ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: ASSESSING MOTIVES FOR RUSSIAN FEDERATION USE AND NON-USE OF FORCE: AN APPROACH TO IMPROVE THE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES

Christopher John Hickey,
Doctor of Philosophy, 2021

Dissertation directed by: Professor Nancy W. Gallagher, School of Public Policy

The purpose of this dissertation is to inform scholarship and improve U.S. policy and strategy to prevent the Russian Federation from using military force against U.S. interests. It does this by exploring and answering the question, what explains the Russian Federation's choices on the use of military force?

The dissertation developed and demonstrated an approach to translating policy debates into sufficiently rigorous sets of competing explanations of strategic behavior for expectations about future behavior under various conditions to be stated and tested. The explanations developed and tested used motives derived from *The Rational Theory of International Politics* by Glaser and *The Logic of Political Survival* by Bueno De Mesquita, Smith, Siverson, and Morrow. Systematic analysis

of competing explanations attempted to find incongruence between the expectations if a motive was a plausible explanation and the behaviors actually observed since 1991.

This dissertation found that the Russian Federation's choices on the use of military force are explainable by the balancing of three motives. These choices have prioritized first the motive of the president's political survival, then Russia's self-protection/security motive, and then Russia's domination/greed motive. This suggests that the Russian Federation calculates risks when making these choices differently than currently assumed. The most important risks influencing these decisions are those related to the future of the Russian president's political winning coalition.

These findings allow the U.S. to take a game theory-informed approach to strategic planning that seeks to prevent the use of military force against U.S. interests at a lower level of costs and risks than the current approach. The United States should develop a strategy to foster three somewhat contradictory calculations simultaneously. The U.S. strategy needs to communicate that the negative consequences of using force would outweigh whatever potential benefit might tempt the domination/greed motive. At the same time, the strategy needs to communicate that if Russia acts with restraint, then Russian self-protection/security motive concerns will be addressed cooperatively. Most importantly, the strategy needs to influence the Russian president's calculations about whether using or not using force against U.S. interests would be better for personal political survival.

ASSESSING MOTIVES FOR RUSSIAN USE AND NON-USE OF FORCE: AN APPROACH TO IMPROVE THE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES

by

Christopher John Hickey

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2021

Advisory Committee:

Professor Nancy W. Gallagher, Chair
Professor Catherine McArdle Kelleher
Professor Paul Huth
Professor Charles Harry
Professor Alec Worsnop
Professor Celestino Perez
Dr. Anya Fink

Dedication

Dedicated with love and gratitude to Kate, Michael, Matthew, and Meredith Hickey.

Acknowledgments

I first want to thank my wife, Kate Hickey, and our children, Michael, Matthew, and Meredith, for their love, support, and understanding during this lengthy project.

I want to thank Nancy Gallagher for many years of mentoring, support and guidance. She selflessly took on these time-consuming burdens. I am profoundly grateful.

I also want to thank the members of the committee for their contributions to inspiring, refining, and completing this project. Thank you to Catherine McArdle Kelleher, Paul Huth, Charles Harry, Alec Worsnop, Celestino Perez, and Anya Fink.

I would like to thank my mother and late father, Alice and John Hickey, my brother, Patrick Hickey, and my sister, Lauren Hickey Cummings, for their love and support.

Thanks to my many friends and colleagues in the University of Maryland, U.S. Army War College, and Carlisle, Pennsylvania communities whose friendship and assistance were invaluable including Doug Winton, Devin Entrikin, Poorti Sapatnekar, Angie Halvorson, Matt Nicastro, Ed Kaplan, Brett Weigle, Francis Park, Ben Runkle, Kristin Behfar, Kevin Carroll, Sam Corvah, Doug Bennett, Allison Abbe, Patrick Bratton, Jeff Wilson, Kevin McCall, Taryn Faulkner, Naoko Aoki, Cynthia Boruchowwicz, Mac Destler, Mike Sigler, Erik Greve, Elizabeth Mata Lorenzo, Siobhan Kerr, Taryn Faulkner, Chris Hossfeld, Al Lord, Mike Lynch, Grace Stettenbauer, Fred Gellert, Francesca Perry, Bob Bradford, Jonas Seigel, Rob Orr, Robert Sprinkle, Nancy Guevara, Felipe Quero, Jonathan Montag, Maria Bruno, Tyra

Hosfelt, Kaden Hurley, Megan Casey, Adam Shilling, Abigail Stonerock, Mary Bell, Edward Eichelberger, Heather Smith, Dianne Evans, Greta Braungard, Melody Carte, G.K. Cunningham, Gen Lester, George Skerritt, Heather Gregg, Jerad Harper, Keith Burkepile, Derek Martin, Leigh Caraher, Michael Marra, Tim Brown, Tom Spahr, Chris Pesile, and Jim Breckenridge.

Thanks also to Charles Glaser and the many scholars on whose work I drew in this project. I have tried to faithfully restate their contributions to knowledge. Care should be taken to refer back to their work before attributing an issue in this dissertation to their theories as in some cases several concepts have been interwoven or used differently than originally intended. Any problems in such a case would be my responsibility and everything I have found suggests that the theories I have cited are effective and efficient in achieving the purposes for which they were originally intended. I would also like to thank Sky, Rebecca, and their team for proofing work done after the defense, with the permission of the Committee Chair, and Kanyinsola Sanusi for assistance with the conduct of the defense.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Important terms

A minimal objective of U.S. strategic planning vis-à-vis Russia is preventing the use of force against U.S. interests. Strategic planning refers to the continuous cyclical process of policy and strategy development, execution, and assessment. Policy is defined as the decisions and guidance provided by national-level leaders for certain desired outcomes, sometimes coupled with specific guidance on broad approaches to reaching these outcomes or guidance on other matters. A complete strategy includes a coherent set of five elements: (1) ends, (2) ways, (3) means, and (4) risks for (5) a defined context.[1] Imbalances between ends, ways, and means are an important but not the only source of risk.

In principle, policy should always dominate strategy. Strategists take the objectives specified by policymakers as well as their guidance on other matters as the ends of strategy and the parameters based on which strategists are to choose or recommend ways and means. In practice, policy and strategy overlap and interact. The distinction between the two and the direction of causality is sometimes unclear to participants in the process and difficult for outsiders to reconstruct later.

The term "use of military force" includes explicitly threatening and employing military forces for coercive or brute force purposes. It also involves the development and

---

1. Derived from Harry R. Yarger, "Toward a Theory of Strategy: Art Lykke and the Army War College Strategy Model," in *The U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010), 45–52, http://publications.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/2088.pdf. and United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Doctrine Note 1-18: Strategy* (Washington, D.C.: The Joint Staff, April 25, 2018), and updated June 3, 2019, https://www.jcs.mil/Doctrine/Joint-Doctrine-Pubs/Joint-Doctrine-Notes/.

management of military forces for coercive purposes. Coercion includes the deterrence and compellence of another party concerning territorial integrity, political sovereignty, independence, population safety, prosperity, and way of life. Coercion can influence the counterparty's choices through threats, painful actions that stay below the level of armed conflict, or limited military operations that promise more death and destruction unless concessions are made to terminate fighting. Brute force refers to the complete military defeat of a counterparty so that the victor can impose any termination conditions they desire, and it exists primarily above the threshold for armed conflict.[2]

Purely economic or diplomatic measures, including sanctions and treaties, are not considered military force. They could be part of a broader policy that does or does not include the use of military force. There is now a grey zone where military power is being used between states in ways that remain below the historical threshold of armed conflict.

Certain types of cyber operations are prominent in the grey area of competition and conflict that does not fit traditional Western ideas of armed conflict. Using cyber exploitation to collect information and intelligence during peacetime would not be regarded as the use of force. However, using them to disrupt information technology-enabled operations would be regarded as the use of force if the physical effects are comparable to those resulting during irregular wars, armed conflicts, military operations

---

2. This draws on the phrasing of the NATO Treaty and a broader definition of security mentioned in footnote 34 on page 35 of Charles L Glaser, Rational Theory of International Politics: The Logic of Competition and Cooperation (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010). Paperback and Kindle. and Tami Davis Biddle, "Coercion Theory: A Basic Introduction for Practitioners," Texas National Security Review 3, no. 2 (Spring 2020): 94–109, http://dx.doi.org/10.26153/tsw/8864.

(e.g., sabotage or assassination), or the use of kinetic force in traditional interstate armed conflicts (e.g., crippling infrastructure).[3]

Let us suppose that the information collected or disseminated by cyber-means is collected or used by military personnel and organizations for information operations aimed at political effects comparable to traditional military force, such as changes in a state's leadership. This, then, creates a practical and theoretical problem. This does not fit traditional or current definitions of the use of force since there is no physical damage or harm. It is, however, considered the use of military power, as the U.S. and Russian military personnel, forces, and capabilities are now engaging each other, intelligence agencies, and criminal groups using these means.[4] There is an urgent and vital requirement for all parties to develop an understanding and establish an appropriate policy on the uses of this form of military power. Significantly useful steps in the direction include works by Charles Harry and Nancy Gallagher, who established a

---

3. Personal communication from Nancy Gallagher, September 2021.

4. See for example Ellen Nakashima, "U.S. Cyber Command Operation Disrupted Internet Access of Russian Troll Factory on Day of 2018 Midterms;" *Washington Post*, February 27, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-cyber-command-operation-disrupted-internet-access-of-russian-troll-factory-on-day-of-2018-midterms/2019/02/26/1827fc9e-36d6-11e9-af5b-b51b7ff322e9_story.html. and Ellen Nakashima, "U.S. Cybercom Contemplates Information Warfare to Counter Russian Interference in 2020 Election," *Washington Post*, December 25, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/us-cybercom-contemplates-information-warfare-to-counter-russian-interference-in-the-2020-election/2019/12/25/21bb246e-20e8-11ea-bed5-880264cc91a9_story.html.

taxonomy,[5] and Erica Borghard and Shawn Lonergan, who developed theories of coercion and deterrence in cyberspace.[6]

Addressing this form of power in the dissertation was a challenge since it was evolving while the dissertation was being prepared and existing theories may not have adequately accounted for such a form of power. The general approach that was adopted was to regard these important behaviors as requiring consideration alongside the uses of military force using a similar theoretical foundation. This resulted in useful observations, but the findings linked to these behaviors have a lesser degree of certainty than those linked to traditional uses of force since all parties may not have understood them in a way that makes the use of existing theories entirely appropriate.

---

5. See Charles Harry and Nancy Gallagher, "Classifying Cyber Events: A Proposed Taxonomy," *Journal of Information Warfare* 17, no. 3 (2018): 17–31, https://www.jinfowar.com/journal/volume-17-issue-3/classifying-cyber-events-proposed-taxonomy.

6. See Erica D. Borghard, and Shawn W. Lonergan, "The Logic of Coercion in Cyberspace," Security Studies 26, no. 3 (2017/07/03 2017): 452–81, https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2017.1306396. and Erica D. Borghard and Shawn W. Lonergan, "Deterrence by Denial in Cyberspace," *Journal of Strategic Studies* (2021): 1–36, https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2021.1944856.

Chapter 1: Overview

What was the motivation for the work in this dissertation?

The dissertation investigates the following research question: What explains the Russian Federation's choices on the use of military force? The United States and Russia are engaged in militarized competition and are preparing for a potential near-term war with possibly existential consequences. This confrontation creates enormous risks and costs for all parties.

Competition and armed conflict are not the stated outcome that U.S. presidents have pursued using a wide variety of policies and strategies since the end of the Cold War. At some point, all have stated a preference for cooperation or, at least, coexistence with the Russian Federation. President George H. W. Bush cooperated with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin to preserve peace and stability during momentous change. President Bill Clinton's administration advanced ideas such as cooperative security and threat reduction. President George W. Bush's administration sought cooperation against terrorism and dismissed formal arms control as unnecessary when the two countries were no longer strategic competitors. President Barack H. Obama's reset with Russia sought to restore the cooperation perceived by the United States to have existed before the 2008 conflict in Georgia. President Donald J. Trump repeatedly expressed a desire for a better relationship and personally used a friendly tone with President Vladimir Putin even as his *National Security Strategy*, strongly influenced by current and former military officers who were noted for their strategic planning savvy, directed the U.S. government to intensify deterrence and prepare for defense against Russian aggression. Considering the

heightened state of tensions, President Joe Biden adopted a balanced tone in his first summit with President Putin, as he sought to communicate his expectations for different Russian behaviors while raising the possibility of a more cooperative future.

No post-Cold War president has expressed intentions that require military force against Russia other than to prevent or reverse the Russian Federation's uses of military force against U.S. interests. Although the Trump administration framed its security strategies in terms of great power competition with Russia and China, it stated that the need for increased U.S. military capabilities and more assertive military operations was a response to Russian and Chinese actions. So, permanent competition and potential war are not desirable from a U.S. standpoint, and probably not from a Russian standpoint either.

This policy problem, which is urgent, important, interesting, and directly related to the researcher's areas of competence, drove both the need for and the approach adopted in the dissertation. None of the conventional explanations for the deterioration of U.S.–Russia security relations since the mid-1990s adequately and consistently explain the Russian Federation's sequence of decisions about when and how to make threats and employ military force or show restraint. Each is consistent with some of the empirical evidence, but none can account for the following three puzzles.

Puzzle 1: Why does the Russian Federation repeatedly provoke others into taking actions that Russian leaders claim to fear, which previously seemed unlikely to occur from a U.S. perspective?

Puzzle 2: Why does the Russian Federation accept the significant risks and costs of violating the perceived norm against the use of military force between Euro-Atlantic

states but then settle for accepting a limited victory when a more decisive outcome appears militarily achievable?

Puzzle 3: Why have the Russian Federation's uses of interstate force not been prevented or reversed by U.S. and Western strategies?

The researcher posits that the persistence of these puzzles is significantly explained by two factors that will continue to contribute to the intensification of policy problems for the United States unless action is taken. The first is that U.S. strategic plans are based on an inadequate understanding of Russia's military motives. The second is that even with a better understanding, the linear logic within processes currently used to conduct U.S. strategic planning toward Russia and other major powers are inadequate to guide effective and efficient interactions with adaptive counterparts. These two issues significantly worsen the likelihood that U.S. strategic planning will fail to anticipate Russian actions and reactions and that U.S. efforts to influence Russian behavior will not have the desired effects.

The approach adopted in this dissertation was inspired by the researcher's reflections on practical strategic planning experience and scholarly work as a student and an instructor. The researcher's practical work as a strategist for the U.S. Army included leading the development of U.S. military options to respond to armed conflict between Russia and Georgia in 2008, leading U.S. military planning at the United States European Command (USEUCOM) in relation to deterring and defending against a Russian Federation attack on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) until 2010, and later, leading a related NATO exercise scenario development team. The researcher's scholarly work involved professional military education programs related to strategic

studies, culminating in studies at the NATO Defence College in Rome and the United States Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. This was complemented by civilian studies related to political science, international relations, and policy studies at Johns Hopkins University, Harvard Kennedy School, and the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy. The researcher taught relevant courses as an Assistant Professor at the United States Military Academy at West Point and is currently the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Professor of Military Studies Chair at the United States Army War College.

Insights acquired from these experiences generated three intuitions that motivate this dissertation. The first was that U.S. strategic planning processes could be improved to better reflect the complexity of the strategic environment and the interaction of collective actors. The second was a more specific intuition that the Russian Federation and the United States have a worse relationship than what the interests of both powers suggest is desirable. This might be a result of failures of understanding. The third was that many ideas within the researcher's fields could complement each other and better explain problems if they are used together.

This chapter sets up the dissertation by doing a number of things. It begins with an overview of current thinking in scholarly research and strategic documents about determinants of Russian decision-making on the use of force. It also contains a discussion of the reasons why the single-factor explanations prevalent in the debate and the largely linear logic of strategic planning processes may contribute to misperceptions and miscalculations, counter-productive spirals, and other problems in U.S.–Russian security relations. Next, it previews the methodology used in this dissertation to answer

the research question. The methodology is described sequentially, but the process involved the interaction and refinement of the steps during the dissertation work. The methodology and the dissertation itself can be thought of as having two phases. In Phase One, a method was developed and applied to synthesize testable explanations from a policy debate into a form useful for strategic planning that adopts a game theory-informed approach rather than simply attempting to directly apply power against a counterparty until they submit. In Phase Two, the explanations for Russian behaviors that were found to be most useful in Phase One were evaluated, findings were obtained, and implications were outlined. The last part of this chapter lays out the core argument and certain key findings, including implications for policy and strategic planning.

Academics, policymakers, and strategists pay great attention to those occasions in the past where another party used force. They tend to focus on the circumstances related to the initiation of force when making judgments about how that party will act in the future and while explaining past actions. Less commonly considered is valuable evidence that could be gleaned from examining situations where a state did not use force because it either did not see force as an appropriate option or chose to exercise restraint despite military force being an appropriate option. Likewise, states often make their own choices about the use of force without fully considering or correctly understanding how other parties, including those outside the region where military force is used, will interpret a particular use of force as evidence of their motives.

U.S. national security and military planning have traditionally used a strategic planning process that is overly top-down and linear. The term linear in this sense is used to mean that the default concept is the direct application of power to force counterparties

to comply with U.S. interests. There is also a tendency to make inappropriately simplistic assumptions about causation. As a result, initial faulty assumptions about other actors can lead to recurrent strategic surprises and counterproductive U.S. responses with limited ways for planners to refine and update their analysis. If U.S. assumptions about the motives of the Russian Federation that are deeply embedded in strategic planning are wrong, U.S. strategy may be directing actions that communicate an unintended message to Russia. It may also generate effects on Russian behavior that may be irrelevant or counterproductive to achieving the outcomes desired by U.S. policymakers. If, on the other hand, U.S. assumptions about Russian Federation motives are correct, Russia has a pattern of making substantial mistakes in its uses of force. These faults would primarily include Russia failing to fully exploit opportunities once force has been used and lacking the patience to await developments that would have given it greater relative power. This pattern, if accurate, could create opportunities for the United States.

Recent U.S. policy and strategy regarding Russia are the products of an increasingly sophisticated strategy enterprise. That enterprise has limitations that reinforce assumptions about Russia being aggressive and risk-taking even when the reality is more complex. One well-known problem is that the strategy-development process remains overly linear, defaulting to the direct application or power to a counterparty and making overly simple assumptions about causation for a complex non-linear problem. Additionally, the U.S. strategic planning system has separate intelligence and planning institutions and processes. There is only a limited and erratically practiced ability to make integrated assessments about the interactions of multiple parties acting strategically or project the interactions' primary and secondary effects into the future.

The process often relies on surprisingly simple and potentially untested assumptions regarding crucial factors, many of which are unstated. For example, neither motives nor predictions about what actions a state is expected to take under various conditions given those motives are addressed in current military planning doctrine. Objectives, intentions, and capabilities are intermingled in a way that does more to conceal the lack of prediction about policy and strategy interactions than it does to explain why actors make certain choices under certain conditions.

The publicly available U.S. strategy analyzed in the dissertation is based on explicit, implied, and unstated assumptions that Russia is aggressive and risk-taking. These assumptions suggest that the best way for the United States to deter attacks is to impose high costs on Russia for past uses of force, increase the capability to defeat future Russian uses of force, and make shows of resolve to make deterrent threats more credible.[7] Meanwhile, the current publicly available Russian strategy is based on a similar assumption that the United States and others have taken deliberate measures in the last decades to harm the Russian Federation and continue to pose a deliberate threat to Russia. Russian strategic planning appears to assume that Russia must continue or increase the behaviors that U.S. strategic planning is designed to halt, as Russia believes that doing so deters the United States from engineering a Russian color revolution.[8]

---

7. See for example Donald Trump, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America (*Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2017), https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/.../2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf.

8. See for example Vladimir Putin, *Russian Federation National Security Strategy* (Moscow: Kremlin Website, December 31, 2015), https://russiamatters.org/node/21421.

Given that there are significant differences of interests, values, and identities, which would be problematic even with a better relationship as a starting point, it is unsurprising that the relationship has been on a trajectory toward greater competition and conflict. The existing pattern of increasingly competitive strategic interactions could escalate into open war. Neither state currently has an overarching strategy nor a set of policies that offers a likely potential path to a peaceful resolution of the problem. It is well past time for both sides to expand their policy and strategy debate to include potential measures for halting and potentially reducing all parties' growing costs and risks.

What are the current understandings and the problems they cause?

Explanations for Russian decisions regarding the use of force are often contextualized within international relations theories, the perspectives of other scholarly fields of inquiry, or a policymaker's bureaucratic position and political alignment. Such explanations are influenced by witting or unwitting tendencies to explain everything through the lens of the theory, field, political party, or profession that the author is associated with. This is highly unsatisfactory from a policy studies standpoint since it leads to unstated bias in strategic assumptions. Both policy and scholarship tend to place these issues within a dyadic relationship rather than address the interaction problems created by complex adaptive systems with many rational actors. For policy studies, a better approach is to use multiple lenses or models to understand a complex reality. This dissertation is, in part, an experiment in methodologies that might better inform policy while benefiting from scholarly knowledge and academic standards of rigor.

The scholarly literature includes a wide variety of explanations for Russian behavior, each of which suggests very different strategic prescriptions. Some of them focus on international relations. For example, the realist John Mearsheimer has argued that Russian behavior is a predictable reaction to NATO and European Union (EU) expansion.[9] Liberal internationalist John Ikenberry has attributed Russian behavior to a desire to contest the U.S.-dominated world order.[10] Constructivist Iver Neumann has argued that the cause is related to Russians adopting a negative identity toward Europe.[11]

Others emphasize factors specific to Russia. For example, critical theorist Agnia Grigas asserted, "Russia's structural and historical predilections have played the key role in its quest for reimperialization, while Putin's leadership and related domestic factors have been strongly contributing rather than central factors."[12] Journalist Peter Pomerantsev argued that Russian uses of military force are part of a domestic political strategy that justifies the continuation of authoritarian government by exaggerating security threats. He described how "the Kremlin has finally mastered the art of fusing reality TV and authoritarianism to keep the great, 140-million-strong population

---

9. John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (September–October 2014): 77–89, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-08-18/why-ukraine-crisis-west-s-fault.

10. G. John Ikenberry, "The Future of Liberal World Order," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 16, no. 03 (September 2015): 450–455, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1468109915000122.

11. Iver B. Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2017).

12. Agnia Grigas, *Beyond Crimea: The New Russian Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 16.

entertained, distracted, constantly exposed to geopolitical nightmares."[13] In *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin,* Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy argued that President Putin generally acts in what he sees as the best interests of Russia and the Russian people.[14] In "The Next Mr. Putin? The Question of Succession," Hill argued that Russian behavior is decided by a "hyperpersonalized presidency supported by informal elite networks."[15]

Each of these scholarly sources offers valuable insights. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that any single theory provides a complete explanation of Russian decision-making since none of the major theories adequately addresses the three puzzling problems or explains why Russia chose not to use force in certain cases and then did use force in another similar instance. Many theories in the policy debate suffer from the common problem of trying to explain complex causation with a single or small number of variables driving a linear process of causation. This approach is useful for purposes of scholarly theorizing but is much less appropriate for policymaking. Unfortunately, many practitioners fail to note important distinctions in some of the most important theories. They make mistakes such as attempting to formulate foreign policy using theory intended to offer a general theory of the international system but not to drive a specific state's strategic planning when much more information is available than what the parsimonious theories of international relations employ.

---

13. Peter Pomerantsev, *Nothing Is True and Everything Is Possible: Adventures in Modern Russia* (London: Faber and Faber, 2017), 272–273.

14. Fiona Hill and Clifford G. Gaddy, *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremli*n (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2015).

15. Fiona Hill, "The Next Mr. Putin? The Question of Succession," *Daedalus* 146, no. 2 (Spring 2017): 41, https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_a_00433.

Both the United States and the Russian Federation also provide or hint at explanations about their reasons behind using or not using force through publicly available documents and statements by their leaders. From 2014 through 2020, both Russia and the United States' strategic documents and their political and military leaders' statements typically explained their own military preparations and actions by attributing aggressive and malign intentions to the other and highlighting a preponderance of defensive and benign intentions on their own part. However, this has not always been true. Both states generally had positive assumptions about the other and the relationship's future in the early and mid-1990s. After 1996, assumptions began to diverge. The United States deemphasized the importance of Russia in its policy. It assumed that Russia was neither an imminent threat nor a power whose concurrence was required on major international security decisions, including the U.S.-led military operations in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the Americas. Russia failed to realize that U.S. policy was no longer primarily about its relationship with Moscow and increasingly expressed opposition to U.S.-led military actions as it gradually shifted to a more malign interpretation of U.S. motives. The United States reconsidered the relationship with Russia when it was involved in a conflict in Georgia in 2008, and Russian military exercises and rhetoric in Europe took on a warlike tone. After the events in Crimea in 2014, both the United States and Russia made emphasizing the malign motives of the other a central part of their diplomatic and military strategies. The Obama administration simultaneously emphasized a more negative assessment of Russian intentions, its willingness to impose enduring costs on Russia for aggressive actions, and its desire to disengage militarily from Europe and shift the focus of U.S.

policy towards China in the Pacific. The Trump administration simultaneously sought to posture the United States for great power competition with Russia and China while disrupting long-standing Alliances and partnerships and sending conflicting signals about U.S. policy.

The official position of both states is that the other is a malign actor who could attack without provocation. Russian Federation strategists fear that the United States and NATO might promote a color revolution in Russia and then decapitate the Russian state with a precision air and special operations campaign.[16] U.S. strategists fear that Russia might defeat the U.S. and NATO through an emerging strategy of creating political and social disruptions that increase vulnerability to a rapid and short surprise attack.[17]

Background on current U.S. strategic planning

Policymakers and strategic planners are often trained and suitable as generic problem-solvers. Instead of planning for only a narrow set of problems involving a single or small number of counterparties, they move among many problems, limiting how deeply they can understand problems and counterparties. These problem-solvers depend on many sources of information, including intelligence, but they usually operate with

---

16. Valery Gerasimov, "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying out Combat Operations," *Military Review* 96, no. 1 (January–February 2016): 23–29, Original Source: *Military Industrial Kurier*, 27 February 2013, trans. Robert Coalson, https://www.armyupress.army.mil/portals/7/military-review/archives/english/militaryreview_20160228_art008.pdf.

17. Douglas V. Mastriano and Derek O'Malley, *Project 1704: A U.S. Army War College Analysis of Russian Strategy in Eastern Europe, an Appropriate U.S. Response, and the Implications for U.S. Landpower* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2015), https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1274.

limited information, limited depth of expertise about the counterparty, and limited time. The system also creates a bias for strategic planning to recommend rapid and decisive action that may not be feasible and to display optimism about results that the facts may not justify. U.S. policymakers are accountable to voters on a timescale that does not necessarily correlate to the pace of what can feasibly be achieved internationally within a given period. Professional military, diplomatic, and intelligence leaders are time-constrained by performance evaluation and duty position cycles. These cycles may be shorter than the length of time required for understanding and creating strategic effects in the international system.

U.S. strategic planning processes interact with U.S. intelligence processes, but the two are distinct. The Intelligence Community (IC) is not intended to evaluate U.S. strategic planning or recommend policy. It is reasonably effective at considering possible counterparty options and courses of action. The IC has a significant capability aimed at illuminating counterparty plans and intentions. The researcher assess that a gap exists between strategic planning and intelligence processes where the United States needs a capability to evaluate how different sets of U.S. and counterparty (in this case Russia) strategies might interact over the long-term and result in a number of potential outcomes. This would require highly specialized regional and methodological knowledge and would have to draw on scholars, strategists, and intelligence professionals. This would allow a more sophisticated approach to policy and strategy that might reduce risks and costs and improve the outcome.

The president's *National Security Strategy (NSS)* is the capstone public document of the U.S. strategic planning process. In practice, the most important institutions

represented in the strategic planning process driven by the *NSS* align with defense, diplomacy, and development functions. Although they lead separate organizations, the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) publish a common *Joint Strategic Plan* (*JSP*). Additional strategic planning occurs at the regional level and at the level of individual countries and institutions to which a U.S. Embassy or similar organization is accredited. The Secretary of Defense creates the *National Defense Strategy* (*NDS*) and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) creates the *National Military Strategy* (*NMS*). Geographic and functional combatant commanders (CCDRs), joint force commanders (JFCs), and service chiefs are responsible for specific strategies and plans within the military. The commander of USEUCOM has coordinating authority for U.S. military strategies and plans related to the Russian Federation under the global integration role of the CJCS. The Commander of USEUCOM is also the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) for NATO.[18]

The Trump administration's December 2017 *NSS* made the following judgment about Russia: "China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity. They are determined to make economies less free and less fair, to grow their militaries, and to control information and data to repress their societies and expand their influence."[19]

---

18. United States Army War College, *Military Strategy and Campaigning Course Material*, (Carlisle Barracks: Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations, 2020).

19. Trump, *National Security Strategy,* 2.

In subsequent pages, the *NSS* seemed to assume that Russia and China exist to oppose U.S. interests:

> China and Russia want to shape a world antithetical to U.S. values and interests. … Russia seeks to restore its great power status and establish spheres of influence near its borders. The intentions of both nations are not necessarily fixed. … Russia aims to weaken U.S. influence in the world and divide us from our allies and partners. Russia views the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union (EU) as threats. Russia is investing in new military capabilities, including nuclear systems that remain the most significant existential threat to the United States, and in destabilizing cyber capabilities. Through modernized forms of subversive tactics, Russia interferes in the domestic political affairs of countries around the world. The combination of Russian ambition and growing military capabilities creates an unstable frontier in Eurasia, where the risk of conflict due to Russian miscalculation is growing.[20]

This confrontation creates enormous risks and costs for all parties while offering little or no benefit to the United States compared to a situation where the Russian Federation was not seen to pose a threat. The nuclear forces of Russia, the United States, France, and the United Kingdom and weapons made available to NATO forces can start a global extinction event within minutes. Military forces operating in close proximity are exposed to the risk of misadventure and miscalculation that could lead to crises, and the crisis management systems developed during the Cold War have atrophied. The United States, Russia, China, and other great powers are racing to field militarized versions of new technologies. These technologies include hypersonic weapons, remotely piloted vehicles, robotics, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and information/cyberspace

---

20. Trump, *National Security Strategy*, 25–26. This citation is for a block quote. Should the block quote formatting be lost the quote begins with "China and Russia…" and ends with "…miscalculation is growing."

capabilities. The impact on strategic stability and the political and military consequences are likely to be significant but are not yet fully understood.

The *NSS* did not address the possibility of misperception. It accepted the inevitability of enduring competition and the necessity to alter the U.S. government's structure and behavior in response to Russia and China:

> The United States must prepare for this type of competition. China, Russia, and other state and non-state actors recognize that the United States often views the world in binary terms, with states being either "at peace" or "at war," when it is actually an arena of continuous competition. Our adversaries will not fight us on our terms. We will raise our competitive game to meet that challenge, to protect American interests, and to advance our values. Our diplomatic, intelligence, military, and economic agencies have not kept pace with the changes in the character of competition. America's military must be prepared to operate across a full spectrum of conflict, across multiple domains at once. To meet these challenges we must also upgrade our political and economic instruments to operate across these environments.[21]

The *NSS* listed four vital U.S. interests: "protect the American people, the homeland, and the American way of life," "promote American prosperity," "preserve peace through strength," and "advance American influence."[22] While they were phrased in a somewhat unilateral and strident tone, they are not, in practice, a huge departure from the interests seen in the comparable documents of earlier administrations. The bureaucracy generally attempted to implement this guidance in a more traditional multilateral way and developed a host of supporting interests.

---

21. Trump, *National Security Strategy*, 28. This citation is for a block quote. Should the block quote formatting be lost the quote begins with "The United States…" and ends with "…these environments."

22. Trump, *National Security Strategy*, 3–4.

Background on Russian Federation's strategic planning

Russia's strategic concepts increasingly emphasize the rapidly evolving character of war, which has increasingly blended what were once more distinct spheres of politics and warfighting. Simultaneously, Russian Federation military capabilities and doctrine have improved and changed in response to the spread of innovative technologies and lessons drawn from Western and Russian military operations. In a landmark 2013 speech, Russian General Valery Gerasimov argued that Western actions made clear that the "new change in the character of war"[23] involved "the use of political, diplomatic, economic, and other nonmilitary measures in combination with the use of military forces."[24]

General Gerasimov called on Russian strategists to develop Russian means to counter the potential use of this new type of conflict by the United States against Russia.[25] The Russian Federation's military can now conduct cyber, information, and influence operations that serve purposes traditionally associated with conflict without crossing the traditional threshold of armed conflict and the use of physical violence. These purposes include seeking to coerce a change in the policy, territory, or population of a counterparty state and to prevent a counterparty from doing the same to Russia. By blending traditional military means with new technologies and concepts and employing capabilities in ways that Western nations are reluctant to employ, Russia has reduced the relative military advantage of the United States. Some of these are not uses of military

---

23. Valery Gerasimov, "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight," 25.
24. Gerasimov, "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight," 25.
25. Gerasimov, "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight," 25–29.

force as the term was understood when the dissertation work began, but they are an important use of military power that needs to be better understood and must be accounted for in the dissertation. The dissertation addressed them to the extent possible using the available general theories, but the results of the analysis of these behaviors should be considered to have an additional degree of uncertainty due to the immature theoretical and practical understanding of whether and how this use of military power alters traditional beliefs about conflict.

The British scholar Andrew Monaghan provided several important insights into the Russian Federation's strategic planning process. The first was that Russia has a publicly visible strategic planning process, which reveals its strategic thinking principles. According to Monaghan, "a structured process, with the Security Council at its heart, has taken shape from the mid-2000s, albeit slowly and with difficulty, resulting in the overhaul of Moscow's strategic planning."[26] The second is that Moscow has struggled with executing its strategy and has been focusing considerable effort on improving the capabilities and processes needed to execute policy decisions.[27]

---

26. Andrew Monaghan, *Power in Modern Russia: Strategy and Mobilisation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 85.

27. Monaghan, *Power in Modern Russia*, 86.

The third is the following:

> [Russian] assumptions that influence strategic thinking and planning ... reflect concerns about a range of threats, real and perceived, including color revolution and international terrorism and increasing competition between major states over resources and influence that is believed to be likely to continue, even accelerate into the 2020s—perhaps resulting in a major war.[28]

His most important overall argument was built on a distinction between what Russia wants and how it behaves:

> Russian grand strategy is defensive and likely to remain so for the immediate future – the primary goal is the protection and defence of Russian sovereignty, independence and territory, making Russia a modernised hub in Eurasia ready to cope with the challenges and demands of the next decades of the twenty-first century. Defensive does not mean passive, though, and senior Russian officials have already indicated that the line between defensive and offensive (but not, in their view, aggressive) operations are blurring, just as the line between war and peace is blurred. Gerasimov has stated, for example, that during a defensive operation, in some directions, "preventive, active, offensive actions are planned for," as has been learned from Russia's experience in Syria.[29]

---

28. Monaghan, *Power in Modern Russia*, 86–87. This citation is for a block quote. Should the block quote formatting be lost the quote begins with "[Russian] assumptions…" and ends with "…a major war"

29. Monaghan, *Power in Modern Russia*, Kindle Location 89–90. This citation is for a block quote. Should the block quote formatting be lost the quote begins with "Russian grand strategy…" and ends with "…in Syria."

According to Nancy Gallagher, Director of the Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM), a critical distinction between U.S. and Russian strategic logic is that many leaders in Moscow have:

> thought about strategic stability more in political than in technical terms. During détente, Soviet leaders placed great value on US acknowledgment that mutual nuclear vulnerability created a condition of political parity in which the superpowers had a shared responsibility for preventing nuclear war by exercising restraint in their bilateral military relations and accommodating each other's interests elsewhere.[30]

Gallagher's view that certain agreements' political symbolism had a value greater than their technical value may explain, partially or wholly, some aspects of Russian behavior that have long puzzled and distressed Western observers. "The Soviets saw the ABM treaty as evidence that the United States accepted, and would not try to change, mutual vulnerability and political parity."[31] On the other hand, "they opposed the Strategic Defense Initiative, not because they believed that it could neutralize their nuclear deterrent any time soon, but because they saw it as proof that unilateralists had wrested control of US foreign policy away from pragmatists who accepted the need for restraint and accommodation vis-à-vis Moscow."[32]

---

30. Nancy W. Gallagher, "Re-Thinking the Unthinkable: Arms Control in the Twenty-First Century," *The Nonproliferation Review* 22, no. 3–4 (2015): 481, https://doi.org/10.1080/10736700.2016.1149279. This citation is for a block quote. Should the block quote formatting be lost the quote begins with "thought about…" and ends with "…interests elsewhere."

31. Gallagher, "Re-Thinking the Unthinkable," 482.

32. Gallagher, "Re-Thinking the Unthinkable," 482.

Timothy Thomas is a retired U.S. Army officer whose research focuses on Russian security forces' logic and thought patterns. He explained how Russia's military and political logic are crafted according to Russia's unique doctrine

> One issue to consider would be the importance of the IPW [Initial Period of War] and the COFM [Correlation of Forces and Methods] and their mutual influence. That is, what strategic advantages are uncovered in the COFM assessment and how might they indicate when to initiate the IPW. The COFM may offer inherent recommendations as to the time, place, form, and method for the commencement of the IPW.[33]

He described the following:

> [I]n Crimea, for example, Russia may have performed risk analysis and ... surmised that the potential for US involvement was minimal. A COFM military-economic, military-technical, and military-strategic assessment may have indicated that the US force is tired, basically withdrawn and out of area, and not able to gather much budgetary support.[34]

Finally, understanding the concept of reflexive control is also important for the correct interpretation of Russian reasoning. Based on a thorough understanding of a counterparty, Russia will take an action that makes sense primarily in that it will likely lead to the opponent taking some action that Russia desires them to take. According to Thomas, "It seems that RC [Reflexive Control] appears everywhere in Russia. It has a role to play as part of negotiations, long- and short-term strategies, analogies, doctrines,

---

33. Timothy Thomas, *Kremlin Kontrol: Russia's Political-Military Reality* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: United States Army Foreign Military Studies Office, 2017), 145, https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo106695. This citation is for a block quote. Should the block quote formatting be lost the quote begins with "One issue…" and ends with "…the IPW."

34. Thomas, *Kremlin Kontrol*, 145. This citation is for a block quote. Should the block quote formatting be lost the quote begins with "[I]n Crimea…" and ends with "…budgetary support."

tactics, and high-tech systems, among other areas."[35] Tony Selhorst, a Dutch Army Officer, commented that

> Russia wants to let the reflexive control system take its second and third-order effects to annex areas. The culminating psychological effects of the reflexive control approach, like disorientation, suggestion and concealment need to overcome the provocation. At the end, it will cause exhaustion, paralysis and a perception of despair among the political and military leadership.[36]

What methods were used in the dissertation?

The dissertation evaluated the explanatory power of assumptions about Russian motives that correspond to stated and unstated assumptions underlying current U.S. strategy and several competing views that are influential in policy debates and academic analyses. The overall methodological approach was intended to explore the complementary use of theories and concepts associated with strategic studies, policy studies, political science, and international relations. The research process was divided into two main phases that were intended to allow the development of an answer to the research question and explore potential methodological improvements.

Phase One of the dissertation had two key objectives that were intended to support the larger purposes of the dissertation. The first objective was to develop an approach to synthesizing explanations of strategic behaviors in a form that could help inform U.S. strategic planning and allow multiple explanations to be tested through

---

35. Thomas, *Kremlin Kontrol*, 196–198.

36. Tony Selhorst, "Russia's Perception Warfare: The Development of Gerasimov's Doctrine in Estonia and Georgia and Its Application in Ukraine," *Militaire Spectator: Tijdschrift Voor Het Nederlandsche Leger* 185, no. 4 (2016): 164, http://www.militairespectator.nl/sites/default/files/uitgaven/inhoudsopgave/Militaire%20Spectator%204-2016%20Selhorst.pdf. This citation is for a block quote. Should the block quote formatting be lost the quote begins with "Russia wants…" and ends with "…military leadership."

rigorous scholarly methods using publicly observable information. The second objective was to apply and improve the method using arguments related to why the Russian Federation uses military force. There were eight major steps in Phase One, which are fully described in Chapter 2 and summarized below.

Step 1 involved conducting a comprehensive literature review of the policy debate and other relevant arguments. Step 2 involved creating a sample of credible sources that represented the major explanations and relevant arguments. Step 3 involved clustering the 120 sources in the sample into groups based on ways of looking at the arguments made and evidence offered by the sources. Each group shared a central implication for U.S. strategic planning linked to an existing theory. A complete set of sources organized into groups was termed an "explanation set." Step 4 involved developing a narrative or graphic that captured the strategic logic of the individual explanations and the common logic of the explanation set. Step 5 involved iterating Steps 3 and 4 until no further improved explanation set could be designed. Step 6 involved selecting the best explanation set for evaluation in Phase Two. Step 7 involved conducting a more intensive literature review of the general theories and scholarly methods selected for the evaluation of the set of causal theories to refine and finalize the evaluation method. Step 8 involved establishing a common set of variables and expectations about which different conditions of the relevant variables would increase or decrease the likelihood of military force being used or otherwise influence the decision.

During Phase One, the seven major iterations gradually evolved from a framework based on three broad international relations theories to a framework based on three different Russian motives within a strategic rational choice approach. The

explanation set selected as the most credible and useful included four motive-based explanations. The first assumed a domination motive. The second assumed a self-protection motive. The third assumed a mix of domination and self-protection motives. The fourth assumed that the Russian Federation president's domestic political survival motive is the primary driver of Russian decisions about using force. This explanation set of four motive-based explanations was chosen as the most useful and parsimonious way to compare and contrast the many divergent arguments within the debate in way that was useful for strategic planning.

The synthesis process was inspired by design thinking methods that recently began to influence U.S. strategic planning. Design thinking uses abductive reasoning to iteratively frame and reframe an increasingly better understanding of the environment, a problem or problems, and potential approaches to addressing the problem or problems. Abductive reasoning infers the best explanation for a phenomenon but cannot dispel uncertainty completely, including the possibility that other explanations might be valid.[37]

Linking explanations drawn from policy debates and strategic guidance documents to well-known academic theories allows a causal theory regarding a state's strategic behavior to be specified precisely and rigorously. This allowed the expectations derived from established theories to be tested against observable events using commonly available public information. The consideration of both international and domestic political motives was especially appropriate because the Russian Federation's

---

37. United States Army War College, *Military Strategy and Campaigning Course Material*, (Carlisle Barracks: Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations, 2018).

decision-making regarding force is relatively centralized around the Russian Federation's president. Charles Glaser's *Rational Theory of International Politics (RTIP)* was chosen as the academic theory with strategic logic that best matched the three externally oriented explanations. *The Logic of Political Survival,* authored by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al. was selected as the best theoretical fit for the internally motivated explanation. The underlying logic of the theories was sufficiently similar that, when appropriate, all of their variables could be considered in context to make judgments about the incongruence between motives and the decisions made given the conditions of the variables.

