the U.S. is partially responsible for Israeli actions in the area that they disapprove of. They believe that Washington should do more and can do more to solve the conflict. As the U.S. is lacking behind in these efforts this generates negative attitudes towards the U.S in the Middle East (7-12).

From the examples mentioned above it can be deducted that credibility and legitimacy play an important role in how soft power is perceived. States can gain or lose a foothold in soft power advantage. A states soft power advantage is measured by several dimensions: the match between culture and ideas matching prevailing global norms; access to multiple communication channels that can influence how issues are framed in global news media; however the most important one is a state's credibility legitimacy which is enhanced by domestic and international behavior (Snow 4). In order to seduce or attract populations abroad, legitimacy and credibility of the U.S. policies at home and abroad is essential as it can make or break U.S. relations with other countries. It is therefore important that values and policies the U.S. promotes abroad are being followed both at home and abroad. If the U.S. wants to promote democracy and human rights while neglecting these at home to certain minority groups this may harm their credibility abroad (Nye 2004, 103).

During the Cold War the U.S. created an image of itself as the "leader of the freed world." Communist propaganda addressed the race problem in the U.S., which caused the nation to lose prestige among both friends and foes. The U.S. commitment

to ideals of equality, justice, and democracy suffered an intense blow after ugly incidents of racism multiplied during the 1950s and 1960s. Scenes from Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957 when white students and parents violently resisted school desegregations, the burning bus of the freedom riders, Civil Rights marches, etcetera, made people around the world, particularly in Asia, Africa and Latin America, wonder whether America's rhetoric had any basis in reality (Krenn). A more recent example that made people worldwide question U.S. rhetoric and the reality at home was when it became public knowledge that the prisoners at Guantanamo Bay detention camp were tortured and treated in a cruel, inhuman and degrading manner. Human rights were violated while President Georg W. Bush had declared in his Bush Doctrine that promoting democracy and human rights was one of the pillars of his foreign policy. Again, rhetoric and reality were far apart and these international public relations nightmares seriously undermined U.S. credibility and legitimacy thereby complicating U.S. foreign policy and international relations. All these events may harm the U.S. credibility, legitimacy and attractiveness of their foreign policy and their moral authority to export their values and policies. It will make it harder to win the hearts and minds of the people abroad and make them less cooperative and open to U.S. values and interests, as they will become skeptic of U.S. intentions. In short the perception of the U.S. values and policies abroad can negatively affect soft power (Nye 2004, 14, 60).

Although Nye sees an important role for soft power in U.S. foreign policy he does not think the U.S. should solely focus on soft power measure. He thinks that the aim of global policies should be to find a balance between soft and hard power. Therefore, he opts for what he refers to as "smart power." Coercion and inducement may lead to change in the short run but U.S. foreign policy should focus on the long term rather than on the short-term objectives. For this reason, it is essential to use soft power as it helps to achieve change from within and it creates a friendly environment in which objectives, support, and change are more easily obtained (Nye 2009). The CSIS Commission on Smart Power defines it as follows: "Smart power is neither hard nor soft – it is the skillful combination of both. Smart power means developing an integrated strategy, resource base and a tool kit to achieve American objectives, drawing on both hard and soft power. It is an approach that underscores the necessity of a strong military, but it also invests heavily in alliances, partnerships and institutions at all levels to expand American influence and establish the legitimacy of

American action” (7). The best example of smart power is the Reagan Doctrine in which military built up and the promotion of American values such as democracy, human rights, and free market went hand in hand to undermine and break Soviet rule (Nye 2009).

From the “old” Public Diplomacy to a New Public Diplomacy.

Now that the definitions of soft power and public diplomacy have been defined, it is time to link them together. In order to connect the two it is necessary to further define the concept of public diplomacy.

From the early days of the Republic The United States have relied on Public Diplomacy to win (European) friends and create a balance of power in Europe in their own interest of national security. The emerging nation had no choice but to rely on diplomacy as its military capability were limited (Seib 240). However, it was not until 1965 when Edmund Gullion, former U.S. Ambassador to the Congo and the founder of the Edward R. Murrow Center at Tuft University’s Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, first referred to public diplomacy as a recognizable field of American foreign policy. Gullion described public diplomacy as: “ the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy ... [including] the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another ... (and) the transnational flow of information and ideas.” According to Giles Scott-Smith, Gullion’s definition of public diplomacy was unique in the sense that it highlighted certain aspects that marked public diplomacy as a unique area of activity. He argues that studies before Gullion referred to public diplomacy as activities that were politically neutral cultural relations and educational exchange or as propaganda. However, Gullion emphasized the domestic impact of public opinion on the making of foreign policy. Secondly he recognizes, either in cooperation with or independent of the government, the essential role of the private sector in building en strengthening transnational relations, which goes beyond “traditional” diplomacy (Scott-Smith and Mos 226-228).

After the Cold War the fields of foreign policy and diplomacy have changed because of several developments. First of all, the diversification of media outlets and the diffusion of information and communication technologies have increased the

availability of information and lessened the ability of the nation-states to control and pursue their own political agenda. Secondly, a process of democratization has occurred in the domain of foreign policy and because of that it is not longer an elite establishment. Politicians and diplomats need to legitimize their policies to the domestic public and this has altered the relationship between the governments and the general public. Also, because of the democratization process within the domain of foreign policy other non-state players have become more important (Seib 243).

The second point that Gullion pays attention is that of the interaction between the government and other “international actors.” In order to unravel this point it is important to look at the definitions of public diplomacy. Currently, there are two definitions of public diplomacy. Both definitions agree that public diplomacy involves American communication with the public in foreign countries. However, the difference between the two definitions is that the traditional or “old” definition states that American public diplomacy is an activity carried out by the U.S. Government, while the new definition claims that it can also be carried out by “international actors,” meaning not only the government but also non-governmental organizations (NGOs), commercial entities, and even individuals (Rugh 12). Crocker Snow Jr., who is acting Director of the Edward R. Murrow Center on Public Diplomacy, best illustrates this. He claims that: “Public diplomacy that traditionally represents actions of governments to influence overseas publics within the foreign policy process has expanded today - by accident and design - beyond the realm of governments to include the media, multinational corporations, NGO's and faith-based organizations as active participants in the field” (The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University).

It is here where NGOs come in, as NGOs are non-state actors that also actively make use of soft power and are part of public diplomacy. These nongovernmental organizations and networks are flexible and in particular very effective in penetrating states without regard to borders. As they often involve citizens who are well placed in the domestic politics of several countries, such networks are able to focus the attention of the media and governments on their issues. They create new types of transnational political coalitions and networks and they can influence political policies domestically and abroad. It is for these reasons that the U.S. government supports and makes use of NGOs as a useful tool for its foreign policy (Ahmed and Potter 62-65).

As mentioned before, the U.S. government spends 1% of its budget on democracy and human rights promotion. This money is distributed to the NGOs through several channels in order for them to set-up and implement policies, programs, and projects to advance democracy. The U.S. government has several channels for promoting democracy, most notably are the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); The National Endowment of Democracy (NED); the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) and Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI); and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which provides funds to nations that already meet certain democratic standards. But also many other U.S. nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) help to promote democracy and human rights abroad. Most of these organizations are with varying degrees financially dependent on the government. In recent years, their budgets have increased dramatically. The organizations provide a wide array of support for democracy promotion efforts such as training of democratic activists and governmental leaders, support for political party formation and electoral processes, technical and financial assistance to democratic institutions and organizations, support for civil society actors, including but not limited to trade unions, NGOs and the media. Many NGOs also provide policy advice and research that influence U.S. policy-making and public sector programmatic decisions (Sedaca and Bouchet 8).

2.3 Conclusion

U.S. foreign policy is based upon five so-called pillars, which contribute to the country's national security and economic interests at home and abroad. These pillars are defending the American homeland from being under attack, maintaining a favorable balance of power among the great powers, punishing rogue actors, investing in good governance and allied capabilities abroad, and promoting democracy and human rights. The most important pillar, which binds all the others together, is promoting democracy and human rights abroad. The key-idea is that by creating like-minded governments that share the same liberal democratic values, the democratic peace can be achieved, which in its turns will lead to a secure, stable, and prosperous world.

Public diplomacy is one of the most important tools used by the U.S. government to promote democracy and human rights abroad. This means of soft power is seen a deliberate act designed to communicate with foreign public. It

bypasses the more formal diplomatic channels and is targeted directly at the foreign public. Connecting it to U.S. foreign policy it can help reach international objectives by building global friendships and diminishing enmity towards the U.S. by making foreign publics and government more friendly.

NGOs play an important role in U.S. public diplomacy strategies, as they are flexible transnational organizations that are in particularly very effective in penetrating states without regard to borders. Also, they often involve citizens who are well placed in the domestic politics of several countries. This creates networks that are able to focus the attention of the media and governments on issues and values they find important. New types of transnational political coalitions are formed which can influence political policies domestically and abroad. It is for these reasons that the U.S. government supports and makes use of NGOs and sees them as useful tools for its foreign policy to achieve its own objectives. Still, it is important to notice that the NGOs are not a part of the U.S. government organizational structure. The NGOs support and work together with the U.S. government but retain their independence as they have their own agendas and objectives. Still, the NGOs do share the same ideals and values as the U.S. government and many democracy and human rights objectives are similar. This is why they engage in a mutual beneficial cooperation with each other.

Chapter 3

Rivalry for the former Soviet space and the role of the Reset Policy

The first part of this chapter explains the historical context of the U.S. use of public diplomacy and NGOs to spread American ideas of democracy and human rights during and after the Cold War in Russia. It also takes a closer look at how the NGOs and their activities of promoting and consolidating liberal ideas have been perceived in Russia and how this changed over time. It is important to have some knowledge of this in order to understand the position of international NGOs in Russia. The second part points out why it is important to the U.S. to have good bilateral relations with Russia. It also shows how the bilateral relation deteriorated under President George W. Bush and how President Barack Obama tried to rebuild and reinvigorate the relationship through his Reset Policy. The introduction to the Reset Policy is central in this chapter. Also, it pays close attention to the human rights aspect of the policy and explains why this aspect is so important for good relations with Russia. The aim is to show that the Reset Policy is a relevant case study in which democracy and human rights are a prominent, although sometimes somewhat neglected, objective and that NGOs have been given an important role to reach these objectives of the Reset Policy.

