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# Strategy in the Practice of Statecraft?

The Interrelationship of Foreign and Military Policies  
in Putin's Russia,  
2014-2021

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## Abstract

This dissertation empirically examines press releases and documents issued by the Russian government to measure their relative frequency and intended message over the years 2014-2021. It then quantifies how the quantities of diplomatic meetings and military exercises over time shift the relative quality of Russia's relations with other countries of the world as well as the degree of military threat expressed toward each country by the geographical and tactical distribution of the military exercises acknowledged by the state. Finally, it assesses this shifting distribution using mixed methodologies: a quantitative methodology to determine if and how the changing foreign policy quality and military threat are correlated and a qualitative methodology to examine the patterns by which different leading Russian politicians and bureaucratic organs discuss their competing outlooks on and objectives of policy. It concludes by assessing that despite efforts to better harmonise policymaking across the Russian government, relatively little evidence exists to suggest that a coherent strategy is determining the everyday coordination of Russian foreign and military policies.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Tables.....	vi
List of Maps.....	viii
List of Charts.....	ix
Acknowledgements.....	x
Author's Declaration.....	x
Abbreviations.....	xi
Chapter 1. Introduction.....	1
Research Question.....	3
Research Design.....	5
Structure.....	7
Chapter 2. Literature Review.....	10
The Silo School.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
International Relations Theoretical Approaches.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Geographical and Geostrategic Approaches.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Institutional Approaches.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Historical Approaches.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Military Modernisation Analysis.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Military Exercise Analysis.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Military Signalling.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Rusting Pile of Nuclear Weapons School.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Comprehensive Strategy School.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Political Pressures Theory.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Hybrid Warfare.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Global Plot.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Flexible Response.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Conclusions.....	53
Chapter 3. A Comprehensive View of Russian Management of Foreign and Military Policy in the Putin Era.....	56
The Kremlin.....	57
Perception of the International System and Role of War.....	59
Politics and Policy.....	76
Self-Perception.....	81
Summary.....	82
The Russian Armed Forces.....	83
Evolution of Thought on Conflict.....	90

Perception of and Interaction with the International System .....	94
Self-Perception .....	97
Summary .....	100
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs.....	101
Views on Conflict and the International System .....	104
Implementation of Policy .....	107
Summary .....	110
Conclusions .....	112
Chapter 4. Quantitative Analysis.....	114
Methodology for Tracking the Coordination of Russian Foreign and Military Policies .	114
Quantitative Measurement of Russian Foreign Policy: FPQS .....	116
Quantitative Measurement of Russian Military Policy: MTPS .....	121
Correlation of Foreign and Military Policy.....	137
The Analysis .....	141
Relating Military Exercises to Foreign Policy Quality (PMPTS and FPQS) .....	141
Relating Trade Turnover to Foreign Policy Quality (FPQS) .....	143
Comparing the Correlation among the Two Variable Relationships .....	145
Conclusions .....	147
Assessing the Hypotheses .....	147
Theoretical Implications.....	153
Chapter 5. Qualitative Case Studies .....	156
Turkey .....	159
Japan.....	178
France .....	197
Conclusions .....	218
Chapter 6. Conclusion.....	221
Findings Relative to the Literature.....	221
Further Research Possibilities.....	228
Conclusions: A Spectrum of Relations from Cooperation to Opposition? .....	229
Appendix.....	236
FPQS Calculation: Methodology Details .....	236
Sources Consulted.....	236
State Diplomacy Weighting .....	236
Information and Propaganda Weighting .....	237
MTPS Calculation .....	238
Areas of Responsibility, TVDs, and Affected Countries .....	238
Countries Impacted by Naval Exercises .....	249
Types of Exercises and their MTPS Weighting .....	251
Quantitative Date Codebook.....	255

List of Control Variable Relationships and Correlation Coefficients.....	256
Bibliography.....	259
Chapter 1 .....	259
Chapter 2 .....	262
Chapter 3 .....	281
Chapter 4 .....	301
Chapter 5 .....	305
Chapter 6 .....	331

## List of Tables

Table 3-1. Demonstrations of Kremlin Interest in Military Affairs, 2014-2021.....	77
Table 4-1. Russian Foreign Policy Quality Scores (FPQS) with High Importance Interlocutors, 2019.....	126
Table 4-2. Russian Foreign Policy Quality Scores (FPQS) with the United Kingdom, 2014-2021.....	126
Table 4-3. Percentage of Military Threat Potential Score (MTPS) from Russian Strategic Nuclear Weapons per Country, 2021.....	140
Table 4-4. Scale of Significance of Correlation of Variables using Pearson's $r$ .....	146
Table 4-5. Relationships in which the Correlation Coefficient in Pearson's $r$ Test between Proportional Military Threat Potential Score (PMTPS) and Foreign Policy Quality Score (FPQS) exceeded 0.4.....	147
Table 4-6. Relationships in which the Correlation Coefficient in Pearson's $r$ Test between the Previous Year's Trade Turnover and Foreign Policy Quality Score (FPQS) exceeded 0.....	149
Table 4-7. Relationships in which the Correlation Coefficient in Pearson's $r$ Test between Proportional Military Threat Potential Score (PTMPS) and Foreign Policy Quality Score (FPQS) exceeded 0.4 and in which the Absolute Value of the Coefficient exceeded that between Trade Turnover and FPQS by at least 0.1....	151
Table 4-8. Relationships in which the Correlation Coefficient in Pearson's $r$ Test between Trade Turnover and Foreign Policy Quality Score (FPQS) exceeded 0.4 and in which the Absolute Value of the Coefficient exceeded that between Proportional Military Threat Potential Score (PMTPS) and FPQS by at least 0.1...	151
Table 4-9. Distribution of Quadrants by implications on the hypotheses.....	153
Table 4-10. Distribute of Correlation Tests by Quadrant of Coefficients.....	153
Table 5-1. Methodology for Determining the Quantitative 'Characterization of Relations'.....	157
Table 5-2. Russia-Turkey Relations in Quantitative Figures, 2014-2021.....	168
Table 5-3. Russia-Turkey Discussion Topics in Bilateral Meetings excluding matters of Bilateral Relations, 2014-2021.....	171
Table 5-4. Operational-Level Russian Military Units and Seas affecting Russian Military Threat Potential Scores (MTPS) toward Turkey.....	175
Table 5-5. Russia-Japan Relations in Quantitative Figures, 2014-2021.....	187
Table 5-6. Russia-Japan Discussion Topics in Bilateral Meetings excluding matters of Bilateral Relations, 2014-2021.....	188
Table 5-7. Annual Frequency of officially acknowledged Russian meetings on a peace treaty with Japan and Foreign policy Quality Scores (FPQS), 2014-2021.....	189

Table 5-8. Operational-Level Russian Military Units and Seas affecting Russian Military Threat Potential Scores (MTPS) toward Japan.....	194
Table 5-9. Russia-France Relations in Quantitative Figures, 2014-2021.....	204
Table 5-10. Russia-France Discussion Topics in Bilateral Meetings excluding matters of Bilateral Relations, 2014-2021.....	205
Table 5-11. Operational-Level Russian Military Units and Seas affecting Russian Military Threat Potential Scores (MTPS) toward France.....	214
Table 6-1. Methodology for Determining the Quantitative ‘Characterization of Relations’ .....	234



## List of Maps

Map 4-1. Russian Army and Corps-Level Areas of Responsibility.....	129
Map 4-2. Distribution of modern countries among the Soviet-era theatres of strategic military action <i>TVDs</i> ).....	132
Map 4-3. Minimum number of border crossings from Russian mainland to each country.....	134
Map 6-1. Characterization of Relations of the Russian Federation with Other States, 2014.....	235
Map 6-2. Characterization of Relations of the Russian Federation with Other States, 2021.....	235

## List of Charts

Chart 4-1. Correlation scores between Proportional Military Threat Potential Scores (PMTPS) and Foreign Policy Quality Score (FPQS) vs between trade turnover and Foreign Policy Quality Score (FPQS).....	150
Chart 4-2. Scatterplot of Global Russian Proportional Military Threat Potential Scores (PMTPS) and Foreign Policy Quality Scores (FPQS), 2014-2021.....	154
Chart 4-3. Scatterplot of Global Russian trade turnover and Foreign Policy Quality Scores (FPQS), 2014-2021.....	155
Chart 4-4. Scatterplot of Global Proportional Military Threat Potential Scores (PMTPS) and Foreign Policy Quality Scores (FPQS) excluding Ukraine, 2014-2021.....	156
Chart 5-1. Russian Foreign Policy Quality Scores (FPQS) toward France, Japan, and Turkey, 2014-2021.....	162
Chart 5-2. Russian Interest Count (IC) toward France, Japan, and Turkey, 2014-2021.	163
Chart 5-3. Russian Proportional Military Threat Potential Scores (PMTPS) toward France, Japan, and Turkey, 2014-2021.....	164

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Word Count: 89,570

## Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: Nicholas Myers

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 29 April 2022

## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used most frequently in the text below:

AOR: Area of responsibility

C2: Command and control

DFM: Deputy foreign minister

IC: Interest count

FPQS: Foreign policy quality score

MID: Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (short for *Ministerstvo innostrannykh del*)

MOD: Ministry of defence

MTPS: Military threat potential score

    AMTPS: Absolute military threat potential score

    PMTPS: Proportional military threat potential score

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

TCA: Trade per interest count average (measurement for politicization)

TVD: Theatre of strategic military action (short for *teatr voennykh deystvii*)

## Chapter 1. Introduction

Situated at the intersection of many regions, the Russian Federation engages the world with a unique combination of foreign and military policies. Russian policy appears simultaneously both monolithic and idiosyncratic, destabilising and constructive, driven exclusively by Moscow's grand strategy and contained by foreign capitals' will to engage. However apocryphally Tsar Alexander III claimed that 'Russia has only two allies: its army and its navy',<sup>1</sup> this sentiment is both well-known to and oft-repeated among Russian strategists and scholars<sup>2</sup> and suggests Russia perceives itself as having no true friends. This dissertation analyses how such a self-proclaimed distrusting power engages its partners and foes using a large-*n* empirical database of observations to identify patterns and judge them against the emerging Western 'hybrid warfare' theory that Russian foreign policy serves merely to justify a coercive, primarily military, strategy.

Despite the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation retains assertive foreign and military policies likely to outlast long-time President Vladimir Putin. This dissertation explores the empirical expressions of these policies to identify what factors most prominently influence their vicissitudes and better understand Russian strategic priorities.

In this dissertation, Russian 'foreign policy' is defined as the political means by which Russia overtly interacts with other actors in the international system.<sup>3</sup> Russian 'military policy' incorporates both defence planning and the deployment of the armed forces.<sup>4</sup> 'Strategy' refers to the intersection and attempted

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<sup>1</sup> Yuriy Kirillov, 'Нужны ли нам сильные армия и флот' [Do we need a strong army and navy], *Nezavisimoe Gazeta*, 3 April 2020, [http://nvo.ng.ru/concepts/2020-04-03/1\\_1088\\_fleet1.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/concepts/2020-04-03/1_1088_fleet1.html). Accessed 4 April 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Е.г. 'Прямая линия с Владимиром Путиным' [Direct Line with Vladimir Putin], Kremlin, 16 April 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/49261>. Accessed 29 June 2020.

<sup>3</sup> This definition includes the means but not the ends because it includes data from recent history for which the necessary archives are not yet available to unambiguously determine the latter. To compensate for this, this dissertation measures how foreign policy is expressed rather than assessing its intentions. This crude definition of 'foreign policy' as essentially a list of options for a single state to pursue is influenced by the separation of foreign policy from international politics within the realm of international relations at large. M. Fatih Tayfur, 'Main approaches to the study of foreign policy: A review', *METU Studies in Development*, 21:4, 1994, p 114-118. This will be explored in greater detail below in chapter 4.

<sup>4</sup> The definition of 'military policy' is very sparsely defined in the pre-existing literature with many books taking it in their title but declining to define it. Frederick Kagan, *Finding the target: the transformation of American military policy*, New York: Encounter Books, 2006. William C. Martel, *Victory in war: foundations*

synchronisation of these policies over time.<sup>5</sup>

No shortage of literature exists describing Russian foreign policy via such diverse prisms as theoretical,<sup>6</sup> ideological,<sup>7</sup> event-driven,<sup>8</sup> geographical,<sup>9</sup> political,<sup>10</sup> and constructivist interest-based<sup>11</sup> perspectives. A smaller but still substantial body of literature addresses Russian military policy primarily via administrative,<sup>12</sup>

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*of modern military policy*, Cambridge University Press, 2007. As such, the definition used in this dissertation follows the options for an individual state approach used to define foreign policy in line with the definition of 'military policy' in the 2014 Russian Military Doctrine. 'Военная доктрина Российской Федерации' [Military doctrine of the Russian Federation], Article 18, <https://rg.ru/2014/12/30/doktrina-dok.html>. Accessed 9 April 2022. As contemporary defence planning remains classified, military exercise scenarios and public statements of defence officials on the state of global security are used as proxies. This will be explained in greater detail below in chapter 4.

<sup>5</sup> Strategy for this dissertation might therefore be considered as the means of reconciling the distinct but inextricably linked practices of politics and war. Lawrence T. Caldwell, 'Russian Concepts of National Security', *Russian foreign policy in the twenty-first century and the shadow of the past*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, p 326. Beatrice Heuser, *The evolution of strategy: thinking war from antiquity to the present*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p 3. Colin S. Gray, *Strategy and defence planning: meeting the challenge of uncertainty*, Oxford University Press, 2014, p 51.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Sergunin, *Explaining Russian foreign policy behavior: theory and practice*, Ibidem-Verlag Haunschild, 2016. Chris Alden & Amnon Aran, *Foreign policy analysis: new approaches*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London: Routledge, 2017, p 1-3. Ed. Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Routledge Handbook of Russian Foreign Policy*, London: Routledge, 2018. Deborah Welch Larson & Alexei Shevchenko, *Quest for status: Chinese and Russian foreign policy*, Yale University Press, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Marlene Laurelle, *Russian nationalism: imaginaries, doctrines, and political battlefields*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2019. Alicja Curanović, *The sense of mission in Russian foreign policy: destined for greatness!*, London: Routledge, 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia and the West from Alexander to Putin: honor in international relations*, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Robert H. Donaldson, Joseph L. Noguee, & Vidya Madkarni, *The foreign policy of Russia: changing systems, enduring interests*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2014. Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's foreign policy: change and continuity in national identity*, London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey Mankoff, *Russian foreign policy: the return of great power politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2011. Ed. Natasha Kuhrt, *Russia and the world: the internal-external nexus*, London: Routledge, 2013. Nikolas K. Gvosdev & Christopher Marsh, *Russian foreign policy: interests, vectors, and sectors*, Thousand Oaks, California: CQ Press, 2014. Ed. Roger E. Kanet & Rémi Piet, *Shifting priorities in Russia's foreign and security policy*, Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2014. Robert Nalbandov, *Not by bread alone: Russian foreign policy under Putin*, Lincoln, Nebraska: Potomac Books, 2016. Angela E. Stent, *Putin's world: Russia against the West and with the rest*, New York: Twelve, 2019.

<sup>10</sup> Dmitri Trenin, *Post-Imperium*, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011. Luke March, 'Nationalism for export? The domestic and foreign-policy implications of the new "Russian Idea"', *Russia and the world: the internal-external nexus*, London: Routledge, 2013, p 9-34.

<sup>11</sup> James Sherr, *Hard diplomacy and soft coercion: Russia's influence abroad*, London: Chatham House, 2013. Bobo Lo, *Russia and the new world disorder*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Andrew Monaghan, *Power in modern Russia: Strategy and mobilisation*, Manchester University Press, 2017. Lester W. Grau & Charles K. Bartles, *The Russian way of war: force structure, tactics, and modernization of the Russian Ground Forces*, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2017. Aleksandr Golts, *Military reform and militarism in Russia*, Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2018. Ed. Stephen J. Blank, *The Russian military in contemporary perspective*, Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, 2019.

modernisation,<sup>13</sup> exercise,<sup>14</sup> or doctrinal<sup>15</sup> analysis. Relatively sparse literature observes how the two are linked beyond certain attempts at political analysis and this derives primarily from case studies rooted in broad understanding of the constructed Russian imagination of its interlocutor(s).<sup>16</sup> This dissertation examines a distinct gap in the literature: a quantitative assessment of the relationship of Russian foreign and military policies with a qualitative assessment of the most important Russian institutions involved in these policies and three countries examined according to an index of empirical events. This approach is not entirely unprecedented in terms of data collection but is original in its application to both these policies to determine how intertwined the different potential influences are.

### Research Question

The coordination of these policies is assessed according to the research question: Do military bureaucratic behaviour or economic relations significantly influence the quality of the bilateral foreign policy relations of the Russian Federation? This dissertation answers this by exploring the historical expression of official Russian policy embodied in the data of official state activities, most especially diplomacy and military exercises. It then correlates this data with the expressed opinions of both the Russian government and the broader Russian political and policy community to parse both the standard bureaucratic tempo of Russia's relationships and the expressed Muscovite institutional sentiments driving these decisions. It also considers the potential relationship of officially-

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<sup>13</sup> Roger N. McDermott, *The reform of Russia's conventional armed forces: problems, challenges, and policy implications*, Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2011. Bettina Renz, *Russia's military revival*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018.

<sup>14</sup> Johan Norberg, 'Training for war – Russia's strategic-level military exercises 2009-2017', Stockholm: FOI, 2018. Daivis Petraitis, 'The anatomy of Zapad-2017: certain features of Russian military planning', Vilnius: General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Ed. Colby Howard & Ruslan Pukhov, *Brothers armed: military aspects of the crisis in Ukraine*, Minneapolis, Minnesota: East View Press, 2014. Ed. Glen E. Howard & Matthew Czekaj, *Russia's military strategy and doctrine*, Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2019.

<sup>16</sup> Jeffrey Applegate, Jeffrey Kline, & James J. Wirtz, 'Do wargames impact deterrence?', *Military exercises: political messaging and strategic impact*, Rome: NATO Defence College Forum Paper 26, 2018, p 27-44. Kyle J. Wolfley, 'Military statecraft and the use of multinational exercises in world politics', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 17:2, 2021, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/fpa/oraa022>. Accessed 10 April 2022. Kyle J. Wolfley, 'Military power reimagined: the rise and future of shaping', *Joint Force Quarterly*, Issue 102, 2021. Raymond Kuo & Brian Dylan Blankenship, 'Deterrence and restraint: do joint military exercises escalate conflict?', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 66:1, 2022, p 3-31.

reported Russian trade data with each country in case this serves as a better indicator of Russian foreign policy than military policy.

Using this data, this dissertation tests the nascent theory that military exercises have an inherent but frequently covert political dimension.<sup>17</sup> As the Russian Federation releases a large quantity of open-source materials on its foreign and military policy activities, in theory one can identify this political dimension either through perhaps the timing or frequency of these materials. The author therefore compiled and analysed nearly a hundred thousand individual Russian government press releases to construct an empirical database of Russian state activities to observe this.

\*\*\*\*\*This approach explores whether the Russian Federation is actually adept at ‘whole-of-government’ policy as it is understood in the West. Whereas the sentiment in Western countries observing Russia since the annexation of Crimea in 2014 has been to believe Russia especially agile in the coordination of its policies on the international stage, many Russian observers of their own government lament the chaos or ‘*bardak*’<sup>18</sup> bedevilling its ability to pursue any objective.

This dissertation specifically explores Russian foreign and military policies for several reasons. Firstly, the Russian government generates an enormous quantity of open-source data about both policies, enabling longitudinal surveys of how the emphasis and tone of Russian messaging evolves over time. Secondly, the details of both these policies have definable and specific targets: Russian diplomatic interactions with the officials of a given country reflect Russian foreign policy in that country as opposed to others not mentioned in the read-

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<sup>17</sup> ‘Hybrid threats as a concept’, Hybrid Centre of Excellence, <https://www.hybridcoe.fi/hybrid-threats-as-a-phenomenon/>. Accessed 9 April 2022. Bettina Renz, ‘Russia and “hybrid warfare”’, *Contemporary Politics*, 22:3, 2016, p 283-300. Beatrice Heuser and Harold Simpson, ‘The missing political dimension of military exercises’, *The RUSI Journal*, 162:3, 2017, p 20-28. Christopher S. Chivvis, ‘Understanding Russian ‘Hybrid Warfare’: and what can be done about it’, Washington, DC: RAND Corporation, 22 March 2017, [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/CT400/CT468/RAND\\_CT468.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/CT400/CT468/RAND_CT468.pdf). Accessed 9 April 2022. Gabriel Lloyd, ‘Hybrid war and active measures’, *Small Wars Journal*, 10 October 2021, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/hybrid-warfare-and-active-measures>. Accessed 26 October 2021. Andrei Kolesnikov, ‘Expert survey: will the outcome of Russia’s elections impact its foreign policy?’, *Russia Matters*, 24 September 2021, <https://www.russiamatters.org/analysis/expert-survey-will-outcome-russias-elections-impact-its-foreign-policy>. Accessed 3 November 2021.

<sup>18</sup> Бардак



out; given the geographical organization of the Russian Armed Forces, a military exercise in one region impacts that region significantly more than it does others. For example, a military exercise in the Russian Far East comprises part of Russian military policy in the Asia-Pacific region rather than that in Europe.

This large quantity of available sources with specific regional implications favours the selection of Russian foreign and military policy for examination. As will be discussed in chapter 3, other Russian bureaucratic activities - especially intelligence operations - are at least as important to the Russian government as these policies, but the institutions running them publish substantially less information than do those running Russian foreign and military policies; furthermore, the sources that are produced tend disproportionately to come from journalists instead of the Russian government itself, making them difficult to compare and impossible to survey as a large-*n* database analogous to those collected for foreign and military policies.\*\*\*\*\*

To the author's knowledge, utilising official Russian government sources to create an empirical quantitative analysis of the degree of military threat over time, let alone relate it to the evolving quality of Russian bilateral relationships is unprecedented in the literature. Qualitative assessment of Russian statements has plenty of precedent as suggested by the sources listed above, but comparing this to other influences on Russian foreign policy does not. This dissertation created two systems of scoring the degree of military threat and foreign policy quality which will be addressed in chapter 3 to address this gaping hole in the literature.

## Research Design

This dissertation uses a longitudinal research design<sup>19</sup> examining official Russian government publications over the years 2014-2021. These years are chosen because of the shock to Russia's global diplomatic position following its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and again with the larger invasion of Ukraine in 2022. During these years, though considerable variation did occur in

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<sup>19</sup> Alan Bryman, *Social research methods*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p 45-47.

Russia's bilateral relations with various global interlocutors, there were comparatively few existential shocks,<sup>20</sup> enabling a by and large *ceteris parabis* opportunity to examine how different Russian institutions and elite opinions influenced relations over time.

In obtaining the empirical data, this dissertation attempts to apply as strict a positivist approach to categorising the sources as possible.<sup>21</sup> For the most part, information is recorded strictly according to facts, such as the date, location, and participants in a meeting, exercise, or other activity. Greater importance is allocated to events led by the Russian head of state - President Vladimir Putin - and to Russia's self-professed 'higher' forms of activities, such as *ucheniya*<sup>22</sup> vs other military training activities. Somewhat more interpretivist by necessity is this dissertation's categorisation of the intention of Russian information as being favourable, unfavourable, or neutral toward an interlocutor. These categories were determined if possible from whether specific terms of congratulation or opposition were used in the entry; otherwise, context as to whether the targeted interlocutor would find the statement positive or negative was used in the determination in accordance with a grounded theory application of qualitative analysis.<sup>23</sup>

For the qualitative analysis of Russian institutions and their interactions especially with the selected case studies, this dissertation employs narrative analysis.<sup>24</sup> This is done because the bureaucracy's constant development of even its most abstract long-term visions for policy are conducted within linear time influenced by outside events and during the linear careers of Russian civil servants.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The only exception for which many relationships adjusted was the early phase of COVID-19, during which the Russian Federation increased cooperation with certain countries in the West, but this positive change was soon undone first by bureaucratic distraction when the pandemic came in full force to Russian territory and then by political outrage over the poisoning of Russian opposition activist Aleksey Navalny.

<sup>21</sup> Bryman, p 11-12.

<sup>22</sup> 'Учение' [Exercise], Russian Ministry of Defence,

<https://encyclopedia.mil.ru/encyclopedia/dictionary/details.htm?id=14075@morfDictionary>. Accessed 9 April 2022.

<sup>23</sup> Bryman, p 390-395.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p 401.

<sup>25</sup> This agent-driven bureaucracy analysis methodology is inspired by Carl H. Builder, *The masks of war: American military styles in strategy and analysis*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989. The key difference is that whereas Builder drew upon written sources as well as ethnographic research, this dissertation confines itself primarily to written and transcribed sources to avoid potential ethics constraints

These research design choices raise several potential problems but none that undermine the viability of the methodology. Firstly, the use of official Russian government sources and Russian propaganda admits the possibility of unfavourable events being omitted from the record and readouts being spun in especially self-serving manners. However, the author's frequent re-evaluation of sources gathered for the database indicated that retroactive revisions to the sources were exceptionally uncommon.<sup>26</sup> In addition, the bias of the source material was more useful in interpreting the positive or negative connotation of relations. Secondly, the formalised system for gathering and coding data reduces the complexity of certain nuances intended in diplomatic statements while also introducing some internal validity<sup>27</sup> concerns to the data collection. The author accommodated this problem as best as possible through two rounds of evaluation of most of the data to ensure that specific terms used for specific interlocutors were coded consistently. Further controls were also introduced for the appropriate weighting of the material; these will be explained in substantially greater detail in chapter 4. Thirdly, by confining source material consulted to contemporary open sources, possible classified subtext is eliminated from consideration. However, this choice not only improves the applicability and impact of this research for real-world analysis but also nullifies ethical problems as no danger derives from using publicly available sources. In addition, utilisation of a limited number of comprehensive Internet-hosted lists of official Russian publications allows the gathering of comprehensive longitudinal data in a manner that would be functionally impossible at the necessary fidelity with archival or partially-declassified sources.

## Structure

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of research in the Russian Federation and especially among state security and diplomatic services at the time of writing. In addition, whereas Builder focuses primarily on the difference in perspectives among armed services, this dissertation compares the Russian military and its bureaucrats to non-military bureaucrats.

<sup>26</sup> Of the approximately 40,000 data sources comprising the diplomacy component of the database, only 3 (0.0075%) appear to have been altered or subsequently eliminated from the record despite the existence of a fair number of references to attempted diplomatic initiatives that ultimately failed. For example, all details of Russia's planned 2014 G8 chairmanship – cancelled by the other members of the group following the annexation of Crimea – remain available on Russian government websites.

<sup>27</sup> Bryman, p 36.

This dissertation is structured in the following manner:

- Chapter 2 reviews the pre-existing literature more thoroughly, dividing it into competing schools for explaining the narrative and theory of Russian foreign and military policies.
- Chapter 3 explores the competing narratives and approaches of the three most important Russian bureaucracies involved in foreign policy: the Kremlin, the Ministry of Defence, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It follows the narratives to understand how they have adapted to each other within the context of the recent years of Putin's presidency and how they understand and prepare to interact with the outside world.
- Chapter 4 uses quantitative analysis on a database correlating the 100,000 foreign and military policy data points to 1,624 country-year dyads. It first explains the methodology distilling the datapoints into scores of foreign policy quality and military threat potential and then determines whether the latter serves as an effective independent variable to explain the former as a dependent variable. Trade turnover is also used as a competing independent variable to test the presumed alternative hypothesis the Russian government would pose to this experiment.
- Chapter 5 uses qualitative analysis of the both the database scores and narrative analysis of generated source materials around three specific interlocutors as case studies: Turkey, Japan, and France. It examines the diplomatic, information, military, and economic dimensions of the relationships both in terms of bureaucratic actions and from specific institutional perspectives to explore - so far as possible from open sources - which are the most important drivers of Russian policy in these three specific cases.
- Chapter 6 contextualises the findings against the pre-existing literature and makes what conclusions are possible from this particular organisation of the data.

At each point of the dissertation, hypotheses coincide with the expected principles of the 'hybrid warfare' theory<sup>28</sup> and the political dimensions of

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<sup>28</sup> That is, a decline in the centrality of the use of military force in expressing power and an increase in its signalling capacity short of direct use via acts of war. 'Hybrid threats as a concept', Hybrid Centre of

military exercises theory.<sup>29</sup>

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Excellence, <https://www.hybridcoe.fi/hybrid-threats-as-a-phenomenon/>. Accessed 9 April 2022. Andrew Monaghan, "The "War" in Russia's "Hybrid Warfare", *Parameters*, 45:4, 2015, p 65-74. Renz, 2018, p 68-78.  
<sup>29</sup> Heuser and Simpson, p 20-28. Appleget, Kline, & Wirtz, p 27-44.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

Though assessments of both Russian foreign and military policy abound, examinations of how they synchronise or fail to do so are rare. To the author's knowledge, the quantitative approaches taken by this dissertation are unprecedented, which has left a gaping hole in the understanding of how Russia executes its policies within its worldview.

This dissertation attempts to fill three holes in the pre-existing literature resulting from this relative dearth of empirical data collection and analysis. First, academic research into Russian foreign policy overwhelmingly concentrates on theoretical or speech discourse analysis within broad historical trends with only scant reference to the actual content of Russian foreign policy over time. Second, research into Russian military policy most often attempts to extrapolate broad lessons on strategic culture and doctrine primarily by analysing senior defence officials' speeches or only the larger Russian military exercises. Third, pre-existing research into Russian strategy encompassing both foreign and military policies typically examines Russian intentions and objectives but not how they are pursued or how their importance is understood in the practices of the Russian bureaucracy. In each of these cases, the gap is that various theories to explain Russian policy are proposed but never is a mechanism with which to test the applicability of these theories to modern Russian strategy identified or tried. This dissertation offers such a mechanism by quantifying Russian bureaucratic activity through methodologies described in chapter 4 below and by examining and explicating even the most mundane Russian bureaucratic press releases to discern patterns of government behaviour in chapters 3 and 5.

This chapter explores the most important themes in the pre-existing literature so that its various theories can be tested in the conclusion. It will also show how despite their contributions to the broader understanding of Russian policy they have not yet managed to connect their theories to the empirical practice of Russian strategy.

## Foreign Policy-Focused Literature

Previous studies of Russian foreign policy concentrate disproportionately upon theoretical explanations typically reliant on broad generalizations of Russian history or analysis of the speeches of policymakers and public intellectuals. Though these approaches have contributed excellent material for studying Russia, they fail to account for how daily practice of Russian foreign policy is conducted beyond cursory summaries of the structure of certain bureaucratic organs. As such, this literature fails to connect the activities of Russian diplomats and politicians to the broad policies summarised.

## International Relations Theoretical Approaches

It is worth briefly noting that academic analysis of Russian foreign policy prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union was often accused of ignoring international relations theory.<sup>1</sup> A small group of academics specifically called for the application of international relations theory writ large to remedy misplaced politicized data-centric analyses of Russia,<sup>2</sup> but these scholars won the argument in academia and to the extent they still exist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are partisans of individual theoretical approaches either overtly or unwittingly. Because of this transformation, this section first overviews the different theory-centric analysis of Russian foreign policy.

## Neorealism

Western scholarship assessing Russia from a Neorealist perspective unsurprisingly centres on a perceived security dilemma pitting Russia and the West, especially the United States, into a cantankerous disagreement in which short-sighted political interests - grievance-driven in Russia and triumphalist in the West - prevent a more nuanced examination of the actual interests of each state.<sup>3</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander J. Motyl, 'The dilemmas of Sovietology and the labyrinth of theory', *Post-communist studies & political science: methodology and empirical theory in Sovietology*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1993, p 77.

<sup>2</sup> Christer Pursianien, *Russian foreign policy and international relations theory*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Michael E. Brown, 'The flawed logic of NATO expansion', *Survival*, 37:1, 1995, p 34-52. Michael E. Brown, 'Minimalist NATO', *Foreign Affairs*, 78:3, 1999, p 204-218. John J. Mearsheimer, 'Why the Ukraine crisis is the West's fault', *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2014, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-08-18/why-ukraine-crisis-west-s-fault>. Accessed 4 April 2022. Michael Mandelbaum, 'Is major war

their singular focus on the Russia-West balance, they rarely examine any other region save potentially some Western-centric comments on China and cursory mentions of Syria and Venezuela.

Prior to the Russian annexation of Crimea, Western Neorealists contended that the decline in Russian military capability resulted from a more benign international order via an emerging multipolar structure of international politics<sup>4</sup> in which competing powers need not view each other exclusively through a zero-sum game prism.<sup>5</sup> This view converged with a vision that Russian foreign policy had been less ideologically-driven than it appeared during the Soviet era.<sup>6</sup>

Among Russian scholars, Neorealism has a vigorous following.<sup>7</sup> Arguably, their leading figure is the academic Fyodor Lukyanov, who consistently seeks proofs that the post-Cold War liberal international system is obsolete.<sup>8</sup> Attempting to disprove liberalism and show that the United States or democracy was not the decisive factor in the demise of the Soviet Union is the unifying force for Russian Neorealists.<sup>9</sup>

Russian Neorealists frequently parrot the official Russian talking points on 'stability', perceiving America's attempt to uphold a unipolar order as upsetting

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still obsolete?', *Survival*, 61:5, 2019, p 65-71. Charles E. Ziegler, 'A crisis of diverging perspectives: U.S.-Russian relations and the security dilemma', *Texas National Security Review*, 4:1, 2020-2021, p 11-33.

<sup>4</sup> Robert H. Donaldson, Joseph L. Noguee, & Vidya Nadkarni, *The foreign policy of Russia: changing systems, enduring interests*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2014, p 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> Karl W. Deutsch & J. David Singer, 'Multipolar power systems and international stability', *World Politics*, 16:3, April 1964, p 390-406. Joseph L. Noguee, 'Polarity: an ambiguous concept', *Orbis*, 19:1, 1974, p 1193-1224.

<sup>6</sup> Donaldson, Noguee, & Nadkarni, p 5-6.

<sup>7</sup> Ivan Timofeev, 'Забывать «Калашников»? Российская внешнеполитическая мысль после реализма' [Forget Kalashnikov? Russian foreign policy thought after realism], *Valdai Club*, 26 August 2021, <https://ru.valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/zabyt-kalashnikov/>. Accessed 7 September 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Fyodor Lukyanov, 'Мир и его части' [The world and its parts], *Rossiia v global'noy politike*, 15 April 2019, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/mir-i-ego-chasti/>. Accessed 20 April 2020. Fyodor Lukyanov, 'Как люди победили скуку' [How people defeated boredom], *Rossiia v global'noy politike*, 28 August 2019, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/kak-lyudi-pobedili-skuku/>. Accessed 20 April 2020. Fyodor Lukyanov, 'Далеко до Чикаго' [A long way to Chicago], *Rossiia v global'noy politike*, 30 October 2019, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/daleko-do-chikago/>. Accessed 20 April 2020. Fyodor Lukyanov, '«Популисты сейчас врут меньше «системных политиков»»' [Populists now lie less than do 'system politicians'], *Rossiia v global'noy politike*, 31 October 2019, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/populisty-sejchas-vrut-menshe-sistemnyh-politikov/>. Accessed 20 April 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Igor Istomin, 'Всесильно, потому что верно?' [Omnipotent because it's right?], *Rossiia v global'noy politike*, 28 August 2019, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/vsesilno-potomu-chno-verno/>. Accessed 20 April 2020. Polina Kolozaridi, 'Фрагменты свободы' [Fragments of freedom], *Rossiia v global'noy politike*, 31 October 2019, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/fragmenty-svobody/>. Accessed 20 April 2020.



strategic stability. Ironically, their solution to this problem is multilateralism,<sup>10</sup> which in Western neorealist canon leads to greater instability. Considering this, the Russian Neorealists of the early twenty-first century may be more accurately cast in the West as power-centric Russian revisionists. Some among them reject invocations of history as the pretext of policy negotiations, but more because it is a double-edged sword for and against Russia than for theoretical consistency.<sup>11</sup>

### *(Post-)Imperial Syndrome*

Many scholars, including ones who object to it, cannot avoid analysing Russian relations with now-independent countries previously part of the Soviet Union as somehow still ‘imperial’ with ambitions neither properly neo-imperialist nor merely *primus inter pares*.<sup>12</sup> This school was most tied to a feeling of ‘post-imperial syndrome’ analogised to post-1918 policy feelings in Vienna after the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire but complicated by the extreme imbalance of powers among former Soviet republics, among which the Russian Federation possesses preponderant economic and military power.<sup>13</sup>

Post-Soviet<sup>14</sup> Russian scholars maintain a limited definition of ‘imperial’, generally using the term where they mean Western ‘imperialism’. In this sense, the Russian debate is aware of Russia’s failures with soft power to achieve

<sup>10</sup> Sergey Karaganov and Dmitriy Suslov, ‘Сдерживание в новую эпоху’ [Containment in a new era], *Rossiya v global’noy politike*, 12 September 2019, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/sderzhivanie-v-novuyu-epohu/>. Accessed 20 April 2020.

<sup>11</sup> Kira Sazonova, ‘На долгую память’ [On long-term memory], *Rossiya v global’noy politike*, 4 July 2019, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/na-dolguyu-pamyat/>. Accessed 20 April 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Bobo Lo, *Russia and the new world disorder*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2015, p 100-101.

<sup>13</sup> Alexander J. Motyl, *Imperial ends: the decay, collapse, and revival of empires*, Columbia University Press, 2001. Dmitri Trenin, ‘After the empire: Russia’s emerging international identity’, *Russia between East and West: Russian foreign policy on the threshold of the twenty-first century*, London: Frank Cass, 2003, p 33-38. Fyodor Lukyanov, ‘Kremlin’s imperial ambitions ended in 2010’, *The Moscow Times*, 22 December 2010, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/12/22/kremlins-imperial-ambitions-ended-in-2010-a3956>. Accessed 18 April 2022. Dmitri Trenin, *Post-Imperium*, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Soviet-era scholars rigidly adhered to the formula that ‘imperialism’ referred to the bourgeois West’s quest for increased power and markets in line with classical Marxist-Leninist ideology. Major-General Yu.V. Lebedev & A.I. Podberезkin, ‘Имперские амбиции Вашингтона - главная преграда на пути ядерного разоружения’ [Imperialist ambitions of Washington are the main barrier to nuclear disarmament], *Voennaya mysl’*, Issue 1, 1987, p 3-12.

desired results in Ukraine due to the territorial seizure of Crimea.<sup>15</sup> However, these views tend to be divorced from considerations of historical ties between Russia and its former imperial subjects despite overt Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID) awareness.

The Western school of ontological security, though perceiving itself as an independent strain of analysis of Russia, ultimately falls within the imperial syndrome group. The supposed ontological crisis of the Russian Federation prior to 2014 is inextricably linked to the losses associated with the collapse of the Soviet Union and a need to establish a more coherent agency despite still extralegally construing non-Russian former Soviet lands and legacies as inherent to identity.<sup>16</sup> This in turn animates Russian foreign policy decisions that not only harmed prospects for future good relations but which were anticipated to do so in advance of their undertaking such as the annexation of Crimea and intervention in the Donbass.<sup>17</sup> This theory accommodates a broad understanding of Russian foreign policy as being reactive but does little to explain why Russia sometimes voices large and sometimes small protests and counteractions to external events.

### *Liberalism*

In theory, the liberal perspective on Russian international relations would contend that institutions and norms are the best predictors of strategic policies. Most academics contend that the Russian Federation features weak institutions; nevertheless, a striking number put great stock in the backgrounds of key individuals in Russian politics to explain larger trends in policy, often explaining it through those individuals' institutional backgrounds. This is especially blatant in assessments of Vladimir Putin essentially being a product his time in the

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<sup>15</sup> Pavel Salin, 'Импрескость 2.0?' [Empire 2.0?], *Rossiya v global'noy politike*, 16 May 2019, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/imperskost-2-0/>. Accessed 20 April 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Alexander Astrov and Natalia Morozova, 'Russia: geopolitics from the heartland', *Return of geopolitics in Europe? social mechanisms and foreign policy identity crises*, ed Stefano Guzzini, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p 192-216.

<sup>17</sup> Brendan Chrzanowski, 'An episode of existential uncertainty: the ontological security origins of the war in Donbas', *Texas National Security Review*, Vol 4, Issue 3, Summer 2021, p 11-32.

KGB.<sup>18</sup> This dissertation considers adherents to this ‘personnel is policy’ approach to represent the liberal appraisal of Russian policies.

Most liberal observers of Russia share a despair at the failure of the country to transition into a Western-style democracy. Foremost in this category of despair is academic, advisor to the Obama Administration, and Ambassador Michael McFaul, who since his retirement from government service in 2014 writes about Russia’s descent into autocracy under Putin in a fundamentally personnel-driven manner.<sup>19</sup> Even before 2014 and the Russian annexation of Crimea, McFaul expressed concern at the feebleness of Russian civil society and its perils for the fate of Russian democracy.<sup>20</sup>

Another even more theoretical approach considers the scandal of Russian-Western relations as the product of the absence of strong multinational institutions and norms for preventing certain types of taboo activities<sup>21</sup> or facilitating elementary understanding.

### *Constructivism*

The constructivist approach to Russian strategic policies holds that Russia’s professed ‘national interests’ are determined by perceptions, ideas, and identities drawing from but not circumscribed by history and geography.<sup>22</sup> As with liberalism, this view is far more popular in the West than it is in Russia.

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<sup>18</sup> Fiona Hill & Clifford G. Gaddy, *Mr. Putin: operative in the Kremlin*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2015. Angela E. Stent, *The limits of partnership: U.S.-Russia relations in the twenty-first century*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014, p 50-54. Michael McFaul, ‘Putin, Putinism, and the domestic determinants of Russian foreign policy’, *International Security*, 45:2, Fall 2020, p 95-139.

<sup>19</sup> Michael McFaul, ‘Choosing autocracy: actors, institutions, and revolution in the erosion of Russian democracy’, *Comparative Politics*, 50:3, April 2018, p 305-325. Michael McFaul, ‘Russia’s road to autocracy’, *Journal of Democracy*, 32:4, October 2021, p 11-26.

<sup>20</sup> Michael McFaul, *Russia’s unfinished revolution: political change from Gorbachev to Putin*, Cornell University Press, 2002. Timothy J. Colton & Michael McFaul, *Popular choice and managed democracy: the Russian elections of 1999 and 2000*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003. Michael McFaul, Nikolai Petrov, & Andrei Ryabov, *Between dictatorship and democracy: Russian post-communist political reform*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2004.

<sup>21</sup> Joseph S. Nye, ‘US-Russian cyber stability needs “drunken party” approach: limits, deterrence, and communication’, *Russia Matters*, 6 October 2021, <https://www.russiamatters.org/analysis/us-russian-cyber-stability-needs-drunken-party-approach-limits-deterrence-and>. Accessed 3 November 2021.

<sup>22</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny, ‘Living in the hood: Russia, empire, and old and new neighbors’, *Russian foreign policy in the twenty-first century and the shadow of the past*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, p 35-36. Joan DeBardleben, ‘New EU-Russian borders after enlargement: from local to transnational linkages?’, *Shifting priorities in Russia’s foreign and security policy*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2014, p 75.

These scholars consider Russia's foreign policy as the product of competing Russian identities. These scholars tend to believe the great nineteenth-century Westernizer vs Slavophile debate continues unabated, creating seemingly contradictory simultaneous post-imperial normalisation, neo-imperialist restoration, and isolationist policies<sup>23</sup> and potentially even reconciliation through regularisation of contact among scandalously polarised opponents ultimately constitutes its own stability.<sup>24</sup> This group tends toward an exceptionally Eurocentric view of Russian foreign policy, positing that Russia's identity debate rends Russia from its European or at least Christian cultural home/destiny and opens it to anti-Western policies typically cast as 'pragmatic'.<sup>25</sup>

Breaking down historical Russian foreign policy into a contestation of identities, Ronald Grigor Suny portrays the Soviet era as a set of imperial ambitions derived alternatively from realist security considerations and Marxist-Leninist ideological hopes.<sup>26</sup> In his view the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan is the apotheosis of these contradictory goals as it was both consistent and divergent from both perspectives' aims under various considerations.<sup>27</sup> He posits that the dissolution of the Soviet Union is the natural result of Gorbachev's erosion of the Soviet imperial metropolitan identity even as the peripheral identities had been cultivated,<sup>28</sup> leading to an imbalance of identity in the Eurasian political expression. If these shifting identities could make the Soviet Union so impractical as to dissolve, Suny posits that continued perceived shifts in post-Soviet *ruskiy* political identity may force another revision to the *rossiyskiy* state's borders.<sup>29</sup> In the post-Soviet era, competing identities debated whether to resuscitate the multinational model of the Russian state and seek to regain as much of the Soviet Union as possible (on the right) or dispense with non-*ruskiy* lands and peoples and maintain great power status as an East Slavic union with

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<sup>23</sup> Sandra Fernandes, 'Putin's foreign policy towards Europe: evolving trends of an (un)avoidable relationship', *Shifting priorities in Russia's foreign and security policy*, Ashgate, 2014, p 15. Robert Legvold, 'Russian foreign policy during periods of great state transformation', *Russian foreign policy in the twenty-first century and the shadow of the past*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, p 108-109.

<sup>24</sup> DeBardeleben, p 74.

<sup>25</sup> Fernandes, pp 16-17, 20.

<sup>26</sup> Suny, p 55-57.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p 57-58.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, pp 49-55, 59.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p 61-62.

Belarus and Ukraine (on the left).<sup>30</sup> Within his framework, Suny reduces the importance of the use of force in Russian foreign policy to mere means of imperial maintenance.<sup>31</sup> Writing before 2008, Suny considered that the threat of external war had been ‘largely eliminated’ in the Russian Federation, contributing to this diminution of the military in foreign policy thinking.<sup>32</sup> The threat of disunity or US hegemony undermining Russia as a great power merely as a concept nevertheless legitimises greater centralised efforts at amassing military force capabilities.<sup>33</sup>

In discerning the elements of the emerging 21<sup>st</sup>-century Russian-Chinese relationship, Marcin Kazmarski finds that though certain power dynamics underpin Moscow and Beijing seeking a geopolitical consensus against Western hegemony, the narratives about policy among each country’s elites rather than purely material explanations better explain their ‘fellow traveller’ partnership.<sup>34</sup> At minimum, the Russian domestic perception that an international system under U.S. hegemony as a threat to the Russian state displaces the perception of China as an alternative source of peril.<sup>35</sup>

Other constructivists question geopolitically perceived long-term interests of Russian strategy such as the quest for warm-water ports or insecure borders,<sup>36</sup> claiming them as Western constructed concepts of Russia. Such scholars claim the Putin era’s reprisal of certain historical trends are complemented by the reduction in interest in other such interests. This results in expressions of Russian political discord with the West being expressed through historical-sounding opposition such as ‘Eurasianism’ but that these are fundamentally different problems and priorities from the past which have only been couched in

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p 61.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p 58.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p 62.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, pp 65-66, 69.

<sup>34</sup> Marcin Kaczmariski, *Russia-China relations in the post-crisis international order*, London: Routledge, 2015, pp 3-4, 8-9, 165-173. Marcin Kaczmariski, ‘Two ways of influence-building: The Eurasian Economic Union and the One Belt, One Road Initiative’, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 69:7, 2017, p 1027-1046.

<sup>35</sup> Marcin Kaczmariski, ‘Domestic sources of Russia’s China policy’, *Problems of Post-Communism*, 59:2, 2012, p 3-17. Marcin Kaczmariski, ‘The asymmetric partnership? Russia’s turn to China’, *International Politics*, Vol 53, 2016, p 415-434.

<sup>36</sup> Lawrence T. Caldwell, ‘Russian concepts of national security’, *Russian foreign policy in the twenty-first century and the shadow of the past*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, p 280-282.

pre-existing cultural concepts to facilitate their political dissemination.<sup>37</sup>

Western scholars also sometimes attribute a failure of Russian leaders to act as the West thinks best to a constructed Russian vision of corrupt elite self-preservation.<sup>38</sup>

Role theory forms a subset of the constructivist approach, ascribing specific roles to the behaviour of a state through its elite according to certain transnational perceptions. Role theorists examine the contradictions of Russia's 'major power' role aspirations juxtaposed with various national characteristics suggesting Russian decline or reduced status.<sup>39</sup> Though the theory explores the perception of Russia and how the Russian elite attempts to influence this perception, it cannot explain the priorities of state policy beyond ascriptions of certain artificial labels the Russian elite does not use.

### Geographical and Geostrategic Approaches

One common approach to assessing disaggregated Russian strategic policies is by considering different geographical regions. Different assessments of the regions, however, also fall into a variety of distinguishing groups.

#### *The Realist Romantics*

The Realist Romantic group carries on the Cold War-era Western fond memories of the Tsarist era<sup>40</sup> and portrays Russian strategy as a broad continuation of continuous geopolitical interests. They most frequently cite Tsar Alexander III's statement on Russia's only allies being the army and navy and are most prone to belief in geopolitics.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, 'How persistent are persistent factors?', *Russian foreign policy in the twenty-first century and the shadow of the past*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, p 258-261.

<sup>38</sup> Paul Saunders, 'Stoner's quantitative and qualitative assessment of Russia's new strength', *Russia Matters*, 5 May 2021, <https://russiamatters.org/analysis/stoners-quantitative-and-qualitative-assessment-russias-new-strength>. Accessed 14 October 2021. Andrew Monaghan, 'Russia resurrected: its power and purpose in a new global order', *The RUSI Journal*, 166:3, 2021, p. 96-98.

<sup>39</sup> Marije Bruening & Anna Pechenina, 'Role dissonance in foreign policy: Russia, power, and intercountry adoption', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol 16, Issue 1, 2020, p. 21+.

<sup>40</sup> Norman Davies, *Europe: A History*, Harper Perennial, 1996, pp 40, 57.

<sup>41</sup> E.g. Nikolas K. Gvosdev & Christopher Marsh, *Russian foreign policy: interests, vectors, and sectors*, Sage, 2014, p 13.

Nikolas K. Gvosdev and Christopher Marsh consider Russian foreign policy as a series of vectors from Moscow, seeking to replace the Cold War-era ideology-denominated Western understanding of Russian foreign policy.<sup>42</sup> They invoke Lord Palmerston's adage that 'great states have no permanent friends, only permanent interests' to explain why Russia runs multiple foreign policies in different regions.<sup>43</sup> They attribute the differences in Russian foreign policy in various regions to competition for influence among a fractious elite and the necessary bindings of geopolitics. As a result of these bindings, they reason that Russian foreign policy toward each individual region can be easily summarized as a historical continuity in multiple vectors.<sup>44</sup> They attribute Russia's political preoccupations in these different vectors - not always according with Realist theory - to historical choices forging a deep-seated political culture.<sup>45</sup> They also attribute greater influence to the policy preferences of individual Russian ministers for Moscow's overarching message,<sup>46</sup> acknowledging that under Putin the overt organising principle of Russian foreign policy is promoting economic development.<sup>47</sup> Their greatest emphasis in understanding 21<sup>st</sup>-century Russian foreign policy is that the ideological assumptions of the Soviet era were successfully purged under the last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev,<sup>48</sup> requiring a more geopolitical and vector-driven analysis of Russian policy even by 1989. As such, Gvosdev especially discounts the degree to which Russia is interfering in Western democracy for any ideological purpose beyond weakening potential rivals in these interest-centric perceptions.<sup>49</sup> To the extent that they explore the interaction of foreign and military policies, they perceive undefined institutional cross-purposes between the MID and the Ministry of Defence,<sup>50</sup> though Gvosdev has separately explored this interaction in the U.S. context.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p xiii-xiv.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p 1.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, pp 4-10, 13.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p 13-15.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p 33.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p 39.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p 20-23.

<sup>49</sup> Nikolas K. Gvosdev, 'Is Russia sabotaging democracy in the West?', *Orbis*, 63:3, 2019, p 321-333.

<sup>50</sup> Gvosdev & Marsh, p 35.

<sup>51</sup> Derek S. Reveron & Nikolas K. Gvosdev, '(Re)discovering the national interest: the future of U.S. foreign policy and defense Strategy', *Orbis*, 59:3, 2015, p 299-316. Nikolas K. Gvosdev, Jessica D. Blankshain, & David A. Cooper, *Decision-making in American foreign policy: translating theory into practice*, Cambridge University Press, 2019.

A steady crop of analysis studies how regional or individual country relationships are complicated by Russia's special interest in that region or country.<sup>52</sup> These analyses differ from the post-imperial syndrome explanation in that they tend to study the expression of Russian policy in particular locations or on specific subjects rather than assessing Russia as a whole. To the extent that they do assess Russia at large by induction, they typically concede an ongoing Russian imperial fixation with the subject. Ironically, Realist Romantics rarely perceive that Russia's draw of attention toward subjects considered relatively esoteric outside Russia simply reflects Moscow's prioritisation of policy as opposed to some entrenched neo-imperial dream.<sup>53</sup>

Among Russian scholars, Realist Romanticism is most visible in the returning interest in geopolitics as a subject<sup>54</sup> and complementary efforts at patriotic education in geography.<sup>55</sup> A small subset of Russian scholars writing for public consumption dwell upon the future conventional military implications of the evolving dynamics of the global strategic balance, including hypothetical Chinese

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<sup>52</sup> Scott Radnitz, 'Deeper U.S. engagement with Uzbekistan stymied by changing US priorities, Russian wariness', *Russia Matters*, 26 October 2021, <https://www.russiamatters.org/analysis/deeper-us-engagement-uzbekistan-stymied-changing-us-priorities-russian-wariness>. Accessed 3 November 2021.

<sup>53</sup> Paul Kobe, 'The global war on Chechnya: what does 9/11 teach us about counterterrorism cooperation with Russia?', *Russia Matters*, 13 October 2021, <https://www.russiamatters.org/analysis/global-war-chechnya-what-does-911-teach-us-about-counterterrorism-cooperation-russia>. Accessed 3 November 2021.

<sup>54</sup> Mikhail Grachyov, 'Новое видение «старой науки» [A new vision of an "old science"]', *Rossiya v global'noy politike*, 3 September 2019, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/novoe-videnie-staroj-nauki/>. Accessed 20 April 2020. Maksim Vasilev, 'Новые принципы геополитики в условиях информационного общества' [New principles of geopolitics in the information society], *Geopolitika*, 2 December 2019, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/novye-principy-geopolitiki-v-usloviyah-informacionnogo-obshchestva>. Accessed 16 May 2020. Leonid Savin, 'Вооруженные силы и геополитическая мощь России' [Armed forces and the geopolitical power of Russia], *Geopolitika*, 31 December 2019, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/vooruzhennye-sily-i-geopoliticheskaya-moshch-rossii>. Accessed 16 May 2020.

<sup>55</sup> 'Заседание попечительского совета Русского географического общества' [Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Russian Geographical Society], Kremlin, 27 April 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/49348>. Accessed 29 June 2020. 'Министр обороны принял участие в работе медиа-клуба Русского географического общества' [Minister of Defence took part in the work in the media-club Russian Geographical Society], Ministry of Defence, 14 September 2016, [http://деятельность.минобороны.пф/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12096024@egNews](http://деятельность.минобороны.пф/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12096024@egNews). Accessed 27 April 2020. Maria Zakharova, 'О международной просветительской акции «Географический диктант-2021»' [On the international educational action "Geographical Dictation-2021"], MID, 3 November 2021, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4922767#12](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4922767#12). Accessed 4 November 2021.



invasions of Russia's Central Asian allies.<sup>56</sup>

### *The Opportunists*

Another group of analysis of Russian foreign policy effectively considers Russia's attention to the world as zero-sum: for example, if Russia is paying greater attention to Asia, then its interest in Europe has decreased. This group seeks the dynamics of Russia's expectations for improved relations as opposed to analysing the actual content of Russian foreign policy. These scholars typically conclude that Russia's foreign policy is largely opportunistic, expanding wherever the options are available, hence the label 'opportunist'. Those more dismissive of Russia frequently prefer to label the country a 'spoiler'.

In the 2010s, the primary thesis put forward by this group was that the eastward expansion of NATO and the European Union created too many complications for Russian foreign policy with the West,<sup>57</sup> resulting in a turn or pivot to Eurasia<sup>58</sup> or the Asia-Pacific region. Sometimes this is explained as an overt Russian defence of autocracy as a like-minded regime system to Russia's own.<sup>59</sup>

Opportunists frequently explain Russian foreign policy toward disputes in smaller countries as seeking 'leverage'<sup>60</sup> either to project Russia as a 'great power' or without explanation. This frequently involves exporting weapons or 'insecurity' to a region to destabilize it and then offering Russian 'protection' to restabilize it more firmly under Russian tutelage.<sup>61</sup>

### *The Reactivists*

Yet another group considers seeming Russian opportunism a reflection of

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<sup>56</sup> Aleksandr Khranchikin, 'Появление НОАК в Европе – дело одной-двух недель' [The emergence of the PLA in Europe could be done in one or two weeks], *VPK*, 22 October 2019, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/53171>. Accessed 21 April 2020.

<sup>57</sup> Roger E. Kanet and Rémi Piet, *Shifting Priorities in Russia's Foreign and Security Policy*, Ashgate, 2014, p 3.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, p 4.

<sup>59</sup> Stent, 2014, pp 99-103, 263-266.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, p 263.

<sup>61</sup> Andrew S. Bowen, 'Russian Arms Sales and Defense Industry' (R46937), Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 14 October 2021, Summary.

operating in a difficult or discordant security environment exacerbated by its own diffidence in the international community. They consider Russian foreign policy to possess more agency than do the opportunists but believe that Russia is primarily forced to react to external geopolitical developments than actively shape the world as they ideally would want.<sup>62</sup> This view was especially prominent in the early 2000s as the U.S. Bush Doctrine expanded the American military footprint into multiple new dimensions of the former Soviet Union.<sup>63</sup>

Russian analysts frequently invoke this explanation for Tsarist-era expansionism, citing provocations creating a ‘complicated<sup>64</sup> military-political situation’ on a certain periphery requiring counterattack or seizure of a wayward region.<sup>65</sup>

### *The (Extra-)Statists*

Another group of analysts examines Russian policy less from an ideologically-tinged perspective than from a standing assumption that the Russian Federation cultivates regions for future benefits and opportunities. These analysts consider Russian policy geographically by either region or country and explain Russian activity according to perceived global trends.<sup>66</sup> This perspective most reflects those scholars of domestic Russian politics who label the Putin regime as ‘statist’ but differs in that these analysts perceive the potential implications of these policies as extending beyond Russia’s borders to the cultivation of foreign states, typically other former Soviet republics,<sup>67</sup> hence the somewhat ironic label of

<sup>62</sup> Mary Chesnut & Julian G. Waller, ‘Russia’s response to U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan: criticism of us, concerns about security environment’, *Russia Matters*, 14 September 2021, <https://www.russiamatters.org/analysis/russias-response-us-withdrawal-afghanistan-criticism-us-concerns-about-security>. Accessed 3 November 2021.

<sup>63</sup> Alex Pravda, ‘Putin’s foreign policy after 11 September: radical or revolutionary?’, *Russia between East and West: Russian foreign policy on the threshold of the twenty-first century*, Frank Cass: London, 2003, p 39-57. Alvin Z. Rubinstein, ‘Russian strategic uncertainty in an era of U.S. tactical intrusiveness’, *Russia between East and West: Russian foreign policy on the threshold of the twenty-first century*, Frank Cass: London, 2003, p 86-94. Richard Sakwa, ‘Putin’s foreign policy: transforming “the East”’, *Russia between East and West: Russian foreign policy on the threshold of the twenty-first century*, Frank Cass: London, 2003, p 174-194.

<sup>64</sup> Сложный (*slozhnyy*). Frequently also translated as ‘difficult’ but contains an overtone of intricacy atypical for this English word.

<sup>65</sup> Viktor Dubovitskiy, ‘Атлантический «хук» ШОСы’ [Atlanticist “hook” to the SCO?], *Geopolitica*, 15 October 2021, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/atlantistskiy-huk-shosu>. Accessed 26 January 2022.

<sup>66</sup> Pär Gustafsson, ‘Russia’s ambitions in the Arctic towards 2035’, Stockholm: FOI, Memo 7624, 2021, <https://foi.se/report-summary?reportNo=FOI%20Memo%207624>. Accessed 4 November 2021.

<sup>67</sup> Lena Jonson, ‘The security dimension of Russia’s policy in South Central Asia’, *Russia between east and west: Russian foreign policy on the threshold of the twenty-first century*, London: Frank Cass, 2003, p 138-

‘extra-statist’.

As can be seen above, scholars focusing on Russian foreign policy have developed many theories to explain the broad patterns of behaviour of the Russian state across history. However, they tend toward a determinism driven either by broader international relations theories or geography without explaining how individual decisions reflect or deviate from their generalizations. These scholars focus primarily on the anticipation of conflict or the forces mediating against conflict but fail to show why Russian diplomatic interactions with rivals or other unfriendly countries do not invariably descend into conflict nor what constitutes an alliance or friendship. Theoretical approaches are also hampered by the fact that ordinal characterisations of relations without a means of distinguishing orders of friendship or enmity cannot be proven without a war or a formal alliance to prove historical existence; however, many historical incidences of friendly relations have not led to formal alliances and incidences of international antagonism do not always lead to war. This dissertation attempts to use the empirical data both to explain and to distinguish Russia’s perceived friends and foes.

### Military Policy-Focused Literature

Previous studies focusing on Russian military policy feature fewer theoretical frameworks as they are more often written by analysts than academics. Nevertheless, they again feature disproportionate focus on broad Russian doctrinal statements or longer-term strategic culture rather than everyday bureaucratic practice. A nascent body of research on Russian military exercises has emerged in recent years, but it also focuses on the major capstone named exercises of the year rather than the hundreds of other more mundane training

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146. Vladimir Putin, ‘Russia and the changing world’, originally published in *Moskovskiye Novosti*, Valdai Discussion Club, 27 February 2012, [https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/vladimir\\_putin\\_on\\_foreign\\_policy\\_russia\\_and\\_the\\_changing\\_world/?s\\_phrase\\_id=1376717](https://valdaiclub.com/a/highlights/vladimir_putin_on_foreign_policy_russia_and_the_changing_world/?s_phrase_id=1376717). Accessed 18 April 2022. Adam Michnik, ‘Putin is trying to reconstruct the Russian Empire’, *The New Republic*, 21 July 2014, <https://newrepublic.com/article/118790/after-malaysia-flight-17-we-should-call-putin-shameless-thug>. Accessed 18 April 2022. Lilia A. Arakelyan, ‘The Soviet Union is dead: long live the Eurasian Union!’, *Shifting priorities in Russia’s foreign and security policy*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2014, p 141-162. Jakob Hedenskog, ‘Endgame Belarus? Union State integration under pressure’, Stockholm: FOI, FOI-R—5181-SE, <https://foi.se/report-summary?reportNo=FOI-R--5181--SE>. Accessed 4 November 2021.

activities occurring every day which occupy the attention of the Russian officer corps. As with the foreign policy literature, the broad gap in the literature is a failure to connect the much-studied policy at large with the ordinary events which compose it that this dissertation's empirical data collection offers.

In the Soviet era, the Armed Forces developed a fixed theory of deterrence, believing that their power in conjunction with the popular and irreversible dialectic toward Socialism deterred Western 'imperialist' aggression from 1946. Nevertheless, this capability of deterrence required constant modernisation to remain effective, hence the paradox that the Socialist states would constantly be arming themselves whilst demanding disarmament.<sup>68</sup>

Technological modernisation scholars explore how the changing relative quality of technology impacts the degree of control of a region,<sup>69</sup> capacity for strategic or great power competition,<sup>70</sup> or nature of military function.<sup>71</sup> A distinct subfield of Russian analysts explore how the evolution of technology impacts operational art and thus military strategy, typically arguing that technologies employable most effectively in degrading enemy organisation are the most significant for the future of conflict.<sup>72</sup>

Western scholars focusing on Russian technological modernisation frequently perceive this as a means of redressing longstanding grievances with the West without dwelling on the root cause beyond Putin himself.<sup>73</sup> This leads to

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<sup>68</sup> Colonel K.A. Vorobev, 'Интернационализм и защита социализма' [Internationalism and the defence of socialism], *Voennaya Mysl'*, Issue 11, 1987, p 60-70.

<sup>69</sup> Marina Miron & Rod Thornton, 'Emerging as the "victor" (?): Syria and Russia's grand and military strategies', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 34:1, 2021, p 18-22.

<sup>70</sup> Kelley M. Saylor, 'Hypersonic weapons: background and issues for Congress', Congressional Research Service #R45811, 19 October 2021.

<sup>71</sup> Mordechai de Haas et al, 'Russia's military action in Syria driven by military reforms', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 33:2, 2020, p 292-299. Duncan McCrory, 'Russian electronic warfare, cyber and information operations in Ukraine', *The RUSI Journal*, Volume 165, Issue 7, 2020, p 34-44. Anna Nadibaidze, 'Russian perceptions of military AI, automation, and autonomy', Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2022.

<sup>72</sup> I.A. Buvaltsev, O.A. Abdrashitov, & A.V. Garvard, 'Развитие тактики в современных условиях' [Development of Tactics in Present-Day Conditions], *Voennaya mysl'*, Vol. 10, 2021, p. 30-37.

<sup>73</sup> Daniel Gouré, 'Cutting the Putinian knot: developing a strategy for dealing with an authoritarian, unstable, and armed Russian regime', *The Russian military in contemporary perspective*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2019, p 59-132. Daniel Gouré, 'In the face of Moscow's threats to NATO, the U.S. must support Polish rearmament', *Real Clear Defense*, 11 January 2022, [https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2022/01/11/in\\_the\\_face\\_of\\_moscows\\_threats\\_to\\_nato\\_the\\_us\\_must\\_support\\_polish\\_rearmament\\_811454.html](https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2022/01/11/in_the_face_of_moscows_threats_to_nato_the_us_must_support_polish_rearmament_811454.html). Accessed 12 January 2022.

occasional projections of perceived Russian foreign policy in military strategy, especially as regards anti-access/area denial (A2AD)<sup>74</sup> as the imposition of a sphere of influence or nuclear doctrine as a means of showing first-tier power status.

Technological modernisation analysis also has its own dissident movement, asserting that Russian claims about its technological modernisation are overstated, especially in the debate on anti-access/area denial (A2/AD).<sup>75</sup> These scholars often cite Russia's true strengths as being its superior readiness, quantity of forces, risk-willingness,<sup>76</sup> or doctrine.

Russian implementation of modern military technology generally utilizes concepts from the Soviet era adapted to improved communications capabilities.<sup>77</sup> Almost continuously since the Soviet era, the most pressing demand upon new technology has been the quest for faster intelligence in anticipation of ever greater paces of mobility in modern warfare to optimize command-and-control (C2) decision-making.<sup>78</sup> Accordingly, automated weapons have driven peculiar interest among Russian analysts both as a means of evading constrained C2<sup>79</sup> and as a potential threat to C2's ability to control the application of violence.

Roger McDermott systematizes Russian military modernization efforts as consisting of reforms to the officer corps and its approach to C2,<sup>80</sup> a growing

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<sup>74</sup> Gouré 2019, p 81-84.

<sup>75</sup> Robert Dalsjö and Michael Jonsson, 'More than decorative, less than decisive: Russian A2/AD capabilities and NATO', *Survival*, 63:5, 2021, p 169-190.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, p 182.

<sup>77</sup> Stephen J. Blank, *The Russian military in contemporary perspective*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2019, p 4-6.

<sup>78</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Vitaliy Rodkin, 'Совершенствование способов инженерной разведки при ведении маневренной обороны' [Improving the methods of engineering reconnaissance in mobile defence], *Voennaya Mys'*, Issue 12, 2021, p 44-45. Boris Fisich & Ruslan Kanzalayev, 'Основы геопроостранственного моделирования тактической обстановки' [The basics of geospatial modeling of the tactical situation], *Voennaya Mys'*, Issue 12, 2021, p 72-82. Colonel Aleksandr Sidorin & Lieutenant-Colonel Aleksey Bezrodniy, 'Перспективы применения технологий искусственного интеллекта в радиоэлектронной борьбе' [The prospects for using artificial intelligence technologies in electronic warfare], *Voennaya Mys'*, Issue 12, 2021, p 108-118.

<sup>79</sup> 'Война будущего - автомат с искусственным интеллектом' [Future war will be automated with artificial intelligence], *VPK*, 22 September 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/news/63967>. Accessed 26 January 2022.

<sup>80</sup> McDermott 2011, p 126-224. Roger McDermott, 'The revolution in Russian military decision-making', *Russia's path to the high-tech battlespace*, Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 12 March 2021,

recognition of the importance of non-contact weapons,<sup>81</sup> adaptation to the integration of technologies of the information age into linking C2 and these non-contact weapons,<sup>82</sup> and the emerging discussion of a potential trade-off in the manpower debate between classical mobilisation and unmanned systems.<sup>83</sup> McDermott contends that doctrinal reform follows from a combination of technological impetus to generate new ideas and political will rather than the other way around.<sup>84</sup>

Doctrinal modernisation scholars investigate how developments of concepts for the employment of force improve the efficacy of a country in the pursuit of political or strategic ends. The recurring motif in Western analysis of Russian doctrinal modernisation is the unpicking of to what extent the Soviet legacy endures in modern Russian thinking,<sup>85</sup> occasionally leading to confusion of ends and means past and present. These scholars often compare overt Russian debates about the nature of warfare with procurement decisions to determine which faction is prevailing.<sup>86</sup> This debate also includes consideration of the

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<https://jamestown.org/program/the-revolution-in-russian-military-decision-making/>. Accessed 18 April 2022.

<sup>81</sup> Roger McDermott, 'Russia's entry to sixth-generation warfare: the "non-contact" experiment in Syria', *Russia's path to the high-tech battlespace*, Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 29 May 2021, <https://jamestown.org/program/russias-entry-to-sixth-generation-warfare-the-non-contact-experiment-in-syria/>. Accessed 18 April 2022. Roger McDermott, 'The role of hypersonic weapons in Russian military strategy', *Russia's path to the high-tech battlespace*, Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 4 February 2022, <https://jamestown.org/program/the-role-of-hypersonic-weapons-in-russian-military-strategy/>. Accessed 18 April 2022.

<sup>82</sup> Roger McDermott, 'Russian military thought in the changing character of war: harnessing technology in the information age', *Russia's path to the high-tech battlespace*, Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 29 October 2021, <https://jamestown.org/program/russian-military-thought-on-the-changing-character-of-war-harnessing-technology-in-the-information-age/>. Accessed 18 April 2022.

<sup>83</sup> McDermott 2011, p 78-125. Roger McDermott, 'Russia's UAVs and UCAVs: ISR and future strike capabilities', *Russia's path to the high-tech battlespace*, Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 23 March 2022, <https://jamestown.org/program/russias-uavs-and-ucavs-isr-and-future-strike-capabilities/>. Accessed 18 April 2022.

<sup>84</sup> Roger McDermott, 'Tracing Russia's path to network-centric military capability', *Russia's path to the high-tech battlespace*, Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 4 December 2020, <https://jamestown.org/program/tracing-russias-path-to-network-centric-military-capability/>. Accessed 18 April 2022.

<sup>85</sup> Rod Thornton, 'The concept of pace in current Russian military thinking', *Current Russia military affairs: assessing and countering Russian strategy, operational planning, and modernization*, Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2018, p 25-28.

<sup>86</sup> Jacob W. Kipp, 'Russian sixth generation warfare and recent developments', *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 25 January 2012, <https://jamestown.org/program/russian-sixth-generation-warfare-and-recent-developments/>. Accessed 7 December 2021. Charles Bartles, 'Factors influencing Russian force modernization', *Current Russia military affairs: assessing and countering Russian strategy, operational planning, and modernization*, Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2018, p 40-44.

changing Russian order of battle,<sup>87</sup> conferring upon its concentrations some notion of strategic intent<sup>88</sup> as well as lamentations about the long-term difficulties of the Russian Armed Forces moving beyond the Soviet Union.<sup>89</sup>

Due to a forecasting-dominant model of engagement, Lester Grau and Charles K. Bartles contend that understanding the modernisation of Russian thought about war and its subsequent doctrinal updates is of greatest importance to understanding the Russian Armed Forces.<sup>90</sup> Rather than designing deductive models with which a Western military assesses and addresses a problem set, Grau and Bartles hold that a correlation of forces and means through forecasting and trend analysis allows for more rapid updates to training. In particular, he analyses that the Russian General Staff is pushing precision weapons, robotics, and asymmetric conflict based on recent observed global trends.<sup>91</sup> All the while, certain longstanding themes - especially geography - consistently inform Russian tactical decisions.<sup>92</sup>

As military officer training programmes proliferate in the West, a competition among some officers to define new aspects or Russian fighting methods or even distinguish original thinking from the 'hybrid warfare' consensus dominant over 2014-2019, a flurry of scarcely distinguishable terms has flooded professional military education-trained officer corps in the West. Jānis Bērziņš decries the Western obsession with inventing its own theories to explain Russian behaviour already guided by well-defined theories in the Russian literature. Rejecting the Western adaptation of the 'hybrid warfare' label to whatever Russian policy happens to be, he sticks to the Russian-origin term 'new generation warfare', which envisions warfighting transcending the kinetic bounds of war imagined in

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<sup>87</sup> Aleksandr Golts, 'The concept of mass mobilization returns', *Russia's military strategy and doctrine*, Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2019, p 419-431. Gregory Whisler, 'Carving a peacetime force from a mobilization military: the overlooked pillar of post-Soviet Russian defense reforms', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 34:3, 2021, p 357-383.

<sup>88</sup> Lasnoszka & Hunzeker, p 20-26.

<sup>89</sup> David R. Stone, *A military history of Russia: from Ivan the Terrible to the war in Chechnya*, Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 2006, 246-247. Greg Whisler, 'Strategic command and control in the Russian armed forces: untangling the General Staff, military districts, and service main commands (Part Three)', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 33:2, 2020, p 237-258.

<sup>90</sup> Lester W. Grau & Charles K. Bartles, *The Russian way of war: force structure, tactics, and modernization of the Russian Ground Forces*, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2017, p xiv-xv.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, p 5.

<sup>92</sup> Lester W. Grau, 'Defending a river line: the Soviet World War II experience', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 34:1, 2021, p 69-82.



the West across eight dimensions.<sup>93</sup>

Focusing on the role of the Russian strategic culture, Dima Adamsky researches on how it influences Russian understanding and design of strategy and operations both at the leadership<sup>94</sup> and bureaucratic levels.<sup>95</sup> His research examines Russian experiences and writing to analyse how Russian strategic culture addresses specific challenges and how its observations of the efficacy of its decisions in addressing those challenges affect the development of the Russian strategic culture's thinking about the future.<sup>96</sup> He also addresses how the Russian government specifically uses cultural institutions such as the Russian Orthodox Church to assist in the mobilisation of society by spiritually alleviating some of the suffering of soldiers or impelling popular commitment to larger political or strategic goals.<sup>97</sup> He also considers the possibility that certain Russian capabilities are not pursued with a doctrinal mission at all but entirely based on a perception of self-animating perceived importance and that the perception of coherence of Russian strategy is generated by external observers.<sup>98</sup>

Russian thinkers about the evolution of war doctrines in the 21<sup>st</sup> century typically meld the impact of changing technology upon military practice,<sup>99</sup> though this is still primarily analysed through the prism of decisive warfare vs

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<sup>93</sup> Jānis Bērziņš, 'The Russian way of warfare', *Current Russia military affairs: assessing and countering Russian strategy, operational planning, and modernization*, Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2018, p 18-20. Jānis Bērziņš, 'Not "hybrid" but new generation warfare', *Russia's military strategy and doctrine*, Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2019, p 157-184.

<sup>94</sup> Dmitry (Dima) Adamsky, 'Conclusion', *How do leaders make decisions? evidence from the East and West, part B*, Bingley: Emerald Publishing, 2020, p 179-181.

<sup>95</sup> Dmitry (Dima) Adamsky, 'Christ-loving diplomats: Russian ecclesiastical diplomacy in Syria', *Survival*, 61:6, 2019, p 49-68. Dmitry (Dima) Adamsky, 'Russian campaign in Syria – change and continuity in strategic culture', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 43:1, 2020, p 104-125.

<sup>96</sup> Dmitry (Dima) Adamsky, 'From Moscow with coercion: Russian deterrence theory and strategic culture', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 41:1-2, 2018, p 33-60. Dmitry (Dima) Adamsky, 'Russian lessons learned from the operation in Syria: A preliminary assessment', *Russia's military strategy and doctrine*, Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2019, p 379-410.

<sup>97</sup> Dmitry (Dima) Adamsky, 'Christ-loving warriors: ecclesiastical dimension of the Russian military campaign in Syria', *Problems of Post Communism*, 67:6, 2020, p 433-445. Dmitry (Dima) Adamsky, 'Russian Orthodox Church and nuclear command and control: a hypothesis', *Security Studies*, 28:5, 2019, p 1010-1039. Dmitry Adamsky, *Russian nuclear orthodoxy: religion, politics, and strategy*, Stanford University Press, 2019.

<sup>98</sup> Dima Adamsky, *The culture of military innovation: the impact of cultural factors on the revolution in military affairs in Russia, the US, and Israel*, Stanford University Press, 2010, p 56-57. Dmitry (Dima) Adamsky, 'Nuclear incoherence: deterrence theory and non-strategic nuclear weapons in Russia', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 37:1, 2014, p 91-134. Dmitry (Dima) Adamsky, 'If war comes tomorrow: Russian thinking about "regional nuclear deterrence"', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 27:1, 2014, p 163-188.

<sup>99</sup> Nikolay Sidnyaev, 'Сетецентрические управляющие системы и боевые операции' [Network-centric control systems], *Voennaya Mysl'*, Issue 12, 2021, p 60-71.



war of attrition.<sup>100</sup> As in the West, Russian futurists generally ascribe greater thought to the former in an unspoken belief that descent into the latter would be too disastrous or unethical to fight. The consensus in the 2010s among most Russian thinkers was therefore that greater professionalization of the Russian Armed Forces with an aim to dispelling unnecessary mobilization units but increasing readiness for various strategic contingencies would be the most useful disposition of the military,<sup>101</sup> especially relative to the concurrent drives for practically dualist rapid reaction and mobilization units sought prior to the 2008 Georgian War which had resulted in *de facto* two Russian militaries, both insufficiently funded to work.<sup>102</sup>

Analysing military exercises for their policy and strategic value is a relatively undeveloped but growing field academically. Generally, they are neglected in favour of military operations and campaigns as these have greater historical significance and the political messaging they contain are more discernible from the purely military dimensions.<sup>103</sup>

Martin van Creveld overviews the history of military exercises as training, pageantry, and a sociological component of human behaviour but does not extend his analysis to their strategic or signalling value.<sup>104</sup> Their original use is for the professionalization of military servicemen, whose ‘exercises are unbloody battles and their battles bloody exercises’ in a quote attributed to the Roman historian Flavius Josephus.<sup>105</sup> This tradition is best summarized in the frequent Russian citation of Tsarist Generalissimo Aleksandr Suvorov’s dictum of ‘difficulty in exercises, ease in battle’ (*tyazhelo v uchenii, legko v boyu*).<sup>106</sup> As

<sup>100</sup> Mikhail Stepshin & Andrey Anikonov, ‘Развитие вооружения, военной и специальной техники и их влияние на характер будущих войн’ [Progress in weapons, special and military hardware and their effect on the nature of future warfare], *Voennaya Mysl*, Issue 12, 2021, p 35.

<sup>101</sup> Mikhail Barabanov, ‘Changing the force and moving forward after Georgia’, *Brothers armed: military aspects of the crisis in Ukraine*, Minneapolis: East View Press, 2014, p 91-123.

<sup>102</sup> Mikhail Barabanov, ‘Hard lessons learned: Russian military reform up to the Georgian conflict’, *Brothers armed: military aspects of the crisis in Ukraine*, Minneapolis: East View Press, 2014, p 84-90.

<sup>103</sup> Guillaume Lasconjarias, ‘The utility of military exercises’, University of Copenhagen: Centre for Military Studies, 2020, p 1.

<sup>104</sup> Martin van Creveld, *Wargames: From Gladiators to Gigabytes*, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

<sup>105</sup> Lasconjarias, p 9.

<sup>106</sup> ‘Тяжело в учении – легко в бою.’ E.g. Marina Eliseeva, ‘Его называли солдатским маршалом’ [He was called the soldier’s marshal], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 29 December 2017,

<http://archive.redstar.ru/index.php/biryulin/item/35541-ego-nazyvali-soldatskim-marshalom>. Accessed 18

Russia has few international partners with which it can test its doctrines besides distant India and suspicious China, exercises necessarily replace what combat experience and multinational doctrine review offers Western militaries.<sup>107</sup>

Arguing that three different government perspectives play (or at least should play) a role in designing military exercises, Guillaume Lasconjarias comes closest to offering a coherent theory for the use of military exercises. The strategic level views exercises through a set of national- and multinational-level values indicating political trust in coalitions, alliances, and plans. The joint operational level, a uniquely Western level, approaches military exercises as a testing ground for amalgamating the different potential actors within a state toward a directed aim. The operational and tactical levels by contrast use military exercises to evaluate and test plans and military skills.<sup>108</sup> The confluence of these levels and their ability to demonstrate political resolve in addition to military skill complicates their analysis but accentuates their importance as a 'hybrid phenomenon'.<sup>109</sup> Writing from a Western perspective, he defines military exercises as being collective practice, occurring at all levels of military organization, being key to interoperability across states and services, mirroring reality, and informing future military developments.<sup>110</sup> Lasconjarias also highlights the importance of exercises' visibility, in turn producing political and strategic effects ranging from reassurance of allies and partners to concrete diplomatic involvement to applied deterrence.<sup>111</sup> Military exercises in his vision can be measured according to their volume, complexity, virtuality, reiteration, interservice nature, multi-nationality, and interoperability.<sup>112</sup> With the end of the Cold War, Lasconjarias argues that military exercises in the West turned to preserving at least a cadre of core military skills among allies and partners with

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January 2022. Konstantin Lobkov, 'В полном объёме, точно и в срок' [Completely, accurately, and on time], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 7 May 2020, <http://redstar.ru/v-polnom-obyome-tochno-i-v-srok/>. Accessed 18 January 2020. Aleksandr Bondarenko, 'Вечная «Наука побеждать»' [Eternal "science of winning"], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 20 November 2020, <http://redstar.ru/vechnaya-nauka-pobezhdad/>. Accessed 18 January 2022.