Phase Two of the dissertation evaluated these four causal explanations against a comprehensive dataset of issues and interactions related to Russian choices of competitive/assertive or cooperative/restrained behavior related to the use of force. Phase Two of the dissertation had several objectives supporting the larger purposes of the dissertation. The first objective was to evaluate the explanations using a foundation of existing credible theories and methods. The second objective was to bring these theories and methods together to look at the most comprehensive set of behaviors possible. Among other reasons for doing this was an interest in observing periods and instances of restraint or disinterest in the use of force as well as the more commonly studied instances where force was used. Phase Two contained six steps that were built on the eight already completed. They are fully described in Chapter 3 and summarized below.

Step 9 involved establishing a comprehensive list of potential counterparties relevant to the strategic behavior being explained. The list included dozens of states and organizations spanning the globe, too many for each to be treated as an individual subcase. This list helped guide Step 10, which involved creating a chronology of the

sequence of relevant observable strategic behaviors and conditions. Once this was done, the entire history of the Russian Federation was divided into three manageable periods. These periods were 25 December 1991 through 7 May 2000, 8 May 2000 through 7 May 2012, and 8 May 2012 through 30 September 2020. These dates were chosen as relatively neutral. The transition point between cases was always a presidential inauguration of the Russian Federation.

In Step 11, the set of observable strategic behaviors was organized into a manageable number of logically related subcases within each of the three periods. Subcases were organized around geographically related counterparties or critical topics. Counterparties that were, in theory, potential targets for the use of force due to geography and the operational reach of Russian military capabilities but not of much evidentiary value in actual practice were either included as a component of a larger subcase or not explicitly written out in a subcase.

Step 12 involved evaluating all sets of observable strategic behaviors against a common set of six structured, focused comparison questions to determine if there were instances of incongruent strategic behaviors given the expectations and scoping conditions, which would have led to the rejection or reduction of confidence in a causal theory. Step 13 involved evaluating each motive's predictive and explanatory power and producing other observations and findings. Step 14 involved obtaining overall findings and deriving implications for scholarship and policy.

Since the method followed in Part One had established credible sources making arguments supporting each motive with examples, the purpose of the structured, focused comparison of the subcases in the three periods was to look for incongruence between

expected and actual strategic behaviors. If significant incongruent choices could be demonstrated, a motive could be rejected or confidence in it could be reduced. It should be noted that if an explanation supported by credible sources with examples cannot be shown incongruent with at least some past events, strategic planning should address the possibility that the associated motives will retain some degree of influence on Russian Federation decisions under similar conditions now and in the future.

Data relating to four areas were required for the analysis: (1) Russian Federation domestic conditions, events, and behaviors, (2) military operations and exercises, (3) military posture, capabilities, strategy, and doctrine, and (4) international events and agreements. The essential source of data to meet this requirement was the yearly editions of the *Military Balance.* The highly detailed *Military Balance* provided a consistent set of data that recorded the publicly observable facts in the context of the time rather than in hindsight. The data included detailed information on military power and the strategic environment. It provided evidence related to power, including a list of each nation's military forces. It also provided evidence related to information on behaviors and expectations that included a description of the year's political, military, and economic news. Additional sources of data are described in Chapter 3.

In the historical analysis, the researcher compared expectations about what Russian decision-makers would do if they were driven by each type of motive with what actually happened in order to see whether the observed outcome was more or less consistent with the theoretical expectations. This approach did not involve making unprovable judgments on what the Russian Federation president was thinking about when making a decision, nor did it require impractical access to secret insider information. All

that was needed was to compare expectations for what actions were incongruent with a motive being true given certain conditions in the environment and what behavior was observed under the observable conditions.

Why was this approach to the dissertation work appropriate?

This dissertation addresses the possibility that the three puzzles exist due to inadequate understanding of how the Russian Federation views its environment, problems, and options for addressing problems. There are real and serious differences in values, interests, and identity between the Russian Federation and the United States that would lead to problems in any case. These problems are increased by both parties' failure to understand how their actions are perceived and how the other side perceives itself. As a result, opportunities to capitalize on shared interests have failed to reach their full potential over the last three decades, and previously unthinkable escalations in the post-Cold War competition have occurred.

Truly understanding strategic behavior in a way that facilitates strategic planning that can effectively anticipate and shape future behaviors requires knowledge of how the counterparty tends to perceive its environment, defines its problems, calculates its approach to addressing those problems, and thinks about risk. The United States and Russian Federation's strategic planning, as discussed in Chapter 2, begins with considering one's own interests and then looking outward. Perhaps reflecting a bias borne of great power and the status of a superpower, other parties are treated almost as part of the environment or a problem to be solved rather than as a thinking and adaptive equal party. Surprisingly, little attention is dedicated to considering what may happen when thinking actors interact in a complex international environment.

It appears likely from the evidence presented in the dissertation that neither party has an adequate understanding of how the other views its environment, security problems, and options for addressing problems. The two sides begin with incorrect assumptions about how the other views affairs and how their actions are interpreted. Each party then follows a mostly linear logic that it believes will lead to the desired outcome. In reality, what happens is that actions are misdirected, their meaning is misunderstood, and the interaction of strategic behaviors leads to unexpected and undesired outcomes.

The case study suggested that U.S. strategic planning was not focused on Russia after 1996. Instead, the United States was advancing its interests around the world and making the most of a period of unilateral dominance. Simultaneously, Russia interpreted these U.S. actions as ultimately being aimed against Russia and failed to realize that Moscow was no longer at the center of U.S. strategic thinking. Coupled with the fact that U.S. actions did have unintended negative consequences for Russia along with an overestimation of both the U.S.' ability to pursue a long-term strategic vision and its covert capabilities, this contributed to the interpretation of U.S. strategy made by General Gerasimov in his famous 2013 speech. Russia developed new methods of conflict that sought to change the policy of other states with the use of military force below the level of armed conflict. The United States has responded with an expansion of its capabilities for armed conflict and a strategy of accepting a blurring of the lines between war and peace. None of this should be interpreted as a moral judgment or the attribution of blame. It is simply an evaluation of a long and complex process for which the dissertation offers evidence. This evaluation is, in fact, somewhat positive news for the

United States, as it suggests that modifications to the existing policy can decrease the likelihood that Russia will choose to use force against U.S. interests.

The method used in this dissertation was intended to show that with expert advice, a team of generalist strategic planners could develop and test hypotheses about how other parties make decisions about strategic behaviors. This would allow improvements in the downstream steps of the design, planning, execution, and assessment cycle. Such a method must make it feasible for a small group to generate comprehensive answers under time-constrained conditions measured in weeks and months rather than the years spent on the dissertation. A multidisciplinary approach has the potential to bridge barriers that limit the academic and policy usefulness of current explanations. Adopting such a method would not solve the whole problem, but it would be an important step toward better strategic planning for the United States.

What are the four explanations developed to represent the policy debate?

The dissertation purposely began with an open-ended research question to identify and explore stated and unstated assumptions and heuristics in strategic planning and scholarly methodology. Initially, explanations were framed using the three major international relations theories. Then, a variety of theories were used to frame additional sets of explanations. Each was at least marginally better at representing the debate, making use of the type of information likely to be available for strategic planning, or allowing judgments to be made about expected behavior under observable conditions. The judgment that motives were the most important and useful variable was a significant result of this approach. The two theories used for the final explanations provided a robust and interoperable conceptual framework. This made it possible to consider how for each

motive, Russia could be expected to make choices about military force under each possible combination of the independent variables in three areas. The three areas were relative military power, information about motives that shape expectations about the counterparty's future behavior, and domestic political power.[38]

Using the terms "greed" and "security" for the two motives drawn from *RTIP* created a significant obstacle in conveying their intended meaning to an audience not directly engaged with the theory. As a result, the usefulness of the motives' approach for strategic planning and scholarship was compromised. Therefore, two relatively more neutral terms were selected for use in explaining the dissertation to a broad audience. The term "domination motive" was used interchangeably with Glaser's greed motive. The term "self-protection motive" was used interchangeably with "his security motive." These terms were chosen rather than the more commonly used offensive and defensive distinction since those words are too often accorded moral value that biases judgments needed for rational strategic planning. They are understood very differently by scholars and military strategists. Other options have similar disadvantages. For the same reason, the terminology related to the four motive-based types of state in *RTIP* was avoided where possible by simply stating the motives.

---

38. These are all important to *The Logic of Political Survival* and *RTIP*. They are detailed in Chapter 3. All are relevant to the cases studies.

The first explanation: The domination/greed motive explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force

The first explanation assumes that the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force are explained by the domination/greed motive. This explanation is comparable to the unstated and stated assumptions found in the sample's U.S. strategic planning documents from 2014 and later. The motive was modeled and tested using the "purely greedy" type of state with only the greed motive from *RTIP* by Charles Glaser.[39] The greed motive refers to "nonsecurity motives for expansion, which can include the desire to increase its wealth, territory, or prestige, and to spread its political ideology or religion, when these are not required to preserve the state's security."[40]

The implication of this individual motive for U.S. strategic planning is that preventing the Russian Federation's use of military force driven by this motive against U.S. interests requires **only** that the Russian Federation be deterred from using force. The weakening of deterrence aimed at the Russian Federation would increase the likelihood of force being used.[41]

This explanation being the sole valid explanation out of the four would be the simplest problem for U.S. strategic planning. The mechanics of establishing and maintaining deterrence are more straightforward than those required if one of the other explanations is valid.

---

39. Glaser, *RTIP*, 36–37.

40. Glaser, *RTIP*, 36.

41. The implications were drawn from the overall logic of *RTIP,* in particular "Figure 2.2. Explanation for Intentions" on page 39.

The second explanation: The self-protection/security motive explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force

The second explanation assumes that the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force are explained by the self-protection/security motive. This explanation is comparable to the assumptions and arguments made by Russian Federation presidents and strategic planning documents after 2007 and, to a lesser extent, beginning in 1997. The motive was modeled and tested using the "security-seeking" type of state with only the security motive from *RTIP*.[42] In that theory, the word "security," when used to describe a motive, "measures the state's prospects for preserving control of its territory, avoiding war to protect its territory, and suffering low costs in fighting if war occurs."[43]

The implication of this individual motive for U.S. strategic planning is that preventing the Russian Federation's use of military force against U.S. interests driven by this motive requires that the Russian Federation perceive that its security will be assured by cooperation.[44]

The existence of this motive sets up a possible security dilemma/spiral dilemma. In this dilemma, both the United States and the Russian Federation would be motivated by self-protection/security, but rather than cooperating, they would take action to improve their security at the cost of the other. This would lead to a spiral of actions as

---

42. Glaser, *RTIP*, 35–37.

43. Glaser, *RTIP*, 35.

44. The implications were drawn from the overall logic of *RTIP,* in particular "Figure 2.2. Explanation for Intentions" on page 39.

they respond to each other's actions. This could occur even if neither planned to initiate armed conflict. It could be unintentional and unperceived, as it could appear to each as if they were engaged in a necessary arms race required to preserve deterrence. This is a very challenging situation to manage for both sides. It would be difficult to escape from the dilemma even if both sides would benefit from resolving the problem.[45]

The third explanation: A mix of the domination/greed motive and the self-protection/security motive explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force

The third explanation assumes that the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force are explained by a mix of the domination/greed and the self-protection/security motives. This explanation is comparable to the unstated and stated assumptions and the arguments made by many U.S., European, and Russian scholars in the sample who were notable for expertise in international relations and Russia. The explanation was modeled using the "greedy" type of state with both greed and security motives from *RTIP*.[46]

The implication for U.S. strategic planning is that decreasing the likelihood of the Russian Federation's use of military force against U.S. interests simultaneously requires that the Russian Federation be deterred from such actions **and** that the Russian Federation perceive that its security will be assured by cooperation. This presents an

45. Glaser, *RTIP*.
46. Glaser, *RTIP*, 35–37.

extremely challenging situation where paradoxically, either too much deterrence or too much reassurance could increase the likelihood of the Russian Federation using force.[47]

The expectations for this type of state's choices regarding the use of force were much less clearly differentiated from the other two internationally oriented explanations than those single motive explanations were from each other. For this and other reasons, the evaluations in Phase Two focused primarily on the three distinct motives and looked for instances where Russian behavior was incongruent with what behavior was expected given the conditions if that motive were a valid source of explanation.

A state with a mix of greed and security motives, Glaser's greedy type of state, should behave congruently with some aspects of a purely greedy and security-seeking state. Logically, if confidence in one or both of those explanatory theories can be weakened, confidence in this explanation would be weakened. Therefore, the dissertation did not attempt direct prediction for this explanation but indirectly evaluated it by assessing the domination and self-protection motives. It should be noted that if confidence in either or both is weakened, confidence in this explanation will also be weakened.

The fourth explanation: The Russian Federation's president's domestic political survival motive explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force

The fourth explanation assumes that the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force are explained by the Russian president's domestic political

47. The implications were drawn from the overall logic of *RTIP,* in particular "Figure 2.2. Explanation for Intentions" on page 39.

survival motive. This explanation is comparable to the unstated and stated assumptions and the arguments made in the sample of sources by many of the journalists with longtime experience in Russia and by political leaders and political scientists who emphasized the role of individuals, especially Vladimir Putin. These motives were modeled and tested using the Selectorate Theory from Bueno de Mesquita et al.'s *The Logic of Political Survival*. In the Selectorate Theory, a leader's primary motive when making decisions is remaining in power by sustaining a winning coalition within the selectorate of domestic individuals and groups with the ability to participate in leader selection. This theory accounts for the full range of regime types, from authoritarian to democratic, and selection mechanisms, including elections, coups, and revolutions.[48]

The implication of this individual motive for U.S. strategic planning is that preventing the Russian Federation's use of military force against U.S. interests driven by this motive requires that the Russian president believe that such actions will endanger the support of a winning coalition in domestic politics. The belief that military force would increase the probability of political survival would increase the likelihood of military force being used.[49]

What were the findings when the dissertation was complete?

This dissertation found that the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use and non-use of military force are significantly and usefully explainable by the

---

48. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003).

49. The logic of these implications derives from Bueno de Mesquita et al.'s *The Logic of Political Survival* and Glaser's *RTIP*.

balancing of three motives in priority order. A Russian Federation choice on the use of military force will prioritize first the motive of presidential political survival, then the self-protection/security motive, and then the domination/greed motive.

These findings concerning motives were obtained by considering all potential Russian Federation choices to use and not use force from December 25, 1991 through September 30, 2020 for all reasonable potential counterparties for the use of force.

The Russian Federation's behavior has generally been consistent with the three motives. Contrary to the assumptions driving current U.S. strategic planning, the presidential political survival motive has consistently been more important than either the domination/greed or the self-protection/security motive.

Support for this multi-motive explanation comes from evidence that the puzzling aspects of the past outcomes of U.S. strategic planning vis-à-vis Russia, which motivated this dissertation, can be explained by recognizing that planning was largely based on single-motive, externally oriented assumptions about Russian motives, as was the thinking that had to be improved upon to resolve the puzzles. The truth was more complex and included powerful internal motives.

The findings on the subcase of the relationship between the Russian Federation and the United States were consistent with the overall findings concerning Russian Federation motives and the expected strategic behaviors for these motives under the conditions observed. The method revealed that if the three motives were valid sources of explanation, then the Russian Federation's choices were less surprising than they seemed at times to the United States. Russian choices were generally consistent with what the

motives predicted, given a pessimistic but not unreasonable Russian interpretation of events.

The tension between competing motives often led to what appeared to be surprising or suboptimal behavior from the perspective of an observer without an understanding of the tensions.

The findings imply that the United States should gradually adjust policy and strategy to account for the tensions between the three Russian motives in a manner that makes the Russian Federation less likely to use military force against U.S. interests.

The United States does, in fact, need to communicate credibly that the negative consequences of using military force would outweigh whatever potential benefit might tempt the domination/greed motive.

At the same time, the United States also needs to communicate credibly that if the Russian Federation acts with restraint, then Russian Federation self-protection/security motive concerns will be addressed cooperatively.

Most importantly, the United States needs to consider the Russian president's calculations about whether using or not using force against U.S. interests would help or harm their prospects for political survival.

The United States could improve its strategic planning by taking more account of motives for strategic behavior and then taking a game theory-informed approach to strategy that considers how states might make choices about the use of military force to actualize these motives when the actions of multiple actors are interacting in the environment to produce outcomes that are interdependent on the choices of multiple parties.

Many important recent uses of Russian military power do not meet the traditional definition of military force but sought similar strategic outcomes. Some of the theoretical foundations of this work predate this issue. Many important scholarly and military beliefs may need to be reexamined in light of these changes. This is not expected to change the overall findings and implications of this dissertation.

Other significant findings and implications

An extremely important insight obtained from the case study was that after roughly 1996, the Russian Federation's public statements and strategic documents gradually drew stronger conclusions about the United States having malicious motives toward Russia than the United States intended to signal or actually possessed. This happened partially because the United States had gradually begun to discount the Russian Federation when making global policy and its own choices about the use of military force.

This context helps resolve the puzzles and explain the Russian Federation's behavior. Past Russian Federation behaviors are divisible into five periods where the broad choice regarding interacting with the United States was generally consistent. The periods are roughly 1991–1996, 1996–2002, 2002–2007, 2007–2014, and 2014–2020. They are explained in Chapter 4. Interestingly, the United States does not seem to have noted or acted promptly on the inflection points in Russian perception.

In most periods, Russian Federation behaviors were reasonably consistent with the expectations for rational strategic choices given the actual events and information available at the time. Russia generally made choices regarding cooperation or competition with the United States in a manner consistent with Russian beliefs about

relative power, expectations about how the United States would act toward Russia, and calculations to ensure the political survival of the president.

The Russian Federation made its most notable uses of military force and novel uses of military power after 2013 or early 2014. Why 2013 or 2014 was a turning point is an interesting question, and there was not a single smoking gun event in the subcases. Comparing it to the findings of the subcases, it was obvious that this was after the perceived interference in Russian politics by U.S. officials in the 2010–2012 period and around the time when new Russian military capabilities and forces were becoming effective. This was also during the Presidency when the status of Crimea needed to be resolved according to the Ukrainian Constitution. Most importantly, it was around this time that pro-Western forces overthrew the elected pro-Russian president of Ukraine and declared an intent to join the EU and NATO. Therefore, the turning point was likely not simply related to a change in relative power or the creation of new forms of power but more likely involved a near-simultaneous increase and change in power **and** a shift in Russian perceptions of foreign actions that would harm Russian Federation interests and, most importantly, would damage the domestic support for President Putin.

An important set of issues that obscures the whole debate relates to the use of information and military power to interfere in elections. These are not traditional or conventionally termed uses of force, but they have similar effects. These behaviors could not be ignored, and the best way to address them was to use the existing theoretical foundations and the assumption of bounded rationality informed by commonly observable events. If these theories are eventually shown not to be entirely appropriate and are replaced by something better, this could refine a portion of the findings. This

would not fundamentally alter the findings but would be a useful refinement. Additionally, Russian leaders may have underestimated the hostility that these actions have created among important segments of the U.S. population and the harm that this will cause to future efforts to cooperate in ways that could have helped actualize the security/self-protection motive.

These findings suggested that the best way to understand past Russian Federation choices and engage in strategic planning for the future may be to assume that all three motives are influential in the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force. If so, the current U.S. strategy is too narrowly focused on relations with the Russian Federation as purely a deterrence problem. The true problem is a combination of a deterrence problem, a security dilemma/spiral dilemma problem, and a Russian domestic political power problem.

To lower the likelihood of Russia using force in a given situation, the United States and its allies should attempt to use strategies that simultaneously foster three somewhat contradictory calculations. They need to credibly communicate that the negative consequences of using force would outweigh whatever potential benefit might tempt the domination/greed motive. At the same time, they also need to credibly communicate that if Russia acts with restraint, then Russian self-protection motive concerns will be addressed cooperatively. Most importantly, they need to influence the Russian president's calculations about whether the use of force against U.S. interests would be better for personal political survival.

The implications of the findings for scholars raise the question of whether, rather than attempting to demonstrate with applicable cases the power of a single source of

explanation for state or international system behavior, they should instead attempt to disprove all plausible explanations using incongruent examples. The three motives found plausible in this specific case might be useful more generally as a starting point for explaining strategic behavior. It seems reasonable to expect states to prioritize the following: (1) the need of the existing leadership to continue in power, (2) the preservation of the state and its existing territory and people, and (3) the establishment of domination or some form of control over peoples, territories, and states not currently under state control.

This implication has two distinct and potentially separable parts. The first part is that although attempting to falsify otherwise plausible theories of state behavior cannot done to laboratory standards, it is still a more compelling approach than selecting examples congruent with the theories. Among other reasons for this is that the dissertation has shown how difficult it is to distinguish between an action motivated by the domination/greed and the self-protection/security motives. The dissertation suggested that this is most feasible when the counterparty is weaker and its behaviors are negative for the first state, which is one of four possible conditions. The other three conditions may create incentives for bargaining, deception, or delay that may obscure motives. This means that a great many potential test cases may be of less evidentiary value than currently believed.

The second part is that common sense suggests that the prioritization of the political and personal survival or the state's decision-maker, the preservation of the state, and the expansion of the state is a logical and not highly controversial initial assumption to make about what is important to a state and what drives its behavior. This dissertation

used motives to explore this idea, but other ways of framing this prioritization are presumably possible.

How is the dissertation organized?

Chapter 1 summarizes the core elements of the dissertation. The dissertation was conducted in two phases reflected in the arrangement of the dissertation.

Phase One is the primary source of the material in "Chapter 2: The development and application of an approach to synthesizing explanations of strategic behavior." This chapter provides a background on Russian strategic planning. It also discusses design thinking, a new approach to addressing certain types of problems in U.S. military planning. It then discusses the method developed and outlines the explanations framed to represent the debate in a format useful for U.S. strategic planning and testable using rigorous scholarly methods. Finally, it reviews the primary and secondary sources from the debate.

Phase Two is the primary source of the material in the last three chapters and the first three annexes. "Chapter 3: The evaluation of motive-based explanations" reviews the most significant theoretical literature. It then presents the method used in this research. It describes the process followed to systematically assemble a comprehensive and concise dataset of Russian decisions related to the use of force against counterparties within the operational reach of the Russian military. It also explains the method used to evaluate the fit between theoretical expectations and actual behavior.

Due to the significant length of the structured, focused comparisons, they were placed in Annexes A, B, and C rather than included as numbered chapters. Annexes A, B, and C explain how the method was applied to three time periods: 1991–2000, 2000–

2012, and 2012–2020. Each annex states the scoping conditions and provides a visual representation of the observable events, conditions, and behaviors during the period. Then, it details how all the potentially informative Russian behaviors were logically grouped into subcases and subjected to a structured, focused comparison. Finally, each motive was evaluated in context for incongruence with the observable behaviors. The method found that geographically, the most important and relevant evidence was related to counterparties in the Euro-Atlantic region or within the former Soviet borders. This was reflected in the design of subcases.

Chapter 4 interprets the findings obtained from the examination of the three motives. It first describes five major eras where the Russian Federation made similar choices relative to the United States. It then evaluates each motive across the entire case.

Chapter 5 answers the research question and resolves the puzzling aspects of the policy problem. It then mentions the implications for scholarship and U.S. strategic planning.

Chapter 2: The development and application of an approach to synthesizing explanations of strategic behavior[50]

The focus of this chapter is the methodology used during Phase One of the research process, which involved the development and application of a design thinking-inspired approach to synthesizing explanations of strategic behavior. This chapter first provides a background on design thinking related to U.S. strategic planning. Next, the chapter describes the method used in Phase One and states the key lessons. The chapter then reviews the literature that informed the methodology used in the dissertation and ends with a review of key literature sampled from the policy debate.

Background on the evolution of modern U.S. strategic planning and design thinking[51]

The purpose of this section is to describe how design thinking is positively influencing U.S. strategic planning with a focus on military power. Various forms of the words strategic and operational are used in the literature in ways that are not always precise and consistent. The dissertation uses the term strategic planning to encompass all of these uses and the related processes, concepts, and ideas. The section does not describe all of the various processes used. Most strategic documents in the sample were the result of a specifically tailored process. To provide examples, the discussion will focus on a selection of the publically available plans, strategies, and processes used in U.S.-led planning for major recent armed conflicts, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan.

---

50. This chapter and the related annexes are revised and expanded from a conference paper: Christopher John Hickey, "Developing and Applying a Design Approach to Evaluate the Dominant Explanations for Why the Russian Federation Uses Interstate Force," Toronto: International Studies Association 2019 Annual Conference (2019).

51. This section draws on the researchers experiences as a U.S. Army Functional Area 59 Strategist during the events and intellectual debates described.

The specific processes discussed in these examples have evolved into two complementary constructs. The first is the Joint Planning Process (JPP) which is used to turn conceptual strategies or operational approaches into detailed plans or orders. The second is Operational Design which uses design thinking to develop an understanding of the environment and the problem, or problems, to be addressed and an operational approach to address the selected problem. It is also used to reframe these understandings as the situation evolves and this may lead to further detailed planning. The pairing of these two ideas allows for more sophisticated strategic planning as the relative strengths and weaknesses of the two approaches complement each other.

At the time the dissertation work started, Operational Design was primarily a tool for one to think about themselves and look outward. Since then, the researcher has been part of a movement to use design thinking more broadly in strategic planning. For example, the researcher led and contributed to efforts to shift key strategic planning experiential learning events at the U.S. Army War College from one-sided plan development exercises into design thinking centered events, often driven by games, in which two or more sides develop operational approaches to real world problems. The participants then see the interaction of multiple approaches and have to adapt as the event continues. With more than 1,000 senior leaders, including international fellows from roughly 80 countries enrolled annually in resident and hybrid online/resident programs, this is likely to have a real impact on strategic planning.

Traditional, modern Western strategic planning related to the use of military force generally follows a theoretically top-down process where political leaders issue guidance to military leaders and military leaders develop plans. Each command level within the

military hierarchy nests its strategy and plans with the logic of higher levels. Formal planning steps coordinate the process. Interactions and approvals between levels occur using common terms and logic at specified points in the process. Somewhat different processes and concepts are used at various echelons of the military. The *NDS* and *NMS* were developed using a process developed specifically for them. Lower echelon strategic planning documents developed by Combatant Commanders and Joint Force Commanders often follow a publically published planning process. All of these processes would benefit from finding ways to better understand and account for how individual and collective actors make choices on the use of force. What follows provides some context for that claim using public information.

Past strategic planning that did not include design thinking produced strategic plans such as the draft of the 2003 Iraq invasion plan reproduced in Figure 2. Processes and the resulting plans like this example were arguably sufficient to counter the relatively predictable actions of the 20th-century autocracies who were constrained by ideological considerations. They are not well suited to current conditions and likely future because they are overly optimistic about the United States' ability to directly apply power to produce predictable outcomes and because they assume away the agency of the counterparty.

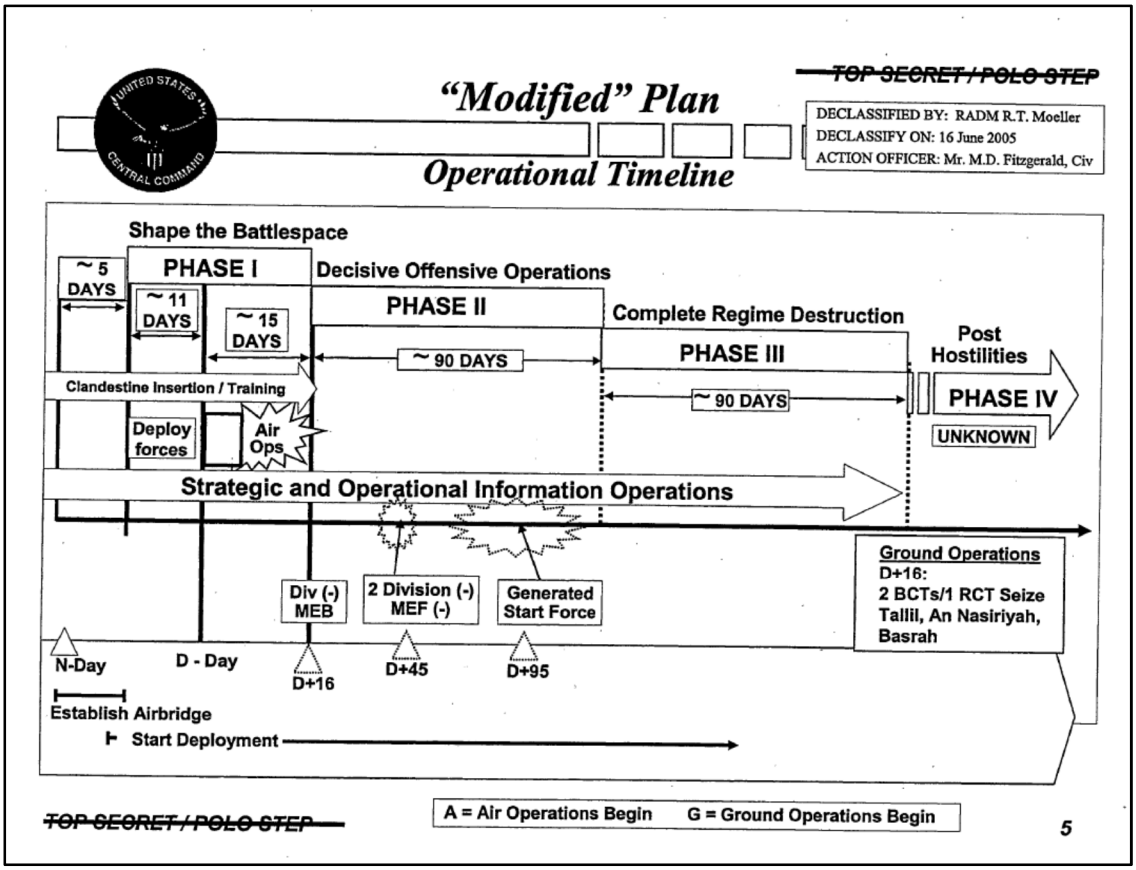

Figure 1. *A concept slide used in the planning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Source: The George Washington University National Security Archive.*

The process and the plan for U.S. military operations in Iraq in 2003 suffered from several limitations that contributed to problems with execution. Political leaders chose to disregard even the relatively limited advice from military, diplomatic, and intelligence leaders that the existing process allowed for. Military leaders then set about planning to fulfill the policy directed by political leaders without a prudent understanding of and preparations for the actual strategic environment, the actual problems they were likely to face, and their options for addressing the problems. The result was a plan and an operation that involved greater military risk than was necessary due to the overemphasis on politically directed attempts to achieve a rapid outcome while avoiding expensive

preparations for the issues normally expected from a large combat operation followed by a peacemaking operation. The plan achieved a measure of initial military success that did not translate into the fulfillment of policy goals or the termination of military operations.[52]

As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan failed to fulfill their initial objectives, there was intense interest and debate on new forms of strategic thinking among strategic planning professionals. One result was the widespread acceptance within the U.S. strategic planning community of the fact that some form of design thinking was needed to complement traditional planning processes. A step in this direction was the 2006 publication of the Joint Operations Planning Process (JOPP) shown in Figure 3. This was intended for military plans, primarily at the operational and theater strategic level.

---

52. Author's personal experience during operations in Iraq from March to May of 2003 and, subsequently, during the reconsideration of strategic planning processes that followed.

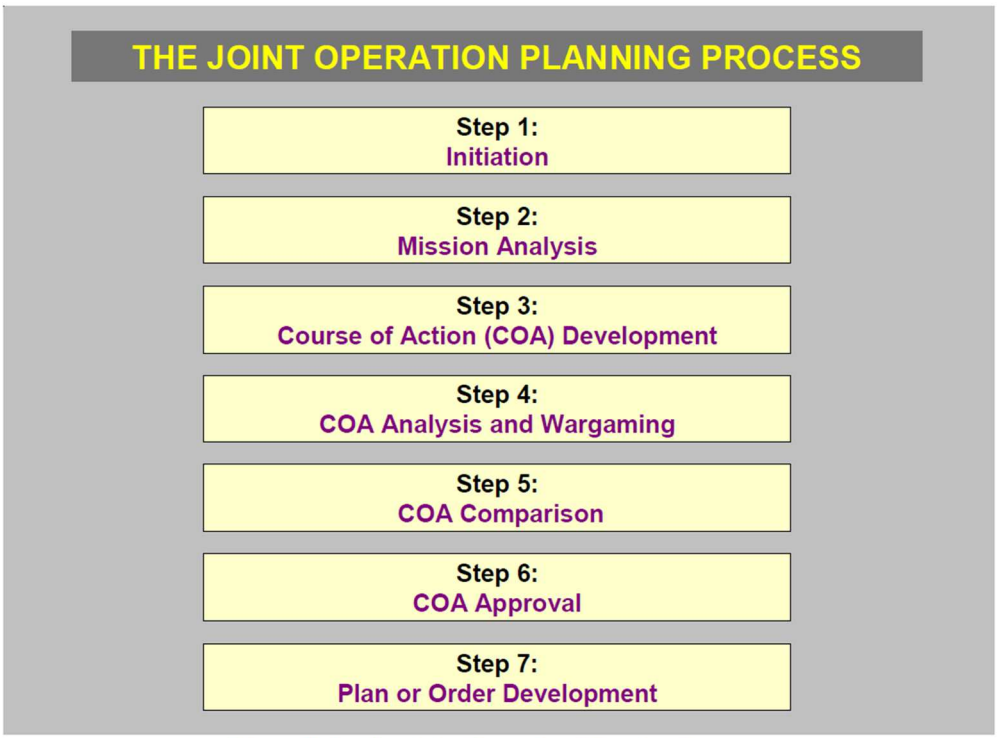

Figure III-3. The Joint Operation Planning Process

Figure 2. *The 2006 Joint Operation Planning Process. Source: Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning, 26 December 2006.*

Notably, the process developed in 2006 includes several periods of interaction and dialogue within the seven steps. Step 1: Initiation requires much more political and military interaction than was the norm in the past. Later refined and renamed the Joint Planning Process (JPP), this process was designed to work with a version of design thinking referred to as operational design. The two approaches are often employed simultaneously to address the same problem, leading to significantly better but imperfect strategic planning.[53] Design thinking has greater possible applications, and the dissertation explored the possibility that it could be used to create hypotheses about how

53. See the 2006, 2011, 2017, and 2020 editions of *JP 5-0*.

other parties tended to view their environment, problem, and options for addressing the problem.

The JPP is primarily used to develop military plans that are connected to other forms of power. It is logically similar to the planning methods used by other nations and organizations as well as each of the U.S. military services. It is not specifically designed for national-level documents such as the *NSS*, *NDS*, *NMS*, and *JSP,* although portions of it could be adapted to support the development of these products and the researcher believes its basic logic was influential in designing the processes for these documents. These national-level documents are normally developed using whatever ad hoc process is deemed appropriate by those developing the strategy. However, the basic logic seen in the JPP permeates U.S. strategic planning. Many of the key strategic planners who developed the U.S. documents sampled were well-versed in the JPP and similar processes. A surprisingly large number were graduates of the U.S. Army War College.[54]

Design thinking refers to an eclectic and multidisciplinary method employed in various academic, policy, and private-sector fields that benefit from non-linear methods of understanding and managing complex problems.[55] Design thinking employs a systems

---

54. Researcher's experiences.

55. Alex J. Ryan, "Applications of Complex Systems to Operational Design," in *Unifying Themes in Complex Systems: Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on Complex Systems* (Cambridge, MA: New England Complex Systems Institute, 2011), 1252–1266, http://necsi.edu/events/iccs2011/papers/40.pdf.

approach with critical and creative thinking and relies on the rapid iteration of divergent and convergent thinking.[56]

The best-known design thinking theorist in the policy studies community is Horst Rittel. He famously coined the term "wicked problem" in his landmark 1973 article "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning."[57] Much of his work involved applications of design thinking to the "class of social system problems that are ill-formulated, where the information is confusing, where there are many clients and decisionmakers with conflicting values, and where the ramifications in the whole system are thoroughly confusing."[58] According to Richard Buchanan's 1992 retrospective on design thinking, titled *Wicked Problems in Design Thinking,* Rittel wanted to improve on linear models of thinking and planning. Rittel and others argued that "the actual sequence of design thinking and decision-making is not a simple linear process ... the problems addressed by designers do not, in actual practice, yield to any linear analysis and synthesis yet proposed."[59]

In contrast to traditional strategic planning's more stylized approach, design's philosophy of open-ended intellectual exploration empowers the user to adopt the tools of

---

56. United States Army War College, *Military Strategy and Campaigning Course Material*, (Carlisle Barracks: Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations, 2018).

57. Horst W. J. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber, "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning," *Policy Sciences* 4, no. 2 (1973): 155, https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF01405730.

58. Richard Buchanan, "Wicked Problems in Design Thinking," *Design Issues* 8, no. 2 (1992): 15, https://doi.org/10.2307/1511637. Here he quotes from C. West Churchman, "Wicked Problems," *Management Sciences* 4, no. 14 (December 1967): B-141–B-142, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2628678.

59. Buchanan, "Wicked Problems," 15.

almost any method in the process. Figure 4 shows an example of how operational design iterates among the three frames and some typical considerations within each frame.

Figure 3. *An example of operational design considerations. Source: 2018 Theater Strategy and Campaigning Course Material, U.S. Army War College.*

A relatively well-known public example of the modern approach that links design thinking with traditional strategic planning is shown in Figure 5.

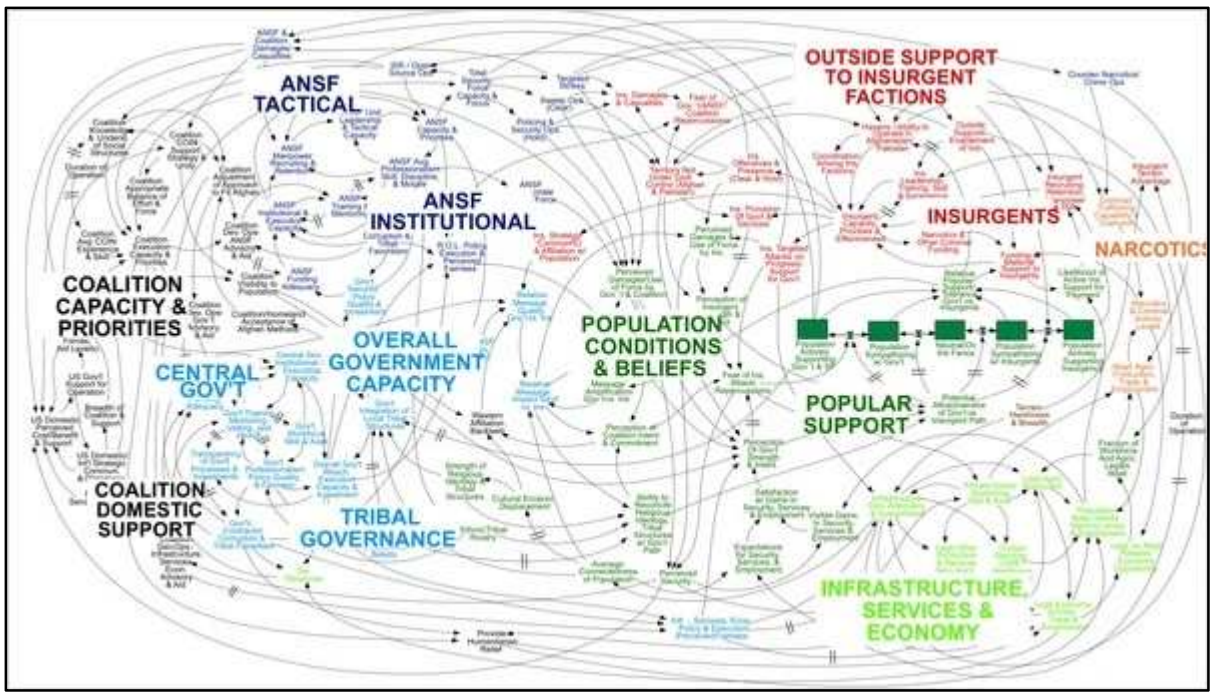

Figure 4. *"Afghanistan Stability/COIN Dynamics – Security," A Systems/Design Thinking approach to understanding the war in Afghanistan circa 2010. Source: The New York Times* https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/27/world/27powerpoint.html.

Products similar to this were used in Iraq and Afghanistan, as suspicions grew that the United States' national-level guidance for those wars was not appropriate for the actual situation. For example, a similar product was built during a planning effort in Kabul, and the researcher participated in the development of the same. It helped planners conclude that a U.S. and multi-national force limited to Afghanistan was unlikely to force an opponent based in Pakistan and provided with outside support to terminate military operations. This and many other similar efforts contributed to the eventual reframing of the mission from directly defeating the Taliban to supporting Afghan forces in securing their country for the foreseeable future. This required months of high-level and multinational dialogue between civilian and military leaders.

This reframed understanding of the environment, problem, and operational approach led to remarkably more comprehensive approaches than the example provided in Figure 2. One good example of this is summarized visually in Figure 6.

Figure 5. *The ISAF/NATO/U.S. Anaconda Strategy vs. Insurgents in Afghanistan." 20 October 2010. Source: Small Wars Journal.*

Interestingly, this more comprehensive 2010 plan was developed and executed by a lower-echelon headquarters compared to the narrower 2003 plan. While there were supporting military operational plans that looked more like Figure 2, the overall approach to military force became better linked to other forms of power and more adaptive to changes in the environment or those made by the opponent as this new way of strategic planning evolved. The eventual near-collapse of the government of Iraq and the total

collapse of the government of Afghanistan followed the removal of the comprehensive support that was being supplied to them by the United States and others under these plans. Whether a longer or different approach to providing this support would have altered events is a question for a separate study.