3.1 Advancing American ideas in Russia before the Reset Policy

During the Cold War U.S.-Russian American public diplomacy and democracy and human rights promotion captured momentum. It gained worldwide recognition in winning the battle for the hearts and the minds of the people in the Soviet Union. Public diplomacy was already an important component of U.S. foreign policy during the Second World War. After the Second World War, the U.S. continued to expand its use of public diplomacy due to the Soviet threat from the East. The main agents of American public diplomacy were the United States Information Agency, Voice of America, and Radio Liberty. These organizations used the expertise and language skills of exiles from the Soviet Union to export western ideas to the people on the other side of the Iron Curtain. This provided the people living in the Soviet Union with a critical and truthful view of the Soviet Union. It also kept their hopes on a different life as an alternative to the Soviet way of living. The liberal American message promised equal opportunities for everyone, freedom of

expression, equal rights, and the free market (Orlova 2009, 74-75). According to Nye it were these messages that helped to win the Cold War as it helped to erode faith in communism in the Soviet Union (Nye 2008, 98). Carnes Lord and Helle C. Dale agree with Nye in their article “Public Diplomacy and the Cold War: Lessons Learned.” They claimed that U.S. public diplomacy helped to hasten the dissolution of the Soviet Union from the inside by promoting American values and ideas (Lord & Dale 7-8). However, it would be too easy and simple to attribute the end of the Cold War to only soft power measures such as public diplomacy. As also the Helsinki Agreements in 1975 helped to spread American/Western values and advance human rights in Russia. In the end it was the combination of hard and soft power that brought down the Iron Curtain and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nye perceived U.S. foreign policy towards the Soviet Union during the Cold War as the best example of a mix between soft and hard power and labeled this as “smart power.” Throughout the Cold War, hard power was used to deter Soviet aggression and soft power was used to erode faith in Communism. Nye argued: "When the Berlin Wall finally collapsed, it was destroyed not by artillery barrage but by hammers and bulldozers wielded by those who had lost faith in communism," referring to the fact that the spread of American liberal ideas with the help of public diplomacy played an important role in ending the Cold War (Nye 2009).

Nye's claims are rooted in U.S. foreign policy towards the Soviet Union at the time of the Reagan and Bush administrations. Reagan decided to leave the détente-orientated policy of his predecessors and introduced a more hardline approach; President Richard Nixon introduced the détente policy and his successors Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter stuck to Nixon's détente policy. From the beginning of his first term, President Reagan believed the superiority of the American economic system and believed Soviet system was weaker. A key component of the strategy of his policy towards the Soviet Union involved modernization of the military and significant increases in defense spending. Reagan knew that if the U.S. would start building up its military forces on a massive scale, the Soviet Union would follow but in the end be unable to compete, as its economy would be in tatters (Kissinger 2014, 310-311, Fischer 132-133). Reagan referred to his “peace through strength” foreign policy in his Address to the Nation on National Security on February 26, 1986: We know that peace is the condition under which mankind was meant to flourish. Yet peace does not exist of its own will. It depends on us, on our courage to build it and

guard it and pass it on to future generations. George Washington's words may seem hard and cold today, but history has proven him right again and again. "To be prepared for war," he said, "is one of the most effective means of preserving peace" (Reagan). However, Reagan did not only stick to hard power measures. He believed that the U.S. should lead militarily and economically but also morally and spread its liberal values across the world. The combination of American hard power combined with the spread of American liberal values made the Berlin Wall come down, which is in line with Nye's claims (Nye 2009).

The arms race that exhausted the economy of the Soviet Union and the public diplomacy operations had a changing effect on Soviet society. It made Gorbachov come up with the liberal policies of Glasnost, Perestroika, and "new thinking" based on democratic values; this further changed the dynamics within the Soviet Union. The new thinking and new policies plus the fact that Moscow had less money to spend on subsidies for the countries in Eastern Europe led to a process of disintegration of various communist regimes and the weakening of the Kremlin's influence in the region due to a wave of popular democratic revolutions (McMahon 2003, 163-165).

Gorbachov and George H.W. Bush declared the end of the Cold War at the Malta summit in 1989. This declaration raised high hopes and expectations. The political scientist Francis Fukuyama argued in his essay "The End of History?" (1989): "What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." The political scientists Samuel Huntington agreed with this observation in his book *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. He made the argument that from Portugal's revolution in 1974, there had been a third wave of democratization which included more than 60 countries throughout Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia which underwent some form of democratic transition. These fast-paced processes of democratization in Eastern Europe and Eurasia undermined the Soviet hierarchy and resulted in the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

With the end of the Cold War in 1989, NGOs soon moved into the former Soviet space and played important roles in the consolidation and promotion of democracy building in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, often with different outcomes, after the end of the Cold War (Nye 2008, 105). After the dissolution of the Soviet

Union it were the NGOs that helped to rebuild and restructure Russia. For this reason the Russians supported the work of the NGOs working in Russia. However, during the turmoil of the 1990s many Russians began to associate these pro-Western liberals and their ideals with the economic collapse and the near-political anarchy. For this reason many Russians and also government officials began to distance themselves from Western ideals, and the growing idea of Western-style civil society Russia (Dufalla). The reason for this was not only the economic set-back and near bankruptcy of the country but it can also be traced back to the psychological and humiliating effects of the End of the Cold War (Wilson 11-12). After the Cold War the U.S. hoped and assumed that Russia and the other former Soviet countries would take over the U.S. ideals of democracy and democratic values. A scenario similar to what happened with Germany and Japan who also adopted these values after the Second World War. The greatest victories come not when a country has defeated an enemy by force, but when the enemy had adopted that country's system of values. However, for Russia this was humiliating and a serious blow to its prestige as it still saw itself as a potential world power (Saunders 53).

During the start of the 21st century, when the Russian government continued to stabilize due to its gas exports under President Putin, it became highly suspicious of and more hostile towards NGOs that were politically engaged and received support from foreign countries. The NGOs were said to spread Western values that were different from the traditional Russian values and this undermined Russian sovereignty and authority. Also, Russia no longer perceived itself as a developing country that needed the help of foreign NGOs to develop its society. This belief was based upon the country's growing wealth, due to its gas exports, and the fact it provided foreign aid programs to developing countries throughout the world. These developments made Russia a proud country again that wanted to be taken seriously in the international political arena; therefore, it believed that it no longer needed and wanted development aid from foreign NGOs or other countries. (Saunders 53, Wilson 30-32).

For these reasons, NGOs were no longer seen as needed to help Russia; rather, the Kremlin saw them as a nuisance that was too critical of its policies and a threat to Russia's international reputation. For this reasons so-called NGO-laws were drafted. The first NGO law to control the movement and activities of NGOs dates back to 2006, which was followed by the Foreign Agent law in 2012. These laws gave the Russian government the opportunity to further limit and control NGOs' movements in

Russia and eventually it caused many NGOs to leave the country as they were no longer able to function properly (Dufalla).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, NGOs were seen as important actors in helping to advance and further develop Russian society, this perception ended in the end of the nineties. NGOs were seen as a cause of Russia's economic misfortune. The organizations were perceived as foreign agents that purposely undermined Russia's society in order to keep Russia weak. A consequence of this line of thought was that the Kremlin decided to limit and control the movement of NGOs'. This was not only because they truly believed NGOs to be foreign agents but rather that the NGOs had become too much of a threat to the Kremlin's policies and Russia's international reputation due to the NGOs' critical stance towards Russia's democracy and human rights situation.

3.2 Why Russia matters to the United States and Obama's Reset Policy

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 the relations between the U.S. and Russia have varied from friendly and cooperative to hostile and uncooperative. Still, for the U.S. it is important to have good bilateral relations with Russia in order to maintain its leading position in the world. Russia remains a powerful force within Eurasia and good relations will be beneficial for the U.S. (Charap and Petersen 8).

In the previous chapter the objectives of U.S. foreign policy were explained. The chapter pointed out that the essence of U.S. foreign policy initiatives abroad aimed at avoiding outside threats and guaranteeing U.S. national security and other interests (political and economic). From this perspective there are, according to the Task Force on Russia and U.S. National Interests, seven reasons why good relations with Russia are a top priority for the United States. The first five reasons relate to the political aspect of why the U.S. needs to conduct good bilateral relations with Russia. First of all, nuclear weapons and nuclear terrorism are the number one threat to U.S. national security, when taking into account Miller's five pillars of U.S. Foreign Policy. The U.S. and Russia together possess 95% of the world's nuclear weapons and most of the world's weapons-usable material. Furthermore, they both are important suppliers of civilian nuclear technologies around the world. Also, Russia is the only nation that could actually destroy the U.S. with its nuclear arsenal therefore, it is important that Russia and the U.S. cooperate together to prevent this scenario from ever taking place (Miller 2012, 8). The second reason relates to the non-

proliferation of nuclear arms and technology. Russia plays a key role in U.S.-led international efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, weapons-usable materials and technologies, which are sought not only by nation states, but also by non-state actors. Moscow has generally supported American initiatives to combat nuclear terrorism and shared intelligence on Al Qaeda and other terrorist insurgencies in the Middle East with Washington. The United States needs Russia's assistance in order to slow down nuclear proliferation and prevent the usage of nuclear arms.

Thirdly, Russia is an important factor in geopolitics. It still plays an important role in the international system as a (former) superpower nation. Having Moscow as an ally and develop a friendship on equal bases, would align Russia more closely with U.S. objectives and bring significant balance of power advantages of the U.S. in Eurasia but also in managing China's emergence as a global power. Furthermore, having Russia as an ally in the region would prevent the rise of a threat of Soviet dimensions in the Eurasian heartland as Russia is the only former Soviet state capable of becoming such a threat (Ukraine is too weak and internally too divided as recent events have shown). This also explains the support for the sovereignty of the former Soviet states such as Ukraine, Georgia, and the Baltics, and the efforts to block the reassertion of Russian influence in the region (Graham 52-53). The fourth reason ties in with the third reason. Russia has a strategic geographical location in the world and is the largest country in Europe. It is located at a strategic crossroads between Europe, Asia, and the greater Middle East and it is America's neighbor in the Arctic. As a result, Russia is close to fireplaces of international instability like Afghanistan and Iraq and it is also an important transit corridor for energy and other goods to the U.S. and its allies such as the European Union. The fifth reason why Russia matters is that it can be a valuable ally in the war on terrorism. Terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and IS threatening U.S. national security but also Russia's national security.

Geographically Russia is close to the fireplaces in the Middle East where non-state actors such as Al-Qaeda and IS operate. When we think of countries like Afghanistan and Syria then having Russia as an ally can give the U.S. access to Russia's airspace and help to combat these insurgencies more effectively. Next to this practical reason for cooperation, both countries can also share and exchange information on this topic and help each other to fight and counter terrorist groups (Task Force on Russia and U.S. National Interests Report 8-10).