<sup>107</sup> Isabelle Facon, 'Military exercises: the Russian way', *The Russian military in contemporary perspective*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2019, p 232.

<sup>108</sup> Lasconjarias, pp 1-2, 28-29.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*, pp 5, 26.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, p 7-8.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, p 11.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, p 12-13.

smaller militaries,<sup>113</sup> in turn amplifying the exercises' political dimension as military atrophy from the 'peace dividend' in many NATO countries became a political controversy.

To Lasconjarias' formulation of the use of military exercises, Johan Norberg adds the dimension of building military skills. Writing primarily about the Russian context, Norberg highlights the importance of major military exercises providing practice both for the brain (command-and-control or C2) and muscles (forces) of the armed forces.<sup>114</sup> In contrast to the trends in NATO outlined by Lasconjarias, Russian military exercises feature far more emphasis on the military dimensions than political ones in part because of a paucity of allies and in part because few Russian politicians in power claim post-Soviet Russian military power is superfluous.

Using Lasconjarias' components of military exercises, it is easy to calculate that Russia's exercises have greater volume than NATO's whereas NATO's are more multinational than Russia's.<sup>115</sup> However, calculating the relative measurements of the other variables is more complicated. Some analysts identify the participation of certain units as determinants of intended messages.<sup>116</sup> Another group examines the overt (e.g. 'defensive') and implied (e.g. offensive capabilities through demonstration) strategic messaging of exercises, constructing a dialectical development.<sup>117</sup> Unfortunately, these approaches rely upon qualitative determinations difficult to extrapolate across all Russian bureaucratic activity without massive subjective swings in unit and capability interpretations.

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid, pp 15-16, 26.

<sup>114</sup> Johan Norberg, 'Vostok-2018: about the Russian military's brain, not its muscles', Stockholm: FOI, September 2018, FOI Memo 6470. Johan Norberg, 'Russia trains for war', Stockholm: FOI, 4 February 2019, <https://www.foi.se/en/foi/news-and-pressroom/news/2019-02-04-russia-trains-for-war.html>. Accessed 21 April 2022. Johan Norberg and Natalie Simpson, 'Zapad-2021 and Russia's potential for warfighting', Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2021, p 4.

<sup>115</sup> Lasconjarias, p 22-23.

<sup>116</sup> Stephen Blank, 'What do the Zapad-2013 exercises reveal?', *Russia's Zapad 2013 military exercise: lessons for Baltic regional security*, Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, 2015, p 10.

<sup>117</sup> Ieva Bērziņa, 'Zapad 2013 as a form of strategic communication', *Russia's Zapad 2013 military exercise: lessons for Baltic regional security*, Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, 2015, p 58-76. Vera Ratsiborynska, Daivis Petraitis, & Valeriy Akimenko, 'Russia's strategic exercises: messages and implications', Riga: NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, 2020.

Though military exercises bring military skills to life in peacetime,<sup>118</sup> their capacity to transmit signals through variations in their components requires at least some measure of transparency for the other party, or interlocutor, to behold the message.<sup>119</sup> Governments of Russia's neighbours are sometimes quick to consider all Russian exercises threats considering the use of large-scale exercises prior to combat operations in Georgia in 2008, Ukraine in 2014, and Syria in 2015 seemingly in preparation.<sup>120</sup> Concerns have been raised about the conflict scenarios Russia runs in its strategic exercises ultimately require nuclear weapons to resolve.<sup>121</sup>

Military journalists, by contrast, have probably written too much about military exercises' strategic value. The more useful of these analyses follow a standard format: identify the major activities of the exercise and their targets, assess what units did or did not participate, and contextualise the exercise in recent military leader statements and reported modernisation efforts.<sup>122</sup> These writers frequently ascribe a 'coercive signalling' to neighbouring states dimension to Russian military exercises.<sup>123</sup> Academics sometimes enter this fray, using the existence of Russian exercises in a particular region or with a particular partner as a sign of threat or support<sup>124</sup> but rarely give the context on how these activities relate to past behaviour or support or deviate from established patterns.

International Russian exercises are also frequently cited as manifestations of

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<sup>118</sup> Diego Ruiz Palmer, 'Military exercises and strategic intent through the prism of NATO's *Autumn Forge* exercise series, 1975-1989', *Military exercises: political messaging and strategic impact*, Rome: NATO Defence College, 2018, p 66-67. Andrew S. Bowen, 'Russian military exercises', Congressional Research Service #IF11938, 4 October 2021.

<sup>119</sup> Lasconjarias, p 14-15.

<sup>120</sup> Facon, p 221.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, p 239.

<sup>122</sup> Examples of this form of analysis include Pavel Ivanov, '«Гром» грянул, НАТО перекрестилось' [*Grom* struck, NATO crossed itself], *VPK*, 12 November 2019, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/53585>. Accessed 21 April 2020. Fredrik Wesslau & Andrew Wilson, 'So far from god, so close to Russia: Belarus and the Zapad military exercise', European Council on Foreign Relations, 11 September 2017, <https://ecfr.eu/publication/so-close-to-russia-belarus-and-the-zapad-military-exercise-7221/>. Accessed 26 April 2022.

<sup>123</sup> Jacob W. Kipp, 'The Zapad-2013 strategic exercise and the function of such exercises in the Soviet Union and Russia', *Russia's Zapad 2013 military exercise: lessons for Baltic regional security*, Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, 2015, p 78-79. Bowen 2021a.

<sup>124</sup> Bradley Jardine & Edward Lemon, 'In post-American Central Asia, Russia and China are tightening their grip', *War on the Rocks*, 7 October 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/10/in-post-american-central-asia-russia-and-china-are-tightening-their-grip/>. Accessed 1 November 2021.

deepening relations with countries beyond the former Soviet Union and demonstrations of dominance over neighbours within.<sup>125</sup>

In the West, some academics write about the enduring utility of the military in the post-Cold War era as a mechanism for diplomatic trading or influence as opposed to warfighting.<sup>126</sup> This abstract notion has neither been applied by these academics to the Russian military nor have the Russians explored it themselves.

Putin himself has claimed that nuclear weapons have made War unthinkable as state policy, relegating use of military force during the Cold War to an 'exceptional measure'.<sup>127</sup> However, in the same speech, he claims the post-Cold War world has seen a great reduction in the threshold of use of force. Russia protested the US introduction of the low-yield W76-2 nuclear warhead, claiming it destabilised the international order by lowering the nuclear threshold.<sup>128</sup>

A subset of Russian scholars disregards the revolutionary nature of nuclear weapons on warfare. When considering the potential end of the post-1945 nuclear taboo, Aleksey Fenenko notes that nuclear weapons are just one of several technological innovations considered impractical to achieve a political victory in War.<sup>129</sup> Whereas nuclear weapons effectively deterred war after 1945, the inflexibility of their destruction renders them impossible to wield in 21<sup>st</sup> century conflicts and so their pertinence to ongoing conflict is marginalised.<sup>130</sup>

Another subset, however, perceives the necessarily extreme nature of nuclear use makes them ideal for forcing opponents such as NATO to accept a small defeat rather than risk a large war. In this approach, nuclear weapons are used -

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<sup>125</sup> Facon, p 234-236.

<sup>126</sup> Hew Strachan, *The direction of war: contemporary strategy in historical strategy*, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p 125.

<sup>127</sup> 'Заседание Международного дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»' [Meeting of the International discussion club "Valdai"], Kremlin, 22 October 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50548>. Accessed 13 May 2020.

<sup>128</sup> 'Брифинг официального представителя МИД России М.В.Захаровой, Москва' [Official briefing of the spokesperson of the MID of Russia M.V. Zakharova, Moscow], MID, 29 April 2020, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4108704#8](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4108704#8). Accessed 30 April 2020.

<sup>129</sup> Aleksey Fenenko, '«Долгий мир» и ядерное оружие' [The "long peace" and nuclear weapons], *Rossiya v global'noy politike*, 21 November 2018, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/dolgij-mir-i-yadernoe-oruzhie/>. Accessed 14 May 2020.

<sup>130</sup> Miron & Thornton, p. 4-5.

including in peacetime - to achieve a spectrum of intimidation, anti-access area denial (A2AD), offset of conventional weakness, and guarantee of freedom of manoeuvre.<sup>131</sup>

In the West, the debate on Russian nuclear strategy centres primarily upon their centrality to ensuring that Russian international policy positions cannot be ignored even if its conventional military capabilities are perceived to be too weak to stop an opposed policy by force.<sup>132</sup>

A more vigorous debate exists on the role of missiles in military signalling in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Among Russian experts, recent discourse on missiles correlates highly with realist international theory: the United States, as the dominant military power, destabilises the world with more capabilities whereas Russia and China stabilise the world with those same capabilities as they prevent the US from irresponsibly using military force on the international stage.<sup>133</sup>

Russian analysts consider the omnipresent threat of a ‘sudden (pre-emptive) combined nuclear strike’ by massed cruise missiles ample justification for a constant evaluation of the strategic environment in which peacetime can descend into conflict almost without warning.<sup>134</sup> This in turn has led to a frantic defining of multiple types of pre-war status requiring readiness of the Russian Armed Forces: (1) peacetime, (2) aggravation (*obostreniya*) of interstate relations, (3) growing tension (*narastaniya napryazhennosti*), (4) military conflict (*konflikt*) with conventional weapons, and (5) emergency conditions in which missiles are employed.<sup>135</sup> This escalation toward missiles highlights their role in breaking down

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<sup>131</sup> Blank 2019a, p 28. Mark B. Schneider, ‘Russian nuclear weapons policy and programs, the European security crisis, and the threat to NATO’, *The Russian military in contemporary perspective*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2019, p 305-340.

<sup>132</sup> Stefan Forss, ‘Russian nuclear policy, doctrine, and strategy’, *Russia’s military strategy and doctrine*, Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2019, p 189-203.

<sup>133</sup> ‘Эксперты: китайская СПРН, о которой заявил Путин, снизит вероятность большой войны’ [Experts: Chinese early warning missile radar system, which Putin announced, will reduce the likelihood of a large war], *TASS*, 4 October 2019, <https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/6964281>. Accessed 23 April 2020. ‘Эксперт рассказал, как Россия может ответить на милитаризацию космоса США’ [Expert told how Russia can answer US militarisation of space], *TASS*, 11 October 2019, <https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/6991029>. Accessed 23 April 2020.

<sup>134</sup> V.V. Sukhorutchenko, A.S. Borisenko, & Ye.A. Shlotov, ‘Актуальные проблемы оценки стратегической обстановки и возможные направления их решения’ [The topical issues of assessing the strategic situation and likely ways of dealing with those], *Voennaya mys’*, Issue 10, 2021, p. 26.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*, p. 22.

more classical notions of war and peace in the Russian military's mindset. There is also a concern at how the proliferation of missile systems and other long-range tactical technologies exponentially increase the spatial dimension of battlefields, especially as battlefield intelligence capabilities increase.<sup>136</sup>

Without a doubt, the most repeated theme of missile strategy signalling in 21<sup>st</sup>-century Russia is US missile defence. The enthusiasm for this subject is driven directly by the Russian government, which overtly invests in future weapons to overcome US investment in missile defence.<sup>137</sup>

Especially among Russian scholars, debate rages on the lowering threshold of violence as the means of conducting war expand. Wittier Russian scholars place this under the cautionary headline '*vse pozvoleno*' ('everything is permissible'),<sup>138</sup> the mantra which Fyodor Dostoevsky's villain Smerdyakov uses to justify murder in *The Brothers Karamazov*. They warn that the endemic nature and relatively low cost of psychological and information warfare in the media and cyber-enabled espionage erode the perceived significance of the possibility of especially violent kinetic consequences to these actions.<sup>139</sup> Putin and his advisors<sup>140</sup> frequently invoke this warning, especially in admonitions on why remembering the Soviet sacrifice in World War II (or the 'Great Patriotic War') remains relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century Russian understanding of military strategy seems to have expanded from a competent capacity to engage in potentially nuclear war to a more flexible concept of 'sovereign self-assertion' and 'strategic non-nuclear deterrence' designed to address NATO attacks on Russian internal stability.<sup>141</sup> This drive toward flexibility, for some scholars, shows prospects for increased

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<sup>136</sup> Buvaltsev, Abdrashitov, & Garvard, p. 31-32.

<sup>137</sup> 'Путин заявил, что российские ракетные комплексы смогут преодолеть любую систему ПРО' [Putin declared that Russian rockets can any missile defence system], *TASS*, 12 October 2019, <https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/6992732>. Accessed 23 April 2020.

<sup>138</sup> Vladimir Orlov, '«Все позволено» и новая уязвимость' ['Everything is permissible' and a new vulnerability], *Rossiya v global'noymire*, 15 May 2019, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/vse-pozvoleno-i-novaya-uyazvimost-2/>. Accessed 14 May 2020.

<sup>139</sup> Kremlin 2015b.

<sup>140</sup> Nikolay Patrushev, 'Как ложь превратилась в инструмент принижения роли России?' [How did the lie turn into an instrument to belittle the role of Russia?], *SCRF*, 6 May 2020, <http://scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/2779/>. Accessed 14 May 2020.

<sup>141</sup> Miron & Thornton, p 5-6.



Russian strategic prowess with less deployment of military force but with concomitant strategic effects.<sup>142</sup> However, this approach also tends to blur the distinction between more purely political initiatives and military action into an amalgam serving 'geopolitical' goals.<sup>143</sup>

The broad limitation to the pre-existing military policy-focused literature is its reliance on an exceptionally narrow range of sources such as scattered articles by generals and defence thinkers or infrequent speeches by Putin or his defence ministers. Exercise analysis done so far overwhelmingly concentrates on only two exercises per year: the capstone strategic exercise (*Kavkaz, Zapad, Vostok, and Tsentri*) and the annual strategic nuclear deterrence exercise. In the Soviet era, such limitations were necessary due to the limited quantity of sources available to academics, but such limitations are largely lifted in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the Russian Ministry of Defence alone publishes typically between 50 and 100 press releases pertaining to the Russian military's training, modernisation, and cultural activities every day. This dissertation ends the neglect of these important new sources in the literature.

### Cumulative Strategy Literature

A smaller body of literature analyses how Russian foreign and military policies are used in concert. This research nearly always concludes that these policies capitulate to a singularly focused Russian strategy explained either by broad observations or theory, but again typically fails to connect those observations and theories with the actual activities of the Russian government, again leaving a critical gap in the literature.

Some of these scholars focus on the evolution of the institutions of Russia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Since Putin's return to the Presidency, concerns about the hollowing out of institutions in favour of personal connections to the leadership have been widespread among both outside observers and junior Russian officials.<sup>144</sup> This, however, does not degrade the perceived importance of

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid, p 22-23.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, pp 7, 22.

<sup>144</sup> Kadri Liik, 'The last of the offended: Russia's first post-Putin diplomats', European Council on Foreign Relations, 19 November 2019,



understanding the institutions still limping along, especially as leading Russian politicians including Putin consider large segments of Russian bureaucratic management - including military reform for a time - as unrewarding money sinks for which active management only saps political capital resources of potentially greater significance elsewhere.<sup>145</sup>

Among Russian experts themselves, the key trend perceived in their own institutions is the 'democratisation' of foreign policy approaches, particularly an abandonment of the rigid clichés and declarations of the Soviet-era bureaucracy.<sup>146</sup> For diplomats themselves thinking on this process, an important emphasis is how this transformation tries to adapt with the transition to a polycentric world order.<sup>147</sup>

Nevertheless, the critical limitations of this approach are the partial availability of the guiding documents of Russian policy, the opacity of how Russian leaders interpret their national security concepts and policy doctrines into individual events, and the incongruent definitions of terms across security cultures that either create or increase the difference between 'declaratory policy' and real-world actions.<sup>148</sup>

In addition to government institutions, certain non-state actors are also perceived to have a large place in Russian foreign and military policy. This includes the military-industrial complex (often abbreviated simply as the *oboronka* in Russian) seeking international arms sales not only to boost Russia's position on the global stage but also secure money for Russia's own technological modernisation and broader economy.<sup>149</sup>

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<https://ecfr.eu/publication/the-last-of-the-offended-russias-first-post-putin-diplomats/>. Accessed 24 November 2021.

<sup>145</sup> Roger N. McDermott, *The reform of Russian conventional armed forces: problems, challenges, and policy implications*, Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2011, p 306.

<sup>146</sup> Roman Raynkhardt, 'От клише к неологизмам' [From cliché to neologism], *Rossiia v global'noy politike*, Vol. 101, 30 January 2020, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/ot-klishe-k-neologizmam/>. Accessed 15 April 2020.

<sup>147</sup> Dmitriy Polyanskiy, 'Последовательность и логика сейчас в большой цене' [Consistency and logic are now at a great price], *Rossiia v global'noy politike*, Vol. 101, 30 January 2020, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/posledovatelnost-i-logika-sejchas-v-bolshoj-czene/>. Accessed 15 April 2020.

<sup>148</sup> Caldwell, p 311-313.

<sup>149</sup> Bowen 2021b, p 1-2.

The foremost type of the institutional approach to Russian analysis is the vertical of power concentration, which considers the central question of Russian strategic policymaking to be the attempted centralisation of all Russian decision authority in the Kremlin. Though it has scattered antecedents in the Soviet<sup>150</sup> and even Tsarist past<sup>151</sup> with speculations on the inability of individual leaders to effectively control a country as enormous as Russia, its modern iteration effectively recast itself entirely after Putin's ascendancy to the Presidency in 2000.

The most enduring aspect of the vertical of power critique of Russian strategy is the role of court politics in deciding policy.<sup>152</sup> Without archive declassification, studying the dynamics in the inner sanctum of Russia's leaders is quantitatively impossible and largely speculative. However, the incomplete window provided by the Russian Federation's structures suggests that in the 2010s there exists a tension between desired fiscal stability within the Kremlin and increased support for the Armed Forces from the political mainstream.<sup>153</sup> Despite various attempts to institute centralised reforms to Russian governance, high-profile failures continue even in the late 2010s<sup>154</sup> when Putin is internationally considered a despot.

The Realist Romantic group of the silo school tends to be sympathetic to the vertical of power school but believes this to be only one of many competing forces for influence in Russian strategic thought.<sup>155</sup> Gvosdev and Marsh in particular think multiple Russian foreign policies toward a single country is natural given the competing interests in Moscow.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Viktor Suvorov, *Inside the Soviet Army*, New York: Macmillan, 1982, p 22-36.

<sup>151</sup> E.A. Brayley Hodgetts, *The Court of Russia in the Nineteenth Century: Volume II*, London: Methuen & Co, 1908.

<sup>152</sup> Kathryn Stoner, *Russia resurrected: its power and purpose in a new global order*, Oxford University Press, 2021.

<sup>153</sup> Pavel Vasil'ev, 'Защита Отечества в режиме экономии' [Defending the Fatherland in an economic regime], *VPK*, 15 October 2019, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/53020>. Accessed 21 April 2020.

<sup>154</sup> For example, the failure to implement a centralised military equipment oversight board in line with the 2012 May Edicts. Valeriy Butymov, 'Централизованное управление жизненным циклом военной техники отложено на неопределенный срок' [Centralised command of the life cycle of military equipment postponed indefinitely], *Военное.рф*, 1 October 2019, <https://военное.рф/2019/Технологии6/>. Accessed 17 April 2020.

<sup>155</sup> Gvosdev & Marsh, pp 2, 7, 16-17.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid*, p 52-53.

Other scholars hold that the relative atrophy of the Russian Armed Forces' conventional capabilities have shifted greater weight to the role of nuclear weapons and a bluffing threat-ridden foreign policy. This group has been in decline in the past decade as Russia has invested in revitalised conventional armed forces but some scholars remained doubtful of the efficacy of these reforms even before the 2022 invasion of Ukraine.<sup>157</sup> Scholars who dismiss the Russian Federation's capability to use force as overhyped nevertheless admit the persistent threat of their nuclear deterrent and so tend to regard the intersection of Russian foreign and military policy in the light of what Moscow considers as meriting a nuclear threat. Nevertheless, this basic vision still has adherents among prominent Western commentators<sup>158</sup> and politicians, including former U.S. President Barack Obama and current U.S. President Joseph Biden.<sup>159</sup>

During Putin's first two terms as president, the inability of the Armed Forces to intervene in or otherwise influence ongoing international developments was acknowledged in the national security concept. Only from 2009 was this concept reformulated to deliberately alleviate this problem.<sup>160</sup> To offset this impotence, Russia 'nuclearised' its military policy from the first years of Putin's presidency, emphasising nuclear modernisation and diminishing its self-declared inhibitions about using nuclear weapons in its overt doctrine.<sup>161</sup> However, this trend, especially before 2008-2009, has been considered specifically political rather than military.<sup>162</sup>

A key concern among some analysts considering the disproportionate Russian emphasis on nuclear weapons in its military modernization is the seemingly weak early warning and intelligence capabilities that should accompany a robust

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<sup>157</sup> Jeff Hawn, 'The unreformed Russian military', *Riddle*, 20 April 2022, <https://ridl.io/en/the-unreformed-russian-military/>. Accessed 25 April 2022.

<sup>158</sup> Andrea Kendall-Taylor, 'The myth of Russian decline', *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2021, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2021-10-19/myth-russian-decline>. Accessed 23 October 2021.

<sup>159</sup> Blank 2019a, p 4. Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 'Remarks by President Biden at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence', White House, 27 July 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/07/27/remarks-by-president-biden-at-the-office-of-the-director-of-national-intelligence/>.

<sup>160</sup> Mark Neimark, 'Национальная безопасность России: от концепции к стратегии' [National security of Russia: from concept to strategy], *Rossiia i Mir*, MGIMO, Vol. 19, 2019, p 10-11.

<sup>161</sup> Caldwell, pp 279-280, 324-325.

<sup>162</sup> Jennifer G. Mathers, 'Nuclear weapons in Russian foreign policy: patterns in presidential discourse, 2000-2010', *Russia and the world: the internal-external nexus*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2013, p 103-128.

nuclear doctrine.<sup>163</sup> This raises concerns that the Russian leadership will have little time to make nuclear decisions to the detriment of its rationality or that Russia is underinvesting in these capabilities specifically because it has a first use policy.<sup>164</sup>

Another subset of the Rusting Pile of Nuclear Weapons School attributes Russia's disproportionate power position to its energy wealth.<sup>165</sup> Without these resources to export for external cash, they contend that Russian capacity for military power would evaporate. These analyses frequently focus regionally - especially on Europe<sup>166</sup> or China<sup>167</sup> - and deliberately ignore Russian military power or its lack thereof.

Yet another subset uses statistical indicators to show that Russia is in decline and cannot sustain whatever ambitious foreign policy or broader strategy it might otherwise want. Frequent citations include demographic,<sup>168</sup> economic, and governance<sup>169</sup> weakness.

Certain scholars consider virtually all Russian strategy political survival<sup>170</sup> by resisting primarily Western attempts to remould the Russian political system in its image.<sup>171</sup> It imagines the Russian Federation as the successor to previous Russian states' attempts to define its identity as both Christian and non-Western or non-European.<sup>172</sup> The sovereignty sub-group essentially is the Russian area

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<sup>163</sup> Blank 2019a, p 18.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, pp 17, 23.

<sup>165</sup> Peter Rutland, 'Russia as an energy superpower', *New Political Economy*, 13:2, June 2008, p 203-210. Peter Rutland, 'Petronation? oil, gas, and national identity in Russia', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 31:1, 2015, p 66-89.

<sup>166</sup> Sergei Kapitonov, 'European gas crisis: Russia to the rescue?', Carnegie Moscow Centre, 12 October 2021, [https://carnegiemoscow.org/commentary/85545?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss](https://carnegiemoscow.org/commentary/85545?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss). Accessed 3 November 2021.

<sup>167</sup> Rob de Wijk, *Power politics: how China and Russia reshape the world*, Amsterdam University Press, 2016, p 24.

<sup>168</sup> Brent Peabody, 'Russia doesn't have the demographics for war', *Foreign Policy*, 3 January 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/01/03/russia-demography-birthrate-decline-ukraine/>. Accessed 4 January 2022.

<sup>169</sup> Gouré 2019, p 59-132.

<sup>170</sup> Hadar Glottman, 'The decision calculus of Putin', *How do leaders make decisions? evidence from the East and West, part B*, Bingley: Emerald Publishing, 2020, p 18-22.

<sup>171</sup> Potentially even to the risk of agglomeration into a China-centric world order. Kaczmarek 2012, p 3-17. Marcin Kaczmarek, 'The Sino-Russian relationship and the West', *Survival*, 62:6, 2010, p 199-212.

<sup>172</sup> John Berryman, "'Fear and Loathing" in the Kremlin: Russia and the challenge of intervention', *Shifting priorities in Russia's foreign and security policy*, Ashgate, 2014, p 51-72.

studies expression of Charles Tilly's dictum that 'war made the state and the state made war'.<sup>173</sup>

Though he believes the three political pressures sub-groups broadly represent the views of three continuous Russian policy camps, Andrei Tsygankov contends that the 'Statist' or sovereignty-oriented camp controls the Russian Federation and indeed held dominance more often than not in the historical Russian state. Tsygankov adheres to a constructivist Western international relations theory for understanding Russian foreign policy mostly because he concludes competing realist and liberal explanations fall short,<sup>174</sup> arguing that Russian foreign policy is debated among Westernizers, Statists, and Civilizationists. As the Statists have been ascendant since 1998, Tsygankov therefore falls in this sub-group in this dissertation. The primary Statist interest is ensuring capacity to govern and preserving the social and political order, taking a neutral or opportunistic position on relations with the West.<sup>175</sup> Tsygankov's formulation proves simplistic as it ultimately understands Russian foreign policy almost completely upon Russian leaders' attitude toward the West: pro- (Westernizer), anti- (Civilizationist), or ambivalent (Statist).<sup>176</sup>

Bobo Lo presents the Russian vision of the world as one fundamentally informed by the internal political structure of the bureaucratic system and the external pressure of a perceived global disorder in which Russia seeks a permanent place, ideally as a great power filling an emerging void of order.<sup>177</sup> He effectively takes a constructivist approach to the reactivist concept explored above but within the range of possible observation from the confines of the Russian domestic political debate<sup>178</sup> as well as the range of options that Russian military capabilities is perceived to offer.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Charles Tilly, 'Reflections on the history of European state making', *The formation of national states in western Europe*, Princeton University Press, 1975, p 42.

<sup>174</sup> Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006, p 8-20.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, p 5-6.

<sup>176</sup> In Tsygankov's framing of the 'Statist', there is a willingness to embrace the stability that the West's institutions offer if they are available but also an enduring concern that access to these institutions is entirely contingent upon external favour, requiring maintenance of the ability to survive without them.

<sup>177</sup> Lo 2015, p xvi-xviii.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid, p 3-37.

<sup>179</sup> Bobo Lo, 'The securitization of Russian foreign policy under Putin', *Russia between East and West: Russian foreign policy on the threshold of the twenty-first century*, London: Frank Cass, 2003, p 12-27.

Another group looks more closely at the electoral and civic society interests of the Russian people and elite. In the first 20 years after the Soviet Union, these scholars highlighted the harrowing political experience of the loss of Soviet power in the international competitive environment.<sup>180</sup> Since the 2011-2012 protests over Putin's return to the Presidency for a third term, it has concentrated on how Putin's regime now draws its support overwhelmingly from older voters who remember or romanticize Soviet power<sup>181</sup> especially with the 2014 annexation of Crimea.<sup>182</sup> This drives Russia's leadership to endorse this aging generation's grievances with the West over the 1990s economic disaster<sup>183</sup> whilst seemingly arming Russia to resist potential future interference with its sovereignty. However, defining what Russia's policies should be beyond a vague great power revanchism remains vague due to the inability to define the national interest at this stage of Russia's political development, especially in light of the rapid changes to the global power structure.<sup>184</sup>

When considering the specifically military implications of this phenomenon, this group emphasizes the continuing Soviet-legacy dispersed military education system seemingly ill-suited to more professional armed forces to prevent educated officers from objecting to potentially criminal orders from the Kremlin.<sup>185</sup>

Russian scholars generally accept an immaturity of Russian strategic conceptual thought in the 1990s as the rapidly-declining resources of the Russian state required wholesale re-evaluation of the national interest.<sup>186</sup> Nevertheless, they

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<sup>180</sup> Legvold, p 3. Eugene Rumer, 'Russian strategic objectives: it's about the state', *Current Russia military affairs*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2018, p 1-5.

<sup>181</sup> Vladimir Rukasvishnikov, 'Understanding Putin's foreign and security policy: lessons from the Russian transition', *Shifting priorities in Russia's foreign and security policy*, Ashgate, 2014, p 42.

<sup>182</sup> Gouré, 2019, p 78.

<sup>183</sup> Rukasvishnikov, p 37.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, p 45. Julia Gurganus, 'How (And why) Russia does more with less', *Current Russia military affairs*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2018, p 10.

<sup>185</sup> Aleksandr Golts, 'Modernization versus mobilization', *The Russian military in contemporary perspective*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2019, p 272-274.

<sup>186</sup> Mark Neimark, 'Политика России на постсоветском пространстве: концептуальный опыт формирования' [Russian policy in the post-Soviet space: conceptual experience of formation], *Rossiia i Mir*, MGIMO, Vol. 17, 2018, p 7. Neimark 2019, p 7-9.

generally claim that any such immaturity<sup>187</sup> had disappeared by 2009.<sup>188</sup>

Yet other scholars fear a re-emerging ideological offensive mindset emerging within Russian policy management wherein Russian state pre-occupation with an ideological quest transcends strategy and politically reconciles an otherwise underdeveloped state with a geopolitical will to power. It has been characterised as a conflict between ‘lawless Russian nationalism and law-governed Western multilateralism’.<sup>189</sup>

Lawrence T. Caldwell identifies the Third Rome concept, 19<sup>th</sup>-century nationalism, and Marxism-Leninism as the key historical ideological drivers of Russian security thinking. Though he claims these are tempered by realistic Russian assessments of its own weaknesses and a constant economising of priorities to regions nearer Moscow and technologies implementable in the near-term, ideology and a tactical obsession with surprise dominate politicians’ strategic thinking.<sup>190</sup>

The political pressures theory group also emphasises the disappearance of the communist legacy from Russian foreign policy thinking.<sup>191</sup> Indeed, Russian outreach is characterised by a co-opting political movements abroad of highly diverse ideological persuasion, generally influencing anti-establishment elite opinion to try to persuade the general public to sympathise with Russian policies and narratives.<sup>192</sup>

‘Hybrid warfare’ or ‘grey zone’ warfare represents a subsection of the comprehensive strategy school that considers Russia and the West to be in a

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<sup>187</sup> Neimark defines this ‘immaturity’ as an over-fixation on following US policy and the most powerful Western players in the immediate post-Soviet era at the expense of Russian national interests. Neimark 2018, p 15-16.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid, p 11.

<sup>189</sup> Edward Lucas, *The new Cold War: how the Kremlin menaces both Russia and the West*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p 14.

<sup>190</sup> Caldwell, p 283-285.

<sup>191</sup> Rukasvishnikov, pp 43, 46.

<sup>192</sup> Aleksandr Fisher, ‘Trickle down soft power: do Russia’s ties to European parties influence public opinion?’, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 17:1, 2021, <https://academic-oup-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/fpa/article/17/1/oraa013/5825379>. Accessed 5 January 2022.

semi-armed struggle for influence.<sup>193</sup> Ironically, this military conception runs quite contrary to US military theorist Frank Hoffman's original concept for 'hybrid warfare', developed to analyse the increasing confusion differentiating roles of state and nonstate actors in both combat and administration of territory drawn from the 2006 Israel-Hizballah War.<sup>194</sup> Though characterised by its extreme flexibility of definition,<sup>195</sup> the central premise of the Western conception of hybrid warfare as a tool of Russian policy is that Russian military policy uses Russian foreign policy as a mere shield<sup>196</sup> to achieve strategic victories with a combination of military and nonmilitary tools with an economy of force despite international institutional resistance to Russian revanchism.<sup>197</sup> Since Russia lacks the resources to fight a large-scale conventional war, its military tactics must be decisive but easily deniable and its foreign policy will obfuscate decisive military actions<sup>198</sup> whilst continuously eroding the resolve of Russia's rival(s).<sup>199</sup> It will also seek to maximise the impact of certain non-military actions, especially cyberattacks, information warfare, and the mobilisation of the civilian population to patriotic ends.<sup>200</sup> On the conventional military side, Russia uses exercises to communicate coercive strategic intent, preferring these relatively cheap signals to war.<sup>201</sup>

Scholars within this school tend to be in the military and disproportionately

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<sup>193</sup> Aleksandr Bartosh, 'Ход серым конем' [Grey knight's move], *VPK*, 30 November 2020, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/59752>. Accessed 20 April 2022.

<sup>194</sup> Frank G. Hoffman, 'Conflict in the 21st century: the rise of hybrid wars', Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, December 2007. Ofer Fridman, *Hybrid warfare: resurgence and politicisation*, Oxford University Press, 2018, p 11.

<sup>195</sup> Colin S. Gray, *Categorical confusion: the strategic implications of recognizing challenges either as irregular or traditional*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2012, p 16. Evan Lawson, 'We need to talk about hybrid', *The RUSI Journal*, 166:3, 2021, p. 58-66.

<sup>196</sup> Andrei Kaleshnikov, 'Expert survey: will the outcome of Russia's elections impact its foreign policy?', *Russia Matters*, 24 September 2021, <https://www.russiamatters.org/analysis/expert-survey-will-outcome-russias-elections-impact-its-foreign-policy>. Accessed 3 November 2021.

<sup>197</sup> Gabriel Lloyd, 'Hybrid war and active measures', *Small Wars Journal*, 10 October 2021, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/hybrid-warfare-and-active-measures>. Accessed 26 October 2021.

<sup>198</sup> Dan Altman, 'The future of conquest: fights over small places could spark the next big war', *Foreign Affairs*, 24 September 2021, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-09-24/china-russia-future-conquest>. Accessed 3 November 2021.

<sup>199</sup> Anna Malyar, 'Сьогодні Україна не програє інформаційну війну Росії, а успішно протистоїть усім інформзагрозам' [Today Ukraine is not losing the information war to Russia but successfully resisting all information threats], Ukrainian Ministry of Defence, 2 November 2021, <https://www.mil.gov.ua/news/2021/11/02/sogodni-ukraina-ne-prograe-informacijnu-vijnu-rosii-a-uspishno-protistoit-usim-informzagrozam/>. Accessed 3 November 2021.

<sup>200</sup> Lawson, p. 61-62.

<sup>201</sup> Kipp 2015, p 82-84.



study Russian military policy, holding Russian foreign policy as a flexible tool.<sup>202</sup> It can plausibly be argued to be the opposite of the ‘vertical of power’ contention by other scholars as it contends that large sections of the Russian bureaucracy function by unintentional dissembling wherein Russian diplomats frequently have no knowledge of what the state is doing. Equally plausibly, it reinforces the ‘vertical of power’ argument by suggesting that only the very top of the vertical truly understands the policies of the Russian Federation.

Some scholars have attempted to reconstruct this Russian policy-centric definition of warfare back into a military concept designed to extend warfare into all manner of non-traditionally military domains, such as culture, psychology, and morale,<sup>203</sup> typically arriving at some variation of the DIME<sup>204</sup> formulation of the instruments of national power currently in vogue in the West.<sup>205</sup> However, such attempts typically are explorations of how future technologies and digitised societies will impact the future of conflict for which ‘hybrid warfare’ is merely a label applied because of a perceived advance in such tactics in Russia’s annexation of Crimea and subsequent war in the Donbass in 2014.<sup>206</sup>

Among Russians, the term ‘hybrid warfare’ refers exclusively to a Western way of warfare seeking to disconnect populations from their governments to enable favourable regime change,<sup>207</sup> perhaps as a convenient way of claiming not to be at fault for its implications.<sup>208</sup> However, in the context of narrow military policy

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<sup>202</sup> Steven C Williamson, ‘From fourth generation warfare to hybrid war’, US Army War College, 2009. Brian P. Fleming, ‘The hybrid threat concept: contemporary war, military planning and the advent of unrestricted operational art’, SAMS Monograph, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2011. James F. Blanton, ‘Finding the balance to combat a hybrid threat’, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2013. David E. Johnson, ‘Military capabilities for hybrid war: insights from the Israel Defense Forces in Lebanon and Gaza’, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2010. Larry R Jordan, ‘Hybrid war: is the U.S. Army ready for the face of 21st century warfare?’, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2008. Daniel T. Lasica, ‘Strategic implications of hybrid war: a theory of victory’, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2009.

<sup>203</sup> Johann Schmid, ‘Introduction to hybrid warfare – a framework for comprehensive analysis’, *Hybrid warfare: future and technologies*, Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2021, p 12.

<sup>204</sup> Diplomacy, Information, Military, Economy

<sup>205</sup> Tom Raeburn, ‘A new way in war? Russian “hybrid” warfare in the Ukrainian conflict of 2014’, *Air and Space Power Review*, 22:3, Autumn/Winter 2019, p 82-93.

<sup>206</sup> Ralph Thiele, *Hybrid warfare: future and technologies*, Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2021, p 165-173.

<sup>207</sup> ‘Интервью Секретаря Совета Безопасности Российской Федерации Н.П.Патрушева “Российской газете” [Interview of Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation N.P. Patrushev to “Rossiyskaya Gazeta”], SCRF, 23 December 2015, <http://scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/1002/>. Accessed 5 April 2022.

<sup>208</sup> Ofer Fridman, ‘Hybrid warfare or *gibradnaya voyna*?’, *The RUSI Journal*, 162:1, 2017, p 45.

dominating foreign policy, several strands of thought exist. Of particular interest is the degree to which cyber threats have created a broader environment of security vulnerability (what Westerners call the ‘grey zone’) that is reopening the world to cognising interstate violence.<sup>209</sup> Aleksey Fenenko suggests that Louis XIV invented the concept of ‘hybrid warfare’ by using German princes to secure French control of the Palatinate in 1688-1697.<sup>210</sup>

Some Russian analysts consider the integrated nature of a hybrid threat - encompassing many different types of military and non-military measures - as instigation for development of specific military capabilities.<sup>211</sup> Others call for specifically non-military measures to reduce vulnerabilities, such as economic reinvigoration and quality of life improvement<sup>212</sup> or reimposition of ideology.

Russian analysts Konstantin Sivkov and Aleksandr Bartosh evaluate the world as competing spheres of influence, judging that the contradictions generating conflict occur in the confrontations among imperial-type power structures. They write extensively in Russian defence journals about geopolitical trends in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to anticipate the different elements of anticipated conflicts but their writings are tied together by his belief in this imperial structure.<sup>213</sup> However, their conception of modern empire is not built from military power but from ideological identity but one which is subject to external attempts to manipulation<sup>214</sup> and which can be aggravated through conventional military

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<sup>209</sup> Orlov 2019. Leonid Savin, ‘Концепция гибридной войны: истоки, применение, противодействие’ [The concept of hybrid warfare: origins, application, opposition], *Geopolitica*, 18 October 2021, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/koncepciya-gibridnoy-voyny-istoki-primeneniye-protivodeystvie>. Accessed 20 October 2021.

<sup>210</sup> Fenenko 2018.

<sup>211</sup> Aleksandr Bartosh, ‘«Грачи» не прилетели’ [“Rooks” did not arrive], *VPK*, 19 October 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/64289>. Accessed 20 October 2021.

<sup>212</sup> Konstantin Sivkov, ‘Наш дом Россия, версия 2.0’ [Our home is Russia version 2.0], *VPK*, 19 October 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/64304>. Accessed 20 October 2021.

<sup>213</sup> E.g. Konstantin Sivkov, ‘Соединенные Штаты будут воевать на своем заднем дворе’ [The United States will fight in its own backyard], *VPK*, 21 January 2020, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/54760>. Accessed 31 May 2020. Aleksandr Bartosh, ‘В ожидании войны в Европе Париж склоняется к капитуляции’ [In anticipation of war in Europe Paris tends to surrender], *VPK*, 19 November 2019, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/53723>. Accessed 31 May 2020.

<sup>214</sup> Aleksandr Bartosh, ‘Пешки и ферзи гибридной войны’ [Pawns and queens of hybrid warfare], *VPK*, 8 February 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/60786>. Accessed 20 April 2022. Konstantin Sivkov, ‘Компас в море хаоса’ [Compass in a world of chaos], *VPK*, 4 October 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/64122>. Accessed 20 April 2022. Konstantin Sivkov, ‘Технология взраумления’ [Technology of enlightenment], *VPK*, 1 November 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/64480>. Accessed 20 April 2022. Konstantin Sivkov, ‘В двух

means.<sup>215</sup> They ascribe Western victory in the Cold War and continued vitality today to government capacity for manipulation toward abstract concepts in the information domain<sup>216</sup> and even argue that Russia must compete in such information domain competition to preserve its position.<sup>217</sup> They contend that if Russia can incorporate this understanding into its bureaucratic doctrines, there is indeed a path to relitigating the outcome of the Cold War without precipitating War.<sup>218</sup>

Others claiming to study ‘hybrid warfare’ actually believe in what this dissertation labels the ‘global plot’. They consider Russia to be a full-scale revisionist power seeking to overturn the verdict of the Cold War. This group ironically represents the conceptual opposite of hybrid warfare despite frequently adopting its name: it considers Russian military policy as the servant of a concerted Russian foreign policy to destroy the Western order utterly. Scholars within this group tend to consider Russia and the West to be already at war, but a war in which the military represents only a small fragment.<sup>219</sup> Whereas the ‘hybrid warfare’ group is popular among Western military analysts, the ‘global plot’ group is more popular among Atlanticist think tanks. The key limiting factor in each Russian attempt at a global plot is insufficient resources.<sup>220</sup>

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шагах от бунта’ [Two steps away from rebellion], *VPK*, 20 December 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/65189>. Accessed 20 April 2022.

<sup>215</sup> Aleksandr Bartosh, ‘Стратегическая культура как инструмент военно-политического анализа’ [Strategic culture as an instrument of military-political analysis], *Voennaya Mysl’*, Issue 7, 2020, p 6-21. Aleksandr Bartosh, ‘Время принудительной дипломатии’ [Time for coercive diplomacy], *VPK*, 3 August 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/63219>. Accessed 20 April 2022.

<sup>216</sup> Konstantin Sivkov, ‘Что означают художества Трампа’ [What the Trump arts mean], *VPK*, 18 February 2020, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/55317>. Accessed 31 May 2020. Aleksandr Bartosh, ‘«Серые зоны» как ключевой элемент современного операционного пространства гибридной войны’ [“Grey areas” as the key element of today’s operational space of hybrid warfare], *Voennaya Mysl’*, Issue 2, 2021, p 6-19.

<sup>217</sup> Konstantin Sivkov, ‘В прицеле властители дум’ [The rulers of thoughts in sight], *VPK*, 26 October 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/64396>. Accessed 1 November 2021.

<sup>218</sup> Aleksandr Bartosh, ‘Вычисляем будущие конфликты’ [Calculating future conflicts], *VPK*, 19 January 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/60450>. Accessed 20 April 2022. Bartosh 2021b, p 6-19.

<sup>219</sup> Franklin D. Kramer & Lauren M. Speranza, ‘Meeting the Russian hybrid challenge: a comprehensive strategic framework’, Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, May 2017, p 14. Christopher S. Chivvis, ‘Understanding Russian “hybrid warfare” and what can be done about it’, Testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, Washington, DC: RAND Corporation, 22 March 2017, [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/CT400/CT468/RAND\\_CT468.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/CT400/CT468/RAND_CT468.pdf). Accessed 20 March 2022.

<sup>220</sup> Caldwell, p 331-332.

Stephen Blank approaches the ‘global plot’ concept from a more military perspective, portraying the Russian Armed Forces as less reformed than the ‘hybrid warfare’ mainstream do.<sup>221</sup> However, in this unreformed and ‘discredited’ form, he claims the Russian government uses its messaging and exercises to dissemble understanding of capabilities while practicing to relitigate the ending of the Cold War through conventional land invasions if possible and threats of nuclear weapons if necessary, casting those who would resist such an invasion as ‘terrorists’ to maintain a pretence of ‘defensive’ intent.<sup>222</sup> Listing the invasion of Georgia; invasion and annexation of Crimea; invasion of the Donbass; intervention in Syria; electoral interference in the United Kingdom, Germany, and the United States; economic warfare across Europe; and coup attempt in Montenegro, Blank concludes that ‘Russia acts as if it is, and considers itself to be, at war with NATO, not just the United States.’<sup>223</sup> Fearing Russian infiltration of its targets’ political elite, he anticipates military-enabled (including both conventional and nuclear threats) *faits accompli* such as Crimea in 2014 or the Anschluss in 1938 to become frequent<sup>224</sup> and warns of a generally strategically-competent Russian policy elite that understands that it is not operational victory but strategic effect that must be pursued at the highest level of statecraft.<sup>225</sup>

Russian thought on the ‘global plot’ is highly intertwined with their concept of *gibradnaya voyna*, having derived the latter concept from the anti-communist ideologue Evgeniy Messner, who wrote extensively on ‘subversion-war’<sup>226</sup> as a means of diverting the enemy’s political will to fight on a battlefield that could not be won with standard ways of war (e.g. strategic nuclear arms).<sup>227</sup> Russian theorists and analysts view the collapse of the Soviet Union as the culmination of a grand Western plot to subvert their will to resist.

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<sup>221</sup> Blank 2015, p 11-12.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid, p 8-13.

<sup>223</sup> Stephen Blank, ‘Putin’s “asymmetric strategy”: nuclear and new-type weapons in Russian defense policy’, *Russia’s military strategy and doctrine*, Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2019, p 251-252. Blank 2019a, p 9-10.

<sup>224</sup> Blank 2019a, p 14-15.

<sup>225</sup> Stephen J. Blank, ‘A Clinic on Clausewitz: Lessons of Russia’s Syria Campaign’, *The Russian military in contemporary perspective*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2019, p 401-490.

<sup>226</sup> Мятёжь-война (*myatezh'-voyna*)

<sup>227</sup> Evgeniy Messner, ‘Мятёжь – ммя третьей всемирной’ [Subversion: the name of the third all-worldwar], Buenos Aires: South American Division of the Institute for the Study of the Problems of War and Peace, 1971, p 88-89. Fridman 2017, p 42-46.

Russian analysts tend to picture the ‘global plot’ conception from the perspective that the West is seeking to prevent Russian influence in all possible domains. This has given rise to considerable worries about the integration of political, economic, disinformation, and various other non-military influences into conflict.<sup>228</sup> The key hypothesis to this threat perception is that the United States or the West at large is trying to create contradictions within the Russian population to cause a second collapse of the Russian state without having to fight. They reason that the West does this to preserve its hegemony, either out of political cultural chauvinism or unreasoning paranoia.<sup>229</sup> Unfortunately for the clarity of this paper, Russian analysts in this camp believe that this is the essence of ‘hybrid warfare’<sup>230</sup> in stark contrast to the Western belief that ‘hybrid warfare’ adds the military dimension to political conflict. These Russians consider the ‘colour revolution’ to be the primary manifestation of the West’s global plot. Not just the historical colour revolutions of 2003-2005 but virtually any protest even the most vaguely pro-Russian government is considered evidence of a Western plot.<sup>231</sup>

Russian thinker Aleksandr Dugin studies the global plot concept in all dimensions

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<sup>228</sup> Vladimir Ostankov, ‘Войны будущего начинаются сегодня’ [Wars of the future begin today], *VPK*, 15 October 2019, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/53018>. Accessed 21 April 2020. Bartosh 2021b, p 6-19.

<sup>229</sup> Leonid Savin, ‘Кибербезопасность и США: новый висток паранойи’ [Cybersecurity in the USA: new round of paranoia], *Geopolitika*, 11 November 2019, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/kiberbezopasnost-v-ssha-novyy-vitok-paranoyi>. Accessed 16 May 2020.

<sup>230</sup> Aleksey Prokhozhev & Sergey Pershutkin, ‘России готовят перестройку с элементами арабской весны’ [Russia is preparing perestroika with elements of the Arab Spring], *VPK*, 12 November 2019, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/53588>. Accessed 21 April 2020. Leonid Savin, ‘Коронавирус и гибридная война’ [Coronavirus and hybrid warfare], *Geopolitika*, 19 March 2020, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/koronavirus-i-gibridnaya-voyna>. Accessed 17 May 2020. Even COVID-19 is thought as a type of ‘hybrid warfare’ by some: Andrey Manoilo, ‘Вирус на бочку’ [Virus in the barrel], *VPK*, 31 March 2020, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/56172>. Accessed 31 May 2020.

<sup>231</sup> E.g. 2019 protests in Lebanon: Leonid Savin, ‘Ливан: цветная революция или региональный антишиитский проект?’ [Lebanon: color revolution or regional anti-Shiite project?], *Geopolitika*, 2 December 2019, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/livan-cvetnaya-revolyuciya-ili-regionalnyy-antishiitskiy-proekt>. Accessed 16 May 2020. Even autocratic elections that go successfully are analysed for the chance of Western subversion: Valeriy Korovin, ‘Выбор в Азербайджане: трансформация оппозиции, угрозы майдана, отношения с Россией’ [Election in Azerbaijan: transformation of the opposition, threats of Maidan, relations with Russia], *Geopolitika*, 2 March 2020, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/vybory-v-azerbaydzhane-transformaciya-oppozicii-ugrozy-maydana-otnosheniya-s-rossiyey>. Accessed 17 May 2020.

of society from military confrontation to philosophical,<sup>232</sup> artistic,<sup>233</sup> and religious<sup>234</sup> engagement. With such a broad concept of competitive strategy, Dugin ultimately is torn between an evaluation of human performance in power<sup>235</sup> and life and an unlimited quest to prove the global plot with political philosophy.<sup>236</sup> In his quest to enumerate and explain all the contradictions of the world - and explain how Russia constitutes the key to their solving - his political beliefs have evolved so rapidly with each global event that they cannot be considered coherent. He is less influential on Russian foreign and military policies than he is a simulacrum of them, reacting or overreacting to each incident of global affairs by writing a new entry to his encyclopaedia of thoughts,<sup>237</sup> disregarding how it may directly contradict his previously-expressed beliefs.<sup>238</sup> He cannot be considered a 'nationalist' only because his Russia is the anti-nation according to the definition in the previous chapter nor is he an

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<sup>232</sup> Aleksandr Dugin, 'Приближение смуты и его враги' [The approach of troubles and its enemies], *Geopolitika*, 8 March 2020, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/priblizhenie-smuty-i-ego-vragi>. Accessed 17 May 2020.

<sup>233</sup> Aleksandr Dugin, 'Мысли во время чумы. № 1 темная месть светлого божества' [Thoughts in the time of plague. 1 Dark revenge of a bright deity], *Geopolitika*, 27 March 2020, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/mysli-vo-vremya-chumy-no-1-temnaya-mest-svetlogo-bozhestva>. Accessed 17 May 2020. Aleksandr Dugin, 'Онтология и антропология театра лекция №1' [Ontology and anthropology of the theatre lecture 1], *Geopolitika*, 29 April 2020, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/ontologiya-i-antropologiya-teatra-lekciya-no1>. Accessed 17 May 2020.

<sup>234</sup> Aleksandr Dugin, 'Русь последняя. Фиольюфские аспекты единоверия' [The last Rus. Philosophical aspects of united faith], *Geopolitika*, 6 February 2020, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/rus-poslednyaya-filosofskie-aspekty-edinoveriya>. Accessed 16 May 2020. Aleksandr Dugin, 'На боевом великом посту' [Great Lent in the military], *Geopolitika*, 2 March 2020, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/na-boevom-velikom-postu>. Accessed 17 May 2020.

<sup>235</sup> Aleksandr Dugin, 'Археомодерн (окончание). Тарантино в кремле' [Archeomodern (ending). [Tarantino in the Kremlin], *Geopolitika*, 28 October 2019, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/arheomodern-okonchanie-tarantino-v-kremle>. Accessed 16 May 2020.

<sup>236</sup> Aleksandr Dugin, 'Тигр и история' [Tiger and history], *Geopolitica*, 8 December 2019, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/tigr-i-istoriya>. Accessed 16 May 2020. Aleksandr Dugin, 'Вирус, «эпидемия» и чрезвычайное положение' [Virus, "epidemic", and the state of emergency], *Geopolitica*, 14 March 2020, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/virus-epidemiya-i-chrezvychaynoe-polozhenie>. Accessed 17 May 2020.

<sup>237</sup> E.g. Sudden respect for Kassem Suleimani as a hero of his vision of international relations only after his assassination by their mutual enemy, the United States. 'Генерал Сулеймани – символ борьбы за многополярный мир' [General Suleymani – symbol of the fight for a multipolar world], *Geopolitika*, 13 March 2020, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/general-suleymani-simvol-borby-za-mnogopolyarnyy-mir>. Accessed 17 May 2020. How COVID-19 will cause his long-anticipated revolution against globalism. Aleksandr Dugin, 'Карантин как Ereignis' [Quarantine as Ereignis], *Geopolitika*, 11 April 2020, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/karantin-kak-ereignis>. Accessed 17 May 2020. Aleksandr Dugin, 'Посткоронавирусный миропорядок (анализ реалиста)' [Post-coronavirus world order (realist analysis)], *Geopolitika*, 16 April 2020, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/postkoronavirusnyy-miroporjadok-analiz-realista>. Accessed 17 May 2020.

<sup>238</sup> E.g. Dugin in 2020 ascribes to a global resistance to 'globalism' and 'liberalism' infecting Western civilisation whereas he previously denigrated all things Western. He also increasingly views China favourably whereas it previously was a foil within his Eurasianist theory. Legvold, p 109-110.



‘imperialist’ or ‘fascist’ because his thoughts are too inconsistent to explain either of them. It is perhaps best to consider him as coming from a ‘Muscovite school’ which believes Moscow’s unique authority system over the Russian state is the best bulwark to avert the threat of War in an unstable and contradictory world. His blog has chosen the perfect slogan, *Carthago delenda est*,<sup>239</sup> for his mission as he will repeat his mantras until they materialise or evolve again.

The Russian government occasionally engages this thinking mostly in its official treatment of history. It persistently claims that the West is desperately searching for a fictional ‘Russian threat’<sup>240</sup> to justify its hegemonic policies and analogises this to how the United Kingdom began planning ‘Operation Unthinkable’ against the Soviet Union even in 1945 before the first overt events of the Cold War.<sup>241</sup>

Ofer Fridman specifically addresses the miscommunication between the ‘hybrid warfare’ and ‘global plot’ groups, highlighting that though they both reflect on a strategy called ‘hybrid warfare’ or ‘*gibradnaya voyna*’, they have little in common and come from distinct theoretical backgrounds.<sup>242</sup> Instead, Fridman disaggregates these theories and concludes that the strength of these respective ideas is their politicised value in polemics against Russia or the West respectively.

Lastly, a group of scholars adopts a more ‘flexible response’ analysis, viewing current Russian military policy as offering non-nuclear options for ensuring security whilst executing a vigorous and independent foreign policy. Rather than imagining Russia as a weak state seeking to fill vacuums as the hybrid warfare group does or Russia as a nefarious state seeking to burn the West to the ground as the global plot group does, the flexible response school considers Russia’s foreign policy aims to be a more nebulous retrenchment of Moscow as one of the

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<sup>239</sup> Geopolitca.ru.

<sup>240</sup> Instances of this trope include ‘О новой британской стратегической доктрине’ [On the new British strategic doctrine], MID, 26 November 2015, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/1951983#21](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/1951983#21). Accessed 17 May 2020.

<sup>241</sup> Vladimir Chizhov, ‘Выбор всегда остается за вами’ [The choice is always yours], MID, 8 May 2020, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4120409](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4120409). Accessed 14 May 2020.

<sup>242</sup> Fridman 2018.

world's power centres. The seemingly nefarious complications of Russian military thinking arise from Russian assessments of how to compete in a world of 'grey zone' conflict short of war but incorporating military alongside non-military dimensions<sup>243</sup> using a distribution of responsibilities not dissimilar to that envisioned by the 'global plot' group.

The 'flexible response' name comes from Cold War-era American military policy designed to maximize the number of gradient steps between peace and nuclear exchange to facilitate means of war termination after deterrence failed.<sup>244</sup> During the Soviet era, considerable suspicions existed of the true intentions of flexible response, holding that it signified NATO could pivot anywhere between non-military and nuclear responses to standard security problems<sup>245</sup> in a manner strikingly reminiscent of modern Western policy concerns about Russian strategy.<sup>246</sup>

This view is popular with Russian defence journalists seeking to explain how various aspects of the global arms race impact international politics.<sup>247</sup> Though conventional rearmament is a key aspect of the flexible response analysis of Russian power, military modernization is only one manner of anticipating future conflict.<sup>248</sup> Equally important is the acknowledgement of the importance of political messaging and the cognitive domain in warfare.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> Ilmari Kähkö, 'The Evolution of Hybrid Warfare: Implications for Strategy and the Military Profession', *Parameters*, Vol 51, No 3, 2021, p 115-127.

<sup>244</sup> Strachan, p 121.

<sup>245</sup> E.g. Major-General R.G. Simonyan, 'Некоторые аспекты коалиционной военной стратегии НАТО' [Some aspects of the coalition military strategy of NATO], *Военная Мысль*, Issue 12, 1987, p 65-74.

<sup>246</sup> Perhaps most prominently the 2017 U.S. National Security Strategy, which though emphasizing a military response to the threats Russia pose, emphasizes that the threats encompass military, economic, and even somewhat ideological foundations. 'National Security Strategy of the United States of America', Trump White House Archives, 18 December 2017, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>. Accessed 20 April 2022.

<sup>247</sup> Anton Lavrov, 'Восход «Нептуна»: как создание новых ракет ужесточает риторику Украины' [Rise of "Neptune": how the creation of new missiles toughens the rhetoric of Ukraine], *Izvestiya*, 19 April 2020, <https://iz.ru/1001285/anton-lavrov/voskhod-neptuna-kak-sozdanie-novykh-raket-uzhestochaet-ritoriku-ukrainy>. Accessed 20 April 2020.

<sup>248</sup> Andrew Monaghan, 'From plans to strategy: mobilization as Russian grand strategy', *Current Russia military affairs*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2018, p 14-19.

<sup>249</sup> Sofya Metelkina, 'Аднам Аззам: Сирия – это не боевые операции, а медийная война' [Adnam Assam: Syria is not a military operation but a media war], *Геополитика*, 6 February 2020, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/adnam-azzam-siriya-eto-ne-boevye-operacii-mediynaya-voyna>. Accessed 16 May 2020. Flemming Splidsboel Hansen, 'When Russia Wages War in the Cognitive Domain', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol 34:2, 2021, p 181-201.



Another emerging subset of the flexible response group considers Russian diplomacy and conventional military movements and actions as a form of policy compellence.<sup>250</sup> This view holds that Russia uses its various conventional military signals - such as buzzing forces and destination exercises - to communicate willingness to fight and enforce unwanted policies without imposition of war. Though this view is consistent with the Russian government's concern about the unacceptable costs of a war to remake the international system whilst contending that the international system features grave instability, this conventional signalling compellence concept has not achieved any noticeable successes against the NATO alliance or even against Ukraine to date.

Yet for all these approaches to analysing Russian strategy through both foreign and military policy, none have attempted to show how these practices are enacted in the real world except through extremely isolated case studies of coercion, especially centred upon Ukraine. As will be shown below, this obsession with the Ukrainian case study seems to have biased all these scholars into attempting to find some reflection of this especially important and aggravated relationship in all of Moscow's foreign interactions. This dissertation attempts to correct this problem by including all Russian bilateral relationships in its examination to see if these broad generalizations accurately reflect Russian behaviour at large.

## Conclusions

To generalize, Western scholars have a diverse array of explanations for Russian behaviour ranging from the theoretical to the observational-analytical. Russia is perhaps more frequently a case study for more realist thinkers than it is for others but those others typically cite Russia as a failure of democratic change, leaving Russia as an unfortunate exception to the broader market-driven rule. Russian analysts, by contrast, thrive on that exceptional status and broadly divided into two camps: (1) realist analogues who argue that Western hegemony

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<sup>250</sup> Rob Lee, 'Moscow's Compellence Strategy', Foreign Policy Research Institute, 18 January 2022, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/01/moscows-compellence-strategy/>. Accessed 20 January 2022.

requires a counterbalance and (2) a somewhat more constructivist or idiosyncratic group who assume that Russia exists beyond the market-driven rule.

Over the years 2014-2021 surveyed in this dissertation, different segments of the Russian government gravitated to these groups separately. Russian diplomats regularly hold meetings with representatives of the realist analogues, especially Fyodor Lukyanov and Sergey Karagonov.<sup>251</sup> However, the Russian military increasingly draws upon the more idiosyncratically semi-constructivist scholars, especially Aleksandr Bartosh,<sup>252</sup> to explain the current organisation of international politics. Vladimir Putin occasionally references aphorisms and proverbs, typically attributed to a specific nationality<sup>253</sup> but never modern scholars. On one occasion, asked at the 2015 Valdai Discussion Club about his thoughts about whether there was cultural affinity between Russians and Americans or Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilisations', Putin responded: You know, if you look at the arguments of our thinkers, philosophers, representatives of classical Russian literature, they see the reasons for disagreements between Russia and the West in general, in the broadest sense of the word, in the difference in worldviews. And partly they are right. At the heart of the Russian worldview lies the idea of good and evil, of higher powers, the divine principle. At the heart of Western thinking - I don't want this to sound awkward - but still it is based on interest, pragmatism, pragmatics. And in this regard, it is necessary to use terms very precisely and uniformly.<sup>254</sup>

This hints at an anti-academic mindset suggesting no scholar possesses much

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<sup>251</sup> E.g. 'Выступление Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова на XXIX Ассамблее СВОП' [Remarks of Minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov at the 29<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy], MID, 2 October 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1777351/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1777351/). Accessed 21 April 2022.

<sup>252</sup> E.g. Aleksandr Bartosh, 'Взаимодействие в гибридной войне' [Interaction in hybrid warfare], *Voennaya Mysl'*, Issue 4, 2022, p 6-23.

<sup>253</sup> Examples of this include Putin's quotes of the Chinese proverb 'God forbid you live in an era of change' (не дай бог жить в эпоху перемен) ('Заседание дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»' [Meeting of the discussion club "Valdai"], Kremlin, 21 October 2021, <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66975>. Accessed 21 April 2022.), the Russian proverb 'The way will be mastered by those going' [Дорогу осилит идущий] ('Открытый урок «Помнить – значит знать»' [Open lesson "To remember is to know], Kremlin, 1 September 2020, <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63983>. Accessed 21 April 2022.), and "It was smooth on paper but we forgot the ravines" [Гладко было на бумаге, но забыли про овраги] ('Прямая линия с Владимиром Путиным' [Direct line with Vladimir Putin], Kremlin, 15 June 2017, <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54790>. Accessed 21 April 2022.

<sup>254</sup> Kremlin 2015.

influence over Putin himself. As will be explored in some greater detail in the next chapter, Russia's diplomats have very little influence and Russia's military only a self-contained one. As such, Bartosh probably could be considered the most influential Russian thinker on the government today, but he hardly commands a decisive influence.

What unites these sundry groups is the lack of a comprehensive methodology for proving or disproving their various theories with empirical data. As a result, though most of the scholars cited above offer fascinating insight into the broad trajectories of Russian policy, none have been able to prove them with any but anecdotal evidence from speeches and articles. This has enabled contradictory theories - such as the global plot and hybrid warfare concepts - to develop simultaneously with no accepted means of arbitrating the relative accuracy of the two over time or by region as neither can either prove or disprove its claims. This dissertation attempts to solve this problem by gathering the vast but largely unutilised quantity of press releases published by the Russian government to determine quantitative patterns of behaviour and then compare how them to the various theories listed above. Selected findings of how the data analysed in the following chapters compares to the theories described above is presented in chapter 6 below.

## Chapter 3. A Comprehensive View of Russian Management of Foreign and Military Policy in the Putin Era

This chapter examines the seeming Russian bureaucratic quirks of interfacing with diverse interlocutors observable in public data. Drawing on these open sources, it looks at the differing institutional views on Russian foreign and military policies and their oversight.

Neither the Russian Federation as a country nor its government is a monolith. At least two scholars summarised this phenomenon as a Russian allergy to ‘one-size-fits-all’ models.<sup>1</sup> Without access to internal Russian documents not yet declassified, this dissertation disaggregates the policy approaches of some of the major Russian government institutions by their external manifestation and seeming course of development. Though other Russian government institutions conducting foreign and military policy exist, this dissertation will only examine the three most important: the Kremlin during the Putin era, the Russian Armed Forces and Ministry of Defence, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For each institution, the dissertation identifies patterns of its members’ outlook, their thoughts on the nature of international conflict, and their regular means of conducting policy, culminating in an assessment of how they seem to make decisions based on available sources. Though other institutions such as the SVR, FSB, and Ministry of Energy also play vital roles in the crafting of Russian foreign and military policy, they are far more opaque about their activities and conceptual thinking in addition to being less central to the questions of war and peace in Russian statecraft and so are not considered here.

This section will show that though the Kremlin studies strategy with forecasts, it applies them in a manner that can best be described as astrategic,<sup>2</sup> fusing policy

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<sup>1</sup> Lester W. Grau & Charles K. Bartles, *The Russian Way of War: Force Structure, Tactics, and Modernization of the Russian Ground Forces*, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2017, p xv. Ilmari Käihkö, ‘The Evolution of Hybrid Warfare: Implications for Strategy and the Military Profession’, *Parameters*, Vol 51, No 3, 2021, p 126.

<sup>2</sup> As will be explored in greater detail below, the link between policy aims and the use or threat of use of force appears to be a self-referencing theory within the President of the Russian Federation’s imagination. Operations are the policy of the Russian Federation because of their idealist conformity with the President’s views on international affairs; whereas typically the link between policy and operations is strategy, in the Russian case policy directly dictates operations, creating a void where Strategy should exist. Beatrice

and operational-level activities without the aid of a coherent intermediary philosophy to relate the two. By contrast, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs operates according to a reactive emergent strategies model, exploring as many possible entry points into a policy debate as possible and exploiting only those having the largest impact abroad. The Russian Armed Forces in turn are torn between these approaches: they both forecast future conflict and react to what is most successful both bureaucratically and on the battlefield yet also to what has been the most uncomfortable accommodating post-Soviet thought on idealist (as opposed to materialist) means of affecting international competition.<sup>3</sup>

### The Kremlin

In the Putin era, the intelligence and security community (ISC) is seen as controlling the Kremlin.<sup>4</sup> However, given that the Russian ISC is a large entity, it is more interesting to note that those ISC members who have been promoted into Putin's Kremlin share a basic outlook seemingly as a prerequisite of attaining their posts. As most ISC members outside the Kremlin avoid broadcasting their opinions,<sup>5</sup> this dissertation instead focuses analysis on the immediate orbit of the Kremlin.

By 'the Kremlin', this dissertation refers to those members of the Russian

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Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p 3. Williamson Murray, *War, Strategy, and Military Effectiveness*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p 98-100.

<sup>3</sup> Whereas nearly all Russian commanders opine on their visions for the most effective military exercises (e.g. Yuliya Kozak, 'Войска, рождённые для разведки и защиты' [Troops born for reconnaissance and defence], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 9 November 2018, <http://redstar.ru/vojska-rozhdyonnye-dlya-razvedki-i-zashhity/>. Accessed 16 April 2022 or Yuliya Kozak, 'Им предстоит покорять моря и глубины' [They have to conquer the sea and the depths], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 20 March 2019, <http://redstar.ru/im-predstoit-pokoryat-morya-i-glubiny/>. Accessed 16 April 2022.), only those officers directly involved in the political motivation cone of the military have spent time talking about the new Russian military-political initiatives despite considerable funding of such projects evident in the quantity of bureaucratic data published on the subject by the Ministry of Defence. E.g. Aleksandr Pinchuk, 'Замполит призван быть рядом с солдатом' [The political officer is called to be near the soldier], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 19 December 2018, <http://redstar.ru/zampolit-prizvan-byt-ryadom-s-soldatom/>. Accessed 16 April 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Mark Galeotti, 'RISCy business: the role of the intelligence and security community in shaping Russian actions', Stuttgart, Germany: US EUCOM Russia Strategic Initiative, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> The FSB (<http://fsb.ru>) or SVR (<http://svr.gov.ru/>), respectively the primary domestic and foreign ISC bureaucracies of the Russian Federation, typically publish only matter-of-fact press releases about arrests, anniversaries, and meetings as opposed to meetings in their newsfeeds. Only recently has the SVR's director Sergey Naryshkin, as much a politician as and intelligence operative, begun broadcasting political opinions.

government either in formal executive decision-making positions or else serving in advisory capacities with the ability to disseminate opinions on official and government-friendly Russian media. Only those individuals who decide and opine on foreign and military policies are considered. Formally, this consists of the President of the Russian Federation, the Presidential Administration, and the Security Council of the Russian Federation. Though each of these offices is supported by the vast Russian bureaucracy in the formation of the relevant policies, individuals working in this definition of the Kremlin are at least theoretically empowered to organise the broad contours of Russian strategy by defining and organising these policies' guiding documents.<sup>6</sup> However, the Soviet legacy only a relatively small cadre of Russian experts training for or possessing experience of crisis management remains, keeping this relevant subsection of the Kremlin quite small.<sup>7</sup>

After Sergey Ivanov switched from being Head of the Presidential Administration<sup>8</sup> to a special representative on environmental and transport issues in 2016, the visibility of the Presidential Administration in the media declined dramatically. As such, this section concentrates on the strategic and institutional vision propagated by the President<sup>9</sup>, Secretary of the Security Council and his deputies, the Deputy Chairman of the Security Council, and Ivanov himself prior to standing down as Head of the Presidential Administration. Of note is that the President of the Russian Federation and Secretary of the Security Council positions have been held by one man for the duration of the period covered by this dissertation - Vladimir Putin and Nikolay Patrushev respectively. Dmitriy Medvedev, previously the Prime Minister and President of the Russian Federation, was seemingly demoted to Deputy Security Council Chairman since the position's creation in 2020. Relative to the 1990s and even Putin's first two

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<sup>6</sup> Though there is some emerging indication in 2021 that the plethora of strategic documents may be further consolidated in the name of reducing ambiguity among various directions published in a cycle over a five-year period. This could end up concentrating actual decision-making power even more tightly. 'Секретарь Совета Безопасности Н.П.Патрушев прокомментировал представителям средств массовой информации итоги состоявшегося заседания Совета Безопасности Российской Федерации' [Secretary of the Security Council N.P. Patrushev commented on the results of the meeting of the Security Council of the Russian Federation to the media], SCRF, 27 September 2021, <http://scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/3081/>. Accessed 27 October 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Jack L. Snyder, 'The Soviet strategic culture: implications for limited nuclear operations', Santa Monica: RAND Corporation R-2154-AF, September 1977.

<sup>8</sup> A position analogous to a chief of staff to a politician.

<sup>9</sup> President Putin also serves as Chairman of the Security Council.

terms as President, personnel turnover in the Kremlin is extremely slow.

The domination of the Kremlin by ISC personnel has given rise to the claim that only the most paranoid can obtain and retain power.<sup>10</sup> Putin frequently claims that Western agents and their puppets caused the collapse of the Soviet Union, creating the crises of the 1990s and that the West has not given up trying to destroy Russia.<sup>11</sup> As Putin himself has expressed this paranoia:

We did everything wrong [about the end of the Cold War], from the first steps we did not overcome the split of Europe. 25 years ago, the Berlin Wall fell but the division of Europe was not overcome, the invisible walls were simply moved to the east. This created the prerequisites for future mutual reproaches, misunderstandings, and crises.

He then proceeded to discuss the verbal promise that NATO would not expand eastward communicated to Soviet and Russian leaders.<sup>12</sup> This reflection on Russian inability to contest an unjust situation in the past plays as much to Putin's political advantage as to his paranoia as reminding Russian voters of the improvements to their lives now compared to the 1990s is a key component of Putin's popularity.<sup>13</sup>

## Perception of the International System and Role of War

### *Concepts*

President Putin has spoken on several occasions about his view of conflict and the international system, though typically as part of a broader explanation of his policies or future expectations at the Valdai Discussion Club. Putin's vision consists of two distinct types of international interaction: a formal and static

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<sup>10</sup> Valeriy Solovey interview by Igor Solovyev, *LB*, 5 July 2016, [https://lb.ua/world/2016/07/05/339458\\_nigde\\_mire\\_shpionam\\_doveryayut.html](https://lb.ua/world/2016/07/05/339458_nigde_mire_shpionam_doveryayut.html). Accessed 5 January 2022.

<sup>11</sup> 'Путин заявил о попытках сил на Западе развалить Россию вслед за СССР' [Putin declared that the West has attempted to destroy Russia after the USSR], *Izvestiya*, 7 December 2021, <https://iz.ru/1261064/2021-12-07/putin-zaiavil-o-popytkakh-sil-na-zapade-razvalit-rossiiu-sled-za-sssr>. Accessed 6 January 2022.

<sup>12</sup> 'Интервью немецкому изданию Bild. Часть 1' [Interview with the German publication Bild. Part 1], Kremlin, 11 January 2016, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/51154>. Accessed 21 April 2022.

<sup>13</sup> F. Joseph Dresen, 'Petrostate: Putin, power, and the New Russia', Wilson Center, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/petrostate-putin-power-and-the-new-russia>. Accessed 6 January 2022.

international system built upon law derived from states' consent and the commonwealth of states characterized by dynamic interests where relative power is in constant flux.

Waxing poetic about the nature of war and peace in his 2015 address to the Valdai Discussion Club, Putin gave the most complete description of his understanding:

This year the discussion focusses on issues of war and peace. This topic has clearly been the concern of humanity throughout its history. Back in ancient times, in antiquity people argued about the nature, the causes of conflicts, about the fair and unfair use of force, of whether wars would always accompany the development of civilisation, broken only by ceasefires, or would the time come when arguments and conflicts are resolved without war.

I'm sure you recalled our great writer Leo Tolstoy here. In his great novel War and Peace, he wrote that war contradicted human reason and human nature, while peace in his opinion was good for people.

True, peace, a peaceful life have always been humanity's ideal. State figures, philosophers and lawyers have often come up with models for a peaceful interaction between nations. Various coalitions and alliances declared that their goal was to ensure strong, 'lasting' peace as they used to say. However, the problem was that they often turned to war as a way to resolve the accumulated contradictions, while war itself served as a means for establishing new post-war hierarchies in the world.

Meanwhile peace, as a state of world politics, has never been stable and did not come of itself. Periods of peace in both European and world history were always been based on securing and maintaining the existing balance of forces. This happened in the 17th century in the times of the so-called Peace of Westphalia, which put an end to the Thirty Years' War. Then in the 19th century, in the time of the Vienna Congress; and again 70 years ago in Yalta, when the victors over Nazism made the decision to set up the United Nations Organisation and lay down the principles of relations between states.

With the appearance of nuclear weapons, it became clear that there could be no winner in a global conflict. There can be only one end - guaranteed mutual destruction. It so happened that in its attempt to create ever more destructive weapons humanity has made any big war pointless.

Incidentally, the world leaders of the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and even 1980s did treat the use of armed force as an exceptional measure. In this sense, they behaved responsibly, weighing all the circumstances and possible consequences.



The end of the Cold War put an end to ideological opposition, but the basis for arguments and geopolitical conflicts remained. All states have always had and will continue to have their own diverse interests, while the course of world history has always been accompanied by competition between nations and their alliances. In my view, this is absolutely natural.

The main thing is to ensure that this competition develops within the framework of fixed political, legal and moral norms and rules. Otherwise, competition and conflicts of interest may lead to acute crises and dramatic outbursts.

We have seen this happen many times in the past. Today, unfortunately, we have again come across similar situations. Attempts to promote a model of unilateral domination, as I have said on numerous occasions, have led to an imbalance in the system of international law and global regulation, which means there is a threat, and political, economic or military competition may get out of control.<sup>14</sup>

More prosaically, the conclusion of a large-scale war establishes a static international political system in a peace agreement, which allots roles to its constituent states. Over time, those states wax and wane in power, influence, and interests. These dynamic states operating within a static international political system create contradictions<sup>15</sup> as their capabilities and interests no longer match the solutions established at the conclusion of the last war. These contradictions sometimes result in a declining state being assigned too much influence an ascendant one sometimes too little.<sup>16</sup> This international system's maintenance is fundamentally a product of strategic stability, a circumstance incentivising the persistence of the system and reducing tensions among members in dialogue. Putin warns that historically leaders' inability to resolve their contradictions in a spirit of strategic stability results in their attempt to resolve the dispute with war. War in turn represents the collapse of the international system but also the opportunity to reorder a future international system according to the winners and losers in their manifestation of strength and weakness. Certain international systems last longer than others depending on

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<sup>14</sup> 'Заседание Международного дискуссионного клуба «Валдай» [Meeting of the International Discussion Club "Valdai"]], Kremlin, 22 October 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50548>. Accessed 9 November 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Противоречии (*protivorechii*)

<sup>16</sup> Putin has specifically called out Britain and France as states given too much influence in the international system whereas China, Germany, and South Africa do not have enough. 'Заседание дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»' [Meeting of the "Valdai" Discussion Club], Kremlin, 22 October 2020, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64261>. Accessed 24 January 2022.

the quality of the strategic stability at the time,<sup>17</sup> typically citing the Yalta Convention as the premier example of a successful forging of an international system.<sup>18</sup>

Conveniently for Putin's vision of international relations, he claims that since nuclear weapons make resolution of the contradictions of the international system impossible to justify morally or even strategically,<sup>19</sup> the international system must be preserved according to the current system based on the outcomes of 1945, whose verdict included the Soviet Union as one of the key victors.<sup>20</sup> This victory in 1945 in turn confers automatic legitimacy on Russia's special position as a great power in Putin's vision and has led to ever greater invocation of the Second World War and the resulting United Nations Charter as the necessary basis for peace today and in the future.

As Putin proceeds to discuss at length after the quote above, not just provocations but arms control - and its absence - can be a source of contradictions posing threat against another country through efforts to increase the ability of one state to unilaterally control the means of escalating a conflict. Putin cites this to explain his opposition to US ballistic missile defence as it would deprive Russia of the ability to use its strategic deterrent in a hypothetical crisis.<sup>21</sup>

Yet this vision of conflict lends to a relatively narrow definition of 'war'<sup>22</sup> if it requires a collapse of the international system on a scale greater than merely

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<sup>17</sup> Putin occasionally sights the international system established by the 1919 Paris Peace Conference as one which failed to mollify its contradictions. Vladimir Putin, '75 лет Великой Победы: общая ответственность перед историей и будущим [75 years of the Great Victory: shared responsibility to history and the future], Kremlin, 19 June 2020, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63527>. Accessed 9 November 2021.

<sup>18</sup> 'Заседание международного дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»' [Meeting of the "Valdai" International Discussion Club], Kremlin, 19 September 2013, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19243>. Accessed 10 November 2021.

<sup>19</sup> As there would be only loss for all sides if nuclear weapons were used.

<sup>20</sup> Kremlin 2015e.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> At least one profoundly narrower than NATO's concept of hybrid war. 'Hybrid threats', The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, <https://www.hybridcoe.fi/hybrid-threats/>. Accessed 9 November 2021. Colin S. Gray, *Categorical confusion: the strategic implications of recognizing challenges either as irregular or traditional*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2012, p 16. Käihkö, pp 115-116, 126.

the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>23</sup> This suggests the Kremlin has a profoundly unequal sense of sovereignty in the world as this vision would limit those threats to Russian sovereignty as only those which could threaten the collapse of the United Nations system.

This conception leaves a critical gap between the fragmentation of the larger international system and state uses of force. The nuance complicating the Kremlin's perception of 'war' relative to the Western perception is that actions undertaken to strengthen the international system - regardless of the amount of violence used - constitute not war but its prevention. Though Putin has not explicitly explained it in this manner to date, his use of the term 'operation'<sup>24</sup> to define the Russian military intervention in Syria from 2015<sup>25</sup> and the invasion of Ukraine in 2022<sup>26</sup> deliberately connotes that he is seeking to increase the stability of the international system rather than allow it to degenerate toward war. Indeed, the 2014 Russian military doctrine specifically defines

'operations to maintain (restore) international peace and security, take measures to prevent (eliminate) a threat to peace, suppress acts of aggression (violation of the peace)' as a peacetime function of the Russian Armed Forces, albeit one that should be authorised by a body recognised by international law.<sup>27</sup>

Officially, this sentiment is enshrined in the United Nations Charter as Article 42 expanding upon appropriate Security Council responses to 'the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression':

Should the Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 [non-armed force sanctions] would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Kremlin 2016a.

<sup>24</sup> 'Операция' (*operatsiya*)

<sup>25</sup> 'Совещание с членами Правительства' [Meeting with members of the government], Kremlin, 30 September 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50401>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>26</sup> 'Обращение Президента Российской Федерации' [Message from the President of the Russian Federation], Kremlin, 24 February 2022, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>27</sup> 'Военная доктрина Российской Федерации', *Konsortium Kodeks*, Article 32, clause I (л), 25 December 2014, <https://docs.cntd.ru/document/420246589>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>28</sup> 'United Nations Charter, Chapter VII: Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression', United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-7>. Accessed 21 April 2022.