Design has begun to influence strategic planning about Russia from the standpoint of how the U.S. military should frame the environment in which they interact with Russia, what the problem or problems they are facing with Russia are, and how they should approach this problem. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, what is not yet being done except in several instances where the researcher suggested it is using design thinking to build and test theories about how Russia tends to frame its environment, problems, and options for addressing the problems. Current strategic planning fails to look deeply at why another actor behaves as it does and then to consider what options the United States has that might interact with options that the other party has to arrive at for various more or less desirable (from both perspectives) outcomes. While perfect understanding seems unlikely, at least this would move toward an explicit statement of causal theories that could be tested. As actual behaviors are assessed against expectations, theories could be updated and refined. Strategic planning could adapt accordingly.

Phase One's method

In Phase One of the research process, techniques inspired by a design thinking approach to strategic planning were used to synthesize the explicit assertions and implicit assumptions about Russian motives in scholarly and policy debates into four testable explanations for Russian choices related to military force. The researcher simulated the

rapid iteration of divergent and convergent thinking used in design thinking by conducting an extensive literature review and then trying a series of different grouping strategies to develop a manageable number of distinctly different and commonly used explanations for Russian motives that shape decisions about military force.[60] The best grouping strategy produced four motive-based explanations that offered different answers regarding how Russian decision-makers frame their environment, their problems, and what they consider suitable approaches to these problems. Each of these four motive-based explanations was then linked to an established scholarly theory so that the researcher could derive expectations about the choices that decision-makers with each type of motive would make on a given issue in a specific context. In Phase Two of the research process, these expectations were compared against actual Russian choices to use or not use force in a wide range of situations. Instances of Russia behaving in an unexpected manner helped refine the researcher's understanding of what motives appeared to have been most influential in the past and how U.S. strategic planners can develop more effective ways of interacting with Russia going forward.

While the steps below are described in the order the researcher recommends, iteration and modification of most steps took place as the process was developed and applied for the first time. Two significant periods of iterating were conducted, separated

---

60. For source material and background see Alex J. Ryan, "Applications of Complex Systems to Operational Design," in *Unifying Themes in Complex Systems: Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on Complex Systems* (Cambridge, MA: New England Complex Systems Institute, 2011): 1252–1266, http://necsi.edu/events/iccs2011/papers/40.pdf. and United States Army War College, *Military Strategy and Campaigning Course Material*, (Carlisle Barracks: Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations, 2018).

by a period of additional research and reflection. The first period of iteration produced four sets in late 2018 and early 2019. The process and lessons were presented at the 2019 International Studies Association Conference in Toronto. The second period of interactions used the process described in this chapter to produce three additional sets, including Explanation Set G, which was the one tested in Phase Two.

Step 1: Conduct a comprehensive literature review of the policy debate and other relevant arguments.

The review focused on the debate in scholarly fields and in the public aspects of the policy and strategy debate. It examined the following: the policy and strategy documents of the United States, Russian Federation, and other states and institutions; political speeches, testimonies, and memoirs; historical accounts that provide insight into how Russians might view their history; and responsible journalism. It also accounted for the views of specialists who translated and commented on Russian Federation discourse and documents related to the use of force.

Step 2: Create a sample of credible sources that represent the policy debate.

One hundred and twenty sources were chosen for their collective representation of the policy debate in the literature review. A detailed review with notes on these 120 sources was completed. The citations for each source were printed on multiple sets of three-by-five-inch sticky notes to be easily grouped into clusters of sources with similar implications for U.S. strategic planning to prevent the Russian Federation's use of force against U.S. interests. These sources are listed in "Annex G: Sources used in designing the explanation sets."

Step 3: Group the individual sources by their potential shared implications for strategic planning to produce a set of explanations that adequately represents the debate.

The researcher placed each sticky note on a large dry erase board and grouped and regrouped them until they were sorted using two criteria. The first grouping criterion was where they converged and diverged in terms of how the explanation they offered implied that the United States should act to prevent the Russian Federation from using force against U.S. interests. The second grouping criterion was where they converged and diverged with the other sources regarding a general scholarly theory that could better define the specific explanation. Connecting these two ideas was difficult. When making this judgment, it was helpful to look for commonalities in the three design frames of environmental framing, problem framing, and approach framing as inspired by the sources.

If a source was found not to fit well anywhere, it was not grouped. If it fit into multiple groups, this was depicted visually on the board. This step's outcome was a set of clustered sources where each cluster had some degree of commonality within the group. Each group of sources was different from the other groups in terms of implications and theoretical linkage. A photo of the final version is shown in Figure 7 for orientation purposes, and photos of all seven explanation sets are presented in "Annex D: Images of explanation sets."

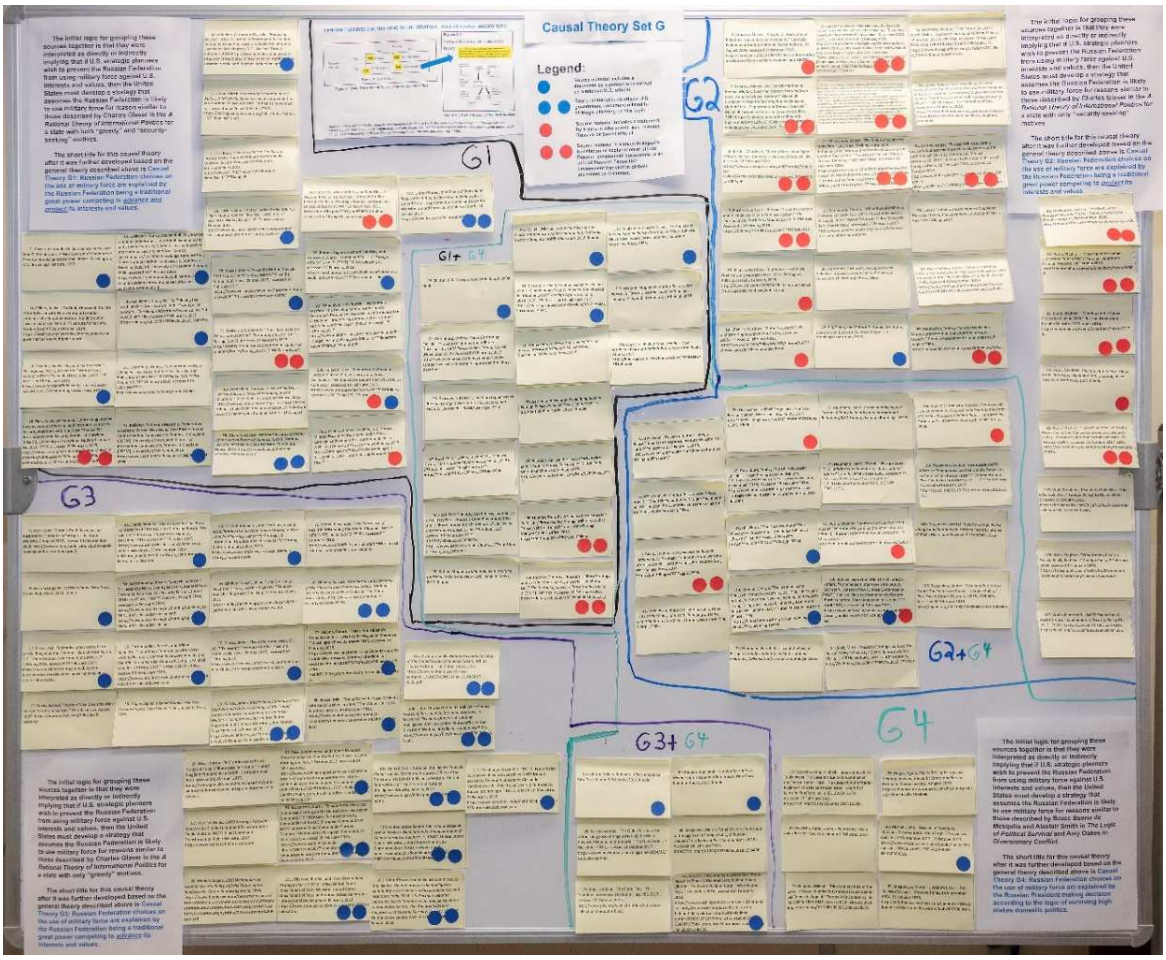

Figure 6. *Example photograph of the sources clustered into explanation sets. Photo credit: Scott Finger.*

The first explanation set was labeled Explanation Set A for reference. It was deliberately made relatively simple. Almost all of the 120 sources were grouped into three explanations: realism, liberalism, and constructivism. The important observation that emerged from this set was that almost all of the U.S. government's intelligence and strategy documents offered explanations placed under the realist group, while almost all Russian explanations were placed under the liberal group. There is no meaningful acknowledgment of this disparity in public claims in either the United States or Russian official documents. This raised several questions, including whether either or both is

misrepresenting their perception for strategic communication purposes or whether they misunderstand each other.

Step 4: Develop a narrative or graphic for each explanation set that explains its strategic logic and identify one or more existing theories that could be used to frame the explanations in a precise and testable manner.

Once all 120 sources were either grouped or determined not to fit into any group, the researcher developed a narrative description or explanatory graphic for each explanation modeled on the operational design framework. This task was intertwined with the selection of potential general theories to be used if the set was chosen for evaluation in the second part. For example, for the fourth explanation linked to the Selectorate Theory, the Russian Federation's choice regarding the use of military force was framed from the perspective of the Russian Federation's president. The explanation was that the Russian Federation's president is likely to frame their decision most strongly in the context of domestic politics, the problem the president is trying to solve is personal political survival, and the approach adopted will involve choosing to use or not use force in a way that best ensures their personal political power. This explanation does not mean that international factors are not important, but it does mean that international strategic behaviors will be more strongly motivated by domestic political factors than by considerations of a purely international nature.

As each iteration was conducted, the technique of capturing and communicating the framing of the environment, problem, and approach consistent with the explanation evolved. Some rather over-complicated approaches were attempted before it became clear that a concise narrative with few caveats would be more useful for Phase Two of the research process than a more specific and complicated wording. It also became

increasingly clear that using existing rather than ad hoc theories was more credible and practical. The final version of the explanations is found in the section titled "What are the four explanations developed to represent the policy debate?" in Chapter 1. This version attempts to take all the process, thinking, and theory that went into building the explanation and express it such that it is simple enough for a multinational and multidisciplinary audience to understand the explanations in a way that is consistent, as simple as possible, and allows them to use the explanations in strategic planning to consider what behaviors might interact with potential Russian behaviors to arrive at various outcomes.

Step 5: Repeat the third and fourth steps until no further improved set can be designed.

Seven explanation sets resulted from this iterative process. They are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. *The seven explanation sets*

A	A1: Realism	A2: Liberalism	A3: Constructivism			
B	B1: Defensive realism	B2: Offensive realism	B3: Neoclassical realism	B4: Liberal institutionalism	B5: Liberal: Domestic preferences and diversionary conflict	B6: Constructivism
C	C1: International: reaction	C2: International: control	C3: Domestic: Constructed exceptionalism		C4: Domestic: Diversionary conflict	
D	D1: Security seeking	D2: (Pure) Greedy	D3: Diversionary			
E	E1: The Russian Federation makes choices about the use of force defensively.	E2: The Russian Federation makes choices about the use of force aggressively.	E3: The Russian Federation makes choices about the use of force opportunistically.		E4: The Russian Federation makes choices about using force to prevent the Russian people from turning against the Russian president.	
F	F1: Calculated aggression	F2: Security and hegemonic motives in rational great power international politics		F3: The president's Logic of Political Survival		
G	The domination/greed motive explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force.	The self-protection/security motive explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force.	A mix of the domination/greed motive and the self-protection/security motive explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force.		The Russian Federation's president's domestic political survival motive explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force.	

The first set was discussed under Step 3 and was purposely made simple, while Explanation Set B was purposely made rather complicated. This was done to create a bracket establishing a range of possible solutions. This helped reduce the number of iterations. For Explanation Set B, the sources were structured in relation to six explanations: defensive realism, offensive realism, neoclassical realism, liberal

institutionalism, liberal domestic preference/diversionary theory, and constructivism. The reference product created to show the result was a matrix. The results appeared to be more likely to paralyze strategic planning and frustrate scholarly tests than fulfill the desired purpose of facilitating both since there was little coherent logic to the overall set of explanations. The set did highlight that the Russian Federation and the U.S. and Western official government sources were reasonably consistent in their explanations over time, but each offered an explanation that had widely different policy implications. While these claims may be accounted for as strategic behavior, it reinforced the earlier concerns that misperception could be involved.

The third set, C, included two domestic and two international explanations. For all of them, the decision-maker was the person occupying the Russian Presidency. One of the explanations under the domestic category, constructed exceptionalism, posed the problem of seeming to be impractical to test in a way that would be convincing to all the audiences for which the research was intended. This explanation was, in part, intended to address very compelling constructivist sources, but no means of evaluating the explanation other than opinion polling seemed appropriate. One approach considered was the use of the theories offered and evaluated by Mansfield and Snyder, who made a case with policy implications that were similar to this group. They argued and provided evidence that structural problems related to transitional or incomplete democracy often led to war.[61]

---

61. Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Incomplete Democratization and the Outbreak of Military Disputes," *International Studies Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (2002): 529–549, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3096128.

Explanation set D used the two most distinctly different types out of Glaser's four types of states and a diversionary theory of war. This was deemed too narrow both internationally and domestically to account for all the available information and possible answers to the research question.

It was replaced by Explanation Set E, which attempted to use all four types of states in Glaser's theory along with a diversionary explanation for states with no international motive. The difficulty of proving a diversionary hypothesis and the fact that other domestic explanations could exist led to the use of the Selectorate Theory in set F. This set also attempted to find more useful terminology that followed Glaser's logic but focused only on the two types of states that the researcher considered as plausible candidates for becoming great powers.

The failure of the attempts to recast or improve upon the logic of *RTIP* and the Selectorate Theory led to the adaption of Glaser's four-type model with the Selectorate Theory standing in for states that lacked international motives. It was not possible to develop a better explanation set for the dissertation than this despite a lengthy attempt. It was immediately obvious that the words greed, security, and selectorate were a potential source of confusion, as was the further layer four types of state. This was ultimately addressed by using the term domination motive interchangeably with greed motive and the term self-protection motive with security motive. The term selectorate simply needed to be explained, as no other replacement was suitable.

Step 6: Select for evaluation the best explanation set from those produced.

When it was clear that no better set was likely to be produced, all seven sets were considered. The one that best suited the purposes of the dissertation, Explanation Set G,

was selected for evaluation in Phase Two. Explanation set G was judged to best reflect the debate in the dissertation's context and supply an appropriately complete yet manageable set of hypotheses. Compared to earlier sets, it was found to be more appropriate to link the explanations to theories of state decision-making on military policy and decision-making by leaders based on politics than the much more general and parsimonious theories of how international relations operate. The variables related to the theories selected looked like factors for which decision-makers are likely to have information and are likely to consider important. The logic of the explanation set was not linked to any U.S. political ideology. While it was based on rigorous theoretical work, it could be communicated in a way that passed the common sense test.

An important point to be considered when determining the best set was whether the existing general theories that aligned with each explanation offered enough resolution to identify the observable factors that could be used in congruence or incongruence tests and whether the theory was suitable to inform strategic planning. This was necessary to allow for the use of conventional scholarly methods to evaluate for incongruence. It also would suggest what kind of observable artifacts and behaviors policymakers should expect their intelligence and assessment experts to look for while implementing a strategy. Ultimately, this would allow the explanations influencing a strategy to be confirmed, rejected, or refined by evaluating new facts, behaviors, and events.

Step 7: Conduct a more intensive literature review of theories and methods to refine and finalize the evaluation method.

The refinement and finalization of a method for testing the explanations were of critical importance in this dissertation. The dissertation proposal suggested that the best way to evaluate the explanations might be through a modification of the methods

proposed by Alexander George and Andrew Bennett to test for incongruence using a structured, focused comparison.[62] As the iteration of explanation sets proceeded, this general approach needed to be confirmed, refined, and finalized before investing the time to apply it. Step 7 proved to be much more important and time-consuming than expected, and it is useful to address some of the issues involved. The method chosen needed to be useful and persuasive for both scholars and practitioners. It also had to be feasible to follow such a method using information that is likely to be available to scholars and practitioners without privileged access to the secretive strategic planning processes and deliberations of state decision-making regarding the use of military force. Process tracing, for example, will be infeasible until far after the event in many cases and may not be credible even then. Process tracing without direct access to the decision-makers' discussions and direction poses the risk of simply arranging a series of facts and assumptions in chronological order and mistaking this for an explanation. The kind of information needed is often unavailable, and even if it were available, it would be regarded with suspicion since many decision-makers would prefer their real motives not to be known to their contemporary counterparties or history.

The congruence method described by Alexander George and Andrew Bennett in Chapter 9 of C*ase Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* is appropriate in these circumstances. According to George and Bennett, "[T]he essential characteristic of the congruence method is that the investigator begins with a theory and then attempts

---

62. Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

to assess its ability to explain or predict the outcome in a particular case."[63] The outcome the researcher was interested in was a Russian decision to threaten or use military force. The four explanations are four competing theories about why Russia would use force. According to George and Bennett,

> [T]he investigator can attempt to deal with the limitations of the congruence method [by providing] a plausible or convincing argument that the deductive theory or empirical generalization being employed is powerful and well-validated, that it fits the case at hand extremely well, and that it is not rivaled by competing theories or at least is better than conceivable alternative theories.[64]

Treating Russian uses of military force as a policy studies problem requires a different approach than laboratory science. Policy studies should seek to make judgments about context, ends, ways, means, and risks in the face of uncertainty, as well as an acknowledgment and an estimate of the degree of uncertainty. The problem has all the features of Horst Rittel's wicked problem and must be approached in a way that acknowledges complexity. Understanding complexity requires separating the vast quantity of data that should be ignored as unhelpful from the smaller quantity of data that are useful to explain and predict system outcomes and players' strategic behavior.

Since the four explanations were explicitly designed to represent the prominent credible arguments in the policy debate, it was possible to show examples of observable behaviors congruent with each explanation. If this were not true, the set of explanatory theories would not fulfill its criteria. Therefore, to rigorously evaluate each explanation's

---

63. Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 181.

64. George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development*, 184. This citation is for a block quote. If the format is lost it begins with "[T]he investigator…" and ends with "…alternative theories."

actual explanatory and predictive power, it is appropriate to assess all the available information to identify incongruent behaviors with one or more explanations. Rejecting an explanation for Russia's choices regarding the use of military force requires showing a pattern of incongruence between Russia's observable behaviors and the behaviors predicted by the explanation given the variables' observable conditions.

Step 8: Establish a common set of variables along with the expectations for what behaviors would be incongruent with each explanation under different conditions.

This was done using the logic of the established general theories and insights gained from developing causal loop diagrams and systemist international relations diagrams for the causal theories.

Each of the four explanations assumed that certain motives were valid and then required consideration of one dependent and seven dependent variables. The dependent variable was the Russian Federation's choices regarding military force. The independent variables were relative military power, the offense–defense balance, offense–defense distinguishability, Russian beliefs about the counterparty's motives, Russian beliefs about the counterparty's beliefs about Russian motives, the state of the winning coalition in Russian Federations' domestic politics, and the state of the selectorate of the Russian president.

As part of the development of probabilistic predictions, causal loop diagrams and systemist international relations diagrams were drafted to consider Russian tendencies under the various combinations of the variables available. The causal loop diagrams were found to be overly detailed, and they were replaced with the more parsimonious systemist diagrams. The systemist diagrams for the set of theories tested in the dissertation are shown below. In December of 2019, Patrick James of the University of

Southern California published "Systemist International Relations."[65] Among other goals, this article described a new Visual International Relations Project (VIRP) that sought to convey information about international relations theories visually. While slightly deviating from the recommended approach, the dissertation used the VIRP's *Systemism Orientation Package Mk V* by Michael R. Pfonner and advice from Sarah Gansen, both from the University of Southern California, to create the systemist diagrams for the three motives.[66] These three figures are presented below.

---

65. Patrick James, "Systemist International Relations," *International Studies Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (2019), https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqz086, https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqz086.

66. Michael R. Pfonner, *Systemism Orientation Package Mk V, 2019*, University of Southern California and phone and email exchange with Sarah Gansen at the University of Southern California.

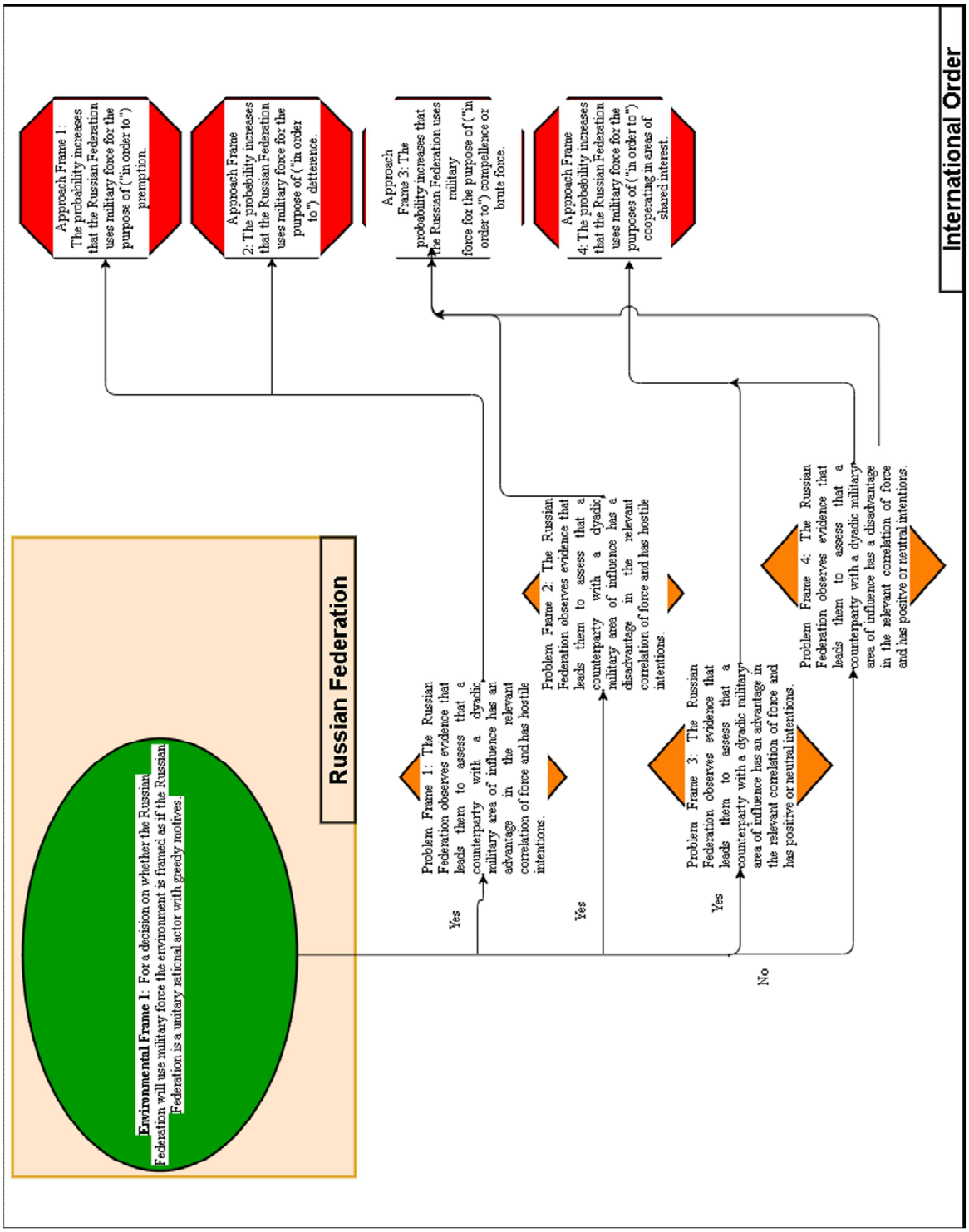

Figure 7. *Domination/greedy motive predictions.*

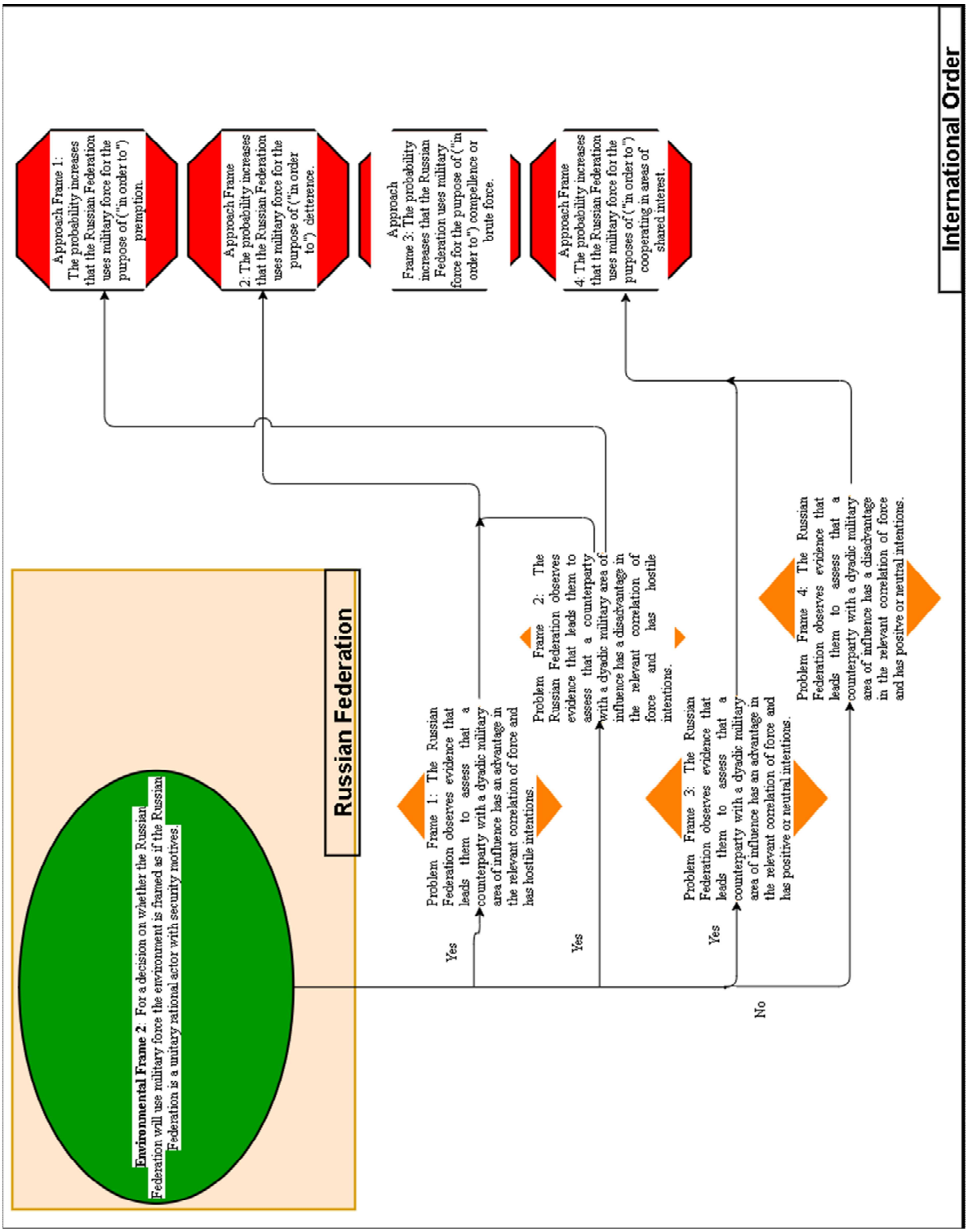

Figure 8. *Self-protection/security motive predictions.*

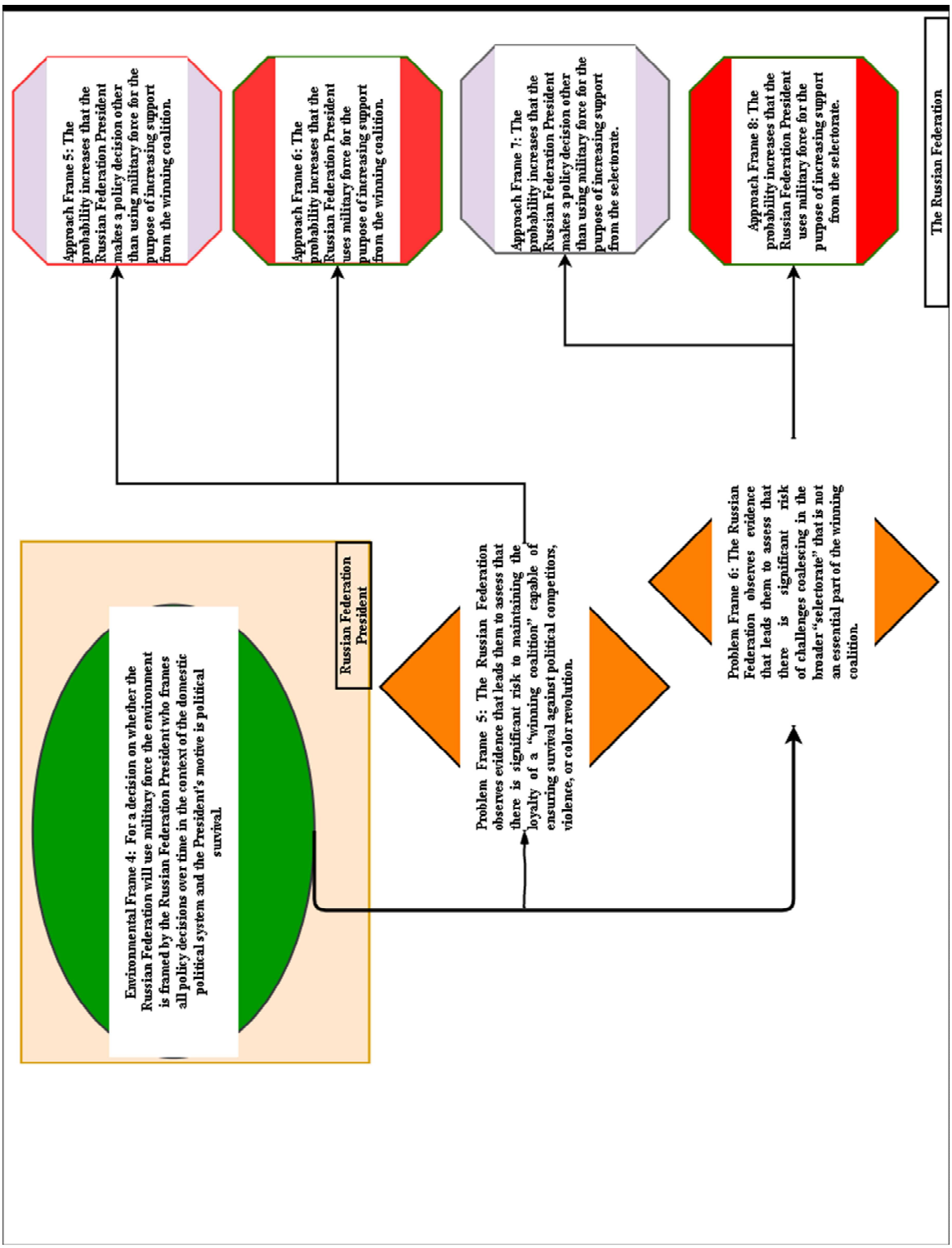

Figure 9. *Political survival motive predictions.*

Literature review for the evaluation of the three motives

This section reviews two theories with reasonably interoperable logic chosen as the framework for the explanations evaluated in Phase Two and then provides a very broad review of some related topics. Phase One revealed that the theories most influential in the policy debate, including the many variants of realism, liberalism, and constructivism, may not be the best theories to explain the strategic planning problems facing the United States and the Russian Federation. Rational choice theories were appropriate despite what we know about problems with rational decision-making.

RTIP provides the analytical framework for internationally motivated Russian Federation's strategic behavior. The Selectorate Theory does so for domestically motivated strategic behavior. The two theories overlap in their discussion of war and can be used to inform each other and all four explanations. Using a framework that has two levels involves certain challenges. The expectation was that this was manageable given that the four explanations were aligned with the four types of state described below and since it was expected that only one of these types would be the explanation. The eventual finding that the Russian Federation's behavior is consistent with both the type of state and the mix of the domination/greed motive and the security/self-protection motive as well as with the political survival motive indicated that U.S. strategic planning needs to be done differently and highlighted an opportunity to look at scholarly problems differently.

The Rational Theory of International Politics

RTIP is a "rationalist, strategic choice theory"[67] that explains a state's decisions on military policy. The theory argues that three independent material variables and two independent informational variables determine how decision-makers should rationally answer the following question: "[G]iven its motives and international environment, can a state best achieve its goals with a cooperative military policy or a competitive one?"[68] It also addresses some policy-level issues of war and peace, including crisis behavior and war initiation and termination.[69] Unlike offensive or defensive realism, which makes broad assumptions that all states want the same thing, *RTIP* allows consideration of different types of states distinguished by the presence or absence of two distinct motives: greed and security. It is a theory about how a state makes choices rather than a theory of how the international system works.[70]

The dependent variable in *RTIP* is "a state's choice among the basic options for achieving its international objectives as well as a theory of international politics."[71] These options are that "more generally, states choose between cooperative and competitive strategies; more specifically, yet still broadly defined, states can choose between building up arms, acquiring allies, negotiating arms control agreements, making

---

67. Glaser, *RTIP*, 2.
68. Glaser, *RTIP*, 24.
69. Glaser, *RTIP*, 112–126.
70. Glaser, *RTIP*, 213–15.
71. Glaser, *RTIP*, 26.

concessions, and launching wars."[72] The international environment in Glaser's theory is a given and its nature is not explained by the theory.[73] It is described in terms of three material variables and two informational variables. States with different motives should rationally respond differently to at least some conditions of these variables.[74] These variables are framed in dyadic and relative terms that do not fully account for the large number of actors that matter to real state decision-making. The material variables are the relative power of the two states, the offense–defense balance, and offense–defense distinguishability.[75] The information variables are how a state assesses the motives of the counterparty and how it believes that the counterparty assesses the motives of the first state.[76] The theory's logic is consistent with basic game theory and bargaining concepts. In Glaser's theory, a state's motives are an independent variable that "embodies what a state values, capturing its fundamental interests and goals."[77]

---

72. Glaser, *RTIP*, 26.
73. Glaser, *RTIP*, 24.
74. Glaser, *RTIP*, 3 and 33–50.
75. Glaser, *RTIP*, 40–46.
76. Glaser, *RTIP*, 46–50.
77. Glaser, *RTIP*, 3.

Glaser explains motives and their relationship to the decision-making of a state with the following passage:

> Motives translate into the benefits states see in maintaining the territory they possess and in acquiring more, and therefore can influence their strategies. A state that is satisfied with the status quo is less likely to see benefits in changing it and, therefore, is less likely than a dissatisfied state to try to change it. More precisely, a state that is motivated only by security, and therefore would accept the status quo if secure within it, should be more inclined toward cooperative policies than a state with more ambitious motives. Nevertheless, under certain conditions a security-seeking state will value changing the status quo-if more territory would increase its ability to defend itself—and value war—if fighting would reduce its adversary's current or future ability to attack it. In contrast, states with the more ambitious motives, which I term "greedy" states, are fundamentally dissatisfied with the status quo, desiring additional territory even when it is not required for security. These nonsecurity goals result in a fundamental conflict of interests that makes competition the only strategy with which a greedy state can achieve its goals.[78]

Two distinct motives result in the four different potential types of states, as shown in Figure 11. "Purely greedy" and "security-seeker" states have only the single motive of greed and security, respectively.[79] States can have both motives, and the theory describes these as "greedy" states.[80] An "unmotivated" state has neither motive to a significant degree.[81]

---

78. Glaser, *RTIP*, 3–4. This citation is for a block quote. Should the block quote formatting be lost the quote begins with "Motives translate… " and ends with " …. its goals."

79. Glaser, *RTIP*, 35–40.

80. Glaser, *RTIP*, 35–40.

81. Glaser, *RTIP*, 35–40.

		Greedy: Yes	Greedy: No
Security-seeking	Yes	Greedy	Security seeker
	No	Purely greedy	Unmotivated

Figure 2.1. Types of States

Figure 10. *The four types of states in RTIP. Source: RTIP, 37, fig 2.1.*

In *RTIP,* the "unmotivated" state is characterized by neither the greed nor security motives.[82] Glaser did not greatly develop his exploration of such states, but logically, if a state's motives are not international and the state is taking action in the international environment, its motives must be domestic. For these states, the Selectorate Theory is a useful general theory for predicting and explaining behavior since the Selectorate Theory and *RTIP* share an essential logic of rational strategic choice and a game-theoretic approach. This makes it possible, useful, and interesting to use them in a complementary fashion.

Since the words "greed" and "security" are emotionally charged and linked to various concepts, using these words when explaining the dissertation to scholars and strategists created multiple areas of confusion. When discussing them in a context intended for a wide audience, the greed motive was referred to as the domination motive and the security motive as the self-protection motive. Rather than explaining to the

82. Glaser, *RTIP*, 37.

broader audience the additional layer of the theory that translates the two motives into four types of state, it was sufficient to mention that a state could have a domination/greed motive, a self-protection/security motive, both motives, or neither motive. Within the dissertation, these terms have been used interchangeably.

The strategy choices in *RTIP* are distinct enough to make it relatively straightforward to review historical case studies and determine with reasonable confidence when states executed any of them. It is also possible to establish with a reasonably high degree of certainty the state of the three material variables in *RTIP* at any given time. The information variables are also ascertainable but to a lesser degree of certainty. When the outcome, the material variables, the information variables, and, in some situations, the political power variables described later are known, the researcher can determine what motives would have been congruent with observed behaviors given those other variables. This required building separate sets of expectations for the three motives.

Power is the first of the three material variables and is defined relative to a second party. Under conditions short of armed conflict, Glaser defined power as "the ratio of the state's resources that can be converted into military assets to the adversary's resources."[83] During a crisis potentially leading to armed conflict or an actual armed conflict, the measure of power is actual rather than potential military power since "the outcomes of wars, at least wars fought with forces deployed before the war starts, will depend on actual military power—that is deployed military forces—not potential power."[84] This

---

83. Glaser, *RTIP*, 41.
84. Glaser, *RTIP*, 114.

important distinction allows for scenarios where one side strikes the other with some measure of surprise and uses a strategy intended to terminate the conflict before the other side can convert its economic and political resources into military resources. These surprise scenarios and the unique possibilities they open for an aggressive state occupy a surprisingly, and perhaps inappropriately, large place in Russian and U.S. thinking.

It is important to note that Glaser's definition of military capabilities is not a function of absolute quantities. Instead, it is relative and both qualitative and quantitative: "[A] state's ability to perform military missions is not determined by the size, type, and quality of its forces or resources, but instead by how these forces compare with and would fight against the adversary's forces."[85] Glaser noted that the two militaries' will and skill to conduct operations are assumed to be equal on both sides during peace, but one side might have a relative advantage revealed once an armed conflict begins.[86] He also stated that "nuclear weapons create a large advantage for deterrence, which in this context is the functional equivalent of defense."[87]

The offense–defense balance is the second material variable. It

> is defined as the ratio of the cost of the offensive forces the attacker requires to take territory to the cost of forces the defender has deployed ... The offense–defense balance depends on a variety of factors, including the nature of military technology and geography, which are not included in power but could significantly influence a state's ability to defend.[88]

---

85. Glaser, *RTIP*, 41.

86. Glaser, *RTIP*, 44–45.

87. Glaser, *RTIP*, 44.

88. Glaser, *RTIP*, 43. This citation is for a block quote. Should the block quote formatting be lost the quote begins with "is defined…" and ends with "…to defend."

The third material variable is offense–defense distinguishability. "When offense and defense are completely distinguishable, the forces that support offensive missions do not support defensive missions, and vice versa; when offense and defense are entirely indistinguishable, the forces that support offensive missions can be used as effectively in defensive missions, and vice versa."[89]

The relationship between the material variables is shown in Figure 12.

---

89. Glaser, *RTIP*, 45.

	Offense-Defense Balance: Defense > Offense	Offense-Defense Balance: Offense > Defense
Power advantage	• No need to build—defensive doctrine without force advantage is adequate; action-reaction peters out • Exceptions if geopolitical rationales generate offensive requirements ♦ Must then compare political costs against military benefits (depends on information about adversary's motives)	• Arms buildups and offensive doctrine often best, unless ♦ power advantage is large enough to make defense possible ♦ power advantage is too small to guarantee success; weigh risks of losing a race ♦ offense and defense are different; weigh the benefits of limiting offense against risks of cheating
Power disadvantage	• If defense advantage is greater than power disadvantage, defensive doctrine is still feasible; arms buildups can be avoided or should peter out • If defense advantage is less than power disadvantage, cannot prevent adversary from acquiring offensive capability ♦ Weigh arms competition to retain some deterrent capability against cooperating to improve relations	• Buildup holds little prospect of producing a defensive capability • Might buildup to preserve an offensive capability

Figure 3.1 Material Variables and the Choice of Arming Policies

Figure 11. *The relationship between the material variables and the consequences in RTIP. Source: RTIP, 80, fig 3.1.*

Glaser's information variables are judgments made under conditions of uncertainty by one state about the other state's motives and what the second state believes the first state's motives to be. *RTIP* does not claim that states can determine with scientific certainty the motives of another state. Instead, it argues that motives are important for state decision-making and even limited information is valuable. "Being able to put the probability that an opposing state is greedy within a wide range (to be

distinguished from precise probabilities)—for example, high, medium (that is, roughly as likely to be greedy as security seeking), or low—can be quite useful, playing a significant role in the state's choice between cooperative and competitive policies."[90] Glaser pointed out that the information variables suffer from endogeneity to a certain degree due to prior interactions. He recommended addressing this by limiting consideration to the information reasonably available to a state at the time.[91]

The first information variable is how a state assesses the motives of the counterparty.

> The basic purposes of a state's military policy should depend on its adversary's motives … there are conditions under which two states facing the same international situation should choose different strategies and make different decisions because they have different motives. A state should expect that its adversary's policy could vary for the same reason.[92]

The second information variable is how a state believes that its counterparty assesses the first state's motives. According to Glaser, "a state's information about the adversary's beliefs about the state's motives should also influence its choice of strategy."[93] This is because "the adversary's decision about whether to reciprocate cooperation would depend on this belief ... When the adversary believes that the state is likely to be greedy, the adversary is less likely to cooperate because it expects that the state will be less likely to continue cooperating."[94]

---

90. Glaser, *RTIP*, 200–201.

91. Glaser, *RTIP*, 48–49.

92. Glaser, *RTIP*, 46. This citation is for a block quote. Should the block quote formatting be lost the quote begins with "The basic…" and ends with "…same reason."