The following two reasons tie in with the economic importance of having good bilateral relations with Russia. This is important to ensure energy security and the stability of the international economy. The first reason is that Russia is one of the world's leading energy producers and it has a tremendous supply of natural gas reserves. Therefore, Russia has an important role in maintaining and expanding energy supplies that keep the global economy stable and enable economic growth in the U.S. and other countries around the world. The fact that Russia is one of the world's leading energy producers and suppliers make the country economically and financially an important player in the world. This brings us to the final reason of why the U.S. should value its relations with Russia. Given that Russia is a member of the G8 and the G20 it has an influence on the most important financial and economic meetings and discussions (10).

All the different reasons that have been mentioned above make it clear that Russia's choices and actions have a serious impact on U.S. vital national interests both political as well as economical. For these reasons, it is safe to say that few other nations are as important to the U.S. as Russia and that the U.S. needs to keep investing in a sustainable cooperative relationship with Russia. If the U.S. would fail to do so it could harm American national interests internationally as Russia could act as a spoiler in a number of areas and issues important to the United States. For example, ignoring Russia as a valuable and potential friend can have substantial costs such as losing Russia's vote in the UN security Council and losing Russia's influence in certain parts of the world (Syria), which can harm the success of the U.S. international diplomacy. Also, Russia's role and influence on the world economy through the G8 and the G20 should not be ignored. For these and other reasons the U.S. should carefully weigh its national interests when developing its policies for the region and always act on it in regards to Russia's values and ambitions to prevent Russia from mistrusting U.S. motives in the former Soviet space (Task Force on Russia and U.S. National Interests Report 10, 37).

The Obama administration acknowledged the importance of good bilateral relations between the U.S. and Russia. In one of his earliest foreign policy initiatives, President Obama sought to reset relations with Russia and reverse what he referred to as a "dangerous drift" in the relationship between the two countries. An official statement on The White House website reads: "President Obama and his administration have sought to engage the Russian government to pursue foreign

policy goals of common interest – win-win outcomes – for the American and Russian people. In parallel to this engagement with the Russian government, President Obama and his administration also have engaged directly with Russian society – as well as facilitated greater contacts between American and Russian business leaders, civil society organizations, and students – as a way to promote our economic universal values” (The White House).

This revitalization of the bilateral relations between the two countries was necessary due to events, which had happened under the leadership of Obama’s predecessor George W. Bush. During the Bush administration the relationship between the two countries became strained. The Bush administration took an increasingly unilateral course in its foreign policy. Although Russia under President Putin promised to help and support U.S. efforts to combat terrorism and by allowing U.S. military and supply planes fly through Russia’s airspace to support the mission in Afghanistan, the Bush administration did not perceive this cooperative stance of Russia as being a gesture from an ally and a friend but as something that the U.S. could simply demand as it was the only superpower in the world; a clearly unilateral approach towards international relations. The U.S. unilateral course becomes clear in the fact that the U.S. went ahead with the invasion of Iraq despite warnings from international leaders. Moscow perceived this action by the Bush administration as a demonstration of the U.S. being a loose cannon and an unreliable ally. The U.S.-led war in Iraq caused a sharp deterioration in U.S.-Russian relations. Also, the ‘color revolution’ in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan were seen by Moscow as a provocation and a plot to undermine Russian influence in Eurasia (Rutland and Dubinsky 253-254). In 2003, the relations deteriorated even further when U.S.-European actions led Moldova to abandon the so-called “Kozak Memorandum,” which was an officially Russian draft memorandum on the basic principles of the state structure of a united state in Moldova. This Memorandum could have ended one of the former Soviet Union “frozen conflicts.” Instead it remains unresolved until this day (Saunders 75-76). However, the crisis that caused the relations to drop to an all time low was the Russo-Georgian War. In August 2008, Russia attacked Georgia, whose President Mikheil Saakashvili was foolish enough to provoke its neighbor. Both Democrats and Republicans condemned the Russian attack but the actions taken were neglectable as the main focus remained on Iraq in this period (Graubard 2009, 708-709).

When Obama came into office one of his first priorities was to reinvigorate the relations with Russia. The reason behind this was the Asian Pivot. Despite the clear importance of having a good relationship with Russia, the administration preceding Obama's had been retrenching from Russia (Graham 51). This happened for conflicts such as the ones under the Bush administration but also because the U.S. decided its priorities were elsewhere and it decided to focus its attention and resources to the upcoming countries in Asia where it had more direct business interests. This shift of U.S. attention has also been referred to as the Asian Pivot. However, in order to be able to spend more attention to the Asian Pivot Obama needed to improve relations with Russia in order to prevent the situation from escalating in Eurasia. Therefore, he had to rectify the U.S. policy of his predecessor and in return he hoped Russia would turn into a cooperative partner. The negotiating of the Reset Policy was the first step to improve U.S.-Russia relations (Wilson 9).

The Reset Policy proved President Obama's pragmatic approach to foreign policy and international relations as it moved away from Bush' unilateral approach. In May 2010, this new approach was put down on paper as the Obama administration published its new National Security Strategy. Whilst Bush' National Security Strategy 2002 was based on unilateralism, American hegemony and the spread of liberalism and democracy, Obama's National Security Strategy 2010 differed extensively. Not only did Obama and his advisors realize that they live in a globalized and digital world but also that peace and stability cannot be achieved unilaterally. A big break away from the National Security Strategy 2002 was the Obama administration's multilateral approach towards international relations. Obama described this as follows: "The fact that I am very proud of my country — and I think that we've got a whole lot to offer the world — does not lessen my interest in recognizing the value and wonderful qualities of other countries ... or recognizing that we're not always going to be right, or that other people may have good ideas, or that in order for us to work collectively, all parties have to compromise and that includes us" (Scherer). The administration saw the need for international cooperation and strong partnerships, both militarily and economically. In accordance with this, whereas, the National Security Strategy 2002 focused more on hard power and neglected the usage of soft power and public diplomacy, the National Security Strategy 2010 put a greater emphasis on the usage of soft power tools such as public diplomacy (National Security Strategy 2002,

National Security Strategy 2010). The Reset Policy, although developed earlier, fits neatly into the National Security Strategy initiated by the Obama administration.

The Reset Policy and its aspect of democracy and human rights promotion

Where the Russia-Georgia war of August 2008 marked a low point in U.S.-Russian relations, this soon was about to change. With the inauguration of President Obama and the launch of the U.S.-Russia reset the hope of a renewed bilateral cooperation was glooming on the horizon. A couple of months after the announcement of the reset the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission (BPC) was created. The BPC consisted of sixteen working groups working on topics ranging from nuclear cooperation, space, health, military-to-military, cultural and sports exchange, to civil society (The White House). The working groups were established to further broaden and deepen the bilateral cooperation. The Reset Policy between the Obama and the Medvedev administration was a policy based upon pragmatism and mutual trust and cooperation on shared interests and building working-level relationships as a foundation for future cooperation and conflict prevention between the U.S. and Russia. Both Moscow and Washington planned to work together to reduce nuclear arsenals and combat global nuclear proliferation through the New Start Treaty after the Start Treaty expired on December 5, 2009, to support peacekeeping and reconstruction in Afghanistan and to prepare coordinated responses to international terrorist threats (Rojansky and Collins 1-2).

The first period of the renewed cooperation between the two countries was successful. Progress was especially made in security spheres such as arms control, Iran, and Afghanistan. The countries settled on nuclear arms control and eventual disarmament and nonproliferation through the New START agreement and on civil nuclear cooperation with the 123-agreement. Russia promised to increase its cooperation with the U.S. in its efforts to contain Iran by multilateral sanctions. Russia also cancelled its agreement with Iran to sell the S0300 air defense system, showing its commitment to the U.S. efforts. Furthermore, Russia enhanced its assistance in support of the NATO mission in Afghanistan. From that moment on U.S. personnel and equipment could transit Russian air space daily, and move by train from Europe through Russia to Central Asia. In return Russia was allowed to become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Russia and Moldova Jackson-Vanik act, which was installed by the U.S. to be able to affect trade relations

with countries that restricted freedom of emigration and other human rights, was cancelled.

Advancing “universal values,” in the form of democracy and human rights, played an important role in the framework of the Reset Policy, as a democratic Russia would be a friendly Russia. Within the government-to-government agreement framework of the Reset Policy, the Obama administration decided to pursue a strategy of dual-track engagement to advance democracy and human rights within Russia. By means of a dual-track engagement the administration wanted to help advancing democracy and human rights at the Russian government level with government officials and at the same time engage with Russian civil society. Through government-to-government cooperation the Obama administration attempted to help President Medvedev’s initiatives of fighting corruption and deepening the rule of law. In parallel to the government-to-government exchanges the Obama administration tried to promote and facilitate meetings and exchanges with American administration officials, Russian civil society leaders, and human rights activists through a Civil Society Working group within the BPC. It also wanted to encourage peer-to-peer dialogues between American and Russian civil society leaders while at the same time expand its financial support to democracy and human rights programs and projects on topics such as the rule of law, human rights, civil society, media, and political processes through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which, in their turn, set-up these programs and projects through American and Russian NGOs active in Russia (The White House). The selected American NGOs would come to play an important role in setting-up, facilitating, and implementing the different activities and programs of the democracy and human rights aspect of the Reset Policy, which will be discussed thoroughly in Chapter four.

Critique of the Reset Policy

Besides all the positive accomplishments, the Reset Policy also had some negative consequences. Critics accused the Obama administration of too many concessions as it engages Moscow (The Foreign Policy Initiative 2010). One of the arguments was that the Reset Policy strained the U.S. relations with current and future NATO allies. For example, the Obama administration promised to stop further NATO expansion towards the East. Countries such as Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine have

therefore been denied NATO membership for the coming years. The fact that the administration nullified agreements made on the placement of missile-defense systems with U.S. allies Poland and the Czech Republic did not help the friendship with these countries either. The decision that these countries made to host American missile defense radars and interceptors was controversial but they believed that through cooperation with the U.S. they could never lose their independence to anyone again (read: Germans or Russians). The Obama administration decided that the made agreements were less important than the goodwill he might buy with Russia by cancelling them. By cancelling the agreements the administration hurt the NATO alliance and showed weakness towards Russia (Feith and Cropsey 3-4).