In short, the UN Charter authorises the UN Security Council to use war pre-emptively to restore international order as established by the UN Charter. For Putin, legitimacy in international law seems to flow metaphysically from the sentiments of the UN Charter due to its cementing of the Soviet victory in the Second World War into the static international political system of today. Putin most famously manifested this innate legitimacy in his invocation the right to self-determination in Article 1, clause 2<sup>29</sup> as the core basis upon which the 16 March 2014 referendum's legitimacy and therefore the legal finality of Crimean 'reunification' with Russia<sup>30</sup> despite international condemnation of his seizure of the territory of a foreign state.

Putin justifies this self-serving narrative through his concept of 'sovereignty',<sup>31</sup> which he defines as a 'fundamental value ensuring independence and unity of [the] state, reliable protection of its territory, and the timely neutralisation of internal and external threats',<sup>32</sup> that is a direct rejection of the unipolarity concept against which Putin had inveighed at the Munich Security Conference in 2007.<sup>33</sup> In the name of neutralising these threats, even military operations can be authorised in the name of preventing war. However, this vision connotes a corollary: those states which cannot reliably protect their territory against internal and external threats are not sovereign, as indeed Putin sometimes complains the Russian Federation itself in the 1990s was not.<sup>34</sup> The Kremlin's endemic obsession with 'sovereignty' extends beyond international politics into

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<sup>29</sup> 'United Nations Charter, Chapter I: Purposes and Principles', United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-1>. Accessed 21 April 2022.

<sup>30</sup> 'Заседание Международного дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»' [Meeting of the "Valdai" International Discussion Club], Kremlin, 24 October 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46860>. Accessed 24 January 2022.

<sup>31</sup> 'Суверенитет' (*suverenitet*)

<sup>32</sup> 'Заседание Совета Безопасности' [Meeting of the Security Council], Kremlin, 22 July 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46305>. Accessed 9 November 2021.

<sup>33</sup> 'Выступление и дискуссия на Мюнхенской конференции по вопросам политики безопасности' [Speech and discussion at the Munich security policy conference], Kremlin, 10 February 2007, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>34</sup> 'Расширенное заседание коллегии Минобороны' [Expanded meeting of the collegium of the Ministry of defence], Kremlin, 21 December 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67402>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

such diverse fields as economics,<sup>35</sup> information,<sup>36</sup> and even morality<sup>37</sup>; uniting these conceptions of sovereignty is that its possession lies in the ability of the Russian Federation to make its own policy regardless of international pressures.

And yet the Kremlin perceives the West as exhibiting international pressures on countries with which it disagrees. Putin has claimed that the mobilisation of 'extremism' to precipitate political change such as 'colour revolutions' is a 'instrument of geopolitics'<sup>38</sup> rather than an act of war.<sup>39</sup> Yet this semantic difference reflects less a difference in effect than a difference in means: as will be explored in greater detail in the Armed Forces section, the Russian government's definition of 'war' pertains specifically to resolutions of contradictions by armed means.<sup>40</sup> As 'extremism' and 'colour revolutions' exacerbate contradictions because they are Western attempts to export or impose external values on a people which has not democratically chosen them, they escalate local conflicts.<sup>41</sup> As these conflicts attract the interest of actors seeking to capitalize upon these contradictions to their advantage or else restore the international order, the possibility of system-destroying war increases and the unthinkable destruction of wars with weapons of mass

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<sup>35</sup> Aleksandr Abelin, 'Интервью для средств массовой информации помощника Секретаря Совета Безопасности Российской Федерации А.П.Абелина к 25-летию Совета Безопасности РФ' [Interview for the media of Assistant Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation A.P. Abelin on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SCRF], SCRF, 29 May 2017, <http://scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/2226/>. Accessed 6 December 2021.

<sup>36</sup> Andrey Krutskikh, 'Выступление специального представителя Президента Российской Федерации по вопросам международного сотрудничества в области информационной безопасности А.В.Крутских на первом заседании рабочей группы ООН открытого состава по достижениям в сфере информатизации и телекоммуникаций в контексте международной безопасности, Нью-Йорк, 3-4 июня 2019 года' [Statement by Amb. Andrey Krutskikh, Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for International Cooperation in the Field of Information Security at the First Session of the UN Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, New York, 3-4 June 2019], MID, 6 June 2019, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3674635](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3674635). Accessed 6 December 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Nikolay Patrushev, 'Нужны ли России «универсальные» ценности?' [Does Russia need "universal" values?], SCRF, 18 June 2020, <http://scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/2802/>. Accessed 6 December 2021.

<sup>38</sup> инструмент геополитики (*instrument geopolitiki*)

<sup>39</sup> Kremlin 2014c.

<sup>40</sup> 'Война' [War], Russian Ministry of Defence, <https://encyclopedia.mil.ru/encyclopedia/dictionary/details.htm?id=12849@morfDictionary>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>41</sup> '70-я сессия Генеральной Ассамблеи ООН' [70<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly of the UN], Kremlin, 28 September 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50385>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

demonstration becomes possible.<sup>42</sup>

This system might be best compared to plate tectonics wherein the large continental plates represent sovereign states. Over time, their various movements build pressure (contradictions) against their neighbours. This pressure is ultimately resolved by a short sharp shock in the form of an earthquake (war). After the pressure is released, the system is somewhat different from before but the process continues. As the threat of a new earthquake or war in the post-1945 world might involve world-ending weapons of mass destruction, Putin perceives all efforts to de-pressure these contradictions as justifiable, including use of military force against actors lacking the sovereignty to defend themselves against the extremism or colour revolutions corrupting their politics in the name of avoiding a true war. In plate tectonics, most earthquakes are felt mostly at fault lines. In Putin's vision, any country lacking the sovereign capability to resist imposition of external force is a fault; and so long as the actor is working to restore the local constitution in accordance with the respect for sovereignty enshrined in the UN Charter. As the great Soviet theorist Aleksandr Svechin expressed it, 'Peace itself is primarily the result of violence and is maintained by violence.'<sup>43</sup> Thus also can be expressed Putin's formulation: if violence can restore the status quo as it was at the time of peace, then violence restores peace. This inherently reactionary metaphysical idealist theory of international relations, though expressed using Marxist-Leninist vocabulary, demonstrates Putin's deviation from the Soviet Communist ideas.

Putin's vision of international relations ascribes constitutional international legal authority to the UN Charter and little significance to norms. Anything not officially sanctioned in international law as agreed by the Russian Federation is at most a norm either to be castigated or cited as a 'whataboutism'<sup>44</sup> precedent

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<sup>42</sup> E.g. 'Военная доктрина Союзного государства' [Military doctrine of the Union State], Article 2, clause 1, *Konsortium Kodeks*, 26 December 2001, <https://docs.cntd.ru/document/456089527>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>43</sup> Aleksandr A. Svechin, *Strategy*, Minneapolis, Minnesota: East View Information Services, trans. Kent D. Lee, first published 1927, ppb 2004, p 106.

<sup>44</sup> E.g. Matthew Luxmore, 'Putin's Performance at Geneva Summit Seen as a Master Class in "Whataboutism"', *RFERL*, 17 June 2021, <https://www.rferl.org/a/putin-biden-summit-whataboutism-russia-narrative/31313209.html>. Accessed 21 April 2022. Aleksandra Srdanovic, '2 Decades of Russian



or more accurately the specious ‘*tu quoque*’ rhetorical technique. Perhaps the most famous example of this is the so-called ‘Kosovo precedent’ wherein Putin holds that the West used force to synthesize self-determination for a territory legally part of Yugoslavia. Putin both decries this incident and cites it as justification for its actions in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Crimea.<sup>45</sup> The other famous example of this is the so-called U.S. guarantee not to expand NATO following the fall of the Berlin Wall afterward supposedly abrogated. The fact that this guarantee, likely verbally conferred but never written down,<sup>46</sup> never carried legally binding weight has convinced Putin that nothing short of enshrined international law can be considered the basis of agreement.<sup>47</sup> This does not stop the Kremlin boasting about its own unadopted multilateral initiatives<sup>48</sup> nor does it stop Russian diplomats decrying multilateral initiatives it opposes but which carry broad international support as being somehow legally out of order.<sup>49</sup>

Maintaining the international system as Moscow perceives it is the work referred to as ‘strategic stability’ with a heavy emphasis on nuclear weapons and arms control. Official Russian statements suggest that in the absence of ‘strategic

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‘Whataboutism’: A Partial Rundown’, *Russia Matters*, 21 October 2021, <https://russiamatters.org/blog/2-decades-russian-whataboutism-partial-rundown>. Accessed 21 April 2022.

<sup>45</sup> Kremlin 2014d. ‘Интервью немецкому телеканалу ARD’ [Interview with the German television channel ARD], Kremlin, 17 November 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47029>. Accessed 1 April 2022. Accessed 1 April 2022. ‘Заседание Международного дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»’ [Meeting of the “Valdai” International discussion club], Kremlin, 27 October 2016, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53151>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>46</sup> Kremlin 2016a. Mary Elise Sarotte, ‘Not one inch eastward? Bush, Baker, Kohl, Genscher, Gorbachev, and the origin of Russian resentment toward NATO enlargement in February 1990’, *Diplomatic History*, 3:1, 2010, p 119-140. Mary Elise Sarotte, *Not one inch: America, Russia, and the making of post-Cold War stalemate*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Ежегодная пресс-конференция Владимира Путина’ [Annual press conference of Vladimir Putin], Kremlin, 17 December 2020, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64671>. Accessed 24 January 2022.

<sup>48</sup> E.g. ‘Заявление Президента Российской Федерации В.В.Путина по случаю двадцатипятилетия открытия для подписания Договора о всеобъемлющем запрещении ядерных испытаний’ [Declaration of President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty], Kremlin, 23 September 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66755>. Accessed 24 January 2022.

<sup>49</sup> Maria Zakharova, ‘О вступлении в силу Договора о запрещении ядерного оружия’ [On the entry into force of the Treaty of Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons], MID, 21 January 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1414338/#5](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1414338/#5). Accessed 24 January 2022. ‘Выступление заместителя Постоянного представителя Д.С.Чумакова в Пятом комитете ГА ООН в ходе основной части 76-й сессии по п. 138 повестки дня «Предлагаемый бюджет по программам на 2022 год»’ [Speech of Deputy Permanent Representative D.C. Chumakov to the 5<sup>th</sup> Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations during the main part of the 76<sup>th</sup> session on agenda item 138 “Proposed budget for programs in 2022”], Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the UN, 23 December 2021, [https://russiaun.ru/ru/news/2comm\\_271221](https://russiaun.ru/ru/news/2comm_271221). Accessed 24 January 2022.

stability’, arms races prevail - or at least a futile quest for military supremacy.<sup>50</sup> As it only requires an air of deescalating tensions or increasing trust, strategic stability need not require formal arms control but may need it if some problematic interlocutor - especially the United States<sup>51</sup> - is perceived as overtly seeking that supremacy.<sup>52</sup>

Before the annexation of Crimea, then-Head of the Presidential Administration Ivanov contended that the greatest risk of instability in the world was from intrastate and regional conflicts, specifically due to the possibility that they might grow into wars as external forces developed contradictory views of the various sides.<sup>53</sup> Yet as Putin has asserted consistently since before becoming President in 1999, Russia is a ‘great power’<sup>54</sup> whose perspective must be taken into consideration in all international arbitration of conflicts to prevent war. In this framing, Putin’s Russia is not revisionist: the world seeking to ignore Russia’s interests or coerce Russia into joining a Western-led international community is revisionist. External forces seeking to deprive Russia of its independent voice on the international stage are seeking to upend the international political system in place since 1945 and the Kremlin wants it known that such an action means war. In 2013, Ivanov asked the world to agree to a set of rules for resolving external actors’ differences of opinions in smaller conflicts;<sup>55</sup> in 2021, Putin warned the World Economic Forum in Davos that failure to accommodate all powers’ perspectives in resolving contradictions

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<sup>50</sup> Typically expressed as to ‘change the military-political situation in their favour’ (изменить в свою пользу военно-политическую ситуацию). ‘О встрече заместителя Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.А.Рябкова с заместителем Государственного секретаря США по делам Европы и Евразии К.Донфрид’ [On the meeting of Russian Assistant Foreign Minister S.A. Ryabkov with Deputy State Secretary of State of the USA for European and Eurasian Affairs K. Donfried], MID, 15 December 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1790416/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1790416/). Accessed 5 January 2022.

<sup>51</sup> Maria Zakharova, ‘Об американской исключительности’ [On American exceptionalism], MID, 24 December 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1792014/#24](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1792014/#24). Accessed 5 January 2022.

<sup>52</sup> ‘Интервью Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова МИА «Россия сегодня»’ [Interview of Russian Foreign Minister S.V. Lavrov to news agency “Russia Today”], MID, 31 December 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1793028/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1793028/). Accessed 5 January 2022.

<sup>53</sup> ‘Сергей Иванов принял участие в пленарном заседании конференции «Глобальный стратегический обзор»’ [Sergey Ivanov took part in the plenary session of the conference “Global strategic review”], Kremlin, 21 September 2013, <http://kremlin.ru/events/administration/19263>. Accessed 22 April 2022.

<sup>54</sup> Vladimir Putin, ‘Россия на рубеже тысячелетий’ [Russia on the edge of the millennium], *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 30 December 1999, [https://www.ng.ru/politics/1999-12-30/4\\_millenium.html](https://www.ng.ru/politics/1999-12-30/4_millenium.html). Accessed 22 April 2022. ‘Путин заявил, что Россия по праву претендует на звание великой державы’ [Putin declared that Russia is right to claim being a great power], *RIA Novosti*, 24 June 2020, <https://ria.ru/20200624/1573421862.html>. Accessed 22 April 2022.

<sup>55</sup> Kremlin 2013d.



would end in a catastrophe similar to the Second World War.<sup>56</sup>

Though the Kremlin's conceptual understanding of the international system described above provides a conveniently self-serving philosophy capable of justifying or vilifying international actions as it wishes, a guiding political principle does seem to animate Putin and his associates' view of good and evil. Likely informed primarily by the collapse of the Soviet Union - the 'greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the [twentieth] century'<sup>57</sup> - Putin identifies nationalism as an evil force of division and conflict. Putin contrasts this with Russia's multinational and multi-confessional identity, celebrating these as its enduring strengths, a 'civilization that has organically absorbed many traditions and cultures, preserved their originality and uniqueness, and at the same time preserved the unity, which is very important, the unity of the peoples living in it.'<sup>58</sup>

A critical concept here is the distinction between the two words '*ruskiy*' and '*rossiyskiy*' in this context. Both are translated into English as 'Russian' but they denote the difference between the ethnic Russian nationality (RUS) and the state of *Rossiya* encompassing multiple cultures and religions (ROS). Putin invariably refers to his country adjectivally with the *rossiyskiy* term, typically only uttering the word *ruskiy* in reference to the Russian language and specific cultural traditions. Ethnic *ruskiy* nationalism is as much a threat to the maintenance of *Rossiya* as any external threat, especially as nationalist (as opposed to unionist) politics advocated and ultimately achieved the dissolution of the Soviet Union over 1990-1991.

Though the Russian government's crusade against nationalism is more prominently and rhetorically dispatched by the MID, there is no doubt that the mantra comes from the Kremlin itself, where the terms 'nationalist' and 'neo-

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<sup>56</sup> 'Сессия онлайн-форума «Давосская повестка дня 2021»' [Session of the online-forum "Davos Agenda 2021"], Kremlin, 27 January 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64938>. Accessed 22 April 2022.

<sup>57</sup> 'крупнейшей геополитической катастрофой века' (*krupneyshey geopoliticheskoy katastrofoy veka*) 'Послание Федеральному Собранию Российской Федерации' [Message to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation], Kremlin, 25 April 2005, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22931>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>58</sup> 'Заседание дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»' [Meeting of the "Valdai" discussion club], Kremlin, 3 October 2019, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61719>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

Nazi’ are essentially interchangeable, especially in a European context.<sup>59</sup> Within the Russian Federation, Putin’s regime oppresses chauvinist Russian nationalist as much as it rhetorically abuses nationalist groups abroad<sup>60</sup> and has driven Russian nationalist leaders to back opposition figures.<sup>61</sup> Somewhat confusing the matter, because of the conscious political need to repress this political force, the *rossiyskiy* government also pushes for the protection of the ethnic *russskiy* people abroad - especially in Estonia, Latvia, and Ukraine - specifically because the *russskiy* people have no nation-state to advocate on their behalf of these ‘compatriots’<sup>62</sup> who found themselves in a country no longer claiming to represent them in late 1991.<sup>63</sup>

### *Oversight of the Military*

<sup>59</sup> В интервью «Российской газете» Секретарь Совета Безопасности РФ Николай Патрушев рассказал о готовности России противостоять современным вызовам’ [In an interview with “Rossiyskaya Gazeta” Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Nikolay Patrushev discusses Russia’s readiness to confront modern challenges], SCRF, 19 May 2017, <http://scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/2216/>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>60</sup> Ignat Kalinin, ‘Правые и виноватые: как националисты попали под зачистку’ [Right-wing and guilty: How the nationalists came to be purged], *Gazeta*, 9 July 2017, [https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2017/07/09\\_a\\_10779344.shtml?mc\\_cid=3a96657a04&mc\\_eid=20a5be0d13#page](https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2017/07/09_a_10779344.shtml?mc_cid=3a96657a04&mc_eid=20a5be0d13#page). Accessed 1 April 2022. Roman Polkov, ‘«Государство пытается создать «титушек», но не очень понимает как». Националисты о попытках православного олигарха Малофеева взять их под контроль’ [The state is trying to create “titushki” but does not really understand how’. Nationalists on the attempts of the Orthodox oligarch Malofeev to take them under control], *MBK*, 9 December 2019, <https://mbk-news.appspot.com/sences/vlast-izmenitsya-a-pozo/>. Accessed 1 April 2022. Maksim Polyakov, ‘Директор центра «Сова»\* Александр Верховский: «Ультраправое движение разгромлено. Репрессии дальше расти не будут, потому что давить некого» [Director of the “Sova” centre [an extremist group banned in the Russian Federation]. Aleksandr Verkhovskiy: “The ultra-right movement has been crushed. Repressions will not grow further because there is no one to crush], *Semnasem*, 20 January 2020, [https://semnasem.org/articles/2020/01/20/direktor-centra-sova-aleksandr-verhovskij?mc\\_cid=3a96657a04&mc\\_eid=20a5be0d13](https://semnasem.org/articles/2020/01/20/direktor-centra-sova-aleksandr-verhovskij?mc_cid=3a96657a04&mc_eid=20a5be0d13). Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>61</sup> Andrey Shiropaev, ‘Русскость против русскости’ [Russianness against Russianness], *Kasparov*, 16 November 2017, [http://www.kasparov.ru/material.php?id=5A0DB6FC6987C&mc\\_cid=3a96657a04&mc\\_eid=20a5be0d13](http://www.kasparov.ru/material.php?id=5A0DB6FC6987C&mc_cid=3a96657a04&mc_eid=20a5be0d13). Accessed 1 April 2022. Vladimir Basmanov, ‘Что из себя представляет современный русский национализм?’ [What is contemporary Russian nationalism?], *After Empire*, 24 March 2019, [http://afterempire.info/2019/03/24/rus\\_nazionalizm/?mc\\_cid=3a96657a04&mc\\_eid=20a5be0d13](http://afterempire.info/2019/03/24/rus_nazionalizm/?mc_cid=3a96657a04&mc_eid=20a5be0d13). Accessed 1 April 2022. Sergey Kazanov-Pashkovskiy, ‘Алексей Навальный и русское национальное движение’ [Aleksiy Navalniy and the Russian nationalist movement], *Harbin*, 19 August 2019, [https://harbin.lv/aleksey-navalnyy-i-russkoe-natsionalnoe-dvizhenie?mc\\_cid=3a96657a04&mc\\_eid=20a5be0d13](https://harbin.lv/aleksey-navalnyy-i-russkoe-natsionalnoe-dvizhenie?mc_cid=3a96657a04&mc_eid=20a5be0d13). Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>62</sup> Соотечественники (*sootchestvenniki*). Roughly translatable as ‘also descendants of the fatherland’).

<sup>63</sup> E.g. ‘О нарушениях прав российских граждан и соотечественников в зарубежных странах’ [On violations of the rights of Russian citizens and compatriots in foreign countries], MID, 18 March 2021, [https://archive.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/humanitarian\\_cooperation/-/asset\\_publisher/bB3NYd16mBFC/content/id/4641517](https://archive.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/humanitarian_cooperation/-/asset_publisher/bB3NYd16mBFC/content/id/4641517). Accessed 22 April 2022. Note the distinction made in the title between *rossiyskiy* citizens and the [*russskiy*] compatriots, though the MID typically references their *russskiy*-ness by their language preference.

The Russian Constitution has relatively few words to say about the formal oversight of the military. Article 87 names the President of the Russian Federation the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation<sup>64</sup> and the right to declare martial law in the event of aggression or immediate threat of aggression against the Russian Federation. Article 83 also grants the President control over the military doctrine. The decision of war or peace and the ability to deploy the Russian Armed Forces outside the borders of Russia<sup>65</sup> is accorded to the legislative Federal Assembly under Articles 106 and 102 respectively.<sup>66</sup> Article 4 of the federal law ‘On defence’<sup>67</sup> invests in the President with broad administrative control of Russian military policy as well as mobilisation.<sup>68</sup>

The Kremlin’s direct oversight of the military varies over time. Table 3-1 demonstrates this vacillation in terms of Putin’s personal oversight of military matters. The fact that Putin only revealed details of his conscription service in the Soviet Union in 2019, 20 years into his time at the forefront of Russian politics,<sup>69</sup> suggests a certain disdain for the Armed Forces especially compared with the highly public presentation of Putin’s past as a KGB agent even in the first year of his presidency.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> ‘Верховный Главнокомандующий Вооруженными Силами Российской Федерации (*Verkhovnyu Glavnokomanduyushchiy Vooryzhennymi Silami Rossiyskoy Federatsii*)

<sup>65</sup> As was done on 22 February 2022 for the Russian ‘special operation’ against Ukraine after the recognition of the Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics but before the start of the operation. Elena Teslova, ‘Russian parliament grants Putin permission to use armed forces abroad, in eastern Ukraine’, AA, 22 February 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/russian-parliament-grants-putin-permission-to-use-armed-forces-abroad-in-eastern-ukraine/2510387>. Accessed 21 April 2022.

<sup>66</sup> ‘Конституция Российской Федерации’ [Constitution of the Russian Federation], Kremlin, as amended on 1 July 2020, <http://kremlin.ru/acts/constitution/>. Accessed 21 April 2022.

<sup>67</sup> ‘Об обороне

<sup>68</sup> ‘Статья 4. Полномочия Президента Российской Федерации в области обороны’ [Article 4. Powers of the President of the Russian Federation in the field of defence], ‘Федеральный закон от 31.05.1996 N 61-ФЗ (ред. от 11.06.2021) "Об обороне"' [Federal law from 31 May 1996 No 61-F3 (amended on 11 June 2021) “On defence”], *Konsul’tantPlyus*, [http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons\\_doc\\_LAW\\_10591/bb07c07d4d932fcf9536678ca152c34886464e5f/](http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_10591/bb07c07d4d932fcf9536678ca152c34886464e5f/). Accessed 21 April 2022.

<sup>69</sup> ‘Путин рассказал о наличии у него звания лейтенанта артиллерии’ [Putin spoke about his rank of lieutenant of artillery], *Kommersant*”, 28 January 2019, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3849545>. Accessed 9 November 2021.

<sup>70</sup> Vladimir Putin, *First Person*, Huthinson, 2000.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Meetings chaired by Putin on military affairs<sup>71</sup></i>	<i>Putin's visits to the Ministry of Defence</i>	<i>Russian Security Council discussion of military affairs</i>
2014	16	3	4
2015	21	4	0
2016	17	2	3
2017	11	1	1
2018	8	3	2
2019	9	2	2
2020	10	1	3
2021	7	1	0

Perhaps the most notable shift in Russian Kremlin-military relations of the past 10 years is the creation of the National Centre of Defence Command (Russian acronym NTsUO<sup>72</sup>). The public role of this centre is to provide the capacity for central leadership in Moscow to have as perfect knowledge of the global situation and enable rapid command-and-control (C2) decisions as circumstances require. The officer in command of the NTsUO, known as the duty general,<sup>73</sup> can relay information directly to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, namely the President.<sup>74</sup> This capacity to direct action in relatively minute detail immediately as intelligence details emerge perhaps best define the Russian approach to military management since 2014.

Though the Kremlin has a long-term conception of conflict through contradictions among states and societies, it does not perceive the armed forces as a necessary component of them. The Russian military doctrine overtly refers to how the military can be used to resolve contradictions but 'only after the possibilities of using political, diplomatic, legal, economic, information, and other non-violent instruments have been exhausted'.<sup>75</sup> The infamous 2013 article

<sup>71</sup> Defined as internal meetings chaired by President Putin in which the Ministry of Defence, Armed Forces, or *oboronka* representatives were the lead interlocutor. Compiled from kremlin.ru. The typically biannual weeklong meetings on military matters are collectively considered one event.

<sup>72</sup> Национальный центр управления обороной (*national'nyy tsentr upravleniya oboronoj*)

<sup>73</sup> Дежурный генерал (*dezhurnyy general*)

<sup>74</sup> Andrew Monaghan, *Power in modern Russia: strategy and mobilisation*, Manchester University Press, 2017, p 71-72. 'Военная приемка. Национальный центр управления обороной. Часть 1. Дежурная смена' [Military inspection. The National Centre of Defence Command. Part 1. Duty Shift], Moscow: *Zvezda*, 15 December 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMyVks3RjHM>. Accessed 10 November 2021. Greg Whisler, 'Strategic Command and Control in the Russian Armed Forces: Untangling the General Staff, Military Districts, and Service Main Commands (Part Three)', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 33:2, 2020, p 249.

<sup>75</sup> *Konsortium Kodeks* 2014, Article 5.

by then-new Chief of the General Staff General Valeriy Gerasimov about a more information- and deception-infused conception of conflict<sup>76</sup> was less a prescription for remodelling the Russian Armed Forces but rather a defence of the role of the traditional Armed Forces being at the centre of the definition of 'war'. Over recent years, the Kremlin has intermittently debated expanding the definition of 'war' to include conflicts not characterised predominantly by armed conflict<sup>77</sup> as the official definition does.<sup>78</sup> Though Kremlin investments in and uses of the Russian military in recent years indicate a continued perception of the institution's importance even if its centrality in 'war' is being debated. As noted above, the military also potentially conducts 'operations' in circumstances outside war or for the prevention of war, indicating that the Armed Forces' role is not circumscribed by this limitedly defined time of 'war'.

This ambiguity on what constitutes 'war' coupled with bureaucratic rivalry between the military and non-military (e.g. the FSB) organs over who should prosecute what element of warfare produces the Western obsession with what is alternatively termed the 'grey zone' or 'hybrid warfare' of operations fundamentally driven directly by political actors but falling short of war.<sup>79</sup> To a certain extent, this Western fixation is driven by envy for political acumen over operational decisions. However, whatever decisiveness such a system produces also produces strategic weaknesses which will be explored in 5.1.4 below. What should be noted here is that the military's management of the NTsUO represents a clear bureaucratic victory for the Armed Forces in defining the everyday approach of the Kremlin to security decisions including outside the strict definition of 'war'.

When the Kremlin overly addresses military affairs, it most often discusses procurement and modernisation issues, especially the successful execution of

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<sup>76</sup> Valeriy Gerasimov, 'Ценность науки в предвидении' [The value of science in foresight], *VPK*, 26 February 2013, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/14632>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>77</sup> E.g. 'Состоялось заседание секции научного совета при Совете Безопасности Российской Федерации по проблемам военной безопасности' [A meeting of the section of the scientific council of the Security Council of the Russian Federation occurred on the problems of military security], *SCRF*, 12 January 2017, <http://scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/2146/>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>78</sup> 'Война' [War], Russian Ministry of Defence, <https://encyclopedia.mil.ru/encyclopedia/dictionary/details.htm?id=12849@morfDictionary>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>79</sup> Kāihkō, pp 115-116, 125.

the state defence order (Russian acronym GOZ<sup>80</sup>). Despite high expectations for procurement, technical and corruption constraints habitually prevented growing defence budgets from the early years of Putin's presidency translating into increased materiel production or improved conditions for Russian servicemen.<sup>81</sup> Since returning to the Kremlin, keeping the annual GOZ delivery rate relative to expectations high, typically above 95%, has been Putin's highest overt priority.<sup>82</sup> Since 2014, the Kremlin has also strongly emphasized an 'import substitution'<sup>83</sup> policy for the *oboronka*<sup>84</sup> given the sudden closure of Ukrainian technical expertise, so long central to both Soviet and post-Soviet military technology, to the Russian Armed Forces. Secondly, the Kremlin takes an interest in arms sales as a means of both revenue and prestige.<sup>85</sup>

To the extent that Putin personally directs the modernisation priorities of the Russian Armed Forces, he persistently advocates pursuing high-tech solutions, especially robots and precision weapons.<sup>86</sup> Especially since the *Kavkaz-2020* exercise, Putin has added artificial intelligence (AI) to his list of high-priority technological developments for battlefield deployment.<sup>87</sup> Putin has also claimed some reactive impetus for certain technological pursuits, especially citing

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<sup>80</sup> Государственный оборонный заказ, frequently shortened to гособоронзаказ (*Gosudarstvennyy oboronnyy zakaz/gosoboronzakaz*)

<sup>81</sup> Monaghan, p 40-41.

<sup>82</sup> E.g. 'Заседание Военно-промышленной комиссии' [Meeting of the Military-industrial commission], Kremlin, 10 November 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67093>. Accessed 30 January 2022.

<sup>83</sup> Импортозамещения (*importozameshcheniya*)

<sup>84</sup> The short-hand Russian notation for the military-industrial complex. 'Совещание по вопросу импортозамещения' [Meeting on import substitution], Kremlin, 28 July 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46370>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>85</sup> E.g. 'Заседание Комиссии по военно-техническому сотрудничеству России с иностранными государствами' [Meeting of the Commission on military-technical cooperation of Russia with foreign governments], Kremlin, 7 July 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46163>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>86</sup> 'Заседание Совета Безопасности' [Meeting of the Security Council], Kremlin, 5 July 2013, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/18529>. Accessed 2 April 2022. 'Заседание Военно-промышленной комиссии' [Meeting of the Military-industrial commission], Kremlin, 20 September 2016, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52920>. Accessed 2 April 2022. 'Путин заявил о растущей роли крылатых ракет' [Putin declared the growing role of cruise missiles], *RIA Novosti*, 27 May 2021, <https://ria.ru/20210527/raketa-1734440688.html>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>87</sup> 'Расширенное заседание коллегии Минобороны' [Expanded meeting of the collegium of the Ministry of Defence], Kremlin, 21 December 2020, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64684>. Accessed 2 April 2022. 'Путин: использование искусственного интеллекта станет во многом определять исход боя' [Putin: the use of artificial intelligence will largely determine the outcome of battle], *TASS*, 21 December 2020, <https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/10311665>. Accessed 2 April 2022. 'Путин считает, что будущее авиации - за искусственным интеллектом и беспилотниками' [Putin believes that the future of aviation lies with artificial intelligence and drones], *TASS*, 20 July 2021, <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/11942627>. Accessed 2 April 2022.



Russian hypersonic missile development as a consequence of the United States abandoning the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in 2002.<sup>88</sup> Indeed, Putin's obsession with the US cancellation of the ABM Treaty - given its concomitant erosion of strategic stability - appears to be the primary driver of his interest in non-contact missile systems capable of evading whatever defensive capabilities 21<sup>st</sup>-century US ABM systems offer.<sup>89</sup>

In terms of larger military reforms such as the expansion of domains of warfare and use of weapons of mass destruction, Putin again expresses an overtly reactive reasons for changes. Putin has cited Western attempts to militarise space,<sup>90</sup> cyberspace,<sup>91</sup> and the information space<sup>92</sup> as reasons for security review. On the question of weapons of mass destruction, Putin frequently cites their immense destruction as reason for why Russia cannot initiate their use.<sup>93</sup> Though additional details of the Russian nuclear doctrine released in 2020 suggest that Russia may use nuclear weapons in response to a conventional threat to the existence of the Russian Federation,<sup>94</sup> even this presupposes a

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<sup>88</sup> 'Путин заявил, что выход США из договора по ПРО вынудил Россию создать гиперзвуковое оружие' [Putin declared that the exit of the USA from the ABM treaty forced Russia to develop hypersonic weapons], TASS, 19 September 2020, <https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/9501307>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>89</sup> 'Путин: Россия создаст комплексы, способные преодолеть любую систему ПРО' [Putin: Russia will create systems capable of overcoming any missile defence system], RIA Novosti, 12 October 2019, <https://ria.ru/20191012/1559704070.html>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>90</sup> 'Расширенное заседание коллегии Министерства обороны' [Expanded meeting of the collegium of the Ministry of defence], Kremlin, 19 December 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47257>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>91</sup> 'Патрушев: зарубежные спецслужбы готовят массированные кибератаки' [Patrushev: foreign intelligence agencies are preparing massive cyber attacks], RIA Novosti, 25 October 2019, <https://ria.ru/20191025/1560200868.html>. Accessed 2 April 2022. 'Интервью Секретаря Совета Безопасности России Н.П.Патрушева газете «Коммерсант»' [Interview of Secretary of the Security Council of Russia N.P. Patrushev to the newspaper "Kommersant"], SCRF, 8 April 2021, <http://scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/2958/>. Accessed 2 April 2022. 'Интервью американской телекомпании NBC' [Interview with the American television channel NBC], Kremlin, 14 June 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/65861>. Accessed 2 April 2022. 'Пресс-конференция по итогам российско-американских переговоров' [Press conference following Russian-American negotiations], Kremlin, 16 June 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/65870>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>92</sup> Kremlin 2013b. 'Большая пресс-конференция Владимира Путина' [Large press conference of Vladimir Putin], Kremlin, 23 December 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67438>. Accessed 6 January 2022. 'Интервью заместителя Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации О.В.Сыромолотова международному информационному агентству «Россия сегодня»' [Interview of Russian Deputy Foreign Minister O.V. Syromolotov to the international media agency "Rossiya segodnya"], MID, 29 December 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1792733/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1792733/). Accessed 6 January 2022.

<sup>93</sup> 'Россия не может быть инициатором применения ядерного оружия, заявил Путин' [Russia cannot initiate use of nuclear weapons declared Putin], RIA Novosti, 18 October 2018, <https://ria.ru/20181018/1530982072.html>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>94</sup> A.E. Strelin & A.L. Khryarin, 'Об основах государственной политики Российской Федерации в области ядерного сдерживания' [On the fundamentals of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the field of

fundamentally reactive role of such weapons.

At the height of the New Look military reforms of 2008-2012, Putin cited frustration with the inability of the mass-mobilization army the Russian Federation still attempted to field to address 21<sup>st</sup>-century challenges as reason for major reform.<sup>95</sup> Though this reform involves dismantling the Russian military concept in place since the 1870s, it also ended Russian reliance solely on a secure strategic nuclear second strike capability for deterrence.<sup>96</sup> However, speculation has emerged in the West that since the implementation of the New Look reforms and success in Crimea and Syria, the Kremlin has become overconfident in the capabilities of its modernized military.<sup>97</sup>

### Politics and Policy

Since his return to the Presidency in 2012, Putin has declared that the spiritual identity of the Russian Federation holds the great multinational entity together despite pressure from Western-driven globalization<sup>98</sup> and liberalism.<sup>99</sup> Some scholars have speculated that this view is a development only of late Putinism arising from the greater faith of the Russian political right during his ‘castling’ of positions with Dmitriy Medvedev in 2011<sup>100</sup> but it has regardless become a mainstay of state ideology in the past decade.

However, despite this rhetorical predilection for tradition, this seems merely a pretence to explain divergence from European trends toward sovereignty forfeiture to supernational structures like the European Union. The foremost evidence for this is Putin’s government’s drive toward technologization and digitization of virtually all aspects of governance and the economy regardless of

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nuclear deterrence], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 7 August 2020, <http://redstar.ru/ob-osnovah-gosudarstvennoj-politiki-rossijskoj-federatsii-v-oblasti-yadernogo-sderzhivaniya/>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>95</sup> Aleksandr Golts, ‘Modernization Versus mobilization’, *The Russian military in contemporary perspective*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2019, p 267-268.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, pp 267, 270.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, pp 277-278.

<sup>98</sup> ‘Globalization’ (глобализация/*globalizatsiya*) here should be read not as ‘integration’ (интеграция/*integratsiya*) as referenced above but rather as an attempt to graft a cosmopolitan culture upon a regional or national identity.

<sup>99</sup> Kremlin 2013c.

<sup>100</sup> Charles Clover, *Black wind, white snow: the rise of Russia’s new nationalism*, Yale University Press, 2016, p 312.



their potentially deleterious impact on conservative values in the name of competitive advantages and ultimately power<sup>101</sup>. The May Edicts of 2012,<sup>102</sup> the national projects,<sup>103</sup> rigorous digitalization campaigns spearheaded especially by Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin,<sup>104</sup> and various bureaucratic-military initiatives for technology development - especially robotics<sup>105</sup> and artificial intelligence<sup>106</sup> - all seek liberal innovation to increase Russian economic, military, and political weight and thereby sovereignty. This demonstrates one way in which Putin philosophically differs from his Soviet forebears: whereas the Communist Party of the Soviet Union theorized that Russia could avoid war with the capitalist world by keeping aloof and sufficiently arming to deter imperialist aggression,<sup>107</sup> Putin believes wholeheartedly in regional integration projects, albeit primarily for economic as opposed to security purposes.

Putin's perception of the need for the state to be able to utilize all potential resources at its disposal does not preclude political interests in improving the regional prosperity and development of strategic regions<sup>108</sup> or driving state-dependent companies to expand their business portfolios to products that would

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<sup>101</sup> As castigated by anti-globalist Russian political figures such as Aleksandr Dugin. Aleksandr Dugin, 'Политехнологии погубят Россию' [Political technology will destroy Russia], *Geopolitica*, 17 November 2021, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/polittehologii-pogubyat-rossiyu>. Accessed 12 March 2022.

<sup>102</sup> Andrew Monaghan, 'From plans to strategy: mobilization as Russian grand strategy', *Current Russia military affairs: assessing and countering Russian strategy, operational planning, and modernization*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2018, p 14-17.

<sup>103</sup> 'Заседание Совета по стратегическому развитию и национальным проектам' [Meeting of the Council on strategic development and national projects], Kremlin, 15 December 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67366>. Accessed 17 December 2021. 'Заседание наблюдательного совета Агентства стратегических инициатив' [Meeting of the Supervisory Board of the Agency for strategic initiatives], Kremlin, 16 December 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67376>. Accessed 17 December 2021.

<sup>104</sup> E.g. Mikhail Mishustin, 'Видеообращение Михаила Мишустина к участникам 13-й Недели российского интернета – RIW 20/21' [Video message of Mikhail Mishustin to participants of the 13<sup>th</sup> Russian Internet Week – RIW 20/21], Government of the Russian Federation, 6 December 2021, <http://government.ru/news/44012/>. Accessed 7 December 2021.

<sup>105</sup> Aleksandr Abelin, 'Помощник Секретаря Совета Безопасности Российской Федерации А.П.Абелин в интервью информационным агентствам РИА-Новости, ТАСС и Интерфакс рассказал о вопросах экологической, продовольственной и экономической безопасности России' [Assistant Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation A.P. Abelin in an interview with RIA-Novosti, TASS, and Interfax discussed questions of environmental, food, and economic security of Russia], SCRF, 1 April 2019, <http://scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/2566/>. Accessed 6 December 2021.

<sup>106</sup> Kremlin 2021k.

<sup>107</sup> Margot Light, *The Soviet Theory of International Relations*, Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1988, p 215-220.

<sup>108</sup> 'Выступление на пленарном заседании III Международного арктического форума «Арктика – территория диалога»' [Speech at the plenary meeting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Arctic Forum "Arctic: territory of dialogue"], Kremlin, 25 September 2013, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/19281>. Accessed 30 January 2022.

enable them to be sustained by consumer demand rather than only on public contract largesse,<sup>109</sup> repeating a longstanding Russian ambition to let the *oboronka*<sup>110</sup> lead broader Russian economic development.<sup>111</sup> This includes specific focuses on investment in future technologies often advocated by Putin personally such as lasers, artificial intelligence, and precision munitions.<sup>112</sup>

Against the impulse to repress nationalism described above, the Kremlin overtly advocates for regional integration, especially of Eurasia,<sup>113</sup> primarily as an economic tool<sup>114</sup> but also as a bulwark against nationalist impulses.<sup>115</sup> However, anti-nationalist policies leave a key political vulnerability for the Kremlin the form of the absence of a channel for redress about the mistreatment of ethnic Russian citizens abroad if the Russian Federation is not a nation-state. The Putin regime accommodates this issue to the limit of what it considers seemly, admitting in the 2020 constitutional reforms that the ethnic Russian people are the ‘state-forming people’<sup>116</sup> of the country and rhetorically hounding foreign governments for mistreatment of ethnic Russians living on their territory.<sup>117</sup> This combination of forces has given rise to a popular myth in the West that Putin is seeking to rebuild the Soviet Union or that there remains a disproportionate

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<sup>109</sup> ‘Пленарное заседание Форума оружейников России’ [Plenary meeting of the Forum of arms manufacturers of Russia], Kremlin, 19 September 2019, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61576>. Accessed 1 April 2022. ‘Встреча с вице-премьером Юрием Борисовым’ [Meeting with Vice-Premier Yuriy Borisov], Kremlin, 26 September 2019, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61648>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>110</sup> A standard Russian colloquial expression for the country’s military-industrial complex.

<sup>111</sup> David Holloway, ‘Technological Change and Military Procurement’, *Soviet Naval Influence: Domestic and Foreign Dimensions*, Halifax, Nova Scotia: Praeger, 1977, p 124-126.

<sup>112</sup> ‘Совещание о ходе выполнения гособоронзаказа’ [Meeting on the implementation of the state defence plan], Kremlin, 26 May 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/65678>. Accessed 16 April 2022. ‘Совещание с руководством Минобороны и предприятий ОПК’ [Meeting with the leadership of the Ministry of Defence and defence industry enterprises], Kremlin, 3 November 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67061>. Accessed 16 April 2022.

<sup>113</sup> ‘Вручение верительных грамот послами иностранных государств’ [Presentation of credentials by foreign ambassadors], Kremlin, 19 November 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47039>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>114</sup> ‘Петербургский международный экономический форум’ [St. Petersburg international economic forum], Kremlin, 23 May 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/21080>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>115</sup> E.g. Maria Zakharova, ‘О реакции на проявления нетерпимости по национальному признаку’ [On the reaction to the manifestations of intolerance on a national basis], MID, 3 November 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1784898/#21](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1784898/#21). Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>116</sup> ‘государствообразующий народ’ (*gosudarstvoobrazuyushchiy narod*) ‘В Кремле не видят причин для конфликта из-за понятия «государствообразующий народ»’ [The Kremlin saw no reason for conflict over the idea of the “state-forming people”], *Kommersant*, 4 March 2020, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4276441>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>117</sup> E.g. ‘Большая пресс-конференция Владимира Путина’ [Large press conference of Vladimir Putin], Kremlin, 18 December 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47250>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

interest in the so-called 'near abroad' former Soviet republics. These states are of special significance to the Putin regime because many ethnic Russians live in them and their pursuit of nationalist policies not only offends the core moral sentiment of the Putin regime but also threatens to harm ethnic Russians. This combination makes Russia seem especially threatening to the former Soviet republics but the real source of the threat Russia poses is because of a combination of anti-nationalism and perception that anti-Russian security policies in any country was artificially transplanted by those advocating Western hegemony and therefore can be repulsed by force in the name of peace.

Yet despite this aversion to nationalism within the territory of the former Soviet Union, Russian policy is remarkably sanguine toward nationalist causes in Europe exacerbating fissiparous debates within opposed interlocutors such as Brexit, Scottish independence, and French nationalist movements. Notably, the Russian government has said almost nothing about these topics officially. This is notable when compared with the copious condemnations of nationalist fervour in Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania or in countries where nationalism may strengthen the nation as a threat to Russia as in Germany or Poland. Apart from former Soviet republics in Central Asia, Russia never pronounces on expressions of nationalism in Asia, Africa, or Latin America. It seems that Russian support for nationalist causes abroad pertains specifically to that which will exacerbate contradictions within the Western order opposing Russia without raising any serious potential threat to Russia itself.

Two final curious trends must be noted from this organisational theory. First, Putin's faith in the value of integration for economic and anti-nationalist principles means that he has no inherent objection to the project of the European Union (EU) and indeed was seeking substantially greater interaction with it prior to the breakdown in Russia-Western relations in 2014.<sup>118</sup> The EU's relative lack of a sovereign ability to act independently due to its semi-confederal decision-making process offers Russia a far more promising interlocutory partner than does NATO or any other combination of Western

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<sup>118</sup> 'Саммит Россия – Европейский союз' [Russia-European Union Summit], Kremlin, 28 January 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20113>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

nations which may look to the United States as a leader.<sup>119</sup> This dual interest suggests not only that the Russian government's definition of 'sovereignty' is fundamentally unequal but that it seeks to erode the sovereignty of other countries to gain advantage over interlocutors individually.

Second, the notion that the international system centred upon the UN Charter and the seeking of a long-term peace might seem to contradict friendship with the People's Republic of China, a country which claims territory it does not control which the United States intermittently seems poised to defend. Seeking political and economic friendship with China<sup>120</sup> may strike an observer as a destabilizing policy. However, this international system stability concept fosters a sense of futurism. As referenced above from Putin's 2007 Munich speech, US unipolarity failed in the years after the collapse of the Soviet Union because the 'unipolar model is not only unacceptable but also impossible',<sup>121</sup> and so a multipolar or polycentric world order is necessarily emerging.<sup>122</sup> As the People's Republic of China is perceived to be destined to be a central pillar of this emerging polycentric world order,<sup>123</sup> Russian support for China is simply aligning with the forces of the future even at the risk of war among sovereign states with the forces of the past (i.e. the United States). Russian alignment with China can therefore be said to have some deterrent value against the United States engaging in a war with China, thereby arguably preserving the international system.

In his speech on sovereignty in 2014, Putin celebrated the fact that the Russian Federation had no allies to contaminate its pursuit of its own interests and security.<sup>124</sup> Indeed, without allies to consult or a political system capable of

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<sup>119</sup> Е.г. 'Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел ФРГ Ф.-В.Штайнмайером, Москва' [Remarks and answers to questions of the media of Minister of foreign affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov in a joint press conference after negotiations with Minister of foreign affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany F.-W. Steinmeier, Moscow], MID, 18 November 2014, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1661931/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1661931/). Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>120</sup> 'Деловой саммит форума АТЭС' [Business summit of the APEC Forum], Kremlin, 10 November 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46988>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>121</sup> Kremlin 2007.

<sup>122</sup> These concepts will be explored in much greater depth in the MID session below.

<sup>123</sup> 'Заседание Совета глав правительств государств – членов ШОС' [Meeting of the Council of the heads of government of the members of the SCO], Government.ru, 15 December 2015, <http://government.ru/news/21054/>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>124</sup> Kremlin 2014d.

resisting him, Putin enjoys swift freedom of manoeuvre on the international stage when wielding Russian assets of statecraft.<sup>125</sup> However, this freedom from allies seems to be changing in 2022 as Putin endorsed certain Chinese state policies in a joint declaration,<sup>126</sup> a remarkable break from the past as most joint declarations simply heralded increased degrees of cooperation.<sup>127</sup> This suggests increased belief in Moscow that preservation of its model of the international system requires a greater degree of coordination with Beijing.

### Self-Perception

ISC domination of the Kremlin for the long duration of Putin's time in power has dulled its need to justify its existence at least in an overt sense. Nevertheless, the emergence of state-sponsored social movements<sup>128</sup> to inculcate patriotic visions of Russian history and identity in line with how ISC leaders perceive them suggests a self-consciousness that without active promotion their worldview would be at risk of withering away.

For Putin himself, this seeming lack of innate sustainability of the Kremlin's narrative seems merely to reinforce his concern that foreign interests are trying to infiltrate the Russian political system just as he believes they did in the late Soviet era and in the 1990s.<sup>129</sup> Though this suggests a growing detachment of Putin as both a politician and a strategist from the expressed interests of the people of the Russian Federation, the existence of such a detachment would merely be evidence of the need to counter external control of the information space so that the people better understand the Kremlin's own perception of the

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<sup>125</sup> Golts, p 279-280.

<sup>126</sup> 'Совместное заявление Российской Федерации и Китайской Народной Республики о международных отношениях, вступающих в новую эпоху, и глобальном устойчивом развитии' [Joint declaration of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on international relations entering a new era and global sustainable development], Kremlin, 4 February 2022, <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/5770>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>127</sup> E.g. 'Совместное заявление Российской Федерации и Китайской Народной Республики об углублении всеобъемлющего партнерства и стратегического взаимодействия и о продвижении взаимовыгодного сотрудничества' [Joint declaration of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on deepening comprehensive partnership and strategic interaction and promoting mutually beneficial cooperation], Kremlin, 8 May 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/4969>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>128</sup> E.g. *Yunarmiya*, *Bessmertniy polk*, *Vakhta pamyati*, and the now-defunct *Nashi*.

<sup>129</sup> Kremlin 2021k. Kremlin 2021l.

truth.<sup>130</sup> As of the time of writing, it remains to be seen whether genuine intelligence failures such as that of the Kremlin and Armed Forces in February 2022 will ultimately result in tangible political costs for the Putin regime.

## Summary

The stability-cum-futurist concept of international relations combined with more streamlined Kremlin command-and-control of the various organs of the security organisations, especially the Armed Forces, facilitates decisive leadership but is especially vulnerable to strategic oversights. Without a clear understanding of the motivating factors of the Russian people beyond the grander historical visions of the political leadership, which is in turn confined by a perceived certainty that external forces are trying to create internal contradictions for Russia,<sup>131</sup> the Kremlin finds itself in a political-operational trap. In theory, politics and operations are bridged by strategy. In practice, the Kremlin concept of the international system supplants strategy, replacing an understanding of one's own resources and interests with a perception that the situation is exacerbating or stabilising, driven inherently by the perspective of the Kremlin. This self-reinforcing approach to the international system offers a flexible set of tools for conducting operations, but since the strategy is fixed and the politics sclerotic the decision will inherently be to conduct operations to prop up the system.

This political-operational trap can probably best be imagined as astrategic. Because the objectives of any operation or political policy are indiscernible beyond the perception of stability within an international system across a potentially limitless period of time, there is no actual means to determine how to act beyond reversion to political assumptions. Since the Putin regime's political assumptions are that external forces are trying to dissolve a multinational and multi-confessional Russia, the Kremlin undertakes operations to disable the West's ability to conduct this presumed action. When these

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<sup>130</sup> 'Посещение телеканала Russia Today' [Visiting the television channel Russia Today], Kremlin, 11 June 2013, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/18319>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>131</sup> E.g. 'Встреча с руководителями международных информагентств' [Meeting with the leaders of international information agencies], Kremlin, 4 June 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/65749>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

operations scandalise international norms and motivate external actors to take countermeasures against the Kremlin, it is perceived as affirming the political assumptions. Yet since the political assumptions include a static Russian understanding of itself no adaptation can be made to the course of action which produced the operation in the first place and the astrategic approach continues.

As stated above, it is unclear how immune the current Russian political system is to political discontent with this phenomenon. In both 1917 and 1991, some variant of astrategy persisted until the Russian state had lost sufficient legitimacy such that its commands lacked authority.

### The Russian Armed Forces

The Russian military is responsible for conducting armed conflict, i.e. the main component of 'war',<sup>132</sup> on behalf of the Russian state. The full definition of 'war' according to the Russian military encyclopaedia is:

An extreme form of resolving contradictions, characterised by a sharp change in relations between states, nations, and other subjects of politics and a transition to the use of armed and other types of violence to achieve socio-political, economic, ideological, territorial, national ethnic, religious, and other goals. The main content of war is armed battle.<sup>133</sup>

As with other global militaries, the Russian Armed Forces consists of several influential institutional factions. In Russia's case, the most important of these are the General Staff and the corps of commanders.

Despite considerable effort to modernise the Russian Armed Forces especially since 2008, the military remains a conscription-dependent force in which a relatively modernised strategic nuclear deterrent and expeditionary-capable aerospace force co-exist with a reformed but largely - until 2022 - untested Ground Forces and disparately vintage and modernised Navy.<sup>134</sup> Though the proportion of conscripts in the Russian Armed Forces has declined in recent

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<sup>132</sup> 'Война' [War], Russian Ministry of Defence, <https://encyclopedia.mil.ru/encyclopedia/dictionary/details.htm?id=12849@morfDictionary>. Accessed 1 April 2022.

<sup>133</sup> 'Борьба' (*borba*). Also frequently translated into English as 'struggle'.

<sup>134</sup> 'Russia and Eurasia', *The Military Balance*, London: International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2021, pp 166-172, 190-191.



years, the size of the Armed Forces at large have not meaningfully increased and indeed many of the ‘contractors’ volunteer only to be paid better during their time of conscription.<sup>135</sup> As such, a growing proportion of Russian servicemen come from poorer regions of the Russian Federation, frequently regions home to non-*russskiy* minority populations. Unlike the experience in much of the rest of the world<sup>136</sup> and perhaps due to the centuries-old legacy of military service being seen as distinctly unprestigious and deserving evasion,<sup>137</sup> neither the Russian nor the Soviet Armed Forces are an institution for forging a coherent state identity out of multiple nations.

Recognition that Soviet-style defence planning and doctrine could be outmatched since the 1990s and that half-measures at reforms prior to 2008 failed to deliver victory against Georgia without overwhelming force impossible against a foe like NATO drove impetus for the reforms underway. Over the years covered by this dissertation official Russian military theoretical publications, especially *Voennaya Mysl'*,<sup>138</sup> debated how best to reform the Russian Armed Forces at all levels to adapt to a combat environment widely believed to require different solutions to those taught in recent generations.

Military professionals comprise the bulk of the Russian Ministry of Defence (MOD), though Sergey Shoigu, Defence Minister since 2012, is a bureaucrat-turned-politician without military experience until becoming the Minister. The MOD at large serves a primarily administrative role: deciding budgets, procurement, and the management of the military's interactions with foreign militaries.

As the brain of the organisation, the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces studies the dialectic of armed conflict, generating a forecast-driven model of warfare.<sup>139</sup> This organisation drives a constant modernisation motif

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<sup>135</sup> Golts, p 225-226. *The Military Balance*, p 170.

<sup>136</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: forging the nation, 1707-1837*, Yale University Press, 1992.

<sup>137</sup> Viktor Suvorov, *Inside the Soviet army*, New York: Macmillan, 1983, p 215-220. Maya Eichler, *Militarizing men: gender, conscription, and war in post-Soviet Russia*, Stanford University Press, 2012, pp 2-3, 16, 59, 61-62.

<sup>138</sup> Военная мысль. Literally ‘Military Thought’. The official journal of the Russian General Staff.

<sup>139</sup> Grau & Bartles, p xiv-xv. Roger McDermott, ‘Russian military thought on the changing character of war: harnessing technology in the information age’, Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, 29 October 2021,



encompassing new technologies,<sup>140</sup> updated doctrines,<sup>141</sup> and strategic initiatives.<sup>142</sup> However, the Russian General Staff comprises only a small portion of the Russian Armed Forces. Recruitment to the General Staff functions largely according to the von Manstein matrix of the Prussian General Staff system wherein intelligent and hard-working officers are selected for premier staff positions; intelligent but lazier officers are selected for the highest ranks due to their refusal to get bogged down in details.<sup>143</sup> This creates a dual military leadership community split between a more theory-friendly and innovative General Staff and a more pragmatic and laconic Corps of Commanders.<sup>144</sup>

Accordingly, the General Staff and its associated academics at its Academy in Moscow are more willing to extrapolate trends into the future and consider means of optimizing the Russian Armed Forces to meet forecasted needs.<sup>145</sup> In addition to considerations of future warfare, the General Staff also fosters reverence for and rigorous academic study of historical Russian strategists and

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[https://jamestown.org/program/russian-military-thought-on-the-changing-character-of-war-harnessing-technology-in-the-information-age/?mc\\_cid=a40eeced58&mc\\_eid=20a5be0d13](https://jamestown.org/program/russian-military-thought-on-the-changing-character-of-war-harnessing-technology-in-the-information-age/?mc_cid=a40eeced58&mc_eid=20a5be0d13). Accessed 30 October 2021.

<sup>140</sup> 'Замминистра обороны Татьяна Шевцова открыла в Санкт-Петербургском пансионе обновленные робототехнические классы' [Deputy Defence Minister Tatyana Shevtsova opens a updated robotics classes at the St. Petersburg boarding house], Russian Ministry of Defence, 1 September 2021,

[https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12381751@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12381751@egNews). Accessed 1 November

2021. 'На базе Тихоокеанского флота стартовали Всероссийские соревнования по морской робототехнике «Восточный бриз-2021»' [On the base of the Pacific Fleet started the All-Russian competition of marine robotics "Eastern Breeze-2021"], Russian Ministry of Defence, 20 September 2021,

[https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12384757@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12384757@egNews). Accessed 24 January 2022.

<sup>141</sup> 'В Киргизии на учении «Рубеж-2021» были опробованы новые алгоритмы совместных действий' [New algorithms of joint actions tested in the exercise "Rubezh-2021" in Kyrgyzstan], Russian Ministry of Defence, 9 September 2021,

[https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12383082@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12383082@egNews). Accessed 1 November 2021.

<sup>142</sup> E.g. Aleksandr Tikhonov, 'Новые подходы к подготовке войск и сил' [New approaches to the training of troops and forces], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 14 December 2020, <http://redstar.ru/novye-podhody-k-podgotovke-vojsk-i-sil/>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>143</sup> Henrik Bering, 'The perfect officer', Hoover Institution Press: *Policy Review*, Issue 168, 2011, p 51.

<sup>144</sup> This division is observable in the public biographies of Russian officers: many of the officers with the highest ranks feature a continuous elevation of combat commands whereas some prevalent military thinkers served primarily on staff duty after only a couple of years in the officer corps. Grau & Bartles, p 13-14. Daivis Petraitis, 'Russian Military Peculiarities', Lecture at the Baltic Defence College, Tartu, Estonia, 22 October 2021.

<sup>145</sup> Svechin, p 212. 'В Военной академии ГШ ВС РФ завершается конкурс работ по общим проблемам войны и мира, а также формам и способам вооруженной борьбы будущего' [At the Military academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation the competition of works on the general problems of war and peace as well as the forms and methods of armed struggle of the future is completed], Russian Ministry of Defence, 7 March 2016,

[https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12089132@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12089132@egNews). Accessed 2 April 2022.

their potential implications for the future.<sup>146</sup>

Against the General Staff's will to modernise, a Corps of Commanders, consisting of the officers who command units as opposed to making plans, maintains a conservative ethos of tradition and technical skills manifested in rote learning via lessons,<sup>147</sup> tasks,<sup>148</sup> and courses<sup>149</sup> instilling military science by rote learning<sup>150</sup> and operational art by experience.<sup>151</sup> This is no longer the blunt division between so-called 'Prussian' and 'Russian' schools (the former focusing on precise drills and the latter on the supposedly distinctly Slavic way of war) of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries<sup>152</sup> but does reflect a basic dichotomy of Russian military outlook: the General Staff seeks innovation which the services implement through the prism of military tradition. Russian military tradition itself adheres most closely to hagiographies of historical heroes<sup>153</sup> (especially of the Second World War<sup>154</sup>); preserving legends of the bravery and heroism of

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<sup>146</sup> E.g. 'В Военном университете Минобороны России пройдет межвузовская научная конференция «Военно-географические воззрения Д.А. Милютина и геополитические приоритеты России в современных условиях»' [The Military university of the Ministry of defence of Russia will host an interuniversity scientific conference on the "Military-geographical views of D.A. Milyutin and Russia's geopolitical priorities in modern conditions"], Russian Ministry of Defence, 22 June 2016, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12088341@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12088341@egNews). Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>147</sup> Занятия (*zanyatiya*)

<sup>148</sup> Задач (*zadach*)

<sup>149</sup> Курсы (*kursy*)

<sup>150</sup> Viktor Khudoleev, 'В предельно напряжённом ритме' [In an extremely intense rhythm], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 27 November 2020, <http://redstar.ru/v-predelno-napryazhyonnom-ritme/>. Accessed 4 January 2022.

<sup>151</sup> L. Timurov, 'Двустороннее бригадное тактическое учение' [Bilateral brigade tactical exercise], *Armeyskiy Sbornik*, 6 October 2020, <https://army.ric.mil.ru/Stati/item/272193>. Accessed 5 November 2021.

<sup>152</sup> Alexander Bitis, *Russia and the eastern question: army, government, and society, 1815-1833*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p 36-97. Jacob W. Kipp, 'The Zapad-2013 strategic exercise and the function of such exercises in the Soviet Union and Russia', *Russia's Zapad 2013 military exercise: lessons for Baltic regional security*, Washington, DC: Jamestown Foundation, 2015, p 78-79.

<sup>153</sup> Oleg Pochinyuk, 'Устраняя «белое пятно»', Eliminating the "white spot", *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 6 October 2021, <http://redstar.ru/ustranyaya-beloe-pyatno/>. Accessed 5 November 2021. 'Шойгу поручил включить фильм о летчике Пешкове в перечень обязательных к просмотру в ВС РФ' [Shoigu instructed to include a film about pilot Peshkov in the list of mandatory viewing in the Russian Armed Forces], *TASS*, 9 November 2021, <https://tass.ru/kultura/12869975>. Accessed 11 November 2021.

<sup>154</sup> Known in Russian as the 'Great Patriotic War'. In 2020 – the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war – 1,860 of 2,514 (74%) references to the history of wars found in Russian government publications were to World War II. Data derived from dissertation database.

individual units,<sup>155</sup> militaristic cultural groups,<sup>156</sup> and talismans of military life;<sup>157</sup> and a general reverence for history<sup>158</sup> and geography.<sup>159</sup> When writing recommendations for reforms, the Corps of Commanders generally advocates augmenting readiness by easing legal restrictions upon mobilization and ensuring that non-military assets can be integrated into military operational

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<sup>155</sup> E.g. 'На территории музейного комплекса «Дорога памяти» и в Главном храме ВС РФ состоялись праздничные мероприятия в честь празднования 471-й годовщины создания Дня Сухопутных войск' [On the territory of the museum complex "Way of memory" and in the Main Church of the Russian Armed Forces festive events were held in honour of the 471<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the creation of the Day of the Ground Forces], Russian Ministry of Defence, 2 October 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12386648@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12386648@egNews). Accessed 5 November 2021.

<sup>156</sup> E.g. the Cossacks. 'В Санкт-Петербурге состоялась совместная конференция на тему вступления казаков в состав БАРСа' [A conference was held in St. Petersburg on the theme of entry of the Cossacks into the BARS], Russian Ministry of Defence, 2 September 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12381922@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12381922@egNews). Accessed 1 November 2021. 'Военные комиссариаты Курской, Воронежской и Белгородской областей начали призывать казаков в первую «казачью» роту общевойсковой армии ЗВО' [Military commissions of Kursk, Voronezh, and Belgorod Oblasts start recruitment of Cossacks into the first "Cossack" company of the combined arms army of the Western Military District], Russian Ministry of Defence, 6 November 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12392294@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12392294@egNews). Accessed 8 November 2021. Or the Military Hunting Society: Andrey Gavrilenko, 'Охота как подспорье боевой и физической подготовки', [Hunting as an aid to combat and physical training] *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 13 October 2021, <http://redstar.ru/101233-2/>. Accessed 5 November 2021. Also various military organizations promoting the arts generally dating from the 1920s. 'В Минобороны России подвели итоги Всероссийского открытого конкурса драматургов «Сила Слова»' [At the Ministry of Defence the results of the All-Russian open competition of playwrights "Power of the Word" were summed up], Russian Ministry of Defence, 23 September 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12385349@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12385349@egNews). Accessed 24 January 2022.

<sup>157</sup> E.g. 'В филиале Центрального военно-морского музея «Подводная лодка Д-2 „Народоволец»» работает выставка, посвященная истории тельняшки' [In the branch of the Central Navy Museum "Submarine D-2 Narodovolets" there is an exhibition dedicated to the history of the *tel'nyashka* (Navy striped shirt)], Russian Ministry of Defence, 7 October 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12387468@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12387468@egNews). Accessed 5 November 2021.

<sup>158</sup> 'Командование Воздушно-десантных войск отметило 80-ю годовщину со дня образования' [Command of the Airborne Troops celebrated the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its formation], Russian Ministry of Defence, 4 September 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12382349@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12382349@egNews). Accessed 1 November 2021. Admiral Nikolay Yevmenov, 'Поздравление Главнокомандующего ВМФ России с Днём моряка-надводника и 325-й годовщиной основания Российского регулярного флота' [Congratulations of the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Navy on the Day of the Sailor and 325<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Russian regular fleet], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 29 October 2021, <http://redstar.ru/pozdravlenie-glavnokomanduyushhego-vmf-rossii-s-dnyom-moryaka-nadvodnika-i-325-j-godovshhinoj-osnovaniya-rossijskogo-regulyarnogo-flota/>. Accessed 5 November 2021. Colonel Aleksandr Gordov & Major-General Sergey Smolinskiy, 'Материально-техническое обеспечение — основа передового присутствия войск (сил) за пределами национальной территории' [Logistic Support as the Basis of Forward Troop/Force Presence outside National Territory], *Voennaya Mysl'*, Issue 12, 2021, p 83-91.

<sup>159</sup> 'В Главном командовании Сухопутных войск идет подготовка к ежегодной просветительской акции «Географический диктант»' [The Main Command of the Ground Forces undergoes preparations for the annual educational campaign "Geographic Dictation"], Russian Ministry of Defence, 8 November 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12392697@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12392697@egNews). Accessed 10 November 2021.

contingencies as smoothly as possible.<sup>160</sup>

Of foundational importance to the Corps of Commanders is the ability to permanently maintain certain key factors necessary for waging large-scale War,<sup>161</sup> especially after the possibility of an initial surprise strike.<sup>162</sup> Josef Stalin listed these factors in 1942 as:

Strength of the rear, morale of the army, quantity and quality of divisions, equipment of the army, organising ability of the commanding staff of the army.<sup>163</sup>

Any reform seen as potentially imperilling the capacity to permanently maintain an edge in these factors requires substantial explanation for why the risk must be taken. Conversely, 21<sup>st</sup>-century<sup>164</sup> reforms designed to increase total military capabilities need only be shown to not damage readiness or facilitate preparations for mobilisation.<sup>165</sup>

General Staff thinkers possess sufficient political capital to push back on arguments for responding to threats by simply bulking up capabilities and order of battle, arguing for both improvements in quality and even for certain forms of arms control.<sup>166</sup> Under Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) civilian leadership has taken a more sparing approach to intervention in

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<sup>160</sup> Grau & Bartles, p 14-16. Rear-Admiral Mikhail A. Neupokoev, 'Векторы развития морской деятельности России (о разработке и корректировке нормативных правовых актов в области морской деятельности)' [The Development Vectors of Naval Activity in Russia (on Furthering and Adjusting Normative Legal Acts in the Area of Naval Activity)], *Voennaya Mysl'*, No 12, 2021, p 6-11.

<sup>161</sup> Golts, p 277.

<sup>162</sup> Jeffrey H. Michaels, 'The *Barbarossa* mentality and the Russian concept of war in the 21<sup>st</sup> century', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 33:4, 2020, p 535-541. Gordov & Smolinskiy, p 91-93.

<sup>163</sup> I.V. Stalin, 'Приказ народного комиссара обороны СССР № 55', [Order of the People's Commissar of Defence of the USSR No 55], Originally published in *Pravda*, 23 February 1942. Reprinted in I.V. Stalin, *Сочинения* [Works] Vol 15, Moscow: Pisatel', 1997, p 94. Reproduced at [https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/stalin/t15/t15\\_19.htm](https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/stalin/t15/t15_19.htm). Accessed 24 January 2022.

<sup>164</sup> In the Soviet era, the emphasis was directed less to increasing capabilities than to maintaining them, frequently in comparison to that supposedly upheld during the Second World War. Lieutenant-General B.S. Попов, 'Активная жизненная позиция военнослужащего и воинская дисциплина' [Active life of the position of a serviceman and military discipline], *Voennaya Mysl'*, Issue 11, 1988, p 3-10.

<sup>165</sup> E.g. 'В ЮВО заключили первые контракты с гражданами, желающими пополнить подразделения боевого армейского резерва страны' [In the Southern Military District were signed the first contracts by citizens wishing to join the combat army reserve of the country], Russian Ministry of Defence, 16 September 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12384329@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12384329@egNews). Accessed 24 January 2022.

<sup>166</sup> Admiral Igor Kasatonov, 'Вспомнить уроки прошлого (к 50-летию начала советско-американских переговоров по предотвращению инцидентов на море)' [Remember the lessons of history (on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of Soviet-American negotiations on the prevention of incidents at sea)], *Voennaya Mysl'*, Issue 11, 2021, p 7-8.

the debates among vying priorities for modernisation, especially compared to his predecessor Anatoliy Serdyukov. When the MOD civilians advocate one side of a policy debate, they generally act on behalf of the Kremlin's decisions, which in turn typically reflect the outcomes of biannual military development meetings chaired by Putin himself and typically held in Sochi.<sup>167</sup>

The General Staff enjoyed considerably greater clout than the Corps of Commanders after the collapse of the Soviet Union in no small part because the administrative legacy of the Soviet garrison state bequeathed the nascent Russian Federation a bloated officer corps with an insufficient budget.<sup>168</sup> This relative influence of the General Staff over the Corps of Commanders and the individual service leaderships - the Corps' traditional bastion of authority - culminated in the post-2008 New Look reforms excising the services from wartime command, investing this authority in joint strategic commands (OSKs).<sup>169</sup> Nevertheless, as part of this trade-off, the General Staff Central Command Post was deactivated in favour of the NTsUO described above,<sup>170</sup> reducing some General Staff C2 authority but solidifying the Russian Armed Forces as the central component of the Kremlin's tools for addressing perceived security challenges.

These reforms produced a third smaller but ascendant faction advocating deployment capability over longer-term General Staff thought and high-volume Corps of Commander capability. The OSK commanders almost universally have experience of command in the Russian operation in Syria and now consider operational deployment capability as a goal equivalent to both modernisation

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<sup>167</sup> A notable recent example has been the MOD leadership's pronouncement in favour of developing robotics and artificial intelligence for C2 improvement purposes endorsed personally and publicly by both Shoigu and Putin. 'Шойгу: создаваемая в РФ новая система управления войсками превзойдет зарубежные аналоги' [Shoigu: we develop in the Russian Federation a new system of command-and-control of forces surpassing foreign analogues], TASS, 4 December 2020, <https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/10171101>. Accessed 30 January 2022. 'Министр обороны России генерал армии Сергей Шойгу провел селекторное совещание с руководящим составом Вооруженных Сил' [Defence Minister of Russia Army General Sergey Shoigu held a conference call with the leadership of the Armed Forces], Russian Ministry of Defence, 9 November 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12392797@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12392797@egNews). Accessed 30 January 2022. Kremlin 2021k.

<sup>168</sup> Charles Bartles, 'Factors influencing Russian force modernization', *Current Russia military affairs: assessing and countering Russian strategy, operational planning, and modernization*, Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2018, p 40.

<sup>169</sup> Whisler, p 243-244.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, p 249.

and performance of training quotas,<sup>171</sup> suggesting an increased interest in responding to real-world contingencies as opposed to the main body of the armed forces simply being a latent aspect of the international system. Nevertheless, at least until the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, these general officers with combat experience were a small but illustrious minority. To the extent that this new faction has a coherent interest, it appears to be toward facilitating pragmatic flexibility in training and everyday practice<sup>172</sup> as befits a force that may be called upon to undertake an operation at any time, including peacetime.

### Evolution of Thought on Conflict

Russian Chief of the General Staff General Valeriy Gerasimov unsurprisingly characterises the broad transition in Russia's strategic environment similarly to how the Kremlin does. Curiously, this has involved generally a focus more on the understanding the strategic causes of conflict than on their actual conduct. Speaking shortly after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, Gerasimov claimed:

‘The destruction of the bipolar system of the world order, caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union, did not make the world safer. Having retained and increased its potential, the United States cannot reconcile itself to the formation of new centres of power, since it positions itself as the only international relations actor that has the right to establish the rules of the game.’<sup>173</sup>

<sup>171</sup> ‘Командующий войсками ЮВО провел заседание Военного совета’ [Commander of forces of the Southern Military District held a meeting of the Military council], Russian Ministry of Defence, 13 November 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12393611@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12393611@egNews). Accessed 30 January 2022.

<sup>172</sup> E.g. Vladimir Pylaev, ‘Генерал-лейтенант Геннадий ЖИДКО: «В основе учёбы – суворовские принципы и боевой опыт»’ [Lieutenant-General Gennadiy Zhidko: “The bases of training are the principles of Suvorov and military experience”], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 3 June 2020, <http://redstar.ru/general-lejtenant-gennadij-zhidko-v-osnove-uchyoby-suvorovskie-printsipy-i-boevoj-opyt/>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

‘Командующий войсками ЮВО обсудил с Полномочным представителем Президента Российской Федерации в ЮФО реализацию федерального проекта БАРС-2021’ [Commander of forces of the Southern Military District discussed with the Plenipotentiary representative of the President of the Russian Federation in the Southern Federal District the realisation of the federal project BARS-2021], Russian Ministry of Defence, 6 August 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12375891@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12375891@egNews). Accessed 2 April 2022. Yuriy Borodin, ‘В авангарде боевой подготовки войск и сил’ [In the vanguard of military preparations of troops and forces], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 8 November 2021, <http://redstar.ru/v-avangarde-boevoj-podgotovki-vojsk-i-sil/>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>173</sup> Speech of Valeriy Gerasimov to the Moscow Conference on International Security, Russian Ministry of Defence, 23 May 2014, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11929743%40egNews&m=](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11929743%40egNews&m=). Accessed 22 April 2022.



Proceeding to a list of conflicts the US and NATO have started around the world from Yugoslavia to Iraq to Libya as well as the ability to perpetrate colour revolutions to eliminate unfriendly governments, Gerasimov evinced more a concern about Western, especially US, destabilising behaviour than about appropriate countermeasures. A year later, addressing the Collegium of the Ministry of Defence, Gerasimov highlighted simply the ability to defeat US capabilities designed to achieve a 'position of strength'<sup>174</sup> as the key determinant in protecting Russia from US and NATO 'military superiority'.<sup>175</sup> This focus on stopping the potential exhibiting of Western aggression against Russia puts a heavy priority on the modernisation of strategic deterrence (nuclear) forces.<sup>176</sup> This strategy-heavy theme characterises most of Gerasimov's statements: though he acknowledges that specifically non-military features of warfare are becoming more central to how the West connives to preserve its global hegemony,<sup>177</sup> he speaks relatively seldomly about how the Russian Armed Forces should adapt to the challenges of blending war and peace<sup>178</sup> beyond greater inter-security-bureaucracy cooperation.<sup>179</sup> Perhaps the only time he spoke about something more tangible in the process was on the reasoning for the creation of the NTsUO as a mechanism for reducing the 'cumbersome information collection system up to now', replacing it with a system specifically designed to allow the duty general to report directly to him '20-25 times a day' on irregularities to be addressed.<sup>180</sup> This suggests that despite the high-level strategic themes of Gerasimov's public comments, he too is largely consumed

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<sup>174</sup> Позиция силы (*positsiya sily*)

<sup>175</sup> Военное превосходство (*voennoe prevoskhodstvo*)

<sup>176</sup> 'Коллегия Минобороны: меры по развитию Вооруженных Сил позволят не допустить военного превосходства США и НАТО над Россией' [Collegium of the Ministry of defence: measures to develop the Armed Forces will prevent the military superiority of the USA and NATO over Russia], Russian Ministry of Defence, 30 January 2015, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12006755@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12006755@egNews). Accessed 22 April 2022.

<sup>177</sup> 'Векторы развития военной стратегии' [Vectors of the development of military strategy], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 4 March 2019, <http://redstar.ru/vektory-razvitiya-voennoj-strategii/>. Accessed 22 April 2022.

<sup>178</sup> Valeriy Gerasimov, 'Мир на гранях войны' [Peace on the edges of war], *VPK*, 13 March 2017, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/35591>. Accessed 23 April 2022.

<sup>179</sup> Valeriy Gerasimov, 'Генеральный штаб и оборона страны' [The General staff and defence of the country], *VPK*, 3 February 2014, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/18998>. Accessed 23 April 2022.

<sup>180</sup> 'Начальник российского Генштаба рассказал журналистам о задачах и роли Национального центра по управлению обороной РФ' [Chief of the Russian General Staff told journalists about the goals and roles of the National centre for the management of defence of the Russian Federation], Russian Ministry of Defence, 1 November 2014, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11998309@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11998309@egNews). Accessed 22 April 2022.

with administrative efficiencies on a daily basis rather than reimagining the nature of warfighting.

Even if Gerasimov is not personally at the forefront of reimagining the future of conflict, he and the General Staff work closely with such intellectuals, especially those of the Centre for Military-Strategic Research of the General Staff (TsVSI GS<sup>181</sup>). This research centre directly within the General Staff evaluates the likely nature of future conflict, including how precision weapons are changing the definition of war and peace and how environmental challenges will create new means by which external forces can be exploited by external actors.<sup>182</sup> Yet for as revolutionary of observations by this corps of experts may be, both bureaucratic opportunities and constraints influenced the trajectory of these concepts' implementation over the years surveyed.

Downsizing the bulge of redundant management and skeleton units during the so-called New Look reforms after 2008<sup>183</sup> offered civilian oversight of the Armed Forces considerable incentive to listen to military intellectuals' proposals for a more precision-oriented light-footprint force structure. Major-General Vladimir Slipchenko characterized this evolution as 'sixth generation war' in observation of the US-led Operation Desert Storm in 1991.<sup>184</sup>

Russian military theorists see current trends in military threats as being a proliferation of nuclear and missile technologies and the reduction of their threshold for usage in conflict, the deployment of weapons in space, the loss of the state's monopoly on the use of military force, and the emergence of private military companies.<sup>185</sup> In addition, the increasing rapidity with which weapons

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<sup>181</sup> Russian acronym for Центр военно-стратегических исследований генерального штаба (*Tsentr voenno-strategicheskikh issledovaniy general'nogo shtaba*)

<sup>182</sup> E.g. Sergey Chekinov & Sergey Bogdanov, 'Асимметричные действия по обеспечению военной безопасности России' [Asymmetric activities to ensure the military security of Russia], *Voennaya Mysl'*, Issue 3, 2010, p 13-22. Sergey Chekinov & Sergey Bogdanov, 'A forecast for future wars: meditations on what they will look like', *Voennaya Mysl'*, Issue 4, 2015, p 90-98, translated by East View.

<sup>183</sup> Mikhail Barabanov, 'Changing the force and moving forward after Georgia', *Brothers Armed: Military Aspects of the Crisis in Ukraine*, Minneapolis: East View Press, 2014, p 92-119. Golts, p 268.

<sup>184</sup> Major-General Vladimir Slipchenko, *Война будущего* [Future war], Moscow: Moskovskiy Obschestvennyy Nauchnyy Fond, 1999. Jānis Bērziņš, 'The Theory and Practice of New Generation Warfare: The Case of Ukraine and Syria', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 33:3, 2020, p 358-368.

<sup>185</sup> Dmitriy Pavlov & Vladimir Sizlov, "Тенденции изменения угроз военной безопасности Российской Федерации" [Trends in the transformation of threats to the military security of the Russian Federation], *Voennaya Mysl'*, Issue 11, 2021, p 20. Colonel Sergey Mesheryakov, Colonel Maksut Kayralapov, & Aleksey



systems can be launched and delivered to their targets, the proliferation of mobile platforms for electronic and laser warfare, and the vulnerability of strategic targets to missile strikes from the very start of campaigns not only mandates needs for greater readiness<sup>186</sup> but also seems to flatten the differences between the operational and tactical levels of warfare.<sup>187</sup>

Unlike the Kremlin and MID, the Russian Armed Forces seem hesitant to muddle the fundamentally materialist nature of their science. Though some officers ponder how strictly idealist forces now impact the battlefield,<sup>188</sup> mainstream thinking continues to explain the necessity of building capabilities in strictly materialist terms.<sup>189</sup> Even if information flows are now perceived as a threat to military security due to their ability to radicalize populations, the ‘military solution’ to this problem largely remains use of military force according to long-established military science-determined tactics.

The organisational learning mechanism for the Russian Armed Forces, i.e. the translation of General Staff concepts into Russian training, is the military exercise.<sup>190</sup> Russian military publications are replete with stories of how mid-ranking officers implement lessons from exercises.<sup>191</sup> Commanders also cite exercises as opportunities for practicing combined-arms tactics to illustrate how

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Sinikov, ‘Воздушно-космические силы в стратегическом сдерживании: необходимость и достаточность’ [Aerospace forces in strategic deterrence: necessity and sufficiency], *Voennaya Mysl*, Issue 11, 2021, p 23.