93. Glaser, *RTIP*, 47.

94. Glaser, *RTIP*, 47.

RTIP predicts the relationship of motives, intentions, and security conditions shown in Figure 13.

		Intentions	
		Status Quo	Revisionist
Motives	Security	Secure or deterred	Insecure and not deterred
	Greed	Deterred	Not deterred

Figure 2.2. Explanations for Intentions

Figure 12. *The relationship of motives, intentions, and security conditions in RTIP. Source: RTIP, 39, fig 2.2.*

This figure adds an incredibly important level of analysis beyond what is generally found in the policy debate. It shows that aggressive or passive behaviors are not directly linked to inherent characteristics but originate from multiple factors and variables. It also establishes a critical step in the relationship between these variables and such behaviors. A strategy that seeks to change another party's behaviors should account for all these variables and their relationships.

The dissertation identified significant differences between scholarly and military thinking related to the material and information variables that have critical importance in the cases. A relatively simple aspect of this problem is that scholars and civilian policymakers often frame their arguments as if offense and defense are distinct strategic behaviors or characteristics of a weapon system. By contrast, Russian and U.S. military officers view offense and defense as simultaneous tasks inside a larger military operation

or campaign. Usually, forces defend in some places while others attack other locations. Weapons with a defensive task and purpose, such as air and missile defense, accompany and enable military operations with an offensive task and purpose.

A more complicated aspect of this issue is that Western scholars have a formal offense–defense theory (ODT) that argues that the likelihood of war increases as the offense becomes relatively easier than defense per unit of power and also increases when offensive and defensive military capabilities are less distinguishable.[95] ODT and its implications do not have a central place in U.S. or Russian military strategic planning. They are certainly not used in a way that considers both sides of the relationship. It is common to see the argument that the other side's offensive capability and lack of transparency make it a threat. Essentially, no strategic document or military doctrine takes this a step further and considers if one's capabilities and intentions impact an area other than deterring an attack driven by the domination/greed motive.

Therefore, issues related to offense–defense indistinguishability in military doctrine, capabilities, and exercises may be a critically dangerous and under-recognized dynamic that neither scholars and political leaders nor military officers currently properly account for in their work. This may result in important policy problems since "distinguishability influences the risks a state must run to avoid threatening its adversary and to signal its motives, and the possibility of qualitative arms control, all of which influence the severity of the security dilemma."[96]

---

95. Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "Offense-Defense Theory and Its Critics," *Security Studies* 4, no. 4 (1995): 660–691, https://doi.org/10.1080/09636419509347600.

96. Glaser, *RTIP*, 45.

The Selectorate Theory from The Logic of Political Survival

According to the Selectorate Theory described in *The Logic of Political Survival,* leaders are ultimately selected and reselected to hold power primarily due to the relationship between two variables. They are "the selectorate—the set of people with a say in choosing leaders and with a prospect of gaining access to special privileges doled out by leaders—and the winning coalition—the subgroup of the selectorate who maintain incumbents in office and in exchange receive special privileges."[97] Bueno de Mesquita et al. argued that "political leaders need to hold office to accomplish any goal. Every leader answers to some group that retains her in power: her winning coalition … If the leader loses the loyalty of a sufficient number of members of the winning coalition, a challenger can remove and replace her in office."[98]

The theory argues that incumbent political leaders make three sets of decisions that influence how the groups evaluate their preferences for the incumbent's reselection. They are the ability to tax, the ability to spend, and the ability to distribute public and private goods.[99] Bueno de Mesquita et al. then argued that private goods are distributed only to that subset of the selectorate that forms the winning coalition. Therefore, a smaller winning coalition will reap greater rewards and be more loyal, as it is relatively well rewarded, and as the size of the winning coalition expands, leaders will shift their focus onto public goods.[100]

---

97. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, xi.
98. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival* 7–8.
99. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 8.
100. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 8.

The conciseness of the core argument of the Selectorate Theory may, at first, appear as little more than common sense. Its utility is that it allows the evaluation of essentially any decision made by a political leader against a common logical framework that does not change based on whether the decision at hand relates to international or domestic policy. It essentially reduces Putnam's famed two-level game[101] to a single game where the problem frame is the political survival of the incumbent. Both international and domestic policy choices are made in the context of sustaining the political leader's desired level of support.

The Selectorate Theory does not require that the winning coalition members or the selectorate believe that the incumbent performs well. It requires that a winning coalition does not believe that a challenger could perform better. It also requires that the assessed probability of that challenger being selected combined with the expected difference in performance is sufficient to outweigh the risk of being outside the winning coalition if they support the challenger and the challenger is not selected.[102]

The Selectorate Theory is adaptable to a range of selection mechanisms and regime types. The basic logic holds irrespective of whether the potential selection mechanism is an election, a coup, a popular revolution, or cases where all three could occur. It also works for autocracies and democracies as well as the anocracies that occupy a middle ground. They recall the body of evidence, most notably from Reiter and Stam, which argued that authoritarian governments are likely to win wars since they are

---

101. Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988).

102. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 65–69.

less willing to reallocate resources from providing private goods to their supporters toward providing the public goods needed to win a war.[103]

They also point out that there is evidence that democratization is correlated with an increased probability of conflict and point out empirical evidence for increases in the probability of conflict when democratization stalls or reverses.[104]

Figure 14 shows the core predictions of the Selectorate Theory. The winning coalition's welfare is greatest when either the winning coalition is smallest and can be richly rewarded with private goods on a per capita basis or paradoxically when it is the largest and public goods consume most of the leader-controlled resources. The winning coalition is less well-off between these two extremes, and the leader's survival is less secure. The smaller winning coalition has greater opportunities for kleptocracy and a larger penalty for deserting the incumbent.[105]

---

103. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 224–226 and Dan Reiter and Allan C. Stam, "Democracy and Battlefield Military Effectiveness," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 3 (1998), 259–277, https://www.jstor.org/stable/174514.

104. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 246–247.

105. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 129–132.

Figure 4.1

Core predictions of the selectorate theory

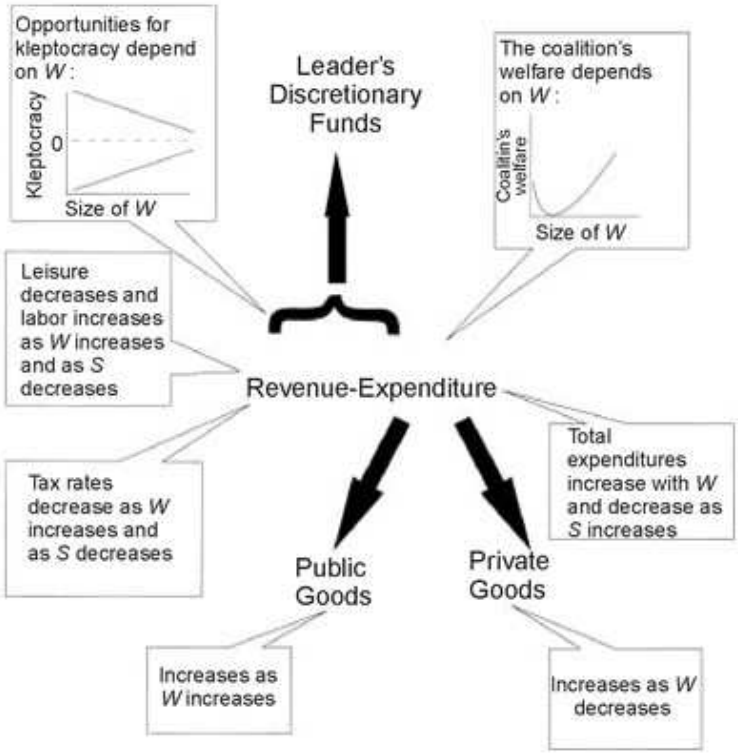

Figure 13. *The Selectorate Theory's predictions. Source: Bueno de Mesquita, et al. The Logic of Political Survival, 130, fig. 4.1.*

Expenditures increase with an increase in the winning coalition's size, which requires more rewards, and tax rates decrease as a result of these rewards. A decrease in the winning coalition's size would correlate with an increase in private goods, and an increase in the winning coalition's size would correlate with an increase in public goods. This has the potential to incentivize a budgetary deficit and also to make the provision of

intangible goods more attractive.[106] It is important for the model that public and private goods include intangible perceptions. Military success could generate perceptions of power and security that may have a positive value, and military failure can generate perceptions of insecurity and weakness that have a negative value.[107] In this way, foreign and military policy successes and failures can be accounted for within the theory's basic logic.

Of special significance is the way the model addresses war and the purposes of war. "The ends [that] state leaders seek in war depend on their domestic political situation. Victory in war allows the winning leader to impose conditions on the loser that benefit her winning coalition."[108] Bueno de Mesquita et al. pointed out that there is a range of public and private goods that war creates. They noted that providing goods includes bringing about or reversing, taking territory, installing a puppet, or changing policy.[109]

The Selectorate Theory's discussion of war aims is a useful complement to that in *RTIP*. Bueno de Mesquita et al. "classify war aims into two broad categories, territory and policy. Territorial aims seek to increase the resource base of the state from which the leader extracts resources; policy aims cover all other war aims that involve changing the policies of the defeated state."[110] According to the authors, "[A] leader's war aims

---

106. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 129–132.
107. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 23–31.
108. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 406.
109. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 405–424.
110. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 405.

depend crucially on her winning coalition. The absolute monarch … answers to a small winning coalition and so seeks goods and glory for himself. Presidents answer to a large coalition and so seek security and policy support through war."[111]

Bueno de Mesquita et al. argued that "leaders who rely on small winning coalitions have a greater incentive to pursue territorial aims."[112] They drew a rough parallel between policy goals generally being linked to public goods and territory to private goods and purposely defined security as a public good, conforming to the very narrow criteria of "the protection of the members of society from death, from wanton injury, and from theft by those who are armed."[113]

They also made an important distinction between a territory's value being primarily a result of its military importance rather than its economic value, whereby it produces the public good of security rather than producing private economic goods. They termed this a "strategic territory."[114]

They also noted the importance of the probability that the leaders or leadership challengers in a defeated state will seek to revise the war's outcome. In this situation, the victor has three primary options to secure peace after the conflict is terminated: keeping territory, creating a puppet government, and altering the defeated state's institutional character.[115]

---

111. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 407.
112. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 405–406.
113. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 407.
114. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 408.
115. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 409–424.

These war termination and post-war behaviors are important evidence in the dissertation since war initiation is deeply intertwined with deception and suspicion, while termination conditions are relatively more easily observed and characterized.

The argument of the Selectorate Theory in this regard is that the leader seeks to terminate a conflict at the point where domestic political goods and costs are optimal for their political survival, not at the point where the state's position in the international system is maximized. This means that if the state is winning and securing that win's goods requires the loser's active compliance, then it is reasonable to pay the cost and take the risks of fighting until the winning state can change the leading institutions of the loser. On the other hand, if the state is winning and securing the goods created by the win requires only the passive acquiescence of the loser, then the state will not fight on through the costs and risks involved in changing the regime and will terminate the conflict at the point it has achieved the minimum requirements to win. The theory considers accepting the loss of territory as passive, so territorial expansion does not require changing the regime or leader. Making policy changes in the state generally requires active acceptance of the terms on witnessing defeat, is more costly, and is less likely to be pursued by a state with a small winning coalition.[116]

The theory also makes more detailed predictions that are described as being of limited probabilistic strength since they are formatted for quantitative testing against a large body of states. The theory predicts the following: "1. The larger the winning coalition of a warring state, the less likely it is to seek to take territory from the opposing

116. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 405–414.

side. 2. The larger the size of the selectorate in a warring state, the more likely it is to seek territory as a war aim. The impact of selectorate size (S) should be most pronounced when WC [the winning coalition] is small."[117]

The Selectorate Theory predicts the following regarding the decision to install a puppet:

> 3. Puppets are not installed in large-coalition systems. 4. The larger the coalition in the victorious state (WC), the more likely the victorious leader is to replace the defeated leader with a puppet. 5. Subject to puppets not being installed in the largest coalition systems, the greater B's coalition, the greater the prospects that a puppet will be imposed on B.[118]

The Selectorate Theory predicts the following regarding the decision to change the institutions of the defeated state: "6. The larger the winning coalition in the victorious state, the more likely it is to alter institutions by reducing coalition size and increasing selectorate size in the defeated state. 7. The larger the winning coalition in the losing state, the more likely a large-coalition victor is to seek institutional changes."[119]

In addition to distinguishing between the territory of normal economic value and strategic territory primarily of military value, the seven predictions have three caveats. First, as general theories, they assume that all other factors are constant. In most specific situations, there will be many other factors impacting probabilities. Second, they include

---

117. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 419.

118. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*., 421. This citation is for a block quote. If formatting is lost it begins with "3. Puppets…" and ends with "…n B."

119. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 423.

some concepts from outside the theory itself. Third, they assume "that the interests of the victor and the defeated state will continue to be opposed after the war."[120]

The dissertation observed that there appears to be an even stronger linkage between international events and domestic politics in Russia than is the case in the United States, presumably as a result of history and geography. When testing for incongruence between behavior and expectations for the greedy/domination motive and the security/self-protection motive, the focus was primarily on the condition of the international variables of power and information. When testing for incongruence between behavior and expectations for the political survival motive, it was necessary to consider the domestic political variables and the international values. The international variables were important because some international problems became domestic political problems. Simultaneously, there was the possibility that the Russian president chose to address a domestic political problem through an international action intended primarily or partially to improve their chances of political survival. The approach to managing these considerations drew on the work of Amy Oakes.

In *Diversionary War: Domestic Unrest and International Conflict,* Amy Oakes presented a theory of how diversionary conflict cases can be explained by "the policy substitutability approach—which proposes that a government's choices result from the interaction between leader preferences and environmental factors."[121] A diversionary conflict is "defined by a leader's motivation, not by whether they successfully divert

---

120. Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 423–424.

121. Amy Oakes, *Diversionary War: Domestic Unrest and International Conflict* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 165.

public attention from domestic travails."[122] A non-diversionary conflict should be explainable by "a standard realist model focused on external threats and security challenges to national interests."[123]

In Oakes' policy substitutability approach, the causal pathway begins with domestic unrest either widely or within the elite or both, which is "significant enough to represent a fundamental threat to the continued legitimacy, capacity, or existence of a regime—it may even endanger the political system itself."[124] The government must then choose one or more options from a menu of policies that include diversionary war as well as "low-level diversionary conflicts against targets that are unlikely to fight back (... 'diversionary spectacles'), political reform, economic reform, repression, inviting foreign military intervention, and 'muddling through,' or delaying action."[125]

War is inherently risky. Launching a war for diversionary purposes is certainly possible but not consistent with the ethos of prudence in strategic planning. Oakes added a distinction, which implied lowering the risk to the lowest level: "Along with launching a full-scale diversionary war, the menu of common responses to domestic unrest includes low-level diversionary conflicts against targets that are unlikely to fight back (which I term "diversionary spectacles)."[126] Her comment on target choice is relevant to the

---

122. Oakes, *Diversionary War*, 15.

123. Oakes, *Diversionary War*, 96. Quoted from M. Taylor Fravel, "The Limits of Diversion: Rethinking Internal and External Conflict." *Security Studies* 19, no. 2 (2010): 307–341.

124. Oakes, *Diversionary War*, 14.

125. Oakes, *Diversionary War*, 7.

126. Oakes, *Diversionary War*, 7.

application of this general theory to Russia's case is. "If the government's primary motivation for provoking a crisis is a lasting improvement in public opinion, the government will prefer a mission where there is widespread support, such as reclaiming territory that has cultural or historical significance or defending the country against a known enemy."[127]

Leaders with fewer economic resources are more likely to choose a diversionary spectacle as the least expensive alternative to muddling through and hoping for the best. While a wealthy state can afford the resources to make a diversionary spectacle a short and decisive operation, a poorer state is more likely to find that its opponent can match its available military power with the result being that the intended spectacle escalates into a full-fledged war. Oakes attributed poorer states' inability to foresee this outcome to the human capacity for wishful thinking when all other options seem even worse.[128]

A significant challenge is that distinguishing between the use of force motivated by international motives and one staged as a political diversion using the available information can be easily done only if the international reasons are insignificant compared to the risk of the action. In the English language literature, the Argentine use of force against the United Kingdom in 1982 has been commonly used as an example. However, translated interviews and anecdotal dialogues with several Argentines suggested that the war was and is seen by a significant portion of the Argentine selectorate as a core security issue related to the territory that should be recognized as

---

127. Oakes, *Diversionary War*, 87.
128. Oakes, *Diversionary War*, 36.

their territory.[129] This led to an intuition that while diversionary explanations are important, they are subject to such strong differences in perception that it would be difficult to support strong claims with the publicly observable evidence. This was the decisive factor that led to the use of Bueno de Mesquita's theory rather than Amy Oakes' theory while considering domestic political issues.

Expectations for the testing of motives

It was expected that a long pattern of behaviors consistent with *RTIP*'s predictions for a state with the domination/greed motive, self-protection/security motive, or both would increase confidence that those motives explain the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force. Additionally, it was expected that a long pattern of behaviors consistent with the Selectorate Theory's predictions would increase confidence that domestic political motives explain the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force. Due to the way in which the design thinking method led to the iterative matching of increasingly credible theories with the explanations in the policy debate, we expected, at first glance, a degree of consistency between these motives and at least some major behaviors.

Rather than being satisfied with that observation, additional tests were needed. This was important both for academic rigor and since the policy audience is deeply committed to their assumptions and requires more persuasive evidence to revise those assumptions. As the purpose of the dissertation was different from the purpose of

---

129. Martin Middlebrook, *The Argentine Fight for the Falklands*. (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military Classics Book, 2003), Kindle.

Glaser's book, the testing method was also different. As described earlier, the method chosen for this involved examining the entire set of possible uses of force as closely as feasible and looking for cases of incongruence with motives. The predictions below were identified and recorded as likely sources of incongruence before the cases were built, although some were edited for clarity later. Some other incongruent behaviors were found during the cases, and they are discussed in the annexes and concluding chapters.

A significant challenge is that a state may take the same action to actualize different motives. The systemist diagrams suggested that the way the Russian Federation treated weaker powers without major allies would be telling. Across multiple counterparties and over time, a domination motive should lead to a pattern of much more aggressive behaviors and greater interference with the territory and policy of a weaker state than a self-protection motive.

Absent some modifying condition on a specific subcase or a scoping condition common to a period described later, the following Russian Federation behaviors were predicted to be **incongruent** with the domination/greed motive.

1. Failing to initiate or threaten military operations or conduct exercises directed toward neighboring states to establish Russian control over their policy and/or their territory when those states were less powerful with the risk likely being acceptable given that this motive would lead to accepting more risks than the others;
2. Failing to accept significant risk to the state when choosing how to conduct and terminate military operations aimed at changing the policy or territory of another state;

3. Failing to seek to maximize the state's power and military capability regardless of other states' behavior and relative power.

Absent some modifying condition on a specific subcase or a scoping condition common to a period described later, the following Russian Federation behaviors were predicted to be **incongruent** with the self-protection/security motive:[130]

4. Initiating or threatening military operations against non-threatening neighboring states or conducting exercises aimed at their compellence;

5. Failing to conduct military operations or exercises to prevent or halt another party from harming Russian interests after cooperative means had failed or clearly been not an option;

6. Failing to seek to maintain a reasonable relative balance of power with states whose behaviors are negative from a Russian perspective with arms races, arms control, or mutual restraint being options whose value depends on available resources and expected trends in the material and information variables;

7. Failing to pursue cooperative measures that maintain a reasonable relative balance of power at a lower level of risk than competitive measures or inaction;

8. Taking a significant military risk to seize the territory or change the policy of a state that is not doing anything perceived as threatening Russian interests;

9. Failing to attempt to deter a stronger state when its behavior is negative from a Russian perspective.

---

130. For consistency, this deliberately largely restates an earlier paragraph.

Absent some modifying condition on a specific subcase or a scoping condition common to a period described later; the following Russian Federation behaviors were predicted to be **incongruent** with the presidential political survival motive:[131]

10. Initiating or threatening military operations against neighboring states or conducting exercises when those actions are reasonably likely to harm the president's position in domestic politics;
11. Using force in a way that significantly violates a number of the seven predictions that the theory makes about the impact of the selectorate and winning coalition size on the war aims detailed above, and since the theory states that these are limited probabilistic predictions, a relatively large deviation would be required for significance;
12. Making a decision regarding using, not using, or how to use force that has a significant risk of causing harm to the winning coalition that is sufficient to reduce its size and power or causing harm sufficient to mobilize that portion of the selectorate outside the winning coalition;
13. Taking a significant risk of the action or inaction leading to the president being blamed for a defeat, a stalemate, or an overly costly victory;
14. Failing to conduct military operations or exercises to prevent or halt another party from harming the selectorate or, more importantly, the winning coalition.

---

131. For consistency, this deliberately largely restates an earlier paragraph.

Literature regarding fundamental assumptions, rationality, and relevant theoretical issues

This section provides a background on the basic assumptions and foundational ideas that are influential in the U.S. policy debate. Additionally, it provides a background on what is known about rationality.

In *Theory of International Politics,* Kenneth Waltz's arguments in favor of defensive realism were based on the argument that states exist under anarchic conditions, "units worry about their survival, [and] the worry conditions their behavior."[132]

> In anarchy, security is the highest end. Only if survival is assured can states safely seek such other goals as tranquility, profit, and power. Because power is a means and not an end, states prefer to join the weaker of two coalitions. They cannot let power, a possibly useful means, become the end they pursue. The goal the system encourages them to seek is security. Increased power may or may not serve that end. Given two coalitions, for example, the greater success of one in drawing members to it may tempt the other to risk preventive war, hoping for victory through surprise before disparities widen. If states wished to maximize power, they would join the stronger side, and we would see not balances forming but a world hegemony forged. This does not happen because balancing, not bandwagoning, is the behavior induced by the system. The first concern of states is not to maximize power but to maintain their positions in the system.[133]

This means that contrary to liberal internationalism, relative rather than absolute gain is prioritized since "a state worries about a division of possible gains that may favor

---

132. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 105, Kindle.

133. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics,* 126. This citation is for a block quote. Should the block quote formatting be lost the quote begins with "In anarchy…" and ends with "…in the system."

others more than itself."[134] True partnership and agreements that promote interdependence are rejected, as the "state worries it may become dependent on others."[135] Balancing rather than bandwagoning occurs since, in the long run, the strongest power is the greatest threat to the state regardless of the strongest power's current intentions and capabilities.[136]

In *The Origins of Alliances,* Stephen Walt argued that states do not arrange themselves to balance power and prevent one from becoming dominant but instead balance against threats.[137] States decide to exhibit this behavior by assessing "factors that will affect the level of threat that states may pose: aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power, and aggressive intentions."[138] For this reason, rather than balancing based solely on power, states support powers with positive intentions toward them and will only seek to balance against states that they assess to have offensive intentions and capabilities and that are a real threat to them due to geography and power.[139]

John Mearsheimer made the definitive case for offensive realism in the *Tragedy of Great Power Politics.* He argued that "the overriding goal of each state is to maximize

---

134. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 106.

135. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 106.

136. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 126–127.

137. Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 86.

138. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances,* 606.

139. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances,* 784.

its share of world power, which means gaining power at the expense of other states … Their ultimate aim is to be the hegemon—that is, the only great power in the system."[140]

The assumptions of Mearsheimer's theory are described below:

> The principal motive behind great-power behavior is survival. In anarchy, however, the desire to survive encourages states to behave aggressively. Nor does my theory classify states as more or less aggressive on the basis of their economic or political systems. Offensive realism makes only a handful of assumptions about great powers, and these assumptions apply equally to all great powers. Except for differences in how much power each state controls, the theory treats all states alike. The first assumption is that the international system is anarchic, which does not mean that it is chaotic or riven by disorder … The second assumption is that great powers inherently possess some offensive military capability, which gives them the wherewithal to hurt and possibly destroy each other … The third assumption is that states can never be certain about other states' intentions. Specifically, no state can be sure that another state will not use its offensive military capability to attack the first state … The fourth assumption is that survival is the primary goal of great powers … The fifth assumption is that great powers are rational actors ... When the five assumptions are married together, they create powerful incentives for great powers to think and act offensively with regard to each other. In particular, three general patterns of behavior result: fear, self-help, and power maximization.[141]

Mearsheimer also discussed "the stopping power of water" and distinguished between "insular states" and "continental" states.[142] He pointed out that the primary insular great powers such as the United Kingdom and the United States (since it became a great power) have not been invaded. On the other hand, most continental great powers

---

140. John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics,* revised edition. (New York: Norton, 2003), 2.

141. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 53–54. This citation is for a block quote. Should the block quote formatting be lost the quote begins with "The principal motive…" and ends with "…power maximization."

142. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 114–128.

have been. He provided examples of France and Russia. He pointed out that in the modern era, Russia has been invaded five times (by Napoleon and allies in 1812, by the British Empire, France, and the Ottomans in 1854, by Germany and its allies in World War I and World War II, and by Poland in 1921).[143] He did not mention the military intervention by the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, France, and others in the Russian Civil War, which is largely forgotten in Western policy circles.[144]

Hedley Bull's *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* argued that there are different kinds of anarchy. Whereas the Hobbesian anarchy of Realism dictates self-centered self-help, Bull argued that what exists in the international order is an anarchical society. Anarchy exists because there is no central authority regulating the states. It is also true that states have developed relationships consistent with the concept of society. Bull stated the three purposes of society: security, the enforcement of agreements, and property rules.[145] Logically, a member of the society whose actions are perceived as harmful to these purposes by one or more other members would risk some consequence. This is a different dynamic than would occur if every state expected the others to act only on behalf of their interests.

Much of international relations theory makes assumptions about anarchy and its results. In practice, it may not be wise to make overly strong and generic assumptions either due to Bull's argument or due to Alexander Wendt's arguments that social

---

143. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 126–128.

144. Paul Jussel, *The U.S. Invasion of Russia*, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Root Hall visual display viewed 2017).

145. Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 4th ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

construction frames anarchy in ways that are not predetermined. He argued that "self-help and power politics do not follow either logically or causally from anarchy and that if today we find ourselves in a self-help world, this is due to process, not structure."[146] This justifies an approach that considers that process rather than accepting that behavior is uniformly dictated by anarchy.

In *People, States, and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*, Barry Buzan argued, "the national security problem cannot be understood without reference to factors at all three levels of analysis."[147] The dissertation addressed this by using both *RTIP* and the Selectorate Theory to consider each level in a manner that meets the purpose of the dissertation better than any alternative found.

In *International Relations Theory: The Game-Theoretic Approach* and later in "Game Theory and the Future of International Security," Andrew Kydd offered a pragmatic approach to employing a rational strategic choice game theory approach while accounting for bounded rationality.[148] Usefully, he summarized and characterized much of what is known about bounded rationality and limits on optimization into the "five main

---

146. Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 394, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706858.

147. Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1983), 245.

148. Andrew H. Kydd, *International Relations Theory: The Game Theoretic Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) and Alexandra Gheciu, William C. Wohlforth, and Andrew H. Kydd, "Game Theory and the Future of International Security," in *The Oxford Handbook of International Security*, eds. Alexandra Gheciu and William C. Wohlforth (Oxford University Press, 2018), https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198777854.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780198777854-e-13.

explanations of inefficiency in international relations."[149] Three of the explanations, which he attributed to "the bargaining theory of conflict as articulated by Fearon," were "undervalued or non-feasible intermediate outcomes," "private information," and "changing power."[150] Two of the explanations, which he attributed to Kenneth Oye and "the literature on enforcement, usually known as cooperation theory," were "monitoring problems" and "impatience."[151]

From 2015 to 2016, *International Security* ran a series of articles where Charles Glaser, Andrew Kydd, Mark Haas, John Owen, and Sebastian Rosato debated about the extent to which great powers can assess intentions.[152] Sebastian Rosato argued that due to uncertainty, private information, incentives for deception, and other reasons, "great powers are uncertain about the current and future intentions of their peers."[153] The others in this debate countered that history is full of examples where states accepted this uncertainty and the risks of making policy based on such assessments of intentions.[154]

---

149. Kydd, *International Relations Theory*, 4.

150. Kydd, *International Relations Theory*, 4–5. and Kenneth A. Oye, *Cooperation under Anarchy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986). and James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995), http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706903.

151. Kydd, *International Relations Theory*, 4–5.

152. Sebastian Rosato, "The Inscrutable Intentions of Great Powers," *International Security* 39, no. 3 (2015), https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00190, Charles L. Glaser et al., "Can Great Powers Discern Intentions?" *International Security* 40, no. 3 (2015), and Charles L. Glaser et al., "Correspondence: Can Great Powers Discern Intentions?," *International Security* 40, no. 3 (2016), https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_c_00230.

153. Rosato, "The Inscrutable Intentions of Great Powers," 86–87.

154. Glaser et al., "Correspondence: Can Great Powers Discern Intentions?"

There are important arguments that state that key parts of structural theories, including the offense–defense theory, are impractical. Kier Lieber argued, "[T]he standard tools of military net assessment are not nearly as fine-grained as necessary for states to identify the conditions conducive for cooperative security policies as outlined in Glaser's theory. Second, the task is logically flawed. Even if practically possible, states could not use the results of that analysis to shape arming and force posture decisions to yield the security benefits envisioned."[155]

Famed military historians Williamson Murray and Allan Millett demonstrated in detail that great powers had made such assessments with a reasonable degree of success in *Calculations: Net Assessment and The Coming of World War II*.[156] What Lieber may have been describing is less a problem with the tools of military net assessment than a problem with contemporary international security scholars and military professionals' understanding of the analytical tools the other group uses. This limits the potential of both scholarship and strategy making.

The proponents and critics of the offense–defense theory miss important distinctions. Post-World War II military judgment has always favored defense on a per unit of power basis at the tactical level, but this can be overcome by amassing power at the tactical level or by operational and strategic means. The basic logic is not invalidated because scholars and policymakers struggle with the calculations involved. Although

---

155. Keir A. Lieber, "Mission Impossible: Measuring the Offense-Defense Balance with Military Net Assessment," *Security Studies* 20, no. 3 (2011): 452, https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2011.599193.

156. Williamson Murray and Allan Reed Millett, *Calculations: Net Assessment and the Coming of World War II* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

military professionals could do the math to make these judgments, they do not use these concepts. Both scholars and military professionals will benefit from sharing their views on this matter.

Herbert Simon's concept of bounded rationality formalized the common-sense observation that it is unrealistic to equate rationality with perfect information and decisions and that a more realistic standard of rationality must be based on "a kind of rational behavior that is compatible with the access to information and the computational capacity."[157] He also developed the concept of satisficing, which holds that rather than seeking the "optimal path" that perfect rationality and information would allow, an actual actor will simply pursue "a path that will permit satisfaction at some specified level of all of its needs."[158] As Nancy Gallagher observed, these concepts were highly relevant to the dissertation since the judgments made in the process "assume[d] bounded rationality in pursuit of various motives, not perfect rationality."[159]

As the subcases accumulated, it became increasingly clear that many "of the problems in interactions occur because the US and Russia misinterpret each other's motives rather than having perfect information about what the other side wants and expects from them."[160] Finally, from a practical standpoint, "strategic planners also have

---

157. Herbert A. Simon, "A Behavioral Model of Rational Choice," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 69, no. 1 (1955): 99, https://doi.org/10.2307/1884852.

158. Herbert A. Simon, "Rational Choice and the Structure of the Environment," *Psychological Review* 63, no. 2 (1956): 136, http://pages.ucsd.edu/~mckenzie/Simon1956PsychReview.pdf.

159. Personal communication from Nancy Gallagher.

160. Personal communication from Nancy Gallagher.

bounded rationality, so the process needs to work reasonably well with imperfect information and be able to self-correct if assumptions are proven wrong and strategy choices don't have [the] desired result."[161]

Stephen Van Evera argued that misperception is central to the logic of both the spiral model and the deterrence model. In the spiral model, conflicts occur due to the misperception that punishment will improve a state's behavior. In the deterrence model, conflict results from two misperceptions. First, a state thinks that it can improve another's behavior with appeasement, and then the other concludes that increasingly bad behavior will be rewarded.[162]

In *Knowing the Adversary: Leaders, Intelligence, and Assessment of Intentions in International Relations,* Keren Yarhi-Milo made an argument that challenges conventional approaches to intentions. Yarhi-Milo said, "[C]apabilities, strategic military doctrine, and behavior theses fail to account fully for the empirical patterns we observe."[163] She argued that a better approach is her "selective attention approach."[164] According to this approach, "[W]hen gauging intentions, decision-makers do not pay equal attention to all costly signals made by their adversaries. Nor do they restrict their focus exclusively to costly actions. Rather, they rely on their personal impressions and

---

161. Personal communication from Nancy Gallagher.

162. Stephen Van Evera, "The Spiral Model vs. The Deterrence Model," from course material for *17.42 Causes and Prevention of War Spring 2009* (Cambridge: MIT, 2009), 1–2, *MIT OpenCourseWare*, http://ocw.mit.edu.

163. Keren Yarhi-Milo, *Knowing the Adversary: Leaders, Intelligence, and Assessment of Intentions in International Relations* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014), 241.

164. Yarhi-Milo, *Knowing the Adversary*, 241.

are influenced by indicators that are consistent with their personal or professional theories about how the world operates as well as their preexisting stance toward an adversary."[165]

The theories and ideas discussed above are important since they address the sources of fundamental assumptions made by many scholars and strategic planners, which have a large impact on their thinking but are often unstated. They also address the judgment problems inherent in scholarly and policy efforts to understand and shape behavior.

Review of illustrative sources sampled from the debate

This section provides a literature review of the selected sources that were used to represent the policy debate and synthesize explanations. The sources were grouped with the explanation they helped inspire. The sources were not expected to align exactly with the general theories chosen. In the research process, this created something of a firewall between the unconventional approach in the first phase and the more traditional case study approach in the second. No one source is particularly decisive, and it would not have been a particularly fruitful pursuit to further shuffle the sources between the explanations. It is important to note that the samples were not intended to represent the life's work of any particular scholar.

One of the great Western policy debates among policymakers and scholars regarding the Cold War was over the sources of Soviet behavior. Their dominant positions argued about whether the Soviet Union was inherently expansionistic for ideological and great power reasons or whether it was more fearful and self-protective.

---

165. Yarhi-Milo, *Knowing the Adversary*, 241.

Other arguments focused on historical, cultural, or domestic political sources of Soviet behavior. There was a notable loss of expertise on the Kremlin's decision-making after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, although the quantity and quality of publicly available sources have made a recovery since the 2008 armed conflict between Georgia and the Russian Federation. The sample of sources was prepared in early 2018. While it would have been differently weighted if done earlier or later, the major points of contention have been broadly similar since 2008, and the debate would have been very limited in scope from 1991 to 2008.

Selected sources that helped in synthesizing the explanation of the domination motive

The sources in this section were the most important of those in the group of sources that were used to synthesize the first of the four explanations evaluated, which was that the domination/greed motive explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force. The full explanation is found in the first chapter in the section titled "The first explanation: The domination/greed motive explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force." This explanation was synthesized to be comparable with the "purely greedy" type of state with only the greed motive from *RTIP*.[166] The greed motive refers to "nonsecurity motives for expansion, which can include the desire to increase its wealth, territory, or prestige, and to spread its political ideology or religion, when these are not required to preserve the state's security."[167] Historically, this kind of explanation has largely dealt with territorial

166. Glaser, *RTIP*, 36–37.
167. Glaser, *RTIP*, 36.

changes, but given the current character of conflict, it also applies to coercive uses of force to, for example, change another state's policies or leaders or force disadvantageous economic arrangements. The implication for U.S. strategic planning is that preventing Russian use of force against U.S. interests requires **only** that the Russian Federation be deterred from using force. The weakening of deterrence aimed at the Russian Federation would increase the likelihood of force being used.[168]

This explanation was mostly absent from the U.S. scholarly and policy debate in the 1990s and early 2000s when the West perceived Russia to be on a converging trajectory with what seemed to be an irreversibly dominant liberal international order. It gained some prominence in scholarly and policy debates in the U.S. and Europe after the 2008 war in Georgia. It is now the dominant explanation in published U.S. and NATO intelligence, policy, and strategy documents.

Both President Obama's 2015 U.S. *NSS* and President Trump's 2017 *NSS* treated Russia as a unitary actor and appeared to assume aggressive and malicious Russian motives.[169] Diplomatic, military, and intelligence professionals proceeded to plan and act based on this assumption. Secretary of Defense James Mattis produced an *NDS of the United States* that assumed Russia had malicious motives. It said, "Russia has violated the borders of nearby nations and pursues veto power over the economic, diplomatic, and

---

168. The implications were drawn from the overall logic of *RTIP,* in particular "Figure 2.2. Explanation for Intentions" on page 39.

169. Barrack Obama, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2010), maintained by National Security Strategy archive website, http://nssarchive.us/national-security-strategy-2015/ and Trump, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*.

security decisions of its neighbors."[170] Speaking about Russia in 2018, he said, "[C]learly, NATO is not a threat. But, right now, Russia is choosing to be a strategic competitor, for any number of reasons. But the bottom line is, NATO is not a threat. And they know it. They have no doubt about it."[171]

The Secretary of Defense's 2018 *NDS* and the CJCS's 2018 *NMS* were classified, and only summaries were made public. As a result of the release dates of these summaries, the *NMS* could not be included in the sample. A summary that was unclassified later revealed that the *NMS* followed the underlying assumptions in the *NSS* and the unclassified summary of the *NDS* quoted above.[172]

The USEUCOM's military theater strategy became a classified document, which is problematic for analyzing U.S. strategic planning since the Russian Federation is part of the USEUCOM's area of responsibility. Fortunately, as one of 11 U.S. Combatant Commanders (CCDRs), the USEUCOM Commander provides an annual posture statement to Congress. From this, we can see that the assumptions about Russia also

---

170. James Mattis, *Unclassified Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Defense, 2018), 1, https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf.

171. James Mattis, "Face the Nation May 28, 2017 Transcript: Secretary Mattis," *CBS News Face the Nation*, May 28, 2017, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/face-the-nation-may-28-2017-transcript-secretary-mattis/.

172. United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Description of the National Military Strategy 2018* (Washington D.C.: The Joint Staff, 2018), https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Publications/UNCLASS_2018_National_Military_Strategy_Description.pdf.

aligned with the greedy motive.[173] The person serving as the Commander of USEUCOM also serves as NATO's SACEUR. NATO documents followed similar assumptions.[174]

Interestingly, the Department of State and the USAID were very closely aligned with the view of Russia held by the military. In the *Joint Strategic Plan FY* [Fiscal Year] *2018–2022*, the Secretary of State and the Administrator of USAID stated, "China and Russia directly challenge an international order based on democratic norms, respect for human rights, and peace."[175] It was unusual that given the diplomatic and development missions of their institutions, the response was largely about enabling military deterrence: "to counter Russian aggression and coercion, the Department will lead allies in enhancing NATO's deterrence and defense posture, promote deeper NATO partnerships with like-minded nations, and build bridges between NATO and the EU to confront the full range of hybrid threats."[176]

Meanwhile, the United States Intelligence Community made similar assumptions in its public documents. In its public summary of classified work on the Russian

---

173. Curtis Scaparrotti, *Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing on the United States European Command, F.Y. 2019 Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, Commander of the U.S. European Command and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Testif*ies (Stuttgart: United States European Command, March 12, 2018.), https://www.eucom.mil/media-library/transcript/36273/senate-armed-services-committee-hearing-on-the-united-stateseuropean-command-f-y-2019.

174. Denis Mercier, *NATO Strategic Foresight Analysis 2017* (NATO Allied Command Transformation Public Website: NATO Allied Command Transformation, 2017), https://www.act.nato.int/futures-work.

175. Rex W. Tillerson and Mark Green, *Joint Strategic Plan: 2018–2022* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of State and United States Agency for International Development, February 2018), 29, https://www.state.gov/joint-strategic-plan/.

176. Tillerson, *Joint Strategic Plan*, 30.

campaign directed at the 2016 U.S. election, the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) stated the following: "We assess Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the US presidential election. Russia's goals were to undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency."[177]

Beyond the Executive Branch, there were assumptions about Russia being a malign actor in numerous Senate and House of Representative documents in the sample, most notably the *Open Hearing on the Intelligence Community's Assessment on Russian Activities and Intentions in the 2016 U.S. Elections: Hearing before the Select Committee on Intelligence of the United States Senate.*[178]

Beyond the U.S. government, similar assumptions can be found in NATO documents despite the careful diplomacy of language necessitated by consensus among all members on major policy statements. In NATO's *Strategic Foresight Analysis: 2017 Report*, which was signed by French General Denis Mercier as the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT), the problem is described as follows: "As Russia increasingly asserts claims on its 'near-abroad' and economic exclusion rights, disputes

---

177. United States National Intelligence Council, *Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent U.S. Elections* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, January 6, 2017), ii, https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf.

178. United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *Open Hearing on the Intelligence Community's Assessment on Russian Activities and Intentions in the 2016 U.S. Elections: Hearing before the Select Committee on Intelligence of the United States Senate, One Hundred Fifteenth Congress, First Session, Tuesday, January 10, 2017* (Washington, D.C.: United States Senate, 2018), https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/hearings/open-hearing-intelligence-communitys-assessment-russian-activities-and-intentions-2016-us.

with regional nations will heighten and maritime lines of commerce will be threatened."[179]

The most carefully nuanced of the European NATO allies on the issue of Russia has long been Germany. Even its 2016 *White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr*, which was signed by Chancellor Doctor Angela Merkel, took a negative view of Russian motives: "Russia is openly calling the European peace order into question with its willingness to use force to advance its interests and to unilaterally redraw borders guaranteed under international law, as it has done in Crimea and eastern Ukraine."[180]

In the interest of brevity, given the need to discuss the policy documents making this argument, only a representative pair of scholars are highlighted here. Several academics made similar arguments, but it was a surprisingly smaller number than expected. Interestingly, relatively few of the most important scholars made this kind of argument. As discussed later, even Mearsheimer, who might have been expected to make this argument as the leading offensive realist, took a very different position than the researcher expected.

Leon Aron argued that while Putin is central to the current situation and that his motives were initially more international than domestic. He stated that the cause of

---

179. Denis Mercier, *NATO Strategic Foresight Analysis 2017* (NATO Allied Command Transformation Public Website: NATO Allied Command Transformation, 2017), 65, https://www.act.nato.int/futures-work.

