

## UNDERSTANDING RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY: CONTINUITIES AND CHANGES UNDER PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN

*Gurjeet Kaur*

*Research Scholar, Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies,  
School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India*

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The study reveals that Russian foreign policy has undergone various transformations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century under the leadership of President Vladimir V. Putin. These changes are reflected in Russia's active involvement in international affairs and its response towards the issues in its backyard (Georgia crisis 2008, Crimean reunification with Russia 2014). In terms of realist aims and ambitions, Russian foreign policy discourses indicate certain continuities of the Soviet era, for example, Russia's emphasis on its global power status. What marks the beginning of a new era in Russian foreign policy discourses is the approach of Vladimir Putin. He has transformed the way today's world looks at Russia. While in principle, Russian foreign policy remains focused on the 'multi-polar world' order with a respectable place for Russia, in practice, it is a pragmatic approach to enhance Russian national interest and counterbalance the West in its backyard and former zones of influence in the world. This study looks at the continuities and changes in the Russian foreign policy in terms of its national interest, Russian Identity and its stance on various international issues.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Realism, National Interest, Identity, Pragmatism, Security, Foreign Policy*