<sup>186</sup> Colonel Oleg Ermolin, ‘Развитие форм применения и способов действий авиационных формирований’ [Development of Forms of Applying and Methods of Operation of Air Force Formations], *Voennaya Mysl*, Issue 11, 2021, p 29-35.

<sup>187</sup> Pavlov & Sizlov, p 20.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid, p 17.

<sup>189</sup> E.g. Yuriy Starobudtsev, Lieutenant-Colonel Pavel Zakalkin, & Major Sergey Ivanov, ‘The multifactor conflict in cyberspace as a prerequisite for forming a new armed forces service’, *Voennaya Mysl*, Issue 12, 2021, p 126-135.

<sup>190</sup> Whisler, pp 243, 247, 250.

<sup>191</sup> Yuriy Borodin, ‘Настрой у специалистов тыла – всегда боевой’ [Attitude of rear specialists is always for the fight], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 8 September 2021, <http://redstar.ru/nastroj-u-spetsialistov-tyla-vsegda-boevoy/>. Accessed 1 November 2021.

concepts developed both internally<sup>192</sup> and by partners abroad<sup>193</sup> can be implemented. Major exercises can also set the tone for the debate about the next steps of force modernisation; for example, because of the effectiveness of helicopters facilitating rapid manoeuvres around an enemy fortified position during *Kavkaz-2020*,<sup>194</sup> the Russian MOD soon thereafter decided to invest in creating more such units.<sup>195</sup>

### Perception of and Interaction with the International System

In addition to training new concepts, the Russian Armed Forces more occasionally use exercises to communicate strategic resolve,<sup>196</sup> especially during times of crisis.<sup>197</sup> This should not be overinterpreted: most exercises fulfil bureaucratic need as opposed to strategic signalling desire as demonstrated by

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<sup>192</sup> 'Командующий войсками ЮВО рассказал об исследовательской тематике тактических учений' [Commander of the Southern Military District spoke about the research topics of tactical exercises], Russian Ministry of Defence, 8 November 2021,

[https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12392655@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12392655@egNews). Accessed 10 November 2021. 'Командующий войсками ЮВО рассказал о новшествах в подготовке командиров тактического звена' [Commander of the Southern Military District talked about innovations in the training of tactical level commanders], Russian Ministry of Defence, 8 November 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12392656@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12392656@egNews). Accessed 10 November 2021.

<sup>193</sup> 'По оценке командующего войсками ЮВО в процессе боевой учебы офицеры округа научились проявлять смекалку при выборе способа поражения целей' [According to Commander of the Southern Military District in the process of combat training officers of the district learned to be smart when choosing a method of hitting targets], Russian Ministry of Defence, 8 November 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12392652@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12392652@egNews). Accessed 10 November 2021.

<sup>194</sup> 'Военнослужащие из России и Армении нанесли главный удар по «противнику» на учениях «Кавказ»' [Aservicemen from Russia and Armenia dealt the main blow to the "opponent" at the exercises "Kavkaz"], Russian Ministry of Defence, 25 September 2020, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12316232@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12316232@egNews). Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>195</sup> 'В составе десантных войск увеличат число маневренных формирований' [The number of manoeuvre formations will increase in the landing troops], *Izvestiya*, 18 October 2020, <https://iz.ru/1075289/2020-10-18/v-sostave-desantnykh-voisk-uvelichat-chislo-manevrennykh-formirovaniy>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>196</sup> For example, the Russian base in Tajikistan conducted more than 20 unscheduled exercises in 2021 in response to the collapse of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. 'Центральный военный округ организовал более 20 учений провели в 2021 году в Таджикистане внепланово на фоне ситуации в Афганистане' [The Central Military District organized more than 20 exercises held in 2021 in Tajikistan on an unscheduled basis amid the situation in Afghanistan], Russian Ministry of Defence, 8 November 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12392630@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12392630@egNews). Accessed 10 November 2021. Retired Soviet officers have also commented on the historical strategic significance of certain exercises. E.g. Valentin Varennikov, *Nepovtorimoe* [Unrepeatable], Book 4, 2001, p 37. <https://litrus.net/book/read/1932?p=37>. Accessed 10 November 2021.

<sup>197</sup> Mesheryakov, Kayralapov, & Sinikov, p 27.

the highly regimented regularity of these activities,<sup>198</sup> especially international ones.

At large, the Russian Armed Forces harbours an especially paranoid view of foreign intentions, expecting enemies to launch rapid strikes against them requiring pre-emptive ripostes.<sup>199</sup> Unlike in the Soviet era when a constant chorus of the imperialist West developing weapons that in turn forced the Socialist countries to arm themselves in defence,<sup>200</sup> the modern Russian Armed Forces are not ashamed to field new weapons systems first such as hypersonic missiles.<sup>201</sup> Furthermore, military theory on strategic deterrence has moved to an overt acceptance that the Russian Armed Forces must be ready to intimidate, restrict, and coerce to prevent escalation against the Russian Federation and stop outside forces from intervening in Russian military missions.<sup>202</sup>

Also unlike the Soviet era, the Russian military leadership perceives the state-centric international system as a necessary tool of stability that might easily be shattered by attacks from other states (especially Western ones) and by the opportunists of ‘terrorists’ and ‘extremists’ that would seek the violent re-ordering of their region if given the chance by state weakness.<sup>203</sup> Soviet military thinkers castigated the West as a collection of imperialist rear guards propping up cronies against the rising tide of the peace-loving naturally Socialist proletariat: if the imperialists and cronies could be stopped, the power of the

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<sup>198</sup> Including during times of large-scale operational deployments. Nicholas J. Myers, ‘New Limits to Russian Conventional Power’, *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 9 March 2022, <https://jamestown.org/program/new-limits-to-russian-conventional-power/>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>199</sup> Vyacheslav Kruglov & Aleksey Shubin, ‘О возрастающем значении упреждения противника в действиях’ [On the increasing importance of preempting adversary actions], *Voennaya Mysl*, Issue 12, 2021, p 27-34.

<sup>200</sup> Colonel-General N.F. Kizyun, ‘Военные вопросы в решениях партийных конференций’ [Military questions in the decisions of party conferences], *Voennaya Mysl*, Issue 4, 1988, p 3-12. ‘Principles and content of military strategy’, *The Voroshilov lectures: materials from the Soviet General Staff Academy*, ed. Ghulam Dastagir Wardak & Graham Hall Turbiville, Jr., Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1989, p 55-92.

<sup>201</sup> Mikhail Stepshin & Andrey Anikonov, ‘Развитие вооружения, военной и специальной техники и их влияние на характер будущих войн’ [Progress in weapons, special and military hardware and their effect on the nature of future warfare], *Voennaya Mysl*, Issue 12, 2021, p 37.

<sup>202</sup> Mesheryakov, Kayralapov, & Sinikov, p 24.

<sup>203</sup> Sergey Afansyev, ‘Деструктивное воздействие терроризма на региональную безопасность’ [The destructive impact of terrorism on regional security], Russian Ministry of Defence, 27 April 2016, <https://mil.ru/pubart.htm?id=12084066@cmsArticle>. Accessed 4 January 2022.

people would create peace.<sup>204</sup> Now, almost the exact opposite theory holds: without the state to bring order to the people, terrorists and extremists enabled by Western malefactors would be empowered to fight an endless civil war.<sup>205</sup> Libya is typically the poster child of a state destroyed by this impulse,<sup>206</sup> Syria of one saved because Russia reinforced the state.<sup>207</sup> Though the Kremlin and MID may engage in philosophical sophistry to explain why any favoured state is 'democratic', Russian military thinkers rarely bother.

However, if the Russian Armed Forces are still consciously geared toward the fighting of 'war', they are increasingly actually occupied by the conducting of 'operations'<sup>208</sup> such as those in Syria and as of 2022 Ukraine. Operations need not occur during wartime and are simply the employment of armed force to defeat an enemy through a combination of battles, strikes, and manoeuvre according to a single plan.<sup>209</sup> Unlike the Kremlin's cultivated theory of the international system and the settling of contradictions or the military doctrine's lengthy definition of 'war', 'operations' merely have military goals to be accomplished.<sup>210</sup> This somewhat more nihilistic view of the component of

<sup>204</sup> E.g. Lieutenant-General D.A. Volkogonov, 'Военные вопросы в Программе КПСС' [Military questions in the Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union], *Voennaya Mysl'*, Issue 5, 1986, p 3-15. Colonel E.I. Polavskiy and Captain N.N. Vinogradov, 'Американская доктрина неоглобализма' [The American doctrine of neoglobalism], *Voennaya Mysl'*, Issue 5, 1986, p 72-80. Colonel-General I.V. Sredin, 'Проблема войны и мира в современной идеологической борьбе' [The problem of war and peace in modern ideological struggle], Issue 7, 1986, p 3-13. General A.D. Lizichev, 'Всепобеждающие идеи Октября' [All-conquering ideas of October], *Voennaya Mysl'*, Issue 11, 1987, p 3-15.

<sup>205</sup> 'Глава российского Генштаба генерал армии Валерий Герасимов встретился с иностранными военными атташе' [Chief of the Russian General Staff Army General Valeriy Gerasimov meets with foreign military attaches], Russian Ministry of Defence, 10 December 2014, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12003627@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12003627@egNews). Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>206</sup> 'О военных аспектах «цветных» революций «на полях» III Московской конференции выступил начальник Главного оперативного управления Генштаба Вооруженных Сил РФ генерал-полковник Владимир Зарудницкий' [Chief of the Main operational department of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation Colonel-General Vladimir Zarudnitskiy talked on the military aspects of "colour" revolutions "on the sidelines" of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Moscow conference], Russian Ministry of Defence, 23 May 2014, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11929774@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11929774@egNews). Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>207</sup> 'Выступление начальника Генштаба ВС РФ генерала армии Валерия Герасимова на конференции MCIS-2016. «Вооруженные Силы Российской Федерации и борьба с международным терроризмом»' [Speech of the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation Army General Valeriy Gerasimov at the conference Moscow Conference on International Security-2016 "The Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and the fight with international terrorism"], Russian Ministry of Defence, 27 April 2016, <https://mil.ru/pubart.htm?id=12084034@cmsArticle>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>208</sup> 'Операция' (*operatsiya*)

<sup>209</sup> 'Операция' [Operation], Russian Ministry of Defence, <https://encyclopedia.mil.ru/encyclopedia/dictionary/details.htm?id=7674@morfDictionary>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

conflict offers flexibility to the politicians in command but can complicate rationalising their decisions to the troops comprising the operation.

However, there is some cultural ground for pushback against this Kremlin differentiation: as with most other militaries, the Russian Armed Forces devote considerable study to the German strategic theorist Carl von Clausewitz. The seminal phrase of Clausewitz's book *Vom Kriege* rendered in English as 'war is a continuation of politics<sup>211</sup> / policy<sup>212</sup> by other means' connotes a notion that war is an alternative means of conducting politics. The Russian translation of this phrase uses the Slavic instrumental case,<sup>213</sup> implying that whenever politics employs 'other means' or violence it becomes 'war'. This more flexible understanding has left the Russian military and the broader Russian defence analyst community with an exceptionally broad literature dealing with various subsets of 'war' that the Kremlin would claim could be used in isolated 'operations'. The difference here perhaps ultimately lies in the cultural divide between the Clausewitz-informed military and the ISC-dominated Kremlin.

### Self-Perception

The Armed Forces and Ministry of Defence also face an existential challenge somewhat more profound than do the Kremlin or the MID. After being continuously prioritized for investment in the Soviet era, the Armed Forces were essentially useless to prevent the dissolution of either the Soviet Empire or even the Soviet Union itself. This has forced Russia's military thinkers to justify why investment in military capabilities remains relevant in an age when conflict is perceived to be increasingly defined by ideas-inspired terrorism and extremism. When Russian military thinkers write about this transformation, they are careful to identify how the Russian Armed Forces remain a necessary part of repulsing

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<sup>211</sup> Beatrice Heuser, *Reading Clausewitz*, Pimlico, 2002, pp 25-27, 40.

<sup>212</sup> Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p 13.

<sup>213</sup> 'Война - продолжение политики иными средствами.' (*Voyna – prodolzhenie politiki inymi sredstvami*). E.g. in Yuriy Kirshin, 'Армия XXI века и гражданский контроль' [The 21st century army and civil control], *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, Issue 45, 2004, <http://militaryarticle.ru/nezavisimoe-voennoe-obozrenie/nvo-2004/16912-armija-xxi-veka-i-grazhdanskij-kontrol>. Accessed 2 April 2022. Georgiy Kolsvanov, 'Военная доктрина не нужна' [Military doctrine is not needed], *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, Issue 10, 30 March 2007, <http://militaryarticle.ru/nezavisimoe-voennoe-obozrenie/nvo-2007/17598-voennaja-doktrina-ne-nuzhna>. Accessed 2 April 2022.

these threats to the state. Senior military leaders offering thoughts on these issues of change in the 21<sup>st</sup> century seems to be cover for allowing more junior officers and affiliated academics to focus on the more mundane details of keeping the Russian Armed Forces capable of responding to all possible contingencies across an enormous landmass spanning eleven time zones within especially complex logistical constraints.

The Russian Armed Forces at large are somewhat resistant to reform, but in the long term not more so than other major armed forces even if they suffered a long lapse of inertia in the first 16 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>214</sup> Nevertheless, the implementation of military reform in the Putin era took place largely during the Medvedev presidency's New Look with intellectually-informed dithering before and minor reversals since.<sup>215</sup> Despite pushes to adopt a more interservice ('joint' in a Western sense) command capability, the Russian Ground Forces continue to dominate all commands and have retrenched their influence in all strategic directions but the Arctic since Putin, Shoigu, and Gerasimov entered their respective positions of power in 2012.<sup>216</sup>

As a conscript force, the Russian Armed Forces do perceive the need to maintain internal motivation especially following the under-performance<sup>217</sup> and heavy political costs<sup>218</sup> of using conscripts in combat in the Chechen Wars. Accordingly, the Russian Armed Forces have cultivated specialised forces of volunteer 'contractors' designed specifically to ensure a greater baseline of morale and performance in combat.<sup>219</sup> The military has also prioritised providing troops with

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<sup>214</sup> David R. Stone, *A Military History of Russia: From Ivan the Terrible to the War in Chechnya*, Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 2006, p 246-247.

<sup>215</sup> Whisler, p 258.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid, p 257.

<sup>217</sup> Joss Meakins, 'The other side of the COIN: the Russians in Chechnya', *Small Wars Journal*, 13 January 2017, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jml/art/the-other-side-of-the-coin-the-russians-in-chechnya>. Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>218</sup> Brenda J. Vallance, 'Russia's mothers – voices of change', *Minerva*, Fall-Winter 2000, p 109.

<sup>219</sup> *The Military Balance*, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2007, p 191. 'Вооруженные силы вдвое нарастят число усиленных батальонов с контрактниками' [The Armed Forces will double the number of reinforced battalions with contractors], *RIA Novosti*, 14 September 2016, <https://ria.ru/20160914/1476912391.html>. Accessed 3 April 2022. General Aleksandr Dvornikov & Colonel Rafail Nasybulin, 'Актуальные направления совершенствования боевой подготовки войск с учетом опыта, полученного в Сирии' [Topical lines of improving combat training of troops based on the experience obtained in Syria], *Voennay Mysl'*, July 2021, p 100-110.



morale boosts during large-scale exercises<sup>220</sup> and assessing servicemen's 'morale' and 'psychological' state when evaluating candidates for billeting.<sup>221</sup> In 2018, the Ministry of Defence also reactivated the military-political directorate designed to indoctrinate servicemen on the justification of their objectives and prevent defections over political differences.<sup>222</sup> Colonel-General Andrey Kartapolov, the officer who led the recreation of the directorate specifically cited looking to Russian traditions such as the Orthodox Church and preventing psychological breakdowns among troops alone could enable state collapse through 'colour revolutions' as his core missions.<sup>223</sup>

As importantly, the Russian Armed Forces do not culturally exist as an embodiment of the state as some militaries do in other countries. With a disreputable past for being the dumping ground of aristocrats trying to rid themselves of troublesome serfs<sup>224</sup> or the children of parents without connections to power in the Soviet Union or Russian Federation,<sup>225</sup> the Russian Armed Forces lack the political capital to oppose other sections of the Russian government. The Russian coups in 1917, 1991, and 1993 all demonstrate that command of the Russian Armed Forces - or at least decisive components of them - are necessary for success but they never seized or held the initiative in these

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<sup>220</sup> E.g. 'Ансамбль песни и пляски Российской армии имени А. В. Александрова выступил перед моряками ТОФ, принимавшими участие в СКШУ «Восток-2014»' [Song and dance ensemble of the Russian army named for A.V. Aleksandrov performed before sailors of the Pacific Fleet who took part in the strategic command-staff exercise "Vostok-2014"], Russian Ministry of Defence, 26 September 2014, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11989896@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11989896@egNews). Accessed 3 April 2022. 'На полигонах ЮВО развернуто около 10 полевых православных храмов и мусульманских мечетей' [At the exercise grounds of the Southern Military District about 10 field Orthodox churches and Muslim mosques were deployed], Russian Ministry of Defence, 12 September 2016, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12095559@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12095559@egNews). Accessed 3 April 2022. 'В рамках ССУ «Запад-2021» состоялся концерт артистов ЦДРА, посвященный Дню танкиста' [As part of the joint strategic exercise "Zapad-2021" artists of the Central House of Arts conducted a concert dedicated to the "Day of the Tankist"], Russian Ministry of Defence, 13 September 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12383795@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12383795@egNews). Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>221</sup> E.g. 'С военнослужащими дальней авиации проведены инструктажи по несению службы в суточных нарядах в новогодние и праздничные дни' [Long-range aviation servicemen were instructed on serving in daily outfits during New Year's and holidays], Russian Ministry of Defence, 30 December 2020, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12332622@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12332622@egNews). Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>222</sup> 'Систему политруков в Вооруженных силах выстроят в три этапа' [The system of political officers in the Armed Forces will be created in three steps], *RIA Novosti*, 5 September 2018, <https://ria.ru/20180905/1527874281.html>. Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>223</sup> Andrey Kartapolov & Oleg Falichev, 'Право первым подняться в атаку' [The right to be the first to attack], *VPK*, 11 September 2018, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/44913>. Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>224</sup> E.g. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 1880, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, ppb 1976, translated by Constance Garnett and Ralph E. Matlaw, p 285.

<sup>225</sup> Eichler 2012.

events.

## Summary

Even after considerable downsizing following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian military remains a large and cumbersome institution that finds large-scale decision implementation difficult even when political pressures on it are strong. If the Kremlin poses a somewhat curious puzzle in its strategy, the Russian Armed Forces are a far more classic case of ‘incrementalist’ bureaucratic politics within which decisions are never synoptic as wholesale reform cannot be implemented given the impossible costs of instantaneous replacement of hardware, doctrine, and mentality.<sup>226</sup>

The institutional battles of the Russian Armed Forces attempt to resolve the modernising instincts of the General Staff with the stoic training legitimacy of the Corps of Commanders, all the while playing to a civilian audience to fund their particular interests for such goals as novel technology, increased reserves, or improved pay. It is difficult to determine to what extent the bureaucratic solutions found and technologies advocated by rival factions of the Russian Armed Forces reflect the product of a genuine internal debate or a concerted attempt to retain favour with ISC-dominated civilian oversight. Nevertheless, the degree to which the military does comply with the Kremlin vision of conflict and yet retains its primacy despite a string of embarrassments since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan suggests that at least some successful political pandering has been undertaken.

Ultimately, the military’s perceptions of the world are subordinated to the terminology and decisions of the Kremlin, intermittently influencing it that future conflict will be conducted in a specific manner but rarely achieving more influence than that. As with the Kremlin, its understanding of its own resources is determined less by a genuine knowledge of its constituents’ motivation than by its ability to provide a certain quantity of resources for hypothetical

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<sup>226</sup> Charles E. Lindblom, ‘The science of “muddling through”’, *Public Administration Review*, 19:2, 1959, p 79-88. Christine Rothmayr Allison & Denis Saint-Martin, ‘Half a century of “muddling”: are we there yet?’, *Policy and Society*, 30:1, 2011, p 1-8.



operations, further insulating political actors in the Kremlin from understanding their forces' motivations.

### The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

'Russia will always reciprocate good feelings for all states, but it will not forgo its rightful place among the world's powers and will not stop working to maintain a political balance. Russia believes that its goals are closely connected with global peace, which is based on respect for law and agreements. It must primarily take care of itself and should only withdraw attention from internal matters to defend its honour and security.'

- Russian Imperial Foreign Minister Nicholas de Giers, 1881<sup>227</sup>

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID<sup>228</sup>) is responsible for executing Russian foreign policy. As with most foreign ministries of the world, it has two types of departments: ones responsible for geographical regions and ones responsible for specific policy issues. Deputy foreign ministers typically oversee multiple of these departments with the foreign minister also responsible for a couple of core offices such as planning, legal, and information.<sup>229</sup> Under Article 83 of the Russian Constitution, the President directly appoints the Minister of Foreign Affairs along with the other Cabinet positions responsible for security forces<sup>230</sup> as though the MID were a security bureaucracy. Though in the 1990s, President Boris Yeltsin named politicians as Foreign Ministers, since Putin's rise to the Presidency, the Russian Foreign Minister has always been a professional diplomat.

Like the Russian military, the MID has two predominant factions competing for influence and an emerging - albeit more unwanted - third force which may emerge as another pole. The traditionally dominant faction consists of the professionals who, like many of their foreign counterparts, harbour dreams of

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<sup>227</sup> Quoted by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, 'Выступление Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на торжественном собрании по случаю Дня дипломатического работника, Москва' [Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's remarks at a ceremony on the occasion of Diplomats' Day, Moscow], MID, 8 February 2018, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3062887](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3062887). Accessed 25 October 2021.

<sup>228</sup> The Russian acronym for the bureaucracy: Министерство иностранных дел (Ministry of foreign affairs)

<sup>229</sup> Eric Shiraev, *Russian Government and Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p 260-261.

<sup>230</sup> 'Конституция Российской Федерации' [Constitution of the Russian Federation], as amended 3 July 2020, <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/constitution/>. Accessed 22 April 2022.

becoming an Ambassador as their highest ambition. Anchored around the Department of Information and Press, the second faction is principally interested in using Russian diplomacy as a basis for expressing the Russian perspective on international affairs. Though mostly comprised of career diplomats, this second faction attaches itself much less to the niceties associated with historical diplomacy and more to the principles of dominating the information space. The emerging third faction consists of non-career diplomats, typically ISC professionals, parachuted into typically deputy foreign ministerial positions. This final faction is quite small but represents a threat to the bureaucratic integrity of a ministry where tenures are quite long and generational turnover slow.

As the MID itself possesses little actual power in and of itself, its factional divides are not as high-profile or overt as those of the Russian Armed Forces. By numbers, the first faction maintains an overwhelming majority. By temperament, the second represents the greatest harmonisation of the potential instruments of the MID in Russian statecraft with the Kremlin perception of non-armed conflict. By connection and influence, the third - however negligible in size - possesses arguably the greatest capacity to lead Russian policy decisions from within the MID through cross-departmental influence. The first faction lacks a collective figurehead leader as most diplomats seek this ideal. Maria Zakharova, the official Russian MID spokesperson since 2015, is clearly the central figure of the second faction. Oleg Syromolotov represents the third faction because his work on counterterrorism is effectively separated from the other portfolios of the MID. Rather than competing amongst each other for control of the ministry's direction, these three factions appear to conduct their own business in parallel silos.

Under long-time Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov,<sup>231</sup> the MID seems to have given up the ghost of being a locus of foreign policy initiative for the Russian Federation. Unlike Shoigu at the MOD, Lavrov leads the MID as a professional insider. However, his bureaucracy executes decisions made in the Kremlin, developing whatever capabilities it requires of it. Though the MID still retains profound capacity for developing intellectual prowess to inform Kremlin

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<sup>231</sup> Himself a representative of the first faction.

decision-making, this function has been reduced to mere maintaining situational awareness often in turn filtered through the ISC before reaching Putin and his inner circle. Whatever bureaucratic despair this might have incited seems to have been offset by the bestowing of most senior MID ranks and privileges on professional diplomats as opposed to politicians.<sup>232</sup> Though frustration has been expressed by the Kremlin's occasional wild deviations from the principles of international law the MID prided itself on before 2014 and still claims to champion today,<sup>233</sup> professional Russian diplomats hold all major diplomatic posts. Even those who seemed overwhelmed by the 2014 shift have been proverbially kicked upstairs.<sup>234</sup> The major drawback to this approach has been extremely slow personnel turnover perhaps best exemplified by Lavrov himself, who at the time of writing is approaching his 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary in office.<sup>235</sup> Many of his deputies serve more than ten-year terms and the tenures for the most significant Ambassadorial posts such as Beijing and Washington exceed five years more often than not.

Above all else, the MID is bedevilled by a leadership that not only thinks it knows everything from its own experience but also will self-servingly override expert opinion when perceived necessary.<sup>236</sup> In 2016, when asked about the possibility of Turkey surprising Russia with its recent deployment of troops into Syria, Putin responded that one of the key tasks of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was to ensure that these developments would not come as surprises (*neozhidannosti*).<sup>237</sup> From this isolated but deliberate remark, it seems Putin considers the MID merely as another intelligence-gathering state institution operating with more formality.

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<sup>232</sup> A fate which has befallen other foreign ministries of the world as well as some ISC agencies in Russia.

<sup>233</sup> Kadri Liik, 'The last of the offended: Russia's first post-Putin diplomats', European Council on Foreign Relations, 19 November 2019, [https://ecfr.eu/publication/the\\_last\\_of\\_the\\_offended\\_russias\\_first\\_post\\_putin\\_diplomats/](https://ecfr.eu/publication/the_last_of_the_offended_russias_first_post_putin_diplomats/). Accessed 24 November 2021.

<sup>234</sup> E.g. Aleksandr Lukashевич served as the official MID spokesman at the time of the 2014 Maidan protests in Ukraine and stopped his regular press briefings shortly afterward in seeming shock at the discontinuity in Russian foreign policy. Despite the job not being adequately fulfilled for about a year before a suitable successor was found, Lukashевич went on to be the MID representative to the OSCE in Vienna, a position he still holds today.

<sup>235</sup> Liik 2019..

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> 'Ответы на вопросы журналистов' [Answers to questions of journalists], Kremlin, 5 September 2016, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52834>. Accessed 29 November 2021.

## Views on Conflict and the International System

Unlike the Kremlin and the Russian Armed Forces, the MID retains an overt Soviet-style ontological surety, refusing any insinuation of duplicity in Russian state action or policy; whereas Putin, Ivanov, and even Gerasimov seek ways to resist their perception of an increasingly unscrupulous West using some of its own techniques, the MID firm adheres to claims that it abides by international law and that the world, not Russia, is wrong when contradictions emerge. Though it no longer claims that its policies follow a ‘scientific theory’ as the Soviet MID claimed to adhere to Marxism-Leninism,<sup>238</sup> it does retain Soviet confidence that Russian policy ameliorates global contradictions whereas problems in the international system invariably emerge from abroad. In the Soviet era, theorists such as Vasiliy Sokolovskiy proclaimed that war could only emerge from non-Socialist states as they alone created the contradictions upon which war was predicated.<sup>239</sup> Today, both the Kremlin<sup>240</sup> and the military<sup>241</sup> acknowledge that contradictions can emerge internally for a variety of factors even if they work diligently to control and mitigate them; the MID makes no such concession, preferring to blame all Russia’s disputes on foreign actors.

The MID cloaks itself in a diplomatic conservatism claiming a steadfast adherence to the inviolable sovereignty of states and basic principles of non-interference in internal affairs under international law.<sup>242</sup> It ascribes all perceived infringements of this principle as violations of international law and has of late<sup>243</sup> taken up the mantle of the United Nations Charter as this law’s

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<sup>238</sup> Light, p 1.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid, p 218.

<sup>240</sup> ‘Заседание Совета Безопасности’ [Meeting of the Security Council], Kremlin, 20 November 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47045>. Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>241</sup> E.g. V.I. Tolshmyakov & V.S. Abzhanov, ‘Военно-политические аспекты сотрудничества Российской Федерации и Республики Казахстан в противодействии терроризму и другим транснациональным угрозам’ [The military-political aspects of cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan in countering terrorism and other transnational threats], *Военная Мысль*, Issue 12, 2021, p 18.

<sup>242</sup> ‘Выступление Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова на XXIX Ассамблее СВОП, Москва’ [Remarks of Minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov at the 29<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy], MID, 2 October 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1777351/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1777351/). Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>243</sup> This line increased dramatically as a Russian mantra in 2020, though it has been claimed before. E.g. ‘О совещании постоянных представителей России при международных организациях системы ООН’ [About the meeting of permanent representatives of Russia to international organizations of the UN system], MID, 19 December 2013, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1660320/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1660320/). Accessed 28 January 2022.

greatest manifestation<sup>244</sup> as a counter-cry to the new American slogan of the ‘rules-based international order’. However, as Svechin wrote in the 1920s, international law as a system of non-intervention in internal affairs was invented to be violated in war as managing conflict requires assessment of one’s neighbours’ intentions.<sup>245</sup> This contradiction in an organisation which claims Russia is the one country lacking contradictions encapsulates some of the inner frustration of a bureaucracy that feels it is losing its centrality in Russian foreign policy’s execution.

Presenting Russia as the consistent state in a sea of international contradictions without benefit of Marxist theory as a reflexive proof requires the MID to project this impression upon international opinion. On this measure, the MID’s success record since 2014 has been poor but shows a consistent pattern of behaviour seeking less an empirically consistent story than an ongoing process of reiterating propaganda points which external actors more readily accept. The second faction described above has been at the centre of this effort. In theoretical terms, the MID acts according to Emergent Strategy more than Deliberate Strategy,<sup>246</sup> rapidly abandoning seemingly sacrosanct characterizations of world events when it finds its persuasive power lacking in the target audience.

Aiding the MID’s quest for philosophical consistency is its celebration of the predictions of former Foreign Minister and late Putin mentor Evgeniy Primakov. As Russian diplomats like to tell it, Primakov observed that a Western-dominated unipolar world order would be only temporary and that it would soon be replaced by either a multipolar or polycentric system.<sup>247</sup> This vision in direct

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<sup>244</sup> A typical example: ‘О встрече Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова с Министром иностранных дел Боливарианской Республики Венесуэла Ф.Пласенсией’ [On the meeting of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela F. Plasencia], MID, 8 November 2021, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4924496](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4924496). Accessed 9 November 2021.

<sup>245</sup> Svechin, p 177.

<sup>246</sup> Henri Mintzberg, Bruce Ahlstrand, & Joseph Lampel, *Strategy safari*, Prentice Hall, 1998, pp 24, 213, 220-222. Eitan Shamir, ‘How leaders exercise emergent strategy? lessons from Moshe Dayan’, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2021, p 2-4.

<sup>247</sup> ‘Ответы на вопросы СМИ С.В.Лаврова по итогам посещения Калининградской области, Калининград’ [Answers to media questions of S.V. Lavrov following a visit to Kaliningrad Oblast, Kaliningrad], MID, 17 August 2021, [https://archive.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4841079](https://archive.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4841079). Accessed 26 January 2022. ‘Выступление и ответы

opposition to a US-dominated unipolar system aligns well with Putin's own worldview expressed since at least his 2007 Munich speech in no small part due to Primakov's personal influence over Putin.<sup>248</sup> Ironically, Primakov was not a diplomat by training and came to the MID in 1996 after a long career in the KGB in the late Soviet era and establishing the SVR as a separate component of the ISC and therefore represents the third faction; his long-term impact both as foreign minister and elder statesman almost certainly reflects some measure of legitimacy derived from his ISC experience.

The actual definition of the 'polycentric' or 'multipolar' world order that Primakov foresaw is difficult to clearly identify from MID statements despite these themes dominating Lavrov's speeches for years. Firstly, these terms do not appear to be interchangeable and Lavrov will favour one or the other alternatively for periods of time. The seeming difference between the two is that 'multipolarity'<sup>249</sup> refers to a distribution of power in which each pole holds some degree of independence in the international system whereas 'polycentrism'<sup>250</sup> refers to an international system of fundamentally unequal degrees of independence among different actors within the system.<sup>251</sup> Primakov's theory, as expressed by Putin<sup>252</sup> and Lavrov,<sup>253</sup> holds that the international system has fundamentally transformed into one in which no single actor around the world holds sufficient power to order the international system (unipolarity) including the United States. That authority now requires the consent of some ever-changing combination of powers but most frequently the United States, the People's Republic of China, India, Germany, Brazil, and South

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на вопросы С.В.Лаврова в ходе встречи с участниками просветительского марафона «Новое знание», Москва' [Remarks and answers to questions by S.V. Lavrov during a meeting with participants in the educational marathon "Novoe znanie", Moscow], MID, 3 September 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1774972/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1774972/). Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>248</sup> 'Встреча с Евгением Примаковым' [Meeting with Evgeniy Primakov], Kremlin, 29 October 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46889>. Accessed 3 April 2022. 'Прощание с Евгением Примаковым' [Farewell to Evgeniy Primakov], Kremlin, 29 June 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/49782>. Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>249</sup> Многополярность (*mnogopolyarnost'*)

<sup>250</sup> Полицентризм (*politsentrizm*)

<sup>251</sup> Leonid Savin, 'Многополярность и Полицентризм' [Multipolarity and Polycentrism], *Geopolitica*, 9 February 2019, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/mnogopolyarnost-i-politsentrizm>. Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>252</sup> Kremlin 2014f.

<sup>253</sup> Е.г. 'Выступление Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на общеполитической дискуссии 76-й сессии Генеральной Ассамблеи ООН, Нью-Йорк' [Speech of Minister of foreign affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov at the general political discussion of the 76<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, New York], MID, 25 September 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1777106/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1777106/). Accessed 3 April 2022.

Africa as BRICS members, and essentially the Russian Federation itself. However, this transition is complicated by the fact that the current formalised structure of the international system dispenses special privileges upon the United States and the West due to their predominant position in the world in recent centuries, setting up the potential for high-stakes conflict as the West fights a rear-guard action to preserve its privileged status despite the evolution of the international system away from this structure in reality.<sup>254</sup> The MID perceives its core mission as facilitating the transition of the international system to a multipolar or polycentric world order, i.e. resolving the apparent contradiction, without letting the situation devolve into war.

For the MID, all conflicts can be explained through this logic of contradictions emerging from a Western inability to perceive the international system as it really is. Though a number of historical precedents are invoked as overreaches of Western power such as Iraq and Libya,<sup>255</sup> none exceeds the degree to which it is reflected in Ukraine since 2014, which one professional diplomat of the first faction described as a veritable ‘apotheosis of contradictions’.<sup>256</sup> The use of this charged term, potentially resolvable through war as discussed above, best indicates how Russia’s diplomatic corps imagines crisis transitions into conflict.

### Implementation of Policy

Though the MID has a theoretically coherent vision for its role in the world, it has a far more tenuous understanding of the idealised policies it should undertake to achieve them beyond decrying the bad behaviour of others,

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<sup>254</sup> ‘Выступление Директора СВР Россия на международной Московской конференции по безопасности’ [Speech of the Director of the SVR of Russia at the international Moscow conference on security], SVR, 4 April 2018, <http://svr.gov.ru/smi/2018/04/pressreliz04042018.htm>. Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>255</sup> Е.г. ‘Выступление Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова на 69-й сессии Генеральной Ассамблеи ООН, Нью-Йорк’ [Speech of the Minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation at the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, New York], MID, 27 September 2014, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1653369/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1653369/). Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>256</sup> ‘Выступление Директора 2-го Департамента стран СНГ МИД России А.Ю.Руденко на Специальной сессии Ежегодной конференции ОБСЕ по обзору проблем в области безопасности «Обеспечение безопасности и стабильности в регионе ОБСЕ в свете событий, связанных с Украиной», Вена’ [Speech of the Director of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Department of countries of the CIS of the MID of Russia A.Yu. Rudenko at a Special session of the Annual conference of the OSCE reviewing problems in the area of security “Security and stability in the region of the OSCE in light of the events and messages from Ukraine”, Vienna], MID, 28 June 2017, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1549077/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1549077/). Accessed 3 April 2022.



especially Westerners. In a further demonstration of the obsolescence of the MID's influence on Russian statecraft, it is understood that diplomacy - the MID's tradecraft - is merely an 'instrument' for implementing foreign policy.<sup>257</sup> Yet the scope of potential MID functions is in theory increasing. Addressing an incoming class of young diplomats, Lavrov claimed that diplomacy has expanded from simply 'solving the problems of war and peace' to one touching on all aspects of global sustainable economic development, requiring an ever greater versatility in the candidate.<sup>258</sup> In practice, however, the versatility the MID seeks leads to singular focuses on particular Kremlin goals of tangential value to foreign policy,<sup>259</sup> secondment of real talent to other bureaucratic agencies,<sup>260</sup> or the importation of more representatives of the third faction.

Among the professional diplomats of the first faction, the primary pattern of everyday MID behaviour as suggested by the 19<sup>th</sup> century quote above is a tendency to prioritise developing bilateral relations, incurring difficulties in relations as regional dynamics unfold. Even when individual states' governments adopt anti-Moscow policies after regime turnover, the MID typically first expresses an interest in cooperation.<sup>261</sup> For example, whereas Russia may have

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<sup>257</sup> 'Интервью Постоянного представителя России при Отделении ООН и других международных организациях в Женеве А.Н.Бородавкина газете «Известия»' [Interview of the Permanent representative of Russia to the organs of the UN and other international organisations in Geneva A.N. Borodavkin to the newspaper "Izvestiya"], MID, 20 November 2017, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1557686/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1557686/). Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>258</sup> 'Выступление Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова на Первом Глобальном форуме молодых дипломатов в рамках Всемирного фестиваля молодежи и студентов, Сочи' [Speech of Minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov at the 1<sup>st</sup> Global forum of young diplomats in a worldwide festival of youth and students, Sochi], MID, 16 October 2017, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1555140/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1555140/). Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>259</sup> E.g. Dmitry Solotov, Pavel Shiverov, & Polina Ivanova, 'Искусственный интеллект в международных отношениях и дипломатической службе' [Artificial intelligence in international relations and diplomatic service], *Vestnik Diplomaticheskoy Akademii MID Rossii*, 26:4, 2020, p 79-94.

<sup>260</sup> E.g. Anatoliy Antonov, a nuclear non-proliferation expert trained by the MID who was transplanted to the MOD for several years before returning to the MID, now serving as the Russian Ambassador to the United States.

<sup>261</sup> Examples include the 2016 U.S. presidential election ('Ответы Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на вопросы информагентства «Россия Сегодня»' [Answers of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov to the questions of the news agency "Rossiya segodnya"], MID, 9 December 2016, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2582919](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2582919). Accessed 29 November 2021.), 2019 Ukrainian presidential election ('Интервью статс-секретаря – заместителя Министра иностранных дел России Г.Б.Карасина международному информационному агентству «Россия сегодня»' [Interview of State Secretary Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia G.B. Karasin to the international information agency "Rossiya segodnya"], MID, 19 June 2019, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3731466](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3731466). Accessed 29 November 2021.) 2021 Moldova parliamentary elections ('Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова по итогам заседания Совета



difficult relations with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance at large, it seeks friendly relations with its individual members, reserving its castigations of the members for instances when they use the pretext of fraught relations with NATO to rebuff Russian initiatives. Most often, these attacks are framed as surrendering that member's independence to the United States as the most powerful country in NATO. Outside Europe, this also features in an outsize way in the Middle East where Russia again seeks friendly relations with all states but expresses concerns and reproaches in response to their activities against other countries with which Russia has greater friendship such as Palestine,<sup>262</sup> Syria,<sup>263</sup> or Yemen.<sup>264</sup> Despite Lavrov's sentiments in his address to young diplomats, such an approach to diplomacy would not be unrecognisable to the MID of former centuries.

For the second faction, the MID can be a primary vector of coordinating official Russian information dissemination, crafting various narratives and shifting between them rapidly in an emergent strategies model to achieve cognitive effect.<sup>265</sup> As was documented at some length in Chapter 4, this task can rapidly respond to international events, providing positive or negative feedback almost in real time. Affirming welcome events and condemning unfavourable decisions from a podium or social media feed in Moscow may seem a petty and old-fashioned means of conducting diplomacy but military thinkers have emphasised the importance of information in the conduct of conflict, making it important to defeat or at least pre-empt information campaigns undermining the legitimacy

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министров иностранных дел Содружества Независимых Государств (СНГ), Минск [Remarks and answers to media questions by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov following a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Minsk], MID, 14 October 2021, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4903728](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4903728). Accessed 29 November 2021).

<sup>262</sup> 'Выступление и.о. Постоянного представителя Д.А.Полянского на заседании СБ ООН по положению на Ближнем Востоке, включая палестинский вопрос' [Speech by acting Permanent Representative D.A. Polyanskiy at the UN Security Council meeting on the situation in the Middle East including the Palestinian question], Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the UN, 28 July 2021, [https://russiaun.ru/ru/news/sc\\_280721](https://russiaun.ru/ru/news/sc_280721). Accessed 29 November 2021.

<sup>263</sup> 'Россия настаивает, а Израиль стреляет' [Russia insists and Israel shoots], *VPK*, 19 January 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/news/60460>. Accessed 29 November 2021.

<sup>264</sup> 'Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России в связи с развитием ситуации в Йемене' [Commentary of the Department of information and press of the MID of Russia in connection with the development of the situation in Yemen], MID, 28 October 2016, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2386914](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2386914). Accessed 29 November 2021.

<sup>265</sup> Flemming Splidsboel Hansen, 'When Russia wages war in the cognitive domain', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Issue 34:2, 2021, p 184-185.

of Russian government decisions in the eyes of the Russian people.<sup>266</sup> As such, the MID offering a means of immediately rebutting or at least complicating an anti-Russia narrative answers one of the core demands military theorists perceive as a danger to the integrity of the state.<sup>267</sup> When the MID engages in information conflict, its contradictory nature can often appear atonal and cacophonous but only to the recipient who actually takes the time to read all of it. As recipients generally receive the MID's information through third parties quoting a 'spokesperson of the Russian Federation', the dissonance is more difficult to determine. For such missions, the quantity of information has a quality all its own: the term used in Russian for overloading with dubious information is the slang term 'vbros',<sup>268</sup> which might be literally translated as 'stuffing', derived from the term for 'to throw in';<sup>269</sup> an increasing number of Russian military analysts conclude that simply stuffing the information space may be decisive in averting 'colour revolutions'.<sup>270</sup> In a sense, *vbros* can be understood as the wartime Spam<sup>271</sup> of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The proliferation of *vbros* under MID official spokesperson Zakharova since 2015. In 2021 alone, of 2,131 instances of the MID issuing some information documented for the database used in this dissertation, 937 (44%) were directly attributable to Zakharova herself. Of those 937, 687 (73%) was negatively charged whether as opposition, disinformation, demands, gloating, or efforts to actively destabilise other country's politics.

## Summary

Though Lavrov himself comes from the first faction of diplomats who aspire to be ambassadors and imagine themselves as civil servants of diplomacy, he seems to have learned that the MID's primary value within the Kremlin's conflict-obsessed strategy is its ability to disseminate and gather information. Over the

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<sup>266</sup> Makhmut Gareev, 'Закон сдерживания' [Law of containment], *VPK*, 9 April 2018, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/42105>. Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>267</sup> Aleksey Mukhin & Vladimir Mokhov, 'Под прицелом – идеологический иммунитет' [Under the gun ideological immunity], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 18 March 2021, <http://redstar.ru/pod-pritselom-ideologicheskij-immunitet/>. Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>268</sup> Вброс

<sup>269</sup> Вбросить (*vbrosit'*)

<sup>270</sup> Ivan Dragomirov, 'Фейки быстрого реагирования' [Rapid response fakes], *VPK*, 20 December 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/65193>. Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>271</sup> Terry Jones & Michael Palin, 'Spam', *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, Season 2, Episode 25, BBC, 1970.

years, he has leaned into the name-calling more typically associated with the second faction but has not ceased to be a formidable diplomatic negotiator even in difficult times for Russia abroad.

However, this recognition has embraced the fact that the MID is now merely an instrument rather than a locus of policy as it was in the 1990s when politicians and other outsiders - including Primakov himself - served as the Minister. Though Lavrov himself seems personally averse to the possibility of going to war due to the enormous destruction this would entail in the modern age,<sup>272</sup> he has been shut out of the Kremlin's decision-making process of war and peace, the classical role of the diplomat: in 2015, Lavrov was still in New York City for the UN General Assembly when the Russian government decided to deploy troops to Syria.<sup>273</sup> Prior to business trips, Lavrov consults with Putin on the policy line he will take and does not deviate from it.<sup>274</sup>

Though the MID is unlikely to cease being a repository of considerable Russian knowledge and talent anytime soon, an ever greater proportion of its energy seems consigned less to crafting foreign policy than to determining whether certain information campaigns are succeeding or failing and how to calibrate them for maximum effect. Perhaps the foremost example of this phenomenon is Lavrov's declaration that the obvious dysfunction of Russia's CSTO alliance relative to the popular Russian perception of NATO discipline is a symbol that Russia has better adapted to a post-ideological world order in which NATO and other military-political blocs are obsolete.<sup>275</sup> Turning the weakness of one's alliance into a rhetorical informational point of boasting rather than working to diplomatically strengthen the alliance is the work of the contemporary MID.

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<sup>272</sup> 'Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова газете и радиостанции «Комсомольская правда» [Interview of the Minister of foreign affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov to the newspaper and radio station "Komsomolskaya pravda"], MID, 31 May 2016, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1529259/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1529259/). Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>273</sup> 'О встрече Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова с Генеральным секретарем ООН Пан Ги Мун' [On the meeting of Minister of foreign affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov with the Secretary General of the UN Ban Ki-moon], MID, 1 October 2015, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1516073/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1516073/). Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>274</sup> 'Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова агентству ИТАР-ТАСС' [Interview of Minister of foreign affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov with the ITAR-TASS agency], MID, 11 September 2014, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1647352/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1647352/). Accessed 3 April 2022.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

## Conclusions

The Russian Armed Forces and MID appear to adapt as much to the broader policy environment constricted by the philosophy of the Kremlin as they do to the forces of the outside world. In the Soviet era, three independent loci of interest in the crafting of policy existed: the Communist Party, the KGB, and the Soviet Armed Forces. In practice, the KGB and the Soviet Armed Forces agreed to defer to the leadership of the Communist Party to avert a constant power struggle, instead conserving their political capital for the isolated policies they considered their highest priorities.<sup>276</sup> At the end of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party dissolved with many of its apparatchiks losing their informal influence in the privatisations and debt default of the 1990s<sup>277</sup> while the Soviet Armed Forces lost their political influence following catastrophes in Afghanistan and Chechnya. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the ISC rooted in the KGB proved the most potent bureaucratic institutional force to survive the breakup of the Soviet Union, enabling it to take control of the Kremlin and assert unchecked authority over the Russian government at large.

Within this overarching constraint, the triumph of the ISC may better reflect the final triumph of the KGB in the great Soviet power struggle, a victory still being enjoyed by its members three decades after the USSR ceased to exist. However stifling that dynamic may be upon the evolution of Russian policy in the post-Soviet world, Russian institutions have not withered so much as acclimated to a bureaucratic environment in which humouring Putin's unsophisticated interpretation of Soviet Marxist international relations theory is the key to securing funding.

The adapting of these institutions to the dominance of a different institutional force in command over at least the past 20 years suggests that Russian governing institutions would be able to adapt to a different governing ideology, though it may require some time. This is likely the reason behind the Putin regime's increased focus on indoctrination programmes to replicate the views of a man

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<sup>276</sup> Suvorov, p 22-32.

<sup>277</sup> Thane Gustafson, *Wheel of Fortune: The Battle for Oil and Power in Russia*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2012, p 30-62.

who grew up in the late Soviet era among people who did not have the opportunity to imbibe those views themselves as they were born after its disappearance. If Putin perceives the irony in these policies' acknowledgement of the project as unsustainable due to the need for propaganda both in his own youth and now, he has not admitted as much publicly in recent years.

## Chapter 4. Quantitative Analysis

### Methodology for Tracking the Coordination of Russian Foreign and Military Policies

Assessing the coordination of Russian foreign and military policies requires new models for understanding both sides of this equation. As both these policies are expressed in very different terms, direct comparison is at best nebulous and highly case study oriented.<sup>1</sup> These case studies frequently claim inductive value to explain Moscow's behaviour at large but the highly specific nature of unpacking details of Russian foreign and military policies in those case studies prevents testing this claim. This dissertation overcomes this problem by quantifying the building blocks of Russian foreign and military policies to allow for comparisons among ratio variables.<sup>2</sup>

Few methodologies predate this dissertation to quantify either of these policies in the information age<sup>3</sup> as a longitudinal dataset exploring the specific nature of an international relationship.<sup>4</sup> This dissertation assesses both foreign and military policies as bilateral relationships between the Russian Federation and other states or international organisations. The states and international organisations with which the Russian Federation interacts are henceforth referred to as 'interlocutors'.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. Stephen J. Blank, 'Imperial ambitions: Russia's military buildup', *World Affairs*, 178:1, 2015, p 67-75.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p 219.

<sup>3</sup> Quantifying foreign policy is not entirely unprecedented. The Conflict and Peace Data Bank and the World Event Interaction Survey attempted to create databases of international behaviour during the Cold War but these projects were abandoned due to the inability to extrapolate broad theories of how foreign policy objectively manifested. They relied upon media as opposed to government data. Edward E. Azar, 'Conflict and Peace Data Bank (CPDAB), 1948-1978', Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 1993, ppb 2009. Charles McClelland, 'World Event/Interaction Survey (WEIS) Project, 1966-1978', Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 1978, ppb 2006. Jean-Frédéric Morin & Jonathan Paquin, *Foreign policy analysis: a toolbox*, Springer International Publishing, 2018, p 9.

<sup>4</sup> Many methodologies have been developed to qualitatively label the quality of foreign policy or aggregate military capabilities for a comparison of power. The former of these suffer for inability to catch how events impact relations, often resulting in labels without necessary nuance and the former never reflect the application of military power over time to demonstrate how aggregate quantities of materiel and manpower are being used outside of broad unnuanced declarations of what certain platforms can doctrinally accomplish. An excellent overview of these various flawed methodologies can be found at Andrew Radin et. al., 'China-Russia cooperation: determining factors, future trajectories, implications for the United States', Arlington, VA: RAND Corporation, 2021, pp 6-20, 173-210.

Previous attempts to organise the quality of foreign policy relationships with interlocutors typically relied upon either ordinal categories of friendliness, neutrality, or enmity<sup>5</sup> or legal or rhetorical alliances and wars or their absence.<sup>6</sup> Though these categorisations are not without merit, they artificially constrain the nuances of a relationship. Ordinal categories of alignment or opposition typically yield no more than five qualitative levels dependent upon arbitrary value judgements difficult to link to any firm data. When more levels are available, the determination becomes even more arbitrary to the point of being useless. The existence or non-existence of alliances and wars offers solid quantitative data but hardly depicts the full depth of foreign policy. Relations between two allies may be good but are rarely if ever equally as good as relations with other allies.

To the author's knowledge, no serious attempt to quantify a country's peacetime military policy has ever been attempted beyond orders of battle. Military case studies abound but these preponderantly pertain to wars or crises approaching war. A modicum of writing exists about specific military exercises of routine bureaucratic minutiae in times not immediately prior to conflict but even these rely almost entirely on case studies, generally of unusually large or strategic exercises.<sup>7</sup> Issues of order of battle are confined to almanacs and encyclopaedias,<sup>8</sup> only encroaching on academic writing at the starts of wars or in generalised descriptions.<sup>9</sup>

This dissertation analyses the ordinary course of peacetime<sup>10</sup> policy in the Russian Federation and observes to what extent foreign and military policies are coordinated. Without pre-existing methodologies to guide this process on a ratio

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<sup>5</sup> Such as using Kendall's  $\tau_b$  or Spearman's rank correlation coefficient to correlate two states' alliances. Curtis S. Signorino and Jeffrey M. Ritter, 'Tau-b or not tau-b: measuring the similarity of foreign policy positions', *International Studies Quarterly*, 43:1, March 1999, p 115-144.

<sup>6</sup> Such as the Correlates of War project.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. Ed. Beatrice Heuser, Tormod Heier, and Guillaume Lasconjarias, *Military exercises: political messaging and strategic impact*, Rome: NATO Defense College, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. International Institute of Strategic Studies' running series *The Military Balance* or Global Security (<https://www.globalsecurity.org/>). These deliberately avoid value judgments on a country's military policy against an interlocutor. Instead, these studies show the bureaucratic organization of a country's armed forces often without any attempt at denoting their geographic distribution.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. Hugh Faringdon, *Strategic geography: NATO, the Warsaw Pact, and the superpowers*, New York: Routledge, 1989. Gregory Whisler, 'Carving a peacetime force from a mobilization military: the overlooked pillar of post-Soviet Russian defense reforms', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 34:3, 2021, p 357-383.

<sup>10</sup> That is in a time without a legally declared war.

scale, this dissertation instead introduces several for calculating and categorizing both foreign and military policy, rendering them on a ratio scale and enabling a test of their correlation. This chapter first introduces the methodology for quantifying Russian foreign policy, then one for quantifying Russian military policy. It then offers a control variable and shows how correlation will be measured. It then analyses the data both on a worldwide basis and then over a series of regional and ordinal categories.

### Quantitative Measurement of Russian Foreign Policy: FPQS

This dissertation defines Russia's foreign policy as a combination of state diplomacy, propaganda and messaging, influence, international agreements (including treaties), and punitive actions (including wars). For all these components, only that which is officially acknowledged by the Russian government is considered a data point. Foreign policy conducted by Russian officials but unacknowledged by the state is admitted as evidence only if reported by state-controlled or government-friendly media<sup>11</sup> to avoid amassing incongruent quantitative data. The result of this is a numerical 'foreign policy quality score' (FPQS).

This measurement therefore relies exclusively upon Russian sources either published by or sympathetic to the government. This introduces considerable bias into the dataset but it is precisely this bias which the dissertation explores. Though Russian interlocutors frequently publish readouts with rather different emphasis about their interactions, this dissertation ignores them to focus on the evolving messaging Moscow transmits over time to produce quantitative longitudinal data.

State diplomacy is the most abundant quantifiable demonstration of Russian foreign policy. It comprises the shuttle diplomacy and 'conversations'<sup>12</sup> of members of the Russian government with interlocutors. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, President Boris Yeltsin named the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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<sup>11</sup> State-controlled and government-friendly media include the newswires RIA Novosti and TASS; the newspapers *Izvestiya* and *Voenna-Promyshlennyy Kur'er*; and the blogs BMPD, Dambiev, and Geopolitica.

<sup>12</sup> Robert H. Donaldson, Joseph L. Noguee, & Vidya Nadkarni, *The foreign policy of Russia: changing systems, enduring interests*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, New York: Routledge, 2019, p 14.



(MID<sup>13</sup>) as the leading body of the Russian Federation dealing with foreign affairs<sup>14</sup>. However, the MID functions less as the decision-making body of Russian foreign policy and more as an intelligence collection agency seeking to understand the policies of other states.<sup>15</sup> This is illustrated by the fact that of 220 documented instances of Russia making international agreements with foreign states and multi-state organisations in 2019, only 31 were signed under the independent auspices of the MID; furthermore of those 31, 17 were merely agreements on reduced travel visa requirements<sup>16</sup>. As such, though MID activities are an essential component of Russian diplomacy, they cannot be considered alone.<sup>17</sup> All major Russian bureaucracies involved in some form of foreign policy are therefore consulted to gather a list of interactions between Russia and each foreign state.<sup>18</sup>

Each meeting reported is recorded in a database. These are then summed and weighted to present the baseline of the bilateral relationship for the time period surveyed.<sup>19</sup> This manner of summarising state diplomacy may seem crude but adheres to the classical definition that ‘diplomacy is the management of

<sup>13</sup> Министерство иностранных дел (*Ministerstvo inostrannykh del*)

<sup>14</sup> Donaldson, Noguee, & Nadkarni, p 129. Eric Shiraev, *Russian Government and Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p 260. Nikolas K. Gvosdev & Christopher Marsh, *Russian Foreign Policy: Interests, Vectors, and Sectors*, Sage, 2014, p 32.

<sup>15</sup> Putin admitted this at his press conference at the conclusion of the 2016 G20 Summit in Hanzhou, China. When asked how a deal reached with the United States on joint combating of terrorism in Syria could be protected from U.S. duplicity, he cited the MID as an institution that would monitor U.S. activities to protect against ‘surprises’. ‘Ответы на вопросы журналистов’ [Answers to the questions of journalists], Kremlin, 5 September 2016, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52834>. Accessed 16 March 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Data compiled from Russian official government websites according to the methodology listed below. Given that visa regimes are managed by the MID itself, this suggests that the diplomatic bureaucracy is only empowered to make decisions about its own rules.

<sup>17</sup> That the MID has no monopoly on foreign policy making is true of virtually all foreign ministries, especially after 1945. Its implied status of *primus inter pares* implied by Yeltsin’s declaration was not respected even in Soviet times. Zara Steiner, *The Times survey of foreign ministries of the world*, London: Times Books, 1982, pp 26, 28. This was most famously summed up in Khrushchev’s declaration to U.S. diplomat Averell Harrison: ‘Gromyko only says what we tell him to. At the next Geneva meeting he will repeat what he has already told you. If he doesn’t we’ll fire him and get someone who does.’ W. Averell Harriman, ‘My alarming interview with Khrushchev’, *Life*, 47:2, 13 July 1959, p 33. Mark Galeotti, ‘The ministry of foreign affairs, Belarus and Ukraine’, *In Moscow’s Shadows*, Ep 50, 21 November 2021, <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/in-moscows-shadows-50-the-ministry-of-foreign/id1510124746?i=1000542638570>. Accessed 12 January 2022.

<sup>18</sup> In addition to the Kremlin itself, these bureaucracies include the Council of Ministers, the Security Council of the Russian Federation, the Foreign Intelligence Service, the Federal Security Service, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Energy.

<sup>19</sup> For the precise manner in which this information is recorded and weighted for both state diplomacy and the other forms of foreign policy, please see the Appendix (A.1.2).

international relations by negotiation'.<sup>20</sup> The Russians also frequently refer to these diplomatic meetings as contributing to 'strategic stability'.<sup>21</sup> Counting instances of negotiation thus seems a fair mechanism of quantifying diplomacy if only to observe how Russian diplomats allocate their limited time among interlocutors.<sup>22</sup>

Russian propaganda and messages comprise statements by Russian officials about interlocutors. The same set of bureaucratic resources as those used for state diplomacy are consulted to obtain these statements. Occasionally, Russia releases a stand-alone statement declaring support or opposition to another country's policies<sup>23</sup>. More often, these messages appear as individual portions of an interview with or speech by a Russian official<sup>24</sup> or else declared within a larger MID press briefing.<sup>25</sup> These individual statements are then weighted according to whether they were positive or negative; after summing up the total of these statements over the course of the year under consideration, the resulting number - positive or negative - is added to the state diplomacy baseline.<sup>26</sup>

Influence refers to official interactions between a government official and a foreigner not officially affiliated to his or her state's government. It includes

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<sup>20</sup> Harold Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, 1963, ppb 1988, p 4.

<sup>21</sup> 'В интересах стратегической стабильности' [In the interest of strategic stability], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 24 April 2020, <http://redstar.ru/v-interesah-strategicheskoy-stabilnosti/>. Accessed 27 April 2020.

<sup>22</sup> Steiner, p 26-30.

<sup>23</sup> E.g. 'Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России в связи с введением Австралией новых антироссийских санкций' [MID Information and Press Department commentary regarding Australia's new anti-Russian sanctions], MID, 20 March 2019, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3579993](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3579993). Accessed 25 January 2020.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Putin's claim that the Union State Treaty with Belarus was never properly implemented at his 2019 press conference. 'Большая пресс-конференция Владимира Путина' [Large press conference of Vladimir Putin], Kremlin, 19 December 2019, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62366>. Accessed 25 January 2020.

<sup>25</sup> E.g. 'Брифинг официального представителя МИД России М.В.Захаровой «на полях» Международного форума общественной дипломатии «Диалог на Волге: мир и взаимопонимание в XXI веке», Волгоград' [Briefing of official MID Spokesperson M.V. Zakharova "on the sidelines" of the International Forum of Public Diplomacy "Dialogue on the Volga: Peace and Mutual Understanding in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", Volgograd], MID, 1 November 2019, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3882176](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3882176). Accessed 25 January 2020.

<sup>26</sup> The precise manner in which information and messaging is weighted is listed in the Appendix.

discussions with retired state officials<sup>27</sup>, private businessmen<sup>28</sup>, academics and researchers<sup>29</sup>, press<sup>30</sup>, and others<sup>31</sup>. It also includes government-sponsored cultural events with a foreign population designed to inculcate pro-Russian sentiments<sup>32</sup> and Russian Orthodox Church dialogue with foreign government officials.<sup>33</sup> This ‘influence’ does not include track 1.5 diplomacy as the government actors in this category are official interlocutors.<sup>34</sup> It must be emphasized that this category includes only activities officially acknowledged by the Russian government. Nevertheless, the unofficial nature of the dialogue means that it possesses significantly less weight than either state diplomacy or propaganda and messages but nevertheless adds marginal points to the FPQS. Each instance of influence contributes a quarter point to FPQS; if conducted by the Russian President, it contributes a half point.

Russian international agreements are instances of signed documents, completed long-term agreements, conclusion of treaties, or actions pursuant to pre-existing treaties. These deals range widely in scope, encompassing matters as disparate

<sup>27</sup> E.g. ‘О встрече Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова с бывшим Госсекретарем США Г.Киссинджером’ [On the meeting of Foreign Minister S.V. Lavrov with former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger], MID, 27 September 2019, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3811842](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3811842). Accessed 25 January 2020.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. ‘Встреча с главой Royal Dutch Shell Бенном ван Берденом’ [Meeting with Head of Royal Dutch Shell Ben van Berden], Kremlin, 18 July 2019, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61044>. Accessed 25 January 2020.

<sup>29</sup> E.g. ‘О встрече в МИД России с представителями отечественных неправительственных организаций’ [On a meeting at the Russian Foreign Ministry with representatives of domestic non-governmental organisations], MID, 1 April 2016, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2196594](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2196594). Accessed 16 April 2016.

<sup>30</sup> E.g. ‘Интервью первого заместителя Министра иностранных дел России В.Г.Титова латвийской русскоязычной газете «Сегодня», опубликованное 15 ноября 2017 года’ [Interview of First Deputy Foreign Minister V.G. Titov by Latvian Russian-language newspaper “Segodnya” published on 15 November 2017], MID, 16 November 2017, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2952382](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2952382). Accessed 25 January 2020.

<sup>31</sup> E.g. ‘Интервью Оливеру Стоуну’ [Interview with Oliver Stone], Kremlin, 19 July 2019, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61057>. Accessed 25 January 2020.

<sup>32</sup> E.g. ‘Ансамбль песни и пляски Российской Армии имени А.В. Александрова станет особым гостем фестиваля Fests spillene в Северной Норвегии’ [Song and dance ensemble of the Russian Army named for A.V. Aleksandrov will be a special guest of the Fests spillene festival in Northern Norway], Russian Ministry of Defence, 26 June 2019, [http://деятельность.минобороны.пф/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12238582@egNews](http://деятельность.минобороны.пф/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12238582@egNews). Accessed 25 January 2020.

<sup>33</sup> E.g. ‘Состоялась встреча Святейшего Патриарха Кирилла с Блаженнейшим Патриархом Антиохийским и всего Востока Иоанном X’ [Meeting of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill with His Beatitude Patriarch of Antioch and All the East John X], Moscow Patriarchate, 29 January 2019, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5363121.html>. Accessed 25 January 2020.

<sup>34</sup> Jennifer Staats, Johnny Walsh, & Rosarie Tucci, ‘A primer on multi-track diplomacy: how does it work?’, *United States Institute of Peace*, 31 July 2019, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2019/07/primer-multi-track-diplomacy-how-does-it-work>. Accessed 25 January 2020.

as arms deals, energy deals, humanitarian aid, cooperation in space, legal extraditions, opening diplomatic missions, building infrastructure, travel regulation agreements, prisoner exchanges, and the overt use of force to support a foreign government. These instances add two points to FPQS; if the agreement remains in the news for an extended time, it adds four.

Russian international punitive actions comprise overt actions to signal either opposition to or contempt for foreign states' policies. This includes such disparate elements as terminating pre-existing agreements, issuing travel advisories, summoning ambassadors, declaring diplomats *persona non grata*, buzzing other states' territory or forces with military assets, initiating lawsuits in international courts, arresting spies, imposing economic sanctions, and (officially) waging wars. These instances add two negative points to FQPS; if the agreement remains in the news for an extended time, it adds four.

These various factors reflected in the FPQS comprise an artificially synthesised number, but one which can be congruently and longitudinally compared both among different countries and over time-steps of a single country. As such, it can be determined how Russian foreign relations with each foreign state have improved or worsened over time. During times of poorer relations, the quantity of state diplomacy decreases, fewer international agreements are made, and more statements of policy condemnation are issued; by contrast, times of rapprochement include increased state diplomacy and more international agreements. The SCRF also continuously monitors the global situation to identify negative trends and crisis situations;<sup>35</sup> though its methodology almost certainly differs from this (and is not public), it can be inferred that an analogous process is ongoing in the highest circles of the Russian government.

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<sup>35</sup> 'Аппарат Совета Безопасности Российской Федерации подготовил проект Положения «Об оценке и государственном мониторинге состояния национальной безопасности Российской Федерации»' [The apparatus of the SCRF has prepared a draft regulation 'On the assessment and state monitoring of the state of national security of the Russian Federation'], SCRF, <http://scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/970/>. Accessed 14 May 2020.

For example, Table 4-1 shows the disparity in the quality of relations between Russia and each of the countries it considered important in 2019<sup>36</sup> in decreasing order according to this methodology. Though, as acknowledged above, all the powers had positive relationships with Russia in 2019, Russian relations with China and India were far better than those with France. This suggests that in 2019 there was a greater degree of cooperation with China, more disagreements with France, or some combination of the two.

Rank	Country	FPQS
1	China	255
2	India	127
3	Iran	107
4	Germany	58
5	France	41
6	United States	-613

FPQS is a measurement of the quality of Russian relations with each interlocutor. This table shows that in 2019 Russia had the best relations with China and the worst with the United States among those countries considered the most important.

Year	FPQS	Annual $\Delta$
2014	16	
2015	22.25	+6.25
2016	-27.3	-49.5
2017	7	+34.25
2018	-167	-174
2019	-36	+131
2020	-78.8	-42.75
2021	-120	-41

FPQS is a measurement of the quality of Russian relations. This table shows that Brexit caused a drop in relations but that the Salisbury poisoning of the Skripals in 2018 caused a far greater one from which Russia-UK relations have never recovered.

Table 4-2 in turn shows the evolution of Russian FPQS with the United Kingdom over the years covered in this dissertation. Though Russia retained a slightly positive working relationship with Britain in 2014 and 2015, rebuttals to accusations of Russian interference in the Brexit referendum in 2016 and then widespread mutual recriminations following the 2018 Russian chemical weapons attack on Sergey Skripal in Salisbury drastically exacerbated relations. Though the intensity of enmity in 2018 reduced in subsequent years, there has yet to be a year in which Russian relations with the UK featured more pragmatic cooperation or agreements than propaganda vitriol and military provocations.

### Quantitative Measurement of Russian Military Policy: MTPS

Russian military policy comprises several components within the broad objective of training and equipping the Armed Forces for probable future scenarios. This

<sup>36</sup> 'Important' or 'high importance' interlocutors are defined as interacted with at least five different Russian deputy foreign ministers.

dissertation quantifies these components using the substantial quantity of open-source data published by the Russian Ministry of Defence (MOD) and other Russian media.<sup>37</sup> Those components considered are the Russian order of battle<sup>38</sup> and the quantity and nature of Russian training activities in different areas of responsibility.

The Russian Armed Forces' perception of the future threat to the country evolved dramatically over the past decade. This dissertation uses a database that tracks how and where training and equipping was reported to measure whether and how everyday military bureaucratic behaviour changed with this evolving threat perception. As such, this dissertation does not attempt to quantify greater or lesser significance for novel or obsolescent military capabilities but rather focuses on the quantity and complexity of military activities.

This section addresses how these activities are categorised for analysis and then shows how this generates a single military threat potential score (MTPS). This MTPS is generated for each country and judged against the FPQS of the above section. Unlike FPQS, MTPS is a 'limited' dependent variable with a lower limit of zero for all respondent country-years.<sup>39</sup>

### *Areas of Responsibility (AORs)*

The Russian Federation borders fourteen countries by land<sup>40</sup> and maintains bases in five further countries<sup>41</sup> beyond those immediate neighbours in both Europe and Asia. This diversity of neighbours and security partners means the perceived strategic demand for military presence and contingencies differs widely in different regions both quantitatively and qualitatively. The foreign policy scores described above illustrate how these neighbours are perceived in Moscow but

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<sup>37</sup> As above, this media includes the newswires *RIA Novosti* and *TASS*; the newspapers *Izvestiya* and *Voennopromyshlennyi Kur'er*; and the blogs *BMPD*, *Dambiev*, and *Geopolitica*.

<sup>38</sup> The order of battle refers to the organisation of forces.

<sup>39</sup> James Tobin, 'Estimation of relationships for limited dependent variables', *Econometrica*, 26:1, 1958, p 24-36.

<sup>40</sup> Azerbaijan, Belarus, China, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Kazakhstan, North Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Norway, Poland, and Ukraine

<sup>41</sup> Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Syria, and Tajikistan

does not distinguish how they are sorted into different military AORs.

As of 2021, the Russian Armed Forces divide Russian territory into five military districts: West, South, Central, East, and North. The commands of these districts train all non-strategic troops stationed on their territory, operating in parallel with a regional strategic command which plans strategic- and operational-level contingencies for perceived risks requiring a potential military response in their region. Four of the five military districts also include armies with peacetime control of a set of manoeuvre and support units.<sup>42</sup> These armies are not equal either by size of order of battle or AOR: the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guards Army of the Central Military District includes four manoeuvre units<sup>43</sup> and the territory of two Soviet-era military districts amounting to 1,993,120 square kilometres whereas the 29<sup>th</sup> Army of the Eastern Military District includes only one manoeuvre unit covering just 431,500 square kilometres. In addition, four army corps also exist within the military districts.

This dissertation primarily addresses military AORs at the army and corps level. Each training event in the database is recorded as taking place within a certain AOR determined by the home garrison of the unit conducting the event, taking the number of the army and corps as its code. The location of each army and corps AOR is shown on Map 4-1.

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<sup>42</sup> Jonas Kjellén and Nils Dahlqvist, 'Russia's armed forces in 2019', *Russian military capability in a ten-year perspective – 2019*, Stockholm: FOI, December 2019, p 23-58.

<sup>43</sup> For the purposes of this dissertation, a 'manoeuvre unit' refers to any unit whose primary purpose is front-line battle with an enemy as opposed to units designed to support their battle.





Map 4-1. Russian Army and Corps-Level Areas of Responsibility

For units not within an army or corps but garrisoned in an army's or corps' AOR, their activities receive the same code as if they were formally a part of the army. The database uses the following codes for units not within an army or corps nor based within one's AOR:

- 15: Space Troops (for 15<sup>th</sup> Spetsnaz Army)
- 102: Transcaucasus (for the 102<sup>nd</sup> Military Base)
- A: Arctic outside Kola Peninsula and Arkhangelsk Oblast
- CA: Central Asia
- K: Caspian
- NE: Northeast Russia (i.e. Kamchatka Krai and Chukotka Autonomous Okrug)
- T: Transnistria

Note that Russian Airborne Troops (VDV) and Aerospace Force (VKS) assets do not formally fall under the control of these armies and army corps, but this dissertation groups them with the nearest one.

### Deploying outside the AOR

Though units within these corps, armies, and military districts typically train and conduct exercises near their home garrisons, they occasionally travel to other regions for specialised exercises. The most frequent reason to do this is to go a specialised training ground (*poligon* in Russian) for a live-fire exercise requiring

specialised sensory equipment to evaluate technical proficiency. Missile units, especially air defence and surface-to-surface units, typically conduct live fire exercises at the Kapustin Yar, Ashuluk, and Telemba *poligons* even if this requires transporting the unit's equipment and servicemen more than a thousand kilometres for a routine evaluation.

Less frequently, Russian units conduct standard tactical exercises outside their home AOR. This dissertation refers to any movement of a unit outside its home AOR either for training or combat operations as a 'cross-deployment'. A unit going to a *poligon* or across borders within its home AOR is rendered as a 'deployment'.

The use of Russian forces outside their home AORs helps indicate the level of operation the Russian military is either practicing or conducting. Russian military science clearly differentiates actions into the following categories in descending order of size: strategic, strategic-operational, operational, operational-tactical, and tactical.<sup>44</sup> At lower levels of action, the Russian General Staff expects the command of an army or army corps to be able to supply the force needed to achieve the desired end-state from its own peacetime units. At higher levels of action, units from other AORs up to the military district level are expected to cross-deploy to achieve the desired end-state.

### Theatres of Military Activities (TVDs)

Russian AORs and military districts make simple delineations for activities within the Russian Federation, but do not easily correspond to Russian activity abroad. The Russian General Staff divides the world into several theatres of military activities<sup>45</sup> which this dissertation renders by its Russian acronym 'TVD'.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Johan Norberg and Martin Goliath, 'The fighting power of Russia's armed forces in 2019', *Russian military capability in a ten-year perspective-2019*, Stockholm: FOI, 2019, p 65.

<sup>45</sup> Театр военных действий (*teatr voennykh deystviy*)

<sup>46</sup> An extensive debate among Western scholars existed during the Cold War about how best to translate TVD into English. 'Theatre of military activities' is the literal translation but does not convey its usage purely at the upper echelons of strategy, hence the frequent translation as 'theatre of strategic military activities' (TSMA). To circumvent this debate, this dissertation simply uses the Russian acronym. The Cold War analyst debate is adequately summarized in Raymond L. Garthoff, 'U.S. considerations of Soviet military thinking', *The Voroshilov lectures: materials from the Soviet General Staff Academy*, Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1989, p 14-18.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian General Staff combined several *TVDs*, relegating several regions previously considered ‘theatres’ to mere ‘strategic directions’.<sup>47</sup> This dissertation uses the Soviet-era *TVD* definitions to parsimoniously avoid distinguishing between these two strategic-level terms.

These *TVDs* were:

- Western (continental Europe)
- North-western (Baltic region and Scandinavia)
- South-western (Mediterranean)
- Near Eastern (Caucasus and Middle East)
- Middle Eastern (Central and South Asia)
- Far Eastern (East Asia)
- North-eastern (northeast Russia, Alaska)
- Northern (Arctic)
- Atlantic Ocean
- Pacific Ocean
- Indian Ocean
- North American
- South American
- African
- Australian
- Antarctica<sup>48</sup>

This dissertation considers Russian diplomatic and military activities via these collective blocs, attaching certain domestic AORs to certain global *TVDs*. These *TVDs* combined with observed patterns of Russian deployments for international exercises or presence missions inform the determination of which exercises within which AORs impact the MTPS of which countries. A full list of how these *TVDs* direct AOR exercises can be found in the Appendix.<sup>49</sup>

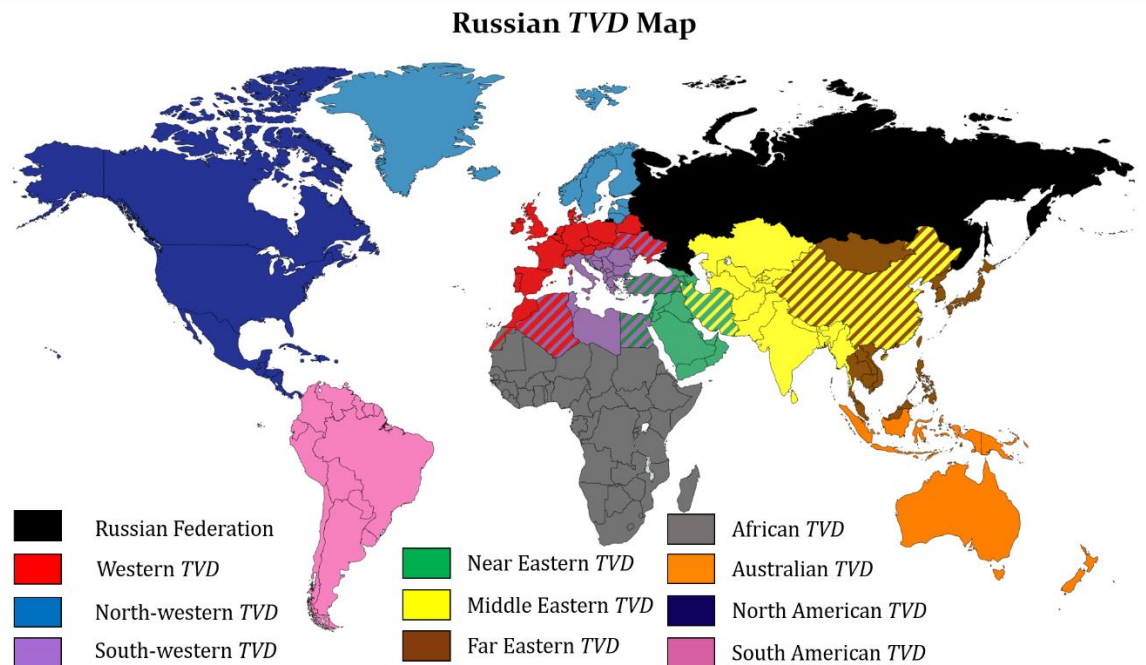
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<sup>47</sup> Greg Whisler, ‘Strategic command and control in the Russian armed forces: untangling the General Staff, military districts, and service main commands (Part Three)’, *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 33:2, 2020, p 245-246.

<sup>48</sup> *The Voroshilov lectures: materials from the Soviet General Staff Academy Vol I Issues of Soviet military strategy*, compiled by Ghulam Dastagir Wardak, Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1989, p 102-104.

<sup>49</sup> See the Appendix.

Military activities pertaining to each of these *TVDs* is considered alongside Russian foreign policy activities in those countries within the *TVD*. Many countries fall within the jurisdiction of multiple *TVDs*. For example, coastal areas are considered part of the oceanic *TVDs* they abut. Certain countries at the intersection of multiple *TVDs* such as Egypt, Iran, and Turkey are considered part of both. The distribution of modern countries into these *TVDs* is shown in Map 4-2.



**Map 4-2.** Distribution of modern countries among the Soviet-era *TVDs*. Countries with multiple colours are considered part of both *TVDs*.

Note that *TVDs* include sections of Russian territory in addition to territory abroad.

### Distance Factor

Distance and location figure heavily into military planning. Though Map 4-2 shows Morocco, Germany, and Belarus all within the western *TVD*, distance alone makes hypothetical Russian military activity in Belarus far simpler than in Morocco. Though all military exercises within a particular *TVD* demonstrate capabilities within a region, the potential threat signalled by these exercises weigh more heavily upon immediate neighbours than distant locales.

This dissertation therefore adjusts the projected degree of Russian military

threat according to the distance of each country from the Russian border.<sup>50</sup> It calculates the distance of each country from Russia according to the number of borders it must cross to reach the territory from the Russian mainland<sup>51</sup> following a line of deployment. For countries accessible by sea, this calculation is determined according to a set list of sea line of communication (SLOC) chokepoints and frequent Russian Navy docking ports. In determining long-distance theoretical maritime deployments to distant countries in the Southern Hemisphere, borders are determined by the regions where the Russian Navy frequently conducts port visits, i.e. not a literal count of coastlines passed.

Different Russian AOR unit sets may cross a different number of borders to reach another country due to the massive and diverse geography of the Russian Federation. Not all border crossings are determined with simple lines; some borders are marked by a paucity of infrastructure and so more circuitous routes are anticipated. For example, India is considered at a distance of five borders rather than the improbable hypothetical two of entering it across the Himalayas from China. Other AORs exercise deployments from different angles than the most direct. For example, the 1<sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army occasionally exercises operations seemingly directed at Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania but from Belarusian territory. For 1<sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army units, the threat against Latvia is therefore to require crossing two borders and Estonia three despite both countries bordering the Russian Federation. By contrast, the 6<sup>th</sup> Army threatens Estonia and Latvia directly and so is only calculated as crossing one border.

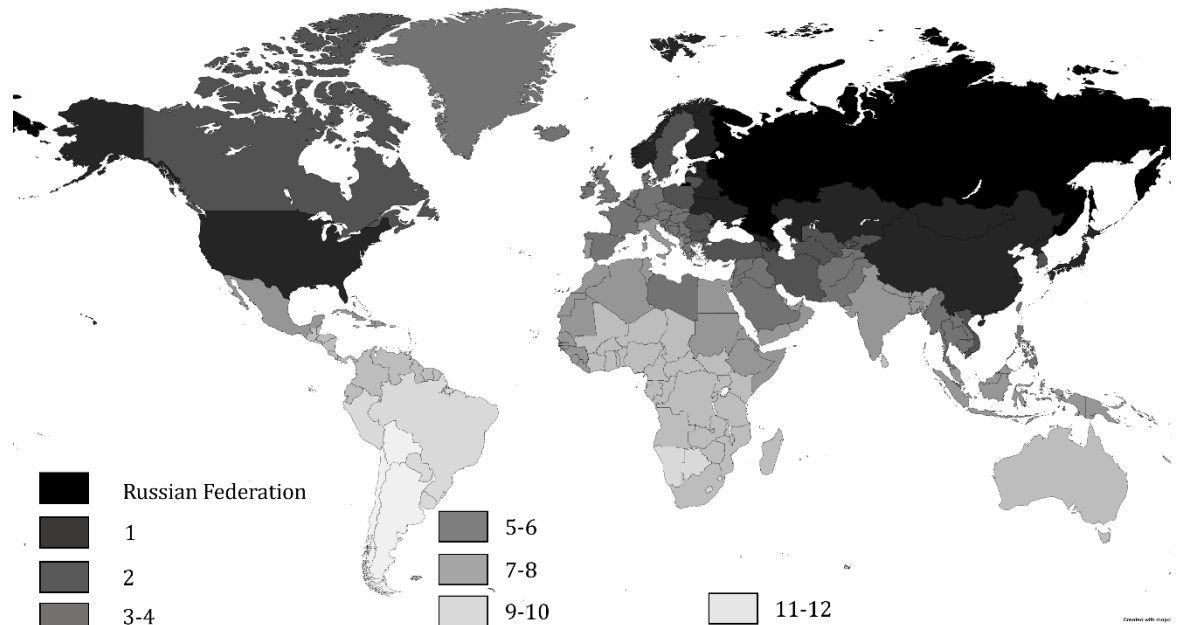
A table of all countries listed according to how many borders must be crossed to reach them by each AOR considered relevant is listed in the appendix with a list of the SLOCs considered. Map 4-3 shows the minimum number of borders this dissertation judges the Russian Armed Forces must cross to access each country.