180. Angela Merkel, *2016 Whitepaper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr* (Berlin: Bundesregierung, 2016), 31, https://www.gmfus.org/publications/white-paper-german-security-policy-and-future-bundeswehr.

Russian use of force in Syria, Ukraine, and foreign elections was Putin's "nostalgia for Soviet power."[181] Aron argued that Putin's beliefs about the international system are largely zero-sum. The implication was that the Western response should, therefore, seek to "engineer for him unambiguous setbacks and reversals—in Ukraine, Syria and wherever else he chooses to go next."[182]

It was the Lithuanian-born and British-educated critical theorist Agnia Grigas who first made major contributions to the debate on national identity and energy security issues between Russia and the Baltic States.[183] More recently, she has warned against "Russia's and the Putin regime's consistent policy trajectory that seeks territorial gains in the former Soviet Republics, especially where three factors are present: (1) a large and concentrated population of Russian speakers or ethnic Russians; (2) that population resides in territories bordering Russia; (3) the population is receptive to Russia's influence."[184] Further, she argued that the objectives of Russian behavior are "reimperialization" by regaining territories and influence and "Russia's structural and historical predilections have played the key role in its quest for reimperialization, while Putin's leadership and related domestic factors have been strongly contributing rather than central factors."[185]

---

181. Leon Aron, *Putin's Goal: Revenge and Restoration* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, June 14, 2016). Several versions with this title have appeared and some have different text.

182. Aron, *Putin's Goal*.

183. Agnia Grigas, *The Politics of Energy and Memory between the Baltic States and Russia* (Farnham, Massachusetts: Ashgate 2013).

184. Grigas, *Beyond Crimea*, 9.

185. Grigas, *Beyond Crimea*, 16.

Selected sources that helped in synthesizing the explanation for the self-protection motive

This section highlights some selections from the sources used to synthesize the second explanation, which was that the self-protection/security motive explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force. This explanation is fully detailed in the similarly named section of Chapter 1. The explanation for the self-protection motive was modeled and tested using the "security-seeking" type of state with only the security motive from *RTIP*.[186] According to that theory, the word security, when used to describe a motive, "measures the state's prospects for preserving control of its territory, avoiding war to protect its territory, and suffering low costs in fighting if war occurs."[187] The implication for U.S. strategic planning is that preventing the Russian Federation's use of military force against U.S. interests driven by this motive requires that the Russian Federation perceive that its security will be assured by cooperation.[188] The existence of this motive creates the possibility of the security dilemma/spiral dilemma.

Arguments consistent with this explanation entered U.S. and European policy debates in a limited way during the NATO military operations in Bosnia and Serbia in the late 1990s. Before then, there had been much more optimism about the relationship's future on both sides, but doubts began to grow around that time. Russian choices about using force from roughly 1991 to 1997 included a great many choices about post-Cold

---

186. Glaser, *RTIP*, 36–37.

187. Glaser, *RTIP*, 35.

188. The implications were drawn from the overall logic of *RTIP,* in particular "Figure 2.2 Explanation for Intentions" on page 39.

War/Soviet Union transition issues and countering separatism and extremism inside the former Soviet borders. This occurred within a largely cooperative, almost liberal, international relations framework that has now been greatly weakened. The 120 sources sampled were intended to represent the debate as it stood at the time of the sampling in 2019. Samples collected in the 1990s and early 2000s would have shown an assumption in U.S. strategic documents that Russia was neither threatening nor threatened and was moving slowly toward facing internal problems on its path to becoming more Western, democratic, and cooperative. Russian leaders and commentators have provided this explanation fairly consistently.

In 2000, the Russian Federation political scientist, Cold War commentator, and former member of the Duma Alexey Arbatov wrote, "[T]he war in Yugoslavia did away with the remaining hopes for a genuine security partnership and military cooperation between Russia and NATO. Once again, Russia perceives NATO as its primary defense concern for the foreseeable future."[189] Arbatov provided evidence of a major change in Russian opinion that led directly to an "overwhelming vote for hardline politicians and nationalist parties in both the parliamentary elections of December 1999 and the presidential elections of March 2000. It significantly triggered a major revision of the

---

189. Alexey Arbatov, *The Transformation of Russian Military Doctrine: Lessons Learned from Kosovo and Chechnya* (Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany: United States Department of Defense George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, 2000), 1–2, https://shib.idm.umd.edu/shibboleth-idp/profile/SAML2/POST/SSO;jsessionid=D7623622F6B508CFCF5FE4C1A8A3E9A7.1?execution=e1s2.

Russian Federation National Security Concept and the Russian Federation Military Doctrine."[190]

Kenneth Waltz, who was also writing in 2000, argued in "NATO Expansion: A Realist's View" that NATO expansion would be perceived as a threat that Russia could not ignore.

> The reasons for expanding NATO are weak. The reasons for opposing expansion are strong. It draws new lines of division in Europe, alienates those left out, and can find no logical stopping place west of Russia. It weakens those Russians most inclined towards liberal democracy and a market economy. It strengthens Russians of opposite inclination. It reduces hope for further large reductions of nuclear weaponry. It pushes Russia towards China instead of drawing Russia towards Europe and America. NATO, led by America, scarcely considered the plight of its defeated adversary. Throughout modern history, Russia has been rebuffed by the West, isolated and at times surrounded. Many Russians believe that, by expanding, NATO brazenly broke promises it made in 1990 and 1991 that former WTO [Warsaw Treaty Organization] members would not be allowed to join NATO.[191]

Waltz was not justifying future Russian actions, but he warned that Realist theory logically led one to conclude that NATO expansion could be a part of a causal chain that leads to a serious Russian reaction. In a similar vein, George Kennan, the author of *The Sources of Soviet Behavior*,[192] commented in 1998, "I think the Russians will gradually

---

190. Arbatov, *The Transformation of Russian Military Doctrine*, 3.

191. Kenneth N. Waltz, "NATO Expansion: A Realist's View," *Contemporary Security Policy* 21, no. 2 (2000): 30, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13523260008404253. This citation is for a block quote. Should the block quote formatting be lost the quote begins with "The reasons…" and ends with "…join NATO."

192. George Kennan, "The Kennan 'Long Telegram': Moscow, February 22, 1946," ed. Kenneth M. Jensen, *Origins of the Cold War: The Novikov, Kennan, and Roberts "Long Telegrams" of 1946* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1991).

react quite adversely and it will affect their policies. I think it is a tragic mistake. There was no reason for this whatsoever. No one was threatening anyone else."[193]

Russian journalist Mikhail Zygar wrote that "according to Kremlin aides, the war in Iraq permanently changed Putin's attitude toward the United States."[194] He also highlighted two subsequent events that he argued were very important to the thinking of Russian President Putin and his inner circle. The first was that in 2004, many Kremlin insiders came to believe that "the revolutions on Russia's borders in Georgia, Ukraine, and even Abkhazia were the result of an anti-Russian plot ... Moreover, it was obvious that the next target of the overseas patrons of the color revolutions would be Russia itself."[195] The second event was that in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, "Bush's approval rating fell through the floor ... Bush, whom Putin believed to be a far stronger leader than himself, turned out to be a weakling. This gave Putin huge confidence and radically changed the tone of Russia's negotiations with the United States."[196]

A critical, if true, insight into decision-making on Crimea provided by Mikhail Zygar was that according to sources close to President Putin, "[t]he decision to return Crimea to ... was very risky ... [But] the Crimean population was overwhelmingly in favor of joining Russia ... the Ukrainian government was in disarray, and there was no

---

193. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault," 83.

194. Mikhail Zygar, *All the Kremlin's Men: Inside the Court of Vladimir Putin* (New York: Public Affairs, 2016), 35–37

195. Zygar, *All the Kremlin's Men*, 106.

196. Zygar, *All the Kremlin's Men*, 138–139.

one to give any orders to the military to defend the peninsula ... Despite the years of talk about the need to retake Crimea, there was, in fact, no concrete plan."[197]

In 2008, Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev changed positions, with Medvedev becoming President and Putin becoming Prime Minister. Escalating tensions with Georgia culminated in a war in August 2008. Making the official announcement of Russia's invasion of Georgia, President Medvedev explained Russian behavior: "Last night, Georgian troops committed what amounts to an act of aggression against Russian peacekeepers and the civilian population in South Ossetia. What took place is a gross violation of international law and of the mandates that the international community gave Russia as a partner in the peace process."[198]

In *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, scholar Andrei Tsygankov argued that the 2008 conflict in Georgia followed a long series of Western uses of military force:

> "International law was silent in the Caucasus because it had been silent when Yugoslavia and Iraq were attacked by Western powers without approval of the United Nations of which Russia is a member. Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, too, followed the West's recognition of Kosovo, which had established a dangerous precedent for redrawing the political map of the world."[199]

---

197. Zygar, *All the Kremlin's Men*, 276.

198. Dmitry Medvedev, "Dmitry Medvedev Made a Statement on the Situation in South Ossetia," *Kremlin Website*, Updated August 8, 2008, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/1043.

199. Andrei Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy Change and Continuity in National Identity*, 3rd ed. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 216.

The U.S. realist scholar John Mearsheimer wrote "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin" in 2014. He argued that those who attributed the conflict to Putin and an aggressive quest to renew Soviet-style power were wrong. The true source of the crisis was Russian fears regarding NATO enlargement and Western attempts to bring Ukraine into the West as a NATO and EU member. This interference culminated in the color revolution that drove out Ukraine's pro-Russian government.[200] "The West's triple package of policies—NATO enlargement, EU expansion, and democracy promotion—added fuel to a fire waiting to ignite."[201] He rejected what he called a belief "that Europe can be kept whole and free on the basis of such liberal principles as the rule of law, economic interdependence, and democracy."[202]

In 2016, Alexey Arbatov argued, "Moscow triggered the current state of relations between 2011 and 2012. The Kremlin decided not to put up with the model of cooperation at that time. Russia believed its position in the world was not acknowledged, and its relations with the West had not been established on an equal footing."[203] He described the political and military mechanics that resulted from the subsequent interaction of Western and Russian behaviors: "[T]he United States needs to respond so

---

200. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault," 77–79.

201. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault," 80.

202. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault," 78.

203. Alexey Arbatov, "A Look at International Relations from a Russian Viewpoint," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Website*, 26 August 2016, http://carnegie.ru/2016/08/26/look-at-international-relations-from-russian-viewpoint-pub-64827.

that their leading role in NATO and their promises of security are taken seriously. In Moscow, of course, we are not going to allow such moves to be made at our expense. So, Russia responds the only way it can, and the vicious circle continues."[204]

In 2014, President Putin made two important addresses regarding the invasion of Ukraine. The first was to the Duma, and the second was to the Valdai Discussion Club. In these speeches, he argued that Russia was forced to prevent Sevastopol from becoming a NATO naval base from which Russia would be excluded. He had to protect Crimean Russians, Ukrainians, and Tartars from the consequences of an allegedly failed Ukrainian state and increasing Western provocations. What received the most attention and raised the alarm was his statement about protecting Russians everywhere.[205] This was widely seen as a threat to move against Estonia and other states with significant Russian minorities.

Danish constructivist Mette Skak made an argument for Russian behavior rooted in the concept of strategic culture. She argued, "The Kremlin's threat perception evolved from a perception of vulnerability to the Ukrainian Orange Revolution of 2004. The Arab Spring inspired a domino theory of color revolutions reiterated by other *siloviki* and

---

204. Arbatov, "A Look at International Relations from a Russian Viewpoint."

205. Vladimir Putin, "Address by President of the Russian Federation (Regarding the Annexation of Crimea)," *Kremlin Website*, March 18, 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603 and Vladimir Putin, "Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club in 2014," *Kremlin Website*, October 24, 2014, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603.

found in military and national security doctrines."[206] In her view, the Russian leadership is heavily weighted with former members of the KGB and other security services of the Soviet Union. Much of the strategic culture of these organizations has been transmitted to the current Russian ruling elite. In this environment, groupthink led to the interpretation that the events in Ukraine were a direct threat to the survival of their regime and resulted in intervention.[207] It could be argued that Skak was describing a political rather than military threat. As the Gerasimov speech showed, Russian decision-makers attribute color revolutions to U.S. political-military operations, not internal political problems. It is worth separate consideration whether this sense of vulnerability to soft power and covert influences is related to the Russian Federation's recently evolved military approach of using military force to directly target the policies and politics of other states while leaving their territory unconquered.

Charles Bartles is a U.S. Army Foreign Military Studies Office researcher who has looked at the nexus where Russian policy direction and military planning interact. According to Bartles, nuclear weapons are central to Russian strategy at both the global and regional levels. Russians fear that U.S. military capabilities such as Prompt Global Strike and Ballistic Missile Defense may cripple the deterrent value of Russia's nuclear

---

206. Mette Skak, "Russian Strategic Culture: The Role of Today's Chekisty," *Contemporary Politics* 22, no. 3 (2016): 324, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2016.1201317.

207. Mette Skak, "Russian Strategic Culture," 324.

forces.[208] Bartles assessed that "Russia believes that the only thing deterring the United States from more involvement in Ukraine is Russian nuclear weapons and the strategic deterrence they provide."[209]

Bartles also sought to correct what he said was a misperception that Russian General Gerasimov laid out a Russian concept of hybrid warfare in his famous 2013 speech and article. Instead, Gerasimov was describing his view that a new Western strategy was emerging that threatened Russia. This Western way of war begins with the creation of political opposition inside a target state. It then proceeds to create an internal crisis that provokes a violent government reaction. This is used to justify a war where Western airpower works with special operations forces and intelligence agencies to topple a regime that has been non-compliant with Western wishes.[210]

U.S. structural realist Stephen Walt argued that it is a mistake to believe that the traditional deterrence model against an aggressive state is the correct diagnosis of Russian motives and the response to Russia's behavior. The basis of this argument was Walt's assessment that in Ukraine and elsewhere, "it is lingering fear, rather than relentless ambition, that underpins Russia's response in Ukraine."[211] He argued that a

---

208. Charles K. Bartles, "Russian Threat Perception and the Ballistic Missile Defense System," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 30, no. 2 (April–June 2017): 152–158, https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2017.1307016.

209. Bartles, "Russian Threat Perception," 168.

210. Charles K. Bartles, "Getting Gerasimov Right," *Military Review* 96, no. 1 (January–February 2016): 30–37, https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20160228_art009.pdf.

211. Stephen Walt, "Why Arming Kiev Is a Really, Really Bad Idea," *Foreign Policy*, 9 February 2015, https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/02/09/how-not-to-save-ukraine-arming-kiev-is-a-bad-idea/.

better model for explaining what is occurring and responding comes from the spiral model.[212]

Walt also argued that we must not misapply the Cold War analogy to guide our relations with Russia. As he pointed out, the significant differences include the lack of ideological rivalry, the relative disparity in power in favor of the West, the relatively more limited geographic scope of the competition, and the much lower priority this issue holds for Western interests. He also emphasized that in many ways, Russian actions such as the interference in the 2016 U.S. election are less impressive than conventional wisdom suggests since their success is largely based on exploiting mistakes made by U.S. leaders.[213]

Selected sources that helped in synthesizing the explanation for the mix of the domination and self-protection motives

This section highlights key sources that helped develop the third explanation: a mix of the domination/greed motive and the self-protection/security motive explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force. This explanation is fully described in Chapter 1. It was modeled using the greedy type of state with both greed and security motives from *RTIP*.[214] The implication for U.S. strategic planning is that decreasing the likelihood of the Russian Federation's use of military force against U.S. interests simultaneously requires that the Russian Federation be deterred from such

212. Walt, "Why Arming Kiev Is a Really, Really Bad Idea."

213. Stephen Walt, "I Knew the Cold War. This Is No Cold War," *Foreign Policy*, 12 March 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/12/i-knew-the-cold-war-this-is-no-cold-war/.

214. Glaser, *RTIP*, 36–37.

actions **and** that the Russian Federation perceive that its security will be assured by cooperation.

This explanation is popular among scholars who assume that great powers would have complex motives, with different ones dominating under different circumstances or at different points in time. This mixed-motive explanation is not well addressed in actual strategic documents. Even the most distinctive scholarly versions of this explanation are difficult to test because they make much less distinct predictions than a single motive explanation.

It is more challenging to evaluate this explanation and the corresponding type of state in *RTIP* than the single motive explanations. This challenge is a significant theme throughout the dissertation. In theory, it would be desirable to be able to specify the conditions under which one motive might dominate or the motives might generally be in balance. Perhaps, these conditions might be different for different issues and could be different at various points in history. If a state consistently acts in a way that is congruent with one of the motives and then shifts to be more consistent with other motives, the question arises as to whether both motives were always in play with one, for some reason, having been actualized less or whether some fundamental external or internal change occurred. The dissertation could be the foundation for a lengthy theoretical exploration of these issues. More specifically, the findings suggested that both motives were initially weak in the optimism of the immediate post-Cold War period and gradually became more significant, although they were always in the shadow of the presidential political survival motive. Rather than a clean solution, it appeared that the tension between the three motives led to a Russian preference for what has been later described

as managed instability where the best overall outcome for Russia is suboptimal for one or more of the motives but best overall. While, perhaps, disappointing for the further development of theory, this finding did help resolve the three puzzling aspects of the Russian Federation's choices.

In *Explaining Russian Foreign Policy Behavior: Theory and Practice*, Alexander Sergunin of Saint Petersburg University concluded that the switch from Marxist theory to multiple viewpoints was disorienting. The chaotic events of the 1990s weakened the credibility of many liberal institutionalists and Western ideas that were out of step with Russian traditions. What emerged as the consensus was "the realist/geopolitical school."[215]

Celeste Wallander's 1996 anthology, *The Sources of Russian Foreign Policy After the Cold War,* contains essays by seven authors who collectively suggested that the explanation must include more than one motive. These essays were described as focusing "on the impact of different factors on Russian foreign policy: type of government, ideology, leadership politics, bureaucratic and interest group politics, the European security system, Russia's historic borderlands, Empire, and the international economic system."[216]

As the anthology shows, all of these explanations fit reasonably well with some academic department, discipline, or theory. They are only partially useful as explanatory and predictive tools when considered in isolation from the other lenses' insights.

---

215. Sergunin, *Explaining Russian Foreign Policy Behavior,* 90–92 and 205.

216. Celeste A. Wallander, ed, *The Sources of Russian Conduct: Theories, Frameworks, and Approaches (*Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).

Anya Fink looked at the works of key thinkers in the Russian military and academic community as well as Russian government policy and strategy documents from 2014–2016 and considered the debate over the Russian concept commonly translated as strategic deterrence. While she went beyond the unitary actor assumption in *RTIP* and, thus, did not fit perfectly with this explanation, her argument highlighted that too narrow an explanation is probably unsuitable. Her findings revealed that while there was no uniform view on how Russia should use force, most views expressed were "generally defensive in nature."[217] There was also an acknowledgment of continued opportunities for cooperation with the West in some areas.[218] She argued that "military and conservative analysts ... focus primarily on Russia's improvement of its strategic deterrence capabilities and how Russia could use nuclear, conventional, and non-military threats to coerce the West."[219] On the other hand, "policy analysts from Russia's leading international affairs universities ... argue for a modicum of restraint, noting that some Russian policies have been based on an exaggerated threat."[220]

The Carnegie Endowment's Eugene Rumer, Richard Sokolsky, and Andrew S. Weiss offered the new president their counsel in "Trump and Russia." The authors

---

217. Anya Loukianova Fink, "Contrasting Russian Perspectives on Coercion and Restraint in Russia's Security Relations with the West," Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM), *University of Maryland Website*, January 16, 2018, http://www.cissm.umd.edu/sites/default/files/Contrasting%20Russian%20Perspectives%20on%20Coercion%20and%20Restraint%20121517.pdf.

218. Anya Loukianova Fink, "Contrasting Russian Perspectives."

219. Fink, "Contrasting Russian Perspectives."

220. Fink, "Contrasting Russian Perspectives."

pointed out that the United States cannot know the true reasons for Russian actions, so it should adopt a strategy that responds to various possible causes.[221] After cataloging both sides' various claims, they argued that the differences between the United States and Russia are so great that they cannot be solved in the near term but must be managed: "Washington will need to chart a middle path. That means both seeking ways to cooperate with Moscow and pushing back against it without sleepwalking into a collision."[222]

Selected sources that helped in synthesizing the explanation for the presidential political survival motive

This section highlights the selected sources that were used to synthesize the fourth explanation, which is described in Chapter 1. It states that the Russian Federation's president's domestic political survival motive explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force. These motives were modeled and tested using the Selectorate Theory from Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al.'s *The Logic of Political Survival*. According to the Selectorate Theory, a leader's primary motive when making decisions is to remain in power by sustaining a winning coalition from the selectorate of domestic individuals and groups with the ability to participate in the selection of leaders.[223] The implication of this individual motive for U.S. strategic planning is that preventing the Russian Federation's use of military force against U.S. interests driven by

---

221. Eugene Rumer, Richard Sokolsky, and Andrew S. Weiss, "Trump and Russia," *Foreign Affairs* 96, no. 2 (2017), https://www.jstor.org/stable/i40204353.

222. Rumer, "Trump and Russia," 12.

223. Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, Randolph M. Siverson, James D. Morrow, and Alastair Smith, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003).

this motive requires that the Russian president believe that such actions will endanger the support of a winning coalition in domestic politics.

The sources supporting this argument come from various perspectives, yet the logic of political survival unifies them. Many political scientists, U.S. officials, and journalists who authored sources grouped with this explanation were overtly hostile to President Putin and implied that he is personally the source of Russia's military behaviors.

U.S. political scientist Karen Dawisha argued that Vladimir Putin's supporters proved dominant in the internal politics of Russia and that they act on behalf of "what they themselves internally call a *sistema* that undermines, mocks, and mimics democracy but actually serves the purpose of creating a unified and stable authoritarian state that allows individuals close to Putin and his associates to benefit personally from the unparalleled despoliation of Russia's vast natural resources."[224] She documented this process in *Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* where she laid out extensive research that led her to "conclude that from the beginning Putin and his circle sought to create an authoritarian regime ruled by a close-knit cabal," and she described the *siloviki* as the core of this group.[225] She described a pattern of corruption where the Russian elite uses the legal system to steal entire private enterprises and crush dissent in what she terms "kleptocratic authoritarianism."[226]

---

224. Karen Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 8–9.

225. Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy*, 8.

226. Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy*, 313–354.

The most explicitly diversionary theories for the Russian use of force are found in journalism that connects the Second Chechen War with the dramatic surge in President Putin's popularity in the months leading up to his first presidential election. An unprecedented and never repeated series of bombings destroyed entire apartment buildings and mobilized the nation for war. This is sometimes attributed to a false flag operation by Russian government forces. Dawisha discussed the accusations that the 1999 apartment bombings linked to the beginning of the Second Chechen War and the rise in Vladimir Putin's popularity were a false flag operation. While there is no undeniable proof one way or the other in the public domain, she pointed out that "the bombing campaign came to a halt only when an FSB [a domestic security successor to the Soviet KGB] team that had evidently been involved in planting a bomb in the city of Ryazan was apprehended by local authorities."[227]

Although her work focused on the Russian Federation's internal processes, she did link the regime's nature to Russian international behaviors. For example, she suggested that one factor leading up to the 2008 invasion of Georgia was that President Saakashvili had moved to halt the use of South Ossetia for smuggling and counterfeit operations by "mafia-siloviki structures."[228] Similarly, Russian leaders, including Putin, were cited as having large economic stakes in protecting property and corruption in Crimea, which may have been a factor in that invasion.[229]

---

227. Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy*, 208.
228. Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy*, 345.
229. Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy*, 346–347.

Fiona Hill and Clifford Addy perhaps made the most comprehensive argument aligned with the narrative that Putin is the source of Russian decisions regarding threats and the use of force in their book *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin*. They differed from many in that they believed that he generally acts in what he sees as the best interests of Russia and the Russian people. In that book, they sought "to figure out who Mr. Putin is in terms of his motivations—what drives him to act as he does?"[230] They concluded that his life experiences drive Russia's behavior. This is particularly important since, as Hill argued in "The Next Mr. Putin? The Question of Succession," Russian behavior is decided not by formal institutions but rather by a "hyper-personalized presidency supported by informal elite networks" and that when Putin departs the scene, Russia's trajectory is very uncertain.[231]

Prominent among arguments that combine internal and external narratives around the person of Vladimir Putin is Mikhail Filippov's "Diversionary Role of the Georgia–Russia Conflict: International Constraints and Domestic Appeal." His assessment was that "the choice to pursue regional conflicts is preset for domestic reasons, though their intensity may depend on what level of political tensions with the West is optimal at any given moment in the Russian government's cost-benefit analysis."[232]

---

230. Hill and Gaddy, *Mr. Putin*, 5.

231. Hill, "The Next Mr. Putin?," 41.

232. Mikhail Filippov, "Diversionary Role of the Georgia–Russia Conflict: International Constraints and Domestic Appeal," *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 10 (2009): 1827, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09668130903278975.

Filippov emphasized that conflict with a small neighbor such as Georgia was "a safe choice because such an opponent could not pose a serious threat to Russia."[233] Attacking it would allow incumbents to portray to the Russian people that they were successfully opposing Georgia's supporters in the West.[234] It was also a way for the then Prime Minister Putin to establish dominance over the then President Medvedev following their exchange of positions in May 2008.[235]

U.S. academic and former U.S. Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul argued that the United States' actions have little to do with Russian behavior. Instead, Russian behavior is driven by the domestic political needs of Vladimir Putin. According to McFaul, Putin initially enjoyed the people's support since the living standards were rising in Russia despite his authoritarian and illiberal policies. The 2008 global economic crisis disrupted the Russian domestic economy and reduced the oil price upon which the government depended for much of its revenue. This resulted in widespread dissatisfaction with the status quo, which put Putin's political future in jeopardy. Therefore, Putin "revived an old Soviet-era argument as his new source of legitimacy—defense of the motherland against the evil West, and especially the imperial, conniving, threatening United States."[236]

President Obama's Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes noted an interesting power dynamic among the Russian elite who interfered with President

---

233. Filippov, "Diversionary Role," 1830.

234. Filippov, "Diversionary Role," 1830.

235. Filippov, "Diversionary Role," 1840–1841.

236. Michael McFaul, *From Cold War to Hot Peace: An American Ambassador in Putin's Russia* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018), 416–418, Kindle.

Obama's desire for better relations with Russia. He described a meeting between President Obama and President Medvedev at which he expected the two to get along well. Shortly before the meeting, Prime Minister Putin publicly criticized the U.S. administration, which was related more to the Prime Minister's political needs than to an actual policy view, according to Rhodes. Rhodes said that when the two presidents subsequently met, "the impact of Putin's criticism was apparent immediately. Medvedev began the meeting with a long complaint about our policy in Libya ... His rant seemed as much for the benefit of the hard-liners on his side in the room, men who were close to Putin."[237]

Russian voters are perhaps not the most dangerous domestic group for a Russian leader who loses their support. However, the Russian military and security services have a history of moving against the ruler following an international defeat. Timothy Thomas, an expert on the Russian military, described Russian behaviors that appeared to him as follows: "protection and insurance against color revolutions, coups, and other perceived threats ... Putin has developed three counters: the development of a personal protection agency ... continual cadre changes ... and an arrangement for implementing instructions known as *sistema.*"[238]

Constructivists Ted Hopf and Iver Neumann made a compelling argument with excellent evidentiary support that most Russians' views evolved the way they did as a result of interactions between the domestic and the international environment. These

---

237. Benjamin Rhodes, *The World as It Is: A Memoir of the Obama White House* (New York: Random House, 2018), 151–152.

238. Timothy Thomas, *Kremlin Kontrol*, 7.

views largely aligned with the choices made by Presidents Putin and Medvedev. If their choices had been unaligned with those of most Russians, as were President Yeltsin's from 1997 to 2000, their political survival would have been at risk. Hopf explained Russian military involvement in Abkhazia, a disputed region of Georgia, during this period as the result of an interaction of international events and changes in Russian discourse. He explained that Russia witnesses competition between three "discursive construction[s] of the Russian self."[239]

Hopf termed the first such discursive construction Liberal; it identifies with the West and against the Soviet past. He termed the second Conservative; it values the Soviet past, Russian ethnic nationalism, and the Orthodox Church. The third was termed Centrist; it favors a uniquely Russian identity that includes the many ethnic and religious minorities within the Federation while idealizing a romanticized view of the Soviet past.[240]

Hopf argued that after a brief period of Liberal policy, the Centrist view came to dominate in 1993 and has remained dominant since then. Had the Liberal identity dominated, Russia would likely have used force less often and perhaps would have ended support to Abkhazian separatism even with the same Western behaviors.[241] If the Conservative identity had won, then "the 1990s might have been marked by frequent

---

239. Ted Hopf, "Identity, Legitimacy, and the Use of Military Force: Russia's Great Power Identities and Military Intervention in Abkhazia," *Review of International Studies* 31, no. S1 (2006): 225, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40072157?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

240. Hopf, "Identity, Legitimacy, and the Use of Military Force," 225–228.

241. Hopf, "Identity, Legitimacy, and the Use of Military Force," 225–226.

Russian military interventions in the Near Abroad, including in Estonia and Latvia, each one of which would have been regarded as legitimate by Moscow."[242]

In the aftermath of Crimea's annexation, Hopf returned to this argument and offered the following chart to depict how this discourse had changed over time.

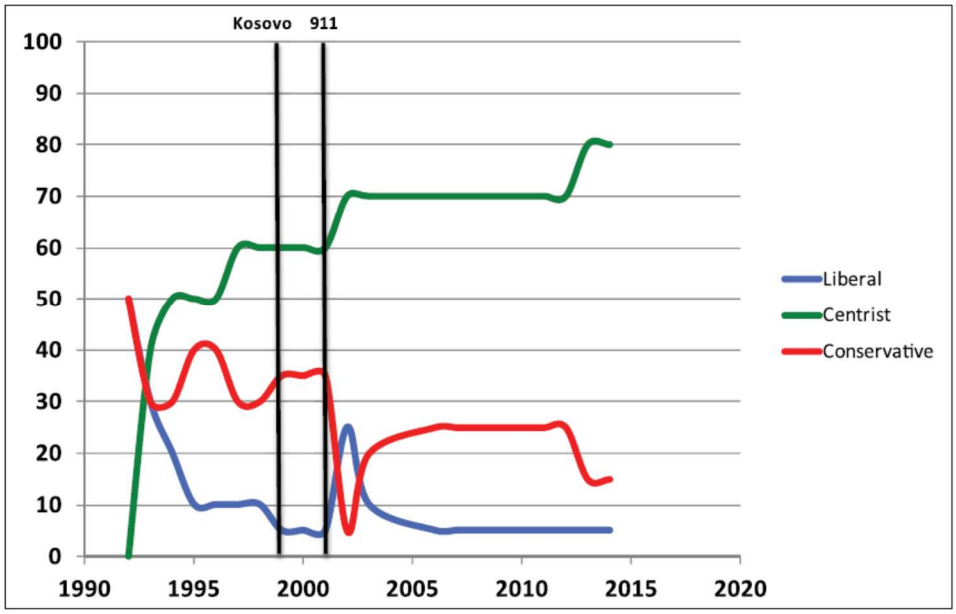

Figure 7: *Ted Hopf's findings on discursive trends in Russian national identity. Source: Ted Hopf, "'Crimea Is Ours': A Discursive History."*

Hopf's graph showed significant changes in public opinion during the post 9/11 period of U.S.-led armed conflicts. It showed a correlation between Russian discourse and Western actions that can fit into Russia's narrative as a victim of a calculated strategy against Russia and its international partners.[243]

---

242. Hopf, "Identity, Legitimacy, and the Use of Military Force," 226.

243. Ted Hopf, "'Crimea Is Ours': A Discursive History," *International Relations* 30, no. 2 (2016): 228, https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117816645646.

Norwegian constructivist scholar Iver Neumann suggested a broad and deep base of support for Russian choices regarding the use of military force. By analyzing Russian history and Russian political and cultural discourse, Neumann argued that the decisive factor in Russian foreign policy is whether Russia's dominant identity defines itself as part of or against a liberal and modernizing Europe. He first made this argument in the first edition of *A Study in Identity and International Relations,* published in 1996. He concluded by warning that relations might worsen if the Russian consensus moved away from a positive identification with Europe.[244] In the 2017 second edition, he detailed how this occurred and concluded that "in terms of foreign policy, the immediate consequence of this shift was the confrontation with neighboring Ukraine ... and an openly confrontational policy against the West."[245]

---

244. Neumann, Iver B. *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations.* (London: Routledge, 1996), 194–210.

245. Neumann, Iver B. *Russia and the Idea of Europe,* 178.

Chapter 3: The evaluation of motive-based explanations

This chapter first describes the method used in Phase Two and makes observations about what was learned. It then reports the findings for each of the three periods. The findings for each period include a table summarizing the instances of incongruence with the motives.

Phase Two's method

Phase Two sought to evaluate the explanations in a very comprehensive manner that considered the full set of observable behaviors as closely as was feasible rather than adopting the more conventional approach of selecting a small number of time-bounded examples. This approach was intended to allow the consideration of cases where military force was used as well as those where the Russian Federation might have used force reasonably but did not do so either because it chose to exercise restraint or was deterred or for some other reason. While this approach proved to be effective, it was also time-consuming and required a much greater number of words to be recorded than a traditional approach. This contributed to the decision to shift much of the detail of the case to the annexes.

In an earlier draft of the dissertation, each of the periods was included as a chapter. As the method required the answering of six structured, focused comparison questions for all 44 subcases, including this information effectively doubled the length of the main body of the dissertation. The details of relatively small subcases seemed likely to obscure the more important overall findings, and, in many subcases, a considerable amount of detail needed to be analyzed before concluding that the case was congruent or incongruent with expectations. Therefore, the three periods of the case became Annexes

A, B, and C. The annexes include the scoping conditions, timelines of the observable behaviors and events likely to influence the variables, and the detailed discussion, citation, and evaluation of the information related to each subcase. The findings section for each period has been moved to this chapter.

Three particularly important parts of Phase Two were subcase selection, assessing expected behavior versus actual behavior in the subcase, and reaching general findings. Subcases were ultimately chosen by determining which relationships between Russia and another party potentially provided useful evidence and then grouping counterparties into subcases that made geographic and military sense relative to the use of force. Counterparties whose relationship with Russia did not provide significantly useful information when the entire period was initially analyzed were rolled into larger regional or global subcases or not specifically addressed in the version of the case submitted.

For each subcase, the likely condition of the variables was established. This was compared with expectations for each motive developed in the section on "Expectations for the testing of motives" in Chapter 2. Information compiled and analyzed while answering the structured, focused comparison questions allowed a judgment to be made about whether the observable behaviors of the Russian Federation were incongruent or congruent with the expectations assuming bounded rationality and that only the information actually available at any point on the timeline was known. Instances of incongruence weakened confidence and could have led to the rejection of a motive and the related explanations as a plausible means of explaining and predicting the Russian Federation's choices.

Evaluating the subcases in the context of the information observable by Russia or the Russian president in the environment as each subcase moved along the larger timeline often showed that the context of events was different from what is generally assumed in the policy debate while looking back at past events or in the reporting of Western media and the statements of political leaders when surprised by a Russian use of force. Looking at events in context shows that the United States and Russia were interpreting the same events differently. It also becomes clear that there were a surprising number of instances when Russia might have used force and either did not do so or used less force than was possible. This can largely be accounted for by the tension between the three powerful motives.

Step 9: Establish a comprehensive list of potential counterparties relevant to the behavior being explained.

On 25 December 1991, Moscow's military forces had military areas of influence that included dozens of states and non-state actors. Here, a military area of influence was considered to have existed when military forces controlled by Moscow were based in or operating on the territory, air space, or waters of a counterparty or were contiguous to the counterparty by land. It also included areas where the counterparty was adjacent to one of the four sea lines of communication on which Russia could project forces by sea, was within range of special operations or air power projected from Russia, or was a major factor in a potential strategic nuclear war.

We can follow this set of counterparties from 1991 to 2020 and see where Russia uses and does not use military force, where it withdraws, and where it expands or seeks to use force to change a counterparty's policy. We can tell a lot from this case where Russia

uses force, but we can also tell a lot from the more common cases when Russia did not use military force.

These counterparties were sorted into four types based on whether Russia was stronger or weaker than the counterparty in the relevant correlation of military power and whether the counterparty's observable actions were generally positive or negative for Russia from the perspective of Russia. Counterparties were sometimes moved between groups, but generally, they could be typed as follows.

The United States was the only militarily stronger power throughout the entire period. Its observable actions were initially positive from a Russian perspective but later became negative for Russia. Many potential counterparties effectively fall under the U.S. security umbrella and, thus, benefit from its power. These include Japan, Canada, South Korea, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Denmark, Belgium, and Norway. Several unlisted U.S. allies, such as Spain and Portugal, are important but are geographically unlikely candidates for Russian use of force.

The list of potential counterparties for the use of military force who were militarily weaker and whose observable actions were negative for Russia included Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Moldova, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. When some of these states joined NATO, they were protected by the power of the United States and other NATO members. This list also includes separatists and

violent extremist organizations (VEOs),[246] most notably those active inside Russia's portion of the Caucasus, including Chechnya.

The list of potential counterparties for the use of military force who were militarily weaker and whose observable actions were positive or neutral for Russia includes North Korea, China (which moved to become equal to or stronger in terms of power by 2020), Vietnam, Indonesia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Ethiopia, Somalia, Egypt, Tunisia, Angola, Guinea, Libya, Cuba, Ukraine, Yugoslavia, Serbia, Albania, Austria, Belarus, Sweden, and Finland.

Step 10: Develop a chronology of the sequence of the relevant observable behaviors and conditions divided into three manageable periods.

Russian Federation history from independence through the end of September 2020 was organized into three chronological case studies. Experimenting with changing the start and end dates led to the conclusion that it altered the length of each chapter but not the overall findings.

Four areas of observable behaviors and significant events constitute costly signals or provide credible information about the condition of the variables. The first is the Russian Federation's domestic conditions, events, and behaviors. The second is military operations and exercises. The third is military posture, capabilities, strategy, and doctrine. The fourth is international events and agreements. A timeline was created for

246. Violent Extremist Organization (VEO) is the terminology used in the 2017 U.S. *NSS* and other documents for terrorist-type organizations. For balance, it has been used here for comparable organizations opposed to the Russian Federation. This grouping overlaps to a degree with separatists in the Russian Caucasus but is not identical.

each of the four areas. The timeline allowed the sequence of events and strategic behaviors to be visualized across time.

Source data for the figures came primarily from *The Military Balance*, Robert Service's landmark *The Penguin History of Modern Russia: From Tsarism to the Twenty-first Century,* Amy Woolf's *Arms Control and Nonproliferation: A Catalog of Treaties and Agreements,* and *The New York Times.*

Step 11: Organize the observable behaviors into a manageable number of logically related subcases for evaluation against the expectations.

For each of the three periods, scoping conditions addressing the political, economic, social, and military conditions likely to lead to deviations from the general expectations were established. Then, following a consideration of the full range of observable events and behaviors, the most relevant and important ones were arranged into timelines in order to communicate a more complete picture of the course of events and the evolution of behaviors than can be concisely communicated in the narrative form. Logically related subcases were established as the subjects of structured, focused comparison. Experiments with several ways of grouping the behaviors suggested that the most appropriate approach was to group them either by policy issue or geopolitical region.

Step 12: Evaluate all sets of observable behaviors using a common set of structured, focused comparison questions to determine if there are instances of behavior incongruent with expectations given the relevant conditions, which would contribute to the rejection or reduction of confidence in an explanation.

The subcases within each period were evaluated using six structured, focused comparison questions:

1. What was the condition of the variables, and given these conditions, what is the likely evidentiary value (high, moderate, or low) of the behaviors? (Not all low-value behaviors were fully developed for inclusion in the final product.)

2. What observably happened that is relevant?

3. Was what observably happened incongruent with the domination/greed motive and why?

4. Was what observably happened incongruent with the self-protection/security motive and why?

5. Was what observably happened incongruent with the presidential political survival motive and why?

6. Does what observably happened weaken confidence in one or more of the explanations, impact the variables, or help explain the problem's puzzling aspects?

While the researcher considered all the possible counterparties, including a full written evaluation of the cases of low evidentiary value was found to be unmanageable and unhelpful. For example, in 1992, Moscow controlled military forces in numerous countries in Africa and the Americas. After reviewing these counterparties, it was found that some issues were worth mentioning in aggregate, so they were mentioned in a "global issues" subcase rather than by country. For strategic planning purposes by a team or staff, it might be useful to outline the details of such countries. Table 2 shows where incongruence was found in the 44 subcases spanning the three time periods. A detailed discussion of the subcases is available in the annexes.

Table 2. *Where incongruence was found in the 44 subcases*

	25 December 1991–7 May 2000	8 May 2000–7 May 2012	8 May 2012–30 September 2020
Russian Federation's policy and strategy documents	All three motives are plausible	All three motives are plausible	All three motives are plausible
Nuclear weapons and missile defense	All three motives are plausible	All three motives are plausible	
Conventional arms control and confidence-building	All three motives are plausible	All three motives are plausible	
Arms control			All three motives are plausible
Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania	*Incongruences found*	*Incongruences found*	
NATO operations and Partnership for Peace exercises	*Incongruences found*		
Other U.S. issues		All three motives are plausible	
Interference in U.S. politics			*Incongruences found*
Moldova	*Incongruences found*	*Incongruences found*	
Ukraine	*Incongruences found*	*Incongruences found*	*Incongruences found*
Belarus	All three motives are plausible	All three motives are plausible	All three motives are plausible
Georgia	All three motives are plausible	*Incongruences found*	
Armenia and Azerbaijan	All three motives are plausible	All three motives are plausible	
Managed instability in Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan			All three motives are plausible
Other European issues, including NATO and the EU	*Incongruences found*	*Incongruences found*	*Incongruences found*
Politics and defectors in Europe			*Incongruences found*
Poland		*Incongruences found*	
Montenegrin Coup (2016)			*Incongruences found*
Central Asia	*Incongruences found*	All three motives are plausible	All three motives are plausible
Other global issues	*Incongruences found*	All three motives are plausible	All three motives are plausible
Syria and Iraq			All three motives are plausible
China			All three motives are plausible
The First Chechen War	Plausible where relevant		
The Second Chechen War and the 2000 election	Plausible where relevant		
Domestic counterinsurgency and counterterrorism		Plausible where relevant	Plausible where relevant

Step 13: Evaluate each motive's predictive and explanatory power and make other observations and findings.