Another point of critique on the Reset Policy was that it had not led to improvements in Russia's internal situation. Although democracy building and the advancement of human rights played a role in the policy, it seemed to be limited to issues such as arms control, Iran and Afghanistan. This was worrying to the critics as the Russian political situation was marked by unfair elections and the abolition of elected governorships, control of civil society organizations through intimidation and harassment, the dominance of state controlled media and restrictions on independent media, impunity for perpetrators of violence, including murder against regime critics and brutal abuses in the Caucasus. Opposition parties struggled to compete in elections and to hold demonstrations. A policy of linkage to improve Russia's domestic situation did not seem to have any effect, especially as the administration did not uphold it (Rojansky and Collins 6). This raised the question of what was more important to the U.S. either good relations with Russia or its democracy and human rights objectives.

The Reset Policy derails

Despite criticism, the 'reset' between the U.S. and Russia was initially a success (Rutland and Dubinsky 2012, 256). However, it would not take long before the first cracks in this renewed partnership became visible. In 2012 after Putin reassumed the Presidential Office, relations between the U.S. and Russia turned sour. President Putin decided to cancel the longstanding Nunn-Lugar program of cooperation on destroying and securing old Soviet weapons of mass destruction, sell the advanced S300 air defence system to Iran and help the country to build the

Busheher nuclear reactor in Iran, and supply Syria's president Bashar al-Assad with military equipment including one billion dollars worth of military hardware. However, the largest falling out between the two countries would be over democracy and human rights. Two key events played an important role in this: the replacement of the Russia and Moldova Jackson-Vanik Repeal by the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of December 2012 and Putin's continued crackdown on civil society (McLaren-Miller; Rutland and Dubinsky 256).

The Magnitsky act's main intention of the law was to punish Russian officials who were thought to be responsible for the death in detention of lawyer Sergei Magnitsky by prohibiting their entrance to the United States and their use of its banking system. Russia was furious and responded with bill unofficially named after Dimitri Yakovlev, a Russian toddler who had died in 2008 of a heart stroke after neglect of his adoptive American parents, which put a ban on U.S. adoption of Russian children (Lally and Englund). The second strain was Putin's crackdown on the dissent at home and blaming the U.S. and other foreign countries for this. Russia accused the West of supporting anti-Putin rallies in reaction to Putin's reelection as President. These dissent groups were seen as Western foreign agents trying to interfere in Russia's internal affairs and undermine the Russian authorities and Putin's powerbase (Piper). In order to cope with this problem legislators from Putin's party United Russia, designed the Russian Foreign Agent law in July 2012. The Foreign Agent Law required organizations that engaged in political activity and received foreign funding should register as foreign agents, even if the foreign funding they received did not actually pay for political activities. The law enabled the state to determine whether organizations were engaged in political activity based not on the goals defined in its charter, but rather on its involvement in the logistical or financial organization of/ or participation in, "political acts" aimed at influencing the decision making of public authorities, changing public policy, or influencing public opinion with respect to government policy (Machalek 2). The Ministry of Justice kept the definition of "political activity" in the law broad and vague in such a way it could extend to all aspects of advocacy and human rights work. The Foreign Agent Law required all NGOs that received foreign funding to request the Ministry of Justice to have them registered and implied legal consequences for the NGOs that did not. In Russia "foreign agent" can be interpreted only as "spy" or "traitor," and there was

little doubt that the law aimed at demonizing and marginalizing the, from the Russian government, independent advocacy groups (Human Rights Watch 2015).

Consequences for the NGOs due to the new law was that, as foreign agents, they had to produce financial reports on their political activities and on the composition of their organizations; political activities had to be registered with the authorities before the organization was permitted to participate in them; they had to label all materials distributed in the media; were subject to state audits scheduled and unscheduled; foreign donations larger than 200,000 rubles (\$6,700) and to mandatory monitoring. All these rules severely affected NGOs activities as they violated the civil rights of free speech and assembly in Russia. When NGOs violated or failed to abide by these rules they were punished in several ways. If it refused to register as a foreign agent it was banned from participating in public demonstrations and access to its bank account would be limited. Also the NGO could be fined for an amount up to 300,000 rubles (\$10,000) and its personnel could even be sentenced to imprisonment for a maximum of two years (Machalek 2).

The introduction of the Foreign Agent law and all its restrictions led to the expulsion of U.S. Agency for International Development from Russia by the Russian authorities. Other Western and American NGOs decided to pull their staffs out and continue their activities from other countries surrounding Russia, such as Lithuania. Among the NGOs that decided to leave Russia were also the International Republican Institute and National Democratic Institute as they believed the laws affected their activities too much. Out of frustration with the Russian government and the violation of civil liberties in Russia, the United States decided to pull out of the Civil Society Working Group of the BPC (McLaren-Miller). However, the biggest losers since the introduction of the law were the numerous civil rights groups, which were charged and prosecuted by the Russian government. Most of them challenged the prosecutor's office and the Ministry of Justice in courts; however, most appeals were lost. As a result, by February 2015 at least twelve local Russian NGOs had to shut down their organization. They would rather close their organization than to be stigmatized with the shameful label of "foreign agent." Among these groups were the GOLOS Association, JURIX (Lawyers for Constitutional Rights and Freedoms), the Moscow School of Civic Education (Moscow), Kostroma Center for Civic Initiatives Support, Anti-Discrimination Center (ADC) Memorial, Side by Side LGBT Film Festival, Coming Out, "Freedom of Information" Foundation, the League of Women Voters

and Human Rights Resource Center (Saint-Petersburg), Center for Social Policy and Gender Studies and Association "Partnership for Development" (Saratov). Other organizations' were severely hindered in their activities by the NGO-law (Human Rights Watch 2015).

These incidents would cause the first cracks in the 'reset' of the U.S.-Russian relations. In the following years, tension between the two countries would continue to rise and lead to the total collapse of the policy with the Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in March 2014.

3.3 Conclusion

Since the Cold War, advancing democracy and human rights was an important part of the U.S. foreign policy towards Russia. NGOs played an important part in this policy, as they were the tools to bring about change in Russia. This chapter explained that the U.S. tried to end the Cold War by a combination of hard and soft power. As a means of soft power NGOs were used to advance ideas of democracy and human rights in Russia to hasten its collapse. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the NGOs became a tool to change and restructure Russian society in order to turn it into a democracy according to Western standards and a good friend and an ally. However, Russia and in particular its leader in the Kremlin had different ideas. They perceived the democracy and human rights efforts by the Western, and especially American, NGOs a threat to Russia's sovereignty and stability. The NGOs were too critical. This undermined the Kremlin's authority domestically and internationally. For these reasons the Russian government decided to implement laws in order to control the activities of NGOs operating in Russia. These turns of events, and others such as the U.S. unilateral approach to world politics and the Iraq War, to name a few, disrupted the relationship between the U.S. and Russia.

The worsening of the U.S.-Russian relations was an unwelcome development for the U.S. as it gained a lot from good bilateral relations with Russia. According to the Task Force on Russia and U.S. National Interests, good bilateral relations were important, as the U.S. gained from this in the fields of nuclear weapons, non-proliferation, geopolitics, strategic geography, combatting terrorism, energy, and finance/world economics. Other reasons were Russia's vote in the UN Security Council, the country's influence in certain parts of the world such as Syria, and its economic role in the G8 and the G20. The Obama administration acknowledged the

importance of good bilateral relations between the U.S. and Russia. In one of his earliest foreign policy initiatives, President Obama sought to reinvigorate the relations with Russia. This new policy initiative was appropriately named the Reset Policy. The countries started to cooperate in different fields such as non-proliferation, combating international terrorism, and democracy and human rights.

Democracy and human rights were important aspects of the Reset Policy as it was believed that a democratic Russia would be a friend and ally. With the help of a dual-track engagement program the U.S. aimed at advancing democracy and human rights in Russian. NGOs played an important part in the democracy and human rights part of the Reset Policy as they helped to support, facilitate, and implement the different projects and programs to advance democracy and human rights in Russia. Also, they had the knowledge and connections in Russia, which meant it was easier for them to access the different parties and bring these together. However, as the Reset Policy advanced, critics accused the administration of making too many concessions to the Kremlin at the cost of democracy building and the advancement of human rights. Still, the renewed cooperation was initially considered a success. When Putin reassumed the Presidential Office, political decisions such as cancelling the longstanding Nunn-Lugar program, selling the S300 air defence system to Iran and helping the country to build the Busheher nuclear reactor, and supplying Syria's president Bashar al-Assad with military equipment strained the U.S.-Russian relations once again. However, even worse was the falling out between the two countries over democracy and human rights. Two key events played an important role in this: the installment of the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of December 2012 and Putin's continued crackdown on civil society and NGOs in Russia. The aforementioned reasons were the first cracks in the 'reset' of the U.S.-Russian relations. The tensions between the two countries would eventually build up and lead to the total collapse of the policy with the Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in March 2014.

The purpose of this chapter was to prove that democracy and human rights played an important part in the U.S. foreign policy towards Russia since the Cold War. During the Reset Policy, democracy and human rights remained an important aspect of the bilateral relations between the two countries. NGOs were the tools used by the U.S. government to implement and support the democracy and human rights aspects of the Reset Policy. This interaction between the NGOs and the U.S.

government would have an impact on the development of the Reset Policy, as will be assessed in het next chapter.

Chapter 4

American NGOs in Russia and their interaction with the United States government and its impact on the Reset Policy

The following chapter takes a closer look at the interaction between the U.S. government and American NGOs operating in Russia and how this has an impact on the Reset Policy. The first part of the chapter assesses the different modes of interaction between the U.S. government and the NGOs Freedom House, Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Republican Institute (IRI), and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). As established earlier in this study, the interaction between NGOs and the U.S. government is not limited to one mode of interaction as these modes are fluid and not static. This means that sometimes NGOs interact with the U.S. government in multiple modes. First, it assesses the interaction between the two on cooperative basis, secondly, it looks at interaction on supplementary bases, and finally, it shows the relation between the U.S. government and NGOs on opposing bases. The second part of the chapter links the interaction between the NGOs and the U.S. government and shows how it has a positive and a negative impact on the policymaking process and the Reset Policy, during the period 2009-2014.

4.1 Interaction on cooperative bases

In Russia, NGOs and the U.S. government work together through the Department of State. This cooperation takes place in three sub-terrains: first of all the U.S. government funds the NGOs, secondly the NGOs implement and set-up programs and projects supporting the U.S. foreign policy goals, and thirdly NGOs support the U.S. government by information sharing, agenda setting, and giving advice in the U.S. foreign policy making process towards Russia.