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<sup>50</sup> This simple but crude metric reflects the constructed importance geopolitical communities, especially armed forces, attach to borders and countries. Joan DeBardeleben, 'New EU-Russian borders after enlargement: from local to transnational linkages?', *Shifting priorities in Russia's foreign and security policy*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2014, p 73.

<sup>51</sup> The Russian 'mainland' is considered to exclude overseas bases and the Kaliningrad Oblast exclave.

### Minimum Number of Border Crossings from Russian Mainland to Each Country



**Map 4-3.** Minimum number of border crossings from Russian mainland to each country

This dissertation counts all exercises according to AOR and divides the result by the number of borders listed in the appendix within the relevant *TVD(s)*. For countries immediately adjacent to a country with a Russian base disconnected from the mainland, exercises from that base are construed as immediately adjacent (i.e. divided by 1) but not beyond those immediate neighbours. Note that certain countries within a *TVD* are construed as accessible from multiple AORs. In those circumstances, both exercise counts are determined, though they are not weighted the same. Map 4-3 only shows the *minimum* number of borders to cross and some AORs can reach a country via more border crossings. Thus, an exercise by the Russian 1<sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army weighted to be five times more threatening to Ukraine than to Spain.

Cross-deployment exercises are considered as boosts to the AORs to which units travel. For each cross-deployment in a military academic season, 10% of the total home AOR core MTPS score is added to the applicable MTPS for the visited AOR's *TVD(s)*. This boost cannot exceed 100% if more than 10 cross-deployments occur. If the home AOR of the cross-deployed unit impacts the *TVD* of the visited AOR in part of in whole, this boost does not apply as that AOR's MTPS will be applied to the relevant set of countries anyway.

### *Training Activities*

The bulk of the MTPS used by this dissertation derives from publicly reported Russian training activities. Though order of battle demonstrates where a country garrisons its armed forces and equipment procurement denotes budgetary priorities for military technology, these are ultimately far less important in understanding a military's capabilities than where, how, and how frequently the military trains.

This dissertation's database relies upon official Russian disclosure of training events. This obfuscates certain details of Russian training patterns and it is impossible to determine whether this is systematic or random. The selective release of training data increases its significance as a signalling instrument as it comprises what the Russian government wants the outside world to know about its military capabilities. Rather than as a comprehensive list of all Russian military training activities, the database should be considered as a list of overt military signals.

### *Distinguishing and Quantifying Training Activities*

'Training activities' (*deyatelnosti podgotovki*) include several frequent actions the Russian military conducts on a routine basis. The most famous and important of these are 'exercises' (*ucheniya*), but others are regularly reported, the most common being 'classes' (*zanyatiya*), 'trainings' (*trenirovki*), 'goals' (*zadachi*), 'courses' (*kursi*), and 'inspections' (*proverki*). The Russian Ministry of Defence explains the definitions of these at length:

- Exercise (*uchenie*): 'The main form of combat and operational training. They are conducted with troops (forces), headquarters, and directorates of all types of the Armed Forces... As a rule, the themes of management are complex (they include several forms and methods of action). For the preparation and conduct of management, leadership is determined and a headquarters for management of the management is created, intermediaries are appointed, and, if necessary, research, control, and other groups, and the consumption of material resources and motor resources is established... Exercises are carried out as a rule continuously during the allotted time.'



Combat actions are played out in accordance with the decisions of the trainees, their orders to subordinates and actual, the position and actions of troops (forces).<sup>52</sup>

- Class (*zanyatie*): ‘A generalized name for the forms of training of military personnel, the main content of which is the transfer of information by the head to the trainees, its assimilation, as well as training in methods of action.’<sup>53</sup>
- Training (*trenirovka*): Activity to ‘acquire and improve the skills of officials in the performance of their functions, duties, and preparations...’<sup>54</sup>
- Goals (*zadachi*): Designated objectives or tasks to be achieved within a set deadline.<sup>55</sup>
- Course (*kurs*): Educational camp for a particular tactical mission set.
- Inspection (*proverka*): Activity ‘carried out in order to determine the real state of combat readiness and mobilization readiness of the military command and control units of the [Armed Forces], their readiness to carry out tasks in accordance with their mission.’<sup>56</sup>

Still other less frequent activities do not fall within these broad classifications, such as shootings (*strelby*), events (*meropriyatiya*), gatherings (*sbory*), and manoeuvres (*manevri*). Still others do not have any official label applied to them.

Of all these activities, exercises (*ucheniya*) are the most important. Nevertheless, the other training types reported are not discounted as they still indicate training priorities for the unit. This dissertation therefore counts the significance of any *uchenie* activity as double the importance of a non-*uchenie*. In calculating the MTPS therefore, *ucheniya* are counted twice whereas all other

<sup>52</sup> ‘УЧЕНИЕ’, Russian Ministry of Defence, <http://xn--d1abichgllj9dyd8a.xn--90anlfbebar6i.xn--p1ai/encyclopedia/dictionary/details.htm?id=10793@morfDictionary>. Accessed 28 November 2020.

<sup>53</sup> ‘ЗАНЯТИЕ’, Russian Ministry of Defence, <http://xn--d1abichgllj9dyd8a.xn--90anlfbebar6i.xn--p1ai/encyclopedia/dictionary/details.htm?id=5147@morfDictionary>. Accessed 28 November 2020.

<sup>54</sup> ‘КОМАНДНО-ШТАБНАЯ ТРЕНИРОВКА’, Russian Ministry of Defence, <http://xn--d1abichgllj9dyd8a.xn--90anlfbebar6i.xn--p1ai/encyclopedia/dictionary/details.htm?id=6371@morfDictionary>. Accessed 28 November 2020.

<sup>55</sup> ‘ОПЕРАТИВНАЯ ЗАДАЧА’, Russian Ministry of Defence, <http://xn--d1abichgllj9dyd8a.xn--90anlfbebar6i.xn--p1ai/encyclopedia/dictionary/details.htm?id=7637@morfDictionary>. Accessed 28 November 2020.

<sup>56</sup> ‘Проверка (контроль) состояния войск’, Russian Ministry of Defence, <http://xn--d1abichgllj9dyd8a.xn--90anlfbebar6i.xn--p1ai/encyclopedia/dictionary/details.htm?id=14689@morfDictionary>. Accessed 28 November 2020.

training activities are only counted once.

To avoid the vague term ‘activity’, this dissertation refers to all Russian training activities as ‘exercises’ elsewhere. When a distinction must be made between an *uchenie* and other Russian military training activities, this dissertation uses the word ‘*uchenie*’ (plural ‘*ucheniya*’).

### Categorising Training Evolutions

Most Russian exercises practice a specific tactical scenario. Some larger *ucheniya* focus more on the employment of a unit at a particular level of activity. The database distinguishes all Russian exercises into almost one hundred categories. Each one of these categories is in turn weighted according to complexity to generate an overarching quantitative score. The 92 different categories, their weighting, and their different types of opposition are listed in the Appendix.<sup>57</sup> All exercise details are drawn from the Russian Ministry of Defence website, *Krasnaya Zvezda* military journal, *Izvestiya* newspaper, TASS, or RIA newswires.

In some especially complex *ucheniya*, the Russian Ministry of Defence publishes multiple press releases about constituent tactical evolutions within the larger scenario. When this occurs, each tactic is recorded in the database, though these constituent events are not numbered as separate exercises.

Between the 92 types of exercises and 25 types of opposition, 2,300 total possibilities exist for each recorded Russian exercise, though many combinations do not occur in practice (e.g. space launches against terrorists). An ‘engineer’ exercise with an ‘infrastructure’ opposition generally refers to clearing a minefield whereas an ‘engineer’ exercise with a ‘disruption’ opposition refers to laying a minefield. Taken together, this offers a comprehensive means of understanding all reported Russian military activities and offers the groundwork for definitively quantifying military threat in each AOR and TVD. Whereas the exercise types indicate the complexity and nature of military planning in a given

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<sup>57</sup> See Appendix.

region, the opposition types indicate the anticipated challenge, e.g. conventional or unconventional warfare.

### Other Factors in Quantifying the MTPS

Several other factors are used to determine whether and how a reported Russian military activity within a set AOR can be said to comprise a threat potential to another country.

Perhaps most important is the simple frequency of reported training activities. Each instance of an exercise is carefully documented. The Russian Armed Forces train in two seasons: winter (December - May) and summer (June - November). Conscripts in the Russian Armed Forces are obliged to complete only twelve months of service. This dissertation therefore calculates the MTPS on a rolling twelve-month basis to reflect the entirety of a recent round of training. This also conveniently enables simple comparison with Russian diplomatic activity over the same or an analogous period.

Also important is the role of international exercises. Russia conducts many exercises in AORs affecting TVDs encompassing its allies, but these exercises frequently are not intended to communicate a potential threat but rather protective capacity.<sup>58</sup> The MTPS adjusts for this in a similar way to how it adjusts for visiting units as described in 3.1.2.1.1. First, the number of international exercises the Russian Armed Forces conducts with an international partner is calculated for the considered 12-month period. Second, this number is decimated. Third, the total MTPS for country is reduced by the percentage yielded from the decimation (e.g. Russia conducting three exercises with country X in a 12-month period results in the total baseline MTPS to that country being reduced by 30% for that period). As above, this is capped at 10 exercises so that no country has a negative MTPS score. In the years considered, only Armenia in 2019 and Belarus in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2021 recorded more than 10 joint exercises with Russia.

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<sup>58</sup> Isabelle Facon, 'Military exercises: the Russian way', *The Russian military in contemporary perspective*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2019, p 234-236.

Russian exercises conducted abroad not only offer solidarity to the country with which Russia is exercising but also might communicate a threat or other deterrent message to that country's neighbours and opponents. Accordingly, for exercises Russia conducts in a foreign country, all that country's neighbours experience a percentage increase to their own MTPS of  $x\%$  where  $x$  equals ten times the quantity of exercises Russia conducted abroad. Though this effect need not be capped at 10, the greatest quantity of exercises Russia reported in a single other country within one year was 8 in the Russian-recognized state of the breakaway Georgian province Abkhazia in 2020. An additional five times the quantity of exercises Russia conducted abroad is added to countries with direct maritime access to the visited country approachable from an angle not possible from Russian territory; for example, exercises conducted in China offer this half threat to Taiwan as Russia does not border the Taiwan Strait whereas exercises conducted in Abkhazia do not add this half threat to Turkey as Russia is already on the Black Sea.

Russian strategic nuclear exercises generate MTPS scores according to the same metrics listed in the Appendix but are not applied along *TVD* lines emanating from an AOR. Instead, strategic nuclear exercises - defined as Strategic Rocket Forces (RVSN), Long Range Aviation (LRA), and Ballistic Missile Submarine (SSBN) activities - direct their MTPS proportionally to the nuclear-armed countries. As the Russian Federation and the United States have substantially larger nuclear arsenals than the rest of the world, this threat is calculated as the United States is threatened by 100% of this capability whereas other nuclear countries are threatened at the same percentage of the total as the size of their arsenal is publicly recorded as constituting that of the United States, i.e. as shown in Table 4-3. Countries with nuclear sharing agreements with the United States are also subject to nuclear threats.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Quantity of Warheads</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
United States	5,550	100%
People's Republic of China	350	6.3%
France	290	5.2%
United Kingdom	225	4.1%
Pakistan	165	3.0%
India	156	2.8%
Israel	90	1.6%
North Korea	40	0.7%
Italy*	40	0.7%
Belgium*	20	0.4%
Germany*	20	0.4%
Netherlands*	20	0.4%
Turkey*	20	0.4%

Sources: 'Global nuclear arsenals grow as states continue to modernize - New SIPRI Yearbook out now', Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 14 June 2021, <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2021/global-nuclear-arsenals-grow-states-continue-modernize-new-sipri-yearbook-out-now>. Accessed 20 January 2022. Hans M. Kristensen, 'United States nuclear weapons, 2021', *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, 77:1, p 43-63.

Though numbers shifted somewhat over the years covered in this dissertation, the percentages did not shift sufficiently to merit a dynamic scoring system.

\*Countries with nuclear sharing agreements with the United States

Strategic nuclear MTPS is adjudicated to each of these 13 countries with the percentage of regularly-calculated threat from the exercises listed above.

### Naval Influence

This neat paradigm breaks down somewhat when it comes to naval exercises both as they can take place in international territory and because they can circumvent borders land-based troops may need to cross. Russian naval exercises are therefore counted separately and according to a slightly different method.

Though MTPS scores are still generated per region according to the list in the Appendix, seas and oceans are used instead of AORs. Exercises occurring in a sea apply their full score to all countries bordering that sea. Half their score applies to all countries not bordering the sea but coming within 1,000km of the sea to represent potential threat from non-contact weapons. Oceanic exercises apply full scores to countries on the nearest continent to which the exercise is reported and half points to other countries around the ocean.

A list of how this applies to each country can be found in the Appendix. Over the years for which Russian military exercises were tracked for this dissertation, 89% of all MTPS generated occurred in seas immediately bordering Russia.<sup>59</sup> Naval exercises at large only accounted for 11% of Russian exercises on or above land. Russia remains very much a land power, but its navy does still contribute certain military and signalling capabilities.

### Absolute vs Proportional MTPS

Over the period covered by this dissertation, the Russian government published an increasing quantity of material. This does not necessarily indicate increasing capabilities but does indicate a growing willingness to communicate Russia's military capabilities. Consequently, the absolute MTPS scores of every AOR increased by between 25% and more than 1,000%.<sup>60</sup> Though significant in and of itself, this creates the impression that the Russian threat was increasing toward all countries.

Accordingly, this dissertation considers two MTPS sets: the absolute scores which increased over the years (AMTPS) and a proportional score reflecting a share of the total (PMTPS). This allows examination of which AORs saw threat grow and shrink as an overall percentage as well as tracking the marked increase of communicated exercises from 2019.

The PMTPS is calculated by dividing each season (winter and summer of each year)'s AOR core MTPS from 100 where 0 indicates no exercises recorded as occurring and 100 indicates all exercises occurred in that AOR. As each year consists of two seasons, the maximum possible PMTPS is 200. It is applied to each country in the same manner that AMTPS is as described above and supplemented in the Appendix.

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<sup>59</sup> Baltic Sea, Barents Sea, Black Sea, Caspian Sea, Sea of Japan, Sea of Okhotsk, and White Sea as well as the northwest Pacific Ocean off the Kamchatka peninsula.

<sup>60</sup> The highest gains of over 1,000% represent AORs that were being seriously reformed in 2014: the Moscow-centred 1<sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army and the Crimea-based 22<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps. However, the third most dramatic increase was over 1,000% for Russian units in Central Asia. The average increase across all AORs was 641%. The sole exception to this trend was the 102<sup>nd</sup> Military Base in Armenia, which reported almost no exercises in 2021 amidst political fallout from the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War, but which had registered a 227% increase from 2014 to 2020.

## Correlation of Foreign and Military Policy

To determine whether foreign and military policy are correlated, this dissertation uses the Pearson's  $r$  method to measure the relationship between FPQS and MTPS. Because both the FPQS and MTPS variables are ratio, Pearson's  $r$  enables a measurement of the strength and direction of the relationship more effectively than other correlation models such as Spearman's rank correlation.<sup>61</sup>

The Russian government's reported trade turnover with each interlocutor is employed as an independent variable affecting the dependent variable FPQS. This enables comparison with the correlation of Russian military policy via MTPS to determine which independent variable has a more robust effect on the quality of foreign relations. Trade turnover can be considered exogenously from either FPQS or MTPS because it is relatively difficult for the Russian government to artificially increase it whereas it can order an increased or decreased quantity of military exercises. Russian President Vladimir Putin himself frequently cites the previous year's trade turnover in his diplomatic meetings as a barometer of good or bad relations.<sup>62</sup> This suggests that this would be the alternative hypothesis brought by the Russian government in response to the proposition that one might be able to judge whether a Russian bilateral relationship is positive or negative based on the frequency and intensity of military exercises. As these figures are not generated in real time, this dissertation uses the trade turnover from the previous year as the potential reference point the Russian government would be reviewing in its decision to pursue friendlier or more adversarial relations with an interlocutor.

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<sup>61</sup> Bryman,, p 227-229. Matthew David & Carole D. Sutton, *Social Research: An Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, London: Sage, 2011, p 522-523.

<sup>62</sup> E.g. 'Встреча с Президентом Казахстана Касым-Жомартом Токаевым' [Meeting with President of Kazakhstan Kasym-Jomart Tokayev], Kremlin, 21 August 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66419>. Accessed 22 January 2022. 'Встреча с Президентом Турции Реджепом Тайипом Эрдоганом' [Meeting with President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan], Kremlin, 29 September 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66800>. Accessed 22 January 2022. 'Встреча с Президентом Финляндии Саули Ниинистё' [Meeting with President of Finland Sauli Niinistö], Kremlin, 29 October 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67033>. Accessed 22 January 2022. 'Встреча с Президентом Узбекистана Шавкатом Мирзиёевым' [Meeting with President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev], Kremlin, 19 November 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67142>. Accessed 22 January 2022.



The methodology for determining the correlation of foreign and military policies is therefore demonstrating whether military exercises (MTPS) or this previous year's trade turnover is better correlated with the quality of Russian foreign relations (FPQS) with a given interlocutor. If trade better correlates, then Russian foreign policy can be shown to be reactive to external pressures as Russia seeks greater market access and economic performance. If exercises better correlate, then Russian military policy can be shown to better reflect Moscow's official thinking than economic performance would suggest.

As FPQS is more of a constructed value, it is treated as the dependent variable in this analysis. If previous trade turnover predicts FPQS, presumably the conduct of Russian foreign policy is in response to this trade. By contrast, if the relationship is primarily based upon Russian military capabilities, foreign policy might be presumed to be based on whether Russia perceives itself as having sufficient military capabilities to enable pursuing an 'independent foreign policy'<sup>63</sup> regardless of the other side's political interests, i.e. as a 'sovereign' state as Putin has defined the concept.<sup>64</sup> In both formulations, FPQS should follow from the other variable; trade cannot be increased by foreign policy and the political dimension of military exercises would suggest that these assist in communicating foreign policy rather than reacting to foreign policy.<sup>65</sup>

This dissertation tests three interrelated hypotheses:

1. PMTPS has a stronger relationship with FPQS than trade turnover.
2. PMTPS has a negative relationship with FPQS (i.e. a greater military threat expressed through military exercises is correlated with a worse bilateral diplomatic relationship).
3. Trade turnover has a positive relationship with FPQS (i.e. greater trade turnover is correlated with a better bilateral diplomatic relationship).

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<sup>63</sup> This formula is how Russian military thinkers imagine the cause of strain in Russia-US relations: whereas the United States pursues a policy of global hegemony, Russia resists this with an 'independent foreign policy'. Dmitriy Pavlov & Vladimir Sizlov, "Тенденции изменения угроз военной безопасности Российской Федерации" [Trends in the transformation of threats to the military security of the Russian Federation], *Военная Мысль*, Issue 11, 2021, p 16-21.

<sup>64</sup> 'Заседание Совета Безопасности' [Meeting of the Security Council], Kremlin, 22 July 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46305>. Accessed 7 March 2022.

<sup>65</sup> Beatrice Heuser & Harold Simpson, 'The missing political dimension of military exercises', *The RUSI Journal*, 162:3, 2017, p 20-28.

If the first proposition is true, the foreign policy of the Russian Federation may be said to be more militarized than economically driven. If the second is true, Russian military policy may be said to incorporate a policy of threatening or intimidating Russian diplomatic adversaries. If the third is true, it may be said that Russian foreign policy can be tempered by the importance of economic ties.

Ten other variables are used to test the correlation between FPQS and alternatively MTPS and trade turnover within smaller selections. Each interlocutor is listed with its full complement of these variables in the Appendix by year in addition to FPQS, PMTPS, AMTPS, and previous year's trade turnover.

1. Distance from the Russian Federation measured in quantity of borders one must cross from Russia to reach its territory<sup>66</sup>
2. Whether the country was a former Soviet republic<sup>67</sup>
3. Quantity of different diplomatic bureaux consulting the interlocutor's government (DFM)<sup>68</sup>
4. Range of quantity of interest (IC)<sup>69</sup>
5. Relative degree of cooperation compared to quantity of interest<sup>70</sup>
6. Region<sup>71</sup>
7. Net trade flow<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Numerical variable used to gauge whether there is a relative difference between the 'near abroad' and beyond. Limited to above zero.

<sup>67</sup> A logical proposition used to gauge whether there is an absolute difference between the 'near abroad' and beyond.

<sup>68</sup> Numerical variable of the quantity of different deputy foreign ministers interacting with an interlocutor's government in a given year intended to differentiate between those countries to which Moscow ascribes global significance (higher number) or lesser significance (lower number). Limited to zero-eight.

<sup>69</sup> Numerical variable counting the quantity of data points recorded in the database toward each individual interlocutor. Higher numbers indicate a greater proportion of scarce bureaucratic attention dedicated toward the interlocutor than lower numbers. Limited to above zero.

<sup>70</sup> Numerical variable organised ordinally dividing the FPQS by IC to determine the relative degree of cooperation. A score of 0.75-1.25 is considered normal with relations mostly functionally following the quantity of interaction. A score exceeding 1.25 suggests a large degree of cooperation because of the higher quantity of high-level state meetings, military exercises, favourable information, and agreements necessary for such an excess to be generated in the methodology. A score of 0-0.75 is considered low as it suggests negative information and punishments reduced the expected FPQS. A negative score is considered adversarial as it requires that FPQS be negative. Unlimited variable.

<sup>71</sup> Nominal variable designating the continent, *TVD*, or other region where the interlocutor is located. The regions considered are Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and North America. In addition, the *TVDs* are Western (continental Europe), North-western (Baltic region and Scandinavia), South-western (Mediterranean), Near Eastern (Caucasus and Middle East), Middle Eastern (Central and South Asia), Far Eastern (East Asia), North-eastern (northeast Russia, Alaska), North American, South American, African, and Australian (incorporating much of Oceania).

<sup>72</sup> Ordinal variable reducing all trade turnover into two categories: net importers for those interlocutors from whom Russia imports more than it exports and net exporters for those to which Russia exports more than it imports.

8. Degree of politicization as a metric of trade per quantity of interest<sup>73</sup>

9. Year<sup>74</sup>

10. Formal alliance<sup>75</sup>

Variables 1 and 2 enables examination to what extent the ‘near abroad’ perception of Russia’s immediate neighbours impacts Russian policies.<sup>76</sup> Variable 3 enables examination whether status<sup>77</sup> in the international system impacts these policies by separating countries Russia considers great powers from others. Variables 4 and 5 reduce the heteroscedasticity of the distribution of the independent and dependent variable scores relative to both as smaller countries approach the (0,0) coordinate whilst larger ones can vary considerably.<sup>78</sup> Variable 6 enables disaggregation of quantitative effects by geography.<sup>79</sup> Variables 7 and 8 more closely examine potential intermediary variables<sup>80</sup> in relationship between FPQS and trade. Variable 9 allows examination into the temporal variation in these correlations to see if the overarching trends are transient. Variable 10 allows insight into whether the existence of formal alliances affect how Moscow approaches the bilateral relationships.<sup>81</sup> These ten variables to control for certain factors potentially intervening in the correlation generate 64 different relationships, all results of which are listed in the Appendix with a specific number to identify them as will be referred to below.

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<sup>73</sup> Numerical variable in which the trade turnover is divided by the IC and compared to Russia’s annual total trade divided by total IC for all interlocutors. The result is always a positive number as each variable must be zero or a positive number. A score greater than 1 indicates a relatively unpoliticized relationship because total interaction is less than would be supposed if Russian political interest was distributed exactly according to trade turnover; a score between 0 and 1 indicates a relatively politicized relationship.

<sup>74</sup> An ordinal numerical variable controlling for a given year surveyed.

<sup>75</sup> Nominal variable indicating whether an interlocutor is an ally of the United States, of the Russian Federation, or neither (non-aligned).

<sup>76</sup> E.g. David R. Cameron & Mitchell A. Orenstein, ‘Post-Soviet authoritarianism: the influence of Russia in its “near abroad”’, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 28:1, 2012, p 1-44. Gerard Toal, *Near abroad: Putin, the West and the contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*, Oxford University Press, 2017.

<sup>77</sup> Tuomas Forsberg, Regina Heller, & Reinhard Wolf, ‘Status and emotions in Russian foreign policy’, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 47:3-4, 2014, p 261-268. Deborah Welch Larson & Alexi Shevchenko, *Quest for status: Chinese and Russian foreign policy*, Yale University Press, 2019.

<sup>78</sup> Raymond J. Carroll, ‘Adapting for heteroscedasticity in linear models’, *Ann. Statist.*, 10:4, December 1982, p 1224-1233.

<sup>79</sup> Jeffrey Mankoff, *Russian foreign policy: the return of great power politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2011. Ed. Natasha Kuhrt, *Russia and the world: the internal-external nexus*, London: Routledge, 2013. Gvosdev & Marsh 2014. Ed. Roger E. Kanet & Rémi Piet, *Shifting priorities in Russia’s foreign and security policy*, Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2014. Robert Nalbandov, *Not by bread alone: Russian foreign policy under Putin*, Lincoln, Nebraska: Potomac Books, 2016. Angela E. Stent, *Putin’s world: Russia against the West and with the rest*, New York: Twelve, 2019.

<sup>80</sup> Bryman, p 231.

<sup>81</sup> Signorino & Ritter, p 115-144.

## The Analysis

To analyse the results of these 64 relationships, this dissertation uses the Pearson's  $r$  test. As the correlation between the variables is bounded by +1 (for perfect positive correlation) and -1 (for perfect negative correlation) with 0 representing absence of correlation, Table 4-4 is used as a determination for the strength of the correlation to be considered:

<i>Absolute Value of Coefficient Range</i>	<i>Relative Strength</i>
0	No relationship
0-0.2	Very weak, negligible relationship
0.2-0.4	Weak, low association
0.4-0.7	Moderate association
0.7-0.9	Strong, high, marked association
0.9-1	Very high, very strong relationship
1	Perfect association

Source: George Argyrous, *Statistics for research: with a guide to SPSS*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, SAGE, 2011.

This dissertation therefore considers any relationship for which the correlation coefficient is 0.4 or less as incapable of rejecting the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the two variables.

### Relating Military Exercises to Foreign Policy Quality (PMTPS and FPQS)

Without control variable filters on the data (relationship 0), a correlation test of the PMTPS and FPQS of all 1,625 country-years examined by this dissertation yields a correlation coefficient of -0.11. Though this indicates a negative relationship as expected in the first hypothesis, it is a very weak or negligible relationship which fails to reject the null hypothesis. As military exercises require some time to organise, implying there may be a delay between a turn in foreign policy and the increase or decrease in military exercises, a separate test comparing FPQS and the PMTPS of the next year was also run, but resulted in an even lower correlation coefficient of -0.07. Altogether, this would indicate a negligible link between the quantity and complexity of military exercises as measured by PMTPS with the quality of a bilateral foreign policy as measured by FPQS, with PMTPS accounting for only 1.2% of the variation in FPQS.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>82</sup> As measured by the coefficient of determination derivable from Pearson's  $r$ . Bryman, p 229.

Nevertheless, control variables' filters upon the data did yield stronger correlation coefficients. 17 such relationships, for which the absolute value of the coefficient exceeded 0.4, are listed in Table 4-5.

**Table 4-5.** Relationships in which the Correlation Coefficient in Pearson's *r* Test between PMTPS and FPQS exceeded 0.4

<i>Rel #</i>	<i>Control</i>	<i>Correlation Coefficient</i>	<i>Direction</i>	<i>Sample Size</i>
4.8	Far Eastern TVD	0.84	Positive	112
2.1	DFM = 0	-0.72	Negative	475
4.2	Asia	0.69	Positive	452
4.12	North American TVD	-0.69	Negative	176
4.5	Western Hemisphere	-0.69	Negative	280
4.16	Western TVD	-0.63	Negative	176
4.9	Middle Eastern TVD	0.62	Positive	120
6.1	Most Unpoliticized	0.56	Positive	168
6.6	Relatively Politicized	-0.56	Negative	103
4.22	Asia without China	0.55	Positive	344
4.15	Southwestern TVD	-0.53	Negative	208
3.2	Normal Cooperation relative to IC	0.52	Positive	377
10.2	Near Abroad	-0.51	Negative	144
9.3	Medium IC	-0.49	Negative	208
4.1	Europe	-0.44	Negative	400
9.4	Low IC	-0.43	Negative	312
4.13	North-western TVD	-0.42	Negative	64

Thus, though the relationship does not exist globally, it does when controlling for certain variables, especially geography. Though most of these significant correlations are negative as expected in the hypothesis, notable exceptions exist, especially in Asia. Also of note is the mirror positive relationship between PMTPS and FPQS for the most unpoliticized countries and negative relationship for relatively politicized ones.

The most important patterns emerging from these relationships can be summarised as follows:

- Whereas Russian military exercises as measured by PMTPS are used to threaten interlocutors in the West as indicated by the strong negative correlation, they seem to be used as a demonstration of strength for Russia as a partner toward interlocutors in the East where a positive relationship places more exercises near countries more favourably disposed to Moscow.
- This effect is uneven in Europe with the northern European plain (Western

*TVD*) most impacted in these years relative to the Balkans (South-western *TVD*) AND Scandinavia (North-western *TVD*).

- Countries of the least significance to Moscow (relationship 2.1) possess the strongest negative relationship, suggesting military exercises are used with impunity against those interlocutors Russian diplomats are content to ignore. The coefficient of determination indicates that 51% of the variation in FPQS can be explained by PMTPS.
- Though the 'near abroad' is subjected to the hypothesised threats from Russian military exercises (relationship 10.2), this relationship is somewhat weaker than other parts of Europe.

All this suggests that the relationship between Russian military exercises and foreign policy quality is less weak as suggested by the global relationship (0) than it is contradictory among several categories, especially those listed in Table 5. The second hypothesis is therefore slightly more true than false but too simplistic.

#### Relating Trade Turnover to Foreign Policy Quality (FPQS)

Among all country-year dyads (relationship 0), the correlation coefficient between the previous year's trade turnover and FPQS was a mere 0.08, again suggesting an extremely weak relationship against which the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. The relationship is positive as expected in the third hypothesis. The magnitude of the correlation is less than the 0.11 of PMTPS to FPQS, technically affirming the first hypothesis but with only a 0.03 gap, representing less than 0.1% difference in effect upon FPQS.

However, for 22 of the 64 relationships incorporating control variables, a correlation coefficient greater than 0.4 was found. These are listed in Table 4-6. Notably, 7 of the 8 highest correlation coefficients (by absolute value) between trade turnover and FPQS are also among the most strongly coordinated between PMTPS and FPQS. Further, the direction of the correlation for all those 7 are the same, rampantly ignoring the hypotheses. Though again the geographic control variables proved the most strongly correlated, a fair number of other categories also showed a significant relationship between trade turnover and FPQS.

**Table 4-6.** Relationships in which the Correlation Coefficient in Pearson's *r* Test between the Previous Year's Trade Turnover and FPQS exceeded 0.4

<i>Rel #</i>	<i>Control</i>	<i>Correlation Coefficient</i>	<i>Direction</i>	<i>Sample Size</i>
4.8	Far Eastern <i>TVD</i>	0.84	Positive	112
4.7	Australian <i>TVD</i>	0.84	Positive	128
4.12	North American <i>TVD</i>	-0.84	Negative	176
4.5	Western Hemisphere	-0.81	Negative	280
6.6	Relatively Politicized	-0.77	Negative	103
6.1	Most Unpoliticized	0.70	Positive	168
4.9	Middle Eastern <i>TVD</i>	0.64	Positive	120
4.2	Asia	0.62	Positive	352
6.7	Most Politicized	-0.59	Negative	881
6.3	Somewhat Unpoliticized	0.58	Positive	143
6.2	Normal Cooperation	0.52	Positive	377
8.4	Russian or PRC Ally	0.52	Positive	88
8.3	Russian Ally	0.50	Positive	72
3.3	Low Cooperation	0.48	Positive	128
1.6	Most Distant from Russia	0.48	Positive	891
4.6	African <i>TVD</i>	0.47	Positive	408
3.1	High Cooperation	0.46	Positive	106
8.1	Non-Aligned	-0.42	Negative	1156
6.4	Average Politicization	0.41	Positive	314
6.9	All Politicized	-0.41	Negative	1155

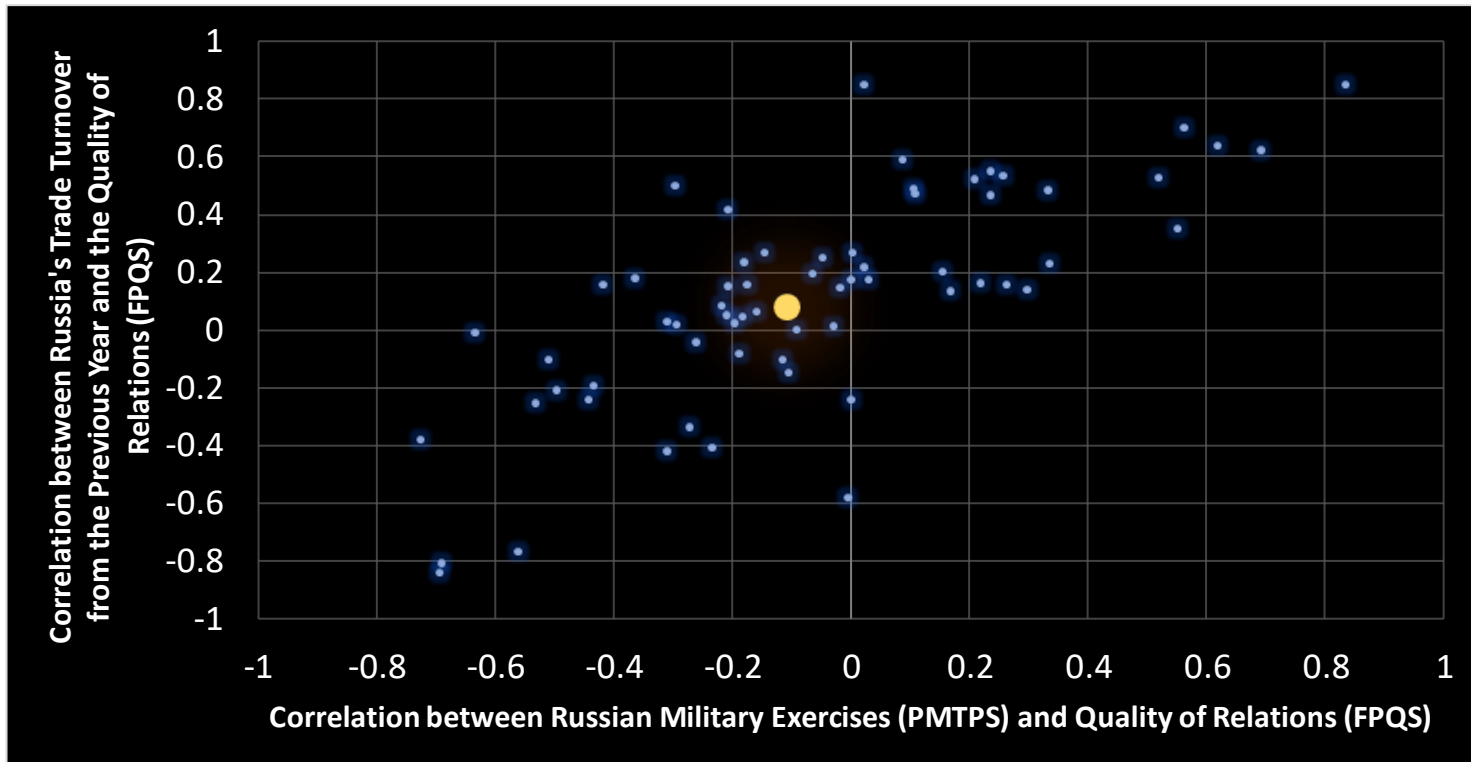
The most important patterns among these control results are:

- Trade's potential impact on foreign policy quality towards an interlocutor again varied geographically. Whereas it was indicative of a good relationship in Asia, in the Western Hemisphere (where Canada and the United States have by far the largest trade relationships with the Russian Federation), trade predicted exactly the opposite pattern by correlation.
- Politicized interlocutors had negative correlations between trade and foreign policy quality whereas unpoliticized interlocutors had positive ones.
- Russia's allies had positive correlations between trade turnover and foreign policy quality whereas non-aligned interlocutors had the opposite.



### Comparing the Correlation among the Two Variable Relationships

Chart 4-1 illustrates the distribution of the various correlation coefficients for each of the relationships with the relation between military exercises and foreign relations on the horizontal axis and the relation between trade turnover and foreign relations on the vertical axis. The larger point marks the global correlation (relationship 0).



**Chart 4-1.** Correlation scores between PMTPS and FPQS (horizontal axis) vs between trade turnover and FPQS (vertical axis). Global relationship (0) highlighted.

The first hypothesis proposes that military exercises (PMTPS) will have a stronger correlation with foreign policy quality (FPQS) than trade turnover. As was shown above, the global correlation between PMTPS and FPQS is indeed stronger than that between the previous year's trade turnover and FPQS but both correlations are extremely weak and the difference only amounts to 0.04 in strength. Thus, though that hypothesis could be technically affirmed, it seems such a slight difference that little conclusion can be made of it.

However, a number of control variables filter the results to sets in which PMTPS clearly has a stronger correlation than trade turnover. For the purposes of this dissertation, having a correlation coefficient with an absolute value at least 0.1 greater than its trade turnover complement provided the PMTPS-FPQS

correlation coefficient absolute value is at least 0.4 as explained above denotes a relationship in which military exercises are considered more impactful upon foreign policy quality than trade turnover. Such a methodology gives 9 of the eligible 17 control variables in which this is the case, listed in Table 4-7.

**Table 4-7.** Relationships in which the Correlation Coefficient in Pearson's  $r$  Test between PMTPS and FPQS exceeded 0.4 and in which the Absolute Value of the Coefficient exceeded that between Trade Turnover and FPQS by at least 0.1

<i>Rel #</i>	<i>Control</i>	<i>Exercise Coefficient</i>	<i>Trade Coefficient</i>	<i>Difference</i>
4.16	Western TVD	-0.63	-0.01	0.62
10.2	Near Abroad	-0.51	-0.11	0.40
2.1	Negligible Significance	-0.72	-0.39	0.34
9.3	Medium IC	-0.49	-0.21	-0.28
4.15	South-western TVD	-0.53	-0.26	0.27
4.13	North-western TVD	-0.42	0.15	0.26
9.4	Low IC	-0.43	-0.19	0.24
4.22	Asia without China	0.55	0.35	0.21
4.1	Europe	-0.44	-0.24	0.20

Note that in all these controls except the north-western TVD (Scandinavia), the direction of the correlation is the same between the two variable relationships. Also notable again is the domination of geographic controls in this list with Europe and its subdivisions again quite prominent.

**Table 4-8.** Relationships in which the Correlation Coefficient in Pearson's  $r$  Test between Trade Turnover and FPQS exceeded 0.4 and in which the Absolute Value of the Coefficient exceeded that between PMTPS and FPQS by at least 0.1

<i>Rel #</i>	<i>Control</i>	<i>Exercise Coefficient</i>	<i>Trade Coefficient</i>	<i>Difference</i>
4.7	Australian TVD	0.02	0.84	0.82
6.7	Most Politicized	-0.00	-0.59	0.58
6.3	Somewhat Unpoliticized	0.09	0.58	0.49
3.3	Low Cooperation	0.11	0.48	0.38
4.6	African TVD	0.11	0.47	0.36
6.2	Relatively Unpoliticized	0.24	0.55	0.31
8.4	Russian and PRC Allies	0.21	0.52	0.31
6.8	All Unpoliticized	0.26	0.53	0.27
3.1	High Cooperation	0.24	0.46	0.23
6.6	Relatively Politicized	-0.56	-0.77	0.21
6.4	Average Politicization	-0.20	0.41	0.21
8.3	Russian Allies	-0.29	0.50	0.21
6.9	All Politicized	-0.23	-0.41	0.18
4.12	North American TVD	-0.69	-0.84	0.15
1.6	Distant from Russia	0.33	0.48	0.15
6.1	Most Unpoliticized	0.56	0.70	0.13
4.5	Western Hemisphere	-0.69	-0.81	-0.12
8.1	Non-aligned Countries	-0.31	-0.42	-0.11

The same methodology for determining which control variables elicit a stronger correlation between trade turnover and foreign policy quality than between military exercises and foreign policy quality finds 18 of the 22 possible control variables with such an advantage as listed in Table 4-8.

Again, nearly all these relationships had the same direction for both PMTPS and trade turnover. In addition, though a couple geographical regions - especially those most distant from Russian territory - feature greater trade than exercise correlation, the controls for politicization and alliance feature somewhat more prominently on this list.

## Conclusions

This distribution of data suggests that worldwide trends in the intersection of Russian foreign, military, and trade policy do statistically exist, they are rather weak and not easily susceptible to theoretical explanation. Nevertheless, sufficient data exists to examine whether the three propositions of the hypothesis can be affirmed or rejected. In addition, a variety of significant correlations do exist for several observations within some of the variables controlled in the quantitative analysis above.

## Assessing the Hypotheses

Reiterating from above, the core hypotheses are:

1. PMTPS has a stronger relationship with FPQS than trade turnover.
2. PMTPS has a negative relationship with FPQS (i.e. a greater military threat expressed through military exercises is correlated with a worse bilateral diplomatic relationship).
3. Trade turnover has a positive relationship with FPQS (i.e. greater trade turnover is correlated with a better bilateral diplomatic relationship).

With caveats, the figures above suggest that all three propositions are true or at least more true than false. However, the quantitative relationships established for each of these propositions is quite weak and bedevilled by outliers.

Referring to Chart 4-1, the second and third hypotheses can be tested according to their distribution into the four quadrants of the chart bounded by +1 and -1 on both axes in a manner elaborated in Table 4-9.

<i>Quadrant</i>	<i>X-Axis (Exercises)</i>	<i>Y-Axis (Trade)</i>	<i>Hypotheses Implications</i>
I	Positive	Positive	Rejects Hypothesis 2, Confirms Hypothesis 3
II	Negative	Positive	Confirms Hypothesis 2, Confirms Hypothesis 3
III	Negative	Negative	Confirms Hypothesis 2, Rejects Hypothesis 3
IV	Positive	Negative	Rejects Hypothesis 2, Rejects Hypothesis 3

Reflecting the restrictions on conclusions above, the global relationship (0) is located in quadrant II, indicating a weak confirmation of both the second and third hypotheses. Table 4-10 disaggregates the 64 relationships according to quadrant first among all relationships and then among those in which at least one of the correlations reached an absolute value of 0.4, i.e. of significance.

<i>Quadrant</i>	<i>All Tests</i>	<i>Tests in which at least one coefficient's absolute value is 0.4</i>
Quadrant I	24	16
Quadrant II	20	2
Quadrant III	19	13
Quadrant IV	1	0

Table 4-10 indicates that, unweighted for relative strength of the outcomes of the correlation tests (i.e. the second column), the control variables selected above did not indicate conclusive evidence that both hypotheses 2 and 3 are correct. However, Table 4-10 does suggest that the probability that neither hypothesis is true (quadrant IV) is exceptionally unlikely with only a single relationship (9.2: moderately high IC) falling into this category.

However, when restricting the findings to those in which at least one of the relationships is significance according to the coefficient of correlation, the quadrant confirming both hypotheses is decimated relatively to those confirming one or the other. Overall, this suggests a trend also visible in Chart 4-1, namely that the correlations themselves among the three data sets are positively coordinated: especially among the significant correlations, a negative

relationship between PMTPS and FPQS is more likely to be associated with a negative relationship between trade turnover and FPQS. Among those relationships confirming one hypothesis but rejecting the other, the affirmation of hypothesis 3 (the positive relationship between trade and foreign policy quality) appears very marginally stronger as more relationships yield results in Quadrant I than Quadrant III, casting some greater aspersion on hypothesis 1.

Returning to the global relationship (0), Charts 4-2 and 4-3 offer scatterplot renditions of the various datapoints to illustrate the relationships between FPQS and PMTPS and trade turnover respectively. The charts reveal a rather heteroskedastic distribution of data, complicating linear regression analysis and potentially suggesting the influence outliers on the data at large.

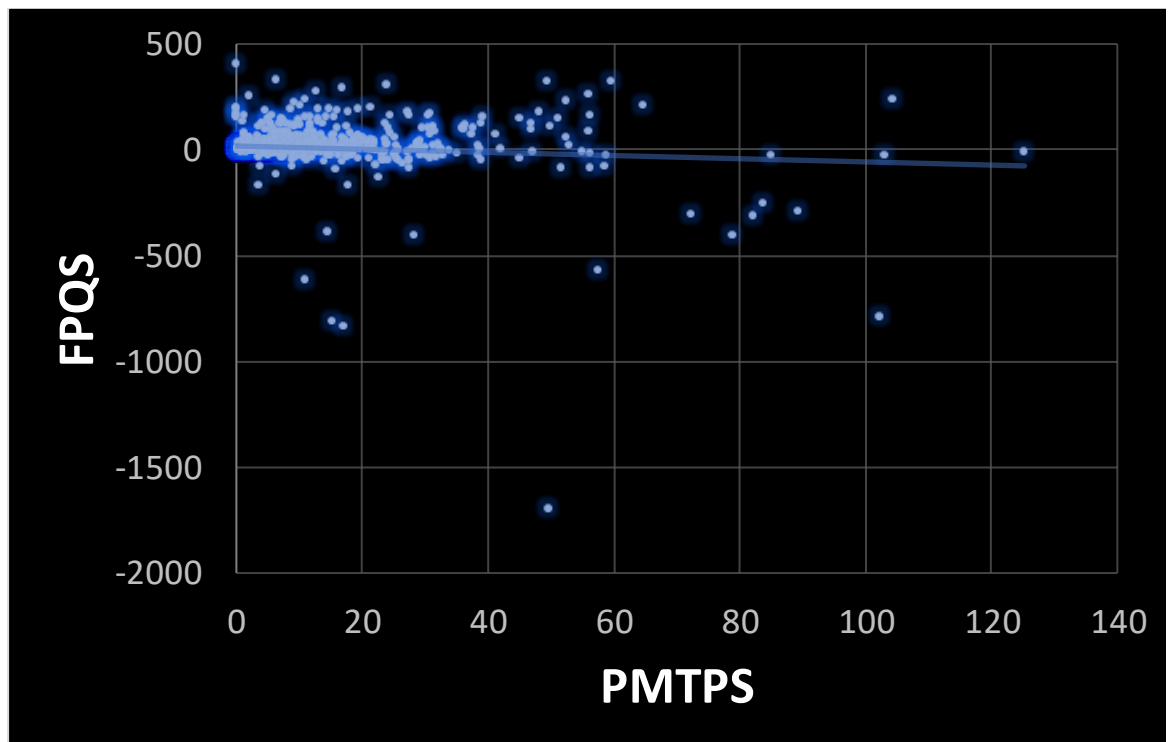


Chart 4-2. Scatterplot of Global Russian PMTPS and FPQS, 2014-2021

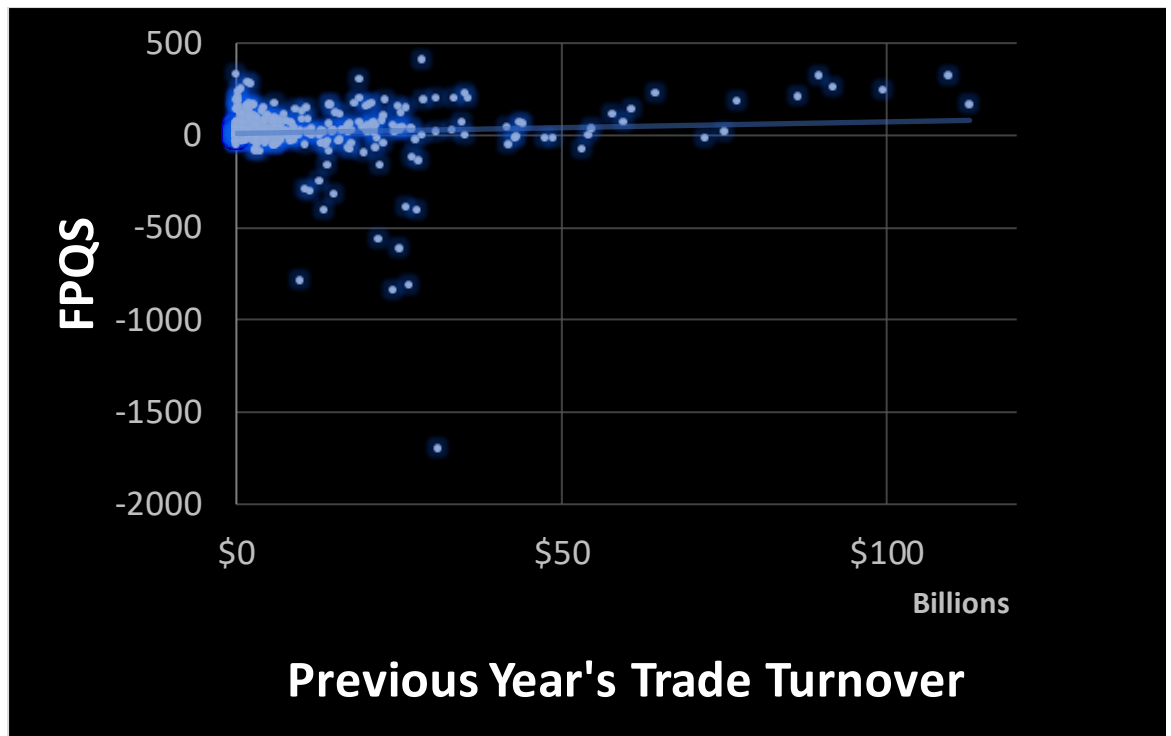


Chart 4-3. Scatterplot of Global Russian trade turnover and FPQS, 2014-2021

If the United States and People's Republic of China are excluded as outliers from the dataset (relationship 10), PMTPS now correlates more with FPQS than trade turnover in all three relationships by all metrics and indeed correlates more closely than in relationship 0. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that military exercises (PMTPS) carry more significance than trade turnover in determining the quality of Russian diplomatic relations with at least most interlocutors.

However, this should not be overstated. PMTPS's correlation with FPQS in both relationship 0 (-0.11) and relationship 10 (-0.20) is quite weak given the potential range of outcomes is -1 to +1 with 0 connoting no relationship. It is vindicated only against the extremely weak correlation of trade turnover with FPQS (relationship 0: 0.08; relationship 10: 0.02). All this suggests that though Russian military exercises may exhibit greater influence upon the quality of foreign relations than trade turnover, the effect is extremely weak with PMTPS accounting for only between 1.2% and 3.8% of the variation in FPQS and trade turnover only between 0.03% and 0.6%.<sup>83</sup> This confirms the first hypothesis more than it rejects it, but fails to reject the null hypothesis that there is simply no relationship.

<sup>83</sup> Bryman, p 229.

The other outlier meriting special consideration in these years is that of Ukraine. Over the years 2014-2021, Moscow adopted a policy of extreme antipathy toward Kyiv after decades of uniquely close economic and technological ties.<sup>84</sup> In the shock of the Euromaidan revolution of 2014, FPQS with Ukraine fell to -1,702, by far the lowest FPQS recorded;<sup>85</sup> mere decline in the frequency of vitriol allowed the FPQS to ‘recover’ to -255 in 2016. If Ukraine alone is excluded from the dataset for a 65<sup>th</sup> relationship (10.1), the correlation of PMTPS with FPQS becomes positive (0.16) illustrated by the scatterplot in Chart 4-4 and the trade turnover correlation with FPQS increases to 0.20.

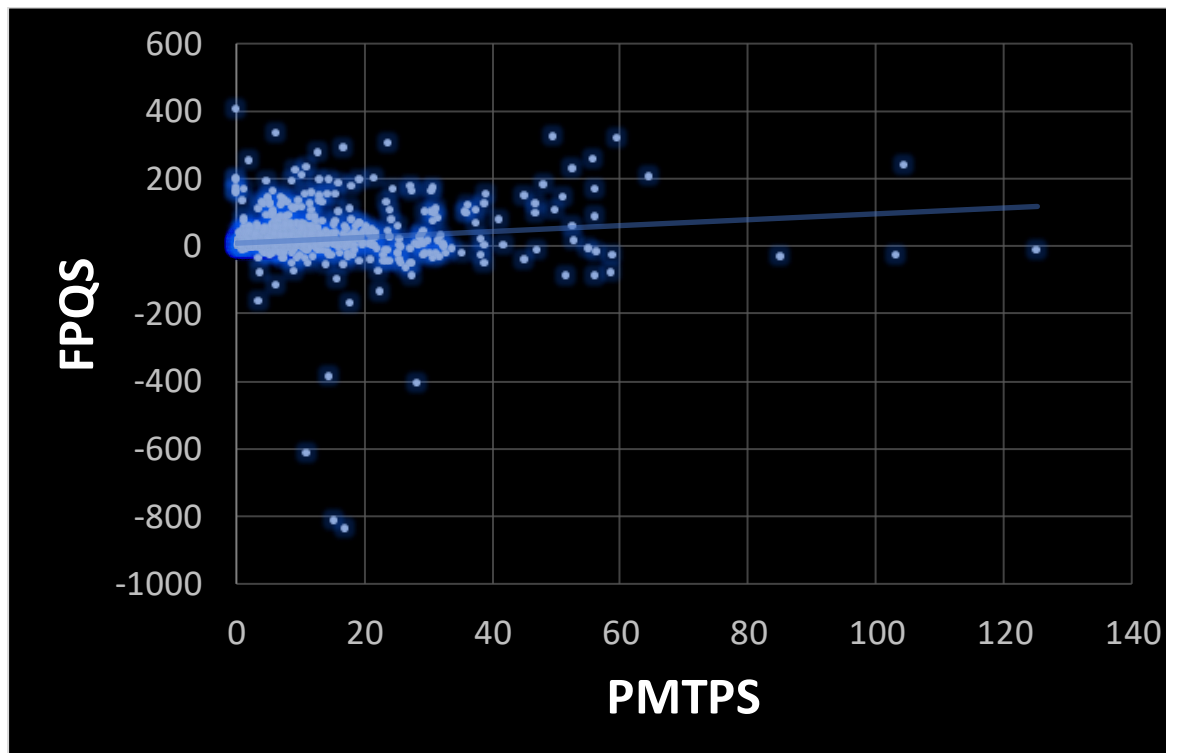


Chart 4-4. Scatterplot of Global PMTPS and FPQS excluding Ukraine, 2014-2021

This remarkable effect upon the data at large demonstrates the disproportionate interest of Ukraine upon Russian foreign and military policy. Despite the almost complete breakdown of the political relationship between Moscow and Kyiv, trade relations remained relatively strong due to highly-integrated infrastructure and supply chains. In addition, the emergence of Kyiv as a nascent NATO partner

<sup>84</sup> ‘занимает особое место в наших военных и военно-технических связях’ ‘Заместитель Министра обороны России Анатолий Антонов встретился с представителями ведущих СМИ’ [Deputy Defence Minister of Russia Anatoliy Antonov met with representatives of leading media], Russian Ministry of Defence, 29 November 2013, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11873078@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11873078@egNews). Accessed 18 March 2022.

<sup>85</sup> The second lowest – the United States in 2021 – amounted to merely -838, less than half as negative.

actively developing its military to resist Russia resulted in Russia greatly increasing its military presence on the Ukrainian border over 2014-2021. This created a massive outlier in the data of a country with which Russia maintained significant trade relations but which incurred the most negative FPQS and PMTPS scores. The Ukrainian outlier casts doubt upon hypotheses 1 and 2 and affirms hypothesis 3 even if not to the margin of 0.4 considered necessary to reject the null hypothesis.

This makes confirming the follow-on declarations proposed above difficult. It was proposed above that if the first hypothesis is true, the foreign policy of the Russian Federation may be said to be more militarized than economically driven. This appears to be somewhat true but mostly because of Ukraine. It seems perhaps more accurate to conclude that in instances of high Russian interest in an interlocutor, relations can be militarized if relations are poor (reflecting relationship 9.1) but that this relationship is more complex than PMTPS being a straightforward independent variable and FPQS a straightforward dependent variable. The first hypothesis may be more true than false because of Russia's fraught position with regards to its most important interlocutors, but this may be driving the militarization of its foreign policy at least as much as military modernization has. It cannot stand alone as an explainer of Russian foreign policy.

Also proposed above was that if the second hypothesis is true, Russian military policy may be said to incorporate a policy of threatening or intimidating Russian diplomatic adversaries and that if the third hypothesis is true, it may be said that Russian foreign policy can be tempered by the importance of economic ties. The second seems on balance to be true but not everywhere. As explored above, the second hypothesis seems true in much of Europe and in countries whose official positions Moscow accords no significance but the opposite seems to hold true in Asia. In contrast, the third hypothesis seems to be somewhat confirmed as its relative weakness in global aggregate is driven by the Ukrainian outlier. Nevertheless, even this relatively strong correlation among the generally weak global trends is insufficiently high to reject the null hypothesis and so also should not be declared an explanation of Russian foreign policy. However, a corollary seems to emerge from those outliers: though trade may temper ties,



the influx of political antipathy into a high-trade relationship is far more dangerous than the deterioration of a less significant relationship.

### Theoretical Implications

These weak findings raise questions about the potential theoretical implications of this data. As was stated in chapter 1, the hypotheses are driven by the ‘hybrid warfare’ theory and the political dimensions of military exercises theory. Though a negative relationship somewhat exists between military exercise placement and the quality of bilateral relations, the weakness of this relationship suggests that the political dimension of Russian military exercises is not primarily about communicating displeasure with unfavoured interlocutors. However, the theory appears more plausible when the proposed political roles of military exercises in this theory are reviewed specifically. These include (1) assuring allies, (2) improving international security, and (3) deterring potential adversaries and threats.<sup>86</sup> As Russia has few allies<sup>87</sup> and pursues a self-professed ‘independent foreign policy’<sup>88</sup> with a security vision purely oriented around Moscow’s perception of the world, this chapter has quantitatively assessed to what extent Russia’s military exercises aid in a deterrence mission.

When confined to this simple question, the data and analysis suggest that deterrence is a measurable component of Russian military policy. Relationship 3.4 considering only interlocutors for which annual interest was at least 10 but which had negative FPQS scores featured a moderate negative relationship between PMTPS and FPQS. Controls for ranges of positive FPQS scores (Relationships 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3) produced positive relationships between PMTPS and FPQS. All were weaker than the relationship with trade turnover but this distinction between positive and negative relations suggests both (1) that an isolatable deterrence mission for exercises can be identified even if it does not explain the FPQS variance<sup>89</sup> and (2) that the disproportionate influence of these relatively rare moderate-to-high interest, negative FPQS interlocutors<sup>90</sup> is

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<sup>86</sup> Heuser & Simpson, p 20-28.

<sup>87</sup> Possibly none according to Putin. Kremlin 2014.

<sup>88</sup> Pavlov & Sizlov, p 16-21.

<sup>89</sup> Test 3.4’s adjusted R-squared score for bivariate linear regression was only 0.0622.

<sup>90</sup> 714 interlocutors have at least 10 interest points. Of these, only 103 (14%) have a negative FPQS.

sufficient to skew the entirety of the dataset such that the global figures read an overall negative relationship between PMTPS and FPQS.

The positive relationships in relationships 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 would suggest that hypotheses one and two should be rejected, implying that Russian military exercises are conducted primarily for apolitical training purposes or assurance of Russia's handful of allies. Nevertheless, the concentration of these relationships by region (central Europe having a negative relationship, Asia a positive one) and time (2014 and 2021 seeing a substantially stronger correlation of exercises with FPQS relative to 2016 and 2017) suggest that the national interest Moscow believes this is serving is ultimately constructed as opposed to purely power-driven. The industrial capacity and sheer quantity of military force in Asia during the eight years investigated was both greater and increasing faster than that in Europe, yet exercises were used to deter against perceived threats from the West and seemingly to demonstrate Russian value to the East. This statistically isolatable phenomenon is reflected in the speeches of Russian diplomats,<sup>91</sup> suggesting a general recognition of this policy among both foreign and military policy practitioners in Moscow.

Some other significant trends are observable in the minutiae of the individual relationships results though insufficiently to reject the null hypothesis. Countries that are closer to Russian territory feature negative correlations of PMTPS and FPQS whereas those further away feature a positive correlation. The lower the DFM score, the more likely that the correlation for both sets of variables is negative while higher ones increase them. This suggests that the hypotheses are more true closer to Russia and that Moscow holds countries with which it abstains from diplomatic consultations with more contempt than it does powers. In addition, the strength of the negative correlation of PMTPS with FPQS is lesser for US allies than it is for non-aligned countries and even Russian and Chinese allies, suggesting that US allies are somewhat protected more protected from the 'hybrid warfare' hypothesis than non-US allies.

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<sup>91</sup> E.g. 'Интервью Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова Гостелерадио Исламской Республики Иран, Москва' [Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's interview with the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, Moscow], MID, 12 December 2020, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1449373/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1449373/). Accessed 18 March 2022.

This casts doubt on the 'hybrid warfare' theory of Russian policy at least so far as it concerns Russian military exercises at large. As a Eurocentric policy, it is more arguably justified. However, the fact that the opposite is observed across almost all Asia - namely that Russian military exercises appear to be designed to communicate Russian strength and openness to partnership rather than as threats - suggests that at a minimum Russia has a flexible understanding of how its military policy contributes to its foreign policy objectives even as an inflexible military doctrine and training system mean that the tools of Russian military policy are mostly uniform in all regions of the country.

Ultimately, this relationship seems less predictive than reflective of Russian policy. Neither PMTPS nor trade turnover properly serve as a satisfactory independent variable to explain FPQS as a dependent variable. Relationships exist and their changing degree of relationship reflects an interesting dimension of Russian foreign and military policy broadly unexplored in purely qualitative analysis of Russian policy. The next chapter will take three case studies among the countries investigated in these years and examine in greater detail how the quantitative data analysed here was reflected in the day-to-day bureaucratic diplomatic and military activities to elicit how this coordination manifested.

## Chapter 5. Qualitative Case Studies

For the purposes of this chapter, any reference to the name of a country refers exclusively to that country's state government. This chapter examines the particular histories and components of the Russian bilateral relationships with Turkey, Japan, and France, utilising both details of the quantitative data and textual analysis of Russian government and Moscow policy community publications on each country.

These three countries are chosen because they are all large in terms of GDP, population, and quantity of Russian interest. In addition, they have the most curiously internally contradictory set of policy and cultural perceptions within Moscow: different bureaucratic actors, interest groups, and segments of Putin's expressed imagination about the state of international relations express opposed opinions about each state over the course of the eight years considered. Finally, these three countries all possess military power of sufficient weight that the Russian defence community writes reports about and comments on their capabilities.

Turkey, Japan, and France are all formal allies of the Russian Federation's strategic rival the United States: Turkey and France being part of the NATO alliance and Japan holding a bilateral military alliance with Washington. However, these alliances have not consistently prevented Moscow from intermittently cooperating and enjoying good relations with these three countries in the decades since 1945. Chart 5-1 depicts the changing foreign policy quality scores (FPQS) of the three countries over 2014-2021. As the global distribution of data is so abnormal as shown in chapter 3, the annual global median score is provided to show the difference between the case studies and an approximate 'typical' interlocutor.

Chart 5-1 shows that of the 24 country-years considered in this dissertation for these three US allies, only 3 (12.5%) featured net-negative relationships despite substantial international friction between Russia and the United States during this time. Indeed, Moscow never perceived relations with Paris as net-negative

at all during the years considered. Russian relations with each of these three interlocutors peaked in different years and for relatively disparate reasons over the time considered but only improved relations with Turkey lasted for more than two years. Whereas the global median remained a single-digit positive number over the duration of the eight years, the three case studies exhibited considerable variance.

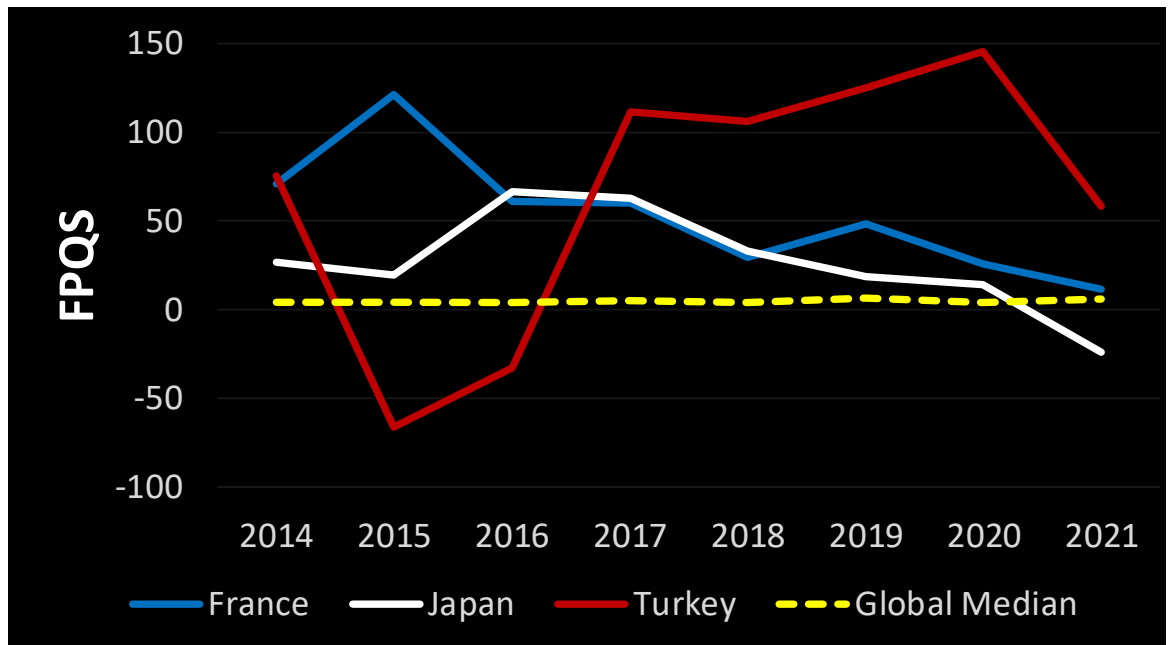


Chart 5-1. Russian FPQS toward France, Japan, and Turkey, 2014-2021

However, whereas Chart 5-1 shows the evolving quality of relations by weighting all official Russian statements about policy with these three interlocutors according to the methodology described in chapter 4, it does not reflect the relative quantity of interest Moscow displayed towards each country. Chart 5-2 displays the Interest Count (IC), which simply removes the weighting of the various statements and actions considered in FPQS and counts everything as one point to demonstrate the quantity of the scarce attention Moscow accords each interlocutor in a given year.

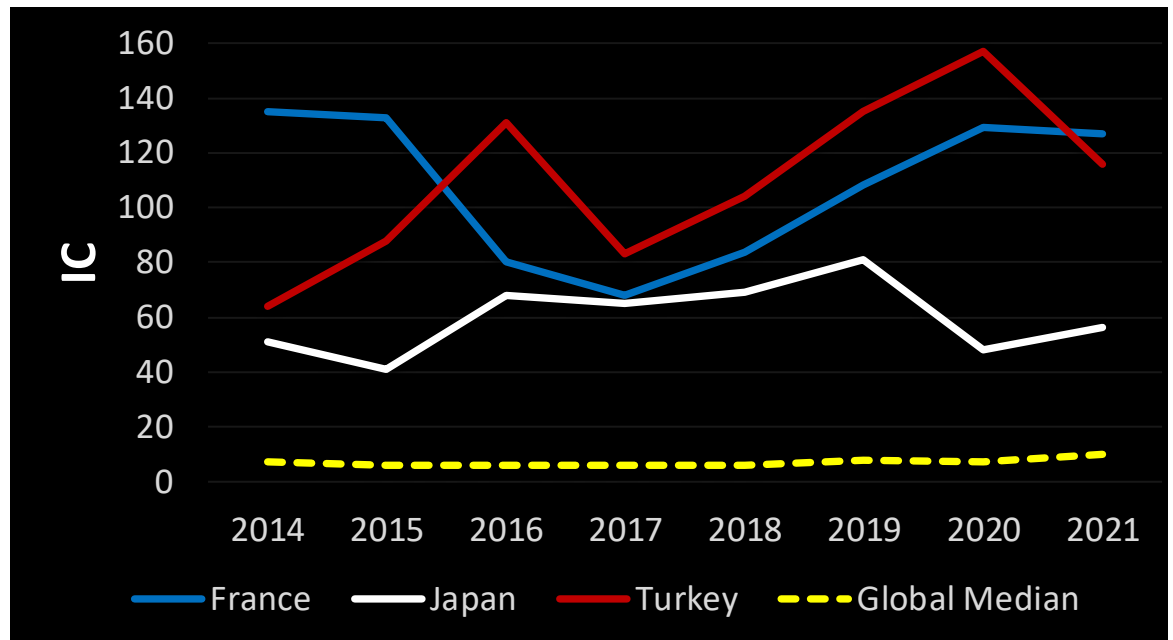


Chart 5-2. Russian IC toward France, Japan, and Turkey, 2014-2021

Chart 5-2 tells a somewhat different story from that indicated in Chart 5-1: Russian interest in Japan remained fairly constant but interest in France waned after 2015 and slowly re-emerged by 2020 whereas Russian interest in Turkey increased dramatically during the years of antipathy before relaxing and then resuming growth until 2020. As with Chart 5-1, the global median remained almost constant over the eight years and well below the three case studies, highlighting that though these three countries evinced different levels of interest from Moscow, it was nevertheless substantially more interest than that of a typical interlocutor.

The military dimension of relations is also relatively complicated with some curious variation over the years. Chart 5-3 shows the proportional military threat potential scores (PMTPS) reflecting the relative threat of Russian military exercises for each country over the eight years considered. As each case study is in a different *TVD*, the different PMTPS scores are not driven by the same exercises. Turkey's presence on the convergence of the Southwestern and Near Eastern *TVDs* does ensure that it has a relatively high PMTPS. Turkey and Japan are nearly the same distance from Russian territory is even closer with Khabarovsk nearly as close to Hokkaido as Sevastopol is to Ankara, suggesting substantially greater military readiness facing south toward Turkey than east toward Japan. France is substantially farther from Russia than the other two, explaining why it has generally enjoyed a lower PMTPS; however, the military

threat potential to France still consistently exceeded the global median and nearly tied with Japan in 2021.

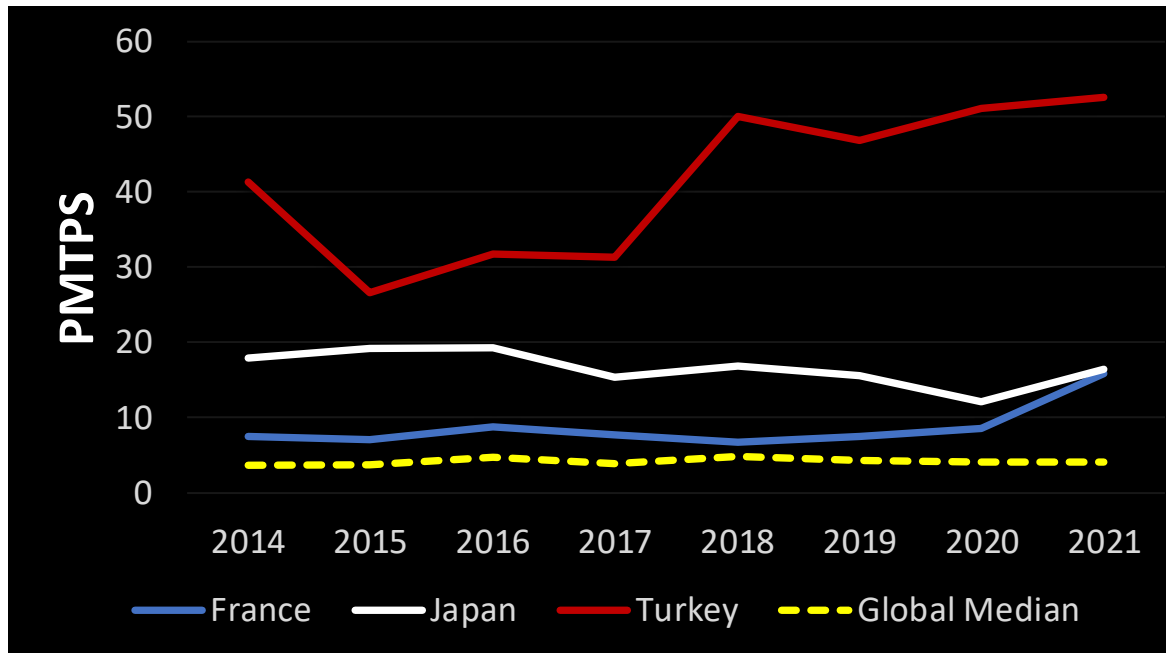


Chart 5-3. Russian PMTPS toward France, Japan, and Turkey, 2014-2021

Though these three scores shift over time, they do not seem immediately to vary in tandem. Though Russian FPQS toward Turkey fell into an especially vitriolic negative period over 2015-2016, Russian PMTPS toward Turkey also reduced during those years. As Russo-Turkish relations improved, so also did the Russian threat communicated in military exercises also seem to increase. This chapter examines the event and bureaucratic dynamics that comprised Russian foreign and military policies toward these three countries over 2014-2021.

## Turkey

We have different, occasionally opposing views on certain matters with [Turkish] President [Recep Tayyip] Erdogan. But he keeps his word like a real man. He does not wag his tail. If he thinks something is good for his country, he goes for it. This is about predictability. It is important to know whom you are dealing with.

- President Vladimir Putin, 17 December

2020<sup>1</sup>

Likely Moscow's most complicated bilateral relationship, Russia-Turkey relations

<sup>1</sup> 'Ежегодная пресс-конференция Владимира Путина' [Annual press conference of Vladimir Putin], Kremlin, 17 December 2020, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64671>. Accessed 21 March 2022.

feature fraught history, opportunistic governments, and clashing extra-statist ambitions. For centuries, Russia, Turkey, and their predecessor states had predominantly antagonistic relations manifest in twelve wars (1568-1570, 1676-1681, 1686-1700, 1710-1711, 1735-1739, 1768-1774, 1787-1792, 1806-1812, 1828-1829, 1853-1856 (Crimean War), 1877-1878, and 1914-1918 (World War I). Of these wars, Russia won eight and Turkey only three with the twelfth inconclusive and one Turkish victory - World War I - soon thereafter lost as the Ottoman Empire collapsed. Even before these conflicts, antagonism prevailed as the Ottomans displaced the Byzantine Empire from which Orthodox Christianity had come to modern Russia. The potential restoration of Orthodox Christian rule to Constantinople (Tsargrad) animated the emergence of Russian popular opinion toward foreign policy in the nineteenth century.

During the Soviet era, Russia and Turkey avoided war but they shared a militarized border in the Caucasus on one of the two direct Soviet-NATO borders (the other being in northern Norway). Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia and Turkey have not shared a border and their relations have become more complex.

The moderate Islamist and Ottoman romanticist Recep Tayyip Erdogan has led Turkey since 2002, proving himself willing to resist Washington's foreign policy preferences despite retaining NATO membership. This independent streak affords Turkey greater significance in Moscow's perception than do other countries with comparable or larger economies.<sup>2</sup> However, Erdogan's fusion of Ottoman nostalgia and interest in pan-Turkic nationalism raises concerns in the Moscow policy community as five former Soviet republics<sup>3</sup> still considered part of Russia's sphere of influence feature Turkic populations; these could - and some do - play Turkey's foreign policy ambitions against Russia's imperial identity to bid for more attention and friendship. Further complicating relations are the deeply antagonistic relations between Turkey and staunch Russian ally Armenia,<sup>4</sup> resulting in a complicated diplomatic dance during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh

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<sup>2</sup> Fyodor A. Lukyanov, 'The Role of Russia, China, USA, and Europe', *Russia in Global Affairs*, 2020, <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/role-of-russia-china-usa-europe/>. Accessed 4 January 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan

<sup>4</sup> '«Важны, но ненадежны, и наоборот» - о книге «Союзники»' ["Important but unreliable" and vice-versa], BMPD Blog, 1 June 2020, <https://bmpd.livejournal.com/4045850.html>. Accessed 5 April 2022.



War as Turkey heavily backed Armenia's puppet's enemy Azerbaijan. Rival Russian and Turkish imperial ambitions have pitted the two capitals against each other in many regions - South Caucasus, Syria, Libya, West Balkans, Cyprus, Crimea and Ukraine - yet they have doggedly retained 'dynamic and efficient'<sup>5</sup> bilateral relations since Erdogan's 2016 apology for the downing of a Russian fighter-bomber on the Syrian-Turkish border.

Scholars frequently attribute the growing complexity to the emergence of a robust trade partnership between the two countries since the collapse of the Soviet Union even as political and security disagreements - such as the 1997 sale of Russian S-300 air defence systems to Greece or Turkish sympathy for anti-Moscow Chechen figures - preserved limits to governmental cooperation.<sup>6</sup> Erdogan's shift of Turkish foreign policy from European appendage to Eurasian power has resulted in Moscow's elevation of the importance of relations, some arguing for better<sup>7</sup> and others for worse.<sup>8</sup> Considerable questions also overhang the degree to which improved Russo-Turkish relations can endure various peripheral disagreements, especially on rival factions in Syria and the tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan.<sup>9</sup> Deeper studies dwell on the two countries'

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<sup>5</sup> 'Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России в связи с участием С.В.Лаврова в восьмом заседании российско-турецкой Совместной группы стратегического планирования' [Commentary of the Department of information and press of the Russian Foreign Ministry on the participation of S.V. Lavrov in the eighth meeting of the Russian-Turkish Joint strategic planning group], MID, 28 December 2020, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1450487/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1450487/). Accessed 4 January 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Damitilla Sagramoso, 'The radicalisation of Islamic Salafi Jamaats in the North Caucasus: moving closer to the global jihadist movement', *Russia and the world: the internal-external nexus*, Routledge, 2013, p 159-160. Nikolas K. Gvosdev & Christopher Marsh, *Russian foreign policy: interests, vectors, and sectors*, Washington DC: CQ Press, 2014, p 293-334. Robert H. Donaldson, Joseph I. Noguee, & Vidha Nadkarni, *The foreign policy of Russia: changing systems, enduring interests*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, London: M.E. Sharpe, 2014, p 306-311. Didem Ekinçi, 'Russia-Turkey relations (1991-2016): diverging interests and compelling realities', *Turkish foreign policy*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, p 151-72. Philipp Casula & Mark N. Katz, 'The Middle East', *Routledge handbook of Russian foreign policy*, Routledge, 2018, p 306. Angela E. Stent, *Putin's world: Russia against the West and with the rest*, New York City: Twelve, 2019, p 274-278.

<sup>7</sup> Ilter Turan, 'Турция на подъеме' [Turkey on the rise], *Rossiia v global'noy politike*, 22 October 2011, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/turcziya-na-podeme/>. Accessed 7 April 2022. Gvosdev & Marsh, p 293-334. Pyotr Stegnyy, 'Вдвоём на «хартленде»' [Together in the "heartland"], *Rossiia v global'noy politike*, 19 February 2015, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/vdvoem-na-hartlende/>. Accessed 7 April 2022. Martin Russell, 'Russia-Turkey relations: a fine line between competition and cooperation', European Parliamentary Research Service, 2021, <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/1426501/russia-turkey-relations/2040943/>. Accessed 7 April 2022.

<sup>8</sup> Nur Bilge Criss & Serdar Güner, 'Geopolitical configurations: the Russia-Turkey-Iran triangle', *Security Dialogue*, 30:3, 1999, p 367. Donaldson, Noguee, & Nadkarni, pp 216-217, 306. Stent, p 275.