The behaviors that were most important as evidence for or against the explanations, shed light on changes in the variables, or suggested answers to the three policy puzzles were evaluated. Each period's results are summarized in a table. The findings emerging from the method suggested that three motives were valid and that their intensity varied over time. Chapter 4 provides an overall evaluation of each motive based on the findings for the three periods summarized in Chapter 3. It explains how the variables changed from the Russian perspective toward the United States over time.

Step 14: Make overall findings and draw implications for scholarship and policy.

In the end, arriving at a finding and highlighting its implications required human judgment, and this process could not eliminate the uncertainty entirely. The 14 steps in the method were intended to mitigate the biases and heuristics inherent in human judgment by establishing a more complete assessment with a more rigorous process than in the existing debate. Chapter 5 provides the overall findings and implications.

Findings on what explains the Russian Federation's choices on the use of military force from 25 December 1991–7 May 2000

The observable behaviors for this period were evaluated in "Annex A: Structured, focused comparison from the Presidencies of Boris Yeltsin through the Acting Presidency of Vladimir Putin (25 December 1991–7 May 2000)." After reviewing all of the information available for the period, it was divided into the following subcases:

1. Russian Federation policy and strategy documents (primarily 1997 and 1999)
2. Nuclear weapons and missile defense (1991–2000)
3. Conventional arms control and confidence-building (1991–2000)

4. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (1991–2000)

5. NATO operations and PFP exercises (1991–2000)

6. Moldova (1991–2000)

7. Ukraine (1991–2000)

8. Belarus (1991–2000)

9. Georgia (1991–2000)

10. Armenia and Azerbaijan (1991–2000)

11. Other European issues, including NATO and the EU (1991–2000)

12. Central Asia (1991–2000)

13. Other global issues (1991–2000)

14. The First Chechen War (1994–1996)

15. The Second Chechen War and the 2000 election (1999–2000)

Table 3 shows the subcases with behaviors that were incongruent with the motives given the state of the variables.[247] Some incongruent behaviors were clearly more important than others, and some were relatively small events within the subcase.

---

247. The body of the case study on which these findings were made is presented in Annex A. The annex includes scoping conditions, timelines, citations, and detailed analysis.

Table 3. *Subcases for each of the three motives from 1991 to 2000 with incongruence between the observable and expected Russian Federation choices regarding the use of military force given the condition of the variables*

Subcase	Incongruence with the domination/greed motive	Incongruence with the self-protection/security motive	Incongruence with the presidential political survival motive
4. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (1991–2000)	Failure to act against NATO and EU membership	Failure to act against NATO and EU membership	Failure to act to protect the rights of ethnic Russians in Estonia and Latvia
5. NATO operations and PFP exercises (1991-2000)			President Yeltsin's overall failure to protect perceived Russian interests in NATO operations against the Bosnian Serbs and Serbia
6. Moldova (1991–2000)	Failure to threaten or initiate military operations to secure a favorable permanent outcome *Without broader context, this case appears more aggressive than it does in the context*		
7. Ukraine (1991–2000)	Failure to threaten or initiate military operations to secure a favorable outcome of the problems of territory, people, and policy		
11. Other European issues, including NATO and the EU (1991–2000)	Failure to act against EU and NATO expansion	Failure to act against EU and NATO expansion	Failure to act against EU and NATO expansion
12. Central Asia (1991–2000)	Failure to do more than the minimum required to prevent the collapse of former Soviet states Cutting off support to the surprisingly resilient Afghan government	Cutting off support to the surprisingly resilient Afghan government	
13. Other global issues (1991–2000)	Abandonment of basing, basing rights, and relationships in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas that provided future regional and global military reach	Abandonment of basing, basing rights, and relationships in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas that provided future regional and global military reach	

For the first few years of the Russian Federation, the state's actions were so inconsistent with either the domination/greed motive and the self-protection/security motive that the researcher rejected these motives and the associated explanations as useful in those early years. This period was one of almost unprecedented voluntary withdrawal from a position of global power and is intertwined with the collapse of communism and the unexpected dissolution of the Soviet Union. This makes it a unique period that probably exceeds the bounds of most general theories.

As Russia began to attempt to define its own place in the world, confidence was weakened in the explanation that the domination/greed motive explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force during this period. In the early part of the period, confidence was weakened in the explanation that the Russian Federation's choices about military force during this period are explained by the security/self-protection motive, although there is evidence of this motive becoming more significant after 1997. Confidence was weakened in the explanation that the Russian Federation's choices about military force during this time are explained by a mix of the domination/greed and the security/self-protection motives. The Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force during this period are best explained by the logic of the political survival of the Russian Federation's president.

This period's findings were shockingly different from those hypothesized, which validated the usefulness of the somewhat lengthy and complex methodology used in the dissertation and suggested answers to the problem's three puzzling aspects. Prior to developing and evaluating the case, the hypothesis was that overall, the Russian

Federation's choices about military force would best be explained by Russia being what *RTIP* calls a "greedy" type of state with both greed and security motives.

A more traditional approach would have probably supported this hypothesis and produced a small number of high-profile examples of behaviors supporting the hypothesis. However, the method used led to findings that were more likely to be true since they considered the entire list of counterparties to Russian behavior. Considering the full context of what was observable in the strategic environment at any time helped to neutralize hindsight and biases of "taking sides," combined insights from multiple perspectives, and considered the entire period rather than only the high-profile crises. This approach was also more interesting and useful for suggesting policy alternatives than expected. The findings were personally and professionally disappointing in that they suggested that misperceptions by Russia and the United States have unnecessarily intensified problems in the relationship. Better past strategies could have prevented or reduced these issues.

The first and second major findings obtained from this study were that while all the explanations were shown to be plausible and, therefore, should be addressed in U.S. policy and strategy, the observable behaviors were least congruent with the domination/greed motive and most congruent with the logic of political survival. The completeness and length of the approach to the case led to the finding that there were a significant number of cases where the domination/greed motive should have led the Russian Federation to act in ways that it did not actually choose. In fact, there were more incongruent issues in the case with this motive being true than for any other motive. Interestingly, when Russian choices about military force were found to be incongruent

with the logic of political survival, there was a significant corresponding decline in presidential approval, which would be a lesson for future presidential decision-making. These two findings are of policy significance since the first part of the dissertation showed that the existing U.S. policy and strategy is largely aligned with the domination/greed motive explanation and not aligned with the logic of political survival motive.

The third major finding was also surprising. It revealed that at least until about 1997, the self-protection/security motive was more poorly supported by the evidence than had been hypothesized. A significant number of important Russian behaviors were incongruent with this motive. This is perhaps explained by the intensity of Russian domestic problems and a broad assumption that the United States and the West had benign intentions toward Russia; Russia had little reason for concern about other great powers for the near future. This view was undergoing dramatic revision at the time of the Kosovo War. This was articulated in the public debate in Russia and the Russian strategic guidance documents published in 2000.

The fourth major finding was that to a much greater and more explicit degree than was expected; the United States prioritized other international issues over its relationship with Russia. Moscow continued to think of the relationship as the organizing principle of all decision-making in both Washington D.C. and Moscow. When the United States used its status as the sole superpower to pursue an expansion of the liberal world order into what had been the communist and third world of the Cold War, it took actions that were not directed at Russia or intended as strategic messages to Russia. Nevertheless, the unintended effect was to isolate Russia from traditional economic and security partners

and alter the military and geopolitical landscape in a way that Russia found undesirable. This would not necessarily have led to insurmountable issues in the relationship if ways were found to use the momentum of the early 1990s to build deep norms of trust and cooperation and if Russia had integrated more fully with Europe in terms of political, economic, and social norms. Since neither of these occurred, Russia made assumptions that U.S. motives were far more malicious than was actually the case and chose to begin a cycle of actions that would ultimately intensify the misperceptions that both parties have about themselves, the other, and their relationship.

Almost all of the sample's U.S. policy and strategy documents assumed that Russian behavior is best explained by Russia being a purely greedy type of state. The methods used caused a greater weakening of the confidence in the validity of that explanation than for any of the other three theories. A more generous interpretation of these documents could be that they only assumed that Russia is a greedy type of state with both motives. This does not resolve the issue that the domination/greed motive was the least supported by Russian behaviors during the period.

Viewed without the broader context of this period, Russian behavior appears more aggressive than it does when considered in that context with the scoping conditions and under the rigorous standards of the *RTIP* and the Selectorate Theory of political survival. Without these analytical tools, an observer could, for example, interpret Russia's actions in Moldova, Georgia, and elsewhere as simply the occupation of a weaker state's territory. The actual events have been demonstrated to be much more complex.

The researcher's initial expectations placed little confidence in domestic explanations. They were included since they were a part of the sample of sources

representing the policy debate, and the method developed required them to be tested. Surprisingly, in this case, the validity of the presidential political survival had the least evidence against it out of the three motives and the four corresponding explanations.

Findings about what explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force from 8 May 2000 to May 2012?

The observable behaviors for this period were evaluated in "Annex B: Structured, focused comparison from the first two Presidencies of Vladimir Putin through the Presidency of Dimitry Medvedev (8 May 2000–May 2012)." After reviewing all of the information available for the period, it was divided into the following subcases:

16. Russian Federation's policy and strategy documents (2000–2012)
17. Nuclear weapons and missile defense (2000–2012)
18. Conventional arms control and confidence-building (2000–2012)
19. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (2000–2012)
20. Poland (2000–2012)
21. Moldova (2000–2012)
22. Ukraine (2000–2012)
23. Belarus (2000–2012)
24. Georgia (2000–2012)
25. Armenia and Azerbaijan (2000–2012)
26. Other European issues, including NATO and the EU (2000–2012)
27. Central Asia (2000–2012)
28. Other United States issues (2000–2012)
29. Other global issues (2000–2012)
30. Domestic counterinsurgency and counterterrorism (2000–2012)

Table 4 summarizes the instances of incongruence between the motives and the behaviors.[248]

248. The body of the case study on which these findings were made is presented in Annex B. The annex includes scoping conditions, timelines, citations, and detailed analysis.

Table 4. *Subcases for each of the three motives from 2000 to 2012 with incongruence between the observable and expected Russian Federation choices regarding the use of military force given the condition of the variables*

Subcase	Incongruence with the domination/greed motive	Incongruence with the self-protection/security motive	Incongruence with presidential political survival motive
19. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (2000–2012)	Negotiating the border treaties and not acting against EU and NATO accession were incongruent actions that occurred before 2007. After 2007, behaviors were congruent		Negotiating border treaties with Estonia and Latvia that would not have fully secured the rights of ethnic Russian
20. Poland (2000–2012)			2010 outreach to Poland based on the commemoration and admission of the Soviet and KGB guilt for the Katyn Massacre
21. Moldova (2000–2012)	Failure to threaten or initiate military operations to secure a favorable permanent outcome	Continued occupation of a weaker state with no direct security value	
22. Ukraine (2000–2012)	Failure to intervene in support of the pro-Russian government during the 2004 Orange Revolution Russian military capability may not have been sufficient to do so at reasonable risk.	Failure to intervene in support of the pro-Russian government during the 2004 Orange Revolution Russian military capability may not have been sufficient to do so at reasonable risk.	Failure to intervene in support of the pro-Russian government during the 2004 Orange Revolution Russian military capability may not have been sufficient to do so at reasonable risk.
24. Georgia (2000–2012)	Failure to intervene in support of the pro-Russian government during the 2003 Rose Revolution Limited gains at the termination of the 2008 military operation	Failure to intervene in support of the pro-Russian government during the 2003 Rose Revolution	Failure to intervene in support of the pro-Russian government during the 2003 Rose Revolution
26. Other European issues, including NATO and the EU (2000–2012)	Failure to act against continued expansion before 2008	Failure to act against continued expansion before 2008	Failure to act against continued expansion before 2008

Confidence in the explanation that the Russian Federation's choices about military force during this period are explained by the domination/greed motive or by a mix of the domination/greed motive and the security/self-protection motive was

weakened prior to 2007 and moderately weakened in 2007 and after. Confidence was moderately weakened in the explanation that the security/self-protection motive explains the Russian Federation's choices about military force during this period. The Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force during this period are best explained by the logic of the political survival of the Russian Federation's president. Several instances of not using military force to intervene in color revolutions in the neighboring countries were arguably incongruent with presidential political survival. These were noted, but they were considered to be of limited value since it is not reasonably certain that Russian military capabilities at the time were sufficient and also because when moving through the timeline chronologically, these events seem less threatening until a pattern of color revolutions around Russia is established.

The first and second major findings obtained from this case were that confidence in the explanation that the Russian Federation's choices are explained by the domination/greed motive or a mix of the domination/greed motive and the self-protection/security motive was significantly weakened before 2007 and moderately weekend in 2007 and later although neither was rejected. Russia passed up numerous opportunities to impose territorial or policy changes on weaker countries by using force. When it did use force, it did so in a much more limited way than it could have given its ability to impose outcomes with force. Russia was more active in 2007 and after, with the 2007 events in Estonia and the 2008 war in Georgia being major international events. In both cases, Russia terminated the operation without achieving a significant change in the territory it actually controlled or the leadership of the opposing government. Russian actions were considered shocking at the time, but in retrospect, the actual military

achievements were largely of symbolic value rather than changing Russia's actual power position. Perhaps, since so little attention was being paid to Russia in U.S. policy circles, the fact was missed that before these crises Russia already had control over sufficient territory in Georgia to keep it out of NATO and the EU and that it already had influence in Estonia. Therefore, it appeared that Russia had achieved more from these and other operations than it actually did.

The third major finding was that while the explanation based on a security motive was not invalidated, confidence in it was moderately weakened by the refusal to shed engagements such as Moldova, which gained Russia little of value while mobilizing opposition and by allowing NATO expansion to occur and then making threats and conducting exercise directed against the new members. This fueled a cycle of increasing NATO presence and readiness for war when otherwise, NATO would have continued to have no real presence on the Russian border in central Europe, and its members would have continued the trend toward smaller and less prepared forces with capabilities poorly suited to interstate war.

The fourth major finding was that the explanation based on political survival logic was not only plausible, but there was little to weaken confidence in it. The most significant departure from it was President Putin's outreach to Poland over the Katyn massacre. As he achieved little internationally and suffered domestically, it probably reinforced his growing tendency to make decisions by prioritizing domestic political motives. The failure to intervene in color revolutions was considered less important because of the problems with Russian military capability at the time as well as the fact that these events seemed less threatening in context than they do in retrospect.

The fifth major finding was important for understanding the puzzles. Russia was interested in Europe's security order. The United States and the West felt that this order had been permanently resolved and were more concerned with disorder elsewhere. This led the United States into conflicts that they saw as unrelated to European order or Russia, but which Russia saw as part of a deliberate strategy to isolate Russia from its few remaining partners and impose U.S. interests on non-compliant states like Libra and Iraq. There was a rational reason for the two states to perceive the world differently.

Findings about what explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force from 8 May 2012 to 30 September 2020

The observable behaviors for this period were evaluated and are outlined in "Annex C: Structured, focused comparison from the third into the fourth Presidencies of Vladimir Putin (8 May 2012–30 September 2020)." After reviewing all of the information available for the period, it was divided into the following subcases.

31. Russian Federation policy and strategy documents (2012–2020)

32. Arms control (2012–2020)

33. Politics and defectors in Europe (2012–2020)

34. Ukraine (2012–2020)

35. Belarus (2012–2020)

36. Montenegrin coup (2016)

37. Managed instability in Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan (2012–September of 2020)

38. Other European issues, including NATO and the EU (2012–2020)

39. Central Asia (2012–2020)

40. Interference in U.S. politics (~2016–2020)

41. Syria and Iraq (2012–2020)

42. China (2012–2020)

43. Other global issues (2012–2020)

44. Domestic counterinsurgency and counterterrorism (2012–2020)

Table 5 shows the instances of incongruence.[249] Some incongruent behaviors are clearly more important than others, and some were relatively small events within the subcase.

249. The body of the case study on which these findings were made is presented in Annex C. The annex includes scoping conditions, timelines, citations, and detailed analysis.

Table 5. *Subcases for each of the three motives from 2012 to 2000 with incongruence between the observable and expected Russian Federation choices regarding the use of military force given the condition of the variables*

Subcase	Incongruence with the domination/greed motive	Incongruence with the self-protection/security motive	Incongruence with presidential political survival motive
33. Politics and defectors in Europe (2012–2020)		Conducted these operations in a way that mobilized European citizens and their governments against Russia for the long-term in exchange for small short-term wins	
34. Ukraine (2012–2020)	Limited gains at the termination of the 2014 Crimean related military operation Limited geographic scope and limited means in the Donbas War in 2014 and later Not delaying the operation until NATO nations had begun their planned military reductions	Not delaying the operation until NATO nations had begun their planned military reductions	
36. Montenegrin coup (2016)		Attempted coup in a minimally important state that was not a significant threat	Attempted a coup with probable intent to murder the President which sets a bad precedent for Euro-Atlantic conflict
38. Other European issues, including NATO and the EU (2012–2020)	Escalating the situation with NATO just before an almost certain reduction in NATO military forces.	Escalating the situation with NATO just before an almost certain reduction in NATO military forces	
40. Interference in U.S. politics (~2016–2020)		Conducted these operations in a way that mobilized U.S. citizens and their government against Russia for the long-term in exchange for short-term wins	

Confidence was only slightly weakened for the later part of the period for the explanation that the domination/greed motive explains the Russian Federation's choices, but there were instances of incongruence. Confidence was moderately weakened in the explanation that the Russian Federation's choices about military force during this period are explained by the security/self-protection motive or by a mix of the domination/greed and the security/self-protection motives. During this period, the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force are best explained by the logic of political survival, but the other explanations are useful as well.

The first major finding was that the explanation of the domination/greed motive was plausible for 2012 through 2020, and confidence in it was only slightly weakened. It does seem like Russia should have attempted greater territorial acquisition or a change of regime in Ukraine. The overall pattern of behavior was included a significant amount of effort to change the policy of many countries through relatively innovative means.

Russia used its newly developed military capabilities as part of a larger effort to intervene in multiple Euro-Atlantic states' electoral and policy processes and continued to do so even when they were caught and their actions were public knowledge. This is a break with Russia's post-1991 pattern of rapidly terminating or transitioning to the operational defense interstate military operations before other parties could be expected to mount an organized military response.

The second and third major findings from this case were that confidence in the self-protection/security motive explanation and the explanation that both the domination/greed motive and the security motive are the explanation was moderately weakened. While it is not the conventional view in Western policy and strategy circles,

there are good security-seeking reasons why Russia may have chosen to use force in Ukraine. There is even a security-seeking argument to be made for why Russia would interfere in U.S. elections in 2016.

On the other hand, Russia has arguably pushed far beyond the point that it would have terminated its military operations directed against U.S. and Western policy if it simply wanted to improve its international security. Russia has directly, publicly, and effectively attacked the U.S. and Western political parties that are most likely to acknowledge security dilemma dynamics and that had the strongest records of policies that would be desirable if Russia were a security-seeking state. If this were an unintended second-order effect of a desire to avoid the risks that Russia might have perceived from a potential Clinton Presidency, then the operation would have logically been terminated or transformed at some point during the Trump Presidency. Instead, it has simply stoked chaos for which American voters and politicians will blame the Russian Federation for at least a generation. These voters and politicians will be unlikely to support the kind of cooperation a security-seeker would desire.

Russia's overall actions contributed to the reversal of an expected drawdown of U.S. military capabilities after the combat mission in Afghanistan transitioned to advising and supporting the host government in 2014. Instead, the U.S. military received bipartisan support for sustaining relatively high force levels and budgets and for the rapid development of a generation of weapons that Russia will never be able to afford to field in meaningful numbers to its own forces.

The fourth major finding was that the explanation based on presidential political survival motives is plausible and has the strongest confidence level. Essentially, no

Russian choice about military force from 2012 to 2020 was incongruent with this motive. The sole exception in the evaluation was the Montenegrin Coup. This was incongruent in that it seems profoundly unwise for a head of state with powerful enemies to violate the Euro-Atlantic norm of not killing heads of Euro-Atlantic states when the issue at hand was so small a part of the total security environment. There are good reasons related to stability not to threaten the physical safety of state leaders.

The fifth major finding was important for developing the alternate explanation. President Putin may have concluded that he personally no longer has anything to lose or gain from the relationship with the United States. The United States' strategic documents have concluded that competition with Russia is now permanent. In fact, in a reversal of the American strategic belief that the purpose of war is a better peace, the United States military has now adopted the belief that even after a war with Russia or China, the result will be only a return to competition. This means that the United States military strategy under the *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning* is not to alter those regimes but simply to compete with them and, if necessary, fight a limited defensive war to reestablish the status quo antebellum.[250] If true, then it would seem that a larger U.S. foreign policy could reasonably seek to reassure these states that the United States primarily has a security motive even if it also has negative estimates of Russian and Chinese motives.

---

250. United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning* (Washington, D.C.: The Joint Staff, March 16, 2018), https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/concepts/joint_concept_integrated_campaign.pdf?ver=2018-03-28-102833-257.

Chapter 4: Interpretation of the case study findings

In Phase Two of the dissertation, 44 subcases were subjected to a structured, focused comparison and other methods described in Chapter 3. In the interest of producing a more usable length document, the three long chapter-sized analyses of the three periods have been moved to Annexes A, B, and C. This chapter begins with an interpretation of the findings from the analysis for each of the three motives. It also discusses five distinct periods that the structured, focused comparison showed existed in the relationship between the Russian Federation and the United States.

The interpretation offered in this chapter is more complicated than a single motive explanation. It is plausible and powerful since it is highly consistent with the observable Russian Federation choices about the use of military force. It explains the actual sequence of behaviors better than any other explanation.

Evaluating the explanatory power of each motive

The explanatory power of each motive was tested by evaluating how frequently actual Russian choices about the use of force were consistent with or violated expectations about how a decision-maker with that motive would behave in the subcases given the state of the three independent variables during that period.

There were more than sufficient instances in the subcases where the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force were congruent with the expectations for each of the motives for all the motives and the resulting explanations to be found plausible. This presents a challenge since, in some cases, the action was congruent with more than one motive. In some cases, including when dealing with the more powerful United States, Russian decision-makers might even have an incentive to

act deceptively or for bargaining purposes. In other cases, the behavior seemed inconsistent with one or more motives, as fully actualizing any one motive would harm another motive. In these cases, and, most interestingly, in the case of managed instability discussed below, the priority seemed to be the political survival motive, then the self-protection/security motive, and only then the domination/greed motive. This helped explain some of the puzzling behaviors, and it is consistent with common sense that one does not sacrifice one's power base to pursue a marginal gain in power that would be irrelevant if the power base was lost.

The long process used in Part One ultimately led to the use of motive-based explanations. Absent this process, motives would not have been used as a source of explanation. They were found to be enormously useful in that they were flexible enough to address a wide variety of situations while also being specific enough to suggest how the environment, problem, and approach would be framed if a particular motive were driving behavior.

No social science method can entirely eliminate uncertainty about complex causal relations. The use of the approach of the congruent example suffers from the problem of multifinality. Multifinality means that a single outcome may be explainable by multiple causes. There are infinite ways to divide history by time and the parties involved. It would be unexpected if no examples were found in history that were consistent with any common-sense explanation. Even in a single instance of armed conflict, changing the start and end times of the case can change the meaning. For example, the cause of the conflict looks very different if one starts a case about the Russian and Georgian armed conflict of August 2008 with the sudden outburst of Russian military railroad repairs in

the Russia-occupied zone, the major U.S. and NATO exercise in Georgia, the separatist violence, the Georgian attack on the separatist area, or the arrival of additional Russian forces. Changing the start point alters perceptions about cause and effect.

There was sufficient congruence to sustain the plausibility of the motives and related explanations, but congruence had its limitations. Therefore, the focus shifted to looking for instances of incongruence and evaluating their meaning. When a behavior was inconsistent with a motive, this raised the question of why it was incongruent. Some instances, notably under President Yeltsin, can be attributed to simple mistakes or assumptions about the future that proved incorrect. Other incongruent behaviors generally make sense when the impact of actualizing them on the other motives is accounted for.

The expectation before Phase Two was that a combination of the domination/greed motive and the self-protection/security motive would be the primary source of explanation, and domestic factors would have a minor modifying effect. In fact, the political survival motive was the most consistent with actual events, and inconsistencies were correlated with drops in Presidential approval. The two international motives were found to be plausible but were less powerful and often intertwined in ways that were difficult to distinguish. They were most distinguishable in how the Russian Federation treated weaker powers. Against expectations, Russia generally treated its neighbors better than the domination/greed motive would suggest. In the early days of the case, this could be a result of problems with Russian military power, but even when Russian military power was modernized, it was not used as aggressively as should have been the case if the only explanation had been the domination/greed

motive, but it was used more aggressively than if only the self-protection/security motive was the explanation. In fact, both clearly interacted. The political survival motive overrode both motives and profoundly shaped when and how force was used.

Interpreting the findings on the domination/greed motive

Periods, subcases, and incongruent behaviors were not sufficiently equivalent to justify a purely quantitative answer to the research question, but they provided a helpful summary of the structured, focused comparison. Table 6 shows that there were 13 subcases among the total of 44 that had instances of incongruence with the domination/greed motive.

Table 6. *Subcases with instances of incongruence with the domination/greed motive.*

1991–2000	2000–2012	2012–2020
6	**5**	**2**

Overall, the weight of evidence suggested that the domination/greed motive was a plausible explanation that should be accounted for in U.S. strategic planning. The overall analysis also suggested that when the plausible motives are in tension, actualizing this motive will be prioritized lower than the presidential political survival motive and will usually be prioritized lower than the self-protection/security motive. Unexpectedly, and important to the resolution of the puzzles, the structured, focused comparison made it clear that even for subcases like Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine where force was used, there were instances where Russia either did not use force when this motive would have suggested the use of less force or using it differently than this motive would suggest.

The domination/greed motive was expected to be consistently strong across time and counterparties. Instead, it turned out to be the motive with the least predictive and explanatory power. After the beginning of 2014, Russian choices about the use of force were more often consistent with the domination/greed motive than before, but the domination/greed motive was still not better than the domestic political survival motive. This was evident in the intense and sustained use of military power below the level of armed conflict to alter the political debate and policies of the United States and European states, including France, Montenegro, and the United Kingdom. However, these forms of military power are relatively new. In fact, they hardly existed in the form they have taken since *RTIP* and the *Logic of Political Survival* were published, so there may be problems with interpreting these behaviors and linking them to motives that are not fully understood.

The literature review highlighted several credible sources with examples that made arguments supporting the assumption that Russia was inherently and permanently aggressive and high risk-taking and that Russia must be deterred lest it takes advantage of perceived weakness. These sources used the conventional social science method of stating a theory and then showing examples where this theory appears to work.

The dissertation sought to push past the limitations of this approach. Therefore, once it was established in the first part that there were credible arguments of this nature, the domination/greed motive from *RTIP* was used as a model for testing. The case took a holistic look at the possible uses of force over the life of the Russian Federation looked for instances of incongruence with a motive being valid.

When looking for evidence to help distinguish between a domination/greed motive and a self-protection motive, a critical distinction between the two motives was found in terms of how a stronger power treats a weaker power. When making choices about using force toward a peer (which the Russian Federation generally lacked) or toward a stronger power, bargaining, deception, or delay strategies may be involved that could confuse interpretation. In the case of a weaker power state, particularly one with no major allies, the stronger state is free to actualize its motives. A state with a powerful domination/greed motive should take an early opportunity to alter the territory, policies, or people of a weaker state to the permanent advantage of the greater state. To some extent, this should be true even if the weaker state is friendly, in which case we might expect a Warsaw Pact-type relationship between the great power and a satellite that cooperates under partial coercion.

Another useful point for testing is to pay less attention to the conventional focus on the circumstances surrounding the initiation of conflict and instead pay more attention to how conflict is terminated. Logically, a state will not terminate conflict if it sees more benefits from continuing to fight than from terminating the fight. In addition, termination takes two. If one party declines to terminate, the other must either continue fighting or capitulate, so termination is a bargaining agreement. It is easy for a state to use deceptive measures to confuse the issue of by whom and how a conflict was initiated. When a much more powerful state chooses to stop fighting despite having the power to continue fighting, it must be because they have achieved the true goal rather than the publicly claimed military and political objectives.

In the case of Russia, these observations are very useful since, for much of its history, it had multiple contiguous weaker powers. Most of these were not members of a stronger alliance for much of the period. There are a large number of states against which Russia had the opportunity to use force. By looking at the entirety of the relationship over 30 years, we can learn more than by looking more narrowly. We can consider restraint or the lack of interest in the use of force as cases of use. Most conventional approaches do not do this, but if one is willing to accept a much more time-consuming approach and can make reasonable calculations about military power, the approach could be reproduced for the case of Russia or other states.

After considering these matters, it became clear that there are many subcases where this approach reverses or refines the understanding of common examples of the Russian Federation's aggressiveness. It also suggested that acting on the domination/greed motive is in tension with the other motives in many cases. The strength of the domination/greed motive grew over time, so it was useful to consider how the periods' subcases were assessed.

Between 1991 and 2000, there were a remarkable number of examples where the Russian Federation's behaviors were incongruent with what would have been expected of a state with a powerful domination/greed motive. The headlong liquidation of the global military posture and power of the former Soviet military was inconsistent with Russia having a greed motive, and to a lesser extent, it was inconsistent with a security motive. The Russian Federation was not the Soviet Union and was entitled to depart from Soviet policy as the situation changed. The Russian Federation inherited the central control institutions and systems and the bulk of the globally deployed forces of the Soviet Union.

The Russian Federation could not have initially afforded to maintain all these forces or elaborate global and European deployments. If it acted on the domination/greed motives, it would have attempted to keep as much of the global posture as it could afford. History shows that global access would have been useful to have when Russia's condition improved. The Russian Federation could have found means to retain some fraction of these deployments or at least the principal of access rights.

Instead, Russian forces were disbanded or were withdrawn faster than they could be properly housed on Russian territory. In Europe, Russia withdrew from a host of bases in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, Poland, and parts of Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, and Belarus. It did not slow or alter these withdrawals to seek some form of a security agreement that would have been useful for future efforts to expand. Russia did less than the region's existing pro-Russian leaders would have liked in Central Asia and Afghanistan and then seemed reluctant to do much beyond the bare minimum to keep VEOs and civil wars away from the Russian border. In Africa and the Americas, Russia simply abandoned bases and relationships that would have given it global reach and allowed it to maintain some measure of potential to compete conventionally with the United States and other great powers dependent on global maritime and air commerce lines of communication. In Asia, Russia withdrew from bases near the major sea and air lines of communication and chokepoints of importance to the United States, China, Korea, and Japan.

The subcases of Moldova, Georgia, Belarus, and Ukraine require further consideration since some Russian Federation military power was used or deployed in each. However, these subcases showed more congruence with attempts to keep these

areas from causing domestic problems for the Russian president than with using superior Russian power to actualize the domination/greed motive. A pattern referred to as "managed instability" emerged in the subcases. In managed instability, the Russian Federation uses only enough force to prevent a bad situation from worsening enough to cause domestic political problems since competing motives make it unwise to use the potentially available military force more decisively.

Considering the Moldovan subcase without full context makes it seems like the Russian presence in Moldova is congruent with a domination/greed motive since Russia uses military power to hold ground and control people who are internationally recognized as Moldovan. If the whole context is considered, the situation looks different. Russia found itself in control of Moldovan territory, as local former Soviet commanders with the most power in newly independent Moldova chose to use force in a way that led to the survival of a locally proclaimed ethnic Russian "Republic" inside Moldova's borders. The Russian Federation had sufficient military power to permanently resolve this anomalous situation in Moldova in its favor. It could have annexed the region, attempted to take the Moldovan capital and install a pro-Russian regime, or inflicted a military defeat on Moldova outside the region to impose some other form of a permanent solution. Instead, Russian Federation forces chose simply to maintain the status quo. Given that they had the power to pursue these options and did not do so suggests that motives other than domination/greed were at work. A security motive would not be actualized by greater Russian control of Moldova given its location, and the Russian selectorate would not be interested in a victory there. The analysis of the subcase suggested that the Russian president is stuck in Moldova. Withdrawal sets up a potential situation where

ethnic Russians might be killed or harmed as the government reasserts control. Then, the Russian president must either accept blame for something that was preventable by doing nothing or return with forces to Moldova and fight a larger and less easy operation. In this circumstance, simply managing the instability between the local Russians and Moldovans on one level and managing the tension between the motives on another level is a better solution than seeking a decisive military conquest.

Georgia is also an interesting case where Russia found itself controlling the most powerful military forces in the newly independent Georgia. There was violence between three ethnic groups and a civil war within Georgia's dominant Georgian ethnic group. Rather than using its military power and the fact that three of the four major factions were more pro-Russian than pro-Western in terms of establishing a permanent position of power, Russia supported the three pro-Russian factions just enough to leave them in a rough balance that was policed by a CIS-approved (Commonwealth of Independent States) and Russian-led peacekeeping force. This was preferable to the alternatives because it ended the fighting between groups historically aligned with Russia and left Russia holding the balance of power between them.

Before the 2008 war, there had been other casus belli related to Georgia that did not lead to war even though such a war could have served the domination/greed or the self-protection motives. In 2003, the Russian Federation had more military power based in Georgia with the government's permission than Georgia did. When the Rose Revolution overthrew a legally elected pro-Russian government and replaced it with a pro-Western government, the Russian Federation neither directly nor indirectly supported the pro-Russian government with the available armed forces. It then withdrew from

those portions of Georgia that were not included in the CIS mission at the new government's request at a time when Russia had more military forces in Georgia than Georgia itself. Compared to Moscow's behaviors toward East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968, and even Poland in the early 1980s, the willingness of Moscow to let a revolution remove a pro-Russian state from the Russian orbit in Georgia during 2003 and in Ukraine during 2004 was unexpected. These examples of restraint are as least as important to understanding Russian motives as the instances when force was used.

Russia did use armed force in Georgia in August of 2008. The subcase written for this was lengthy, and many important issues may have been obscured by deliberate deception. The problem of deception was found to be relatively easily addressed in cases where the conditions of war termination were clear, as this showed what the greater power really wanted to achieve. Russian military force could have attempted to change the regime, which would have been consistent with the greedy motive. However, at the point where Russia instead chose to terminate its use of force, the Russian leadership had secured a victory that was wildly popular at home, actualizing the political survival motive. It effectively froze Georgia out of NATO and the EU, actualizing the self-protection/security motive. Continuing the battle risked significant casualties or an extended period of combat in urban areas that could have reduced or reversed the political win. Had the fighting continued, the U.S. or NATO might have provided lethal support to Georgia or intervened in some way that reduced Russian security in the long-term. Halting the fighting where Russia chose to halt it makes more sense in terms of this

explanation where the three motives interact than the explanation for the one motive of an aggressive Russian found in the U.S. policy documents.

In Belarus, Russia could have simply integrated the state into the Russian Federation against its wishes. Instead, President Lukashenko has maintained control of an independent authoritarian state that occupies a territory of decisive importance to Russia's defense by cooperating just enough to make it not worth intervening in Belarus. For example, he allows his state to be included in a common Western Military District and to be central to the *Zapad* exercise but denies most permanent basing to Russia and has made almost no progress in implementing the Union Treaty. As color revolutions removed authoritarian or pro-Russian leaders, the power dynamic shifted. It is now in President Putin's interest to protect President Lukashenko from his political enemies as a revolution in Minsk could spark unrest in Moscow.

In Ukraine, Russia made several agreements guaranteeing the borders of Ukraine as those of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. It did so even though this granted Ukraine sovereignty over areas that had been a part of Imperial Russia and which, in some cases, had majority ethnic Russian populations. Some of these territories were of military and historic importance, most notably Crimea. Russia did not attempt to contest the borders or establish a pretext to change them later. The Russian Federation also agreed to a division of the Baltic Sea Fleet that gave a larger percentage of the fleet to Georgia and Ukraine than consideration of relative power suggests one would expect.

In Estonia and Latvia, Russia abandoned its occupation without securing the rights of ethnic Russians and failed to use military power in a way that would have demonstrated to other states Russia's unwillingness to see these states join the EU and

NATO. None of these states had the power to eject Russian forces had they chosen to remain in some sort of enclave as they did in Moldova. Russia withdrew all its forces from Lithuania, leaving the Kaliningrad exclave isolated even though Russia expressed concern for the future security of the exclave. It sought only a transit agreement with Lithuania rather than imposing a permanent land bridge between the exclave and its close ally Belarus. During the early 1990s, no state had the power and the will to prevent such an action, but Russia settled for the transit arrangement.

Regarding Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, Russia did not use any form of power to prevent their accession to the EU and NATO. Allowing them to join NATO radically altered the relationship since it transformed them from weaker states with unfavorable policies toward Russia into states guaranteed by the greater power of the United States and NATO that had unfavorable policies toward Russia. Even more surprisingly, Russia put a great deal of effort into negotiating border treaties with these states. Russia did not have to go to war with the United States to achieve any of these goals. It could have conducted some small military operations to create a frozen conflict or even a demonstration or provocative exercise to persuade EU and NATO member states that they would be themselves at risk of conflict with Russia if they allowed these states to accede; failure to do so was incongruent with both the domination/greed and the self-protection motives.

In a similar way, but perhaps to a lesser intensity, the Russian Federation's inaction as Poland and other former Warsaw Pact states moved closer to and into NATO and the EU was incongruent with both the domination/greed and the self-protection motives. This remains true regardless of the intentions of these states and NATO and the

EU. EU membership created an economic and human barrier unfavorable to Russia. Membership in NATO increased the effective power of both the joining state and the member states should a conflict occur between the Russian Federation and NATO. This was a problem because Russia increasingly attributed malicious motives to the United States and NATO.

In Ukraine, Russia maintained the right to base powerful land and maritime forces in the Crimean Peninsula. Large Russian land forces could have entered mainland Ukraine from several directions over poorly defendable terrain and faced poorly prepared Ukrainian forces. Nevertheless, Russia did not use force to support the elected pro-Russian government when it was overthrown in the 2004 Orange Revolution. It did not use force during later disputes with Ukraine regarding payment for energy supplies or when Ukrainian politicians sought to ensure that the Russian Federation's basing rights would end in 2017

The energy disputes were depicted within the U.S. debate as evidence of Russian malice and interpreted as Russia using control over energy to coerce Ukraine. In fairness, according to the sources used in the subcase, Ukraine had not been paying Russia for some or all of the gas it received. There was no reason to expect the Russian state to provide free or subsidized energy to other states when they were led by political leaders whose policies were not consistent with Russian interests. We also would not expect powerful Russian companies to fail to at least try to maximize profits. During this period, the energy dispute resolution was linked to a guarantee of the continued basing of the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea that, in the next period, a later Ukrainian government reversed after the overthrow of the pro-Russian leadership.

Ukraine is an interesting case where Russian and Ukrainian policies changed between close cooperation, competition, and armed conflict on several occasions in the last thirty years. The Russian Federation's military actions in Crimea and Donbas are not fully incongruent with the domination/greed motive since Russia took territory and people from a neighboring weaker state. Nevertheless, the military operations were low risk in direct combat risks. It would seem that an aggressive and risk-taking Russian Federation could have done much more in taking large areas of eastern Ukraine. Equally interesting is that during the 2014 Revolution in Ukraine, there was no large overt military support to the legally elected and pro-Russian regime. It seems feasible that Russian military forces intervened either in Kyiv or in some area of Ukraine where the elected and subsequently overthrown president had many supporters. In fact, Russia opposed the separatist proposal for a referendum like the one that occurred in Crimea.[251]

The First and Second Chechen Wars and the decades of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism within Russia do not directly inform a scholarly assessment of either the domination/greed or self-protection motive because those are externally oriented theories that do not address how states will take action internally to maintain their existing policy, territory, and people. However, the ineffectiveness and excessively brutal methods that Russian Federation forces used may have influenced Western perceptions of Russian motives instead of Russian methods.

As described in the annexes, these conflicts may have made Russia appear weaker than it was and led to an undervaluing of Russian military capabilities that made their

---

251. Nancy Gallagher.

later successes appear more shocking than they were. The brutality toward prisoners and the indiscriminate use of massed air and ground fires in civilian areas created an impression of aggressiveness. This may have led some observers to equate aggressive means with aggressive motives. No great-power state would be expected to have motives that led it to tolerate succession. To an even lesser extent would a state be expected to tolerate a secession movement that might be expected to promote further dissension if successful. It was aggressive means, not aggressive motives, which were most evident. This may have confused outsiders while making it unlikely that Russia would receive strong cooperation against this threat from the United States.

In the final period from 2012 to 2020, the domination/greed motive case becomes stronger. This seems like a theoretical possibility that should rarely exist in practice. The form of military, cyber, and information power that Russia used to interfere with U.S. and European politics had not been effectively demonstrated when Glaser published his theory, so it is interesting to consider how this subcase impacts the assessment of Russian motives. While doing so, it is important to note that the research question itself predates many of these incidents and their eventual declassification, so while they do not rise to the level of the use of military force, they nonetheless demonstrate significant use of a novel form of military power. The most appropriate approach to this problem was deemed to be using the existing theoretical frameworks and accepting that this added another layer of uncertainty to any findings on motives linked to these behaviors.

Military force has traditionally involved physical violence and was responded to with physical violence. Use of force short of armed conflict were generally demonstrations of the willingness and ability to use physical violence. These

demonstrations were intended to coerce a state into accepting some outcome desired by the demonstrator in preference to potentially engaging in armed conflict. What was different in Russia's new approach was that the combined effect of the Russian Federation's military and intelligence capabilities allowed military power to be exerted without the use of military force and to apply power directly against the policies of other states and inside their territories by influencing their people's beliefs. They largely bypassed the military power of the United States while achieving significant political effects comparable to those normally associated with an at least partially successful armed conflict. Responding to this type of behavior with physical violence has been seen as inconsistent with proportionality and would be problematic because no Euro-Atlantic great power has been willing to initiate armed conflict against a nuclear-armed state.

Therefore, this form of power allowed Russia to act on a domination/greed motive with relatively low risk. In no way did Russia have sufficient conventional power to be confident in launching an armed conflict with the United States, the United Kingdom, or France. Nevertheless, it was willing and able to use new forms of military power against them and continued to do so once it had been caught and perhaps well after it was wise to do so. This may change how motives are assessed in the future. Overall, the cyber and information operations seem congruent with the way the presidential political survival motive and domination/greed should be applied to this novel behavior; however, others will disagree with this judgment.