Funding of democracy and human rights promotion in Russia

Through its foreign assistance aid funds the U.S. tries to encourage Russia's development towards a stable, democratic, and reliable partner, thereby advancing America's interests while at the same improving lives in Russia. According to the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, the U.S. government supports funds processes, organizations, institutions, and activists that promote democracy and

human rights in Russia. It does so by promoting civic participation and civil society development, including groups that advocate on behalf of citizen interests and promote government accountability. Furthermore, it supports independent media and the increase of access to information making Russian government policies more transparent to the public. It helps combating corruption, bolster the rule of law, and strengthen protections for and awareness of human rights standards. Also, the U.S. government policy promotes decentralization and advocates more transparency, accountability and participatory local governance. The Increase of electoral transparency and citizen participation in the political process is another aspect that is considered to be important for the further democratization of Russia (Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs).

The U.S. government also has its own development organizations, which support democratization processes and human rights around the world. These federal state agencies set-up projects and programs and help to fund American and Russian NGOs. The U.S. government funds are channeled through the federal state agencies to support the NGOs active in Russia. The most important federal state agency is the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID helps to set-up and financially support democracy projects in the country by setting-up assistance projects but also by funding both American and local Russian NGOs. About 60% of USAID's \$50m budget for 2012 went to groups that promote democracy and human rights. Among the nearly 57 organizations that receive USAID funding in Russia are Freedom House, IRI, NDI but also many Russian organizations such as NGO Memorial, the GOLOS Association, and the anti-corruption group Transparency International (Elder and McGreal). The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is a private, nonprofit foundation that contributes to the growth and strengthening of democratic institutions around the world. Each year, with funding from the U.S. Congress, NED supports programs and projects of American NGOs, such as IRI, NDI, and Crude Accountability in Russia (Shapovalova 4-5). It is important to notice that these federal state organizations, such as USAID and NED, are part of the U.S. government organizational structure and although they do the same work as NGOs, these organizations are Government-operated NGOs (GONGO). This means that they are set-up and controlled by the U.S. government to look like NGOs in order to promote the interests of the government. Because of this they, more or less, enjoy the same credibility that NGOs have; however, they do not have their own agenda, are

not neutral, and cannot operate as independent from the government as NGOs (Willetts).

After 2006, the funding to Russia by the U.S. government was decreased, as was all economic growth assistance, due to the conflicts over NATO expansion, Iraq, and Georgia to name a few. Nonetheless, the U.S. remains the largest donor to democracy and human rights promotion in Russia. However, the total amounts spent on Russia remains small compared to democracy and human rights assistance to other countries in the world (Shapovalova 4). Table 4.1 shows the total amount of money spent on assistance and the amount spent on Governing Justly and Democratically in thousands of U.S. dollars in Russia. The table is based upon figures provided by the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs from the State Department on Foreign operations appropriated assistance to Russia. It shows a decline in the amount of money spent on foreign assistance to Russia. This is in line with the declining trend of funding by the U.S. government to the region of Europe and Eurasia. U.S. assistance to Europe and Eurasia overall is declining and in 2015 the total funding to the region will be \$492 million, which is 18% less than in 2013 (U.S. Global Leadership Coalition 18).

The numbers below show that the U.S. government invests in governing justly and democracy building. These funds are sometimes directly channeled from the State Department to the NGOs and sometimes indirectly through federal state agencies such as USAID and NED. The figures indicate U.S. commitment through the funding of operations to improve democracy and civil society in Russia. Due to the poor relations between the countries there have been no requests to Congress for the funding of governing justly and democracy building projects for the years 2014 and 2015 in Russia (Freedom House 2014, 7).

Year	<i>Total amount of foreign operations appropriated assistance</i>	<i>Amount spent on Governing Justly and Democratically</i>	<i>Share of total aid received</i>
2013 (request)	\$51,961	\$31,809	61%
2012 (estimate)	\$63,935	\$34,561	54%
2011	\$66,138	\$37,234	56%
2010	\$71,500	\$37,021	51%

2009	\$70,564	\$33,871	48%
2008	\$81,906	\$40,134	49%
2007	\$67,000	\$34,170	51%
2006	\$85,156	\$43,430	51%

Table 4.1 Foreign operations appropriated assistance to Russia (source: U.S. Department of State)

Another indication of the U.S. government being involved in the funding of NGO activities are the donor or partner lists of the NGOs. Three of the four selected American NGOs list the U.S. government or federal state agencies, affiliated to the U.S. congress or the Department of State, as a partner.

Freedom House has a list with its main financial “supporters” and “partners.” On this list, organizations and governments that contribute more than \$250,000 are listed as Freedom Trailblazers. Freedom House has listed several governments, organizations, and individuals as donators in this category, including USAID and the U.S. Department of State (Freedom House “our supporters”). IRI lists under “our partners,” as its main benefactors the NED, USAID, and the U.S. Department of State, among others (International Republican Institute “Our partners”). Similar to Freedom House and IRI, NDI receives funding through grants from NED, USAID, and also the U.S. Department of State for its activities worldwide (National Democracy Institute “Who support our work”).

The aforementioned donor lists indicate that there is an active partnership between the American NGOs and the U.S. government. It also shows that the NGOs are at least partially dependent upon the U.S. government for their financial support. However, it is important to keep in account that when looking at the partner and donor lists of non-governmental organizations, it is very well possible that not all donors are listed or how much they exactly contribute to the organization’s financial well-being. Considering the fact that NGOs, as non-governmental organizations, claim that they are not affiliated with any government or political cause, having government funding through the government itself or government organizations may harm their credibility. In this sense, HRW is different. HRW specifically claims: “it does not seek or accept financial support from any government or government-funded agency.” When it comes to financial support the organization does not cooperate with the U.S. government or organizations affiliated with the U.S. government and it

retains its sense of credibility and neutrality to the outside world (Human Rights Watch 2014).

Democracy and human rights activities, programs, and projects

Through its support the U.S. government works together with American and Russian NGOs to promote democracy and human rights to strengthen Russian civil society. In cooperation with the U.S. government, NGOs implement and set-up programs and projects, which support the democracy and human rights aspects of the Reset Policy. This cooperation gives the NGOs the support and legitimacy and financial funds to implement and set-up the projects and programs beneficial to the agenda objectives of both (Ahmed and Potter 62-63). The previous sub-chapter has shown that three of the four discussed NGOs receive funds from the U.S. government directly or indirectly. These funds are used by the NGOs for activities and set up programs to develop and further enhance a democratic Russia.

As a watchdog organization, Freedom House monitors and reports on the status of freedom, democracy and human rights in Russia. Its main focus is therefore to report on the situation, via annual freedom reports and case studies, in Russia. However, the organization also helps to set-up seminars and meetings to exchange knowledge and raise awareness on topics related to democracy and human rights. However, their responsibility does not stop there. Over the years, Freedom House has set-up several assistance programs to support and help protect the rights of Russian citizens. The Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund provides emergency financial assistance to civil society organizations that are under threat or attack and it also provides advocacy support in response to broader threats to civil society. This fund is set-up with seven other international NGOs; however, Freedom House has the lead in this program. A second program to support and protect human rights is The Dignity for All: LGBTI Assistance Program. This program provides emergency funds, advocacy support, and security assistance to human rights defenders and civil society organizations that are being threatened due to their work for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex human rights (Freedom House “Programs Russia”).

IRI has set-up activities and programs to advance democracy and human rights in Russia. According to its “Russian program Summary” (2010) its activities can be divided in different categories. These categories are civic leadership development, youth and women leadership program, legislative and executive exchange, regional

and local development. The programs in the category civic leadership development aim at developing a strong civil society in Russia. Through training in advanced communication technologies, effective campaign strategies and supporting think tanks, IRI tries to develop and educate civil leaders who are capable of bringing about processes of advocacy and reforms. IRI also promotes and helps initiatives to involve and increase the role of Russia's youth and women in social and political processes such as voting, running for office or starting a NGO or political party. Within the third category, legislative and executive exchange, IRI facilitates and promotes legislative and executive exchanges between the legislative and executive bodies of Russia and the U.S. Through the promotion of cooperation and understanding between both sides; the program to encourage the development of sustainable relationships between Russian and American government authorities. IRI also invests in supporting regional and local political development by supporting civil and political leaders at the local and regional political level. Through conferences and roundtables with local elected officials, NGOs and party members learn how to contribute to increased public participation in local governance and meaningful interaction between citizens and local and regional deputies. Through these efforts, IRI attempts to close the gap between the (local) government and citizens (International Republican Institute "Russian Program Summary"; "What we do").

NDI supports and strengthens democratic institutions in the Russian Federation with the help of its activities and programs, which can be divided into two main categories. The first one being: stimulating greater citizen participation in decision-making processes and strengthening civic organizations and political parties in Russia. The second category focuses on international exchanges of experience with the U.S. and the EU. With the help of the U.S. government and other partners' support, NDI Russia supports the first category by facilitating discussions on important, mostly political, issues affecting Russia's society through forums with elected officials and policymakers, roundtables for NGOs sharing common concerns, and advocacy and citizen participation workshops. It promotes youth engagement in order to help young Russian community leaders develop greater capacity to effectively engage in civic and political processes. Another program, in which NDI Russia is involved, is the training and consultation of election observation organizations, such as GOLOS, to guarantee free and fair elections in Russia. The second category of its activities is supported by providing opportunities for young

Russian community leaders to compare experiences and share ideas with their international peers through study programs to Brussels. NDI Russia also conducts an exchange program for Russian legislators and political and civic leaders to discuss policy issues with their counterparts in the U.S. (National Democratic Institute “What we do”; “Publications”).

Interesting is how HRW’s activities and programs relate to the U.S. foreign policy. The NGO does not receive financial support from the U.S. government and claims to be independent. Still, the objectives of its democracy and human rights agenda are similar to those of the U.S. government. This puts the NGO in an awkward and paradoxical position as their activities and programs indirectly support the U.S. international objectives in Russia. Especially, when keeping in mind that they claim to be independent. In Russia, HRW activities consist mainly of impartial fact-finding and reporting, use of (social) media channels in order to raise awareness and advocate changes this often happens in partnership with local human rights groups. In their activities, HRW, tends to focus on the crackdown on Russia’s civil society and the neglected rights of minority groups, handicapped people, and the LGBTBI community (Human Rights Watch “Europe/Central Asia”; “Reports”).

Through their activities and programs NDI, IRI, Freedom House, and HRW all interact in a cooperative mode, either on voluntary bases or in a partnership with the U.S. government and its foreign policy goal of turning Russia into a vibrant democracy. The first three NGOs actively support U.S. foreign policies and they clearly identify themselves and partner up with the U.S. government and its Reset Policy of building a strong democratic Russia where human rights are protected. HRW has the same objectives but claims to be operating independent from the U.S. government. Despite these claims, the organization still contributes, on voluntary bases; to the U.S. foreign policy goals and in that sense they are to a certain extent both supplementary and cooperative with the U.S. government. This can be explained from the perspective that HRW wants to retain its objectivity, credibility, and independence. HRW thinks that it can retain this by not working with the U.S. government in partnership but on voluntary bases.

