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**ROSSOTRUDNICHESTVO AS AN INSTRUMENT OF SOFT POWER OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

O. Andriyenko, PhD, Professor

Academician of the Academy of Higher Education of Ukraine, Ukraine,
Kiev

In the article the philosophical aspect of modern Russias' soft power which is expressed in the activities of Rossotrudnichestvo (The Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots who Live Abroad) has been analyzed. The methodological background of the research includes the following grounds: dialectical logic; systematic approach; historical approach; elements of a synergistic approach; general logical methods (the ascent from the abstract to the certain; analysis; synthesis; modeling and typology). The accent has been made on the variety of ways of interpretation of soft power in modern world (American, Chinese, Indian and other approaches to this concept), on the specific features and historical background of Rossotrudnichestvo as an instrument of soft power of Russia, and on the main problems facing the work of the Agency in modern international environment.

Key words: Soft Power, Smart Power, Attractive Power, Wise Power, Social Worldview, Political Philosophy.

Soft power can be defined as a form of political influence which is based on liking, voluntary participation and attractiveness. The notion "soft power" is contrary to "hard power". At its core "soft power" includes the language and culture of the country which manifest themselves in a wide range of forms and humanitarian technologies, such as science, education, charity, etc. The concept of "soft power" was first put forward by

representatives of the American school of neoliberalism (J. Nye [1, p. 47]) in a controversy with representatives of neorealism (K. Waltz). The problem that arises when using the tools of “hard power” (first of all, military forces), lies in their exhaustion. There is always a limited amount of military and economic resources at the disposal of any state. Moreover, the use of these resources leads to their distraction from the “normal” socio-economic activities and therefore in the long term reduces the socio-economic capabilities of the state. Nowadays soft power became the instrument which is used by many countries. The Russian Federation is among them.

The aim of this article is the philosophical inquiry of the activity and social and political role of *Rossotrudnichestvo* as a tool of soft power of modern Russia.

As for scientific works which are devoted to the problem of soft power should be mentioned the following authors: J. Nye [1], T.A. Börzel and T. Risse [2], D.S. Grewal [3], A.V. Torkunov [4], A.M. Bobylo, S.V. Sevast'yanov [5], and others. Most of their works contain the investigation of the problem of soft power in the context of Western countries (first of all, the USA) while the questions of soft power of Russia and its instruments remain open.

The methodological background of this research is based on the following grounds: 1) dialectical logic; 2) systematic approach; 3) historical approach; 4) elements of a synergistic approach (in the study of the history of the development of *Rossotrudnichestvo* in conjunction with the development of Russia and the transformation of the main areas of implementation of its international interests); 5) general logical methods: the ascent from the abstract to the certain; analysis; synthesis; modeling and typology.

This problem became acute for the United States in the second half of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, when the gradual disappearance

of the relative economic domination of America in the capitalist world became apparent. The USA is increasingly inferior under the pressure of its Western European and Japanese competitors. Even more this problem has worsened due to the acute global oil crisis which has shown the enormous vulnerability of the American economy. Accordingly, the question arose as to whether the United States could in the long term only with its economic and military resources retain claims for global leadership.

A number of works by famous historians [3, p. 27] who pondered this problem in the 1970s–1980s showed that all the world empires that used the tools of “hard power” faced severe disabilities and eventually fell. Not a single state is simply able to maintain its dominance on the world stage, relying on “exhaustible” brute force. In this situation, a number of representatives of American neoliberalism and the idea arose to find an “inexhaustible” source of the power of the state on the world stage.

For neoliberals military and even economic power is neither the only possible nor the most effective tool for ensuring the security of states. In this regard the classical theory of “soft power” does not even imply the use of economic instruments. According to the developments of representatives of this school of thought, the “soft power” of the state is based on the attractiveness of its culture, values, political and social programs.

“Soft power” is the opposite of “hard power”. “Hard power” is a set of pressure tools (military-political, economic, diplomatic) that force other countries to act as “America needs” [2, p. 21]. “Soft power” is based on cultivating a sense of liking, the attractiveness of an ideal and a positive example. “Soft power” and “hard power” are believed to be related in an economic cost reduction model. Significant “soft power” of the state makes its use of “hard power” more acceptable to the objects of its impact, thus reducing costs.

The concept of “soft power” has found wide application in American politics after the end of the Cold War, during the administration of W. Clinton. Then during the administration of G.W. Bush this concept temporarily lost its significance.

With the beginning of the new millennium an active search began for new aspects of the application of “soft power”. A number of its derivative concepts arose. In Europe the idea of “normative power” has spread. The EU officially positions itself as a force that adheres to the norms of international law and spreads them around the world. In the USA during the period of B. Obama’s administration, the concept of “smart power” also put forward by J. Nye was widely used in practice. This is an effective combination of military, economic and “soft power” tools. At present the concept of “network power” is also developing which is related to the use of technical and social networks in the era of globalization and their role in the new generation of revolutions.