<sup>9</sup> Fyodor Lukyanov, 'Обыкновенный вождизм' [Ordinary leadership], *Rossiia v global'noy politike*, 6 June 2013, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/obyknovennyj-vozhdizm/>. Accessed 7 April 2022. Bobo Lo, *Russia and the new world disorder*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2015, p 191-192. Sergey Markedonov, 'Russia-Turkey relations and security issues in the Caucasus', *Russia in Global Affairs*, 30 May

economic ties and emerging political cooperation as a factor of their proximity to and yet separation from Europe as a unifying factor.<sup>10</sup>

Table 5-2 offers the qualitative tools analysed in chapter 4 as they apply to Turkey over 2014-2021. ‘DFM’ refers to the number of Russian deputy foreign ministers who consulted with Turkish diplomats in that year to show how many Russian diplomatic bureaux considered understanding Turkish policy worth the time and resources for such a meeting. ‘Previous Year’s Trade Turnover’ refers to the total trade turnover the Russian Federation reported to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for the previous year in United States dollars. ‘Politicization’ refers to the ratio of trade turnover to the count of instances on which the Russian government mentioned Turkey (IC) as a multiplier against the global Russian trade divided by IC of the year in question: numbers under 1 suggest a relatively politicized relationship with more interest given than trade alone would predict and numbers above 1 a relatively unpoliticized relationship with less interest than trade alone would predict. The ‘characterization of relations’ refers to how the relationship can be qualitatively characterized given the combination of quantitative factors listed in Table 5-1.

DFM	$FPQS > 1.25x IC^*$	$1.25x IC > FPQS > 0.75x IC$	$0.75x IC > FPQS > 0^*$	$0 > FPQS$
>5	Ally	Peer	Competitor	Rival
4-5	Partner	Near-Peer	Malign Force	Opponent
2-3	Sphere of Influence	Project**	Concern	Nuisance
1	Friend/Extension***	Field	Trouble	Adversary
0	Well-Behaved	Untapped	Errant	Enemy

*\*Note: If  $IC < 10$ , only designations from the third and fifth column are used as insufficient data distinguishes between a high cooperation, normal cooperation, and low cooperation relationship.*

*\*\*If  $IC < 10$  but  $DFM > 3$ , the interlocutor cannot exceed designation as a ‘project’. The term ‘project’ is used as the interlocutor receives significant interest to stand out among most but which is insufficiently positive or negative to be designated something closer to alliance or rivalry, suggesting Russia has ambitions for a deeper relationship with the country not yet actualized.*

*\*\*\*An interlocutor is an ‘extension’ if it was part of the Soviet Union, a ‘friend’ if now.*

The figures of Table 5-2 suggest a highly dynamic relationship as not a single one

2016, <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/russia-turkey-relations-and-security-issues-in-the-caucasus/>. Accessed 6 April 2022. Casula & Katz, p 307. Ruslan Mamedov & Grigory Lukyanov, ‘Russia and Turkey: approaches to regional security in the Middle East’, *Perceptions*, 23:2, 2018, p 51.

<sup>10</sup> Vefa Kurban, *Russian-Turkish relations from the First World War to the present*, Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2016, p 222-234.

of the seven metrics considered did not feature at least one serious shift over the eight years considered. Turkey veered from a near-peer to an opponent to a partner within four years and has since declined in Russian consideration despite ongoing cooperation.

**Table 5-2. Russia-Turkey Relations in Quantitative Figures, 2014-2021**

<i>Year</i>	<i>IC</i>	<i>FPQS</i>	<i>DFM</i>	<i>PMTPS</i>	<i>Previous Year's Trade Turnover</i>	<i>Politicization</i>	<i>Characterization of Relations</i>
2014	64	75	5	41.249	\$22,394,865,750	2.02	Near-Peer
2015	88	-66.25	3	26.6321	\$21,409,440,026	1.28	Nuisance
2016	131	-33	4	31.8045	\$15,772,122,794	0.80	Opponent
2017	83	111.5	4	31.3525	\$16,107,354,784	1.30	Partner
2018	104	106	5	49.9968	\$22,710,300,855	3.34	Near-Peer
2019	135	125	4	46.9463	\$25,539,912,742	1.61	Near-Peer
2020	157	145.5	2	51.1081	\$21,040,746,155	1.29	Project
2021	116	58.25	3	52.6014	\$21,040,746,155	2.34	Concern

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Russia-Turkey relations have been fraught by competing spheres of influence ranging across North Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Balkans, Ukraine, the Transcaucasus, and Central Asia. As both Moscow and Ankara cultivated allies and proxies across the region, local actors' conflicts intermittently bubbled into difficulties requiring direct imperial metropole consultations.

Up to 2014, Russia and Turkey coordinated policies across these topics. Excluding bilateral issues, Russia and Turkey exchanged policy ideas on anti-terrorism, the Balkans, Black Sea policy, the Caucasus, Central Asia, dedollarization and deoffshorization, Iran, Iraq, Israel/Palestine, Libya, Syria, Ukraine, and the broader Middle East over 2014. The diplomatic freeze on Russia following the annexation of Crimea and subsequent provocation of violence in the Donbass drastically reduced non-bilateral policy coordination between Moscow and Ankara: in 2015, not a single occasion of dialogue on the Black Sea, the Caucasus, Central Asia, dedollarization, Iran, or Israel/Palestine occurred in any bilateral forum. Discussion of the Libya and the Middle East halved from 2014 to 2015. Russian diplomats greatly curtailed their willingness to discuss Ukraine with the Turks such that only one such meeting was documented by the Russian government in 2015 as opposed to 15 in 2014.

On 21 November 2015, a Turkish F-16 fighter shot down a Russian Su-24M fighter-bomber operating at the Syria-Turkey border early into the Russian military

intervention in Syria. The fallout of this incident ended virtually all diplomatic engagement between Moscow and Ankara. Indeed, Russia went so far as to invite Kurdish political leaders to Moscow for consultations<sup>11</sup> rather than interface directly with the Turkish government. In the meantime, a toxic Russian information campaign was deployed against Turkey with Putin labelling the country an ‘accomplice of terrorism’<sup>12</sup> within days of the incident and fuming that a country he had considered ‘friendly’ to Russia could perform such an act of treachery.<sup>13</sup> Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov rejected any attempt to justify the Turkish shooting down of the Russian jet even when accompanied by condolences for the death of one of the Russian pilots.<sup>14</sup> The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID) embarked on a wide range of information attacks against Turkey, alleging various smears such as how Turkey was facilitating Islamic State’s sales of oil,<sup>15</sup> that chemical weapons Turkey and other Western governments claimed were being used by Russia’s ally Bashar al-Assad’s regime were actually from Turkish stockpiles,<sup>16</sup> and that the Turks were oppressing their Kurdish minority.<sup>17</sup> The Russian Ministry of Defence similarly maintained a

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<sup>11</sup> ‘Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе переговоров с председателем турецкой Демократической партии народов С.Демирташем, Москва’ [Opening words of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov during negotiations with the representative of the Turkish Democratic People’s Party S. Demirtas], MID, 23 December 2015, [https://archive.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/1992300](https://archive.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/1992300). Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Встреча с Королём Иордании Абдаллой II’ [Meeting with King Abdullah II of Jordan], Kremlin, 24 November 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50775>. Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам встречи с Президентом Франции Франсуа Олландом’ [Declaration to the press and answers to questions of journalists following a meeting with the President of France Francois Hollande], Kremlin, 26 November 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/50792>. Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова российским и иностранным СМИ, Москва’ [Interview of the Minister of Foreign Relations of Russia S.V. Lavrov to Russian and foreign media], MID, 25 November 2015, [https://archive.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/1948861](https://archive.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/1948861). Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>15</sup> ‘О публикации норвежской прессы относительно поставок нефти ИГИЛ в Турцию’ [On the publication of the Norwegian press regarding the supply of ISIS oil to Turkey], MID, 24 December 2015, [https://archive.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/1993171](https://archive.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/1993171). Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Комментарий официального представителя МИД России М.В.Захаровой в связи с заявлениями Анкары относительно разоблачений незаконных поставок Турцией в Сирию газа зарин’ [Commentary of the official spokesperson of the MID of Russia M.V. Zakharova in connection to the declaration with Ankara’s statements regarding revelations of Turkey’s illegal supplies of sarin gas to Syria], MID, 25 December 2015, [https://archive.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/1996139](https://archive.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/1996139). Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>17</sup> ‘О текущей ситуации с соблюдением прав человека в Турции с учетом целенаправленных акций в отношении курдского населения страны’ [On the current situation with respect for human rights in Turkey, taking into account targeted actions against the Kurdish population of the country], MID, 21 January 2016, [https://archive.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2015910](https://archive.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2015910). Accessed 21 March 2022.

vigorous information campaign against Turkey, alleging that it was behind the destabilization of Syria.<sup>18</sup> The Kremlin<sup>19</sup> and Russian Cabinet of Ministers<sup>20</sup> rapidly issued a package of sanctions which, as indicated in Table 2, reduced total trade turnover by just over a quarter between 2015 and 2016 - a far greater dent than that resulting from the Russian annexation of Crimea.

This antipathy - coinciding with the negative FPQS over 2015-2016 indicated in Chart 5-1 - abruptly broke at the end of June 2016 when Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sent a formal apology for shooting down the Russian fighter-bomber.<sup>21</sup> Two days later, a terrorist attack struck the Istanbul Airport and Putin called Erdogan to offer his condolences.<sup>22</sup> This phone conversation on 29 June 2016 was the first bilateral interaction the government of the Russian Federation reported with Turkey since 4 December 2015, 208 days before. Though the Russian and Turkish governments rapidly began a process of restoring relations and lifting sanctions, the 'restoration' process was not fully completed until Erdogan's first trip to Russian territory after the incident 9 months later on 3 May 2017.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, by the end of 2016, Moscow and Ankara were interacting on an almost daily basis: between 14 and 31 December, the Russian government reported fully 21 phone calls and meetings between Russian and Turkish officials. Lavrov and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu alone

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<sup>18</sup> 'В Минобороны России прокомментировали доклад Amnesty International и подвели итоги деятельности ВКС РФ в Сирии с 18 по 23 декабря' [The Ministry of Defence of Russian commented on the declaration of Amnesty International and summed up the activities of the Russian Aerospace Force in Syria from 18 to 23 December], Russian Ministry of Defence, 23 December 2015,

[https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12072315@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12072315@egNews). Accessed 21 March 2022.

'Начальник Главного оперативного управления Генерального штаба Вооруженных Сил Российской Федерации подвел итоги деятельности российских ВКС в Сирии в 2015 году' [Chief of the Main Operations Department of the General Staff of the Russian Federation summed up the activities of the Russian Aerospace Force in Syria in 2015], Russian Ministry of Defence, 25 December 2015,

[https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12072380@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12072380@egNews). Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>19</sup> Ukaz № 583, Kremlin, 28 November 2015,

<http://static.kremlin.ru/media/acts/files/0001201511280036.pdf>. Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>20</sup> 'Сообщение Аркадия Дворковича на совещании с вице-премьерами' [Message from Arkadiy Dvorkovich at a meeting with Vice Prime Ministers], Government.ru, 30 November 2015,

<http://government.ru/news/20788/>. Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>21</sup> 'Владимиром Путиным получено послание Президента Турции Реджепа Тайипа Эрдогана' [Vladimir Putin received a message for President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan], Kremlin, 27 June 2016,

<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52282>. Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>22</sup> 'Телефонный разговор с Президентом Турции Реджепом Тайипом Эрдоганом' [Telephone conversation with the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan], Kremlin, 29 June 2016,

<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52295>. Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>23</sup> 'Пресс-конференция по итогам российско-турецких переговоров' [Press conference following Russian-Turkish negotiations], Kremlin, 3 May 2017, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54444>. Accessed 21 March 2022.

exchanged 8 phone conversations during these 16 days not including Çavuşoğlu's accompanying the Turkish Defence Minister for a 2+2 meeting in Moscow trilaterally with Iran.<sup>24</sup>

And yet despite this restoration in relations leading to several years of rather high FPQS, the diversity of topics Moscow and Ankara discussed in 2014 did not. Of the 47 non-bilateral relations topics discussed in bilateral Russia-Turkey meetings in 2016, fully 44 (94%) related only to Syria and counterterrorist cooperation. The broad spectrum of discussion enjoyed in 2014 had converged upon mere coordination of military strategies in the Syrian Civil War and broader efforts to stop Islamic State and other major terrorist threats. Table 3 documents this collapse of the breadth of Russia-Turkey cooperation during the time of improved relations.

**Table 5-3. Russia-Turkey Discussion Topics in Bilateral Meetings excluding matters of Bilateral Relations, 2014-2021**

Year	Syria/ Counterterrorism	Former Soviet Space	Europe/ West	Other Middle East	Maritime Issues	COVID-19
2014	11 (22%)	22 (45%)	2 (4%)	13 (27%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
2015	18 (64%)	1 (4%)	2 (7%)	7 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
2016	44 (94%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
2017	51 (73%)	3 (4%)	4 (6%)	12 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
2018	44 (79%)	3 (5%)	3 (5%)	5 (9%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
2019	52 (69%)	7 (9%)	3 (4%)	11 (15%)	2 (3%)	0 (0%)
2020	51 (37%)	21 (15%)	3 (2%)	47 (34%)	3 (2%)	14 (10%)
2021	22 (23%)	31 (33%)	4 (4%)	21 (22%)	4 (4%)	13 (14%)

Table 5-3 suggests a slow restoration of multifaceted relations not reaching something approximating the wide cooperation of 2014 again until 2019 and even then Syria and counterterrorism represented more than half of the discussion topics. Over 2020-2021, the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War, the resurgence of questions on Ukraine, and mounting Russian concerns about Turkish interests in the largely Turkic-speaking former Soviet republics of central Asia and Azerbaijan rebalance to the proportions of discussion to something quite close to the status quo before Russia's 2015 intervention in Syria and the subsequent Turkish shooting down of the Russian jet.

<sup>24</sup> 'Вступительное слово Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Турции М.Чавушоглу, Москва' [Opening words of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov in negotiations with Foreign Affairs Minister of Turkey M. Cavusoglu, Moscow], MID, 20 December 2016, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1539727/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1539727/). Accessed 21 March 2022.



Yet though the quantity of dialogue about non-bilateral issues increased after the restoration of relations in 2016, Russia-Turkey relations recovered during a time in which relations were remarkably singularly focused on Syria and broader anti-Islamic State activities. Also of note, though Russia does occasionally engage Turkey about European or NATO issues,<sup>25</sup> interactions in 2014-2021 were far more likely to engage on issues in the Middle East. This again highlights the broader pattern of Russia-Turkey relations wherein, unlike some NATO member-states,<sup>26</sup> Moscow does not consider Turkey a pawn of Washington<sup>27</sup> and considers it important to consider Turkish policies at least on the Middle East.

Notably, the Russian and Turkish governments back opposing factions in a variety of countries they interact about, especially Armenia/Azerbaijan, Libya, Syria, and Ukraine. Despite this, Presidents Putin and Erdogan have endeavoured to keep their direct relations amicable. These disagreements impose certain constraints upon relations leading to occasional high-level disagreements.<sup>28</sup>

The greatest difficulty in doing this is the mutual use of both Russian and Turkish Armed Forces directly in conflicts, most notably in Syria where Russian troops have been on the ground since 2015 and Turkish troops since 2018. Even prior to these deployments, the Russian government overtly recognized that Turkey had a 'special concern'<sup>29</sup> in particular regions of Syrian territory as the Civil War had dissolved Damascus' control of the territory along the Turkish border, allowing

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<sup>25</sup> E.g. 'О встрече первого заместителя Министра иностранных дел России В.Г.Титова с Послом Турции в Москве Хусейном Л.Дириозом' [On the meeting of First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia V.G. Titov with Ambassador of Turkey in Moscow Husseyn L. Dirigoz], MID, 13 December 2016, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1539426/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1539426/). Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. Dmitriy Medvedev, 'О Польше' [On Poland], *Telegram*, 21 March 2022, [https://t.me/medvedev\\_telegram/11](https://t.me/medvedev_telegram/11). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>27</sup> Putin has insinuated that countries which join NATO inherently resign a portion of their sovereignty. 'Заявления для прессы и ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам российско-финляндских переговоров' [Declaration to the press and answers to questions of journalists after Russian-Finnish negotiations], Kremlin, 1 July 2016, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/52312>. Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. Putin declaring non-recognition of Crimea as part of Russia as a denial of democratic rights to the peninsula's inhabitants. 'Заседание дискуссионного клуба «Валдай»' [Speech to the "Valdai" discussion club], Kremlin, 22 October 2020, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64261>. Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>29</sup> Особая озабоченность' (*osobaya ozabochennost'*)

Kurds allied to anti-Ankara Kurdish groups to take power in the region.<sup>30</sup> Thus even before both countries began acquiring indirect control of Syrian territory, Moscow acknowledged that Turkey was at least somewhat justified in particular interests contrary to Russia's oft-repeated mantra of supporting Syrian 'sovereignty and unity'<sup>31</sup> to which is frequently appended 'territorial integrity'.<sup>32</sup>

The greatest test to this balancing of relations in the years considered was the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Armenia has remained an entrenched Russian ally whereas Azerbaijan has built substantial friendship with Turkey. Armenia and Turkey have longstanding enmity over the legacy of the deaths of at least hundreds of thousands of ethnic Armenians in the dying days of the Ottoman Empire which the former claims to be a 'genocide' much to the latter's fury; this disagreement among other things has prevented the two from establishing bilateral relations in the 30 years of Armenian independence. Armenian *de facto* control of Nagorno-Karabakh, a region *de jure* part of Azerbaijan long proved an exacerbator of these tensions.

In the summer of 2020, Azerbaijan acted to recapture Nagorno-Karabakh militarily with the armed support of Turkey. Though Armenia appealed to Russia via the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) alliance, Russia avoided entering the conflict because Nagorno-Karabakh was not Armenian territory,<sup>33</sup> effectively ceding a special interest of its ally Armenia to Turkey's ally Azerbaijan. When asked about this decision several months after Azerbaijan and Turkey had won the war and about his broader dealings with Erdogan, Putin

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<sup>30</sup> 'Брифинг официального представителя МИД России А.К.Лукашевича' [Briefing of the official spokesman of the MID of Russia A.K. Lukashovich], MID, 20 February 2014, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1669148/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1669148/). Accessed 23 January 2022.

<sup>31</sup> Е.г. 'О переговорах Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова с заместителем Председателя Совета министров, Министром иностранных дел и по делам эмигрантов Сирии В.Муаллемом' [On the talks of Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign and Emigrants Minister W. Muallem], MID, 17 January 2014, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1714972/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1714972/). Accessed 23 January 2022.

<sup>32</sup> Е.г. 'Выступление Постоянного представителя В.А.Небензи на заседании Совета Безопасности по политическим аспектам ситуации в Сирии' [Speech of Permanent Representative V.A. Nebenzya at a meeting of the Security Council on political aspects of the situation in Syria], Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, 15 March 2021, <https://russiaun.ru/ru/news/syria15032021>. Accessed 23 January 2022.

<sup>33</sup> 'Ответы на вопросы СМИ по ситуации в Нагорном Карабахе' [Answers to media questions on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh], Kremlin, 17 November 2020, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64431>. Accessed 21 March 2022.



stated the quote at the top of this section about Erdogan keeping his word despite holding opposing views. Putin's regime demonstrated an interest in cooperation with Turkey over its peripheral allies' interests.

Economically, Turkey is a substantial trade partner of the Russian Federation. In 2019, the last year before the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's trade turnover in goods with Turkey was Russia's sixth largest relationship worldwide<sup>34</sup> Russian exports to Turkey were more than double the trade value of Russian imports from Turkey each year between 2013 and 2020. Unsurprisingly, Russia's largest export to Turkey in 2019 was petroleum oil.<sup>35</sup> Among export destinations of Russian mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation at large,<sup>36</sup> in 2019 Turkey placed seventh worldwide with \$8,533,789,826 worth of fuels reported delivered;<sup>37</sup> in 2013, Turkey had placed thirteenth<sup>38</sup> but still received \$7,530,346,115 worth of exports. This ascent six places up the world pecking order by 2019 while only increasing 13% more exports by value between 2013 and 2019 is indicative both of the decline of the value of petroleum oil between those years and Russia's shaky trade relations with the world from 2014. Russia's biggest import from Turkey - citrus fruits<sup>39</sup> - represents the largest source of the commodity for the Russian Federation but comprises only 30% of Russia's foreign sources of such fruit; by contrast, Turkey comprises only 4% of the Russian export market for mineral fuels. Turkey in turn exported almost exactly the quantity of mineral fuels it imports from Russia on to other markets in 2019.<sup>40</sup> The only other Russian exports to Turkey in 2019 exceeding values of \$500,000,000 were wheat and certain metal commodities.

Russia being a primarily commodities-driven economy, this makes this economic relationship not especially unusual. Post-2014 sanctions from much of the

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<sup>34</sup> Behind the People's Republic of China, Germany, the Netherlands, Belarus, and the United States. UN Comtrade Database (Comtrade), <https://comtrade.un.org/data>. Accessed 21 March 2021.

<sup>35</sup> Commodity codes 2709 and 2710 in the Harmonized System Codes for foreign trade.

<sup>36</sup> Commodity code 27 in the Harmonized System Codes for foreign trade.

<sup>37</sup> Behind the People's Republic of China, the Netherlands, South Korea, Germany, Poland, and Italy. Comtrade.

<sup>38</sup> Behind Areas not elsewhere specified, the Netherlands, the People's Republic of China, Italy, Poland, Germany, Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, Finland, Latvia, and Belarus. Comtrade.

<sup>39</sup> Commodity code 0805 in the Harmonized System Codes for foreign trade.

<sup>40</sup> \$8,447,378,574 was exported. Comtrade. Turkey imports other sources of mineral fuels as well and indeed claims to have imported significantly more fuel from Russia than Russia reported selling.

European Union did deviate some Russian exports previously sent directly to the West to an indirect route transiting Turkey as observed by the fact that Russian exports to Turkey surged between 2016 and 2018. The COVID-19 pandemic caused Russian exports to Turkey to fall nearly 30% between 2019 and 2020 even as Russian imports from Turkey marginally increased, resetting the total volume of Russo-Turkish trade volume to its quantity in 2014 at the end of the years covered.

Militarily, Turkey is situated at the border of the Southwestern and Near Eastern TVDs. Its MTPS is directly impacted by six different Russian operational-level units and three seas where the Russians exercise listed in Table 5-4. This large quantity of forces feeding the MTPS results in its being relatively high. Ironically, it reached its lowest level - 26.6321 - in 2015 when relations abruptly plunged, though the Turkish shooting down of the Russian fighter-bomber came at the end of November in the last days of the 2015 military academic year. Since then, PMTPS toward Turkey increased nearly every year, only meaningfully declining slightly from 2018 to 2019 and ending at 52.6014 in 2021, signalling that more than 25% of all Russian military threat potential was directed in a manner that might threaten Turkey.

<i>Operational-Level Unit</i>	<i>Quantity of Borders to Cross</i>	<i>Sea</i>	<i>Sea Impact</i>
22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (South)	2	Black Sea	Adjacent
49 <sup>th</sup> Army (South)	2	Caspian Sea	<1,000km
20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (West)	4	Mediterranean Sea	Adjacent
8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (South)	5		
14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (North)	7		
102 <sup>nd</sup> Military Base (South/Armenia)	1		

Four factors drove this surge in PMTPS over 2014-2021. First, the Russian annexation and fortification of Crimea resulted in a steady proportional increase in Russian exercises on the peninsula. Whereas only four exercises - and only one

of them an *uchenie*<sup>41</sup> - occurred on the Crimean peninsula (22<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps) in 2014. By contrast, fully 3% of all Russian exercises in 2021 occurred in Crimea.

Second, in a related development, Russian investment in the Black Sea Fleet following the annexation of Crimea greatly expanded the capabilities of a fleet<sup>42</sup> which international agreements were forcing to rust under the terms by which Russia retained its base in Sevastopol when it was still *de facto* part of Ukraine. The modernisation of assets in the Black Sea Fleet increased the total percentage of Russian exercises taking place in the Black Sea from 1.178% in 2015<sup>43</sup> to 2.624% in 2021, peaking at 3.313% in 2019.

Third, the capstone Russian strategic-operational exercises of 2020 and 2021 - *Kavkaz-2020* and *Zapad-2021* respectively - each focused primarily on Ukraine, boosting the relative quantity of exercise activities in the 8<sup>th</sup> Guards and 20<sup>th</sup> Guards Armies for these years. This produced a temporary bump in the final two years considered in this dataset.

Fourth, the splash damage to Turkey from Russian exercises taking place in its neighbours progressively increased over the years especially from 2017. In addition to long-time Russian ally Armenia, the Russian Armed Forces increased exercises with Syria especially after the Assad regime regained sufficient stability and no longer seemed on the verge of collapse. Russian relations have also improved with Egypt in recent years with regular exercises now taking place near Alexandria, more marginally impacting the potential threat to Turkey.

Prior to Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, the Russian and Turkish militaries conducted regular exchanges, especially in the maritime domain<sup>44</sup> via the

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<sup>41</sup> 'В ходе учения береговые войска Черноморского флота отрабатывают вопросы ведения противодесантной обороны' [During an exercise the coastal forces of the Black Sea Fleet worked out the issues of conducting an anti-landing defence], Russian Ministry of Defence, 8 July 2014, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11967941@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11967941@egNews). Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>42</sup> Vladimir Pasyakin, 'Непотопляемый авианосец России' [The unsinkable aircraft carrier of Russia], *VPK*, 14 March 2022, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/66172>. Accessed 21 March 2022.

<sup>43</sup> The number was even lower in 2014 at 0.486% but this was an outlier relative to 2013 most likely due to the Russian Ministry of Defence avoiding unnecessary publicity for the most controversial segment of its capabilities that year.

<sup>44</sup> E.g. 'Представитель Черноморского флота приглашен на учение ВМС Турции' [Representative of the Black Sea Fleet invited to the exercise of the Turkish Navy], Russian Ministry of Defence, 19 September

Bleakseafor consortium<sup>45</sup> of the Black Sea powers.<sup>46</sup> Despite plans to continue such exchanges,<sup>47</sup> this largely multilateral military interaction broke down in 2014. After this break, but for one port visit in October 2014<sup>48</sup> Russian-Turkish military interactions ceased.

Military cooperation resumed as abruptly as it officially ceased with the Russian military intervention in the Syrian Civil War. Just over a year into the conflict, the Russian Ministry of Defence reported consultations with Turkish colleagues to prevent incidents over Syrian airspace<sup>49</sup> three days before the first such acknowledged coordination occurred between Russia and the United States.<sup>50</sup> This overt cooperation broke down only two weeks later with the downing of the Russian fighter-bomber by the Turkish Air Force and did not resume until several months after Erdogan sent his apology to Putin. On 1 November 2016, Russian Chief of the General Staff General Valeriy Gerasimov welcomed his Turkish counterpart General Hulusi Akar to Moscow for consultations on the progress of operations in Syria, the status of the Battle of Mosul, and broader military plans to defeat the Islamic State and Jabhat al-Nusra terrorist groups.<sup>51</sup> Though the

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2013, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11842754@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11842754@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>45</sup> E.g. 'В турецком Синопе завершилась летняя активация ЧВМГ ОБ «Блэксифор»' [In Sinope, Turkey, the summer activities of the Black Sea Naval Operational Interaction Group "Bleksifor" was completed], Russian Ministry of Defence, 3 September 2013,

[https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11832410@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11832410@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>46</sup> Excepting Georgia, which withdrew from any cooperation with the Russian Federation after the 2008 war.

<sup>47</sup> 'На весенней активации соединения «Блэксифор» Россию представит РКВП «Самум» Черноморского флота' [For the spring activities of the "Bleksifor" unit Russia will be represented by the "Samum" missile ship of the Black Sea Fleet], Russian Ministry of Defence, 14 February 2014, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11902659@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11902659@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>48</sup> The first after the annexation of Crimea and the only one in 2014 came at the end of that October. 'БПК Северного флота «Вице-адмирал Кулаков» зашел в турецкую военно-морскую базу Аксаз-Караагач' [Anti-submarine ship of the Northern Fleet "Vitse-admiral Kulakov" stopped at the Turkish naval base Aksaz-Karaagach], Russian Ministry of Defence, 27 October 2014, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11997454@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11997454@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>49</sup> 'Минобороны России продолжило консультации с турецкими коллегами по предотвращению авиационных инцидентов' [The Ministry of Defence of Russia conducted consultations with Turkish colleagues on preventing aviation incidents], Russian Ministry of Defence, 7 October 2015, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12059952@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12059952@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>50</sup> 'Проект документа по обеспечению безопасности полетов в Сирии передан американской стороне' [Draft document on ensuring flight safety in Syria handed over to the American side], Russian Ministry of Defence, 13 October 2015, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12060758@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12060758@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>51</sup> 'Начальник Генерального штаба Вооруженных Сил РФ генерал армии Валерий Герасимов провел переговоры с турецким коллегой' [Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation Army General Valeriy Gerasimov held talks with [his] Turkish colleague], Russian Ministry of Defence, 1 November 2016, [http://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12101675@egNews](http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12101675@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.

tempo of Russo-Turkish cooperation increased at the end of 2016 as noted above, this extended only somewhat to the military dimension at first, confined to increased direct contacts between Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu and more representatives of the Turkish government<sup>52</sup> but slowly increased. In March 2017, Gerasimov visited Turkey for a trilateral meeting with the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford.<sup>53</sup> In April 2017, a Turkish frigate visited the Russian Black Sea Fleet port of Novorossiysk<sup>54</sup> - the only such port on internationally-recognized Russian territory - culminating in a PASSEX, the simplest form of maritime exercise.<sup>55</sup> Semi-regular interactions followed ranging from acrobatics shows<sup>56</sup> to chief of defence meetings<sup>57</sup> to further port visits;<sup>58</sup> whereas interactions before 2014 had largely been multilateral affairs, Russo-Turkish military relations after the 2016-2017 reconciliation acquired a distinctively bilateral exchange dimension but remained singularly focused on the anti-terrorist campaign in Syria and the wider Middle East in the diplomatic sphere.

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<sup>52</sup> E.g. 'Министр обороны РФ генерал армии Сергей Шойгу провел серию двусторонних телефонных переговоров с главами военных ведомств Сирии и Ирана, а также с руководителем разведывательной службы Турции' [Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation Army General Sergey Shoigu held a series of bilateral telephone conversations with the heads of the military departments of Syria and Iran as well with the head of the Turkish intelligence service], Russian Ministry of Defence, 17 December 2016, [http://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12106573@egNews](http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12106573@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>53</sup> 'Начальник российского Генштаба проводит в Анталии переговоры с коллегами из Турции и США' [Chief of the Russian General Staff holds in Antalya talks with colleagues from Turkey and the United States], Russian Ministry of Defence, 7 March 2017, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12114136@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12114136@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>54</sup> 'Корабли ВМС Турции завершили визит в Новороссийск' [Ships of the Turkish Navy completed a visit to Novorossiysk], Russian Ministry of Defence, 5 April 2017, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12117357@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12117357@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>55</sup> 'В Черном море прошло совместное учение с кораблями ЧФ России и ВМС Турции' [A joint exercise occurred in the Black Sea with ships of the Russian Black Sea Fleet and Turkish Navy], Russian Ministry of Defence, 5 April 2017, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12117438@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12117438@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>56</sup> 'Пилотажная авиагруппа «Турецкие звезды» прибыла на подмосковный аэродром Кубинка' [Pilots of the aviation group "Turkish Stars" arrived at the Moscow Oblast airport Kubinka], Russian Ministry of Defence, 25 August 2017, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12139800@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12139800@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>57</sup> 'Начальники Генштабов России, Турции и Ирана разработали меры по ликвидации боевиков в Сирии' [Chiefs of the General Staffs of Russia, Turkey, and Iran worked out measures of liquidating militants in Syria], Russian Ministry of Defence, 21 November 2017, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12151796@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12151796@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>58</sup> 'В Новороссийск прибыл десантный корабль ВМС Турции «Байрактар»' [Turkish Navy landing ship "Bayraktar" arrived in Novorossiysk], Russian Ministry of Defence, 19 September 2017, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12142812@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12142812@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.

After Turkish Ground Forces entered Syria in 2018, Ministry of Defence diplomatic interaction increased but direct uniformed military-to-military interaction ebbed: the Turkish Defence Minister visited Russia five times in 2018 but only a single uniformed officer meeting.<sup>59</sup> Exercises and port visits ceased until early 2019.<sup>60</sup> And yet to this point exercises remained exclusively maritime.

A new dimension to Russo-Turkish military engagement began following Putin and Erdogan's Sochi meeting of 22 October 2019 subsequent to the Trump Administration's decision to withdraw tacit U.S. protection for Syrian Kurdish fighters. The resulting agreement on creating an 'Idlib de-escalation zone'<sup>61</sup> established the framework for new Ground Forces interactions specifically in the form of joint patrols in the most restive region of Syria<sup>62</sup> and even scattered counterinsurgency training in 2020<sup>63</sup> at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic's freeze on in-person diplomatic engagements.

The 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War, like the 2018 Turkish Afrin offensive, reduced military interactions to high-level civilian defence bureaucrats rather than uniformed contacts but did not interrupt the joint patrols in Syria.<sup>64</sup> The ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan late in 2020 even led to the creation of a joint Russian-Turkish Centre for Control over the Ceasefire and All

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<sup>59</sup> 'Военная делегация ВМС Турции прибыла с визитом в Санкт-Петербург' [The military delegation of the Turkish Navy arrived for a visit in St. Petersburg], Russian Ministry of Defence, 6 June 2018, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12179482@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12179482@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>60</sup> 'Корабли Черноморского флота провели совместные учения с кораблями ВМС Турции, которые завершили деловой заход в Новороссийск' [Ships of the Black Sea Fleet conducted a joint exercise with the Turkish Navy ships which finished a port visit in Novorossiysk], Russian Ministry of Defence, 8 March 2019, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12220704@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12220704@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>61</sup> 'Меморандум о взаимопонимании между Российской Федерацией и Турецкой Республикой' [Memorandum of understanding between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey], Kremlin, 22 October 2019, <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/5452>. Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>62</sup> 'Военная полиция России провела патрулирование границы Сирии с Турцией' [Military police of Russia conducted a patrol on the border of Syria with Turkey], *Izvestiya*, 25 October 2019, <https://iz.ru/936360/2019-10-25/voennaia-politicia-rossii-provela-patrulirovanie-granitcy-sirii-s-turtciei>. Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>63</sup> Ekaterina Vinogradova, 'Военнослужащие России и Турции провели совместные тренировки' [Servicemen of Russia and Turkey conducted a joint training], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 2 September 2020, <http://redstar.ru/voennosluzhashhie-rossii-i-turtsii-proveli-sovmestnye-trenirovki/>. Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>64</sup> Ekaterina Vinogradova, 'Состоялось сотое совместное российско-турецкое патрулирование' [The 100<sup>th</sup> joint Russian-Turkish patrol took place], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 16 October 2020, <http://redstar.ru/sostoyalos-sotoe-sovmestnoe-rossijsko-turetskoe-patrulirovanie/>. Accessed 22 March 2022.

Hostilities in the Zone of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict on Azerbaijani territory in early 2021.<sup>65</sup> Despite these diplomatic breakthroughs and decreasing travel restrictions, however, 2021 saw few Russo-Turkish military interactions besides scattered port visits and joint patrols in both Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh in a seeming reverse of the situation in 2018.

Over the years surveyed in this thesis, the Russo-Turkish military relationship shifted substantially but without much fanfare. Whereas before 2014 a regular multilateral maritime relationship was the most prominent aspect of military relations, these regular contacts were curtailed after the Russian annexation of Crimea only to restart out of practical necessity following the 2015 Russian military intervention in Turkey's neighbour Syria. The subsequent Turkish downing of the Russian Su-24M refroze military relations again until late 2016 but even then Kremlin, MID, and other Russian Cabinet officials drove the restoration of Russo-Turkish relations far more than the military until Turkish military intervention in Syria in 2018 galvanized further bureaucratic talks. These restored relations proved diplomacy-heavy but exercise- and training-light until U.S. drawdown in 2019 enabled closer pragmatic military-to-military relations which have since expanded beyond the original battlefield in Syria.

This suggests a broad pattern wherein Russo-Turkish military interaction is driven by necessity. Though the two powers have frequently found themselves on the opposite sides of proxy wars, the only time the Russian military cast information-based aspersions against the Turks was during the furore following the 2015 downing of the Russian jet, ironically at the time when and in the place where Russian and Turkish military objectives most aligned: non-Kurdish sections of Syria threatened by Islamic State and other terrorist organisations.

Turkey poses an interesting case study because compared to other Russian interlocutors over 2014-2021 the different bureaucratic actors of the Russian

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<sup>65</sup> 'Российские военнослужащие приступили к совершению марша в район развёртывания совместного российско-турецкого Центра по контролю за прекращением огня в зоне Нагорно-Карабахского конфликта' [Russian servicemen began a joint march to the deployment region of the joint Russian-Turkish Centre for control of the ceasefire in the zone of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict], Russian Ministry of Defence, 30 January 2021, [http://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12341405@egNews](http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12341405@egNews). Accessed 22 March 2022.



government seem most overtly in conflict in their dealings with Ankara. Prior to the 2015 fighter shutdown incident, Putin himself seemed relatively sanguine about the ability of Russia and Turkey to cooperate despite their historical disagreements if only out of necessity:

You know, there have been many tragic and dramatic episodes in our history, as well as many good things, during the Atatürk epoch. In this regard I'd like to say the following. In Europe, too, it was far from an easy ride in relations between different countries and peoples.

I think Germany and France, to mention just these two, are setting us a very good example of relation-building under the current circumstances. There have been so many wars between them! World War I, World War II, 1870 and so on... But today they are members of a single union and cooperate very effectively. We should emulate good examples.

Russia and Turkey have very many - I'd like to stress this - coinciding regional interests. Moreover, a number of regional problems cannot be solved unless Turkey joins in to help address them. This is why we are highly interested in promoting our relations, and we will do just that.<sup>66</sup>

This sentiment largely reflects that Putin evinced in the 2020 quote following the Nagorno-Karabakh War at the start of this section. Yet Putin's patience for such a necessary partner is hardly inexhaustible: in the month following the 2015 fighter shutdown incident, an apoplectic Putin personally made all manner of exaggerated and questionable claims about Turkish government policy in front of foreign dignitaries.<sup>67</sup>

Russian diplomats of the MID similarly express both great readiness to work with understanding for Turkish interests as demonstrated in the Afrin example cited above but also great readiness to attack Turkey verbally when directed.<sup>68</sup> And

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<sup>66</sup> 'Большая пресс-конференция Владимира Путина' [Large press conference of Vladimir Putin], Kremlin, 18 December 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47250>. Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>67</sup> Perhaps most infamously in a rant while hosting the President of France at the Kremlin in the wake of the 2015 Paris terrorist attack. Kremlin 2015i.

<sup>68</sup> E.g. 'Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России по вопросу о выполнении Турцией Конвенции Монтрё' [Commentary of the Department of information and press of the MID of Russia on the question of the implementation of the Montreux Convention of Turkey], MID, 10 April 2014,



yet in the immediate aftermath of Erdogan's apology for the 2015 Russian fighter shutdown incident, the MID shifted from launching an average of 7 new rhetorical attacks against Turkey per month to comparative silence and scheduling regular meetings among diplomats within less than a month.<sup>69</sup>

Among other Russian bureaucratic organisations, Turkey appears as a diplomatic foil to Europe to exploit in times of weakness. As the South Stream gas pipeline project collapsed under pressure from the European Union after the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russian Energy Minister Aleksandr Novak was quick to suggest moving the project's terminus from Bulgaria to Turkey.<sup>70</sup> Though this plan was ultimately delayed by the diplomatic breakdown over 2015-2016, this plan ultimately came to pass with the Turkish Stream gas pipeline commissioned at the start of 2020 in Istanbul attended by, among other grandees, the Prime Minister of Bulgaria.<sup>71</sup>

Contrary to the largest component of the previous literature, the empirical data suggests a relationship more driven by Kremlin-centric narrative than the trade relationship; indeed, the quantity of trade was reduced and restored again over 2015-2017 because of bilateral disputes rather than the trade itself possessing some influence to reduce the degree of the antipathy following the Su-24 shutdown. Similarly, the quantity of regional disputes in which Russia and Turkey back opposing proxies paradoxically seems to bolster relations measured by FPQS due to Moscow's and Ankara's resulting frequent need to resolve

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[https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1721660/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1721660/). Accessed 22 March 2022. Maria Zakharova, 'О развитии ситуации в Сирии' [On the development of the situation in Syria], MID, 25 January 2018, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1561886/#3](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1561886/#3). Accessed 22 March 2022. Maria Zakharova, 'О положении крымских татар' [On the situation of the Crimean Tatars], MID, 21 May 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1422928/#23](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1422928/#23). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>69</sup> 'О встрече Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова с Министром иностранных дел Турции М.Чавушоглу' [On the meeting of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey M. Cavusoglu], MID, 1 July 2016, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1531104/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1531104/). Accessed 22 March 2022. 'О консультациях заместителя Министра иностранных дел России А.Ю.Мешкова с заместителем Министра иностранных дел Турции А.К.Айдыном' [On the consultations of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia А.у. Meshkov with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey А.К. Аудын], MID, 14 July 2016, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1531540/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1531540/). Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>70</sup> 'Новак: вариант прокладки "Южного потока" через Турцию существует', *RIA Novosti*, 19 June 2014, <https://ria.ru/20140619/1012759412.html>. Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>71</sup> 'Церемония ввода в эксплуатацию газопровода «Турецкий поток»' [Commissioning ceremony of the "Turkish Stream" gas pipeline], Kremlin, 8 January 2020, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62553>. Accessed 22 March 2022.

potential problems. That Moscow conducts such business with a relative paucity of acrimonious rhetoric suggests that this sort of imperial contradiction resolution is precisely what appeals to the Russian government. It is not the proxies that cause the difficulties in the relationship but the possibilities of direct bilateral conflict.

The vicissitudes of the Russo-Turkish relationship suggest a greater degree of sensitivity than Putin's official sentiments would imply. Moscow acknowledges Turkey's importance. The Kremlin, military, and senior diplomats regard it as a critical partner in the Middle East whereas economically and among other more revenue-minded Russian bureaucrats Turkey is perceived more as an alternate conduit to Europe bypassing potential direct controls from Brussels. When disagreements pertain merely to proxy wars and sphere of influence clashes such as over Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh, Putin has publicly expressed a great depth of understanding and accommodation. When disagreements extend to mere Turkish velleities about undesired Russian policies such as the annexation of Crimea, Putin is content to let his diplomats chastise Ankara and keep silent himself. Even the Turkish arming of Ukraine with advanced equipment being used against the Russian Armed Forces generally receives only frustrated hounding from the MID. However, then the disagreements spill into direct Turkish firing upon Russians, Putin has not held back in his invective against Turkey until Erdogan sent an unusual personal apology. Russo-Turkish military cooperation is both uniquely and pragmatically engaged while also being ceremonially superficial as the primary military-to-military contacts for many years considered were confined to naval matters between two predominantly land powers. Russo-Turkish relations encompass many contradictions and considerable Russian trepidation but have recovered from and even thrived in a remarkably large number of crises within a mere eight-year window.

## Japan

I think that it is no secret I really love Japan, Japanese culture, sports, including judo, but I won't say anything offensive if I note that I love Russia even more... We must understand that the results of that horrible tragedy of the 20th century, which is the Second World War, are enshrined in the relevant international documents and it is a very delicate thing how to

regulate all disputed issues without destroying the entire foundation of the international legal framework that arose as a result of the Second World War. Therefore, I want to say once again: we cannot anticipate the course, let alone the results, of our talks. Everything we are talking about has come down to us as a result of the events of 70 years ago.

- President Vladimir Putin, 13 December

2016<sup>72</sup>

Like Turkey, Japan has an especially fraught history of relations with Russia albeit one that started in earnest substantially later than that of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>73</sup> In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Russian and Japanese Empires haggled over control of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands. An amicable resolution to this arrangement culminated in the future Tsar Nicholas II's visit to Japan in 1891 during which a Japanese policeman attempted to assassinate the then Tsarevich. The 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War ended whatever prospect for friendship there may have been between the countries, compounded by Japanese assistance in the occupation of the Russian Far East during the Civil War. During World War II, the Soviet Union and Japanese Empire remained at peace until the final weeks of the conflict when the USSR seized back the islands lost in 1905.

After 1945, Japan became a key ally and Pacific staging ground for the United States. Between Japan and other US ally South Korea, Soviet Pacific Fleet access to the World Ocean from Vladivostok was limited to only one point of egress not adjacent to US ally territory: a circuitous route via the Amur Estuary north and then east across the Sea of Okhotsk. Japan's persistent insistence on recovering at least two but ideally all four of the Kuril Islands since 1945 would limit even this access to the ocean. The dispute over these islands has proven the most obstreperous point of contention in the still-unfinished task of formalizing a peace treaty between Japan and the Russian Federation to formally end World War II.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>72</sup> 'Интервью Владимира Путина телекомпании «Ниппон» и газете «Иомиури»' [Interview of Vladimir Putin with the television channel "Nippon" and newspaper "Yomiuri"], Kremlin, 13 December 2016, <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53455>. Accessed 5 April 2022.

<sup>73</sup> Specifically starting with the Shimodskiy Treaty of 1855. 'Комментарий МИД России в связи со 160-летием установления российско-японских отношений' [Commentary of the MID of Russia in connection with the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Russian-Japanese relations], MID, 7 February 2015, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1582837/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1582837/). Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>74</sup> Instead, a 'joint declaration' between the Soviet Union and Japan in 1956 ended the *de jure* state of war. 'Выступление заместителя Министра иностранных дел России И.В.Моргулова на открытии выставки «Россия-Япония: к 60-летию восстановления дипломатических отношений», Москва' [Speech of deputy Minister of foreign affairs of Russia I.V. Morgulov on the opening of the exhibition "Russia-Japan: 60

Most assessment of Russian-Japanese relations unsurprisingly holds the Kurile Islands territorial dispute as the centrepiece of the bilateral relationship with only secondary reference to trade.<sup>75</sup> The rare exceptions to this emphasize the role of Japanese trade to the development of the Far East, though still under the heavy shadow of the Kuriles.<sup>76</sup> Despite the fact the bilateral Russian-Japanese trade in goods by value exceeded Russian-Turkish trade until 2017, the latter receives much greater discussion in the literature.<sup>77</sup> A smaller body of scholarship considers Russian-Japanese relations as duelling efforts to use wedge issues to divide Russia from China and Japan from the United States by the respective governments.<sup>78</sup> The Moscow policy debate on Japan centres primarily on the security implications of the Kuril Islands both in terms of their own defence and how they might be used if the United States could use them as bases. However, since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Japan's re-emergence as a major economic power in the Pacific has greatly complicated Russian policy in the region.

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years of restored diplomatic relations”], MID, 19 October 2016, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1536671/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1536671/). Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>75</sup> Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's foreign policy: change and continuity in national identity*, Lenham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield publishers, 2010, p 75. Gvosdev & Marsh, p 123-156. Donaldson, Noguee, & Nadkarni, p 294-300. Jonathan Berkshire Miller, 'Building momentum: an imminent Japan-Russia rapprochement?', *Rossiia v global'noy politike*, 21 March 2014, <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/building-momentum-an-imminent-japan-russia-rapprochement/>. Accessed 7 April 2022. Lo, p 150-153. Dmitriy Streltsov, *Внешнеполитические приоритеты Японии в Азиатско-Тихоокеанском регионе* [Foreign policy priorities of Japan in the Asia-Pacific region], Moscow: Nauka, 2015. James D. Brown, 'Abe's 2016 plan to break the deadlock in the territorial dispute with Russia', *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 14:4, 2016, p 1-26. James D. Brown, *Japan, Russia, and their territorial dispute: the northern delusion*, London: Routledge, 2016. Gilbert Rozman, 'Unanswered questions about Japan-Russia relations in 2017', *Asia-Pacific Review*, 24:1, 2017, p 74-94. Natasha Kuhrt, 'Asia-Pacific and China', *Routledge handbook of Russian foreign policy*, Routledge, 2018, pp 255, 262-263. Yoko Hirose, 'Japan-Russia relations: can the Northern Territories Issue be overcome?', Washington, DC: CSIS, 2018. Stent, p 235-257. Anna Kireeva, 'A new stage in Russia-Japan relations: rapprochement and its limitations', *Asia-Pacific Review*, 26:2, 2019, p 76-104. Olga Luzanova, 'Повлияет ли уход Синдзо Абэ на российско-японские отношения?' [Will Shinzo Abe's departure affect Russian-Japanese relations?], *Rossiia v Global'noy Politike*, 31 August 2020, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/uhod-sindzo-abe-rossia/>. Accessed 7 April 2022. Aleksandr Lukin, 'Курильские острова: пора, наконец, разобраться, что к чему' [The Kurile islands: time, finally, to finally figure what's what], *Rossiia v global'noy politike*, 12 August 2021, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/kurilskie-ostrova-pora-razobratsya/>. Accessed 7 April 2022.

<sup>76</sup> Natasha Kuhrt, 'The Russian far east in Russia's Asia policy: dual integration or double periphery?', *Russia and the world: the internal-external nexus*, Routledge, 2013, p 95. Stent, p 248-250.

<sup>77</sup> Comtrade.

<sup>78</sup> Yashuhiro Izumikawa, 'To Coerce or reward? theorizing wedge strategies in alliance politics', *Security Studies*, 22:3, 2013, p 498-531. Matteo Dian & Anna Kireeva, 'Wedge strategies in Russia-Japan relations', *The Pacific Review*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2021.1887331>. Accessed 7 April 2022.

Japanese interest in regaining control of the southern Kuril Islands runs into two major political problems for 21<sup>st</sup>-century Russia: first, it would overturn fruits of the Second World War which Putin's Russia uses as its inexhaustible basis for the legitimacy of its foreign policy and, second, it exacerbates Russian nationalist concerns of weakness in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Soviet Union captured the Kuril Islands during its relatively short campaign against the Japanese Empire at the end of World War II. Though this was a comparative footnote in the immense history of Soviet engagement in the war, it entitles the islands to an outsized role in modern Russian pride.<sup>79</sup> Considering that so many other perceived fruits of victory were lost with the collapse of the Soviet Union and ensuing decade of disorder, defiant retention of the Kuril Islands on the grounds that they constitute a legacy of the Great Victory is a relatively easy rhetorical victory for the Russian government, especially considering they not only already possess the territory in question but also Japan, lacking nuclear weapons or a serious will to fight for the islands, is easy to deter.

Ironically, this relative lack of threat to this defiant claim increases the Moscow policy elite's interest in portraying the islands as threatened<sup>80</sup> or a potential threat to Russia if allowed to return to Japan's control.<sup>81</sup> The Russian government even occasionally echoes – albeit far less vociferously – Beijing's denunciations of Japanese memorialization of its war dead and imperial legacy as romanticism for militarism and a harbinger of future revanchism.<sup>82</sup>

The ease in using the islands as a mechanism for defending the legacy of Soviet

<sup>79</sup> Pavel Anokhin, 'Мир без торга' [Peace without bargaining], *VPK*, 21 January 2019, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/47764>. Accessed 18 January 2022.

<sup>80</sup> Anatoliy Zaytsev, 'Удар по Курилам – возможный сценарий' [Strike on the Kurils – a possible scenario], *VPK*, 29 January 2019, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/47943>. Accessed 18 January 2022. Konstantin Sivkov, 'Призрак Цусимы' [Ghost of Tsushima], *VPK*, 12 April 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/61693>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>81</sup> 'От ракет не защититься: почему Курилы не спасут Японию' [One cannot protect oneself from missiles: why the Kuriles won't save Japan], *Gazeta*, 5 February 2019, <https://www.gazeta.ru/army/2019/02/05/12164959.shtml>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>82</sup> 'Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на пресс-конференции по итогам деятельности российской дипломатии в 2013 году, Москва' [Speech and answers to questions of the media of Russian Foreign Minister S.V. Lavrov during the press conference summarizing the activities of Russian diplomacy in 2013, Moscow], *MID*, 21 January 2014, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1731533/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1731533/). Accessed 18 January 2022.

victory in World War II also means that it is in Moscow's interest to humour Japanese interest in a final peace treaty to end the war.<sup>83</sup> The fact that Japan cannot politically back down from its interest in regaining at least two or preferably all four of the southern Kuril Islands means that this talking point on defending the legacy of Victory can continue indefinitely.

As indicated by Charts 5-1 and 5-2 above, regardless of the rhetorical prospect of a continuation of World War II through a failure to achieve a final peace treaty with Japan, Moscow's relationship with Tokyo suffers fewer high and low melodramas than do the relationships with Ankara or Paris. Table 5-5 lists the quantitative statistics for Russia's relationship with Japan and the resulting quantitatively-derived qualitative labels prescribed by Table 5-1.

Charts 5-1, 5-2, and 5-3 at the start of this chapter insinuated that Russo-Japanese relations over 2014-2021 were comparatively straightforward and uncomplicated relative to relations with Turkey and France. Table 5 shows a substantially different story. Unlike with Turkey, Russian trade with Japan has never recovered from the fallout from the Russian annexation of Crimea. Also unlike with Turkey, Russian FPQS with Japan never exceeded IC, indicating that relations were never unambiguously good in any of these years as Moscow posted at least some negative actions or information.

<i>Year</i>	<i>IC</i>	<i>FPQS</i>	<i>DFM</i>	<i>PMTPS</i>	<i>Previous Year's Trade Turnover</i>	<i>Politicization</i>	<i>Characterization of Relations</i>
2014	51	27	2	17.852	\$33,228,007,563	3.76	<b>Concern</b>
2015	41	19.25	6	19.152	\$30,748,191,162	3.95	<b>Competitor</b>
2016	68	66.5	6	19.3139	\$21,244,908,841	2.08	<b>Peer</b>
2017	65	62.5	6	15.3518	\$17,480,277,776	1.81	<b>Peer</b>
2018	69	33	4	16.858	\$20,025,621,104	4.43	<b>Malign</b>
2019	81	19	3	15.6337	\$21,262,286,064	2.23	<b>Concern</b>
2020	48	13.75	4	12.1401	\$20,315,290,406	3.28	<b>Malign</b>
2021	56	-24	2	16.3874	\$16,165,465,461	3.71	<b>Nuisance</b>

However, as with Turkey, Russo-Japanese relations proved relatively unpoliticized compared to the global average each year. Also, the changes in

<sup>83</sup> E.g. 'Встреча с Премьер-министром Японии Синдзо Абэ' [Meeting with Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe], Kremlin, 9 November 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46985>. Accessed 18 January 2022.

PMTPS showed little and inconsistent relation to the changes in FPQS except potentially between 2020 and 2021.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Arms Control</i>	<i>Former Soviet Space</i>	<i>The West</i>	<i>Middle East</i>	<i>Asia-Pacific</i>	<i>COVID-19</i>
2014	3 (27%)	6 (55%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (18%)	0 (0%)
2015	3 (16%)	4 (21%)	1 (5%)	5 (26%)	6 (32%)	0 (0%)
2016	5 (11%)	7 (15%)	3 (7%)	12 (26%)	19 (41%)	0 (0%)
2017	7 (21%)	1 (3%)	2 (6%)	4 (12%)	20 (59%)	0 (0%)
2018	5 (21%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	9 (38%)	9 (38%)	0 (0%)
2019	4 (17%)	2 (9%)	3 (13%)	3 (13%)	11 (48%)	0 (0%)
2020	2 (7%)	4 (13%)	3 (10%)	7 (23%)	6 (20%)	8 (27%)
2021	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)	0 (0%)

Table 5-6 lists the distribution of topics discussed in Russo-Japanese diplomatic meetings over 2014-2021 excluding bilateral affairs. Though Asia-Pacific matters constitute the mode of these discussion topics in all but two of the years surveyed, other affairs were regularly discussed except for a remarkably hard break on such talks in 2021. As relations improved in 2016-2017, the quantity of such discussion topics hit its apogee but similarly did such discussions collapse with FPQS in 2021.

Bilaterally, Russia has two main concerns with Japan: the peace treaty and Kuril Islands dispute mentioned above and concerns about Japanese acquiescence to a global US-centred missile defence network. Having only two points of contention would suggest fewer restrictions to dialogue and cooperation than Russia has with Turkey but the abruptness with which Russia curtailed dialogue with Tokyo in 2021, the decrease in deputy foreign ministerial consultations since 2018, and the considerable variance in IC over the years suggest that Moscow views positive diplomatic relations with Tokyo as more optional than those with Ankara.

Unlike with Turkey, few singular events dramatically advanced or halted Russo-Japanese relations during these years and yet an understated narrative can be perceived in the frequency and nature of the meetings that occurred. Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo favoured finalizing a peace treaty with the Russian



Federation<sup>84</sup> which Putin intermittently humoured,<sup>85</sup> but this desire became a means for Moscow to lure Tokyo into endless talks. Table 5-7 lists the frequency of meetings Russia held with Japan each year in which the official Russian readout indicated negotiations toward a peace treaty.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Peace Treaty Negotiations</i>	<i>FPQS</i>
2014	1	27
2015	2	19.25
2016	2	66.5
2017	0	62.5
2018	1	33
2019	4	19
2020	0	13.75
2021	1	-24

Table 5-7 indicates a curious phenomenon wherein Russian FPQS toward Japan seems to drop every time peace treaty negotiations are pursued excepting 2016. At the tactical diplomatic level, the cause of this phenomenon is that the Japanese insist on regaining either two or four of the Kuril Islands whereas the Russian government alternatively refuses to consider the territorial question in any manner beyond that considered in the 1956 Soviet-Japanese Joint Declaration which agrees to consider the territorial question of two of the four islands after a peace treaty is reached<sup>86</sup> or declares that any peace treaty must take into account the views of the islands' local population (i.e. the Soviet-era transplanted inhabitants).<sup>87</sup> Briefly, the Russians seek a peace treaty rapidly whereas the Japanese fear that a treaty not expressly addressing the territorial

<sup>84</sup> 'Japan's Abe says wants to discuss peace treaty with Putin', *Reuters*, 10 September 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-russia-peace-treaty-idUSKCN1LQ1B9>. Accessed 24 March 2022. 'Shinzo Abe wants a "specific discussion" with Vladimir Putin on a peace treaty at Moscow summit', *The Japan Times*, 31 December 2018, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/12/31/national/politics-diplomacy/shinzo-abe-wants-specific-discussion-vladimir-putin-peace-treaty-moscow-summit/>. Accessed 24 March 2022.

<sup>85</sup> Denis Pinchuk & Polina Nikolskaya, 'Russia's Putin tells Japan's Abe: "Let's sign peace deal this year"', *Reuters*, 12 September 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-economy-forum-putin-treaty-idUSKCN1LS0RV>. Accessed 24 March 2022.

<sup>86</sup> 'В Кремле назвали главную цель переговоров с Японией' [It was declared in the Kremlin the main goal for negotiations with Japan], *RIA Novosti*, 27 January 2019, <https://ria.ru/20190127/1549993610.html>. Accessed 25 March 2022.

<sup>87</sup> 'Ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам «Прямой линии»' [Answers to questions of journalists after "Pryamaya Linya"], Kremlin, 16 April 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/49264>. Accessed 26 March 2022. 'Договор с Японией должен учитывать интересы жителей Курил, заявил Песков' [Peskov declares that the Treaty with Japan should consider the interests of the Kuril inhabitants], *RIA Novosti*, 16 January 2019, <https://ria.ru/20190116/1549412518.html>. Accessed 25 March 2022.



issue will forever foreclose any possibility of reclaiming these islands.

As peace treaty negotiations intensify, these matters simply enter greater focus for both sides. From Moscow's perspective, it is better to ignore Tokyo's insistence on territorial adjustments than it is to endanger its popular perception of maintaining Russia's territorial integrity.

Complicating Moscow's political drive to be seen as a vigilant defender of the Russian Far East is its increasing perception that the region requires Asian investment to thrive economically. The Russian government makes a point of seeking investment in the Far East during diplomatic meetings in Asia, including with Japan.<sup>88</sup> Japanese trade with Russia disproportionately benefits the Far East.<sup>89</sup> Even when Russo-Japanese relations are in the throes of peace treaty intransigence, the Russian government reverts to calls for improved business relations to temper the political tensions.<sup>90</sup>

Japan is an important but declining economic partner of the Russian Federation.<sup>91</sup> Prior to the annexation of Crimea, Japan was Russia's 5<sup>th</sup> largest trade partner in the world;<sup>92</sup> by 2019, just prior to the COVID-19 shock, it had fallen to 10<sup>th</sup>.<sup>93</sup> Whereas Japanese trade with Russia constituted just over one-third Chinese trade with Russia in 2013,<sup>94</sup> this had fallen to just over one-sixth by 2019.<sup>95</sup> As with Turkey, Russia is a net exporter to Japan, with fossil fuels - especially crude oil,<sup>96</sup> natural gas,<sup>97</sup> and coal<sup>98</sup> - by far the largest component

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<sup>88</sup> 'Ответ заместителя Министра иностранных дел России И.В.Моргулова на вопрос ТАСС о роли России в урегулировании ситуации на Корейском полуострове' [Answer of Deputy Foreign Minister I.V. Morgulov to the question of TASS on the role of Russia in resolving the situation on the Korean peninsula], MID, 28 April 2018, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1570091/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1570091/). Accessed 4 January 2022.

<sup>89</sup> Stent, p 248-250.

<sup>90</sup> E.g. 'Выступление и ответы на вопросы Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе встречи с Ассоциацией европейского бизнеса в Российской Федерации, Москва' [Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's remarks and answers at a meeting with the Association of European Business in the Russian Federation, Moscow], MID, 21 February 2019, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1454298/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1454298/). Accessed 25 March 2022.

<sup>91</sup> Kuhrt 2018, p 255.

<sup>92</sup> Behind the People's Republic of China, the Netherlands, Germany, and Italy. Comtrade.

<sup>93</sup> Behind the People's Republic of China, Germany, the Netherlands, Belarus, the United States, Turkey, Italy, and South Korea. Comtrade.

<sup>94</sup> \$33,228,007,563 vs \$91,999,234,350

<sup>95</sup> \$20,315,290,406 vs \$112,746,020,933

<sup>96</sup> Commodity code 2709 in the Harmonized System Codes for foreign trade.

<sup>97</sup> Commodity code 2711

<sup>98</sup> Commodity code 2701

followed by other commodities such as precious metals.<sup>99</sup> By far the largest Russian import from Japan is automobiles;<sup>100</sup> indeed, Russia imports more automobiles from Japan than it does from any other country at a greater value than all Russian automobile exports, though the value of these imports halved between 2013 and 2019.<sup>101</sup>

On paper, this trade relationship seems especially fortuitous for both sides: Japan's largest worldwide import is fossil fuels and its largest export automobiles whereas Russia's largest export is fossil fuels and its third largest import automobiles.<sup>102</sup> However, this match overlooks their mutual insignificance in these fields. For Japan in 2019, Russia was only the fifth largest origin of Japanese fossil fuels despite the fact that all four bigger sources - Australia, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and the Qatar<sup>103</sup> - are all substantially farther away from Japan than Russia. Similarly, Japan ranks as Russia's eighth-largest destination for fossil fuel exports.<sup>104</sup> Though Japan is Russia's largest source of imported automobiles, Russia is only Japan's sixth-largest export market for automobiles.<sup>105</sup> This economic relationship may serve both countries' economies well but neither constitutes a critical market for the other. This potentially explains how Moscow's and Tokyo's political intransigence about fully normalising relations nearly 80 years after a three-week war can be maintained with only limited attention given by both parties.

To a certain extent, this failure to achieve better relations despite certain economic interests in doing so reflects a more delicate attempted balance in Russian great power politics than elsewhere. Whereas Russia frequently seeks renegotiation of the security status quo in Europe to force the European Union and NATO to recognize Russia's particular demands and accommodate them as

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<sup>99</sup> Comtrade.

<sup>100</sup> Commodity code 87, especially 8703, 8708, and 8707.

<sup>101</sup> Comtrade.

<sup>102</sup> Comtrade.

<sup>103</sup> Comtrade.

<sup>104</sup> After the People's Republic of China, the Netherlands, South Korea, Germany, Poland, Italy, and Turkey. Comtrade.

<sup>105</sup> After the United States, the People's Republic of China, Australia, Canada, and the United Arab Emirates. Comtrade.

legally-binding policy,<sup>106</sup> its ambitions for the Asia-Pacific region are considerably more modest.<sup>107</sup> Russia seems to harbour lesser ambition for being a Pacific great power than it does in Europe. Over the eight years surveyed, a total of 1,759 Russian articles were found on security aspects of Europe or some part of it as opposed to only 525 about the Asia-Pacific region.

Perhaps because of this relative absence of great power interest, Russo-Japanese military relations have developed relatively well despite the Russian annexation of Crimea and the increasing profile of the US-Japanese alliance in the wake of its increasing concerns over China. Both before<sup>108</sup> and after<sup>109</sup> the annexation of Crimea, senior Japanese officers visited Moscow both for high-level talks and to observe training procedures. The Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) conducted a port visit and joint exercise with the Russian Navy in late 2014.<sup>110</sup> Bilateral Russo-Japanese military relations declined after 2014<sup>111</sup> but did not completely end with occasional visits to Moscow of top Japanese officers<sup>112</sup> and Russian participation in multilateral defence forums in

<sup>106</sup> E.g. 'Выступление руководителя Делегации Российской Федерации на переговорах в Вене по вопросам военной безопасности и контроля над вооружениями К.Ю.Гаврилова на пленарном заседании ФСОБ ОБСЕ, посвящённом закрытию Председательства Австрии' [Speech of the head of the Delegation of the Russian Federation on negotiations in Vienna on the question of military security and arms control K.Yu. Gavrillovch to the plenary session of the FSOB OSCE dedicated to the closing of the Austrian chairmanship], MID, 17 December 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1790847/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1790847/). Accessed 25 March 2022.

<sup>107</sup> E.g. 'Ответ заместителя Министра иностранных дел России И.В.Моргулова на вопрос ТАСС о роли России в урегулировании ситуации на Корейском полуострове' [Answer of Deputy Foreign Minister I.V. Morgulov to the question of TASS on the role of Russia in resolving the situation on the Korean peninsula], MID, 28 April 2018, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1570091/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1570091/). Accessed 4 January 2022.

<sup>108</sup> 'Врио главнокомандующего Сухопутными войсками России генерал-лейтенант Александр Ленцов встретился с начальником штаба Сухопутных сил самообороны Японии генералом Киёфуми Ивата' [Acting Commander-in-Chief of the Ground forces of Russia Lieutenant-General Aleksandr Lentsov met with the chief of staff of the Ground forces of the self-defence forces of Japan General Kiyofumi Iwata], Russian Ministry of Defence, 3 February 2014, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11899536@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11899536@egNews). Accessed 25 March 2022.

<sup>109</sup> 'Военная делегация Японии посетила Учебный центр служебного собаководства Западного военного округа' [Military delegation of Japan visited the Training centre of service dog of the Western military district], Russian Ministry of Defence, 27 August 2014, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11981227@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11981227@egNews). Accessed 25 March 2022.

<sup>110</sup> 'Во Владивосток прибыл японский эсминец «Хамагири»' [Japanese destroyer "Hamagiri" arrived in Vladivostok], Russian Ministry of Defence, 27 October 2014, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11997440@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11997440@egNews). Accessed 25 March 2022.

<sup>111</sup> 'Анатолий Антонов прокомментировал решение Японии о приостановке подготовки соглашения о предотвращении опасной военной деятельности' [Anatoliy Antonov commented on the decision of Japan on the the suspension of preparations for an agreement on the prevention of dangerous military incidents], Russian Ministry of Defence, 19 March 2014, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11910431@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11910431@egNews). Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>112</sup> 'Военная делегация Японии посетила Таманскую гвардейскую мотострелковую дивизию' [Military delegation of Japan visited the Tamanskaya Guards Motor Rifle Division], Russian Ministry of Defence, 19

Tokyo.<sup>113</sup> In 2017, Russia and Japan resumed mutual port visits<sup>114</sup> and maritime exercises<sup>115</sup> and even held a 2+2 ministerial in Tokyo promising to increase mutual confidence-building mechanisms while sharing military lessons from the Russian campaign in Syria<sup>116</sup> as discussion of a peace treaty declined. Accordingly, military delegations increased in 2018<sup>117</sup> and a joint naval exercise was even held in the Gulf of Aden<sup>118</sup> well away from either Russian or Japanese waters. These military exchanges continued apace with frequent General Staff exchanges between the countries and naval exercises culminating in one further distant sea anti-piracy exercise in the Arabian Sea in January 2020.<sup>119</sup> However, the onset of COVID-19 froze Russo-Japanese military exchanges completely after that last exercise.

Thus, as with Turkey, Russian military cooperation is disproportionately navy-centric, though at least until 2015 the Ground Forces also had regular exchanges. This tempo of both uniformed and civilian MOD exchanges greatly exceeds that of the Russo-Turkish relationship in these years, though the latter received considerably greater scrutiny among Western observers. However, this positive military-to-military relationship seems to have played a relatively marginal role in the overarching relationship. Though the relationship was

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May 2015, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12034566@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12034566@egNews). Accessed 25 March 2022.

<sup>113</sup> 'Делегация Минобороны России приняла участие в 20-м Токийском оборонном форуме, который состоялся в Японии 15-17 марта' [Delegation of the Ministry of Defence of Russia took part in the 20<sup>th</sup> Tokyo defence forum which took place in Japan 15-17 March], Russian Ministry of Defence, 17 March 2016, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12081042@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12081042@egNews). Accessed 25 March 2022.

<sup>114</sup> 'Отряд кораблей МСС Японии завершил свой визит во Владивосток' [A detachment of Japanese JMSDF ships completed its visit to Vladivostok], Russian Ministry of Defence, 18 October 2017, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12147291@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12147291@egNews). Accessed 25 March 2022.

<sup>115</sup> 'В Японском море прошло российско-японское военно-морское учение по спасению на море' [A Russian-Japanese naval exercise occurred in the Sea of Japan for rescuing at sea], Russian Ministry of Defence, 23 January 2017, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12108869@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12108869@egNews). Accessed 25 March 2022.

<sup>116</sup> 'Министры обороны России и Японии договорились углублять меры доверия на уровне генштабов' [Ministers of defence of Russia and Japan agreed to deepen confidence-building measures at the level of the General Staffs], Russian Ministry of Defence, 20 March 2017, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12115141@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12115141@egNews). Accessed 25 March 2022.

<sup>117</sup> Е.г. 'Делегация академии Генштаба обсудит в Токио проблемы безопасности в Азиатско-Тихоокеанском регионе' [Delegation of the General Staff academy discussed issues of security in the Asia-Pacific region in Tokyo], Russian Ministry of Defence, 25 September 2018, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12196840@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12196840@egNews). Accessed 25 March 2022.

<sup>118</sup> 'Военно-морские учения России и Японии начались в Аденском заливе' [Naval exercises of Russia and Japan started in the Gulf of Aden], *Izvestiya*, 10 November 2018, <https://iz.ru/810702/2018-11-10/voenno-morskie-ucheniia-rossii-i-iaponii-nachalis-v-adenskom-zalive>. Accessed 25 March 2022.

<sup>119</sup> '«Пиратам» дан отпор' [Pirates rebuffed], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 22 January 2020, <http://redstar.ru/piratam-dan-otpor/>. Accessed 25 March 2022.

restarted in 2017 as Russian FPQS toward Japan was just off its high point, the successful exchange of officers and exercises did not stop the precipitous decline of FPQS over 2018 and 2019. Indeed, when COVID-19 abruptly ended the relationship, there was no complaint in the Russian press about this break. Since Abe's retirement as Prime Minister of Japan, there seems to have been no Japanese or Russian effort to restore the functional-to-good military relationship of 2017-2019.

In terms of Russian threat, Japan lies within the Far Eastern *TVD*. Table 5-8 lists the relevant Russian operational units and seas affecting the MTPS toward Japan. Overall Russian PMTPS toward Japan wavered between 15 and 20 each year except one (2020) when it dropped to 12. Notably, unlike in the western *TVDs*, PMTPS did not spike around the strategic-operational exercise directed toward this region, *Vostok*. Indeed, PMTPS increased to its highest levels against Japan in the two years after *Vostok-2014* even after Russo-Japanese exercises restarted. Unadjusted for diplomatic engagements, the threat continued to increase to 2018 but two bilateral exercises reduced the adjusted threat score. Given that Russia-Japan relations ground to a halt by FPQS metric in 2020, it would seem strange that the PMTPS that year - even unadjusted for the one exercise in the Arabian Sea - fell to its lowest level of the eight years considered.

<i>Operational-Level Unit</i>	<i>Quantity of Borders to Cross</i>	<i>Sea</i>	<i>Sea Impact</i>
5 <sup>th</sup> Army (East)	2	East China Sea	Adjacent
35 <sup>th</sup> Army (East)	2	Northwest Pacific Ocean	Adjacent
68 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (East)	1	Peter the Great Gulf	Adjacent
Northeast Group (East)	2	Sea of Japan	Adjacent
		Sea of Okhotsk	Adjacent

Russian PMTPS toward Japan is relatively low despite the existence of the 68<sup>th</sup> Army Corps on Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands specifically to deter Japanese

attack. Russian training priorities in this unit never expressly target Japan,<sup>120</sup> are indeed primarily defensive,<sup>121</sup> and use relatively older equipment.<sup>122</sup> Nevertheless, Russian *ucheniya* on the Kuril Islands frequently draw protests from Tokyo which the MID dutifully rebuts on each occasion with declarations that the islands are Russian territory and that measures will continue to be taken to boost their defensive capability.<sup>123</sup> The frequency of this mutual intransigence is a leading cause preventing Russian FPQS toward Japan ever exceeding IC in any given year and yet as shown above it has not interfered in Russia and Japan having a functional military relationship even at a time of conflict between Russia and Japan's key ally the United States.

Nevertheless, neither has an accommodating military-to-military relationship alleviated Russian defence community concerns about Japanese intentions.<sup>124</sup> Russian military scholars frequently react negatively to new Japanese defence policies advancing alignment with the United States and against the People's Republic of China with chastisements about phobias for non-existent threats,<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Viktor Khudoleev, 'Мотивированы на достижение максимальных результатов' [Motivated to achieve maximum results], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 21 April 2021, <http://redstar.ru/motivirovany-na-dostizhenie-maksimalnyh-rezultatov/>. Accessed 25 March 2022.

<sup>121</sup> 'Тактическое учение по противодесантной обороне с военнослужащими армейского корпуса ВВО стартовало на Курильских островах' [Tactical exercise to defend against a landing with servicemen of the army corps of the Eastern Military District started in the Kuril Islands], Russian Ministry of Defence, 8 September 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12382817@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12382817@egNews). Accessed 25 March 2022.

<sup>122</sup> Only 23 of 2,165 (1%) reports of new equipment deliveries and upgrades from the Russian Ministry of Defence over the 2014-2021 military academic years pertained to the 68<sup>th</sup> Army Corps.

<sup>123</sup> 'Комментарий официального представителя МИД России М.В.Захаровой в связи с высказыванием генерального секретаря кабинета министров Японии К.Като о военных учениях на южных Курилах' [Commentary of the official spokesperson of the MID of Russia M.V. Zakharova in connection with the statement of the Secretary General of the Cabinet of Ministers of Japan K. Kato about the military exercises in the southern Kurils], 24 June 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1766667/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1766667/). Accessed 25 March 2022.

<sup>124</sup> Even if Russian diplomats insist that more military-to-military interaction will accomplish just that. 'Россия привержена развитию обменов с Японией в военной области' [Russia is committed to developing military exchanges with Japan], *RIA Novosti*, 12 September 2018, <https://ria.ru/20180912/1528413963.html>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>125</sup> Vladimir Kozin, '«Иджис эшор» – не только щит, но и меч' ["Aegis Ashore" – not just a shield but also a sword], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 27 August 2018, <http://redstar.ru/idzhis-eshor-ne-tolko-shhit-no-i-mech/>. Accessed 26 March 2022. 'Японцев испугал союз России с Китаем в случае войны' [Japanese feared an alliance of Russia with China in case of war], *Radio Sputnik*, 8 May 2021, <https://radiosputnik.ria.ru/20210508/smi-1731472979.html>. Accessed 25 March 2022. Vladimir Sviridov, 'Опасные фобии «Белой книги»' [Dangerous phobias of the "White paper"], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 23 July 2021, <http://redstar.ru/opasnye-fobii-beloj-knigi/>. Accessed 25 March 2022.

a phenomenon sometimes repeated by military leaders.<sup>126</sup> Russian defence bureaucrats themselves frequently take a dismissive attitude to Japanese objections to legal norms raised by Russian military activities.<sup>127</sup> Occasionally, the Russian military makes a point of referring to details of World War II to humiliate the Japanese.<sup>128</sup>

Putin personally seems to take a relatively dismissive view of Japan, frequently reverting to lectures about how Tokyo needs to understand its place as the loser of World War II when displeased<sup>129</sup> and dismissing the lack of a peace treaty as a mere ‘anachronism’.<sup>130</sup> Notably, in a 2013 state visit seeking Asian investment in the Russian Far East – a motif of Russian bureaucratic policy toward Japan<sup>131</sup> – Putin visited Vietnam<sup>132</sup> and South Korea,<sup>133</sup> skipping a country with an economy more than triple the size of the two from which he sought aid combined. Though Putin typically recognizes that Japan does not simply mirror U.S. policy, he sees no reason to make a show of concessions on Japanese demands either to get a peace treaty or improved relations<sup>134</sup> even as he has indicated interest in using

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<sup>126</sup> ‘Расширенное заседание коллегии Министерства обороны’ [Expanded meeting of the Collegium of the Ministry of Defence], Kremlin, 11 December 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50913>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>127</sup> ‘Комментарий заместителя Министра обороны РФ Анатолия Антонова относительно озабоченности Японии «частыми» полетами российской военной авиации над акваторией Японского моря’ [Commentary of deputy Minister of defence of the Russian Federation Anatoliy Antonov on Japan’s concerns about “frequent” flights of Russian military aircraft over the Sea of Japan], Russian Ministry of Defence, 21 April 2014, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11919713@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11919713@egNews). Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>128</sup> Е.г. ‘Шойгу рассказал, какую загадку он хочет разгадать’ [Shoygu said what riddle he wants to solve], *RIA Novosti*, 3 September 2020, <https://ria.ru/20200903/shoygu-1576670667.html>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>129</sup> ‘Встреча с руководителями мировых информагентств’ [Meeting with world news agencies], Kremlin, 24 May 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/21090>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>130</sup> ‘Ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам встречи лидеров экономик форума АТЭС’ [Answers to journalists’ questions after the meetings of meeting of economic leaders at the APEC forum], Kremlin, 21 November 2016, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53284>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>131</sup> Е.г. ‘Открытие международной выставки ИННОПРОМ-2017’ [opening of the international exhibition INNOPROM-2017], Kremlin, 9 July 2017, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/55021>. Accessed 26 March 2022. Maksim Reshetnikov, ‘Развитие сотрудничества РФ и Японии зависит от взаимодействия бизнеса’ [Development of cooperation between the Russian Federation and Japan depends on the interaction of business], MERRF, 5 June 2021, [https://economy.gov.ru/material/news/maksim\\_reshetnikov\\_razvitie\\_sotrudnichestva\\_rf\\_i\\_yaponii\\_zavisit\\_ot\\_vzaimodeystviya\\_biznesa.html](https://economy.gov.ru/material/news/maksim_reshetnikov_razvitie_sotrudnichestva_rf_i_yaponii_zavisit_ot_vzaimodeystviya_biznesa.html). Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>132</sup> ‘Официальный визит во Вьетнам’ [Official visit to Vietnam], Kremlin, 12 November 2013, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/trips/19608>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>133</sup> ‘Официальный визит в Республику Корея’ [Official visit to the Republic of Korea], Kremlin, 13 November 2013, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/trips/19617>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>134</sup> ‘Ответы на вопросы журналистов по итогам «Прямой линии»’ [Answers to the questions of journalists after “Прямая линия”], Kremlin, 14 April 2016, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/51718>. Accessed 26 March 2022. ‘Встреча с руководителями



Japanese interest in diplomacy with Russia as a potential lever to dislodge Tokyo's ally Washington's anti-Russian policies elsewhere.<sup>135</sup> At other times, Putin insinuates that Japan is indeed beholden to U.S. policy regardless of the Japanese people's desires, implying that it is difficult to negotiate in good faith with such a government on a peace treaty<sup>136</sup> and that improved Japanese relations with Russia would obviate the need to rely upon this supposedly unpopular defensive support.<sup>137</sup> Casually suggesting that Japan must spurn its closest ally for the possibility of improving relations shows how wildly Putin's whims can swing on Japan when an irreconcilable territorial question clouds the possibility of even a peace treaty, let alone a larger partnership.