Information sharing, agenda setting, and NGOs advisory role

NGOs can be a valuable source of information to governments. Due to their work in the field NGOs gain a lot of expertise and knowledge on the development of

democracy building and human rights in a country, in this case Russia. Due to their experience and because they often work together with citizens who are well informed and well placed in the domestic politics of a country, NGOs have a first hand access to information that can be valuable to the process of policymaking of governments. It is not surprising that governments and policymakers all over the world use reports from Freedom House on democracy and human rights issues. It is for this reason that these groups have a profound influence on the policymaking process. John R. Miller, former member of the U.S. House of Representatives and an advocate of human rights in Russia, acknowledges this role of NGOs (in this particular case the NGO Freedom House) in his article "Does freedom mean freedom from slavery? A glaring omission" (2007). He states that: "Freedom House has unwaveringly raised the standard of freedom in evaluating fascist countries, Communist regimes, and plain old, dictatorial "thugocracies." Its annual rankings are read and used in the United Nations and other international organizations, as well as by the U.S. State Department. Policy and aid decisions are influenced by Freedom House's report. Those fighting for freedom in countries lacking it are encouraged or discouraged by what Freedom House's report covers. And sometimes – most importantly – their governments are moved to greater effort."

The information sharing, agenda setting, and advisory role of NGOs like Freedom House, HRW, IRI, and NDI becomes clear in their reports that inform the readers on the progress of democracy building and the human rights situation in Russia. The reports provide information on the important issues in Russia and always contain a policy advice addressed to the U.S. government or other government such as the governments of Russia and European Union. The effect of these reports and policy advices is hard to measure, however, the fact that the President of Freedom House David J. Kramer was invited to brief the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on European Affairs on December 14, 2011, does indicate that the U.S. government values the information and advice provided by NGOs. During his testimony to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on European Affairs Kramer explained the democracy and human rights situation in Russia and suggested some recommendations for the U.S. policy towards Russia. The testimony took place after protest rallies that took place after the rigged Duma elections and the announcement that Putin would be a candidate for the next Presidential elections, which would surely be manipulated as well (Wilson 27-30). As Kramer's

organization Freedom House operates in Russia, he had to brief the subcommittee as he could provide them with valuable up-to-date information, which they otherwise would not have had. Kramer explained that the demonstrations were crushed violently with arrests, further curtailment of civil rights such as freedom of speech and assembly, and the arrest and murder of critics, journalists and lawyers, also many NGO offices were raided. He noticed a violation of democracy and human rights in Russia during the Putin leadership. In his testimony he gives the U.S. government four proposals for its policy towards Russia. First of all the U.S. had to raise the profile of democracy/human rights concerns as it relates to Russia and speak truth to power. Secondly, it had to pass The Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2011. Thirdly, graduate Russia from Jackson-Vanik, but only if the Magnitsky legislation or something comparable that addresses present-day democracy/human rights challenges in Russia, is passed in its place. Kramer's final recommendation was to confirm Michael McFaul, a fervent supporter and expert on democracy and human rights, as the new U.S. Ambassador to Russia (Kramer 2011). All the recommendations made by Kramer were adopted which indicates that through testimonies NGOs can assert some influence.

Similar to Freedom House, HRW informs the public and also governments on the human rights situation in Russia. This can be through briefing before Congress but also writing reports. These reports are not only meant to inform but also attempt to persuade and advice governments to take on an approach or policy towards Russia on certain issues. In its report "An uncivil approach to civil society" from June 17, 2009, HRW recommends "Russia's international partners, particularly the European Union and the United States, and the Council of Europe," to be more critical on Russia's crackdown on civil society in regards to the NGO law of 2006 (5).

Just like Freedom House and HRW, IRI and NDI publish reports on the developments in the democracy and human rights situation in Russia. IRI focuses more on reports regarding elections observations and assessments, while, NDI is more active, several reports and handbooks/manuals on the human rights situation in Russia. These publications focus mainly on the political participation of vulnerable groups within the Russian society that are underrepresented in the political process such as persons with disabilities and women. However, these reports seem to be more observing mapping the problems these groups encounter within society. Contrary to the Freedom House and HRW publications, these reports do not give any political

advice to the U.S. government on how to deal with these problems or on how to put pressure on Russia. The strength of these NGOs seems to rely more on its action programs rather than their reports (IRI “News & Resource Center”; “NDI “Publications”).

These examples show that NGOs try to influence the U.S. Reset Policy through information sharing, agenda setting, and policy advice. Kramer’s example on testifying before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on European Affairs proves that NGOs, at least the well-established ones, do have access to the higher levels of politics and that they access to the different phases of the policymaking process through agenda setting, providing information, and policy advises. The fact that all of Kramer’s recommendations have been implemented suggests that the NGOs can exert some influence on the policymaking process of the Reset Policy. However, it is hard to measure the exact impact of the information sharing, agenda setting, and policy advices on the U.S. Reset Policy. Fact remains that the more renowned NGOs are still invited and asked for their advice by Washington, which suggests that they do have some influence on the decision-making process in Washington (Ahmed 839).

4.2 Interaction on supplementary bases

When NGOs work supplementary to the government they operate independently as a supplement to governments and their policies in a certain region of country. They provide the government help on voluntary bases without getting anything in return (Young152). Due to the expulsion of USAID, the U.S. government lost its most important tool to promote democracy and human rights and also its main channel of information on the human rights situation in Russia. As it is harder for the U.S. government to directly promote democracy and human rights through its activities or gain information, other organizations have taken over this role. One of these groups is Human Rights Watch (HRW).

To ensure its independence from political interests HRW does not accept government funds, directly or indirectly, or support from any private funder that could compromise its independence or objectivity, as stated on its website. It also claims that it does not support political causes, is non-partisan, and remains neutral in any type of conflict (Human Rights Watch “About”). The organization’s independence

from governments by not accepting financial support is stated in all its financial statements from the period 2009-2014: “HRW obtains financial support from the public - primarily individuals and foundations, but also estates, trusts and businesses. It does not seek or accept financial support from any government or government-funded agency” (Human Rights Watch 2014, 8). This means that the organization, at least financially, operates independently from the U.S. government. However, we need to be careful with these claims as they are not verified by others sources.

Although claiming to be independent from the U.S. government, the organization does have a strong connection with the U.S. government in the form of a voluntary cooperation and not a partnership. Although the organization claims it does not seek or accept financial support from the U.S. government, either directly or indirectly, it still promotes values that are similar to the values promoted by the U.S. government in its democracy and human rights part of the Reset Policy. These values are considered to be “international human rights” and are based on liberal American or Western values. The strong connection comes also to the fore in the information sharing and advisory role the organization plays for the U.S. government. This interaction has led to accusations of HRW being too involved with the U.S. government and that its reports on the human rights situation in different countries are biased (NGO monitor).

As HRW is independent but still supports and advocates U.S. democracy and human rights objectives on a voluntary base, the organization can be identified as being supplementary to U.S. government foreign policies. Freedom House, IRI, and NDI are not as they are in a partnership with the U.S. government as shown earlier.

4.3 Interaction on opposing bases

NGOs do not always have to cooperate with states or be supplementary to them. They can also choose to oppose states and their policies. In Russia American NGOs function as suppliers of development assistance and watchdogs of Russian government policies. In this role the American NGOs criticize the Russian government a lot for not living up to the Helsinki Accords and for neglecting human rights such as freedom of speech and assembly but also for not being transparent and of political fraud. These examples are clear and relate to the concept of an opposing form of interaction between NGOs and states as mentioned by Young, Ahmed and

Potter (65). However, central in this study is not the interaction between American NGOs and the Russian Federation but between American NGOs operating in Russia and the U.S. government. This interaction is different in the sense that the American NGOs working in Russia do cooperate or are at least supplementary to the U.S. government and its Reset Policy. There is a form of cooperation but still the NGOs are critical of the U.S. approach towards Russia. They oppose certain elements of the Reset Policy and call for a more critical and firm stance on democracy and human rights issues towards Russia.

Both HRW and Freedom House called for a more critical stance by the U.S. government regarding Russia and the country's continual violation of its citizen's civil rights. It has to be noted though that Freedom House has more specific critique towards Obama administration and HRW has a more general critique targeted at the UN, European Council, and other concerned States. Both NGOs are critical of the way the U.S. and other countries approach Russia and they call for a more challenging stance towards Putin's regime in its relation to democracy and human rights.

HRW has criticized the U.S. administration stance towards Russia in regards to Human Rights. In its World Report 2014: Russia, HRW praises the legislation which was adopted by the U.S. congress in regards to the death of the whistleblower tax lawyer Sergei Magnitsky and the torture and killing of other whistleblowers. However, HRW has been critical over the fact that in January 2013, the U.S. withdrew from the civil society component of the U.S.-Russian Bilateral Presidential Commission and over not addressing human rights abuses in Russia during several meetings between U.S. and Russian foreign and defense ministers (Human Rights Watch "World Report Russia").

In the report "Contending with Putin's Russia: A call for American Leadership" (2013), Freedom House urges the Obama administration to abandon or at least reconsider the Reset Policy for his second term as President. Freedom House wants the administration to be more critical of the Russian government and the way it approaches and infringes the human rights of its citizens. First of all, it wants President Obama himself, and not just his representatives, to speak out against Putin's human rights abuses and crackdown on civil society, as well as criticizing The U.S. government and the president being very quiet when Putin decided to expel the federal state agency USAID. Neither did they respond to the ejecting of other

organizations, such as UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the ending of several programs on which both countries cooperated (Abbakumova and Lally). According to Freedom House, it is important that the American President stands with organizations expelled and stands up to Putin (Kramer and Corke 9).

The administration needs to “abandon talk of seeking ‘win-win’ cooperation, since Putin views power relations in zero-sum terms and will not pursue such mutual benefits in good faith.” It gives the impression that the Obama administration needs and wants a good relationship more than Putin does. It also affects the credibility of the U.S. in the world when good relations with Putin are more important than its own interests and values. Freedom House advises the administration to “be clear and direct in saying that it cannot advance its partnership with Russia as long as Putin persecutes his own people, impedes progress on Syria and other international crises, and makes anti-Americanism the centerpiece of his propaganda efforts” (6). As Putin does not seem to be cooperative and only looks after his own interests Freedom House believes that the Obama administration needs to be tougher and more assertive when it comes to dealing with Russia. The report continues and gives several suggestions and measures on how to deal with Putin's Russia. One is to be more critical of the regime, restoring the notion of linkage, continuing financial and vocal support to Russian activists who want political change, withhold support to Russia's bid to join the OECD, investigate potential violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act in Russia, and search for ways to work around or without Russia when its leaders obstruct international efforts to uphold democracy and human rights (9).