A significant factor in making this judgment is that the behaviors seem to have continued so long past the point of helpfulness that they are not congruent with the self-protection motive unless Russia assumes that no other option is left and no future

cooperation is desired or expected. This seems unlikely. In many countries, including the United States, these uses of power led to deeply entrenched resentment of Russia within centrist and left-leaning parties. Generally, they had been relatively more in favor of cooperation with Moscow in the past than right-leaning parties. If Russia had been interested in cooperation on behalf of self-protection motives, these actions would have made little sense once the initial objective of damaging Senator Clinton's presidential chances and the follow-up operations became widely known and a cause for mobilizing the Democratic Party and others against Russia.

All of the above discussion could be significantly altered if information available in the future shows that Russia thought about this kind of power in a significantly different way than assumed here. It is possible that according to Russian thinking, they intended to achieve something different from the researcher's interpretation.

Russia's military actions in Syria were found not to be strong evidence of a domination/greed motive despite claims in the sample of sources and in U.S. strategic documents that they were. Of the large number of countries where the Russian Federation forces were based in 1991, Syria is almost unique in that Russia maintained a continued military presence. Russian interests in the region can be traced back to Imperial Russia and even earlier, so it should not have surprised the United States that Russia fought to maintain a government that was one of the few to offer Russia the basing rights and international support. The opponents of that long-allied Syrian government were almost certain to expel the Russian presence and were likely to ally either with anti-Russian VEOs or the United States or both. Additionally, the costs and risks for Russian use of force were limited. It could provide air and missile fires and

special operations advisors to the Syrian military, which were unlikely to cause large Russian casualties. The Russian Federation was already heavily sanctioned for other issues, so it had relatively little risk in its relationship with Europe and the United States.

The bottom line is that the domination/greed motive was a plausible motive but not the most important in the Russian Federation's choices about force. The instances discussed above come from a small but important portion of the 44 subcases, and some have only instances of incongruence with the domination/greed motive. For the much larger sample of behaviors, this motive could not be eliminated as a plausible explanation. Generally, this is because the behaviors that occurred were consistent with this motive and one or more motives, so a simple answer was not obtainable.

If the domination/greed motive is relatively weak but not non-existent compared to the other motives driving Russian calculations, there is, in fact, a traditional deterrence problem, but it is neither the only problem nor the most important problem. The stronger the motive, the more military capabilities it could take to deter Russian aggression. Had Europe and the United States executed their intent for further military reductions after 2015 and later realized that a domination/greed motive had come to play a greater role in Russian decision-making than it had earlier in the period of study, then the situation would have been much worse than it is today.

Since 2014, NATO states have taken actions that were once widely unexpected to expand their militaries, increase their readiness, and posture themselves in ways that have greatly reduced the window of opportunity Russian Federation forces could exploit with a limited surprise attack. Russia's actions have united NATO and EU states against it. The idea that Russia could break NATO by using armed force that NATO did not or could not

respond to no longer has the level of risk it had in 2015, except in certain conditions of military surprise or competition with new uses of force below armed conflict. The United States and NATO members are probably now in a sufficient position to deter Russia, although the cost of fighting Russia if deterrence failed would be very high in terms of human casualties and financial costs with the current balance of military power. It seems likely that most Western countries will find themselves committed to developing further military capabilities to deal with China. This allows them to make future policy from a position of strength compared to Russia alone but may incentivize them to try to improve the relationship with Russia and seek to separate it from China.

Interpreting the findings about the self-protection/security motive

Table 7 shows that of the 44 subcases covering the history of the Russian Federation, 13 were assessed as including behaviors that were incongruent with the expectations for the self-protection/security motive under the conditions of the variables in the subcase.

Table 7. *Subcases with instances of incongruence with the self-protection/security motive.*

1991–2000	2000–2012	2012–2020
4	**4**	**5**

Overall, the weight of evidence suggested that the self-protection/security motive was a plausible explanation that should be accounted for in U.S. strategic planning. The overall analysis also suggested that when the plausible motives are in tension, actualizing this motive will be prioritized lower than the presidential political survival motive and

will usually be prioritized higher or at worse roughly equal to the greed/domination motive.

The researcher initially assumed that many Russian claims of security fears were overstated and that this would reduce the plausibility of this motive. Against expectations, the structured, focused comparison led to the finding that European geography and the state of military technology create a structural security problem and that the context that existed at past times leads to different and better findings than those biased by hindsight. This made many instances of the Russian uses or threats of force the plausible expressions of this motive.

The researcher expected that the self-protection motive would compete with the domination/greed motive to be regarded as the strongest motive because these are the two most heavily emphasized motives in U.S. debates about why Russia does what it does. There was little evidence of military choices made to advance the self-protection motive in the initial years of the Russian Federation, largely because Yeltsin did not view the United States and NATO as threats and saw cooperation as the best way to protect and promote Russian interests. As the United States and its allies and partners took military actions without regard for Russian interests and objection, its self-protection motive gradually increased in importance.

The literature review provided many credible sources that cited examples of Russian insecurity to support this motive while explaining the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of force. Many of those examples came from official Russian sources, including Presidents Putin and Medvedev. Rather than being viewed as authoritative explanations of Russian decisions, these justifications are often dismissed

by those in the West who distrust Russian motives and discount Russian concerns. As U.S. views of Russian behavior have gotten worse, Russian leaders making these arguments are more likely to get them discredited by U.S. strategic planners than have them consider their validity.

Many of the subcases analyzed in this dissertation showed that given the observable conditions related to power, information about how others are likely to treat the Russian Federation, and the behaviors of other states, a reasonable Russian could very well perceive a threat to the Russian Federation. The expansion of NATO and the EU, the United States-led military operations against states with ties to Russia, and the removal of pro-Russian leaders by color revolution can be interpreted as a grand strategy directed against Russia when in fact, they were largely unconnected to Russia and often not even caused by any particular state. Unhelpfully, however, the Russian Federation's actions since 2014 make it politically unpalatable for a Western elected official to make this argument a part of a larger explanation of the Russian Federation's behavior. Past Russian and Soviet negotiating behavior has created a reputation for deception and dishonesty. This may have led to the failure of honest Russian Federation efforts to communicate its true fears in strategic documents and presidential statements.

Many Russian choices in the early post-Cold War years initially appear incongruent with the self-protection motive, but one could argue that this was largely because President Yeltsin no longer perceived the United States and its NATO allies and partners as a threat to Russia and/or Yeltsin believed that cooperating with the West was the best way to protect and promote Russia's security interests.

This must be judged using evidence on actual Russian perceptions, not from the perspective of a U.S. official or in hindsight. The action taken should reasonably be expected to make Russia more secure if it succeeds. An action that leaves Russia more secure and powerful can create confusion between the domination/greed and self-protection motives, so looking for incongruence was useful because many actions could reasonably be congruent with either of the motives.

As discussed in the case of the domination/greed motive from 1991 to 2000, the Russian Federation inherited a powerful military deployed in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. If the Russian Federation was motivated to protect its interests against other states' uses of force, this posture and interstate relationships that went with it were of great value. This is more rather than less true because the Russian Federation could no longer support the costs of the former Soviet military. Simply sustaining the Soviet posture was impractical. That does not require taking this posture to near zero and giving up the basing rights in principle and the military-to-military relationships that went with them. Nor does the agreement of the defunct Soviet state bind its successors to actions that might not make sense in the post-Soviet context. The Russian Federation would never have a better bargaining position than it did to secure what it deemed the appropriate security agreements if it felt the need for them. Leaving token forces or even placing infrastructure in a cold status occasionally visited by small rotational forces would have made sense if Russia had felt the need to be postured for self-protection when its financial situation improved.

The statements that there were informal agreements about NATO expansion and the basing for NATO forces suggested that the issue was simply not taken seriously or

that Russia made overly optimistic assumptions about the future. European security agreements of any value have always included specific written documents. The United States and Russia made a dizzying number of agreements in writing during the time. The Russian Federation made an unusually large number of agreements in the former Soviet sphere. Almost all the Russian Federation agreements with neighbors were framed to suggest that the Russian Federation was reassuring weaker neighbors rather than seeking mutual security.

The failure of the Russian Federation to use any form of its military power to make a serious use or show of force to halt the movement of Poland and the Baltic States into the EU and NATO suggests that self-protection motives were weak during this period.

The Russian Federation's acceptance of the loss of historically Russian areas in Ukraine and Georgia without compensation suggests that the Russian Federation expected to endure cooperation to make this an unimportant issue. The cooperation would have to have been assumed to allow Russian access to Black Sea bases and strategic areas of the Caucasus where VEOs were known to operate. This proved untrue later.

The Russian military occupation of portions of Moldova makes little sense under the conventional assumption that a state's territory encloses the people it considers itself responsible for defending. With this assumption, the presence in Moldova seems to be a costly waste at best and an unnecessary breach of normal behavior likely to make enemies for the Russian Federation.

The air and missile campaigns and the follow-up land operations against the Bosnia Serbs in 1997 and against Serbia in 1999 appear to have greatly heightened the perception in the Russian Federation that the United States and NATO were a potential threat. It also appears to have strengthened the perception that they had a significant enough military power advantage to have future military options against the Russian Federation. President Yeltsin notably failed to communicate this to the West or act strongly enough to defend the historically allied and ethnically and religiously similar Serbians to sustain political support. A significant effort by Vladimir Putin to address these concerns in a series of strategic documents in 1999 and 2000 played a role in his dramatic rise to the Presidency despite being associated with the deeply unpopular President Yeltsin.

The case study found significant examples of incongruence in subcases where Russian officials perceived (rightly or wrongly) a threat to national security yet failed to make choices that they thought would increase protection against that threat.

Interestingly, Russia chose not to use military force to protect its interests related to Georgia against the 2003 Rose Revolution, which overthrew an elected pro-Russian government and replaced it with a pro-Western government despite having more military power in Georgia than Georgia did as a result of basing agreements. Russia withdrew those military forces following talks with the new government, leaving only those forces that were committed to the CIS peacekeeping mission. These behaviors were at least moderately incongruent with the self-protection motive.

It is not possible to prove that the events of August 2008 were incongruent with a self-protection motive for several reasons. Even if Russia deliberately provoked the

Georgians into the tactical military actions that the Russian Federation used to justify additional forces entering the country and attacking Georgian forces, this could have been a reasonable approach to self-protection. If the Russian Federation intended to unfreeze the military situation, alter it in its favor, and then re-freeze it in a way that ensured a permanently frozen conflict that would prevent Georgia from becoming part of the EU and NATO, then the provocation of war would have been consistent with self-protection motives. Russia used its much greater power to change very little, which suggests that Russian motives were similarly limited.

Similarly, in Ukraine, Russia chose not to intervene militarily in the 2004 Orange Revolution, which replaced an elected pro-Russian government with one favoring Western integration. Given the possible consequences of a shift in Ukraine's orientation for the Russian Federation's geo-political position, it would be reasonable for Russians to view these events as a threat.

The continued Russian military presence in Moldova would be incongruent with the self-protection motive if we strictly apply the assumption that a state's protection of people is meant to apply to those people within its territory. Other states, including the United States, have at times included in their statements about strategy a willingness to protect their citizens when they are abroad. From this perspective, it is reasonable to argue that Russia is older than the 1991 birth of the Russian Federation and that the Russian people include some outside the post-1991 borders.

U.S. statements describe the Russian Federation as using ethnic Russians beyond the borders as a pretext for expansionistic interference in the affairs of other states. If one takes seriously the Russian government's statements about having a duty to protect ethnic

Russians living in other countries comparable to the duty that other governments feel to protect their own citizens living abroad, the protection of those persons would be a core national security problem rather than just an excuse for aggression. The United States has no interest in harming these people, so this seems like a low-risk opportunity to explore as a test of Russian motives.

Oddly, only after Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland were admitted to NATO did the Russian Federation use exercises, military demonstrations, and explicit threats to show a capability and a willingness to use force against what it claimed was a threat of NATO uses of force emanating from the bases in these countries. It did not do so before their membership was final at a time when such an action might have persuaded at least one NATO member to break the consensus required for their membership. The Russian Federation's pattern would be puzzling if its intentions were protective as it waited until NATO got stronger and then threatened it when it would have made more sense to make threats when they might have kept it from getting stronger. It did not make such threatening displays when they might have kept the countries out of NATO.

From the journalistic reporting, it appears entirely reasonable to believe that there was at least some GRU-led (GRU is the English abbreviation for the Main Intelligence Directive of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation) support to the pro-Russian Ukrainian government when pro-Western protesters faced it in 2014. Nevertheless, the Russian Federation chose not to become overtly involved militarily to prevent or reverse the 2014 revolution in Ukraine. When the Russian Federation did choose to use military force, first in Crimea and then in Donbas, Russia chose to limit its military objectives to those secured quickly and with minimal military risk.

When fighting continued in Donbas, Russia did just enough to keep Ukraine from making progress in restoring control over an area where ethnic Russians had fought against it but far less than it could have if it wanted to expand the conflict and seek larger goals. For example, while there are notable instances of Russian tactical operations where Russian Federation military forces inflicted significant casualties, these were not exploited to gain additional ground or create an operational or strategic problem that would have forced Ukraine to accept defeat. The battles for control around the Donetsk airport stand out as some of the most intense of the war. Nevertheless, during fighting in and around the airport terminal, which lasted hundreds of days, the Russian Federation used only enough force to allow the fighting to continue. Russia was perfectly capable of bringing in additional maneuver forces to encircle and isolate the airport.[252] This suggests either a hardly believable lack of competence or a deliberate decision on limitations.

The pattern of interference in the political affairs of Euro-Atlantic states may have been initially congruent with a self-protection motive when it was used to shift elections away from candidates that could have been perceived as potentially harming the Russian Federation's interests. As months of interference turned into years, this behavior became more egregious and incongruent with the self-protection of the Russian state. It reduced future opportunities to cooperate and stored up an increasingly deep bitterness among

---

252. Thomas Gibbons-Neff, "At Point 18 in Eastern Ukraine, the War Grinds on, Night after Night," *Washington Pos*t, August 15, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/at-point-18-in-eastern-ukraine-the-war-grinds-on-night-after-night/2015/08/15/fffcf2c0-405f-11e5-9561-4b3dc93e3b9a_story.html.

supporters of political parties and candidates against whom continued force was employed.

The Soviet Union employed relatively sophisticated influence operations against the United States and other states. The modern Russian efforts were different. They had relatively more military involvement. Parties of the left were not favored, they were much more intense, and they continued with little change when the actual personnel involved were identified and sanctioned.

The most extreme example of interference in politics within the Euro-Atlantic states was the 2016 attempt by the GRU and others to launch a coup in Montenegro. This was a notable escalation from other political interference campaigns because Russia had plans to kill the president, according to the press reports cited in the subcase. These came to nothing when the coup was exposed and the planners arrested. Given that the stakes at hand were whether Montenegro, a nation of no great significance militarily or geographically, would join NATO or not, it seems unreasonable to primarily ascribe self-protection motives to such an unnecessarily violent and provocative act.

Interpreting the findings: The presidential political survival motive

Table 8 shows that of the 44 subcases covering the history of the Russian Federation, nine were assessed as including behaviors that were incongruent with the expectations for the self-protection/security motive under the conditions of the variables in the subcase.

Table 8. *Subcases with instances of incongruence with the presidential political survival motive.*

1991–2000	2000–2012	2012–2020
3	**5**	**1**

Overall, the weight of evidence suggested that the presidential political survival motive was a plausible explanation that should be accounted for in U.S. strategic planning. The overall analysis also suggested that when the plausible motives are in tension, actualizing this motive will be prioritized above the self-protection/security motive and the domination/greed motive. Notably, the behaviors incongruent with this motive were generally halted or reversed when the damage to the motive should have become apparent to Presidents Medvedev and Putin but less so in the case of President Yeltsin.

The researcher did not expect that the presidential political survival motive would be a better explanation than motives set primarily in the international system because strategists are trained to focus on military and political interactions between countries. This reflects one of the shortfalls in strategic thinking that the dissertation seeks to address. In retrospect, it appears entirely obvious that the top priority of a leader must be to maintain their leadership position, or they will not be in a position to make policy.

The literature review detailed several arguments of credible sources and their evidence for why they believed some form of domestic political motive was important to the Russian Federation's decision-making regarding the use of force. For testing purposes, the Selectorate Theory was chosen as the basis for rejecting or weakening

confidence in such an explanation by looking for incongruence between predicted and actual Russian Federation behavior if this was a valid motive. This theory is superior to the use of other political theories because it is broad enough to account for all the types of arguments made by the sources while also being deep enough to address the linkage between political power struggles and military action.

Across the 44 subcases, one can find substantial evidence for the importance of domestic political considerations. The spirit of cooperation and incorrect beliefs that security concerns about an interstate war between Euro-Atlantic states were outdated may have contributed to President Yeltsin's decisions related to the use of force that eventually contributed to a decline in his popularity and the intensification of Russian fears about the motives of the United States and the security of the Russian Federation.

The subcases detailed in Annex A, B, and C regarding Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine make more sense when considering the domestic political motive than international motives. Without restating those cases in detail, it is clear that Russia passed on multiple potential casus belli with these states and exercised restraint at times. When force was used, it was clear that Russia could have taken more terrain from these countries than it chose to and could potentially have taken their capitals and installed a pro-Russian leadership.

The continued Russian Federation presence in Moldova does not make a great deal of sense in terms of international power. The Russian Federation did not use its power to create a pro-Russian regime, annex Transnistria, or withdraw from an apparently purposeless occupation of low-value terrain that involves Russia in international disputes over its continued presence. The case suggested that in the chaos

of the Soviet collapse, military commanders loyal to Moscow chose to support ethnic Russian separatists in a region of little importance to the Russian Federation now that it was separated from the Russian Federation by the state of Ukraine.

Any Russian president who took the responsibility to order the departure of the Russian military units preventing the Moldovan government from asserting control would be placing their political position at risk. Attacks by forces attempting to establish control over the ethnic Russian separatists would result in ethnic Russian deaths that voters and elites in the Russian Federation would blame on the leader who ordered the withdrawal. The Russian president would then face a dilemma. They could keep Russian forces out of the fighting, which would result in the defeat of ethnic Russian separatist forces and resulting domestic political problems, or they could order the deployment of military forces back into Moldova for an armed conflict with Moldova that would probably restore the status quo ante in Transnistria. In this light, an endless presence in Moldova seems politically reasonable.

In the case of Georgia, there were more powerful Russian forces already in the country than there were Georgian forces when, in 2003, the Rose Revolution toppled an elected and pro-Russian government and replaced it with a pro-U.S. government. The government subsequently ordered Russian forces out of the country and moved to join NATO and the EU. Russia exercised restraint. When Russia used force in 2008, its military performed poorly. Russia was much more powerful than Georgia in terms of the forces committed to the fighting. Additional uncommitted forces were available to the Russian Federation, although their readiness may not have been high. Nevertheless, Russian forces halted after seizing territory that made military sense for two easily

defendable and contiguous regions, one inhabited primarily by Ossets and another primarily by Abkhazians.

While the creation of a frozen conflict had some value to both international motives, the conflict was frozen in a manner that left Georgia in control of Black Sea ports that were historically important to Russia and did not include the militarily high-value high ground north of Tbilisi or regions that could be used for bargaining. Additionally, Russia did not attempt to enter the capital or install a pro-Russian leader despite its military defeat of Georgia and the ability of the Russian military to bring in vastly overwhelming numbers of forces. Instead, the lines make sense in that they froze the three ethnic groups in positions where a renewal of fighting placed a disadvantage on the initiator. A small Russian force could defend against a concentration of Georgian forces at a single point.

Suppose we accept the idea that Russian voters and the elite expect ethnic Russians beyond the borders of the state to be protected. In that case, it is not much of a stretch to also recall that there are different words for ethnic Russians and other members of the Russian state, but both imply membership in the state. In this context, peoples like the Abkhaz and Ossets are historically members of the Russian Imperial state even though they are not ethnically Russian. The Russian military actions in Georgia would make a great deal of sense if a primary objective were to establish what NATO would call a safe and secure area for the Russian-affiliated Abkhazians and Ossetians while minimizing the harm done to the formerly, and possibly future, Russian-affiliated Georgians.

Similarly, the seizure of Crimea and the armed conflict in Donbas make a great deal of sense in domestic politics but are problematic in terms of international motives. The actual military operation in Crimea was a shock and a surprise to the United States. Russia appeared to have taken a great risk. A look at the situation in 2014 shows that the military risk of the actual use of force executed by the Russian Federation was low. There were already Russian forces with basing rights in Crimea. Ukraine was in no way ready to fight. Its military was unready, and its political leadership was in disarray. The land entrances to Crimea are unique in the world for their narrowness and ease of defense. It was not a major military operational risk for Russian forces to move by surprise to these positions and effectively seal off the Crimean Peninsula.

On the other hand, while the military risk was minimal, the use of force must have seemed likely to involve Russia in international problems that seem far larger than the military value of Crimea. Perhaps, the Sochi Olympics, which in the United States came to be part of a larger narrative equating Putin with Hitler and other villains, simply made Russians and their political leaders focus on the unresolved issues around the Black Sea. Many Russians saw the existing borders as unfair to Russians and not consistent with Russian history. They were aware of the potential for the Russian Federation Fleet to have to depart its historical base in Crimea in 2017 because of the Ukrainian Constitution forbidding the basing of foreign forces after that date. If Russia were a rational and aggressive actor focused on the international aspects of the problem, it would have been wise to wait to use force until 2016 or 2017. By then, European and U.S. land forces might have been hollowed out by the expected post-Afghanistan combat mission drawdown.

The Russian Federation's behavior in doing just enough to keep the pro-Russian separatists in Donbas from being defeated by Ukrainian government forces despite having enough relative military power to have moved the line of control far inside Ukraine is inconsistent with the domination or self-protection motives. It would make sense if the objective had been to keep the problem off the domestic agenda while not risking high casualties or prolonged high-intensity combat that could weaken the perceived competence and credibility of the president.

Very few subcases showed significant incongruence between the political survival motive and actual behaviors – many fewer than were found for the other two motives and mostly during the Yeltsin years. President Yeltsin's failure to use his relative advantage in military power to guarantee equal rights for Russian speakers in the newly independent Estonia and Latvia is a dramatic example of incongruence with the political views of both the Russian voter and the views likely held by security elites. President Yeltsin was actively engaged in withdrawing military forces and setting up new relations with all the post-Soviet states. Yet, he did almost nothing to protect the rights of Russian in the Baltic States until his political opponents made it an issue in the Duma. Even then, President Yeltsin did not use his relative power advantage either directly or indirectly to secure the rights of these now stateless Russians. He simply did enough to get the issue off of the agenda in the Duma.

The decline in President Yeltsin's political popularity as the 2000 election approached had many causes. His relationship with the U.S. and NATO was one of them. This helps highlight a possible systematic bias in scholarship and practice. Geography and history have led to a traditional U.S. assumption that there is, or was at

one time, a relatively clear distinction between domestic and international politics. There is much less of a clear line within Russia. Russia is a land power and has traditionally engaged in competition and conflict with neighboring land powers. Some of the most intense military conflicts in history have occurred inside Russia. This means that international and domestic affairs are more closely intertwined and more directly relevant to the lives of Russian voters than American citizens, especially in the heartland.

President Yeltsin also acted incongruently with his political future when he made little use of Russian power to prevent NATO air and missile campaigns against the historically allied Serbs in former Yugoslavia. He exercised Russia's veto power in the Security Council but failed to use some form of military diplomacy to dissuade NATO from using airpower without Security Council authorization. He contributed Russian land forces to the follow-up NATO-led peacekeeping missions, which helped protect Serbian interests but required accepting a minor role in the command structure. This symbolically shifted Moscow from its traditional place in Europe as one of between two and five super/great powers and placed it in a position akin to one of the smaller European states that traditionally coalesced around the great powers.

Conducting tests that considered international and domestic motives in the same study required careful management to preserve the distinctions between domestic political and international order pressures. One way of addressing this was to treat the Russian Federation as essentially a unitary actor when considering the international motives even though there is an observable domestic political process. Then, when considering the domestic motive, it was necessary to consider evidence such as political polling and expert commentary about internal issues. Scholars tend to take either one

approach or another, which may make sense from a theoretical perspective, but this was an explicit attempt to push the limits of existing theory.

Presidents Putin and Medvedev both made notable efforts to keep their actions congruent with their political survival. The expert commentary in the literature review was almost unanimous in emphasizing the great importance they put on keeping popular support. The case material showed that they were simultaneously building a smaller, inner coalition of "*siloviki*" and armed security forces directly under presidential control. This served as a fallback should the larger public decide the president was no longer their best choice.

The subcases showed that President Putin had placed great emphasis on keeping a large coalition and continues to do so. They also showed that he fears that this could rapidly fall apart, so he has built an inner coalition. President Putin has sustained the larger coalition at least partially by showing that he can provide non-physical public goods like security and orders. Simultaneously, he used the military and security services reforms to build a fallback-winning coalition composed of multiple militarized security services that report directly to the president. He is now well postured to prevent or defeat a coup or color revolution because he has divided military-style forces and power among multiple organizations.

For the 21 years during which these two men have so far held power, there was remarkably little in their decision-making regarding the use of force that was incongruent with popular Russian opinion or with elite views. It is an interesting question for future exploration to consider the causal relationship between popular and elite opinion and the information strategies of the Russian government. Government-controlled media

supported the policies of Presidents Putin and Medvedev. Whether President Putin chose to move with or shape opinion is less important for this dissertation than the finding that there are few times when Russian presidential decisions related to military force and public opinion were inconsistent.

The most notable incongruence since Putin first took office was largely symbolic and appeared to have been missed by many observers. In 2010, it made good sense for the Russian Federation to establish a positive relationship with Poland that would preclude any future trouble while reassuring the rest of Europe that the continued drawdown in military power for large-scale interstate combat operations should continue. Poland was one of very few European states other than the Russian Federation with significant armed conflict capabilities uncommitted to Iraq or Afghanistan. Poland has always been central to Russian military strategy in Europe. Under 21st-century military conditions, Poland was the most obvious NATO member with the potential space to deploy a major NATO military force aimed at Russia. U.S. and NATO forces based in Poland would have Moscow and Saint Petersburg within their theoretical operational reach, as demonstrated in the many U.S.-led wars of the recent past. While the basing infrastructure was not sufficiently developed to create this threat and no state had the actual intention to create either the basing or the threat, the possibility of the threat emerging indeed existed. This would not have mattered if the assumptions of both sides about the motives of the other side had been positive.

Poland and Russia are captives of their history. No issue is more sensitive to the Polish or U.S. voters of Polish heritage than the Soviet Union's cooperation with Hitler to destroy Poland and the massacre of Polish military and civilian elites by the KGB and the

Red Army, most notably at Katyn. Quite cannily and congruent with international motives, President Putin began to establish better Polish–Russian relations by hosting a joint commemoration by the Russian, Belarus, and Polish governments of the massacre at Katyn forest. Interestingly, the Prime Minister led the commemoration rather than President. With little apparent prompting from anyone else, Prime Minister Putin reversed the long-standing denial of Moscow that it was responsible for the massacre.

He quite specifically laid the blame on Joseph Stalin and his own KGB in a potentially popular message with Poland that he must have known would be unpopular and shocking in Russia. As a former KGB officer and the Prime Minister in 2010, he was well aware that many of his supporters were also supporters of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Joseph Stalin, and the military legacy of the Soviet Union. While these may seem trivial points to an American, they were living issues in Russian Federation and Polish politics. President Putin may have felt sufficiently secure at home to accept some risk to his short-term popularity to seek a relationship with Poland that might be in the long-term interest of Russia. It was an important time in the reset with President Obama's administration, and Putin's domestic popularity was high enough that he may have believed that it was worth weathering a short domestic political storm for big international benefits that never materialized because of the crash.

In keeping with the tragic history of Russia and Poland, any positive effect of this initiative was largely nullified when the plane carrying the Polish president and military leaders crashed on arrival at the commemoration, killing all aboard. In the aftermath, the Polish–Russian relations became worse, if possible, and Prime Minister Putin's domestic

enemies, primarily communists and nationalists rather than Western-style liberals, used his actions against him in domestic politics.

The literature review, the design of explanations, and the case studies made very clear the outspokenness of major U.S. political leaders against President Putin after the failure of the "Reset." It is unlikely that U.S. officials had much of a role in causing the protests within Russia during the period. They aligned themselves with the domestic political opponents of Vladimir Putin. In this context, the intensity of the Russian campaign against Secretary Clinton's U.S. presidential bid, which used Russian military forces and capabilities in the cyber and information domains, makes a great deal of sense in terms of the political survival motive.

The unexpected explanatory and predictive power of the political survival motive and the understanding provided by the structured, focused comparison of the subcases did much to resolve the puzzling aspects of the problem. The unusual pattern of the Russian Federation accepting the costs and risks of using force and then accepting a lesser military victory than feasible makes more sense if what is happening is that the Russian president is using just enough force to resolve or freeze a potential political problem. In this situation, the president is not interested in the gains in international power from continuing to fight a weaker adversary to a conclusion. Doing so may involve significant casualties or the appearance of something less than the rapid military victory intended to create positive domestic political consequences.

Interpretation of how the case study indicated that the variables changed relative to the Russian Federation and the United States

The original division into three periods of time detailed in the three annexes was chosen as a relatively neutral and balanced way to break up the thirty-year post-Cold War

period of interest without pre-judging what would be learned about continuity and change in Russian decision-making by analyzing the subcases. One important finding that resulted was that there were actually five relatively distinct periods where Russian leaders appeared to have different perceptions and respond with different choices related to the use of military force. Interestingly, the United States does not seem to have noted or acted promptly on the inflection points in Russian perception.

The dates of these inflection points are imprecise, as relevant evidence (real or misperceived) accumulates slowly and perceptions change gradually. The lengthy cycle of strategic planning also causes a delay in the response. Care must be taken not to simply pick a major event near an inflection point and conclude that it was the major cause of the change. Even if the event was significant, it was only one among many possible intended or unintended signals or sources of information about key variables. Given the tendency in the U.S. policy debate to ascribe blame and reinterpret history in a partisan light, this is an important caution for strategic planning.

The initial state of the variables and selected information about later changes

At the beginning of the case, the dependent variable's status was that the Russian Federation had chosen to use military force almost purely to cooperate with the United States and the other states. Russia did maintain a policy of nuclear deterrence, which mixed competition to maintain a credible deterrent with cooperation to stabilize deterrence at a reasonable cost. The decision for an essentially cooperative military policy immediately encountered challenges as policy decisions always seem to do.

In *RTIP,* Glaser established the state of the observable variables near the end of the Cold War. General Secretary Gorbachev assessed that the United States was more

powerful because it could generate more military power. In a crisis, the Soviet Union's and the Warsaw Pact's large deployed forces and high readiness reserves made the power balance unclear, but the Warsaw Pact had numerical superiority on paper.[253]

In the European conventional military confrontation, both sides' militaries acknowledged that the defense had the advantage at the tactical level of war with few exceptions, such as a surprise attack.[254] At the strategic level, nuclear weapons gave an advantage to the defense by making deterrence more credible under certain conditions. In addition, they created stability in the system because of the deterrent effect created by each side being confident, whereby it could launch a retaliatory nuclear strike if it were stuck first. There was little probability of the other side finding a way to nullify this retaliatory capability. In the nuclear arena, defense by deterrence also had the advantage that a retaliatory strike was not preventable by an attacker given the prevailing conditions.[255]

Both NATO and Soviet doctrine sought victory in conventional war by maneuvering large forces at the operational level of war where the tactical advantage of defense could be overcome by massing forces against the opponent's weak points. At

---

253. This is both a judgement by the researcher and the researcher's understanding of Glaser's case study in *RTIP*, 206–212.

254. In 2005, the researcher and other faculty members at the United States Military Academy completed a 1980s version of the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College correspondence course as part of a deal offered by the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army to get the United States to key positions in Iraq in 2006. The material included elaborate and unclassified tables for calculating relative combat power and discussions of Soviet thinking on the matter. All gave a significant advantage to the defender.

255. This is both a judgement by the researcher and the researcher's understanding of Glaser's case study in *RTIP*, 206–212.

least at the operational level of war, conventional offensively oriented forces were somewhat distinguishable from conventional defensively oriented forces by their mix of equipment and capabilities. For example, offensive forces needed more mobility, the ability to sustain themselves far from their bases of supply, and the ability to quickly cross or breach rather than defend barriers such as rivers and military obstacle belts. It is important to note that this information is about how the force will fight, not about why the force will fight. This was proven by Secretary Gorbachev's ability to signal a lack of offensive intentions by withdrawing most large tank formations and the mobile fueling capabilities needed to sustain an offensive on other states' territory. In terms of nuclear war, offensive and defensive capabilities were at least partially distinguishable by how a system affected incentives for either or both sides to launch a first strike and how they affected the second-strike capability of one or both sides.[256]

Glaser did not specify the motives of either the United States or the Soviet Union and the type of state they were. At a minimum, he implied that both the Soviet Union and the US were not purely greedy or unmotivated states at this time, that they believed that the other was something other than a purely greedy or unmotivated state, and that they believed that the other believed them to be something other than a purely greedy or unmotivated state.[257]

---

256. This is both a judgement by the researcher and the researcher's understanding of Glaser's case study in *RTIP*, 206–212.

257. This is both a judgement by the researcher and the researcher's understanding of Glaser's case study in *RTIP*, 206–212.

These values were the same at the start of the case on 25 December 1991 when Soviet President Gorbachev resigned. The Soviet Union was dissolved, and President Yeltsin became the newly independent Russian Federation's leader. These values predicted that the United States and the Soviet Union and initially, the United States and the newly independent Russia would have cooperative military policies, and that is what was demonstrated by observable behaviors, at least initially.[258]

The Russian Federation initially had a large selectorate, and President Yeltsin started with a broad winning coalition. Every Russian adult could play a role in selecting the Russian President by participating in either an election, a popular revolution, or a coup. The selectorate remained mostly unchanged during this period.

After the 1991 coup attempt, Yeltsin's approval rating was 81%, but this fell to an astonishing 8% when he left office.[259] An analysis of factors driving the steady decline in President Yeltsin's popularity indicated that economic factors were the strongest contributor to his unpopularity.[260]

Russians initially became freer under the new government but then lost much of this freedom. As late as 1986, Russians under the rule of the Soviet Union were categorized by Freedom House as not free, and their political and civil freedom received the lowest possible ranking of seven in both categories. This situation improved dramatically in the early 1990s when Russia was categorized by Freedom House as not

---

258. Robert Service, *The Penguin History of Modern Russia: From Tsarism to the Twenty-First Century*, 4th edition.. (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 485–506.

259. Treisman, "Presidential Popularity," 590.

260. Treisman, "Presidential Popularity," 590.

partly free. Their political and civil freedom received mid-range rankings of three and four on a scale from one to seven, where lower numbers indicated that people were freer than higher numbers. Between 1997 and 2001, Russia became less free in both categories. In 2004, Russia tipped into the Freedom House category of not free with a ranking of six on political and five on civil liberties, which was slightly less bad than under the Soviet Union that was ranked with the lowest possible score of seven during most of its history. Russia has not improved its ratings since that time.[261]

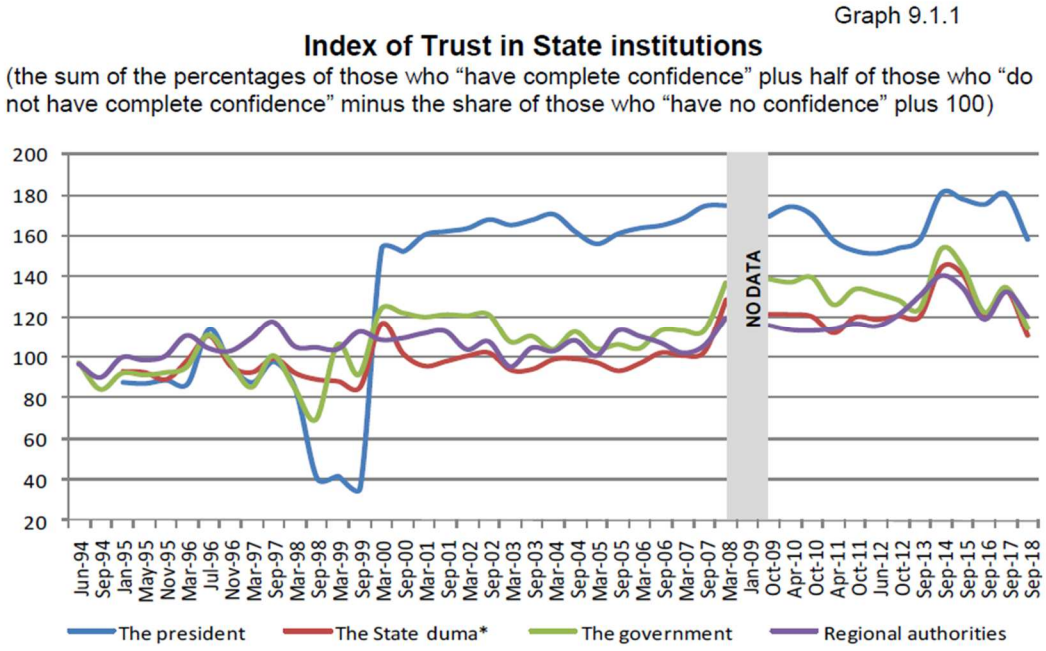

Figure 14. *"Index of trust in state institutions." Source: Levada's "Russian Public Opinion 2018."*

261. Freedom House, "Freedom in the World: Country and Territory Ratings and Statuses, 1973–2020 (Excel)," https://freedomhouse.org/, 2020. https://freedomhouse.org/content/freedom-world-data-and-resources.

Figure 15 from Levada shows the confidence in the Russian Federation's president for almost the entire period. It is the single best reference for the views of the selectorate on the Russian Federation's president. Interestingly, Presidents Putin and Medvedev have consistently outperformed confidence in the rest of the Russian governments.[262]

Explaining behaviors from 1991 to 1996

Russian Federation's choice regarding the use of military force

From roughly 1991 to 1996, the Russian Federation's use of military force related to the United States was primarily about nuclear deterrence with cooperative efforts to maintain stable deterrence, participation in PFP exercises, and participation in the implementation forces in Bosnia and Serbia after the U.S.-led military operations in those countries. These behaviors presumably reflected optimistic assumptions and a desire for good relations in the post-Cold War period. Those perceptions eroded in Russia due to U.S.-led military operations, but President Yeltsin did not fully reflect this in his decisions.

Political survival variables

The Russian Federation began and ended the period with a selectorate that included most Russian Federation voters. The winning coalition supporting President Yeltsin was initially also considerably large, although it shrank over time. His 1996 reelection was only won due to massive media and financial support from the oligarchs,

262. Levada Analytical Center, "Russian Public Opinion 2018," (Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2019), 69, https://www.levada.ru/en/annual-yearbook/.

and he had almost no support by the time he left office. The armed forces' role in this coalition was more significant after supporting him against what appears to be a constitutionally correct removal and replacement as president in 1993. The oligarch's role in the winning coalition increased after tipping the 1996 election in his favor. The coalition's size fell dramatically during the period because of economic and social conditions, corruption, and other failures. President Yeltsin was not replaced through election, coup, or revolution because there was no popular alternative political leader, and he was less unpopular than the communist alternative. The broad rise in traditional religious views and the elites' lawless behavior meant that Russia was ill-suited to follow most European states' path and join the European Union.

For most of the period, cooperation with the United States was consistent with the military's interests in limiting risk and the power gap in their weakened state. Cooperation also fits the selectorate's interest in focusing on economic and social reform. During and after the break-up of Yugoslavia, the United States and allies conducted military operations against historic Russian friends such as Serbia that were unpopular with Russians. Unsurprisingly, views on cooperation became more negative over time, and President Yeltsin suffered politically. The United States did not alter any policies in response to this shift in Russian opinion.

Material variables

The two states maintained rough parity in strategic nuclear weapons by actively cooperating to maintain their force size and capability within a broad range band that was reasonably reassuring to both parties even if it realistically favored the United States, which was better able to afford the most modern systems. Russia fell dramatically in

relative non-nuclear military power as Russia lost allies and bases in other parts of the former Soviet Union, faced severe economic constraints, and attempted to downsize and reorganize its underfunded forces. The United States downsized and modernized its forces to pursue a revolution in military affairs that would provide much more power for the same cost.

Information variables

Russia assumed too much about the United States' future concern for its interests, and the United States incorrectly assumed that Russia would integrate into Europe as a "normal" liberal capitalist democracy. Russia failed to act to protect against future security concerns. It focused on cooperating with U.S. policies without demanding what would later be seen as sufficient security guarantees at a time when it still could have bargained for them. The United States saw no need to issue any such guarantees. When neither of these rosy scenarios developed, the stage was set for a deterioration in the relationship and for each side to blame the other for exploiting its cooperation efforts.

Russia also underestimated the degree to which its neighbors feared it and resented its past treatment of them. As these countries hurried to join U.S.-led security institutions and European legal, economic, and political institutions in preference to the Russian Federation's leadership, Russia failed to draw the correct conclusion and to realize that it faced a long period of trying to change beliefs about Russia. The United States did not recognize that there were structural problems for Russia, both economic and military, which were caused by expansion, and even if it had, it did not consider Russian objections important enough to alter course.

Explaining behaviors from 1997 to 2002

Russian Federation's choice regarding the use of military force

From roughly 1997 to 2002, the Russian president still made choices related to the use of military force relative to the United States in a largely cooperative way but also began hedging by preparing for significant competitive behaviors as beliefs about the motives of the United States worsened. Once the Kosovo War started in 1999, Russia reassessed all its strategies. This coincided with when Vladimir Putin served as Prime Minister, but the broader trends in Russian views that led to it preceded his term. By the time President Putin was elected in 2000, Russia was positioning itself to compete in the future better. The 9/11 attacks helped stabilize the relationship, as the two states initially cooperated against the common threat of VEOs.

Political survival variables

The Russian selectorate would have preferred more competition; additionally, their assessment of U.S. motives worsened, as did their assessment of Russia's relative military power disadvantage with respect to the United States. President Yeltsin failed to act on this view and lost political support. Vladimir Putin, first as Prime Minister and then as President, took a somewhat more competitive approach toward the United States while acting decisively against domestic terrorism and separatism and, as a result, became enormously popular. The rapid rise of Vladimir Putin and his enormous climb in popularity resulted from the alignment of his words and actions with the greater part of the selectorate's views. Any malfeasance that may have occurred in this process does not negate the fact that his words and actions resulted in a tremendously high approval rating. Therefore, he had little incentive to alter his behavior.