As with Turkey, the MID pursued a more rhetorically unscrupulous line of information messaging toward Japan at each turn, alternating between praise for decisions to engage with Moscow<sup>138</sup> and exaggeration of the deleterious effects of opposing or ignoring Russian positions.<sup>139</sup> As noted above, the MID took the lead in rebutting Japanese protests to Russian exercises in the Kuril Islands. Unlike the Kremlin's firm intransigence, Lavrov has cited the forging of a strategic partnership between Russia and China as the means of resolving

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международных информагентств' [Meeting with heads of international news agencies], Kremlin, 4 June 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/65749>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>135</sup> 'Ответы на вопросы журналистов' [Answers to the questions of journalists], Kremlin, 5 September 2016, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52834>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>136</sup> 'Большая пресс-конференция Владимира Путина' [Large press conference of Vladimir Putin], Kremlin, 20 December 2018, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/59455>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>137</sup> 'Большая пресс-конференция Владимира Путина' [Large press conference of Vladimir Putin], Kremlin, 19 December 2019, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62366>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>138</sup> 'Доклад о результатах и основных направлениях деятельности Министерства иностранных дел Российской Федерации в 2013 году и задачах на среднесрочную перспективу' [Declaration of the results and main activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in 2013 and tasks for the medium term], MID, 29 April 2014, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1590055/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1590055/). Accessed 26 March 2022. 'Выступление Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в Дальневосточном федеральном университете (ДВФУ) на тему: «Международная деятельность России для развития российских регионов» и ответы на вопросы студентов и профессорско-преподавательского состава, Владивосток' [Remarks of Minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov at the Far Eastern Federal University on the theme "International activities of Russia for the development of Russian regions" and answers to students' and faculty's questions, Vladivostok], MID, 8 July 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1767412/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1767412/). Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>139</sup> 'Ответ официального представителя МИД России А.К.Лукашевича на вопрос СМИ в связи с введенными Японией визовыми ограничениями против группы российских граждан' [Answer of the official spokesperson of the MID of Russia A.K. Lukashevich to a question of the media in connection with the visa restrictions imposed by Japan against a group of Russian citizens], MID, 29 April 2014, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1590016/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1590016/). Accessed 26 March 2022. 'Комментарий МИД России в связи с введением Японией дополнительных санкций в отношении России' [Commentary of the MID of Russia in connection with Japan's imposition of sanctions against Russia], MID, 29 July 2014, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1628579/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1628579/). Accessed 26 March 2022.



territorial disputes, insinuating that Japan may be similarly rewarded if it but deepens relations with Moscow.<sup>140</sup> The MID also makes a point of objecting to any Japanese investment in missile defence capabilities regardless of their orientation primarily against North Korea both in and of itself<sup>141</sup> and because of concerns that such a system supposedly aids in the integration of Japan into the U.S. global defence network.<sup>142</sup> On occasion, the MID also amplified Beijing's complaints about Tokyo's actions, though these generally took a more muted rhetorical tone than that of the People's Republic of China itself, more often simply emphasizing that the action or decision in question harmed regional relations or stability.<sup>143</sup> As with the Kremlin, the MID frequently cites Japan's defeat in World War II as a fact that Tokyo must acknowledge<sup>144</sup> and occasionally

<sup>140</sup> 'Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова для программы «Действующие лица с Наилей Аскер-заде» на телеканале «Россия 1», Москва' [Interview of the Minister of foreign affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov for the programme "Active faces with Nailia Asker-zade" on television channel "Rossiya 1"], MID, 11 February 2018, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1563155/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1563155/). Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>141</sup> Maria Zakharova, 'О планах Минобороны Японии по размещению комплексов «Иджис Эшор» на территории страны' [On the plans of the Ministry of Defence of Japan to deploy "Aegis Ashore" complexes on the territory of the country], MID, 24 August 2017, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1551139/#8](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1551139/#8). Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>142</sup> 'Выступление и ответ на вопрос СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Японии Т.Коно, Москва' [Remarks and answer to a question of the media of Minister of foreign affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov in a joint a press conference following negotiations with the Minister of foreign affairs of Japan T. Kono, Moscow], MID, 24 November 2017, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1557631/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1557631/). Accessed 26 March 2022. 'Комментарий заместителя Министра иностранных дел России С.А.Рябкова в связи с развертыванием в Японии системы ПРО' [Commentary of deputy Minister of foreign affairs of Russia S.A. Ryabkov in connection with the deployment of a missile defence system in Japan], MID, 30 December 2017, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1560740/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1560740/). Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>143</sup> E.g. Denouncing politicians' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine: MID 2014b. 'Ответ официального представителя МИД России М.В.Захаровой на вопрос СМИ о намерении Японии сбросить жидкие радиоактивные отходы, образовавшиеся в результате аварии на АЭС Фукусима, в Тихий океан' [Answer of the official spokesperson of the MID of Russia M.V. Zakharova to the question of the media on the intention of Japan to dump liquid radioactive waste generated as a result of the Fukushima accident into the Pacific Ocean], MID, 19 December 2017, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1559986/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1559986/). Accessed 26 March 2022. 'Комментарий официального представителя МИД России М.В.Захаровой в связи с планами Японии осуществить сброс воды с АЭС «Фукусима-1» в океан' [Commentary of the official spokesperson of the MID of Russia M.V. Zakharova in connection with the plans of Japan to discharge water from the Fukushima-1 nuclear power plant into the ocean], MID, 13 April 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1419589/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1419589/). Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>144</sup> 'Ответ заместителя директора Департамента информации и печати МИД России М.В.Захаровой на вопрос агентства «Интерфакс» относительно заявления Премьер-министра Японии С.Абэ' [Answer of deputy director of the Department of information and the press of the MID of Russia M.V. Zakharova to the question of the "Interfax" agency regarding the declaration of the Prime Minister of Japan S. Abe], MID, 13 August 2014, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1633877/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1633877/). Accessed 26 March 2022. 'Заявление МИД России в связи с реакцией МИД Японии на рабочую поездку Председателя Правительства Российской Федерации Д.А.Медведева на о.Итуруп' [Declaration of the MID of Russia in connection with the reaction of the MFA of Japan to the working visit of the Chairman of Government of the Russian Federation D.A. Medvedev to the Iturup island], MID, 22 August 2015, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1513333/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1513333/). Accessed 26 March 2022. 'Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России в связи с высказываниями японского дипломата по проблеме мирного договора' [Commentary of the

engages in speculation about the return of militarism<sup>145</sup> or expanded military capabilities and exercises<sup>146</sup> as a potential source of instability in the Asia-Pacific region.

Security-minded non-governmental Muscovite debate about Japan gravitates toward a long-term suspicion of Tokyo's intransigence on the peace treaty issue. Many Russian analysts infer that Japan is holding out on its demands for the Kuril Islands to wait until Russia falls into a moment of weakness again like it did at the collapse of the Soviet Union to extract concessions when Moscow is prone.<sup>147</sup> Others attribute Japanese insistence on the islands to a genuine Japanese popular impulse, in turn sparking further wariness that this political interest cannot be outlasted.<sup>148</sup> Still others comment upon this possibility but then highlight that the United States 'occupies' Japanese territory with unpopular

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Department of information and press of the MID of Russia in connection with the statements of the Japanese diplomat on the issue of a peace treaty], MID, 20 February 2016, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1523060/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1523060/). Accessed 22 March 2022. 'Ответы Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на вопросы читателей газеты «Аргументы и факты» [Answers of Minister of foreign affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov to the questions of the newspaper "Argumenty i Fakty"]], MID, 29 March 2017, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1544529/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1544529/). Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>145</sup> 'Ответ официального представителя МИД России А.К.Лукашевича на вопрос СМИ относительно принятого японским правительством решения об отказе от самоограничений в оборонной сфере' [Answer of the official spokesperson of the MID of Russia A.K. Lukashovich to the question of the media regarding the decision of the Japanese government to abandon self-restrictions on the defence sector], MID, 7 July 2014, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1621666/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1621666/). Accessed 26 March 2022.

'Комментарий МИД России в связи с высказываниями Министра иностранных дел Японии Ф.Кисиды' [Commentary of the MID of Russia in connection with the statements of Minister of foreign affairs of Japan F. Kishida], MID, 21 January 2015, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1581960/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1581960/). Accessed 26 March 2022. 'Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России в связи с вопросом СМИ относительно намерения включить коллекцию музея репатриации японского города Майдзурю в реестр программы «Память мира» ЮНЕСКО' [Commentary of the Department of information and press of the MID of Russia in connection with the media question regarding the intention to include the collection of the Museum of Repatriation of the Japanese city of Maizuru in the register of the UNESCO "Memory of the World" programme], MID, 22 October 2015, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1517387/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1517387/). Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>146</sup> 'Комментарий официального представителя МИД России М.В.Захаровой в связи с японо-американскими военными учениями «Восточный щит»' [Commentary of the official spokesperson of the MID of Russia M.V. Zakharova in connection with the Japanese-American military exercise "Orient Shield"], MID, 3 July 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1767215/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1767215/). Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>147</sup> Leonid Shipilov, 'Карты для изгнанных' [Maps for exiled], *VPK*, 1 October 2018, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/45351>. Accessed 26 March 2022. 'Японцы раскритиковали призыв "отобрать" Южные Курилы у России' [Japanese criticized the call to "take away" the Kuriles from Russia], *RIA Novosti*, 5 June 2020, <https://ria.ru/20200605/1572495411.html>. Accessed 26 March 2022. 'Ждать ли новую Цусиму на восточных рубежах России' [Should we wait for a new Tsushima on the eastern borders of Russia], *VPK*, 10 April 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/news/61650>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>148</sup> Е.г. 'Японцы возмутились архивными фотографиями Курильских островов' [The Japanese were outraged by archival photographs of the Kuril Islands], *RIA Novosti*, 4 September 2020, <https://ria.ru/20200904/kurily-1576714393.html>. Accessed 26 March 2022. Aleksandr Timokhin, 'Япония – не только икебана' [Japan is not just Ikebana], *VPK*, 3 November 2020, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/59365>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

bases but the people are suppressed from effectively opposing them.<sup>149</sup> Fears abound that Japan is developing offensive military capabilities both to execute its revanchism<sup>150</sup> but also as a refusal to acknowledge Soviet victory in World War II.<sup>151</sup> As might be expected from the tenor of the relationship described above, Russian politicians in the Duma cheer individual Japanese decisions to facilitate economic ties<sup>152</sup> but such concessions from Tokyo do nothing to reduce maximalist insinuations on retaining the Kuril Islands.<sup>153</sup>

Russia's 2020 constitutional amendments *inter alia* rendered territorial negotiations illegal, leading some Russian politicians to immediately herald the end of any suspicions that the Kuril Islands were at any risk from a Kremlin interest in greater business ties.<sup>154</sup> Yet as was explored above this has never seemed a prospect seriously considered - at least publicly - by the Russian

<sup>149</sup> 'Американские военные базы власти Японии стараются не замечать' [Japanese authorities try not to notice American military bases], *VPK*, 28 February 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/news/61032>. Accessed 26 March 2022. Nikolay Protoropov, "'Их ненавидят": что морпехи США устроили в Японии' ["They are hated": what the US Marines did in Japan], *RIA Novosti*, 1 March 2021, <https://ria.ru/20210301/morpekhi-1599083581.html>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>150</sup> Vladimir Sidorov, Токио меняет «щит» на «копье» [Tokyo changes a "shield" for a "spear"], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 24 September 2018, <http://redstar.ru/tokio-menyaet-shhit-na-kopyo/>. Accessed 26 March 2022. Maria Tromilenko, 'Япония модернизирует военный потенциал' [Japan is modernizing its military potential], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 26 December 2018, <http://redstar.ru/yaponiya-sovershenstvuet-voennyi-potentsial/>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>151</sup> Maria Tomilenko, 'Итоги Второй мировой войны пересмотру не подлежат' [Results of the Second World War are not subject to revision], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 15 June 2020, <http://redstar.ru/itogi-vtoroj-mirovoj-voiny-peresmotru-ne-podlezhat/>. Accessed 26 March 2020.

<sup>152</sup> E.g. Svetlana Zhurova, Отмена виз между РФ и Японией укрепит отношения между странами' [The abolition of visas between the Russian Federation and Japan will strengthen relations between the countries], *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Dumy po Mezhdunarodnym delam*, 4 June 2019, <https://interkomitet.ru/blog/2019/06/04/svetlana-zhurova-otmena-viz-mezhdu-rf-i-yaponiej-ukreplit-otnosheniya-mezhdu-stranami/>. Accessed 22 March 2022.

<sup>153</sup> Leonid Slutskiy, 'Госдума запросит в МИД информацию о переговорах РФ с Японией по Курилам' [The State Duma will ask the MID for information on negotiations of the Russian Federation with Japan on the Kurils], *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Dumy po Mezhdunarodnym delam*, 18 December 2018, <https://interkomitet.ru/blog/2018/12/18/leonid-slutskij-gosduma-zaprosit-v-mid-informatsiyu-o-peregovorah-rf-s-yaponiej-po-kurilam/>. Accessed 26 March 2022. Anton Morozov, 'Ни на какие уступки в плане Курил Россия не пойдет' [No concessions will be made by Russia in terms of the Kurils], *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Dumy po Mezhdunarodnym delam*, 16 October 2019, <https://interkomitet.ru/blog/2019/10/16/anton-morozov-ni-na-kakie-ustupki-v-plane-kuril-rossiya-ne-pojdet/>. Accessed 26 March 2022. 'В Совфеде исключили пересмотр принадлежности Курил' [Revision of the ownership of the Kuriles was ruled out in the Federation Council], *Izvestiya*, 26 July 2021, <https://iz.ru/1198189/2021-07-26/v-sovfede-iskliuchili-peresmotr-prinadlezhnosti-kuril>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>154</sup> 'Интервью заместителя Председателя Совета Безопасности России' [Interview of the deputy Chairman of the Security Council of Russia], *SCRf*, 1 February 2021, <http://scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/2925/>. Accessed 26 March 2022. 'Песков призвал не читать СМИ с утверждениями о возможной передаче Курил Японии' [Peskov urged not to read media allegations of the possibility of a transfer of the Kuriles to Japan], *Izvestiya*, 3 March 2021, <https://iz.ru/1131951/2021-03-03/peskov-prizval-ne-chitat-smi-s-utverzheniiami-o-vozmozhnoi-peredache-kuril-iaponii>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

government. Putin himself changes his narrative from one of impunity to Japanese demands to one offering a better arrangement for Japanese security than the United States can provide seemingly based on his whims.

Above all else, the Russo-Japanese relationship of these years is one characterised by mutual patience. Whereas the territorial dispute over Crimea animated substantial animus both between Russia, Ukraine, and the West at large, the Kurile Islands dispute remained a constant problem but one which never derailed the daily business of diplomacy, business, and even military exchanges. Private Russian policy community concerns about the growing vulnerability of the disputed islands did not result in substantial military investment in the islands over these years. Russian PMTPS toward Japan remained largely constant over 2014-2021. Japan constituted a convenient straw man for Putin and other Russian government leaders to decry as a villain for coveting Russian territory, but Russia never allowed this to escalate into a serious military provocation.

Perhaps the most concerning element of Russia's military posture to complement its hard-line opposition to Japanese claims is the consolidation of the Russian alignment with China. Increasingly regular joint Russian-Chinese bomber patrols typically fly quite near Japan.<sup>155</sup> Following the *Morskoe Vzaymodeystvie-2021* joint naval exercise with China, Russian and Chinese ships sailed around Japan.<sup>156</sup> These developments have not been coupled with a major proportional surge in military exercises as they have on Russia's European borders over the years covered in this thesis. Cumulatively, this suggests that though Russia and Japan have disputes, any future conflict between the two is more likely to be instigated by Beijing calling upon Moscow than by bilateral Russo-Japanese contradictions.

If the Russo-Turkish relationship can be summarised as a relatively good bilateral

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<sup>155</sup> 'Минобороны РФ показало кадры совместного с КНР воздушного патрулирования' [The Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation showed footage of the joint air patrol with the People's Republic of China], *Izvestiya*, 19 November 2021, <https://iz.ru/1252329/2021-11-19/minoborony-rf-pokazalo-kadry-sovmestnogo-s-knr-vozdushnogo-patrulirovaniia>. Accessed 26 March 2022.

<sup>156</sup> Andrey Gavrilov, 'Курсом через Сангарский пролив' [Cruise through the Sangar Strait], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 25 October 2021, [http://redstar.ru/kursom-через-sangarskij-proliv/](http://redstar.ru/kursom-cherез-sangarskij-proliv/). Accessed 26 March 2022.

relationship complicated by many third-party differences, the Russo-Japanese relationship of 2014-2021 seems the opposite: a relationship bedevilled by a singularly contentious sticking point with many salving elements of cooperation on the periphery. Everyday Russian foreign and military policy seems more invested in seeking ways to focus the bilateral relationship ever further toward those peripheral salves as suggested by the relatively unpoliticized balance of trade to IC. Yet these policies cannot make the core breakthrough of finalising a peace treaty unless either Moscow or Tokyo forfeits a highly politicized and popularly invested political prize in the sparsely populated but strategically positioned Kuril Islands.

As such, perhaps too much scholarly energy has been put into the Kurile Islands dispute itself, which is highly unlikely to see resolution in the near future. This seems especially the case considering the ability of Russian-Japanese relations to enjoy a brief flourish under Abe even after the Russian annexation of Crimea and resulting diplomatic fallout. Though the range of Moscow-Tokyo dialogue is certainly narrower than it is between Moscow and Ankara, it is broader than simply the Kuriles and an elusive peace treaty as well as the economic relationship. Though the wedge strategy observers note an interesting emerging trend, there remains a striking gap in the literature on how Russia perceives Japan within the Asia-Pacific region as a whole as opposed to as a less adversarial component of an increasingly antagonistically-matched pair of allies.

## France

The Russia-France relationship dates back at least to the 11<sup>th</sup> century<sup>157</sup> and is replete with cultural overtones. Especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, if Russia was intellectually considered the darkest corner of Europe, then France was its brightest pinnacle as measured by the penetration of the Enlightenment into society. This mutual impression drove considerable Russian soul-searching about France with many Russian aristocrats adopting the French language for use among themselves before and even after the Napoleonic Wars. Whereas the

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<sup>157</sup> At least according to Putin. 'Интервью Владимира Путина французской газете Le Figaro' [Interview of Vladimir Putin to the French newspaper "Le Figaro"], Kremlin, 31 May 2017, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54638>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

Russian elite retained a fascination with France, the public dubbed the 1812 campaign the 'Patriotic War' involving the mobilization of the entire country to defeat the enemy. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, France and Russia entered into a military alliance to surround Germany and the Habsburg Empire and French banks invested considerable capital to improve Russian infrastructure to improve its military capabilities.

Russian defeat in World War I and the emergence of the Soviet Union even further complicated this relationship as France became an early champion of Soviet containment and the creation of a *cordon sanitaire* to stop the spread of communism. Russia renounced pre-war debts to French banks, lambasted the French Communists' entry into a Popular Front with Bernstein-influenced social democrats, and cooperated far more with France's great rival Germany in the interwar years but did not completely eschew the possibility of military cooperation, especially in the final years before the return of war in Europe. After World War II, though France joined NATO, official Soviet antagonism to Paris was quite mild compared to its diatribes against the United Kingdom and West Germany. Charles de Gaulle's withdrawal from NATO commands and expulsion of NATO facilities from French territory pleased Moscow and Putin continues to fondly quote de Gaulle whenever asked about his long-term hopes for Russian-European relations.<sup>158</sup>

Other observers of the contemporary Russian-French relationship tend to highlight the depths of animosity and heights of mutual respect they have often simultaneously plumbed and enjoyed.<sup>159</sup> Relatively few of these observers have offered as much of a hypothesis to explain larger relations, especially compared to the Russo-Turkish or Russo-Japanese relationships if only because of the relatively large breadth of dialogue. To the extent that a broader pattern of relations exists in recent years, it is judged the result of events in third

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<sup>158</sup> E.g. 'Интервью Владимира Путина радио «Европа-1» и телеканалу TF1' [Interview of Vladimir Putin for radio "Europe-1" and television channel "TF1"], Kremlin, 4 June 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/45832>. Accessed 28 March 2022.

<sup>159</sup> Govsdev & Marsh, p 239-292. Lo, p 187-188.



countries, especially Ukraine, Syria,<sup>160</sup> the Baltic States,<sup>161</sup> Iraq, and Iran.<sup>162</sup> Occasional Russian academic voices view France as a willing Russian interlocutor with which business can be done regarding Europe as a whole.<sup>163</sup> In addition, Putin's Russia holds a special fascination among the French political extremes, both left and right.

The current Russian political approach to France is one of understated complexity. As a fellow permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Russia perceives France as more than just a European regional interlocutor. Moscow readily acknowledges disagreements on perspectives on Europe, but the quality of relations,<sup>164</sup> depth and breadth of engagement have fluctuated wildly in recent years both for good and for ill. Nevertheless, Franco-Russian relations remained net positive throughout the years surveyed despite Russian-precipitated crises along the periphery of the European Union as shown above in Chart 5-1. Table 5-9 breaks down the overarching quantitative indicators of Franco-Russian relations and Table 5-10 demonstrates the extraordinarily broad subject matter discussed in bilateral negotiations.

<i>Year</i>	<i>IC</i>	<i>FPQS</i>	<i>DFM</i>	<i>PMTPS</i>	<i>Previous Year's Trade Turnover</i>	<i>Politicization</i>	<i>Characterization of Relations</i>
2014	135	70.5	6	7.600	\$18,950,386,295	0.81	<b>Competitor</b>
2015	133	121.3	6	7.028	\$15,391,634,747	0.61	<b>Peer</b>
2016	80	61	7	8.722	\$8,631,188,610	0.72	<b>Peer</b>
2017	68	60.5	5	7.780	\$14,244,238,594	1.41	<b>Near-Peer</b>
2018	84	29	7	6.762	\$16,415,476,216	2.99	<b>Competitor</b>
2019	108	49	6	7.206	\$17,345,657,014	1.36	<b>Competitor</b>
2020	129	26.25	8	8.646	\$15,052,806,663	0.91	<b>Competitor</b>
2021	127	11.5	5	15.8823	\$12,845,675,529	1.30	<b>Malign Force</b>

<sup>160</sup> Stent, p 65-69.

<sup>161</sup> Leonid A. Maltsev & Natalia P. Tanshina, 'Baltic factor in Russia-France relations', *Baltic Region* 4, 2016, p 79-85.

<sup>162</sup> Donaldson, Noguee, & Nadkarni, p 314-317, 373-376, 387-390.

<sup>163</sup> Fyodor Lukyanov, 'Зачем нам Макрон?' [Why do we need Macron?], *Rossiia v global'noy politike*, 31 May 2017, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/zachem-nam-makron/>. Accessed 7 April 2022.

<sup>164</sup> 'Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России в связи с переговорами в Москве Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова с Министром Европы и иностранных дел Франции Ж.-И.Ле Дрианом' [Commentary of the Department of information and press of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the talks in Moscow between Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov with Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France J-I. Le Drian], MID, 26 February 2018, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/-/asset\\_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3094125](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/3094125). Accessed 11 November 2021.

**Table 5-10. Russia-France Discussion Topics in Bilateral Meetings excluding matters of Bilateral Relations, 2014-2021**

Year	Arms Control	Former Soviet Space	The West	Middle East	Asia-Pacific	Africa	COVID-19
2014	3 (3%)	47 (48%)	7 (7%)	28 (29%)	1 (1%)	11 (11%)	0 (0%)
2015	16 (18%)	21 (24%)	3 (3%)	41 (47%)	0 (0%)	7 (8%)	0 (0%)
2016	8 (9%)	34 (37%)	9 (10%)	35 (38%)	0 (0%)	5 (5%)	0 (0%)
2017	8 (13%)	27 (43%)	3 (5%)	17 (27%)	1 (2%)	7 (11%)	0 (0%)
2018	2 (5%)	10 (24%)	0 (0%)	25 (60%)	2 (5%)	3 (7%)	0 (0%)
2019	4 (5%)	21 (25%)	6 (7%)	38 (47%)	2 (2%)	10 (12%)	0 (0%)
2020	11 (9%)	36 (31%)	5 (4%)	32 (27%)	1 (1%)	21 (18%)	12 (10%)
2021	15 (11%)	32 (23%)	20 (14%)	24 (17%)	1 (1%)	42 (30%)	4 (3%)

As Table 5-10 shows, Russian and French officials discuss a remarkably wide variety of topics beyond their own bilateral interests. Furthermore, unlike with Turkey and Japan, these topics most often pertain to regions beyond France’s geographical location, the West. In every year, the Russian government discussed issues regarding former Soviet space or the Middle East more frequently than matters confined to Europe and the West at large. France frequently participates in small multilateral formats with Russia on geopolitical issues in formats such as the Minsk Group on Nagorno-Karabakh, Normandy Format on the post-2014 Ukraine conflict, and P5+1 on the Iranian nuclear programme. Within these capacities, especially ones relevant to Europe, Moscow frequently implores Paris to take a greater role enforcing formal diplomatic agreements such as the 21 February 2014 political deal reached with Yanukovich in Kiev,<sup>165</sup> the 2014 and 2015 Minsk Agreements reached with Poroshenko, or even Moscow’s complaints about other members of the European Union.<sup>166</sup> When Moscow perceives these multilateral efforts as failing, this can create tension in the bilateral relationship.<sup>167</sup> Of the 20 recorded instances of direct Russian opposition, disinformation, demands, and other unfriendly statements toward France in the especially tense year of 2014, 12 pertained not to direct Russian-

<sup>165</sup> ‘О телефонном разговоре Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова с министрами иностранных дел Германии, Польши и Франции’ [On the telephone conversations of Foreign Minister of Russia S.V. Lavrov with the Foreign Ministers of Germany, Poland, and France], MID, 22 February 2014, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1670198/](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1670198/). Accessed 15 January 2022.

<sup>166</sup> ‘О рабочих контактах в Париже Уполномоченного МИД России по вопросам прав человека, демократии и верховенства права К.К.Долгова’ [On the working meetings in Paris of the Human, Democratic, and Religious Rights Director of the MID of Russia K.K. Dolgov], MID, 6 March 2014, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1693397/](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1693397/). Accessed 15 January 2022.

<sup>167</sup> ‘Заявление МИД России по событиям на Украине’ [Declaration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia on the situation in Ukraine], MID, 27 February 2014, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1673195/](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1673195/). Accessed 15 January 2022.



French relations but rather to France's policies in third countries.

This dialogue about third party countries between Moscow and Paris extends beyond 21<sup>st</sup> century multilateralism to post-colonial politics. This includes both Russian declarations that Moscow understands the dynamics of its formal imperial periphery better than Paris<sup>168</sup> and Russian gloating and disinformation about attempted French oversight of its remaining and former colonial possessions.<sup>169</sup> Moscow occasionally even claims superior capability to police the former French Empire.<sup>170</sup>

This wide array of discussion topics explains to a certain extent the relatively politicized Franco-Russian relationship in most of these years despite relations remaining positive. As Table 9 shows, in the immediate aftermath of the Russian annexation of Crimea, trade turnover fell even as political dialogue in part seeking peace in Ukraine<sup>171</sup> remained relatively high as evidenced by the high IC score. Trade turnover between the two countries fell in the following years but not IC did not, keeping relations relatively politicized. About the time of Emmanuel Macron's inauguration as President of France, Franco-Russian trade rebounded but IC lagged until 2019, showing a relative depoliticization of the relationship. Excepting 2016, which saw declines in IC, FPQS, and trade, these three scores seem largely unrelated to each other and the narrative of Franco-Russian diplomacy follows much more closely on political developments than on these scores.

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<sup>168</sup> 'Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России в связи с заявлением Министра иностранных дел Франции Л. Фабиуса в отношении Всеукраинского объединения «Свобода»' [Commentary of the Department of Information and Media of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia in connection with the declaration of the Foreign Minister of France L. Fabius on the All-Ukrainian association "Svoboda"], MID, 13 March 2014, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1698206/](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1698206/). Accessed 15 January 2022.

<sup>169</sup> 'Вступительное слово и ответы Министра иностранных дел России С.В. Лаврова на вопросы СМИ в ходе пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Госсекретарем США Дж. Керри, Лондон' [Introductory speech and answers by Russian Foreign Minister S.V. Lavrov to questions of the media during the press conference on the results of negotiations with U.S. Secretary of State J. Kerry, London], 14 March 2014, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1700052/](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1700052/). Accessed 15 January 2022.

<sup>170</sup> 'Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России по ситуации в Центральноафриканской Республике' [Commentary of the Department of Information and Press of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia on the situation in the Central African Republic], MID, 22 September 2014, [https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1650288/](https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1650288/). Accessed 15 January 2022.

<sup>171</sup> Of the 135 Russian IC score for France in 2014, fully 52 (39%) of the collective meetings and statements pertained to Ukraine.

Prior to the annexation of Ukraine, the Russian government had been pursuing programmes of joint high-technology developments especially in engineering<sup>172</sup> and even military technology, most prominently ‘Mistral’-class amphibious landing ships.<sup>173</sup> As the Russian annexation of Crimea poisoned relations between Moscow and Europe, the French government abruptly called off the transfer of the ‘Mistral’ ships to the Russian Navy, causing considerable friction in the official relationship.<sup>174</sup> French President Francois Hollande went to great lengths to facilitate a peace process for Ukraine both through hosting the inaugural Normandy Format summit within a previously-scheduled commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Allied Normandy landings<sup>175</sup> and participation in the forging of the Minsk peace process for a ceasefire in the Donbass<sup>176</sup> even as his administration held up the ‘Mistral’ contract. Through this period of combination impasse and peace initiatives, Franco-Russian diplomatic contact remained fairly constant as indicated by France’s resiliently high DFM score these years but Cabinet-level meetings largely ceased and presidential communication moved primarily to phone conversations; on 6 December 2014, Putin intercepted Hollande at Moscow’s Vnukovo-2 airport for an in-person conversation as the French President was returning to Paris from Kazakhstan<sup>177</sup> as Hollande did not want to be seen coming to the Kremlin.

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<sup>172</sup> ‘Встреча с Премьер-министром Франции Жан-Марком Эйро’ [Meeting with Prime Minister of France Jean-Mark Ayrault], Kremlin, 1 November 2013, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19534>. Accessed 28 March 2022.

<sup>173</sup> ‘18-е заседание Российско-Французской межправительственной комиссии по вопросам двустороннего сотрудничества’ [18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Russian-French intergovernmental commission on matters of bilateral cooperation], Government.ru, 1 November 2013, <http://government.ru/news/7919/>. Accessed 28 March 2022.

<sup>174</sup> ‘Брифинг официального представителя МИД России А.К.Лукашевича’ [Briefing of the official spokesperson of the MID A.K. Lukashovich], MID, 9 October 2014, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1655677/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1655677/). Accessed 28 March 2022. ‘Интервью заместителя Министра иностранных дел России А.Ю.Мешкова агентству «Интерфакс»’ [Interview of deputy Minister of foreign affairs of Russia A.Yu. Meshkov to the “Interfax” agency], 1 December 2014, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1719893/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1719893/). Accessed 28 March 2022. ‘Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова телеканалу «Франс 24», Москва’ [Interview of the Minister of foreign affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov to the television channel “France 24”, Moscow], MID, 16 December 2014, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1723554/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1723554/). Accessed 28 March 2022.

<sup>175</sup> ‘Ответы на вопросы журналистов’ [Answers to the questions of journalists], Kremlin, 6 June 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/45869>. Accessed 28 March 2022.

<sup>176</sup> ‘Переговоры в «нормандском формате»’ [Negotiations in the “Normandy Format”], Kremlin, 12 February 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47664>. Accessed 28 March 2022.

<sup>177</sup> ‘Встреча с Президентом Франции Франсуа Олландом’ [Meeting with the President of France Francois Hollande], Kremlin, 6 December 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47185>. Accessed 28 March 2022.

However, as the FPQS scores suggest, some resolution was achieved in 2015. Following speculation that the Russian government would destabilize the European Union in the wake of the Greek referendum rejecting the terms of the EU bailout,<sup>178</sup> Putin and Hollande formally agreed to a refund for the termination of the ‘Mistral’ contract.<sup>179</sup> The surge in Islamic terrorist incidents in France in 2015<sup>180</sup> culminating in the November Paris attacks killing more than 100 people<sup>181</sup> led to a surge in Franco-Russian interest in cooperation fighting Islamic State, coming as the attacks did shortly after Russia’s military intervention in Syria to accomplish precisely that end. Less than two weeks after the Paris terrorist attacks, Hollande visited the Kremlin to lay the groundwork for increased anti-terrorist (especially anti-Islamic State) coordination - a meeting already referenced above as it was the scene of some of Putin’s most acrimonious denunciations of the Turkish shooting down of the Russian fighter-bomber two days before.<sup>182</sup> Both diplomatic<sup>183</sup> and military<sup>184</sup> consultations to coordinate the fight against Islamic State in the wake of the attacks, culminating in the Russian Ministry of the Interior’s donation of a puppy to their

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<sup>178</sup> ‘Телефонный разговор с Президентом Франции Франсуа Олландом’ [Telephone conversation with the President of France Francois Hollande], Kremlin, 7 July 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/49875>. Accessed 28 March 2022. ‘Пресс-конференция Владимира Путина по итогам саммитов БРИКС и ШОС’ [Press conference of Vladimir Putin following the summits of the BRICS and SCO], Kremlin, 10 July 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/49909>. Accessed 28 March 2022. Aleksandr Novak, ‘Изучаем возможность организации прямых поставок энергетического сырья в Грецию’ [We are studying the possibility of organising direct supplies of energy raw materials to Greece], Russian Ministry of Energy, 12 July 2015, <https://minenergo.gov.ru/node/2369>. Accessed 28 March 2022.

<sup>179</sup> ‘Телефонный разговор с Президентом Франции Франсуа Олландом’ [Telephone conversation with the President of France Francois Hollande], Kremlin, 5 August 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50100>. Accessed 28 March 2022.

<sup>180</sup> ‘Соболезнования Президенту Франции Франсуа Олланду’ [Condolences to the President of France Francois Hollande], Kremlin, 7 January 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47458>. Accessed 28 March 2022.

<sup>181</sup> ‘Соболезнования Президенту Франции Франсуа Олланду’ [Condolences to the President of France Francois Hollande], Kremlin 14 November 2015, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50687>. Accessed 28 March 2022.

<sup>182</sup> Kremlin 2015i.

<sup>183</sup> ‘О встрече заместителя Министра иностранных дел России О.В.Сыромолотова с Послом Франции в России Ж.-М.Рипером; [On the meeting of deputy Minister of foreign affairs of Russia O.V. Syromolotov with the Ambassador of France in Russia J.-M. Ripert], MID, 26 November 2015, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1519220/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1519220/). Accessed 28 March 2022.

<sup>184</sup> ‘Начальник Генерального штаба ВС РФ обсудил с французским коллегой координацию действий в Сирии’ [Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation discussed with his French colleague coordination of activities in Syria], Russian Ministry of Defence, 19 November 2015, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12066302@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12066302@egNews). Accessed 28 March 2022.

French colleagues in solidarity.<sup>185</sup>

The decline of the Russian FPQS toward France from 2015 to 2016 indicates that this semi-alliance did not last long. Though regular diplomatic interaction between Russia and France - including among the security services<sup>186</sup> - resumed, the degree of at least acknowledged cooperation remained purely of a bureaucratic consultative nature as opposed to the joint operations imagined in the heat of November 2015. Openly, France joined broader Western condemnation of Russian war crimes in Syria in early 2016.<sup>187</sup> As a result, though diplomatic coordination between Moscow and Paris remained robust, FPQS fell as the quantity of agreements and positive statements about France ceased.

Putin and the Russian government at large attempted to use the anti-terror theme to continue enhanced cooperation with France after the inauguration of Emmanuel Macron as President.<sup>188</sup> Though Macron invited Putin to Versailles fifteen days into his presidency<sup>189</sup> Franco-Russian trade revived at a substantially greater pace than diplomatic engagement was maintained resulting in the relative depoliticization of relations as indicated by Table 9. After 2017, mutual discussion of Ukraine declined and over 2018 and 2019 the Middle East and Africa dominated the Franco-Russian diplomatic agenda as shown in Table 10.

<sup>185</sup> 'Российская полиция передает в дар французским коллегам щенка овчарки' [Russian police donate a shepherd puppy to French colleagues], Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, 20 November 2015 <https://мвд.пф/news/item/6802710>. Accessed 28 March 2022.

<sup>186</sup> Е.г. 'Секретарь Совета Безопасности Российской Федерации встретился в Москве с Генеральным секретарем по вопросам обороны и национальной безопасности Французской Республики' [Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation met in Moscow with the General secretary on defence and national security issues of the Republic of France], SCRF, 26 February 2016, <http://scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/1036/>. Accessed 28 March 2022. 'Заместитель Министра обороны Российской Федерации Анатолий Антонов принял посла Франции в России Жана Мориса Рипера' [Deputy Minister of defence of the Russian Federation Anatoliy Antonov received the Ambassador of France in Russia Jean Maurice Ripert], Russian Ministry of Defence, 1 April 2016, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12082096@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12082096@egNews). Accessed 28 March 2022.

<sup>187</sup> Maria Zakharova, 'О последних высказываниях Министра иностранных дел Франции Л.Фабиуса по Сирии' [On the latest statements of the Minister of foreign affairs of France L. Fabius on Syria], MID, 14 January 2016, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1521109/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1521109/). Accessed 28 March 2022.

<sup>188</sup> Putin's congratulatory telegram to Macron on his election unusually highlights the difficulties of the situation in Europe in an appeal to work for stability. 'Поздравление Эммануэлю Макрону с избранием на пост Президента Франции' [Congratulations to Emmanuel Macron on his election to the post of President of France], Kremlin, 8 May 2017, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54465>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>189</sup> 'Совместная пресс-конференция с Президентом Франции Эммануэлем Макроном' [Joint press conference with the President of France Emmanuel Macron], Kremlin, 29 May 2017, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54618>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

Over the years between Macron's inauguration and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, intergovernmental dialogue grew more pragmatic. In late 2015, France and Russia actively considered seeking a joint Franco-Russian solution to certain international problems; over 2017-2019, the Russian government framed the relationship as one in which Putin and Macron were managing international problems and using their respective leverage over third parties to boost stability. Ukraine, Syria, and Libya immediately ascended in importance as places where one side was perceived as having greater influence than the other. When the Trump Administration terminated US involvement in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action - the diplomatic agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme to which Russia and France are also members - in 2018, Putin and Macron began regular communication about sustaining this arms control agreement as well.<sup>190</sup>

This spirit of great power cooperation, however, was complemented by harsh Russian rhetoric for many of the Macron Administration's decisions. Even if the Russian government maintained a high tempo of dialogue with Paris, it was clear throughout that French actions aligned with the United States and other NATO members, especially on air strikes<sup>191</sup> and chemical weapons accusations against Syria<sup>192</sup> and denunciations of Russian media as 'propaganda'.<sup>193</sup> Though much of the information campaign turned acrimonious, Lavrov still defended Franco-Russian relations as 'comradely'<sup>194</sup> on both Syria and Ukraine<sup>195</sup> even as Putin despaired that de Gaulle's Lisbon to Vladivostok concept was languishing if not dead.<sup>196</sup> This increase in negative rhetoric alongside a constant pace of

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<sup>190</sup> A typical readout of such a conversation: 'Телефонный разговор с Президентом Франции Эммануэлем Макроном' [Telephone conversation with President of France Emmanuel Macron], Kremlin, 18 July 2019, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61038>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>191</sup> Е.г. 'Заявление МИД России' [Statement of the MID of Russia], MID, 14 April 2018, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1568631/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1568631/). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>192</sup> Е.г. 'Выступление Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на XXVI Ассамблее Совета по внешней и оборонной политике, Москва' [Speech of the Minister of foreign affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov to the 26<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Council on foreign and defence policy, Moscow], MID, 14 April 2018, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1568647/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1568647/). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>193</sup> Е.г. Мария Захарова, 'Об очередных выпадах французских властей в отношении российских СМИ во Франции' [On the regular attacks of the French authorities against Russian media in France], MID, 7 March 2019, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1455592/#15](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1455592/#15). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>194</sup> Товарищеские [*tovarishcheskie*]

<sup>195</sup> MID 2019.

<sup>196</sup> 'Президенты России и Франции сделали заявления для прессы и ответили на вопросы журналистов' [The Presidents of Russia and France give statements to the press and answer journalists']

diplomacy prevented FPQS rising and indeed keeping their proportion low enough that France remained a ‘competitor’ rather than ‘peer’ during the early Macron years.

Since 2020, Franco-Russian relations have become even more engaged, even more diverse, and yet less friendly as IC increased, the distribution of topics discussed (Table 5-10) broadened, and FPQS decreased. The COVID-19 pandemic, the eruption of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War which both Russia and France observed as mediators via the OSCE Minsk Group, the escalation of violence in Libya, and the escalation of Russian pressure on Ukraine all offered more issues for the two great powers to attempt to cooperate. Also in 2020, French solidarity with the German investigation into the poisoning of Russian opposition activist Aleksey Navalny precipitated considerably more Russian invective against France, particularly on supposed development of chemical weapons<sup>197</sup> or suspicion of entirely fabricating the evidence that Navalny was poisoned,<sup>198</sup> suppression of the ‘yellow vest’ protester movement in France,<sup>199</sup> enablement of

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questions], Kremlin, 19 August 2019, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61336>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>197</sup> ‘Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России в связи с заявлениями представителей ряда стран по ситуации вокруг А.Навального’ [Commentary of the Department of information and press of the MID of Russia in connection with the declarations of the representatives of a number of countries on the situation of A. Navalny], MID, 5 September 2020, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1441273/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1441273/). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>198</sup> ‘Телефонный разговор с Президентом Франции Эммануэлем Макроном’ [Telephone conversation with the President of France Emmanuel Macron], Kremlin, 14 September 2020, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/64032>. Accessed 29 March 2022. ‘Комментарий Департамента информации и печати МИД России в связи с ситуацией вокруг А.Навального’ [Commentary of the Department of information and press of the MID of Russia in connection with the situation of A. Navalny], MID, 17 September 2020, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1442306/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1442306/). Accessed 29 March 2022. ‘Выступление и ответы на вопросы Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова на встрече с членами Ассоциации европейского бизнеса в России, Москва’ [Remarks and answers to the questions to the Minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov at the meeting of the members of the Association of European business in Russia, Moscow], MID, 5 October 2020, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1443521/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1443521/). Accessed 29 March 2022. ‘Песков прокомментировал санкции против РФ из-за Навального и ответ Москвы’ [Peskov commented on the sanctions against the Russian Federation over Navalny and Moscow’s response], *Izvestiya*, 13 November 2020, <https://iz.ru/1086604/2020-11-13/peskov-prokomentiroval-sankcii-protiv-rf-iz-za-navalnogo-i-otvet-moskvy>. Accessed 29 March 2022. ‘Большая пресс-конференция Владимира Путина’ [Large press conference of Vladimir Putin], Kremlin, 23 December 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67438>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>199</sup> Sergey Naryshkin, ‘О ситуации с «Сувукным Поток-2»’ [On the situation of “Nord Stream-2”], SVR, 22 September 2020, <http://svr.gov.ru/smi/2020/09/o-situatsii-s-severnym-potokom-2.htm>. Accessed 29 March 2022. ‘Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции с Министром иностранных дел Республики Беларусь В.В.Макеем по итогам совместного заседания коллегий МИД России и МИД Белоруссии, Минск’ [Remarks and answers to questions of the media of Minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov in a joint press conference with Minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of



the government of Ukraine to flout the regulations of the 2015 Minsk peace agreement in the Donbass through supposed overlooking of its violations,<sup>200</sup> and rebuttals to U.S. calls to integrate the People's Republic of China into strategic nuclear arms talks by claiming that Britain and France similarly needed to stop evading such negotiations.<sup>201</sup> At one point, rather than sending a customary declaration of solidarity condemning a terrorist attack in a foreign country, Deputy Foreign Minister for counterterrorist cooperation Oleg Syromolotov blamed the French for accepting self-professed Chechen 'freedom fighters' to their country had no one but themselves to blame for the violence they caused.<sup>202</sup> Intermittent insinuations that Washington controls French policy were broadcast to compound the humiliation.<sup>203</sup> By the end of 2021 amidst an emerging crisis of Russian troop build-up along the Ukrainian border, Moscow and Paris remain diplomatically engaged but increasingly in a seemingly *pro forma* manner. The Russian government seemed still to view France as an important interlocutor but no longer with which effective cooperation to resolve tensions was worth pursuing; Lavrov occasionally castigates Paris as having interesting ideas for arms control and strategic stability worth pursuing but no influence to

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Belarus V.V. Makey following a meeting of the joint collegium of the MID of Russia and MID of Belarus, Minsk], MID, 26 November 2020, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1447820/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1447820/). Accessed 29 March 2022. 'Выступление Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова на заседании Совета министров иностранных дел ОБСЕ в Тиране' [Remarks of Minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov at a meeting of the Council of ministers of foreign affairs of the OSCE in Tirana], MID, 3 December 2020, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1448310/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1448310/). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>200</sup> 'О посланиях Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова министрам иностранных дел Германии и Франции по проблематике урегулирования конфликта в Донбассе' [On the messages of the Minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov to the ministers of foreign affairs of Germany and France on the issue of settling the conflict in the Donbass], MID, 10 November 2020, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1446323/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1446323/). Accessed 29 March 2022.

'Комментарий официального представителя МИД России М.В.Захаровой в связи с франко-германским заявлением по урегулированию конфликта в Донбассе' [Commentary of the official spokesperson of the MID of Russia M.V. Zakharova in connection to the Franco-German declaration on resolving the conflict in the Donbass], MID, 17 November 2020, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1446852/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1446852/). Accessed 29 March 2022. 'Интервью Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова YouTube-каналу «Соловьев Live»,' [Interview of Minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov to YouTube channel "Solovyev Live"], MID, 12 February 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1415684/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1415684/). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>201</sup> 'МИД призвал привлечь другие страны к проблеме контроля над вооружениями' [MID urged to involve other countries in the problem of arms control], 30 July 2020, <https://ria.ru/20200730/1575176953.html>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>202</sup> 'Интервью заместителя Министра иностранных дел России О.В.Сыромолотова международному информационному агентству «Россия сегодня»' [Interview of deputy Minister of foreign affairs of Russia O.V. Syromolotov to the international information agency "Rossiya segodnya"], MID, 30 October 2020, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1445803/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1445803/). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>203</sup> Maria Zakharova, 'О цензуре социальных сетей во Франции' [On social media censorship in France], MID, 11 February 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1415638/#5](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1415638/#5). Accessed 29 March 2022.



convince its Western allies to commit to them,<sup>204</sup> gloating when France objects to Russian diplomatic solutions to problems in which it had previously declared an interest.<sup>205</sup> Though Russian allegations of French mismanagement of its former colonies, which had been semi-frequent in 2014-2015, no longer figure in official Russian rhetoric, Putin in his 2020 Valdai speech insinuated French (and British) power was in decline, likely requiring some revision to the world order.<sup>206</sup>

Economically, unlike Turkey and Japan, France is a net exporter to the Russian Federation.<sup>207</sup> As with the others, Russia's biggest export to France is fossil fuels, especially refined petroleum, crude oil, natural gas, and coal<sup>208</sup> in that order. Fossil fuels and unspecified goods<sup>209</sup> accounted for 87% of all Russian goods exports to France in 2019,<sup>210</sup> the last year before the COVID-19 pandemic. Russian fossil fuel exports to France collapsed in value if not quantity in 2014 amid the broader global supply glut and afterward remained fixed in value between \$2 and \$3 billion in each year thereafter, excepting a brief spike to \$3.2 billion in 2018.<sup>211</sup> By contrast, Russia imported a diverse set of goods from France, most prominently aircraft and heavy machinery<sup>212</sup> in terms of value but also significant quantities of pharmaceutical products, perfumes and cosmetics, and electrical machinery.<sup>213</sup> The value of all this trade in goods roughly halved over the course of 2013-2019 under the weight of Western sanctions but did not

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<sup>204</sup> 'Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова «РТ Франс», «Пари Матч» и «Фигаро»' [Interview of the Minister of foreign affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov to "RT France", "Paris Match", and "Figaro"], MID, 18 October 2018, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1577023/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1577023/). Accessed 29 March 2022. 'Выступление и ответы на вопросы Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова на международном форуме «Примаковские чтения» в режиме видеоконференции, Москва' [Remarks and answers to questions of the Minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov at the international forum "Primakov readings" by videoconference, Moscow], MID, 9 June 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1752157/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1752157/). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>205</sup> 'Ответы Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова на вопросы телеканала «РТ», Москва' [Answers of Minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov to the questions of the television channel "RT"], MID, 19 November 2020, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1447062/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1447062/). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>206</sup> Kremlin 2020c.

<sup>207</sup> Comtrade.

<sup>208</sup> Commodity codes 2710, 2709, 2711, and 2701 respectively in the Harmonized System Codes for foreign trade.

<sup>209</sup> Commodity codes 27 and 99 respectively in the Harmonized System Codes for foreign trade.

<sup>210</sup> Comtrade.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Commodity codes 88 and 84 respectively in the Harmonized System Codes for foreign trade.

<sup>213</sup> Commodity codes 30, 33, and 85 respectively in the Harmonized System Codes for foreign trade. Comtrade.

notably change in the distribution of types of imports. This remarkably diversified economic relationship likely added unstated stability to Russian political discourse with Paris whereas Japan only notably exported automobiles and Turkey certain fruits to Russia. As noted above, prior to 2014 there had been considerable Russian political investment in seeking joint technological and industrial projects with French partners. Unlike with Turkey and Japan, French businessmen were regularly welcomed to high-level Russian government offices.<sup>214</sup> The complementary lack of diversity of Russian exports to France demonstrates the fragility of its economic standing to the latter.

Militarily, France is in within the *Zapad TVD* at relatively great distance from the Russian border, though its easier access to the sea leaves it somewhat more vulnerable to Russian far seas naval activity. Unlike Turkey or Japan, no Russian near sea impacts MTPS toward France. Table 5-11 lists the operational-level Russian military units and seas affecting MTPS toward France.

<i>Operational-Level Unit</i>	<i>Quantity of Borders to Cross</i>	<i>Sea</i>	<i>Sea Impact</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (West)	4	North Atlantic Ocean	<1,000km
14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (North)	5	Bay of Biscay	Adjacent
22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (South)	6	Mediterranean Sea	Adjacent
		North Sea	<1,000km

As Table 5-9 indicated above, Russian PMTPS toward France remained within a reasonably tight range of 6.762 (2018) to 8.722 (2016) over 2014-2020. As the *Zapad-2017* exercise emphasized seemed to emphasize the northwest strategic direction, PMTPS actually fell in 2017 toward France. However, in 2021, this

<sup>214</sup> E.g. 'Встреча с представителями деловых кругов Франции' [Meeting with French business circles], Kremlin, 29 April 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/65469>. Accessed 29 March 2022. 'Владимир Ильичев и генеральный директор «Ашан» в России обсудили поставки российской продукции для продажи в Европе' [Vladimir Ilichev and general director of "Auchan" in Russia discussed the supply of Russian products for sale in Europe], MERRF, 28 July 2021, [https://economy.gov.ru/material/news/vladimir\\_lichev\\_i\\_generalnyy\\_direktor\\_ashan\\_v\\_rossii\\_obsudili\\_p\\_ostavki\\_rossiyskoy\\_produkcii\\_dlya\\_prodazhi\\_v\\_evrope.html](https://economy.gov.ru/material/news/vladimir_lichev_i_generalnyy_direktor_ashan_v_rossii_obsudili_p_ostavki_rossiyskoy_produkcii_dlya_prodazhi_v_evrope.html). Accessed 29 March 2022. 'Александр Новак принял участие в первом дне Российской энергетической недели' [Aleksandr Novak took part on the first day of Russian energy week], Government.ru, 13 October 2021, <http://government.ru/news/43540/>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

threat doubled from its previous average to 15.126, reaching the same level as Japan, a country much closer geographically to Russia. This had much to do with a surge in exercises in the 1<sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army and 20<sup>th</sup> Guards Army combined with the latter's along with the 6<sup>th</sup> Army's frequent movement of units to the 1<sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army area of responsibility for tactical exercises over the course of *Zapad-2021*. With benefit of hindsight, this surge in activity presaged the Russian invasion of Ukraine in spring 2022. The ability of such internal deployments of Russian forces to adjust the PMTPS so dramatically of a country like France requiring the crossing of at least four borders from Russia to reach indicates the flexibility of the Russian Armed Forces as a conventional signalling mechanism at least prior to the invasion of Ukraine.

The Russian and French Armed Forces had relatively robust interaction for a NATO member prior to 2014 with regular visits especially among paratroopers of French officers to Russia<sup>215</sup> and Russian officers to France<sup>216</sup> to observe standard training procedures. Until only a couple weeks before the Russian seizure and annexation of Crimea, the Russian Baltic Fleet was planning a new slate of exercises with the French Navy.<sup>217</sup> This cooperation completely collapsed after the annexation of Crimea<sup>218</sup> with no French security officials of any kind returning to Moscow until April 2015.<sup>219</sup> Direct Franco-Russian military cooperation briefly revived in late 2015 as referenced above as Putin and Hollande sought a more active anti-terrorist campaign in the wake of the Islamic

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<sup>215</sup> 'Французская военная делегация посетила парашютно-десантный полк ВДВ, дислоцированный в Рязани' [French military delegation visited the paratrooper regiment of the Airborne Troops deployed in Ryazan], Russian Ministry of Defence, 26 September 2013, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11847752@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11847752@egNews). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>216</sup> 'Российские десантники высадятся на военном полигоне Франции' [Russian paratroopers will land on a military training round of France], Russian Ministry of Defence, 26 November 2013, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11871053@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11871053@egNews). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>217</sup> 'Командующий Балтийским флотом завершил визит во Францию' [Commander of the Baltic Fleet completed a visit to France], Russian Ministry of Defence, 7 February 2014, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=11901112@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=11901112@egNews). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>218</sup> 'Заместитель Министра обороны РФ Анатолий Антонов рассказал об основных итогах международной деятельности военного ведомства в 2014 году' [Deputy Minister of defence of the Russian Federation Anatoliy Antonov discussed the main results of international military activities in 2014], Russian Ministry of Defence, 24 December 2014, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12004548@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12004548@egNews). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>219</sup> 'Секретарь Совета Безопасности Российской Федерации сегодня в Москве встретился с Генеральным секретарем по вопросам обороны и национальной безопасности Французской Республики' [Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation today met with the General Secretary on defence matters and national security of the French Republic in Moscow], SCRF, 1 April 2015, <http://scrf.gov.ru/news/allnews/870/>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

State attacks on Paris in November. Senior uniformed military interactions ultimately occurred only four times before being again suspended in early 2016 but did include a visit of the French Chief of the Defence Staff to Moscow on Western Christmas Eve.<sup>220</sup> Though senior reengagement was short-lived, the embargo on lower-level bureaucratic interactions ended and sporadic attaché-driven Franco-Russian defence cooperation resumed in 2016.<sup>221</sup>

This pace of interaction continued into the early years of the Macron Administration. Notably, Russian Chief of the General Staff General Valeriy Gerasimov accompanied Lavrov on a trip to Paris in 2018<sup>222</sup> but no accompanying press release was published by the Ministry of Defence. Quite possibly, considerably more Franco-Russian military cooperation was underway in this time but unacknowledged by the Russian government. In 2019, this cooperation became somewhat higher profile with several phone conversations between defence ministers discussing both European security issues and broader global issues<sup>223</sup> in line with the surge in Franco-Russian non-bilateral discussion topic points indicated in Table 5-10, culminating in another direct conversation between Gerasimov and his French counterpart<sup>224</sup> and a 2+2 foreign and defence ministerial in Moscow.<sup>225</sup>

As 2020 dawned, signs emerged that Franco-Russian military cooperation would

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<sup>220</sup> 'На переговорах в Москве начальники Генеральных штабов России и Франции обсудили ситуацию в Сирии' [At negotiations in Moscow the Chiefs of the General Staffs of Russia and France discussed the situation in Syria], Russian Ministry of Defence, 24 December 2015, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12072341@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12072341@egNews). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>221</sup> E.g. Russian Ministry of Defence 2016b.

<sup>222</sup> 'О встрече Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова с Президентом Франции Э.Макроном' [On the meeting of the Minister of foreign affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov with the President of France E. Macron], MID, 24 July 2018, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1574454/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1574454/). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>223</sup> 'Обмен мнениями по актуальным проблемам европейской безопасности' [Exchange of views on topical issues of European security], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 17 July 2019, <http://redstar.ru/obmen-mneniyami-po-aktualnym-problemam-evropejskoj-bezopasnosti/>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>224</sup> 'Начальник Генштаба вооружённых сил РФ провёл телефонные переговоры с коллегой из Франции' [Chief of the General Staff of the armed forces of the Russian Federation had a telephone conversation with his colleague from France], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 6 September 2019, <http://redstar.ru/nachalnik-genshtaba-vooruzhennyh-sil-rf-provyol-telefonnye-peregovory-s-kollegoj-iz-frantsii/>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>225</sup> 'Москва и Париж ведут диалог по геостратегическим вызовам' [Moscow and Paris engage in dialogue on geostrategic challenges], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 11 September 2019, <http://redstar.ru/moskva-i-parizh-vozobnovili-dialog-po-geostrategicheskim-vyzovam/>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

be restarting at with pedagogical exchanges.<sup>226</sup> Gerasimov's counterpart visited Moscow at the end of February<sup>227</sup> but COVID-19 soon interrupted whatever plans had existed. The Russian and French defence ministers<sup>228</sup> and military physicians<sup>229</sup> exchanged best practices for fighting COVID-19 by phone. Gerasimov did communicate with his counterpart on worldwide security challenges by phone<sup>230</sup> and the first Russian diplomatic visit to Paris after the start of the pandemic was a 2+2 deputy ministerial.<sup>231</sup> However, whatever reset may have been afoot in 2020 ran aground about the time of the Navalniy poisoning, resulting in a break of all acknowledged military-to-military contacts for thirteen months, though three contacts<sup>232</sup> including a Russian defence ministerial trip to Paris for another 2+2 meeting<sup>233</sup> did occur at the end of 2021. Franco-Russian military cooperation could therefore be said to have large horizons with many in Paris seeking some cooperation but for Moscow's bad behaviour. However, that bad behaviour has kept the degree of cooperation relatively atrophied despite at least two serious reset attempts, each seemingly

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<sup>226</sup> 'Французские кадеты ознакомились с новейшими образовательными методиками в Санкт-Петербургском суворовском военном училище' [French cadets got acquainted with new pedagogical methodologies in St. Petersburg's Suvorov military school], Russian Ministry of Defence, 17 January 2020, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12271261@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12271261@egNews). Accessed 29 March 2022.

'Офицеры Центра высших военных исследований вооруженных сил Франции посетили Минобороны России' [Officers of the Centre of higher military art of the armed forces of France visited the Ministry of Defence of Russia], Russian Ministry of Defence, 20 February 2020, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12276899@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12276899@egNews). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>227</sup> Vladimir Molchanov, 'Российское военное ведомство готово к диалогу' [Russian military department is ready for dialogue], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 28 February 2020, <http://redstar.ru/rossijskoe-voennoe-vedomstvo-gotovo-k-dialogu/>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>228</sup> 'Обсуждено взаимодействие по военной линии' [Military cooperation discussed], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 15 May 2020, <http://redstar.ru/obsuzhdeno-vzaimodejstvie-po-voennoj-linii/>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>229</sup> 'Военные врачи из России и Франции провели видеоконференцию по борьбе с COVID-19' [Military doctors from Russia and France discuss by videoconference the fight with COVID-19], Russian Ministry of Defence, 27 September 2020, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12316451@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12316451@egNews). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>230</sup> 'Обсуждены вопросы международной безопасности' [Questions of international security discussed], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 13 July 2020, <http://redstar.ru/obsuzhdeny-voprosy-mezhdunarodnoj-bezopasnosti/>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>231</sup> 'В интересах международной безопасности' [In the interests of international security], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 17 July 2020, <http://redstar.ru/v-interesah-mezhdunarodnoj-bezopasnosti/>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>232</sup> 'Обсуждены актуальные вопросы международной безопасности' [Topical questions of international security discussed], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 29 November 2021, <http://redstar.ru/obsuzhdeny-aktualnye-voprosy-mezhdunarodnoj-bezopasnosti-2/>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>233</sup> 'Министр обороны России Сергей Шойгу принял участие в пленарном заседании российско-французского Совета сотрудничества по вопросам безопасности в формате «2+2» в Париже' [Minister of defence of Russia Sergey Shoigu took part in a plenary meeting of the Russian-French Council of cooperation on questions of security in the "2+2" format in Paris], Russian Ministry of Defence, 12 November 2021, [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12393474@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12393474@egNews). Accessed 29 March 2022.

aborted by the French side by the scandal caused by Russian decisions on issues beyond the bilateral relationship.

As mentioned above, Putin has a special reverence for France among other Western countries, occasionally invoking praise for Gaullism and an interest in pursuing Mitterrand's vision for a confederated Europe to include Russia.<sup>234</sup> Though the Kremlin routinely offers messages of solidarity against terrorist attacks including to countries with which Russia has other political difficulties, Putin occasionally makes uncharacteristically public speeches to this effect for France.<sup>235</sup> When in late 2016 a planned state visit to Paris to open a new Russian cultural centre was cancelled over disagreements on policy in Syria, Putin was eager to characterise the incident as a misunderstanding rather than as a French diplomatic snub deserving acrimonious retort.<sup>236</sup> The one incident that has led Putin to personally deride France has been its participation in the allegations that Russian opposition activist Navalny was poisoned by a chemical weapon delivered by the Russian government.<sup>237</sup> In late 2020, Putin made a couple derisive comments about France but these ceased over 2021 as the Navalny affair faded as a topic of diplomatic conversation. Indeed, the only negative comment Putin made about France in 2021 again pertained to the Navalny affair at the end of the year, reiterating his claim that neither France nor Germany had offered any proof of their allegations of the poisoning.<sup>238</sup>

Despite being the source of most of the rhetorical bile Moscow intermittently employs against Paris, the MID cannot be said to have anything but respect for France. This does not constrain Russian rhetoric<sup>239</sup> but explains why amongst

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<sup>234</sup> Kremlin 2014b.

<sup>235</sup> 'Обращение к Франсуа Олланду и французскому народу' [Address to Francois Hollande and the French people], Kremlin, 15 July 2016, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52522>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>236</sup> 'Владимир Путин ответил на вопросы журналистов' [Vladimir Putin answered journalists' questions], Kremlin, 16 October 2016, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53103>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>237</sup> Kremlin 2020b.

<sup>238</sup> Kremlin 2021c.

<sup>239</sup> Some especially egregious examples include: 'Ответ официального представителя МИД России М.В.Захаровой на вопрос СМИ относительно высказываний Министра иностранных дел Франции Л.Фабюса' [Answer of the official spokesperson of the MID of Russia M.V. Zakharova to the question of the media regarding the statements of Minister of foreign affairs of France L. Fabius], MID, 29 October 2015, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1517900/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1517900/). Accessed 29 March 2022. 'Выступление и ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова в ходе совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Сальвадора У.Р.Мартинесом Бонильей,



instances of such derogatory remarks heartlessly weaponizing events into pro-Russian policy narratives<sup>240</sup> Lavrov will still express a high opinion of France and the state of cooperation between the two countries.<sup>241</sup> Sometimes, MID officials specifically insult French pride in their statements,<sup>242</sup> but this can as much be read as a sign of respect that the Russians know this pride's significance for Paris in a manner they rarely show other countries. Russian diplomats eagerly identify Russophile sentiment in the peripheries of French political culture with far more eagerness than they do in other European countries.<sup>243</sup>

History also rings especially vibrantly in Russo-French relations. Putin's first visit to France during Macron's Presidency technically marked the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Peter the Great's journey there<sup>244</sup> during which Putin celebrated the medieval role of French Queen Anne of Kiev in establishing Franco-Russian relations.<sup>245</sup> A

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Москва' [Remarks and answers to questions of the media of Minister of foreign affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov during a joint press conference after negotiations with the Minister of foreign affairs of El Salvador U.R. Martinez Bonila, Moscow], MID, 3 March 2017, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1543321/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1543321/). Accessed 29 March 2022. Maria Zakharova, 'О ситуации с безопасностью российских журналистов во Франции' [On the situation and safety of Russian journalists in France], MID, 28 March 2019, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1457084/#13](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1457084/#13). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>240</sup> E.g. 'Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова информагентству «Россия сегодня»' [Interview of the Minister of foreign affairs of Russia S.V. Lavrov to the information agency "Rossiya segodnya"], MID, 11 December 2015, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1520052/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1520052/). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>241</sup> 'Основные внешнеполитические события 2015 года' [Main foreign policy developments of 2015], MID, 29 December 2015, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1520777/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1520777/). Accessed 29 March 2022. MID 2019. 'Ответы на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел Российской Федерации С.В.Лаврова по итогам 56-й Мюнхенской конференции по вопросам политики безопасности, Мюнхен' [Answers to questions of the media of Minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov following the 56<sup>th</sup> Munich conference on security policy, Munich], MID, 17 February 2020, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1427488/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1427488/). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>242</sup> E.g. MID 2014s. 'Заявление МИД России' [Statement of the MID of Russia], MID, 5 December 2016, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1539033/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1539033/). Accessed 29 March 2022. Maria Zakharova, 'О Совместном всеобъемлющем плане действий по иранской ядерной программе' [On the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme], MID, 26 April 2018, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1569803/#13](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1569803/#13). Accessed 29 March 2022. MID 2018h. Maria Zakharova, 'О высказываниях западных политиков по ситуации с протестными акциями в России' [On the statements of Western politicians on the situation of protests in Russia], MID, 28 January 2021, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1414754/#6](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1414754/#6). Accessed 29 March 2022. 'В Кремле прокомментировали сообщения о слежке за телефоном Макрона' [The reports of surveillance of Macron's phone were commented on in the Kremlin], *RIA Novosti*, 21 July 2021, <https://ria.ru/20210721/slezhka-1742181257.html>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>243</sup> E.g. Maria Zakharova, 'Об инициативах в итальянских регионах и во Франции в отношении отмены антироссийских санкций' [On initiatives in Italian regions and in France regarding the lifting of anti-Russian sanctions], MID, 10 June 2016, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1530040/#15](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1530040/#15). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>244</sup> 'Вручение верительных грамот Президенту России' [Presentation of credentials to the President of Russia], Kremlin, 3 October 2017, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/55756>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>245</sup> Kremlin 2017d.



French activist's proposal to rename the Tsar Alexander III bridge in Paris received a stiff rebuke from the MID.<sup>246</sup> Private Russian commentators opining on the history of Franco-Russian relations frequently highlight only the positive aspects of cooperation even as they decry other Westerners.<sup>247</sup>

Yet for Russian politicians outside the government appealing to the audience cultivated by state television, France represents a component of the decadent anti-traditional West, occasionally lending a setting for sensationalist decrials of the decline of human decency in a land without respect for its history or traditions.<sup>248</sup> The 'yellow vest' (*gilets jaunes*) protest movement starting in 2018 both incited strong support among Russian politicians and activists who celebrate all that befalls the modern West<sup>249</sup> and indignant denials that they were responsible for fomenting the protests.<sup>250</sup> However, this position in the West cuts

<sup>246</sup> Maria Zakharova, 'О призыве переименовать мост Александра II в Париже' [On the call to rename the Pont Alexandre III in Paris], MID, 2 November 2017, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1556246/#20](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1556246/#20). Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>247</sup> E.g. Aleksey Chichkin, 'Сталин лишил Францию ордена Победы по просьбе англосаксов' [Stalin deprived France of the Order of Victory at the request of the Anglo-Saxons], VPK, 16 July 2019, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/51450>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>248</sup> E.g. 'Виталий Милонов заявил о необходимости введения ограничения на въезд российских детей во Францию в случае легализации там педофилии' [Vitaliy Milonov announced the need to introduce restrictions on the entry of Russian children into France in the event of the legalization of paedophilia there], *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Dumys po mezhdynarodnym delam*, 22 November 2017, <https://interkomitet.ru/blog/2017/11/22/vitalij-milonov-zayavil-o-neobhodimosti-vvedeniya-ogranicheniya-na-vezd-rossijskih-detej-vo-frantsiyu-v-sluchae-legalizatsii-tam-pedofilii/>. Accessed 29 March 2022. Aleksandr Dugin, 'Пожар в Нотр-Дам де Пари: покидала Богородица запад' [The fire in Notre-Dame de Paris: the Virgin Mary has left the West], 16 April 2019, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/news/pozhar-v-notr-dam-de-pari-pokidala-bogorodica-zapad>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>249</sup> Aleksandr Dugin, 'Анатомия популизма и вызов матрице' [Anatomy of populism and the challenge to the matrix], *Geopolitica*, 27 November 2018, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/anatomiya-populizma-i-vyzov-matrice>. Accessed 29 March 2022. Ivan Dragomirov, 'Эрдоган вместо Трампа' [Erdogan in place of Trump], VPK, 2 December 2018, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/46704>. Accessed 29 March 2022. Sergey Zheleznyak, 'Решение Эммануэля Макрона ввести в стране чрезвычайное положение говорит о стремлении снизить накал ситуации' [The decision of Emmanuel Macron to introduce a state of emergency in the country speaks of a desire to reduce the intensity of the situation], *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Dumys po mezhdynarodnym delam*, 11 December 2018, <https://interkomitet.ru/blog/2018/12/11/sergej-zheleznyak-reshenie-emmanuelya-makrona-vvesti-v-strane-chrezvychajnoe-polozhenie-govorit-o-stremlenii-snizit-nakal-situatsii/>. Accessed 29 March 2022. Grigoriy Nikonov & Igor Rodionov, 'Изнанка желтого жилета' [Underside of the yellow vest], VPK, 5 February 2019, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/48098>. Accessed 29 March 2022. Sofia Metelkina, 'Макрон и его бабушки: новая стратегия против «желтых жилетов»' [Macron and his grandmothers: a new strategy against the "yellow vests"], *Geopolitica*, 24 March 2019, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/makron-i-ego-babushki-novaya-strategiya-protiv-zheltyh-zhiletov>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>250</sup> 'Леонид Слуцкий прокомментировал заявления о роли России в протестах во Франции' [Leonid Slutskiy commented on the declaration of the role of Russia in the protests in France], *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Dumys po mezhdynarodnym delam*, 10 December 2018, <https://interkomitet.ru/blog/2018/12/10/leonid-slutskij-prokomentiroval-zayavleniya-o-rol-i-rossii-v-protestah-vo-frantsii/>. Accessed 29 March 2022. Svetlana Zhurova, 'Созданные в соцсетях аккаунты о протестах в Париже могут быть провокацией' [Accounts created in social networks about the protests in Paris may be provocation], *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Dumys po mezhdynarodnym delam*, 10 December 2018, <https://interkomitet.ru/blog/2018/12/10/svetlana-zhurova-sozdannye-v-sozsetyah-akkauanty-o-protestah-v-parizhe-mogut-byt-provokatsiei/>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

both ways: when the French government shows an interest in working with Moscow despite its NATO membership, these politicians will also extol Paris' ability to stand up to Washington in the name of its own sovereignty.<sup>251</sup>

The Moscow policy elite gravitates toward a slightly dismissive attitude of current French capabilities on the world stage, frequently gloating over apparent cultural discord in the French Armed Forces<sup>252</sup> and the excess of its great power ambitions beyond its means.<sup>253</sup> More patriotic elements of the community highlight any discord apparent between France and the NATO alliance as a whole.<sup>254</sup> While some commentators lampoon the seemingly

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Paris can be a provocation], *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Dumys po mezhdynarodnym delam*, 11 December 2018, <https://interkomitet.ru/blog/2018/12/11/svetlana-zhurova-sozdannye-v-sotssetyah-akkaunty-o-protetah-v-parizhe-mogut-byt-provokatsiej/>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>251</sup> Leonid Slutskiy, 'Сближение позиций лидеров России и Франции особенно важно на фоне разрушительной политики Соединенных Штатов' [Rapprochement of the positions of the leaders of Russia and France is especially important against the backdrop of the destructive policy of the United States], *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Dumys po mezhdynarodnym delam*, 25 May 2018, <https://interkomitet.ru/blog/2018/05/25/leonid-slutskij-sblizhenie-pozitsij-liderov-rossii-i-frantsii-osobenno-vazhno-na-fone-razrushitelnoj-politiki-soedinennyh-shtatov/>. Accessed 29 March 2022. Elena Panina, 'Германия слабеет, лидером Евросоюза становится Франция' [Germany is weakening, France is becoming the leader of the European Union], *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Dumys po mezhdynarodnym delam*, 6 November 2018, <https://interkomitet.ru/blog/2018/11/06/elena-panina-germaniya-slabeet-liderom-evrosoyuza-stanovitsya-frantsiya/>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>252</sup> E.g. 'Во французской армии тоже стали бороться с историей' [The French Army also began to fight history], *BMPD Blog*, 18 November 2018, <https://bmpd.livejournal.com/3417622.html>. Accessed 29 March 2022. 'В одной из самых феминизированных армий будет больше женщин' [One of the most feminized armies will have more women], *VPK*, 8 March 2019, <https://vpk-news.ru/news/48851>. Accessed 29 March 2022. 'Во Франции расследуется дело об откатах при торговле оружием 25 лет назад' [In France is an investigation of a kickback case in an arms trade 25 years ago], *BMPD Blog*, 21 September 2019, <https://bmpd.livejournal.com/3780985.html>. Accessed 29 March 2022. 'Памятники генералу де Голлю попали под горячую руку' [Monuments to General de Gaulle fell under a hot hand], *VPK*, 15 June 2020, <https://vpk-news.ru/news/57374>. Accessed 29 March 2022. 'Опубликована книга бывшего главы военной разведки Франции генерала Гомара с критикой в адрес коллег' [Publication of a book by former head of military intelligence of France General Gomar with critiques of his colleagues], *BMPD Blog*, 28 September 2020, <https://bmpd.livejournal.com/4150763.html>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>253</sup> 'Французская армия на пределе своих возможностей - начальник Генштаба' [The French Army at the limit of its capabilities – Chief of the General Staff], *BMPD Blog*, 15 November 2019, <https://bmpd.livejournal.com/3839260.html>. Accessed 29 March 2022. Aleksandr Khramchikhin, 'Дьенбьенфу: кому слава, кому позор' [Dienbienphu: to whom goes the glory, to whom the shame], *VPK*, 29 December 2020, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/60160>. Accessed 29 March 2022. Aleksandr Khramchikhin, 'Д'Артаньяны второго эшелона' [D'Artagnans of the second echelon], *VPK*, 15 March 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/61271>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>254</sup> E.g. 'Убегая из Сирии, американцы «забыли» про французский спецназ' [Fleeing from Syria, the Americans "forgot" about the French special forces], *VPK*, 17 October 2019, <https://vpk-news.ru/news/53087>. Accessed 29 March 2022. Aleksandr Bartosh, 'В ожидании войны в Европе Париж склоняется к капитуляции' [When it comes to war in Europe, Paris tends to capitulate], *VPK*, 19 November 2019, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/53723>. Accessed 29 March 2022. 'Второй флот НАТО' [The second fleet of NATO], *VPK*, 26 March 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/news/61436>. Accessed 29 March 2022. 'Франция опасается стать заложником политических амбиций США' [France fears becoming hostage to US ambitions], *VPK*, 22 May 2021, <https://vpk-news.ru/news/62224>. Accessed 29 March 2022. Vladimir Sviridov, 'Против кого нацелен AUKUS?' [Who does AUKUS target?], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 24 September 2021,

unrealistic dreams in Paris for a European army,<sup>255</sup> others celebrate the dream as an impending sign of doom for NATO.<sup>256</sup> Other observers document France's leader's discord with his colleagues, especially under Macron with figures such as Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil<sup>257</sup> and Erdogan of Turkey<sup>258</sup> as an expression of Western decline. More cerebral commentators explored the political fragilities of the French political system, especially in the wake of the 'yellow vest' movement, to better understand contemporary political contradictions in the West.<sup>259</sup>

Like the Russian Federation, France is at the absolute heart of the post-1945 international diplomatic order and the complexity of Franco-Russian relations over 2014-2021 shows how Moscow addresses a would-be partner it perceives as a potential leverage point in the West.<sup>260</sup> After the Russian annexation of Crimea complicated relations in 2014, Moscow worked to refashion Paris back into a peer partner for managing the international system in the remaining years of the Hollande presidency. However, since Macron's inauguration as President, though dialogue on various aspects of great power politics persisted, cooperation has eluded the relationship and Russian rhetoric toward France has darkened in tone at greater frequency. The fact that Russian FPQS toward France remained persistently positive through this time is a testament to Russian willingness to work with France - and a sign that it is Moscow's choices that are driving Paris to

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<http://redstar.ru/protiv-kogo-natselen-aukus/>. Accessed 29 March 2022. Aleksandr Dugin, 'АУКУС и Квад: англосаксы разрушают НАТО' [AUKUS and Quad: the Anglo-Saxons are destroying NATO], *Geopolitica*, 19 October 2021, <https://www.geopolitica.ru/article/aukus-i-kvad-anglosaksy-razrushayut-nato>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>255</sup> 'Минобороны Франции все еще мечтает об общеевропейской армии' [The Ministry of Defence of France still dreams of an all-European army], *VPK*, 1 February 2019, <https://vpk-news.ru/news/48019>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>256</sup> Veronika Mechkivskaya, '«Мы наблюдаем смерть мозга НАТО...»' [“We are witnessing the brain death of NATO...”], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 15 November 2019, <http://redstar.ru/my-nablyudaem-smert-mozga-nato/>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>257</sup> 'Бразильские военные считают Францию основной угрозой национальной безопасности' [The Brazilian military considers France a major threat to national security], *BMPD Blog*, 7 February 2020, <https://bmpd.livejournal.com/3925930.html>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>258</sup> 'В Турции назвали Макрона «колонизатором»' [In Turkey Macron was called a “colonizer”], *VPK*, 10 September 2020, <https://vpk-news.ru/news/58591>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>259</sup> Oleg G. Karpovich, Adeline Sh. Nogomova, & Valeriy O. Litvinov, 'Феномен движения «желтых жилетов» во Франции и «цветные революции» [The phenomenon of the “yellow vests” movement in France and the “colour revolutions”], *Rossiia i Mir*, 25:3, 2020, p 72-87. Igor Druz, 'Ценности деградации' [Degradation of values], *VPK*, 22 December 2020, <https://vpk-news.ru/articles/60063>. Accessed 29 March 2022.

<sup>260</sup> Sergey Lavrov, 'Россия—Франция, Россия—Европа: горизонты партнерства' [Russia-France, Russia-Europe: horizons of partnership], *Rossiia v global'noy politike*, 3:1, 28 May 2013 2013, <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/rossiya-francziya-rossiya-evropa-gorizonty-partnerstva/>. Accessed 7 April 2022.

eschew it more than Russian disdain for a declining power holding up relations. The relative unpoliticization of relations since Macron's inauguration - excepting 2020 when as shown above a reset in pragmatic military cooperation was briefly attempted - suggests that Russian political engagement does not follow trade turnover but the perceived possibilities of partnership and that French signals to resume truly peer-level partnership would almost certainly be happily received in Moscow.

Though the broader literature accurately reflects that the specific relationship of Moscow and Paris is diffused across many points, it relegates France to merely the second interlocutor of the European Union or a sparring partner on Middle Eastern and African affairs as some surveys of Russian foreign policy do. As with the other case studies, the specific Kremlin-centric narrative seems to have a far bigger impact on FPQS than the evolution of trade dynamics or Russian military capabilities.

Many crises convulsed Franco-Russian relations over the years, such as disagreements on interpreting the Minsk Agreements for peace in Ukraine, the 'Mistral' contract, chemical weapons and breaches of human rights allegations in Syria, restrictions on certain Russian journalists and prisoners in France, and the Russian will to gloat over the 'yellow vest' protest movement. However, only the issue of French allegations against the Russian government for using chemical weapons against Aleksey Navalniy and the follow-on denunciations of his incarceration seriously rankled with Putin and led to a deterioration of relations. Previous declines in FPQS pertained more to temporary atrophy of relations than to active disagreement but these allegations about the internal Russian governance system elicited substantially greater pushback than even the Crimean sovereignty question.

## Conclusions

Each of these case studies involved a different paradigm of a relationship working or failing because of a different combination of factors. For Turkey, Moscow's recognition of the importance of keeping this country of a favourable disposition was sufficient to maintain close cooperation despite often violent

disagreements about the peripheries of their respective spheres of influence - except when the Turkish military directly fired upon the Russian one. For Japan, a singular but pivotal disagreement on territorial integrity so central to both Moscow's and Tokyo's self-perception does not hinder cooperation on certain peripheral matters such as regional investment and Asia-Pacific security discussions but does put a definitive limit to any effort to forge a new, more stable security architecture for the region or advance economic ties ideally suited to be complementary given Russia's resource wealth and Japan's industrial might. For France, a mutual will to cooperate cannot overcome the French perception of the scandalous nature of the Russian political system and its decisions whether in Ukraine, Syria, Africa, or domestically, instilling a scandalized Russian perception of French degradation and consigning a relationship both sides consider strategically valuable to lie fallow.

Yet in each case neither did FPQS follow trade turnover or PMTPS. Of the two years in the case study when war seemed plausible between Russia and one of these interlocutors - with Turkey in 2015 and 2020 - in the former year Russian PMTPS against Turkey dropped and in the latter it increased only marginally and at roughly the same pace as FPQS. Russian trade with Japan slowly declined but FPQS increased when Tokyo leaned into trying to normalize relations with Moscow. Russian trade with France declined under the weight of sanctions but rebounded after Macron became President in an almost exact reversal of the trajectory of FPQS.

Relative to the previous literature for each of these case studies, the empirical data suggests that the Kremlin's perception of the political narrative had a far more decisive role determining the inflection of the quality of the relationship than did the vitality of economic relations or the degree of military threat communicated. To a certain extent this suggests the unsurprising hypothesis that the Russian government is more responsive to its leadership than to external factors. However, as trade turnover seems more impacted by FPQS than the other way around, it seems that certain exceptions the literature overstates the impact of trade on Russian foreign policy and undervalues the role of the Kremlin's perceived political narrative.

What is consistent about these three case studies is that FPQS grew when Moscow politically saw the interlocutor as worth the discussion. After Turkey apologized for shooting down the Su-24, the Russian government eagerly pursued joint efforts with Turkey to stabilize Syria in a mutually acceptable manner and collaborate on preventing the Middle East from spilling into their bilateral conflict. The Russian government sees no objection to working with Tokyo on multilateral issues if Tokyo is open to doing so without insisting on repatriation of the Kuril Islands but is content to let relations wane if that is the only topic the Japanese wish to discuss. Moscow continuously discusses all problems of the world with Paris but will rebut any denunciations made about it and its choices to score political points, especially if these censures prevent the opening of the full spectrum of cooperation between Russia and France. In short, these qualitative case studies show that Moscow's decisions comprising a positive or negative FPQS seem built more upon foreign policy community-driven narratives than on defence bureaucracies' relative build-up of strength or the development of trade as the Kremlin likes to insinuate.