Both NGOs conclude that, to the U.S. government, the human rights aspect of the Reset Policy is less important than the U.S. relations with Russia. In order to not anger Russia, the U.S. is making too many concessions. This becomes apparent in Freedom House's report “Investing in Freedom: Democracy Support in the U.S. Budget” (2013). In this report Freedom House criticizes the U.S. government for not requesting any funding of democracy and human rights activities for the year 2014. They see this as a bad sign for the democracy and human rights movement in Russia. The organization claims that to have no funding request sends the wrong signal as it shows that the U.S. does not care about the human rights situation in Russia (Trister 7). The report illustrates that the relationship between Russia and the U.S. is more important than the democracy and human rights situation. It is perceived as another concession made by the U.S. government and a sign of weakness.

Both HRW and Freedom House call for stronger actions and not just symbolic meaningless rhetoric by civil servants or pulling the plug on the funding of democracy and human rights organizations and activities. The U.S. and its President Barack Obama need to stand up and lead so that Russia realizes that the U.S. is serious about democracy and human rights and that these rights need to be respected. By showing their concerns and critiques, the NGOs oppose certain aspects of the U.S. government's Reset Policy.

4.4 How the interaction between NGOs and the U.S. government affects the Reset Policy

After establishing the interaction between American NGOs and the U.S. government in Russia, it is time to look at how these modes affect and relate to the Obama administration's Reset Policy. As established in chapter three, democracy and human rights are an important part of the Reset Policy with Russia; therefore, the U.S. government gladly uses American NGOs to help implement and support the Reset Policy's goals of democracy and human rights in Russia. The main reason is that NGOs have a strong local network and the necessary expertise to implement the policy. Therefore, NGOs can be seen as an important public diplomacy tool as they help to support the implementation of Obama's policy. However, as will become clear, due to the fact that NGOs still have their own agenda and can operate largely independently, the interaction between American NGOs and the U.S. government is a complicated relation. Because of this complicated relationship, the different modes of interaction have both positive and negative impacts that affect U.S. foreign policy, in this study the Reset Policy.

Positive impact: advancing Universal values and U.S. foreign policy objectives

First off all, the interaction between the U.S. government and NGOs on cooperative and supplementary bases, help the U.S. government to reach its democracy and human rights objectives of the Reset Policy. As explained in chapter three, democracy and human rights promotion is a central aspect of the Reset Policy. The Reset Policy has been initiated by the Obama administration to reinvigorate and strengthen the bilateral relations with Russia. By making Russia more democratic and make the country share the same democratic values the U.S. hopes to turn Russia into

a trustworthy ally and friend. In order to advance democratic values in Russia, the U.S. government cooperates with the American NGOs Freedom House, HRW, IRI, and NDI. The NGOs share the same values as the U.S. government and their foreign policy of democracy and human rights promotion. This becomes evident in the Reset Policy's dual track engagement to advance democracy and human rights within Russia (White House 2010, fact sheet). The NGOs play an important role in achieving these goals by bringing the different parties from the government and civil society level together. Also, through their efforts and activities, NGOs help to strengthen Russia's civil society and promote and stand up for democracy and human rights. In this sense, the NGOs are, although being partially independent and having their own agenda, a valuable asset of the U.S. foreign policy agenda and they fit in the country's Reset Policy objectives. Good examples of this are the government-to-government exchanges and the peer-to-peer dialogues between American and Russian civil society leaders, politicians, and lawyers on democracy and human rights. The Obama administration wanted more and a higher frequency of such exchanges and NGOs such as NDI and IRI helped to facilitate and organize these exchanges (The White House; International Republican Institute 2010). Through their activities and programs, the NGOs help to spread liberal values to turn Russia into a real democracy according to Western and U.S. standards. This process helps, according to the U.S. grand strategy, to bring peace and stability to Russia and the region Eurasia and it will improve U.S.-Russian relations as well, which is the main aim of the Reset Policy.

A second positive impact, next to the NGOs activities and programs to promote democracy and human rights, are their information sharing, agenda setting, and policy advice to support the Reset Policy. The information sharing, agenda setting, policy advice and recommendations help to further develop the democracy and human rights aspects of the Reset Policy as they show what is important.

The Freedom House report "Contending with Putin's Russia: A call for American Leadership" and the "World Report 2014: Russia" by HRW, are important in the sense that due to the NGOs' field experience, first hand information, and expertise the NGOs are a valuable source of information. The NGOs know more about the situation on democracy and human rights in Russia than the politicians and policy officers in Washington. For this reason they can be a valuable contribution to the U.S. foreign policy making process in the case of the Reset Policy. However, it is hard to measure the exact impact of these reports and its real influence can only be

guessed although it is highly likely that the reports are being used for their information. However, the fact that NGOs are asked to appear before subcommittees such as the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on European Affairs in the case of Freedom House's executive director, David J. Kramer, proves that the U.S. government has faith in the expertise and knowledge of the NGOs. The fact that the U.S. government implements all his suggestions shows the influence that the NGOs have on the Reset Policy. Therefore, there is a point to be made that the policy recommendations by NGOs, especially the ones made by the more renowned ones, do have an impact on the U.S. foreign policymaking towards Russia and the Reset Policy.

Negative impact: credibility and objectivity of American NGOs harms Reset Policy

The main problem that these NGOs face due to interaction with governments is that they are associated with the objectives and credibility of this government. This may harm the credibility and objectivity of the NGOs. This means that when they are critical of governments other than the one(s) they cooperate with, their critique may be perceived as being biased. The criticized governments or foreign publics perceive the activities and programs of the NGOs not as a part of the NGOs' own agenda but rather the foreign policy strategy of the government they interact with. In the case of the American NGOs Freedom House, HRW, IRI, and NDI the Russian government sees them as agents of the U.S. government, which only objective is to undermine the Russian state. As NGOs are considered to be an important part in the democracy and human rights part of the Reset Policy, their loss of credibility and objectivity is harmful for their own agenda but also has a negative impact on the Obama administration's Reset Policy.

The problem of credibility and objectivity due to the interaction and association with the U.S. government becomes clear through the following events and statements. On 12 June 2012, tens of thousands of anti-government protesters marched in Moscow demanding for more freedom, democracy, and transparency. The protesters rejected the legitimacy of the just newly re-elected President Vladimir Putin and demanded new elections. Former Prime Minister under Putin during the period 2000-2004, Mikhail Kasyanov, claimed: "We believe that his presidency right now is not legitimate at all." He claimed that the election in March 2012 that returned Putin to the presidency after four years of functioning as Prime Minister was not fair and

that the results were not credible (Black). The four selected American NGOs and many others supported these accusations and reported on the events going on in Russia. In a response the Russian foreign ministry held a press conference to explain that USAID had to stop its activities in Russia. The spokesman of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Aleksander Lukashevich, said in reference to the U.S. assistance aid: "There comes a time - and we stressed it in our comments yesterday - when own capabilities allow Russia seriously dealing with all these aspects. At the same time we can't tolerantly relate to the cases (and there were many), when representatives of the Agency through the grant injections crossed the red line" (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation). The U.S. government crossed the "red line" through the funding of American and Russian NGOs, which in its turn promoted, according to the Russian government, American ideals and values of democracy and human rights, which undermined Russian authority. USAID had to stop its activities, as it was part of the U.S. government's organizational structure. USAID worked together with many other NGOs, such as the ones selected, which caused cross containment and also these NGOs became suspects. However, as the NGOs such as Freedom House and HRW were not part of the government's organizational structure they could continue their work in Russia. Others such as IRI and NDI had to stop their activities as it had become impossible for them to continue under the suppression by the Russian state (Interfax).

The Russian government was, mildly put, unhappy with the funding of American and Russian NGOs by the U.S. government, as they perceived this as a threat to the stability of Russian society. The Russian government accused the U.S. for abusing democracy-building projects to undermine the Russian government and promoting its own ideals in Russia to serve its own interests. The official statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation said: "It's about attempts to influence political processes, including elections of various types, and institutions of civil society through the distribution of grants." In an interview with the Russian newspaper Kommersant, the Russian commissioner for Human Rights, Democracy and Supremacy of Law from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Konstantin Dolgov, expressed the Kremlin's annoyance with the U.S. mingling in Russian domestic politics as follows: "The main idea is that Americans continue positioning themselves as an absolute authority and indisputable leader in the sphere of democracy and human rights. They behave themselves as mentors when trying to

teach other countries how to build democracy and ensure human rights. Sometimes, they are tough and intrusive and violate the basic international and legal principle of the state sovereignty. Very often, their attempts to demonstrate care of human rights in other countries look like the direct interference in their internal affairs.” (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation). Dolgov criticized the U.S. for attempting to spread their ideas of democracy and human rights and force them upon other countries by interfering in other countries internal affairs, thereby, neglecting the international basic principles of state sovereignty. With his claims Dolgov implied that the U.S. policy of democracy and human rights promotion was not legitimate. The fact that the U.S. department of state finances American and Russian NGOs to advance their democracy and human rights programs and projects through federal state agencies makes these NGOs lose their neutral position and thereby their credibility and legitimacy according to the perception of the Russian government.

During a Federal Security Service (FSB) board meeting on the 14th of February 2013, President Putin reflected on the results of the FSB’s activities in 2012. In his speech Putin emphasized the constitutional right to freedom of speech but that no one had the right to use this right to sow hatred or destabilize Russia as this would endanger the lives, well-being, and peaceful existence of millions of people. Russian society was maturing and the Russian people took more responsibility for what was happening in their own society and are forming organizations, associations, and political parties. Putin promised state support for these processes. However, other countries funding these processes through grants was a bridge too far according to him as they served other countries’ interests: “I nevertheless want to emphasize that no one holds a monopoly that gives them the right to speak on behalf of all Russian society, especially the entities managed and financed from abroad as they inevitably serve others’ interests.” President Putin continued and said that NGOs and their activities that had to comply with Russian law: “The regime governing the activities of NGOs in Russia is in place, and it also applies to funding from abroad. Obviously, these laws must be complied with. Any direct or indirect interference in our internal affairs, any form of pressure on our country or on our allies and partners, is unacceptable” (Vladimir Putin 2013). The fear that shimmers through in Putin’s words can be explained from the ongoing Arab Revolution and the memory of the Color Revolutions in Eurasia. According to the Russian journalist and political commentator Konstantin von Eggert, the fear shimmering through in the Russian

statements come from the ongoing Arab Revolution and the memory of the Color Revolutions in Eurasia: "Putin sees Western-funded NGOs as direct agents of regime change in Russia" (Brunwasser).