The concept of “soft power” has become widespread in non-Western countries. A new vision of foreign policy strategies in the framework of “soft power”, the types of which determine national identity, represent different countries. So, along with the “smart power” of the USA the “attractive power” of the EU, the “wise power” of China, and the “sophisticated power” of India have been applied.

In building attractive power strategies Western European policy is based on the ideas of tolerance, democracy and openness, the popularity of Western European languages and education.

Implementing the wise power model Beijing uses above all the principles of “wise expansion”, “wise cooperation”, “restraint” and “consistency”.

The conceptual basis of the sophisticated power of India as a kind of “soft power” is the idea of peaceful development, based on the most

important philosophical idea – *Ahimsa*. The idea of humanizing international relations was reflected in the principles of peaceful coexistence (“*pancha shila*”), the idea of non-alignment, in the ideals of moral politics. The ability of “soft power” to humanize international relations, limiting the use of real, hard power is of great importance for Indian politics prompting it to increasingly look for and apply new forms of its realization.

The effective policy of “soft power” enables the state to activate the resources of external influence and strengthen its position in the political space. Without paying due attention to the development of “soft power” technologies Russia today is faced with the negative consequences of stereotypes that have emerged as a country that realizes its foreign policy interests primarily with the methods and resources of “hard power” [5, p. 75]. At present the efforts of the Russian state in building new “soft power” strategies are rather fragmented, which significantly reduces the possibility of the Russian influence on modern world politics. It is important to pay attention to the formation of new projects of “soft power” of Russia, the inclusion of new actors and new methods of expanding external influence in accordance with current realities. An important place in this process belongs to Rossotrudnichestvo.

In the conditions of the modern globalized world, the main activities of any state include the need to constantly strengthen state positions on the world stage and develop the country’s interests not using “hard power” but resorting to humanitarian methods [6].

In today’s Russia the main federal executive bodies involved in ensuring and developing Russia’s international relations with members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, ensuring and developing Russia’s international relations with other countries, and creating an objective view of the modern Russian Federation include in accordance

with Presidential Order No. 1315 of September 6, 2008, "On Certain Issues of Public Administration in the Field of International native cooperation" [7].

In its activities Rossotrudnichestvo or The Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots who Live Abroad is directly subordinate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation [8].

Abroad the activities of Rossotrudnichestvo are implemented through the Russian centers of science and culture which are its official representative offices, as well as through Russian overseas agencies.

Work on coordinating the development of cultural ties with foreign countries in Russia has been going on for quite some time even before the creation of Rossotrudnichestvo [9].

The history of the creation of Rossotrudnichestvo can be divided into the following stages:

- All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS), (the original organization was created in April 1925);
- Union of Soviet Friendship Societies (SODC) which was established in 1958;
- International Union of Public Associations "Russian Association for International Cooperation" (RAMS), established in 1992;
- Roszarubezhtsentr or Russian Center for International Scientific and Cultural Cooperation, established in 1994, and in 2002 became part of the Russian Foreign Ministry.

The necessity to create a strategy that must meet the requirements of the new time and accordingly the importance of creating a federal executive body that is Rossotrudnichestvo is associated with the following factors:

- The development of international relations;
- Active implementation of international policy in cultural and humanitarian sulfur;

- The necessity to build a trusting relationship with a foreign society with the active involvement of public diplomacy.

The work of Rossotrudnichestvo is carried out in accordance with the regulatory framework of the Russian Federation, namely on the basis of:

- Bylaws of the President of Russia;
- Government regulations;
- Bylaws of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia;
- Departmental orders;
- International agreements.

In addition the field of activity of Rossotrudnichestvo also includes participation in the elaboration of the regulatory framework together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia which aims to regulate the functioning of Russian centers of science and culture in other countries.

Based on the Regulation on Rossotrudnichestvo, its head has four deputies and, in its structure, the central apparatus is divided into offices in accordance with the main areas of work:

- Educational and youth programs, programs of support of Russian language;
- International humanitarian cooperation and Russian centers of science and culture;
- Cultural programs;
- Work with compatriots and research and production associations;
- Information support;
- Secretariat of the Federal Agency;
- Monetary, financial and logistical support.

The maximum number of employees working in the central office of Rossotrudnichestvo is 257 people. And today it has its offices in 76 countries, including 59 Russian centers of science and culture, 8 branches

of centers of science and culture, and 17 representative offices of the federal body which are part of Russia's diplomatic missions.

From a geographical point of view Rossotrudnichestvo with its activities covers the territory from the USA to Japan and from Argentina to Finland and by 2020 more than 100 centers of science and culture of Russia should be working all over the world [4, p. 88].

Thus, it can already be argued that the Russian Foreign Ministry has done a lot of work to promote the national interests of the Russian Federation abroad using the methods of "soft power" but it should be noted that other states, for example China, currently have more than 800 such. It should also be noted that for the frequent material database of Russian centers abroad requires serious and capital reconstruction.

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