## Chapter 6. Conclusion

In his final years, Evgeniy Primakov, a leading luminary for many in the Kremlin and the MID, frequently opined about the need to improve the coordination of Russian military, foreign, and economic policies.<sup>1</sup> Otherwise, he warned that Washington seemed unlikely to treat Moscow as an equal, meaning that whatever relaxation of tensions there had been in the early years of the Obama Administration were unlikely to last.<sup>2</sup> This dissertation's research finds that six years after Primakov's death, his avowed disciples have failed to realise this in practice even if efforts to standardise and digitise management of the state continue in various corners of the government.

This final chapter assesses the findings of the dissertation research in relation to the theories proposed in the pre-existing literature, suggests potential other future tests for the theories, and makes some concluding observations on the behavioural patterns of the Russian government over 2014-2021 discernible from the database. As will be explored in greater detail below, the findings suggest that a constructivist and positivist theoretical approaches to studying Russian foreign policy are better borne out in the data than realist ones and that the political dimension of military exercises theory may be accurate but requires considerably more categories for understanding the role of exercises than mere deterrence and assurance. Among more comprehensive approaches to studying Russian foreign and military policies, both the hybrid warfare and global plot concepts appear to extrapolate upon Russian policy toward Ukraine to the rest of the world without much allowance for nuance whereas the flexible response approach fails to sufficiently accommodate the Ukrainian exception to Russian policy in the later Putin years.

### Findings Relative to the Literature

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<sup>1</sup> Evgeniy Primakov, 'Безопасность и развитие - взаимосвязанные цели' [Security and development: interlinked goals], *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 8 October 2013, <https://rg.ru/2013/10/08/primakov.html>. Accessed 22 April 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Evgeniy Primakov, '2011 год: взгляд в будущее' [2011: a look into the future], *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 16 January 2012, <https://rg.ru/2012/01/16/primakov.html>. Accessed 22 April 2022.



The findings observable in the above chapters using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies suggest only a tenuous relationship between Russian military exercise patterns and the quality of Russian bilateral relations with other states. The weakness of this relationship suggests the relatively nascent theme in the literature about a link between military exercises and aspects of foreign policy, especially deterrence,<sup>3</sup> are somewhat overstated at least in the case of Russia.

As the methodologies used in this dissertation for quantifying military exercises and foreign policy quality are novel, it is quite possible that it is simply the manner of measurement which has obscured the link between the two. However, without the weighting system used in this methodology, a simple count of the geographical frequency of Russian military exercises would aggravate the mismatch in the trends as the threat potential would increase toward countries friendly to Russia such as Belarus, the People's Republic of China, and Kazakhstan without much further significant effect. A more likely flaw in the methodology may be that the relevant data drowned in mundane bureaucratically necessary training activities when only a small number of exercises were explicitly designed to include deterrence or other foreign policy purposes. Though this is possible, the Russian government's deliberate obfuscation of such a distinction renders identifying such distinctive exercises with anything approaching the positivist research design the author used to create a quantitatively analysable database impossible. Furthermore, Russia's annual strategic exercises (i.e. *Kavkaz*, *Zapad*, *Vostok*, and *Tsentr*) almost always significantly skewed the proportional military threat potential scores in a manner seemed deliberately designed to communicate strategic intent.

If the relationship between Russian military exercises and foreign policy quality is weak, that of trade turnover with foreign policy quality, i.e. more closely

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<sup>3</sup> Jeffrey Appleget, Jeffrey Kline, & James J. Wirtz, 'Do wargames impact deterrence?', *Military exercises: political messaging and strategic impact*, Rome: NATO Defence College Forum Paper 26, 2018, p 27-44. Kyle J. Wolfley, 'Military statecraft and the use of multinational exercises in world politics', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 17:2, 2021, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.1093/fpa/oraa022>. Accessed 10 April 2022. Kyle J. Wolfley, 'Military power reimagined: the rise and future of shaping', *Joint Force Quarterly*, Issue 102, 2021. Raymond Kuo & Brian Dylan Blankenship, 'Deterrence and restraint: do joint military exercises escalate conflict?', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 66:1, 2022, p 3-31.

following the Kremlin's own claims,<sup>4</sup> is as tenuous. Worldwide, the relationship is even weaker than that of Russian military exercises with foreign policy, though this is reversed when Ukraine is excluded from consideration. The difference seems insufficient to declare that military exercises are a relatively good indicator of good relations between the Russian Federation and another state by comparison, but does appear to give the lie to President Vladimir Putin's insinuation that economic interests are of greater importance in determining Russian policy than other political concerns.

As such, it was difficult to detect a decided 'hybrid warfare'<sup>5</sup> influence on Russian foreign or military policy at least in terms of military exercises. Though circumstances in which different Russian bureaucratic agencies collaborated to cooperate with or oppose another state within a year were frequent, these rarely accompanied a decidedly coercive policy. Instances of overt Russian advocacy or demand for policy changes were not accompanied by spikes in military exercises, mounting bureaucratic punishments, or even decreases in trade turnover. If anything, Russia and the advocated other state atrophied their positive relationship more than engaging in diplomatic sniping. In the uncommon cases when Russia mixed advocacy and diplomatic opprobrium, the quality of the relationship was invariably poor prior to the moment of advocacy.<sup>6</sup> The one case in which this hostility exploded into state-backed violence during the years surveyed - Ukraine - turned out to be a conventional war rather than anything suggested by the 'hybrid warfare' theory.

However, this does not necessarily discredit the 'hybrid warfare' theory as there are other metrics by which coercion might be measured, such as criminal

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<sup>4</sup> E.g. 'Встреча с Президентом Казахстана Касым-Жомартом Токаевым' [Meeting with President of Kazakhstan Kasym-Jomart Tokayev], Kremlin, 21 August 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66419>. Accessed 22 January 2022. 'Встреча с Президентом Турции Реджепом Тайипом Эрдоганом' [Meeting with President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan], Kremlin, 29 September 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66800>. Accessed 22 January 2022. 'Встреча с Президентом Финляндии Саули Ниинистё' [Meeting with President of Finland Sauli Niinistö], Kremlin, 29 October 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67033>. Accessed 22 January 2022. 'Встреча с Президентом Узбекистана Шавкатом Мирзиёевым' [Meeting with President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev], Kremlin, 19 November 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67142>. Accessed 22 January 2022.

<sup>5</sup> 'Hybrid threats as a concept', Hybrid Centre of Excellence, <https://www.hybridcoe.fi/hybrid-threats-as-a-phenomenon/>. Accessed 9 April 2022.

<sup>6</sup> These cases occurred almost exclusively with large other states such as the United Kingdom and United States.

infiltration, both violent and non-violent.<sup>7</sup> This dissertation does seem to prove that there is no discernible proof of such a pattern of behaviour in official Russian sources, but this is perhaps unsurprising even among such disparate Russian government agencies. The metrics developed in this dissertation may nevertheless be useful in identifying which other states are most likely to be targeted by such covert tactics than in detecting the tactics themselves.

Also unavoidable in the survey of Russian foreign and military policy over 2014-2021 is the outsized role of Ukraine in the data. Whereas Ukraine remained the most vital component of the non-Russian former Soviet space integrated into the Russian economy until at least 2014, the sudden political rift following Russian pressure on the Ukrainian political system to reject the European Union in favour of its own regional integration project and the Ukrainian popular backlash over 2013-2014 threw this dynamic into existential doubt. Russia's decision to use force first to annex Crimea and then foment what Russia called a civil war in the Donbass guaranteed antagonistic relations of varying intensity of enmity for the duration of the years covered finally erupting into open conventional hostilities in 2022. Ukraine's weight in the data indicated evidence for the 'hybrid warfare' approach to understanding Russian policy and it may be most accurate to say that this entire theory is established to explain a unique Russian policy toward an unusually highly integrated country such as Ukraine now seeking independence to form associations elsewhere.

Though elements of the 'hybrid warfare' theory could be seen in Russian diplomatic approaches to NATO members and former Soviet republics Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the degree of bile Russia unleashed against them was quite trivial compared to that directed against Ukraine over these years. Indeed, the collective Russian mentions of these three countries amounted to less than one-quarter of all Russian mentions of Ukraine over the years covered. To a certain extent, the threat to Ukraine over these years could be imagined to loom over Belarus were it to pursue a pro-European, anti-Russian policy, but the data

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<sup>7</sup> Jānis Bērziņš, 'Russia's New Generation Warfare in Ukraine: Implications for Latvian Defense Policy', Riga: National Defence Academy of Latvia, Policy Paper No 02, April 2014. Nicholas Fedyk, 'Russian "New Generation" Warfare: Theory, Practice, and Lessons for U.S. Strategists', *Small Wars Journal*, 4 May 2017, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/russian-%E2%80%9Cnew-generation%E2%80%9D-warfare-theory-practice-and-lessons-for-us-strategists-0>. Accessed 10 April 2022.

offered no specific indication of this beyond certain Russian statements highlighting how much Minsk felt like part of Russia.

Fundamentally, this dissertation contributes the first serious attempt to analyse whether the elements of ‘hybrid warfare’ or the missing political dimension of military exercises theories can be observed in Russian government data. The answer to the former appears to be no, though this is perhaps unsurprising given the assumed biases of Russian government data. The answer to the latter appears to be yes, though in a limited sense of offering assurances to the limited number of Russian allies.

As for the other comprehensive strategy school groups surveyed in chapter 2, the failure to discern a clear connection to test the ‘hybrid warfare’ theory suggests that the ‘global plot’ theory is at least as unproven. The vision of a unified Russian state coordinating all aspects of statecraft to defiantly declare Russia a great power pole of the world as Stephen Blank fears and Aleksandr Dugin wishes seems a fantasy according to the data gathered, perhaps explaining Dugin’s increasing frustration with Putin’s government.<sup>8</sup> The ‘flexible response’ group seems somewhat more plausible than the ‘global plot’ but Putin’s decision to use conventional force classically against Ukraine in 2022 appears to undermine what evidence may have emerged for it in this dissertation. At the opposite extreme of the external literature, this dissertation fails to disprove the ‘Rusting Pile of Nuclear Weapons’ school as strategic nuclear deterrence is affirmed even by some of the more forward-thinking Russian leaders as the only true guarantor of an independent Russia.

\*\*\*\*\*Among the other more siloed theories of Russian foreign policy, this dissertation lends credence to a more constructivist or even positivist view of Russian foreign policy. As chapter 5 intimated, Russian bureaucratic perception of specific countries seemed more driven by the inertia of preconceived notions than by evolving understanding of power or institutions. If relations were

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<sup>8</sup> E.g. Aleksandr Dugin, ‘Глобалистское таянся, лабл байнд и непреодолимая дилемма Путина’ [Globalist dances, double bind, and Putin’s insurmountable dilemma], *Geopolitika*, 5 September 2021, <https://www.geopolitika.ru/article/globalistkoe-tyansya-dabl-baynd-i-nepreodolimaya-dilemma-putina>. Accessed 22 April 2022.

previously good due to the existence of intergovernmental agreements or mere positive rapport among individual diplomats and leaders, relations were likely to remain good whereas previously bad relations often persisted so unless and until policies Moscow disliked ended or leadership changes offered new opportunities for dialogue. Continuous interest in cooperation with countries disinclined to give it such as France or continuous intransigence to discuss a longstanding bilateral dispute such as with Japan seem less influenced by relative perception of power than pre-existing inclination to desire friendship or rebuff politically unfathomable discussions.

This bureaucratic inertia explains but also casts doubt upon the hypothesis of the Realist Romantics: insisted Russian self-perception as a 'great power' rather than persistent strategy animates bilateral relationships despite Moscow's claims to be perpetuating centuries-old diplomatic relationships transcending Russian regime changes in 1917 and 1991. This perpetuation is more political spectacle than a relapse to romanticized geopolitics. Whereas the predatory geopolitical concepts these realists expect involve efforts by states to conquer each other either by imperialism or economic machinations, the Russian Federation of the 21st century dedicates its political and military attention to protecting a sphere of influence within the market space it once dominated - the former Soviet Union. Its diplomatic energy is spent defusing other governments' attempts to punish Russia for its punitive actions in preserving that sphere of influence. Notably, though Putin fervently argues for a multicultural and multi-confessional *rossiyskiy* identity, he has not argued that this identity therefore could accommodate cultures and ethnicities not previously subject to the *rossiyskiy* component of the Soviet Union. Even in his justifications of the 'special military operation' invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Putin asserted not the ability of the multicultural Russian Federation to better represent the Ukrainian body politic than the purportedly neo-Nazi regime in Kiev but rather that the Ukrainian culture was actually a subset of the ethnic *russskiy* identity.<sup>9</sup> Russia is not pursuing a bold new geopolitical project but fighting a rear-guard action to preserve the remaining privileges accorded it by an increasingly bygone one.

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<sup>9</sup> Vladimir Putin, 'Об историческом единстве русских и украинцев' [On the historical unity of the Russians and Ukrainians], Kremlin, 12 July 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>. Accessed 29 May 2022.

To a certain extent, this dissertation's findings reject theory at large: certain aspects of these constructed perceptions of relationships are so particular to individual countries such as the cultural legacy of France, geography of Turkey, or historical victory against Japan as to suggest that no theory binds how Moscow approaches any two of them. At minimum, this phenomenon suggests that the individual truths of Russia's various bilateral relationships is the perception of the actors in Moscow rather than database-able statistics of power or affiliation. However, it is equally clear that the classical formulation of this debate among Russian foreign policy elites - namely categorization among 'Westernizer', 'Eurasianist', or 'Statist' - is too Eurocentric and reductive to be of much use analysing modern Russian foreign policy. The quantitative patterns discernible in chapter 4 strongly suggest that Russia uses the same policy means to very different ends at least in Europe and Asia. Of the vast quantity of sources surveyed in chapter 3, none suggests even a lone voice in the Russian government advocating exclusively for one category of foreign policy definable exclusively by favour or disfavour in the West. Empirical evidence also suggested that the Russian government adhered to institutional norms more consistently than generally claimed, even if Moscow regularly challenged Western assumptions of what those institutional norms were.<sup>10</sup> However, whatever additional evidence this may have produced for a more liberal theoretical interpretation of Russian policy was overturned in 2022 as the Russian government cavalierly and unilaterally reinterpreted international contracts and used energy supplies as a weapon in contrast to previous boasts that Russia had never historically condescended to do so.

Realism too seems at odds with the empirical data gathered for this dissertation. No significant correlation could be found between Russian threats and accommodation and measurements of the power of other countries. When foreign governments defied Moscow's will, the Russian response was generally indistinguishable regardless of that other government's power or alliance status. The rising power of the People's Republic of China lured Russia to ally with it rather than hedge against it. Of its defiant neighbours, Russia focused its

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<sup>10</sup> Such as belief in the unique legitimacy of the United Nations or the need for equal scrutiny among all members of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

military and diplomatic attention most against Ukraine, the most powerful of these potential antagonists rather than easier targets such as Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania or even un-allied Georgia. The United States, as the most powerful country in the world in the years surveyed, consistently evinced the greatest enmity from Moscow but Russia only sporadically reached out to U.S. enemies to amass power against the hegemon. In some limited ways, Russia and the United States cooperated in these years, including against a potential ally North Korea amidst a spate of provocations in 2017, suggesting that power alone did not define a Russian categorial imperative to oppose Washington over 2014-2021. \*\*\*\*\*

Though this empirical study does not prove a previously unknown truth about any of the individual sections of the literature, neither does it quite disprove any. If anything, it casts further doubt on exclusively Eurocentric or Western-centric assessments of Russian foreign policy contending everything is built upon admiration of, rejection of, or hedging against the West. Though the empirical data does suggest a relatively strong set of opinions about the Euro-Atlantic community, it shows an even stronger one about Asia. Nevertheless, it may be accurate to say that in the vast Russian bureaucracy, it is difficult or impossible to manage everything as shown by the divergent and sparing policies toward farther off regions such as Latin America. Though some theories may need re-examination or refinement in light of the findings from this methodology, none seem imperilled by this new approach to testing their influence.

### Further Research Possibilities

This use of the database makes only one application of the trends uncovered. As such, many other potential uses might be found with the data collected.

As already suggested, it may be useful to use the tracking of the quality of Russian foreign policy quality with individual states (FPQS) to identify which states would be most likely to be victimized by some form of Russian irregular warfare. On identifying those states, additional metrics of Russian coercion such as crime statistics could be consulted instead of Russian military exercise data to see if 'hybrid warfare' can be observed in some alternative metric.



Using a methodology more similar to that used in this dissertation, it may also be of interest to compare the Russian military exercise data to the frequency of Russian articles about certain geographical areas or particular technological capabilities. This may yield interesting information about how acknowledgement of the importance of a specific region translates or fails to translate into increased Russian military presence over time or how rapidly and frequently military technologies about which the Russian media waxes poetic are actually routinely employed. These perhaps more prosaic functions of the data may in turn raise further questions about how the Russian government chooses to release information about its activities in different regions and concerning certain capabilities.

As importantly, the framing contexts of scenarios in the Russian military exercises noticeably varied over time. Though the variation was relatively slight compared to geography, further investigation should be done into which scenarios were most prevalent in different regions and seasons; even more importantly, the various contexts in which weapons of mass destruction were described as being used (primarily by the enemy in the scripting) deserves further investigation.

In addition, 2014-2021 proved remarkably consistent years bookended by major Russia-instigated crises in Ukraine. Though substantial variation in relations with the rest of the world occurred over these years, the broad dynamic of difficult relations with the West, emerging relations with Asia, and steady engagement in the Middle East and Africa and to a somewhat lesser extent Latin America was broadly consistent. It would be interesting to collect the analogous data for 2013 and 2022 to examine how dramatically Russian interaction with the outside world differed prior to the Euromaidan and Crimea crises in 2014 and following the Russian conventional invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

### Conclusions: A Spectrum of Relations from Cooperation to Opposition?

Chapter 4 showed at best a tenuous connection between Russian military bureaucratic activities or economic integration and the trajectory of the relative

quality of Russian foreign policy toward individual countries at large. The qualitative case studies of chapter 5 indicated that at least among those three relatively but not supremely important states, Moscow's political narrative far more than specifically military or trade considerations determined the course of the state of the relationship over the eight years covered. Chapter 3 suggests that whatever dialectic is unfolding from those political narratives is indeed derived more from a theory anticipating how the international system is supposed to operate and should be realigning over time wherein the perspectives of both the military and the diplomats are subordinated to a formula developed by spies following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

On the surface, this suggests that the Kremlin has developed a theory for managing foreign policy. However flawed the theory may be, it does offer guardrails for Moscow to evaluate its decision options and optimise the retention of the post-1945 international system in which the inheritors of the great Soviet victory occupy an especially prestigious position. In reality, the theory expounded by the Kremlin and infused into the operating procedures of both the MOD and MID offers a means of simulating principles to justify political decisions wherein Putin himself at the heart of the Kremlin can act as a Carl Schmitt-style declarer of the exception. In no other state function is this more apparent than Putin's typically semi-annual ceremony receiving new ambassadors arriving in Moscow to formally present their credentials in the Grand Kremlin Palace.<sup>11</sup> These public ceremonies invariably follow the same formula of a brief speech on some topic of Russia's stance on a foreign policy principle followed by a reading of the list of countries represented by a new ambassador and Putin's hopes for relations with each country. Towards friendly countries, Putin recounts the ways in which relations are good and may become even better; towards distant and low-priority countries, Putin expresses hope for more trade and deeper ties; towards more antagonistic countries, Putin never opposes or chides their positions but simply advocates better relations in the name of greater friendship among peoples or more responsibly sharing the burden of the world's

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<sup>11</sup> E.g. 'Вручение верительных грамот послами иностранных государств' [Presentation of credentials by ambassadors of foreign governments], Kremlin, 27 June 2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46083>. Accessed 3 April 2022.

problems.<sup>12</sup> The intended message is clear: no matter how bad relations may be, Putin himself is open to dialogue to resolve it on the grounds that Russia's position must be accepted since it participates at the heart of the polycentric international system, tirelessly preventing contradictions from finally collapsing this system in which Russia is a bedrock.

Russian military policy in general does not respond to diplomatic crises or honeymoons but rather plans contingencies against everyone. Over 2014-2021, Russia prioritised certain regions for modernisation but neglected none. With benefit of hindsight, it appears that the growing expressed military threat to Europe presaged the 2022 invasion of Ukraine, especially in the 10 months preceding the operation. However, this policy emerged substantially later than did its expression in Russian foreign policy. Generally, Russian military policy within the MOD is derived from study of the trends in domains of conflict and technological modernisation with exercises used to trial different methods for counteracting perceived threats defined according to which countries have both the military means and the contradiction-driven hypothetical motive to threaten Russia's international position.

The actual inter-relationship of Russian foreign and military policies derives not from their respective bureaucratic organs comparing notes but to both their subordination to the Russian ISC's interest in collecting information and actively countering potential threats. Russian foreign policy is simply the most formal means of gathering intelligence on the interests and intentions of foreign governments; Russian military policy is simply the most formal means of stopping a perceived opponent from pursuing a policy so odious as to merit the use of mass organised violence to stop it, albeit not for 'war' unless the entire international system is perceptibly at stake. The sum bureaucratic activity of the Russian Federation appears to be a decent barometer of the quality of relations but not because it contains the truth in and of itself but rather simulates Moscow's interests in intelligence and readiness for counteraction. Though the FPQS methodology projects a spectrum of cooperation to opposition, the ability of Putin to declare it one way or the other suggests that the FPQS reflects active

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<sup>12</sup> This latter point is almost always the refrain toward the United States.

policies of cooperation or opposition rather than detecting them through a bureaucratic fog. The coherence Westerners attribute to Putin's strategy is in their own perception.

Recalling Table 5-1 (reproduced below as Table 6-1), though there are many ways one might categorize the states Russia relates to from Moscow's perspective, Russia perceives relatively few countries as deserving the respect and friendship possible according to the constituent metrics this dissertation identified in the Russian government's data. Map 6-1 categorises each state according to the 21 characterizations of relations possible for the data from 2014 and Map 6-2 for that from 2021. The maps depict friendly countries ( $FPQS^{13} > 1.25 \times IC^{14}$ ) in red, neutral countries ( $1.25 \times IC > FPQS > 0.75 \times IC$ ) as green, unfriendly countries ( $0.75 \times IC > FPQS > 0$ ) as yellow, and adversarial countries ( $0 > FPQS$ ) as blue. Darker colours denote ones with higher DFM<sup>15</sup> scores (i.e. states whose regimes are of greater importance) and fainter ones with lower DFM scores (i.e. states whose regimes are of lesser importance).

DFM	$FPQS > 1.25 \times IC^*$	$1.25 \times IC > FPQS > 0.75 \times IC$	$0.75 \times IC > FPQS > 0^*$	$0 > FPQS$
>5	Ally	Peer	Competitor	Rival
4-5	Partner	Near-Peer	Malign Force	Opponent
2-3	Sphere of Influence	Project**	Concern	Nuisance
1	Friend/Extension***	Field	Trouble	Adversary
0	Well-Behaved	Untapped	Errant	Enemy

*\*Note: If  $IC < 10$ , only designations from the third and fifth column are used as insufficient data distinguishes between a high cooperation, normal cooperation, and low cooperation relationship.*

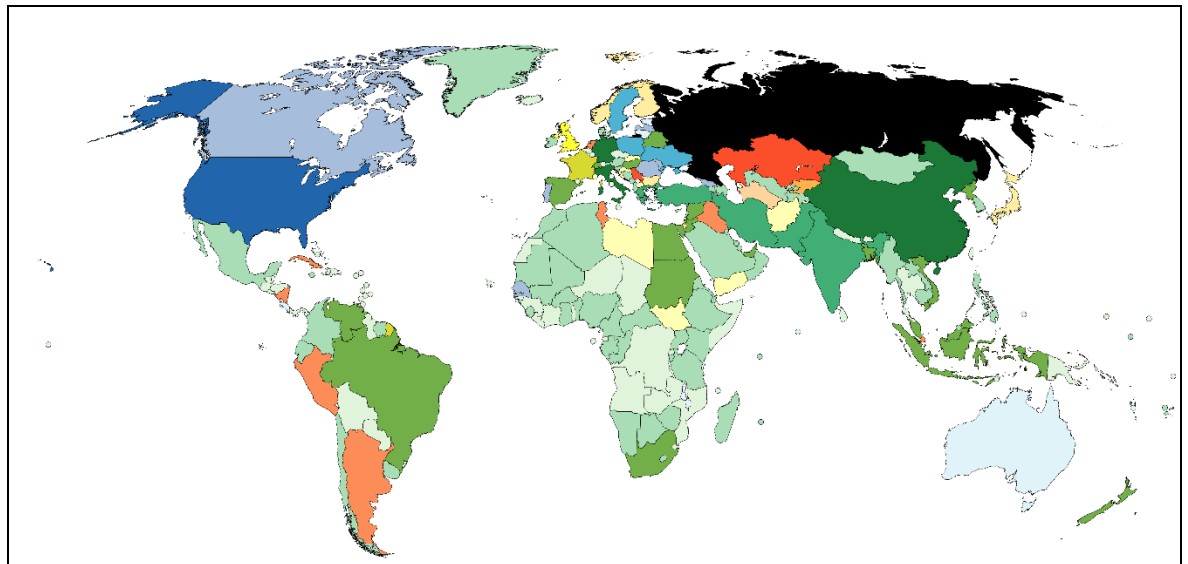
*\*\*If  $IC < 10$  but  $DFM > 3$ , the state cannot exceed designation as a 'project'. The term 'project' is used as the state receives significant interest to stand out among most but which is insufficiently positive or negative to be designated something closer to alliance or rivalry, suggesting Russia has ambitions for a deeper relationship with the country not yet actualized.*

*\*\*\*An state is an 'extension' if it was part of the Soviet Union, a 'friend' if not.*

<sup>13</sup> Foreign Policy Quality Score

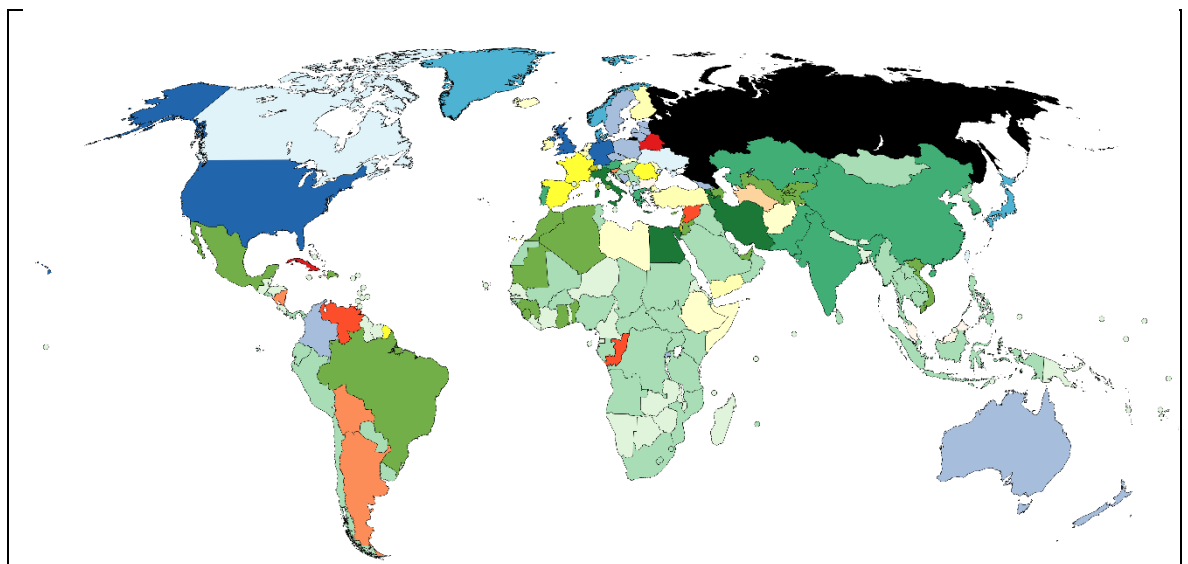
<sup>14</sup> Interest Count

<sup>15</sup> Deputy Foreign Minister



**Map 6-1.** Characterization of Relations of the Russian Federation with Other States, 2014

<i>Red Colours: 15</i>	<i>Green Colours: 152</i>	<i>Yellow Colours: 15</i>	<i>Blue Colours: 21</i>
Allies: 0	Peers: 3	Competitors: 1	Rivals: 0
Partners: 0	Near-Peers: 5	Malign Forces: 1	Opponents: 1
Sphere of Influence: 2	Projects: 19	Concerns: 5	Nuisances: 3
Friends: 8; Extensions: 4	Field: 64	Troubles: 8	Adversaries: 7
Well-Behaved: 1	Untapped: 61	Errant: 0	Enemies: 10



**Map 6-2.** Characterization of Relations of the Russian Federation with Other States, 2021

<i>Red Colours: 11</i>	<i>Green Colours: 143</i>	<i>Yellow Colours: 24</i>	<i>Blue Colours: 25</i>
Allies: 0	Peers: 4	Competitors: 2	Rivals: 0
Partners: 2	Near-Peers: 8	Malign Forces: 3	Opponents: 3
Sphere of Influence: 3	Projects: 21	Concerns: 6	Nuisances: 3
Friends: 4; Extensions: 1	Field: 49	Troubles: 10	Adversaries: 12
Well-Behaved: 1	Untapped: 61	Errant: 3	Enemies: 7

Though the precise distribution of states among the groups did change, the general trajectory did not over these years. In 2014, only four countries

achieved the highest possible range of DFM score, increasing only to six in 2021. Furthermore, none of these countries reached the distinction of an ally or a rival in these years. Over all the years surveyed, only the People's Republic of China in 2015 achieved the scores necessary to be considered an 'ally'. The United States achieved the 'rival' category in every year but 2014 and 2021 as well as Germany and the United Kingdom in 2020 when COVID-19 initially enabled greater diplomatic cooperation before the outrage over the Navalniy poisoning significantly dented relations.

This distribution of categories suggests that over the years surveyed Moscow was too sceptical to welcome those governments with which it felt alignment into an alliance capable of affecting Russian political interests. The antagonism of many governments whose territory the Soviet Union occupied in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century was similarly ignored in Moscow. This refusal to let external forces impact Russian policy is consistent with Putin's overt theory about the nature of sovereignty and alliances: even Russia's formal military allies in the Collective Security Treaty Organisation<sup>16</sup> never achieved the status of an 'ally' of Moscow nor were consistently in the red colouration as relatively friendly to Moscow. However, this also betrays a sort of myopia about Russia's position in the world beyond recitations of Russia's indispensable position within the international community as the inheritor of the Soviet Victory in 1945 and position within a theoretical polycentric world order.

Another theme perhaps worth exploring in future research is the role of the Russian government's opposition to nationalism within its self-perception on the international stage as the executor of an independent foreign policy. Unlike most other countries of the world, the Russian Federation overtly rejects its status as a 'nation-state' and pursues a multicultural project, however flawed by white racism among its citizens. It seems possible though not provable with the data collected for this dissertation that Putin's perception of Russia as at least a pseudo-microcosm of the United Nations vision gives him an automatic perception of representing multiple national viewpoints on the international stage such that Russia's diplomatic isolation does not feel as acute as it might

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<sup>16</sup> Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

otherwise be.

The Kremlin perceives Russian policy to be reactive, merely responding as appropriate to positive and negative developments but in practice sets the tone of relations according to its own self-serving definition of what is likely to cause or stave off war. The result is a gradualist gauge of relations freely transcending a threshold of violence just as Clausewitz is translated into Russian: especially positive relations requiring security stabilisation result in the deployment of the Russian Armed Forces to help (e.g. 2015 Syria), especially negative relations requiring security reestablishment result in the deployment of the Russian Armed Forces to mould (e.g. 2014 Ukraine). Overtly, this spectrum exists to deter 'war'. However, because the Kremlin definition of 'war' is the endangerment of the Russian Federation's place in the international system, this spectrum more accurately exists to perpetuate Putin's idea of what constitutes Russia.



## Appendix

### FPQS Calculation: Methodology Details

#### Sources Consulted

The official websites of the following Russian offices were used as sources to gather data to calculate the FPQS:

- President of the Russian Federation ([www.kremlin.ru](http://www.kremlin.ru))
- Government<sup>1</sup> of the Russian Federation ([www.government.ru/news](http://www.government.ru/news))
- Security Council of the Russian Federation ([www.scrf.gov.ru](http://www.scrf.gov.ru))
- Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation ([www.svr.gov.ru](http://www.svr.gov.ru))
- Federal Security Service ([www.fsb.ru](http://www.fsb.ru))
- Ministry of the Interior ([www.мвд.рф](http://www.мвд.рф))
- Ministry of Industry and Trade ([www.minpromtorg.gov.ru](http://www.minpromtorg.gov.ru))
- Ministry of Economic Development ([www.economy.gov.ru](http://www.economy.gov.ru))
- Ministry of Finance ([www.minfin.ru](http://www.minfin.ru))
- Ministry of Energy ([www.minenergo.gov.ru](http://www.minenergo.gov.ru))
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs ([www.mid.ru](http://www.mid.ru))
- Ministry of Defence ([www.function.mil.ru](http://www.function.mil.ru))
- Russian National Guard ([www.rosgvard.ru](http://www.rosgvard.ru))
- Ministry of Emergency Situations ([www.mchs.gov.ru](http://www.mchs.gov.ru))

#### State Diplomacy Weighting

The weighting system for state diplomacy is as follows. Each diplomatic interaction is coded according to the role of the interlocutor's agent within the foreign organisation. Each meeting counts as a single FPQS point for that country. If the interlocutor agent is the head of government (encoded as 'HOG' or 'HOS/HOG' if the agent is both head of state and head of government), an additional FPQS is given for a total of 2 for that meeting. If the interlocutor agent is the head of the ruling party in a one-party state or other political leader able to direct the actions of the formal head of government<sup>2</sup> (encoded 'SG Commies'), an additional FPQS point is given for a total of 2 for that meeting. If the interlocutor agent is the ceremonial head of state (encoded as 'HOS'), an additional half FPQS point is given for a total of 1.5 for that meeting. If the interlocutor agent is a member of the opposition to the government (encoded 'Opposition'), two points are deducted for a total of -1 FPQS points for that meeting. If the interlocutor agent is not just a member of the opposition but the rival leader of the country (encoded 'Rival'), three points are deducted for a total of -2 FPQS points for that meeting.

These refer to in-person meetings held on the territory either of the Russian Federation or the interlocutor. If the meeting takes place virtually, over the phone, or on the territory of a third state, the base score of 1 FPQS point is divided in half for a total of 0.5 FPQS points.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Government' here refers to something analogous to the expression 'Margaret Thatcher government' in the United Kingdom or 'administration' as in 'Truman Administration' in the United States.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. the Supreme Leader of Iran

Military activities more extensive than a meeting also count for extra points. Military exercises (encoded 'Exercise') and overseas bases or missions (encoded as 'Deployment') each are given an extra FPQS point for a total of 2 for the event. Note that the cycling of additional troops or units to an overseas base or mission counts as an agreement, specifically a 'Force deployment', and therefore can yield additional FPQS points elsewhere. The 'Deployment' bonus only confers an advantage for the existence of an active base.

Each of these bonuses counts only to bilateral meetings. Summits of leaders of multilateral organizations earn just a single FPQS point for each member interlocutor provided the organization in question has no more than 10 members.<sup>3</sup> However, additional bilateral meetings on the sidelines of multilateral summits do yield extra points, though these are likely to occur on the territory of third countries. Exercises with multilateral organizations do get double points and virtual or phone summits get half points.

The multilateral organizations to which these rules apply for the Russian Federation are:

- Arctic Council
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa)
- Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)
- Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)
- Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)
- Normandy Four
- Nuclear Five (P5)
- Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

### Information and Propaganda Weighting

Each instance of Russian information and propaganda is coded according to one of 11 actions. These actions are then weighted according to the following rubric to be added to the larger FPQS score.

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<sup>3</sup> Summits with more than 10 members are presumed not to automatically denote interaction with all other participants.

Code	Description	Score
Support	Affirming an interlocutor's policies or sympathizing with an interlocutor being chastised by another interlocutor	+2
CT	Declaring solidarity with an interlocutor following a terrorist attack, natural disaster, or other national tragedy (e.g. death of an elder statesman).	+1
Monitor	Tracking the development of an event in an interlocutor without rendering a significant judgment for or against its occurrence	+1
Restraint	Calling for an abstention from violence or further activity during a time of tension or crisis	-1
Advocacy	Recommending that an interlocutor take a particular course of action	-1
Gloat	Declaring that an interlocutor's difficulties are its own fault despite previous warnings or the interlocutor's previous confidence	-1
Propaganda	Asserting a particular narrative as true about the interlocutor or else substituting the interlocutor's narrative about the agent for the agent's	-2
Oppose	Declaring an interlocutor's policies to be wrong or ineffective	-2
Demand	Insisting that an interlocutor accept a policy recommendation or else the agent will take contradictory action (Compellence)	-3
Threat	Insisting that an interlocutor not undertake a certain action or else the agent will take contradictory action	-3
Destabilize	Distributing information designed to undermine the interlocutor's people's faith and confidence in their government	-4

As can be seen, the net score can be either positive or negative depending on how favourable Russian messaging is.

### MTPS Calculation

#### Areas of Responsibility, TVDs, and Affected Countries

This section lists which areas of responsibility (AORs) and theatres of military action (TVDs) affect which countries, first listing by country and then by AOR/ TVD. In the AOR category column, the number following in parentheses indicates the number of borders a Russian unit of this AOR is considered necessary to cross to reach the country in question.

Country	AOR (Borders to Cross)	TVD
Abkhazia	22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (2), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (1)	Near Eastern
Afghanistan	2 <sup>nd</sup> Guards Army (3), 41 <sup>st</sup> Army (4), Central Asian Units (1)	Middle Eastern
Albania	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (6), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (5)	Southwestern
Algeria	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Guards Army (6), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (6)	Western, Southwestern
Andorra	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (5)	Western

<i>Country</i>	<i>AOR (Borders to Cross)</i>	<i>TVD</i>
Angola	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (8)	African
Antigua and Barbuda	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (11), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6)	North American
Argentina	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (13), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (11)	South American
Armenia	58 <sup>th</sup> Army (2), 102 <sup>nd</sup> Military Base (0)	Near Eastern
Australia	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (8)	Australian
Austria	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (4)	Western
Azerbaijan	58 <sup>th</sup> Army (1), 102 <sup>nd</sup> Military Base (1), Caspian Units (1)	Near Eastern
Bahamas	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (11), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6)	North American
Bahrain	22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (8), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (8), 58 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	Near Eastern
Bangladesh	2 <sup>nd</sup> Guards Army (6), 5 <sup>th</sup> Army (7)	Middle Eastern
Barbados	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (11), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6)	North American
Belarus	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Army (1), 6 <sup>th</sup> Army (1)	Western
Belgium	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (4), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (4)	Western
Belize	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (9), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	North American
Benin	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	African
Bhutan	41 <sup>st</sup> Army (6)	Middle Eastern
Bolivia	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (11), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (11)	South American
Bosnia and Herzegovina	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (5), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (4)	Southwestern
Botswana	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (9)	African
Brazil	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (14), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (9)	South American
Brunei	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	Far Eastern
Bulgaria	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (4), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (3), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (2), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (2)	Southwestern
Burkina Faso	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (8)	African
Burundi	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (12), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (8), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (8)	African
Cambodia	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (6), 29 <sup>th</sup> Army (3)	Far Eastern
Cameroon	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	African
Canada	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (3), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (4), Northeast Forces (2)	North American
Cape Verde	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (5)	African
Central African Republic	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (8)	African
Chad	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (8)	African

<i>Country</i>	<i>AOR (Borders to Cross)</i>	<i>TVD</i>
Chile	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (11), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (11)	South American
China	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (1), 29 <sup>th</sup> Army (1), 35 <sup>th</sup> Army (1), 36 <sup>th</sup> Army (2), 41 <sup>st</sup> Army (2), Arctic Troops (3), Central Asian Troops (1),	Far Eastern, Middle Eastern
Colombia	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (8), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	South American
Comoros	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (10), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (7), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (7)	African
Costa Rica	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (7), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	North American
Croatia	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (5), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (4)	Southwestern
Cuba	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (10), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6)	North American
Cyprus	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (4), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (4)	Southwestern, Near Eastern
Czech Republic	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (3)	Western
Democratic Republic of Congo	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (8)	African
Denmark	6 <sup>th</sup> Army (4), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (3)	Northwestern
Djibouti	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (9), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (5), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	African
Dominica	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (11), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6)	North American
Dominican Republic	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (10), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6)	North American
East Timor	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (7)	Australian
Ecuador	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (8), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (9)	South American
Egypt	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (4), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	Southwestern, Near Eastern
El Salvador	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (7), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (9)	North American
Equatorial Guinea	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	African
Eritrea	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (8), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (5), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	African
Estonia	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (3), 6 <sup>th</sup> Army (1)	Northwestern
Eswatini	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (10), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (6), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (6)	African
Ethiopia	4 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (10), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (6), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (6)	African

<i>Country</i>	<i>AOR (Borders to Cross)</i>	<i>TVD</i>
Fiji	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (7)	Australian
Finland	6 <sup>th</sup> Army (1), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (1)	Northwestern
France	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (4), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (5), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (6)	Western
Gabon	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	African
Gambia	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (5)	African
Georgia	22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (2), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (1), 58 <sup>th</sup> Army (1)	Near Eastern
Germany	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (3), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (4)	Western
Ghana	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	African
Greece	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (5), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (4), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (3), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (3)	Southwestern
Grenada	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (11), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6)	North American
Guatemala	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (7), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	North American
Guinea	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6)	African
Guinea-Bissau	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6)	African
Guyana	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (12), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	South American
Haiti	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (10), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6)	North American
Honduras	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (8), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	North American
Hungary	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (4), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (3)	Southwestern
Iceland	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (3)	Northwestern
India	2 <sup>nd</sup> Guards Army (5), 5 <sup>th</sup> Army (7) 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (11), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (8), 41 <sup>st</sup> Army (6), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (8)	Middle Eastern
Indonesia	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (6)	Australian
Iran	2 <sup>nd</sup> Guards Army (4), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (11), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (8), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (8), 58 <sup>th</sup> Army (2), 102 <sup>nd</sup> Military Base (1), Caspian Troops (2)	Near Eastern, Middle Eastern
Iraq	22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (9), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (9), 58 <sup>th</sup> Army (3)	Near Eastern
Ireland	6 <sup>th</sup> Army (7), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (4)	Western

<i>Country</i>	<i>AOR (Borders to Cross)</i>	<i>TVD</i>
Israel	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (4), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (4)	Near Eastern
Italy	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (6), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (5), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (5), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	Southwestern
Ivory Coast	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	African
Jamaica	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (10), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	North American
Japan	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (2), 35 <sup>th</sup> Army (2), 68 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (1), Northeast Troops (2)	Far Eastern
Jordan	49 <sup>th</sup> Army (4)	Near Eastern
Kazakhstan	2 <sup>nd</sup> Guards Army, 41 <sup>st</sup> Army (1) Central Asian Troops (1), Caspian Troops (1)	Middle Eastern
Kenya	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (11), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (7), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (7)	African
Kiribati	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (6)	Australian
Kosovo	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (5), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (4)	Southwestern
Kurdistan	58 <sup>th</sup> Army (3)	Near Eastern
Kuwait	22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (9), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (9), 58 <sup>th</sup> Army (4)	Near Eastern
Kyrgyzstan	41 <sup>st</sup> Army (2), Central Asian Troops (1)	Middle Eastern
Laos	29 <sup>th</sup> Army (3)	Far Eastern
Latvia	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (2), 6 <sup>th</sup> Army (1)	Northwestern
Lebanon	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (4), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (4)	Near Eastern
Lesotho	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (10), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (9), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (9)	African
Liberia	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6)	African
Libya	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (4), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (4)	Southwestern
Liechtenstein	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (5)	Western
Lithuania	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (2), 6 <sup>th</sup> Army (2), 11 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (1)	Northwestern
Luxembourg	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (4)	Western
Madagascar	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (10), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (7), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (7)	African



<i>Country</i>	<i>AOR (Borders to Cross)</i>	<i>TVD</i>
Malawi	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (11), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (8), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (8)	African
Malaysia	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	Far Eastern
Maldives	2 <sup>nd</sup> Guards Army (6), 5 <sup>th</sup> Army (8), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (11)	African
Mali	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	African
Malta	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (5), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	Southwestern
Marshall Islands	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	Australian
Mauritania	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (5)	African
Mauritius	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (11), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (8), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (8)	African
Mexico	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (6), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	North American
Micronesia	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (4)	Australian
Moldova	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (2), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (2), Transnistria Troops (1)	Southwestern
Monaco	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (5), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (6)	Western
Mongolia	29 <sup>th</sup> Army (1), 36 <sup>th</sup> Army (1)	Far Eastern
Montenegro	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (5), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (4)	Southwestern
Morocco	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (5), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (7)	Western
Mozambique	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (10), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (7), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (7)	African
Myanmar	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (7), 29 <sup>th</sup> Army (3)	Middle Eastern
Namibia	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (8)	African
Nauru	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	Australian
Nepal	41 <sup>st</sup> Army (6)	Middle Eastern
Netherlands	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (4), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (4)	Western
New Zealand	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (9)	Australian
Nagorno-Karabakh	58 <sup>th</sup> Army (2), 102 <sup>nd</sup> Military Base (1)	Near Eastern
Nicaragua	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (7), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	North American
Niger	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (8)	African
Nigeria	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	African
North Korea	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (1)	Far Eastern
North Macedonia	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (5), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (4)	Southwestern
Northern Cyprus	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (4), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (4)	Southwestern, Near Eastern

<i>Country</i>	<i>AOR (Borders to Cross)</i>	<i>TVD</i>
Norway	6 <sup>th</sup> Army (4), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (1)	Northwestern
Oman	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (10), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (7), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (7), 58 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	Near Eastern
Pakistan	2 <sup>nd</sup> Guards Army (4), 5 <sup>th</sup> Army (8), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (11), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (8), 41 <sup>st</sup> Army (5), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (8)	Middle Eastern
Palau	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (4)	Australian
Palestine	49 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	Near Eastern
Panama	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (7), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	North American
Papua New Guinea	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	Australian
Paraguay	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (15), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (10)	South American
Peru	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (9), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (10)	South American
Philippines	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (4)	Far Eastern
Poland	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (2), 11 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (1)	Western
Portugal	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (6), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (15)	Western
Qatar	22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (8), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (8), 58 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	Near Eastern
Republic of the Congo	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (8)	African
Romania	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (3), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (2), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (2), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (2)	Southwestern
Rwanda	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (12), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (8), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (8)	African
Saint Kitts and Nevis	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (11), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6)	North American
Saint Lucia	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (11), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6)	North American
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (11), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6)	North American
Samoa	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (7)	Australian
San Marino	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (7), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (6), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (6), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (6)	Southwestern
Sao Tome and Principe	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	African
Saudi Arabia	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (8), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (5), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (5), 58 <sup>th</sup> Army (4)	Near Eastern
Senegal	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (5)	African

<i>Country</i>	<i>AOR (Borders to Cross)</i>	<i>TVD</i>
Serbia	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (4), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (3)	Southwestern
Seychelles	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (11), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (7), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (7)	African
Sierra Leone	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6)	African
Singapore	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (6)	Far Eastern
Slovakia	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (3)	Western
Slovenia	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (5), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (4)	Southwestern
Solomon Islands	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	Australian
Somalia	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (12), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (5), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	African
South Africa	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (9), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (8), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (8)	African
South Korea	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (2)	Far Eastern
South Ossetia	58 <sup>th</sup> Army (1)	Near Eastern
South Sudan	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (11), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (8), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (8)	African
Spain	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (5), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (4), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (6)	Western
Sri Lanka	2 <sup>nd</sup> Guards Army (7), 5 <sup>th</sup> Army (7), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (12)	Middle Eastern
Sudan	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (8), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (5), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	African
Suriname	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (12), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	South American
Sweden	6 <sup>th</sup> Army (3), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (2)	Northwestern
Switzerland	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (4)	Western
Syria	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (4), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (3)	Near Eastern
Taiwan	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (3)	Far Eastern
Tajikistan	41 <sup>st</sup> Army (3), Central Asian Troops (1)	Middle Eastern
Tanzania	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (11), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (7), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (7)	African
Thailand	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (6), 29 <sup>th</sup> Army (4)	Far Eastern
Togo	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	African
Tonga	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (8)	Australian
Transnistria	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (2), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (2), Transnistria (0)	Southwestern
Trinidad and Tobago	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (11), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6)	North American

<i>Country</i>	<i>AOR (Borders to Cross)</i>	<i>TVD</i>
Tunisia	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (6), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (5), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	Southwestern
Turkey	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (5), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (4), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (2), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (2), 102 <sup>nd</sup> Military Base (1)	Southwestern, Near Eastern
Turkmenistan	2 <sup>nd</sup> Guards Army (3), Caspian Troops (2)	Middle Eastern
Tuvalu	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (6)	Australian
United Arab Emirates	22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (8), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (8), 58 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	Near Eastern
Uganda	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (12), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (8), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (8)	African
Ukraine	1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army (2), 8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (1), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (1), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (1), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (2), Transnistria (1)	Western, Southwestern
United Kingdom	6 <sup>th</sup> Army (6), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (3)	Western
United States	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (3), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (5), Northeast Troops (1)	North American
Uruguay	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (14), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (10)	South American
Uzbekistan	2 <sup>nd</sup> Guards Army (2), 41 <sup>st</sup> Army (2), Central Asian Troops (1)	Middle Eastern
Vanuatu	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (6)	Australian
Vatican City	8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (7), 20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army (6), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (6), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (6)	Southwestern
Venezuela	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (10), 14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (7)	South American
Vietnam	5 <sup>th</sup> Army (4), 29 <sup>th</sup> Army (2)	Far Eastern
Western Sahara	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (5)	Western
Yemen	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (9), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (6), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (6), 58 <sup>th</sup> Army (5)	Near Eastern
Zambia	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (11), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (8), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (8)	African
Zimbabwe	14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps (11), 22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps (8), 49 <sup>th</sup> Army (8)	African

<i>Area of Responsibility (AOR) Unit</i>	<i>Affected Countries (Number of Borders to Cross)</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> Guards Tank Army	Andorra (5), Austria (4), Belarus (1), Belgium (4), Czech Republic (3), Estonia (3), France (4), Germany (3), Latvia (2), Liechtenstein (5), Lithuania (2), Luxembourg (4), Monaco (5), Netherlands (4), Poland (2), Portugal (6), Slovakia (3), Spain (5), Switzerland (4), Ukraine (2)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Guards Army	Afghanistan (3), Bangladesh (6), India (5), Iran (4), Kazakhstan (1), Maldives (6), Pakistan (4), Sri Lanka, (7), Turkmenistan (3), Uzbekistan (2)
5 <sup>th</sup> Army	Antigua and Barbuda (11), Argentina (13), Australia (8), Bahamas (11), Bangladesh (7), Barbados (11), Belize (9), Bolivia (11), Brazil (14), Brunei (5), Cambodia (6), Canada (3), Chile (11), China (1), Colombia (8), Costa Rica (7), Cuba (10), Dominica (11), Dominican Republic (10), East Timor (7), Ecuador (8), El Salvador (7), Fiji (7), Grenada (11), Guatemala (7), Guyana (12), Haiti (10), Honduras (8), India (7), Indonesia (6), Jamaica (10), Japan (2), Kiribati (6), Malaysia (5), Maldives (8), Marshall Islands (5), Mexico (6), Micronesia (4), Myanmar (7), Nauru (5), New Zealand (9), Nicaragua (7), North Korea (1), Pakistan (8), Palau (4), Panama (7), Papua New Guinea (5), Paraguay (15), Peru (9), Philippines (4), Saint Kitts and Nevis (11), Saint Lucia (11), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (11), Samoa (7), Singapore (6), Solomon Islands (5), South Korea (2), Sri Lanka (7), Suriname (12), Taiwan (3), Thailand (6), Tonga (8), Trinidad and Tobago (11), Tuvalu (6), United States (3), Uruguay (14), Vanuatu (6), Venezuela (10), Vietnam (4)
6 <sup>th</sup> Army	Belarus (1), Denmark (4), Estonia (1), Finland (1), Ireland (7), Latvia (1), Lithuania (2), Norway (4), Sweden (3), United Kingdom (6)
8 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army	Albania (6), Bosnia and Herzegovina (5), Bulgaria (4), Croatia (5), Greece (5), Hungary (4), Italy (6), Kosovo (5), Moldova (2), Montenegro (5), North Macedonia (5), Romania (3), San Marino (7), Serbia (4), Slovenia (5), Transnistria (2), Turkey (5), Ukraine (1), Vatican City (7)
11 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps	Lithuania (1), Poland (1)
14 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps	Algeria (6), Angola (8), Antigua and Barbuda (11), Argentina (11), Bahamas (6), Belgium (4), Belize (7), Benin (7), Bolivia (11), Botswana (9), Brazil (9), Burkina Faso (8), Burundi (12), Cameroon (7), Canada (4), Cape Verde (5), Central African Republic (8), Chad (8), Chile (11), Colombia (7), Comoros (10), Costa Rica (7), Cuba (6), Cyprus (6), Democratic Republic of Congo (8), Denmark (3), Djibouti (9), Dominica (6), Dominican Republic (6), Ecuador (9), Egypt (7), El Salvador (9), Equatorial Guinea (7), Eritrea (8), Eswatini (10), Ethiopia (10), Finland (1), France (5), Gabon (7), Gambia (5), Germany (4), Ghana (7), Greece (7), Grenada (6), Guatemala (7), Guinea (6), Guinea-Bissau (6), Guyana (7), Haiti (6), Honduras (7), Iceland (3), India (11), Iran (11), Ireland, (4), Israel (7), Italy (6), Ivory Coast (7), Jamaica (7), Kenya (11), Lebanon (6), Lesotho (10), Liberia (6), Libya (7), Madagascar (10), Malawi (11), Maldives (11), Mali (7), Malta (6),

	Mauritania (5), Mauritius (11), Mexico (7), Monaco (6), Morocco (5), Mozambique (10), Namibia (8), Netherlands (4), Nicaragua (7), Niger (8), Nigeria (7), Northern Cyprus (6), Norway (1), Oman (10), Pakistan (11), Panama (7), Paraguay (10), Peru (10), Portugal (5), Republic of the Congo (8), Rwanda (12), Saint Kitts and Nevis (6), Saint Lucia (6), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (6), Sao Tome and Principe (7), Saudi Arabia (8), Senegal (5), Seychelles (11), Sierra Leone (6), Somalia (12), South Africa (9), South Sudan (11), Spain (4), Sri Lanka (12), Sudan (8), Suriname (7), Sweden (2), Syria (7), Tanzania (7), Togo (7), Trinidad and Tobago (6), Tunisia (6), Turkey (7), Uganda (12), United Kingdom (3) United States (5), Uruguay (10), Venezuela (7), Western Sahara (5), Yemen (9), Zambia (11), Zimbabwe (11)
20 <sup>th</sup> Guards Army	Albania (5), Bosnia and Herzegovina (4), Bulgaria (3), Croatia (4), Greece (4), Hungary (3), Italy (5), Kosovo (4), Moldova (2), Montenegro (4), North Macedonia (4), Romania (2), San Marino (6), Serbia (3), Slovenia (4), Transnistria (2), Turkey (4), Ukraine (1), Vatican City (6)
22 <sup>nd</sup> Army Corps	Abkhazia (2), Algeria (6), Bahrain (8), Bulgaria (2), Burundi (8), Comoros (7), Cyprus (4), Djibouti (5), Egypt (5), Eritrea (5), Eswatini (9), France (6), Georgia (2), Greece (3), India (8), Iran (8), Iraq (9), Israel (4), Italy (5), Kenya (7), Kuwait (9), Lebanon (4), Lesotho (9), Libya (4), Madagascar (7), Malawi (8), Malta (5), Mauritius (8), Monaco (6), Morocco (7), Mozambique (7), Northern Cyprus (4), Oman (7), Pakistan (8), Qatar (8), Romania (2), Rwanda (8), San Marino (6), Saudi Arabia (5), Seychelles (7), Somalia (5), South Africa (8), South Sudan (8), Spain (6), Sudan (5), Syria (4), Tanzania (7), Tunisia (5), Turkey (2), United Arab Emirates (8), Uganda (8), Ukraine (1), Vatican City (6), Yemen (6), Zambia (8), Zimbabwe (8)
29 <sup>th</sup> Army	Cambodia (3), China (1), Laos (3), Mongolia (1), Myanmar (3), Thailand (4), Vietnam (2)
35 <sup>th</sup> Army	China (1), Japan (2)
36 <sup>th</sup> Army	China (2), Mongolia (1)
41 <sup>st</sup> Army	Afghanistan (4), Bhutan (6), China (2), India (6), Kazakhstan (1), Kyrgyzstan (2), Nepal (6), Pakistan (5), Tajikistan (3), Uzbekistan (2)
49 <sup>th</sup> Army	Abkhazia (1), Algeria (6), Bahrain (8), Bulgaria (2), Burundi (8), Comoros (7), Cyprus (4), Djibouti (5), Egypt (5), Eritrea (5), Eswatini (9), Ethiopia (6), Georgia (1), Greece (3), India (8), Iran (8), Iraq (9), Israel (4), Italy (5), Jordan (4), Kenya (7), Kuwait (9), Lebanon (6), Lesotho (9), Libya (4), Madagascar (7), Malawi (8), Malta (5), Mauritius (8), Mozambique (7), Northern Cyprus (4), Oman (7), Pakistan (8), Palestine (5), Qatar (5), Romania (2), Rwanda (8), San Marino (6), Saudi Arabia (5), Seychelles (7), Somalia (5), South Africa (8), South Sudan (8), Sudan (5), Syria (3), Tanzania (7), Tunisia (5), Turkey (2), United Arab Emirates (8), Uganda (8), Ukraine (2), Vatican City (6), Yemen (6), Zambia (8), Zimbabwe (8)

<i>Area of Responsibility (AOR) Unit</i>	<i>Affected Countries (Number of Borders to Cross)</i>
58 <sup>th</sup> Army	Armenia (2), Azerbaijan (1), Bahrain (5), Georgia (1), Iran (2), Iraq (3), Kurdistan (3), Kuwait (4), Nagorno-Karabakh (2), Oman (5), Qatar (5), Saudi Arabia (4), South Ossetia (1), United Arab Emirates (5), Yemen (5)
68 <sup>th</sup> Army Corps	Japan (1)
102 <sup>nd</sup> Military Base	Armenia (0), Azerbaijan (1), Iran (1), Nagorno-Karabakh (1), Turkey (1)
Arctic Troops	China (3)
Central Asian Troops	Afghanistan (1), China (1), Kazakhstan (1), Kyrgyzstan (1), Tajikistan (1), Uzbekistan (1)
Caspian Troops	Azerbaijan (1), Iran (2), Kazakhstan (1), Turkmenistan (2)
Northeast Troops	Canada (2), Japan (2), United States (1)
Transnistria	Moldova (1), Transnistria (0), Ukraine (1)

### Countries Impacted by Naval Exercises

This section lists the countries impacted by naval exercises in and over bodies of water as described in section 3.1.2.3.4. It is divided into two parts: the near seas around Russian naval bases and the far seas which are not. The first column lists the sea, the second column those countries bordering the sea impacted by the full MTPS generated in that body of water, and the third those countries not bordering on the sea but within 1,000km of the sea and so impacted by half the MTPS owing to potential missile strikes or other non-contact warfare options.

1,000km centre points are determined according to most frequent locations of Russian exercises rather than a definitive listing of all countries possibly within 1,000km range. As such, some countries that may seem to lie on the sea in question are listed as further away due to the typical location of Russian exercises in them. In other cases, countries with short coastlines on a sea but no major ports are considered as within 1,000km but not bordering the sea.

<b>Near Sea</b>	<b>Countries Bordering the Sea</b>	<b>Countries within 1,000km of the Sea</b>
Baltic Sea	Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden	Austria, Belarus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine
Barents Sea	Norway	Finland, Sweden
Black Sea	Abkhazia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Turkey, Ukraine	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, Nagorno-Karabakh, North Macedonia, Northern Cyprus, Serbia, Slovakia, South Ossetia, Syria, Transnistria
Caspian Sea	Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan	Abkhazia, Armenia, Georgia, Iraq, Kurdistan, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan
Gulf of Finland	Estonia, Finland	Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, Ukraine



<b>Near Sea</b>	<b>Countries Bordering the Sea</b>	<b>Countries within 1,000km of the Sea</b>
Northwest Pacific Ocean	Japan, North Korea, South Korea	China
Peter the Great Gulf	Japan, North Korea	China, South Korea
Sea of Japan	Japan, North Korea, South Korea	China
Sea of Okhotsk	Japan	N/A
White Sea	N/A	Estonia, Finland, Norway, Sweden

<b>Far Sea</b>	<b>Countries Bordering the Sea</b>	<b>Countries within 1,000km of the Sea</b>
Arctic Ocean	Canada, Denmark, Norway, United States	Finland, Iceland, Sweden
North Atlantic Ocean	Canada, Iceland, Ireland, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom, United States	France, Western Sahara
South Atlantic Ocean	Angola, Argentina, Benin, Brazil, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Namibia, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo, Uruguay	Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Paraguay
Bay of Biscay	France, Spain	Andorra, Belgium, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, United Kingdom
Beaufort Sea	Canada, United States	N/A
Bering Sea	United States	N/A
Caribbean Sea	Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela	Bahamas, El Salvador, Guyana, Mexico, Suriname, United States
Chukchi Sea	United States	N/A
East China Sea	China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan	North Korea, Philippines
Gulf of Aden	Djibouti, Somalia, Yemen	Eritrea, Ethiopia, Oman, Saudi Arabia
Gulf of Thailand	Cambodia, Thailand	Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Vietnam

Far Sea	Countries Bordering the Sea	Countries within 1,000km of the Sea
Indian Ocean	Australia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Yemen	Afghanistan, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Thailand
Java Sea	Indonesia	Malaysia, Singapore
Kara Sea	N/A	N/A
Laptev Sea	N/A	N/A
Mediterranean Sea	Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Northern Cyprus, Palestine, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey	Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Iraq, Jordan, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Portugal, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Vatican City
North Sea	Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom	Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland
Norwegian Sea	Iceland, Norway, United Kingdom	Denmark, Sweden
Philippine Sea	Micronesia, Palau, Philippines, Taiwan	China, Indonesia
Red Sea	Egypt, Eritrea, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen	Cyprus, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Northern Cyprus, Palestine, Somalia, Syria
South China Sea	Brunei, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam	Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand

### Types of Exercises and their MTPS Weighting

The database uses predominantly Russian terminology to code the various exercises. The 92 different codes (with their weights in parentheses) are:

- 'AEW' (4): Short for aerial early warning. Using of AEW aircraft such as the A-50.
- 'Air assault' (5): Transporting infantry by helicopter into combat frequently with helicopter fire support.
- 'Air defence' (2): Defending a target from an air attack.
- 'Air interception' (2): Intercepting enemy aircraft with one's own aircraft (analogous to combat air patrol (CAP) in the West).
- 'Air recover' (4): Dispersal of aircraft to recovery fields.
- 'Air strike' (2): Using airborne weapons against an enemy.
- 'Airbase suppression' (3): Preventing an airfield from being used.
- 'Airborne' (4): Transporting infantry by parachute into combat.
- 'Amphibious warfare' (4): Transporting manoeuvre unit into combat by sea.
- 'Anti-landing' (3): Preventing amphibious or aerial attack (*desant*).
- 'Anti-saboteur' (2): Stopping special forces from disrupting military activities.

- 'Anti-submarine warfare' (3): Locating and destroying submarines.
- 'Anti-tank' (1): Using infantry-borne heavy weapons to destroy heavy armoured fighting vehicles such as tanks.
- 'Anti-terrorist' (3): Stopping provocateurs or criminals from stealing military equipment.
- 'Army tactical exercise' (10): Using all units of an army to achieve an operational-tactical objective.
- 'Artillery' (1): Shooting standard indirect fires.
- 'Assault' (3): Deploying engineers to open a path through a minefield or other hazardous zone in the middle of active combat.
- 'Ballistic missile test' (3): Shooting a ballistic missile.
- 'Battalion tactical exercise' (5): Using all units of a battalion to achieve a tactical objective.
- 'Brigade tactical exercise' (10): Using all units of a brigade to achieve a tactical objective.
- 'Chemical operation' (5): Conducting an operation under the condition of chemical weapons release and contamination.
- 'Civil defence' (4): Protecting civilian population in anticipation of war.
- 'Coastal missile' (3): Using coastal missiles to defend against enemy warships.
- 'Close air support' (4): Supporting ground operations with direct air fires.
- 'Combat readiness inspection' (2): Raising readiness of unit to determine rapidity and competence to deploy (but without subsequently-listed action).
- 'Command inspection' (2): Checking or educating junior officers, senior enlisted, or warrant officers in important tasks.
- 'Command-staff' (3): Managing complex scenario with one's headquarters but only limited of ordinary troops, simulating much of the action.
- 'Commando' (3): Practicing physically- and psychologically-demanding tasks to achieve surprise over an enemy.
- 'Communications' (2): Establishing a communications network for officers to communicate with subordinates without interference from illegal listeners or electronic warfare.
- 'Company tactical exercise' (5): Using all units of a company to achieve a tactical objective.
- 'Counterinsurgency' (7): Deploying troops to eliminate *guerrilla* forces (*boeviki*) who have been decreasing state sovereignty in a region.
- 'Counter-UAV' (2): Kinetic destruction of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).
- 'Cruise missile test' (3): Shooting a cruise missile.
- 'Defensive' (5): Using a unit to stop an enemy offensive and transition to a counteroffensive.
- 'Disaster relief' (1): Deploying a unit to restore infrastructure during an emergency
- 'Diving' (1): Technical diving skills.
- 'Driving' (1): Technical driving skills.
- 'Educational' (1): Learning how to use a new piece of equipment.
- 'Electronic warfare' (3): Disrupting the enemy's communications network and/or disabling the enemy's intelligence-gathering capabilities.

- ‘Engineer’ (2): Installing infrastructure or clearing disruptions in terrain such as minefields.
- ‘Escort’ (2): Protecting another unit from ambushes.
- ‘Evacuation’ (3): Pulling a unit, parts of a unit, or civilians from combat.
- ‘Firefighting’ (1): Stopping fires at a base.
- ‘Flamethrower’ (3): Using thermobaric weapons to rapidly attrit an enemy.
- ‘Helicopter strike’ (2): Using heliborne weapons against an enemy.
- ‘Hypersonic missile test’ (3): Shooting a hypersonic missile.
- ‘Icebreaking’ (1): Breaking ice to enable movement through otherwise blocked terrain.
- ‘Interdiction’ (4): Closing enemy lines of communication and supply to a particular region.
- ‘Live fire’ (1): Shooting live ammunition for real-world acclimatisation to combat.
- ‘Logistics’ (2): Connecting combat units with supplies from the rear to continue their operation.
- ‘Long-range march’ (2): Deployment of a unit or ship on a multi-day task either to demonstrate presence or capability to move across a theatre.
- ‘Manoeuvre’ (2): Moving units in a way to gain a situational advantage over the enemy.
- ‘Media’ (3): Operating with an embedded media team to ensure best possible distribution of information from the front.
- ‘Medical’ (2): Providing medical assistance either in the field or in the rear at a large rate.
- ‘Military police’ (1): Preventing criminal activity around military bases and ensuring proper traffic flow.
- ‘Mine countermeasures’ (2): Seeking mines and either marking them to be avoided or destroying them.
- ‘Missile calculation’ (3): Calculating appropriate use of missiles in an exercise but without shooting a literal missile, relying upon a simulation to determine result.
- ‘Missile defence’ (5): Intercepting an enemy missile.
- ‘Mountaineering’ (1): Learning to climb and operate in the mountains.
- ‘Naval landing’ (2): Helicopters landing on surface ships for replenishment purposes.
- ‘Naval vitality’ (1): Practicing measures to preserve a ship in the event of an emergency. Often used to verify a ship’s ability to deploy.
- ‘Navigation’ (2): Finding one’s way with limited information or providing data via satellite uplink to a headquarters on local combat and infrastructure situation.
- ‘NBC defence’ (2): Countermeasures against nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons and contamination.
- ‘Nuclear operation’ (5): Conducting an operation under the condition of nuclear weapons release and contamination.
- ‘Offensive’ (5): Conducting an advance.
- ‘Organisation’ (3): Co-ordinating subunits for manoeuvre or deployment.
- ‘Parachute’ (1): Paratropping but without subsequent combat operations.
- ‘Peacekeeping’ (3): Ensuring order in a region with heightened local tensions, including isolating and destroying troublemakers.

- ‘Psychological’ (1): Verifying resilience under difficult psychological conditions.
- ‘Radio-technical’ (3): Using radios and radars to identify enemies.
- ‘Railway’ (2): Repairing or building additional rail lines to facilitate troop movement.
- ‘Reconnaissance’ (3): Identifying enemy location.
- ‘Reconnaissance-strike’ (3): Using intelligence assets to locate an enemy and immediately taking action to destroy it with indirect fires.
- ‘Refueling’ (5): Providing more fuel to units either currently deployed or in transit.
- ‘Regiment tactical exercise’ (5): Using all units of a regiment to achieve a tactical objective.
- ‘Reservist training’ (3): Calling up reservists to practice military skills.
- ‘River crossing’ (3): Establishing or repairing a crossing over a river or fording a river.
- ‘Sabotage and reconnaissance’ (4): Reconnoitring the enemy and then sabotaging most critical infrastructure in its rear.
- ‘Search and destroy’ (3): Locating an enemy position and destroying it with direct fires.
- ‘Search and rescue’ (2): Finding a missing person or unit and bringing it to safety.
- ‘SEAD’ (4): Short for suppression of enemy air defence. Evading or destroying enemy air defence.
- ‘Season capstone’ (5): Confirmation of training competences at the end of a training season integrating multiple tactical objectives.
- ‘Simulation’ (1): Using a simulator to practice complicated technologies.
- ‘Smokescreen’ (2): Concealing unit or infrastructure position with smoke.
- ‘Snap check’ (4): Raising combat readiness to maximum level without advance knowledge.
- ‘Small arms’ (0.5): Training with any standard weapons smaller than a grenade launcher.
- ‘Sniper’ (1): Using small arms to disrupt enemy positions over a long range.
- ‘Space launch’ (2): Launching a rocket with a military satellite payload into orbit.
- ‘Strategic-operational’ (10): Large-scale capstone exercise at the strategic, operational, or strategic-operational level.
- ‘Submarine warfare’ (4): Submarines engaging surface or subsurface targets.
- ‘Surface warfare’ (3): Surface ships engaging surface, air, or coastal targets with missiles or torpedoes.
- ‘Survival’ (1): Practicing tactics for survival in a hostile or inhospitable environment.
- ‘Tactical’ (5): Using all elements of a unit of undefined size to achieve a tactical objective.
- ‘UAV training’ (2): Using UAVs to improve reconnaissance or targeting capabilities.
- ‘Urban warfare’ (4): Combat in an urban environment.

In addition to these categories, the database assigns one of 25 ‘opposition’ value to each exercise to reflect the nature of the objective in the scenario. These categories are:

- Air: Fighting an aerial target (airplane or helicopter).
- Bilateral: Other troops playing the opposition (OPFOR) for a human opponent.
- *Boeviki*: Fighting insurgents or *guerrilla* forces.
- Camouflage: Concealing information from the enemy.
- CBRN: Fighting an enemy under conditions in which chemical, biological, radiation, or nuclear (CBRN) weapons have been used.
- Conventional: Fighting a conventional opponent.
- Criminal: Operating against ordinary criminals legally in the country.
- *Desant*: Fighting forces attempting to establish a beachhead from either the sea or the air.
- Disruption: Disrupting the enemy’s organisation.
- *DRG*: Fighting enemy Special Forces infiltration. *DRG* is short for ‘*diversionno-razvedyvatel’naya gruppa*’ or ‘sabotage and reconnaissance group’.
- Education: Educating soldiers in elementary tactics (often at the beginning of a training season with new conscripts).
- Emergency: Responding to a natural disaster or manmade accident.
- Escort: Protecting a unit, population, or infrastructure.
- Infrastructure: Creating infrastructure to support future friendly military actions, eliminating the enemy’s disruptions, or establishing a favourable military situation (e.g. air superiority).
- Inspection: Determining the combat readiness of a unit (as the most important aspect of the exercise rather than just as a component).
- *Maskirovka*: Deceiving the enemy’s understanding of friendly intentions.
- Missile: Stopping a missile attack.
- Mobilisation: Preparing the non-military population for the possibility of war.
- Navy: Fighting surface, subsurface, and/or naval aviation targets.
- *NVF*: Short for ‘*nezakonnye vooruzhyonnye formirovaniya*’ or ‘illegally armed formation’. Catch-all term for group in the country against the law ranging from a conventional enemy to scattered criminals illegally in the country.
- Space: Fighting a target in space.
- Submarine: Fighting a submarine.
- Surface naval: Fighting a surface ship.
- Terrorist: Fighting an enemy intent on using violence to achieve domestic political objectives.
- UAV: Fighting unmanned aerial vehicles.

### Quantitative Data Codebook

The following refer to the meaning of each of the columns of the quantitative data analysed:

- **Region**: The continent or region of the interlocutor considered.
- **TVD**: The *TVD* in which the interlocutor is located.

- **MB:** The minimum number of borders that must be crossed to reach the interlocutor from Russia without using impenetrable borders.
- **Country:** Name of the interlocutor
- **Time:** Year considered in the row
- **A:** Alliance code of the interlocutor. 0 = non-aligned, 1 = US ally, 2 = Russian ally, 3 = China or Chinese ally
- **Nuclear:** Does the interlocutor possess nuclear weapons? 0 = No, 1 = Nuclear sharing agreement with the United States, 2 = Yes
- **IC:** Interest count of the interlocutor: How many times did the Russian government mention the interlocutor in any context in the year?
- **FPQS:** Foreign Policy Quality Score. Methodology of calculation described at length in chapter 4 and above.
- **AMTPS:** Absolute Military Threat Potential Score. Methodology of calculation described at length in chapter 4 and above.
- **PMTPS:** Proportional Military Threat Potential Score. Same methodology of calculation as AMTPS but core score weighted to be between 0 and 200 regardless of the overall quantity of Russian military exercises.
- **Exercises:** Quantity of military exercises Russia jointly conducted with the interlocutor.
- **Trade:** Quantity of trade turnover the Russian government reported with the interlocutor in the previous year.
- **Tcontrol:** Weighting of trade turnover on a scale of 0-125.146 to offer a similar ratio between trade turnover and PMTPS.
- **Imports:** Imports as a component of previous year's trade turnover.
- **Comp1:** Percentage of imports out of previous year's trade turnover.
- **Exports:** Exports as a component of previous year's trade turnover.
- **Comp2:** Percentage of exports out of previous year's trade turnover.
- **DFM:** Quantity of Russian deputy foreign ministers meeting with a representative of the interlocutor's government over the year.
- **Code:** Distribution into friendly, neutral, unfriendly, and adversarial relations. 1 = Friendly ( $FPQS > 1.25 \times IC$ ), 2 = Neutral ( $1.25 \times IC > FPQS > 0.75 \times IC$ ), 3 = Unfriendly ( $0.75 \times IC > FPQS > 0$ ), 4 = Adversarial ( $0 > FPQS$ ).
- **Rel:** FPQS divided by IC
- **TIC:** Previous year's trade turnover divided by IC
- **TCA:** TIC of individual interlocutor divided by the quotient of the previous year's total Russian reported trade turnover divided by that year's total IC for all countries.

### List of Control Variable Relationships and Correlation Coefficients

The following lists the relationships by the number as they are referred to in chapter 4, how the variables were controlled, the sample size, and what the coefficients of correlation were for each resulting data set.

<i>Rel #</i>	<i>Control Variable</i>	<i>Sample Size</i>	<i>PMTPS/FPQS Coefficient</i>	<i>Trade Turnover/FPQS Coefficient</i>
0	None (Global)	1,625	-0.1100482	0.07905092
1.1	Neighbours of Russia (MB=1)	128	0.207207	0.1477752
1.2	Neighbours+1 (MB $\leq$ 2)	264	-0.2178775	0.08177978
1.3	Neighbours+2 (MB $\leq$ 3)	408	-0.209161	0.05003892
1.4	Neighbours+3 (MB $\leq$ 4)	633	-0.1809445	0.4534503
1.5	Neighbours+4 (MB $\leq$ 5)	881	-0.1568663	0.06036298
1.6	Distant (MB $\geq$ 5)	891	0.3337175	0.479348
1.6	Near Abroad (FSU=Yes)	144	-0.5084218	-0.1093064
1.7	Far Abroad (FSU=No)	1,481	0.2215614	0.1610304
2.1	Negligible Significance (DFM=0)	475	-0.7247346	-0.3864256
2.2	Peripheral Significance (DFM=1)	674	-0.01785801	0.1422272
2.3	Marginal Significance (DFM=2 and DFM=3)	475	-0.1868443	-0.0860673
2.4	Significant Significance (DFM=4 and DFM=5)	67	0.1706822	0.13337459
2.5	Critical Significance (DFM>5)	50	0.3368733	0.2235055
3.1	High Cooperation (FPQS>1.25xIC, IC>9)	106	0.2357303	0.4635326
3.2	Normal Cooperation (1.25xIC>FPQS>0.75xIC, IC>9)	377	0.5210831	0.5247846
3.3	Low Cooperation (0.75xIC>FPQS>0, IC>9)	128	0.10655506	0.4848025
3.4	Negative Cooperation (0>FPQS, IC>9)	103	-0.2695131	-0.3386705
4.1	Europe (Region=Europe)	400	-0.4420458	-0.2440833
4.2	Asia (Region=Asia)	352	0.6946322	0.6169981
4.22	Asia except China	344	0.5526179	0.347955
4.3	Middle East (Region=Middle East)	160	0.2641197	0.1549735
4.4	Africa (Region=Africa)	158	0.30005884	0.1388805
4.5	Americas (Region=North America and South America)	280	-0.689196	-0.8111859
4.55	Americas except USA	272	-0.1776869	0.2299995
4.6	African TVD	400	0.1088388	0.4685063
4.7	Australian TVD	128	0.02397217	0.8437633
4.8	Far Eastern TVD	112	0.837554	0.8447641
4.9	Middle Eastern TVD	120	0.6197228	0.6368372
4.11	Near Eastern TVD	200	0.002541596	0.1692861
4.12	North American TVD	184	-0.6919736	-0.841937
4.13	Northwestern TVD	64	-0.4162794	0.1528089
4.14	South American TVD	96	0.004114152	0.2642816
4.15	Southwestern TVD	208	-0.53000558	-0.258072
4.16	Western TVD	176	-0.6333321	-0.01271582
5.1	Net Importer (Imports>Exports)	525	-0.08870185	-0.00188993



<i>Rel #</i>	<i>Control Variable</i>	<i>Sample Size</i>	<i>PMTPS/FPQS Coefficient</i>	<i>Trade Turnover/FPQS Coefficient</i>
5.2	Net Exporter (Exports>Imports)	1,018	-0.1743777	0.1532826
6.1	Most Unpoliticized (TCA>3)	168	0.563378	0.6962718
6.2	Relatively Unpoliticized (2<TCA<3)	78	0.2360667	0.5491339
6.3	Somewhat Unpoliticized (1<TCA<2)	143	0.08940989	0.5831111
6.4	Average Politicization (0.5<TCA<2)	314	-0.2049101	0.41277712
6.5	Somewhat Politicized (0.5<TCA<1)	171	-0.3638898	0.1766726
6.6	Relatively Politicized (0.33<TCA<0.5)	103	-0.5595923	-0.7742747
6.7	Most Politicized (0<TCA<0.33)	881	-0.00266519	-0.5861698
6.8	All Unpoliticized (TCA>1)	389	0.2585308	0.5319695
6.9	All Politicized (0<TCA<1)	1,155	-0.2342232	-0.4105246
7.1	2014	203	-0.2605669	-0.04776269
7.2	2015	203	-0.06246335	0.1946351
7.3	2016	203	-0.04733663	0.2462453
7.4	2017	203	-0.1438453	0.2618809
7.5	2018	203	0.03085426	0.1723293
7.6	2019	203	0.02256107	0.2123185
7.7	2020	203	-0.02661093	0.009314416
7.8	2021	203	-0.291992	0.01262019
8.1	Non-Aligned Countries (A=0)	1,156	-0.3076813	-0.4218611
8.2	US Allies (A=1)	380	-0.11403	-0.1082229
8.3	Russian Allies (A=2)	72	-0.2939239	0.4994387
8.4	Russian & Chinese Allies (A>1)	88	0.2089034	0.51933986
9.1	Extreme Interest (IC≥100)	103	-0.3085438	0.02830123
9.2	High Interest (50≤I<100)	91	0.001643874	-0.2431787
9.3	Medium Interest (25≤I<50)	208	-0.4942683	-0.2102932
9.4	Low Interest (10≤I<25)	312	-0.4342568	-0.1932176
9.5	Negligible Interest (I<10)	910	-0.104188	-0.1531741
10	Global except China and USA	1,608	-0.19556006	0.01831682
10.1	Global except Ukraine	1,616	0.1566912	0.20009798
0.1	Future Exercises (PMTPS compared to FPQS of previous year)	1,421	-0.06913411	0.09208235

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