The above statements make it clear that the Russian government perceives the activities of NGOs threatening to its government's authority and its sovereignty. In a political ideology such as Putinism, everything within the state has to be in support of the state and is organized in such a way it keeps the political position of President Putin intact. This means that there is no room for critical voices from for example NGOs, which are perceived as a threat to the political system in Russia (Lucas 73-74; Wilson 24-25). The close interaction between the American NGOs and the U.S. government and their efforts to reinvigorate Russian civil society, democracy, and human rights is misused to silence the opposition and the power of the opposition that undermine Putin's power.

By advancing "universal values" through democracy and human rights efforts and seeking engagement with the Russian government and Russian civil society, the U.S. government hoped to improve mutual understanding and create a synergy of democratic and liberal values with Russia in order to improve the bilateral relations. However, it were these so-called "universal values" and the constant criticizing and promotion of these "universal values" that Russia perceived as being dangerous for its stability. The Kremlin considered the promotion of these "universal values", what they casted as American values, to be a threat to Russia's sovereignty and authority as they are different from so-called traditional Russian values. This perception played an important role in the failure of the Reset Policy as the NGOs actively helped to implement its democracy and human rights aspects. Therefore, it could be said that the work American and Russian NGOs did to advance democracy building and human rights to strengthen civil society had the opposite effect. Instead of improving the bilateral relations with Russia through their development assistance, NGOs caused distrust, as they were associated with the U.S. government and its policies, which had a negative connotation to Russia. Due to their close interaction with the U.S. government, who approved and funded NGOs' programs and projects, the Russian government believed that the NGOs were in fact agents for the U.S. government supporting the U.S. governments' political agenda rather than their own. This wielded distrust and undermined the Reset Policy's main objective of improving the bilateral

relations between the U.S. and Russia. This turned out to be one of the causes why the Reset Policy failed in the end.

To conclude, due to their close interaction with the U.S. government and its policies the NGOs were also associated with the government objectives. As Russia perceived the U.S. objectives to be aimed at undermining Russian authority and sovereignty, these objectives were seen as a danger to the Russia's national interests. As NGOs played an important role in facilitating and promoting the democracy and human rights aspects of the Reset Policy they were seen as agents, who promoted U.S. interests and tried to destabilize the Russian state by their democracy and human rights works. These associations made the NGOs lose their objectivity and credibility in the eyes of the Russian state. Their activities had to be curtailed to protect Russian interests by the means of NGO laws and cutting off their financial support. This made it difficult for them to reach their own objectives and the Reset Policy objectives of the U.S. government. Even worse, the works of the NGOs and their interaction with the U.S. government in Russia caused the further deterioration of the U.S.-Russian bilateral relations and played a part in the failure of the Reset Policy.

Conclusion

The work and impact of NGOs in international relations has been extensively studied and recognized. However, most of the results of these studies have been considered to be based upon perceptions, anecdotal evidence, and on mostly nonscientific assessments of NGOs work and impact. For this reason it is important to pay more attention to the role of NGOs and their behavior and interaction with states globally, assessing their performances, effectiveness, and the impact of NGOs on international relations and world politics. The best way to do this is by means of case studies as these prove to be valuable to assess the performances and impact of the interaction between NGOs and states and the impact of NGOs on states' policies. This study takes a closer look at the interaction between NGOs and state governments and how NGOs can have an impact on a state's foreign policies and international relations. In order to do so, it unravels the interaction between American democracy and human rights NGOs operating in Russia and the U.S. government and how this interaction has had an impact on the U.S. government's Reset Policy during the period 2009-2014. It assesses how NGOs relate to U.S. foreign policy and what their role and impact have been during and on the Reset Policy.

The purpose of chapter one has been to establish a definition of what an NGO is and to offer a model which can be used to entangle the interaction between NGOs and the U.S. government. The definition of a NGO, in this study, is that it is an organization, which is non-profit-seeking, at least organizationally separate from the U.S. government, non-violent, and with a focus on humanitarian development. The NGO's level of organization needs to be international orientated and U.S. based. Its main purpose is the advocacy of political goals in relation to democracy and human rights. For this study, four NGOs have been selected that comply with the aforementioned characteristics: Freedom House, Human Rights Watch (HRW), the International Republic Institute (IRI), and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). These NGOs have been selected as they belong to the most important and influential American NGOs operating in Russia during the time of the Reset Policy. For this reason it is likely that their political power is higher, as well as their impact on U.S. policies and in this study the Reset Policy. The model that has been developed to establish the interaction between the four NGOs and the U.S. government has been based on the idea that interaction takes place on bases of three

different modes: cooperative, supplementary, and opposing. It is important to note that the modes of interaction are fluid and not fixed and sometimes the different modes overlap. This means that the modes of interaction are not exclusive categories and that, depending on the circumstances, NGOs and governments interact and engage with each other in different ways at different times and that the relation can be cooperative while at the same time opposing.

Chapter two aims at connecting NGOs to the U.S. foreign policy grand strategy abroad. U.S. foreign policy consists of five so-called pillars. These pillars represent the U.S. main objectives abroad which are: defending the American homeland from being under attack, maintaining a favorable balance of power among the great powers, punishing rogue actors, investing in good governance and allied capabilities abroad, and promoting democracy and human rights. The most important pillar, which binds all the others together, is promoting democracy and human rights abroad. The key-idea is that by creating like-minded governments that share the same liberal democratic values, peace and stability can be achieved worldwide. In order to advance liberal democracy values the U.S. uses public diplomacy strategies in which NGOs play an important role. NGOs are perceived as objective and credible organizations, which are very effective in penetrating states without regard to borders. Also, they often involve citizens who are well placed in the domestic politics of several countries, and such networks are able to focus the attention of the media and governments on issues and values they find important. They create a new type of transnational political coalitions and can influence political policies both domestically and abroad. It is for these reasons that the U.S. government supports and makes use of NGOs as a useful tool for its foreign policy to achieve its own objectives. However, it has to be noticed that although the NGOs support and work together with the U.S. government, they retain their independence and still have their own agendas and objectives. The NGOs do share the same ideals and values as the U.S. government and because of that many objectives are similar. This is why they engage in a mutual beneficial cooperation with each other.

The chapter three shows that advancing democracy and human rights has been an important objective of the U.S. foreign policy towards Russia. The main reason behind this is that the U.S. hoped that a democratic Russia would become a friend and an ally and that this will lead to peace and stability in Eurasia. Achieving this objective has also played an important role in the Reset Policy, which aims at

improving the U.S.-Russian bilateral relations. The U.S. government has used NGOs to support and implement the Reset Policy's democracy and human rights aspects.

In chapter four the different modes of interaction between the four selected NGOs and the U.S. government are discussed in the framework of the Reset Policy. The case study proved that American democracy and human rights NGOs interacted on cooperative, supplementary, and opposing bases with the U.S. government in Russia. The different modes of interaction showed that the four selected NGOs and the U.S. government were heavily intertwined with each other at the time of the Reset Policy. This had both a positive and a negative impact on the policymaking and evolution process of the Reset Policy. Through the different modes of interaction the NGOs can be a valuable source of information and have a positive impact on the policymaking and development process of the Reset Policy through information sharing, agenda setting, and an advisory role for the Department of State and the U.S. Congress. This gives them an actual voice to insert influence on the policy. Also, the NGOs help to implement the democracy and human rights aspects of the policy by setting up activities, programs, and projects to advance democracy and human rights in Russia. The U.S. government provides the NGOs with the means and legitimacy.

As shown, due to their interaction with the U.S. government the NGOs can have a positive impact on the policymaking and development process of the Reset Policy. Regrettably, the interaction between the NGOs and the U.S. government also has a negative impact on the Reset Policy. The interaction raises doubts on the objectivity and credibility of the NGOs. Some NGOs, such as Freedom House, IRI, and NDI openly claim that they identify themselves with and actively support U.S. foreign policy goals. HRW claims to be independent from the U.S. government. However, they interact on supplementary with the U.S. government, which means they cooperate on voluntary bases and not in a partnership. These forms of interaction with the U.S. government make the NGOs seem suspicious and lose their objectivity and credibility in the eyes of the Russian government. This perception of the NGO's activities has caused the Russian government to implement rules to constrain and control the NGOs. These rules have made it more difficult for the NGOs to do their work and advance democracy and human rights in Russia as well as made it harder for the U.S. government to reach its democracy and human rights goals as listed in the Reset Policy. Even worse, it has seriously damaged the bilateral relations between the two countries as the Kremlin accuses the U.S. of using the NGOs to undermine its

authority and violate its sovereignty. Instead of improving the bilateral relations with Russia through their development assistance, the NGOs cause distrust due to their close interaction with the U.S. government. Because of this the animosity and distrust towards the U.S. has grown, thereby undermining the Reset Policy's main objective of improving the bilateral relations between the U.S. and Russia. Therefore, it can be concluded that the work of American NGOs in the means of advancing democracy and human rights in Russia, have had the opposite effect and even had a part in the failure of the Reset Policy. In this case study, the interaction between the NGOs and the U.S. government had dire consequences and a negative impact on the activities of the NGOs and the U.S. government's Reset Policy.

The purpose of this study has been to take a closer look at the impact of NGOs on the U.S. Reset Policy through their interaction with the U.S. government. After examining the results it can be concluded that NGOs do have a serious impact on the policymaking process especially through their information sharing, agenda setting, and advisory role. However, in this research there has been only room for assessing the more influential and well-established international American NGOs. For further research it would be interesting to look at the impact of smaller American NGOs and/or Russian NGOs and see how they try to influence the U.S. foreign policymaking process in regards to Russia.

To conclude, due to their interaction with governments, NGOs can have a serious impact on the policymaking processes, depending on how well established they are and their access and influence to higher political circles. The interaction can have both a negative and a positive impact on government's policies. Due to the interaction between the NGOs and the U.S. government a complicated relationship exists in which both have to weigh the advantages and disadvantages. Surely, both can benefit from the relationship, but the line between success and failure of reaching their policy objectives is thin. As the case study of the Reset Policy has shown, both can reap the fruits of their relationship in Russia, but in the end it may make matters more complicated.

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