Material variables

The two states maintained rough parity in strategic nuclear weapons. The United States no longer perceived Russia as a near-term military opponent. It, therefore, was more interested in developing missile defense technologies and other revolutionary military capabilities that it might need in an uncertain future than in cooperating to maintain a balance with Russia.

In terms of conventional power, the modernization of the U.S. military was becoming so significant that it changed the character of war. It allowed the United States to begin combat with air and missile fires, special operations, and air deployable ground forces while bringing heavily armed large units by sea with a rapidity never seen before. Russia recognized that this created an actual reduction in Russia's future relative military power. It is not evident that the United States perceived this as a potential problem in the relationship. Russia interpreted this as a potential signal of malicious motives and intentions toward Russia. Russia realized that it could not defeat an attack by such a force on vulnerable areas such as Kaliningrad. President Putin took measures to modernize the Russian military to be the most effective it could be given the available funding.

Information variables

Russia very publicly changed its assessment of the United States and began the gradual process that led it to attribute to the United States the domination/greed motive. The United States largely ignored or did not take these arguments seriously. Russia is partially responsible for this because its past diplomatic actions and those of the Soviet Union and Imperial Russia had been dramatically overstated and often deceptive. As a

result, Russian statements were not taken seriously when it tried to raise its concerns with the United States.

Russia seemed to labor under the misperception that other nations would accept it as one of the two greatest powers, respect its decisions, and accommodate its interest in their behaviors. By 1999, this was unrealistic and inevitably created frustration, as events did not evolve as Russia had desired.

Explaining behaviors from 2002 to 2007

Russian Federation's choice regarding the use of military force

From roughly 2002 to 2007, the Russian president chose to use military force relative to the United States in mostly cooperative ways but included a more significant proportion of competition than in the two earlier periods.

Political survival variables

Under President Putin, power was centralized around the president's office, and political and civil freedoms were reduced in ways that helped ensure the survival of the president against the electoral competition without alienating the winning coalition. With a growing economy and a renewed sense of national pride, Putin remained extremely popular despite Russia's problems with corruption, continued low-level fighting in the Caucasus, terrorism, and the rollback of political freedom.

The military security and services underwent painful downsizing and reforms that would ultimately make them more effective and tighten the president's control. They were strengthened in ways that made sense in light of the ongoing internal violence but also made them effective counterbalancing forces. This reduced the ability of any armed force to conduct a coup.

Material variables

Russia observed the lack of interest that the United States was taking in ensuring that Russia would remain capable of deterring a first strike. The United States did not consider a first strike against Russia as even a remote possibility, so it did not recognize Russia's concerns as significant and valid. Russia overestimated its importance in U.S. policy and did not correctly perceive the change in U.S. strategic logic, which led it to prioritize other states and their related risks and opportunities above those related to Russia.

The conventional gap remained similar or expanded in favor of the United States despite an effort to reform the Russian military. The theoretical advantage of the U.S. military became a problem that Russia had to consider as a threatening issue even if not matched by motives or intent. The United States was actively adding allies along the Russian border in the strategic terrain that had once been part of the defensive depth so prized by Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union. The United States did not perceive this as a problem because war with Russia seemed so unlikely, and its attention was largely focused on Afghanistan, Iraq, and a global struggle with VEOs.

Information variables

The United States and Russia reassessed each other's motives during this period. When Russia made demonstrations of military power instead of being deterred, the United States came to believe that Russia was motivated by greed and mobilized power to deter Russia.

Russian leaders did not understand their neighbors' rejection of Russian-led institutions and their preference for U.S. and European institutions in light of the history

of Soviet and Imperial Russian behaviors that instilled lasting fear in Russian neighbors. Instead, choices by former Soviet republics and Warsaw Pact allies to join NATO and the EU were seen as betrayals of the past Russian leadership and the sacrifice that outsiders with malicious intentions toward Russia had engineered.

Both sides were interested in avoiding a worsened relationship. There were real differences in interests and values that made any relationship very difficult, even if each side had assumed good intentions on the part of the other. The United States made offers of cooperation, but they were largely along the lines of letting Russia be a part of the U.S.-led military operations and European-led social changes that Russia felt were not consistent with its interests and values.

Explaining behaviors from 2007 to 2014

Russian Federation's choice regarding the use of military force

From roughly 2007 to 2014, the Russian president chose to use military force relative to the United States in a mix of cooperation and competition while avoiding direct use of traditional armed conflict between the two states. In Georgia, Russia used military force against a part of the former Soviet Union moving toward a partnership or even an alliance with the United States.

Political survival variables

President Medvedev and President Putin were unable to deliver on the politically popular goal of ending corruption, but they gained popularity for their role in confronting the United States. Major domestic competitors of the president were often convicted of crimes or became the victims of violence. There was significant protest around the time Vladimir Putin returned to the Presidency in 2012. The fact that U.S. officials, including

Ambassador McFaul, Secretary Clinton, and Senator McCain, became closely linked to these protests made it fairly obvious even to a neutral observer that a wide range of U.S. political leaders might be threats to the political survival of the president.

By the end of the period, the only people positioned to threaten Russia's president seriously were, in his view, U.S. politicians with the possibility of becoming the U.S. president. Russia had observed numerous color revolutions and the Arab Spring. It attributed these events not to the popular frustration with internal problems but to the exploitation of internal problems by the United States to create crises and remove non-compliant regimes. Based on U.S. performance in military operations at the time, it hardly seems likely that the U.S. was actually capable of covertly manipulating the population of states to serve U.S. interests.

The United States did get involved around the edges of these events in ways that could be misperceived and support the incorrect belief that the United States could create and direct them. What U.S. leaders were doing was trying to stay relevant as major events occurred in authoritarian states, but in doing so, they inadvertently contributed to the Russian perception that they were somehow causing these events. The United States either did not perceive this to be true or discounted the idea as propaganda. As a result, it was unprepared for the consequences of Russia's response to what it perceived as U.S. involvement in the Russian Federation's domestic politics.

Material variables

During this period, the nuclear balance continued to exist for reasons of inertia as much as anything else. By the end of the period, Russia had improved the quality of its military and developed new types of strategies, capabilities, and forces, which closed the

non-nuclear gap somewhat. China's rise, the centralization of European social and economic power in the EU, violent extremism, and new technologies related to information altered the global order.

Information variables

U.S. military operations' ongoing pattern could not fail to be perceived by Moscow as evidence that the United States was motivated by the domination/greed motives, which alarmed them. While the United States and Russia both shape their strategy document and their speeches around the argument that they are security seeking, this is, in part, a problem of confusing points of view and morality with the words used to describe international relations. From a Russian perspective, expanding the liberal world order into regions with different norms was evidence of the greed/domination motive.

At the same time, Russia continued to overestimate the long-term consistency of U.S. policy and Russia's importance in it. For the United States, Russia was largely seen as a spoiler and a nuisance, but any serious discussion of Russia was lacking in U.S. policy circles, and any suggestion of increasing its priority among the many concerns of the U.S. government was routinely dismissed as Cold War thinking. By acting as if it was the target of a U.S. conspiracy, Russia began to do things that alarmed the United States that otherwise was eager to reduce its focus on Europe and focus more on China and VEOs.

Explaining behaviors from 2014 to 2020

Russian Federation's choice regarding the use of military force

From roughly 2014 to 2020, the Russian president used military force relative to the United States in primarily competitive ways, although cooperation continued in a few

shared interest areas. Russia created and used new forms of military power, including cyber and information operations, which it employed directly against the United States and other Western nations. Russia used force against Ukraine and continued to hold territory in Georgia and Moldova. New technologies, including AI, hypersonics, robotics, and quantum computing, threatened to undermine the reliability of traditional theories and practices related to military force with unpredictable consequences for stability and the character of future conflict.

Political survival variables

Despite the economic consequences of the military campaigns in Ukraine, the president's popularity returned to astonishingly high levels. The military and security services emerged from decades of reform as a credible and respectable force loyal to and centrally controlled by the president. The political opposition was marginalized, and no significantly large alternative political movement was on offer in the Russian political system.

The presidential survival problem is now quite different, as it requires the protection of Vladimir Putin, currently in office until May of 2024, from any domestic or foreign threat or consequence for the rest of his life and perhaps the lifespan of his inner circle. Globally, several former heads of state have been prosecuted for actions committed under their rule in the recent past. This has set a precedent, which no leader can ignore, for the need to protect themselves not only from physical and political danger but also from potential future legal prosecution, whether justified or not, by domestic and international opponents after they yield the power that the office provides them for self-protection. This cannot fail to shape the relationship in the future. There are much more

powerful incentives for President Putin and his supporters to maintain control of power than there are for them to ever give it up.

Material variables

Had Russia not acted in Ukraine, the conventional power gap would have closed somewhat in its favor as new Russian capabilities and improved forces were fielded. The United States and its allies and partners would have reduced their forces as they planned before 2014. Instead, Russia's action mobilized the United States and its allies against it and brought about what it feared most short of war, that is, the basing of NATO troops and warfighting infrastructure along the Russian and Belarussian borders.

Russia also created and employed new forms of military power. It sought to and probably did change U.S. policies, and possibly the outcome of the election, by using military intelligence, information, and cyber personnel to intervene in the U.S. political process while staying below a threshold that would trigger an armed conflict.

Information variables

Russia apparently gave up attempting to cooperate with the United States after 2014. Without using even limited direct violence against U.S. persons, it used military force against the United States at the policy and strategy level and continued to do so when it became public knowledge. If Russia thought that this would help its security motive, it was fundamentally mistaken as it enshrined Russia as the enemy of millions of Americans who otherwise would have had little interest in any competition with Russia. While it may have limited the degree to which President Trump and his political allies opposed Russia, the U.S. national security bureaucracy and the professional military were able to do things against Russia that were previously unthinkable, including massive

changes in the future capabilities, size of the military, much higher readiness for war in Europe, and continued cyber and influence operations.

Russia might have been willing to reduce the intensity of its unprecedented attacks if the Russian leadership had been reassured that they would not be themselves threatened. This would have been politically and morally unpleasant, but it might have been effective. Since the United States did not act to remove the Russian leadership or have a plan to do so in the future, this would have been a largely costless and riskless statement of fact if made quietly and diplomatically.

Analytical Conclusion

The bottom line is that the method revealed that the Russian Federation's choices regarding military force were most often consistent with the presidential political survival motive. They also became increasingly consistent with the security/self-protection motive and the domination/greed motive as time passed. The validity of these three motives means that different motives may influence the Russian Federation toward different preferences for using force and how to use force for any condition of the independent variables. This helps resolve the puzzles and conclude what broad U.S. actions may impact Russian decision-making and in what direction.

Chapter 5: Answers and implications

What explains the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use of military force, and what does this imply for U.S. strategic planning to prevent the Russian Federation from using military force against U.S. interests?

This dissertation found that the Russian Federation's choices regarding the use and non-use of military force are significantly and usefully explainable by the balancing of three motives in priority order. A Russian Federation choice on the use of military force will prioritize first the motive of presidential political survival, then the self-protection/security motive, and then the domination/greed motive.

These findings concerning motives were obtained by considering all potential Russian Federation choices to use and not use force from December 25, 1991 through September 30, 2020 for all reasonable potential counterparties for the use of force.

The Russian Federation's behavior has generally been consistent with the three motives. Contrary to the assumptions driving current U.S. strategic planning, the presidential political survival motive has consistently been more important than either the domination/greed or the self-protection/security motive.

Support for this multi-motive explanation comes from evidence that the puzzling aspects of the past outcomes of U.S. strategic planning vis-à-vis Russia, which motivated this dissertation, can be explained by recognizing that planning was largely based on single-motive, externally oriented assumptions about Russian motives, as was the thinking that had to be improved upon to resolve the puzzles. The truth was more complex and included powerful internal motives.

The findings on the subcase of the relationship between the Russian Federation and the United States were consistent with the overall findings concerning Russian Federation motives and the expected strategic behaviors for these motives under the

conditions observed. The method revealed that if the three motives were valid sources of explanation, then the Russian Federation's choices were less surprising than they seemed at times to the United States. Russian choices were generally consistent with what the motives predicted, given a pessimistic but not unreasonable Russian interpretation of events.

The tension between competing motives often led to what appeared to be surprising or suboptimal behavior from the perspective of an observer without an understanding of the tensions.

The findings imply that the United States should gradually adjust policy and strategy to account for the tensions between the three Russian motives in a manner that makes the Russian Federation less likely to use military force against U.S. interests.

The United States does, in fact, need to communicate credibly that the negative consequences of using military force would outweigh whatever potential benefit might tempt the domination/greed motive.

At the same time, the United States also needs to communicate credibly that if the Russian Federation acts with restraint, then Russian Federation self-protection/security motive concerns will be addressed cooperatively.

Most importantly, the United States needs to consider the Russian President's calculations about whether using or not using force against U.S. interests would help or harm their prospects for political survival.

The United States could improve its strategic planning by taking more account of motives for strategic behavior and then taking a game theory-informed approach to strategy that considers how states might make choices about the use of military force to

actualize these motives when the actions of multiple actors are interacting in the environment to produce outcomes that are interdependent on the choices of multiple parties.

Many important recent uses of Russian military power do not meet the traditional definition of military force but sought similar strategic outcomes. Some of the theoretical foundations of this work predate this issue. Many important scholarly and military beliefs may need to be reexamined in light of these changes. This is not expected to change the overall findings and implications of this dissertation.

What is the best explanation?

Overall, the best explanation is that the interests of the Russian Federation's president in political survival are of greater importance than either the domination/greed or self-protection/security motive in terms of choices regarding the use of military force, and that the Russian Federation also often behaves like the "greedy" type of state in *RTIP* that has both the domination/greed and the self-protection/security motives. The existence of three distinct motives greatly complicates strategic planning compared to a single source explanation. It does explain many of the puzzling aspects of the Russian Federation's strategic behavior, and it fits better as an explanation of actually observed behaviors.

The findings regarding the specific topic of the relationship between the United States and Russia were consistent with the overall findings. The method revealed that because the three motives were valid sources of explanation, with the domestic political survival motive being more important than the other two, the Russian Federation's choices were less surprising than they seemed, at times, to the United States. Russian

choices were generally consistent with what the motives and their relative priority would predict given a pessimistic but not unreasonable Russian interpretation of events.

An extremely important insight from the case study was that after roughly 1996, the Russian Federation's public statements and strategic documents gradually drew stronger conclusions about the United States having malicious motives toward Russia than the United States intended to signal or actually possessed. In part, this is because the United States had gradually begun to discount the Russian Federation when making global policy and its own choices about the use of military force. This context helps resolve the puzzles and explain Russian Federation behavior.

Past Russian Federation behaviors are divisible into five periods where the broad choice on how to interact with the United States was generally consistent. The periods are roughly 1991–1996, 1996–2002, 2002–2007, 2007–2014, and 2014–2020. They are fully interpreted in Chapter 4. Interestingly, the United States does not seem to have noted or acted promptly on the inflection points in Russian perception.

In most periods, Russian Federation behaviors were reasonably consistent with expectations for rational strategic choices given actual events and information available at the time. Russia generally made choices on cooperation or competition with the United States in a manner consistent with Russian beliefs about relative power, expectations about how the United States would act toward Russia, and calculations to ensure the political survival of the Russian president.

The strength of the presidential political survival motive is reassuring because it suggests that the Russian Federation is relatively less likely to act in an aggressive and risk-taking manner than currently assumed. Any potential military action must overcome

practical military hurdles of feasibility and pass the test of domestic politics before it can be a realistic option. If the decision were purely a matter of one or both international motives, then calculations of relative power and potential counterparty behaviors are all that is necessary. The political survival motive means that the potential consequences of a failure to terminate the military use of force as a visible success would be damaging to President Putin's popularity with the majority of Russians and his support by elites. Should President Putin or any future Russian president choose to use force, they will be aware that in the past, seemingly heavy casualties, indecisive armed conflicts, or actual defeats have cost the leadership in Moscow the support of the population and the military. This has often threatened the individual leader and has led to changes in the entire nature of the state.

U.S. and NATO actions since 2014 have substantially improved the available military power both on hand and potentially available to respond to the Russian use of military force in Europe and elsewhere that is above the threshold of armed conflict. To a great extent, the forward-deployed presence of NATO forces in Europe and the demonstrated ability to reinforce them will have raised the probability that any use of armed force will be costly at best and much more likely to end in visible defeat than it would have been if the pre-2014 trends had continued.

On the other hand, the case showed that Russian leaders have long perceived U.S. and NATO advantages in a potential armed conflict. As a result, they purposely tailored portions of the military to use military power effectively in innovative cyber, information, and influence operations below the level of armed conflict. The failure of the United States and others to respond effectively in a way that created significant risks and costs to

the presidential survival motive has allowed Russia to impact the political process in the United States without paying much more of a cost than it was already paying from sanctions related to uses of military force against Georgia and Ukraine. From the domestic political perspective, targeted sanctions on Russian political and military leaders make them more loyal to the Russian president as they need his protection from international or domestic legal retribution. They may also increase the legitimacy and importance of the leaders in the perceptions of other Russians. It is possible to perceive that leaders are sacrificing their interests on behalf of Russia rather than benefiting from corrupt practices and unwise policy.

Resolving the three puzzles

Puzzle 1: Why does the Russian Federation repeatedly provoke others into taking actions that Russian leaders claim to fear, which previously seemed unlikely to occur from a U.S. perspective?

It is possible that Russian leaders consistently underestimate the harm their actions cause to their own self-protection/security motive when making threats, using military force, and using new forms of military power. They also prioritize the political survival motive, which may explain some otherwise puzzling behaviors. The evidence in the structured, focused comparison supports the argument that Euro-Atlantic nations mobilized against Russia only **after** it used military force in Georgia in 2008, threatened force in 2009, and used it again in Ukraine in 2014 and later. Russian behaviors contributed to the mobilization of U.S. and Western military power to deter and prepare for interstate war against the Russian Federation. This would not have occurred given the other trends in the environment if not for Russian choices to repeatedly threaten European countries with conventional and nuclear war, occupy portions of Moldova,

Georgia, and Ukraine, and interfere in the domestic affairs of other states, including most dramatically the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and Montenegro.

The evidence is that there are multiple reasons for these actions. The most important has been a political survival motive often pursued despite costs to Russia's national security and relative power. It is methodologically problematic to prove unquestionably whether Russian presidents have used military force as a diversion from domestic political problems or used military force for international reasons and benefited in domestic politics. We can observe that there seems to be a very strong correlation between how Presidents Putin and Medvedev made choices on using force and their level of domestic political approval. We can also observe that the unpopular behaviors in the United States and the West were not seen that way by the majority of the Russian people.

Russia does have a domination/greed motive to control other states' territory, policy, and people. This has been most strongly shown in the numerous and lengthy campaigns using cyber and information forces to influence political affairs in the United States and other countries. It also applies to neighboring countries but has in many cases been balanced by the potential costs to other important motives of acting with overt military aggression towards these weaker powers. The balance of military power and the restraining influence of potentially high costs on the other two motives have limited the articulation of this motive through force above the level of armed conflict.

Russia also does have a strong self-protection/security motive, and there are, in fact, structural, geopolitical, and military reasons why Russia should feel insecure. This motive has been ignored or underestimated in U.S. strategic planning. The impact of this motive is amplified because Russian leaders have systematically overestimated the

probability that the United States and others would eventually take negative military actions against Russia, making it seem prudent for Russia to preempt such action and get what gains it could with the advantage of surprise.

Based on the cases, it appears that the United States has underestimated the negative impact of its observable behaviors on the interests and values of the Russian Federation and Russian Federation beliefs about U.S. motives towards the Russian Federation. Simultaneously, the Russian Federation has overestimated the degree to which U.S. observable actions were true signals of malign intent towards the Russian Federation. The United States did not offer cooperation of sufficient value to Russia to reassure it that cooperation would secure Russian interests. The evidence reviewed suggests that the United States has not perceived this problem and has not addressed or mitigated it. It may be difficult for the United States to find suitable opportunities for cooperation as it has many other interests and values in play globally.

> Puzzle 2: Why does the Russian Federation accept the significant risks and costs of violating the perceived norm against the use of military force between Euro-Atlantic states but then settle for accepting a limited victory when a more decisive outcome appears militarily achievable?

When the evidence is arranged in historical context, it is clear that there are many times where Russia either did not initiate a potential armed conflict that it had the power to win decisively or when it chose to terminate an armed conflict with less than the decisive victory that it could reasonably have fought for in a longer war. Several factors have been identified that explain this behavior.

The nature of risk is important in explaining this puzzle. The presidential political survival motive was found at all times to be more powerful than the domination and self-protection motives. When the case evaluation was complete, it was clear that the risk

that mattered seemed to be the risk to the president's winning coalition's size. In most cases, these limited victories achieved the best mix of risks and benefits for the Russian president's political survival. More decisive military victories might be politically unappealing if the cost-benefit calculation that was most important was linked to domestic politics rather than international politics.

Analysis of the subcases suggested that Russia may be risk-averse rather than risk-taking contrary to the narrative in the U.S. sources. Russia fought just long enough to secure its minimum acceptable goals. It then terminated armed conflict against an opponent whom it could have defeated more decisively. These opponents might have posed new problems after being decisively defeated in an armed conflict. Russia would have had to continue to accept risks and costs to force them to continue accepting the policy or territory changes imposed after a decisive victory.

When Russia did initiate military operations, those operations may have seemed less risky to Russian leaders than they did to the United States because the Russian leaders' priority was to compare the domestic political risks of the actual operation to those of not conducting a military operation at all or those of conducting a more ambitious operation. This is good news because it suggests that the Russian use of military force may be easier to deter than previously suspected.

Additionally, observed behavior indicates that the Russian approach to armed conflict is not always consistent with the U.S. approach of seeking a decisive battle. Instead, in many cases, Russia's objective was managing instability to balance competing Russian interests at a low cost rather than taking on the risks and costs involved in seeking a decisive and enduring political change using military force.

In these cases, Russia generally had conflicting interests, none of which were existential in themselves but all of which were important. This made it more prudent to accept an enduring frozen conflict that balanced its competing interest rather than taking more risks and accepting greater costs to impose and enforce a decisive outcome to an armed conflict that would have advanced some Russian interests but harmed others.

The United States showed a pattern of overly personalizing interstate conflicts in the cases evaluated. This may not be a decisive problem against weak states such as Haiti, Iraq, and Libya, where the United States had the military capability and the motive to remove the leader. It makes the problem more complex and more volatile against a relatively powerful and nuclear-armed state where removing the leader is unlikely and risks nuclear war. A better approach may be to place less public emphasis on the leader and their regime and simply focus on making the military problem too risky for that leader and regime. If the leader perceives that the use of force would pose a greater risk to their position compared to any potential benefit, then the use of force is unlikely to be chosen as the leader's response to the issue at hand.

The level of military risk sufficient to deter the political survival motive is almost certainly lower than the risk required to deter the greed motive. In recent years, deterrence and defense have been the focus of the U.S., NATO, and broader Western efforts. It seems likely that a reasonable level of deterrence has been reached or is at hand. This implies a measure of safety and stability to explore strategies directed at the other motives, which may either stabilize the problem or offer a long-term opportunity to improve the relationship.

Achieving either stability or an improved relationship will require addressing the security motive. This is easier said than done. As described in the cases, the capabilities of modern weapons and the geopolitics of Europe create a structural security dilemma for Euro-Atlantic states. Most states have resolved this issue by cooperating. Russia does not fit well into these institutions, and it would require a generation or more to change the perception of history and recent events on both sides. It is entirely possible to deter a fearful Russia. However, relatively greater stability would be achieved if Russia were effectively reassured about its fears and its other motives were addressed. The possibility of inadvertent war through the spiral dilemma would be reduced.

Puzzle 3: Why have the Russian Federation's uses of interstate force not been prevented or reversed by U.S. and Western strategies?

The solution to this puzzle begins with the observation that the traditional U.S. practice of analyzing instances when Russia used force while ignoring many instances where it could have done so but did not is misleading. A more comprehensive assessment of Russian choices regarding force shows many times and places where a reasonable state might have chosen to use military force, but Russia did not.

Domestic political calculations were the primary reason for Russian restraint. The most important distinction between times when force could reasonably have been used and was not and the times it was used seems to be that it was used when not doing so would have led to a visible international setback for Russia for which the president could be blamed. The military action seems to have been tailored to do just enough to prevent the president from being blamed for a defeat, even if the action taken did not make the same degree of sense regarding the greed or security motive.

This seems to have limited the Russian aims in Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia to achieving a frozen conflict, or perhaps this is more correctly phrased as establishing a manageable state of instability.

NATO expansion also limited the ability of Russia, when Russian power began to recover, to act against states that had joined. Absent NATO membership, the military power of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania would have been no more of a deterrent than was the military power of Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia. These states might have become targets of much more intense Russian behavior had they not been added to NATO. This suggests a need to balance the interpretation of history to reflect the balance of motives.

In the case of NATO expansion, it may have provoked a reaction from the security motive at the same time that it deterred armed conflict as a reaction to the greed motive. Simultaneously, it made the use of armed force too risky for the political survival motive, yet that motive required some visible action. Thus, the situation arose that competition and threats below armed conflict became Russia's way of balancing the tension between the motives given the state of the international order and the domestic politics of Russia.

Of those Russian military operations conducted, none offers a good example of the United States reversing the Russian action. The best explanation for why Russia went to the expense and trouble to continue these operations is that an active decision to terminate them and withdraw Russian forces would have made the president responsible in domestic political eyes for abandoning Russian or historically associated peoples. Allowing the status quo to continue had less domestic political risk.

Reconsidering the Russian Federation's domestic politics

Given the unexpected explanatory power of domestic politics, it is worth restating and reevaluating the findings in light of more recent scholarship than what was present in the sample taken early in the process. The findings supported the argument that there are at least three significant winning coalitions that approve of President Putin and sustain him in office.

The broadest winning coalition is composed of the large number of people who approve of the President, as evidenced by opinion polling that has been empirically shown to be a reasonable estimate of actual beliefs.[263]

The empirical research has shown a high correlation between Russian economic performance and the approval rating of the president.[264] It has also shown that their opinions relate to observed events and they have taken a negative view of U.S. military operations.[265] Overall, they seem to prefer a president who improves the economy, maintains Russia as a powerful state, and provides internal security in the face of what have been considered serious terrorist and separatist threats. Quantitative empirical research showed a correlation between the views expressed in strategic documents and public opinion polls.[266] The evidence was not strong enough for the researcher to assert

---

263. Anna Efimova and Denis Strebkov, "Linking Public Opinion and Foreign Policy in Russia," *International Spectator* 55, no. 1 (2020): 93–111, https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2019.1700040.

264. Treisman, "Presidential Popularity," 590.

265. Efimova and Strebkov, "Linking Public Opinion and Foreign Policy in Russia," 93–111.

266. Efimova and Strebkov, "Linking Public Opinion and Foreign Policy in Russia," 93–111.

whether government policy influences public opinion or the reverse and whether there is interaction in both directions. It did, however, suggest that assertions that the Russian public is being controlled by government media campaigns are insufficient explanations.

This broad winning coalition could weaken or collapse in the face of disastrous economic or military performance or if a candidate emerges who is seen as likely to be able to replace President Putin and also likely to perform sufficiently better to justify the risk involved in leaving the existing winning coalition. This implies that U.S. actions intended to weaken broad public support could have either a deterrent or an escalatory effect depending on the context. For example, creating a military capability that makes a Russian attack on NATO likely to end in what this audience would assess as a defeat or stalemate would have a deterrent effect, whereas taking obvious but ineffective actions aimed at supporting a rival candidate would be escalatory. This assumes a cumulative set of calculations rather than a single event determining if and how military force is used.

Inside the current broad coalition is a smaller coalition composed of elites with more loyalty that is still likely to be sufficiently powerful to be a winning coalition under most circumstances. Helpfully, scholars have actively monitored elite opinion during the entire history of the Russian Federation. This research characterized this elite in a relatively conventional manner for a modern state. It included individuals from "the media, state-owned enterprises, private businesses, academic institutions with strong international connections, the executive branch of the government, the federal legislature, and the armed forces and security agencies," and it surveyed them on the type of issues

discussed in the dissertation.[267] A study using this data noted a divide in opinions on relevant issues between those who are aligned with the president or with the government and those who are not.[268] It notes the importance and "effectiveness of the passive tools of electoral authoritarian governments."[269]

This elite shares the preference of the larger coalition for good economic and security performance. At the same time, it is incentivized to sustain the current order, including the corrupt aspects of it, because many of the elite benefit from these aspects. The use of violence and state legal processes against individual elites who broke with President Putin discourages anyone from taking an obvious leading role against him. President Putin and his supporters have actively taken a role in shaping who is a part of this elite. Scholars make strong arguments that President Putin has militarized the elite and placed like-minded supporters in high positions.[270]

This coalition could weaken for the same reasons the larger coalition could weaken, namely a combination of bad economic or security performance coupled with the belief that a likely alternative to the current President could do significantly better.

---

267. William Zimmerman, Sharon Werning Rivera, and Kirill Kalinin, *Survey of Russian Elites*, Moscow, Russia, 1993–2016, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 2019-09-11, https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR03724.v6.

268. James D. Bryan and Anastassiya Perevezentseva, "Elite Response to Protest in Authoritarian Settings: Evidence from Russia," *Democratization* 28, no. 6 (2021): 1145, https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2021.1892076.

269. Bryan and Perevezentseva, "Elite Response to Protest in Authoritarian Settings," 1146.

270. David W Rivera and Sharon Werning Rivera, "The Militarization of the Russian Elite Under Putin," *Problems of Post-Communism* 65, no. 4 (2018): 221–32, https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2017.1295812 and Karen Marten, "The 'KGB State' and Russian Political and Foreign Policy Culture," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 30, no. 2 (2017): 131–51. https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2017.1270053.

This elite coalition would be harder to persuade to abandon the president because they benefit from corruption while the larger coalition suffers from it. However, this also means that the Russian president cannot address corruption without reducing the loyalty of this elite coalition.

Should this elite winning coalition collapse, President Putin has been shown in the subcases to have carefully crafted a final fallback winning coalition of armed services under the direct control of the President. The smallest and deadliest winning coalition is the armed services of the Russian Federation. Historically, Russian leaders have tried to balance their armed supporters and prevent anyone from having the capacity to challenge the ruler. Structured, focused comparison of subcases showed how President Putin restructured these forces so that civilian control evolved to mean direct control by the President and how internal security forces were equipped, organized, and postured so that they were able to act against a coup or revolution, in addition to or against the military forces.

These groups would be expected to care less about broader economic performance and more about their budget, place in society, and the emphasis on foreign policy power considerations. This is generally what the subcases showed has been the direction of Russian policy. On the other hand, the cases showed that Putin has, at times, taken a less power-oriented policy than might have been desirable by the individual leaders and the organization in this final fallback coalition. This is important because it matches the findings about the prioritization of the three motives and the logic of the theories.

An issue that may have a huge impact on the relationship and dissertation is that a key member of this coalition, the GRU, has very different capabilities and risk tolerance than more conventional military forces. According to an expert report at a recent NATO cyberspace conference, "the GRU's seemingly high tolerance for operational risk is in many ways incongruent with the traditionally furtive realm of cyber operations, which consist far more often of quiet espionage efforts than large-scale attacks."[271] If this is true and is as important to the issue as it appears to the researcher, then U.S. leaders need to directly address the risk tolerance of the GRU in their strategic planning and communicate with Russian leaders on the issue. The GRU has generally not used physical violence other than against Russian defectors and in the single possible instance of planning to do so in the execution of the Montenegrin coup subcase. There is no evidence that suggests the GRU would not follow the direction of the Russian President or would act against what it believed to be Russian interests. Persuading the GRU and the Russian President that less active operations by the GRU would actualize the three motives better than more recent active GRU operations have done is one obvious way to address the problems in the relationship.

Finding a way to shape Russian behavior influenced by the three existing motives is far more likely to work than ignoring them or attempting to change the nature of Russian motives, but the U.S. should be careful about the Russian tendency to assume the worst. In both peace and war, the perceived threat or opportunity most likely to change

---

271. Bilyana Lilly and Joe Cheravitch, "The Past, Present, and Future of Russia's Cyber Strategy and Forces," *12 International Conference on Cyber Conflict* (May 2020): 141, https://doi.org/10.23919/CyCon49761.2020.9131723.

Russian behavior is one that appears to be directed at the Russian President's political support. The United States needs to consider how very poor its recent record of shaping the politics of other states has been and how strong the three concentric coalitions that support President Putin are.

What is the major implication of the best explanation for U.S. strategic planning to prevent Russian uses of military force against U.S. interests?

These findings suggest that the best way to understand past Russian Federation choices and do strategic planning for the future may be to assume that all three motives are influential in Russian Federation choices on the use of military force. If so, then the current U.S. strategy is too narrowly focused on relations with the Russian Federation as purely a deterrence problem. The true problem is a combination of a deterrence problem, a security dilemma/spiral dilemma problem, and a Russian domestic political power problem.

To lower the likelihood of Russia using force in a given situation, the United States and its allies should try to use strategies that simultaneously foster three somewhat contradictory calculations. They need to communicate credibly that the negative consequences of using force would outweigh whatever potential benefit might tempt the domination/greed motive. At the same time, they also need to communicate credibly that if Russia acts with restraint, then Russian self-protection motive concerns will be addressed cooperatively. Most importantly, they need to influence the Russian president's calculations about whether using or not using force against U.S. interests would be better for personal political survival. Of current interest in September of 2021, the current status of Belarus is critical to all three motives. A color revolution in Minsk would almost certainly trigger a major Russian Federation use of military force.

The combined implication of the interactions of the three motives for U.S. strategic planning to prevent the Russian Federation's military force against U.S. interests is that the current strategy is too narrowly focused on this as purely a deterrence problem. The true problem is a combination of a deterrence problem, a security dilemma/spiral dilemma problem, and a political problem. The highest likelihood of preventing Russian uses of force would occur when Russia was deterred from using force as a result of its greed motive, sufficiently assured that cooperation with the United States would adequately address its security motive, and the Russian president believed that not using force against U.S. interests would contribute to personal political survival. The strategic documents sampled focused almost entirely on deterrence. An overemphasis on deterrence could increase the possibility that Russia will use armed force above the level of armed conflict and sustain its current use of force below the level of armed conflict because of the impact of U.S. strategy on the political survival motive and the self-protection/security motive.

The larger implications for U.S. strategic planning are complex. To date, the Russian Federation has been deterred from direct armed conflict with the United States or U.S. allies but has at times used armed conflict against U.S. partners. Russia has used military power, including cyber and information operations, below the level of armed conflict that seek similar purposes to traditional armed conflict, including military campaigns aimed at changing the leaders and policy of the United States and other states. This observation, and others within the dissertation, suggests that deterrence against such uses of military power has been ineffective. Additionally, they strongly suggest that the

Russian Federation does not believe that cooperation with the United States would assure its security.

As a state with two international motives, the Russian Federation simultaneously presents a deterrence problem and a security dilemma/spiral dilemma problem. The best conditions for preventing military force against U.S. interests would be that the Russian Federation is deterred from such actions *and* simultaneously that the Russian Federation perceives its security will be assured by cooperation. The worst conditions would be that the Russian Federation is not deterred *and* simultaneously that the Russian Federation perceives its security will not be assured by cooperation. This implies that escalation is possible from a deterrence failure, a spiral dilemma, or both.

It also suggests a better relationship with lower costs and risks is possible. This is because there is no persuasive evidence in the subcases reviewed that the United States intended its actions to harm the internationally recognized territory or people of the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation does not perceive this to be true. This is partially a result of Russians viewing the many U.S. uses of force since 1991 as signaling malign intentions towards Russia when in truth, they were not considered directly relevant to Russian interests by the United States.

Simultaneously, the United States has failed to recognize or address that the U.S. initiated Revolution in Military Affairs, the great range and power of modern weapons, the relatively small distances between politically and strategically vital areas of European states, the expansion of NATO, and the frequent use of military force by the United States have contributed to structural threats to European security and heightened Russia's perception of the danger posed by these structural threats. These were not mitigated by

some form of reassurance that cooperation between the United States and the Russian Federation would be sufficient to ensure Russian security. Therefore, taking actions to address these perceptions would reduce the likelihood of conflict without necessarily sacrificing the interests of either party.

Problematically, Russian views that the U.S. has a domination/greed motive towards Russia are deeply entrenched and Russians use the many post-Cold War U.S. military operations and the post-Cold color revolutions as evidence to support this belief. The United States has not given much credence in the past to Russian claims about its insecurity. In current U.S. military strategic thinking, assurance and cooperation are largely reserved for U.S. allies and partners. While the United States actually does not intend to initiate a military operation against the Russian Federation, reassuring Russia of that point will be politically difficult for U.S. leaders because of the blatant interference in the U.S. political process by the Russian Federation.

Following the initiation of armed conflict in Ukraine, the United States and its allies and partners dramatically reversed a more than twenty-year decline in their available military power in Europe. Multinational forces now serve a tripwire role in the most geographically vulnerable NATO states. The will and the capability to conduct large-scale combat operations are being demonstrated by capability improvements, exercises, and funding increases. This places the United States in a better position to deter Russia from traditional uses of force against U.S. interests. Unfortunately, Russia's new capabilities aimed at achieving political influence remain a credible source of harm to U.S. interests, and a concept for preventing their use seems to be lacking.

The political survival motive reinforces the finding that escalation is possible for reasons not fully addressed in the current strategy. It adds additional escalation pathways within Russia that may be difficult for the United States to influence. It also reinforces the finding that a different and more cooperative relationship is theoretically possible. It would require balancing international and internal Russian interests with the interests of the United States and its allies and partners. It would probably also require that many negative aspects of Russian internal politics be treated in the same way that undesirable aspects of certain U.S. partners who are not liberal capitalist democracies are treated.

Further observations on the motives.

The domination/greed motive became much more plausible in the third time period studied. Why 2013 or 2014 was a turning point is an interesting question and there was not a single smoking gun event in the subcases. Based on analysis of the subcases, it is notable that this occurred after the perceived interference in Russian politics by U.S. officials in the 2010–2012 period and around the time when new Russian military capabilities and forces were becoming effective. It was also during the Russian presidency where the status of Crimea needed to be resolved according to the Ukrainian Constitution. Most importantly, it was around the time that pro-Western forces overthrew the elected pro-Russian government of Ukraine and declared an intent to join the EU and NATO. Therefore, the turning point is likely not simply about a change in relative power or the creation of new forms of power but most likely about a near-simultaneous shift in Russian perceptions of foreign actions that would harm Russian interests and damage the domestic support of President Putin **and** the creation of military capabilities that effectively increased Russian power.

These military uses of power below the level of war (or armed conflict) pose a problem to evaluation methods even when using modern theories like *RTIP* and the Selectorate Theory. The underlying assumptions of these theories may not account for the character of Russian military operations aimed at policy goals without violence. This requires rethinking the tools. Strictly speaking, attempting to change the policy of other states would be congruent with the domination/greed motives if those policies were not a significant threat to the user of force and would be congruent with a security motive if those policies were perceived as a significant threat. There should also be distinctions in how the policies were pursued, providing additional evidence for which motive is more congruent. For example, all other factors held equal, a rapidly terminated operation that eliminated the threat and sought no further goal would be more congruent with a self-protection motive, while an extended, ambitious campaign that continued in the face of opposition would be more congruent with a domination/greed motive. In this context, the extent, duration, and intensity of the Russian military operations to interfere in U.S. politics seem more strongly congruent with the greed motive than the security motive, but the political survival motive probably mattered more than either of these two motives

Having a self-protection/security motive does not imply victim status or virtue as sometimes seems to be implied in the debate. It is a purely technical issue, and the most admirable and most reprehensible states could reasonably have either or both of the two international motives. Self-protection motives can contribute to unnecessary arms races, competition, and armed conflict. If it reduces one's total costs and risk, then it is an act of self-interest for a state to address another state's self-protection/security motive by assuring that state that mutual cooperation will enable it to be secure.

Military technology, capabilities, and doctrine combine with geography to create conditions that make a security dilemma/spiral dilemma possible between the Russian Federation and the United States. The Russian Federation has been ineffective in persuading its neighbors that there are structural issues, but it has identified them in past strategic documents. Its actions since 2014 will ensure that if there is indeed a security dilemma/spiral dilemma component to the problem, it will be politically and practically difficult to address.

The presidential political survival motive is more powerful than the other two motives. Reducing the probability of the use of military force requires that the Russian president believe such actions are likely to decrease his support by a winning coalition in Russian politics. This means that the probability of using force is reduced in situations where there is a significant risk of an apparent military stalemate or defeat or excessive casualties and other costs for which the Russian Federation president might be blamed. On the other hand, the probability of force could suddenly rise for domestic reasons beyond the control of the United States or if the Russian president perceives a threat to their political or personal survival by the United States or one of its allies or partners.

Importantly, President Putin's strategy has been to maintain a broad winning coalition that includes most Russians and a smaller elite coalition. Within the elite coalition, there is a smaller fallback winning coalition composed of multiple armed security organizations reporting directly to President Putin. This leaves him well-positioned against replacement threats from elections, coups, color revolutions, or other mechanisms. It has also caused him to miss opportunities to actualize the domination/greed or self-protection motives because this motive leads to calculating risk

differently and being overall less risk-tolerant than if only the international issues were in play. The United States could take advantage of this pattern in future strategic planning regardless of how distasteful it may be not to take a more moralistic approach.

The bottom line is that this motive means that if the United States places the political survival of the Russian president at risk, there is likely to be a significant reaction. Depending on the context, this could be helpful or disastrous. For example, bluffing or contributing to the belief that imminent U.S. action would threaten the president could trigger a use of military force that otherwise would not occur. On the other hand, demonstrating the will and capability to inflict high costs and potential defeat or even a stalemate on Russian forces might prevent them from being used against the United States or an ally or partner.

Considering less than perfect decision-making

The evaluation was done against bounded rational expectations over many observations, and a full study of misperception and subrational behavior was not intended. A few observations and considerations are worth highlighting.

First, it seems clear from the case that a major source of misperception was that the United States dropped its central focus on the relationship with Moscow as the 1990s progressed, but for the Russian Federation, the relationship with Washington, D.C. was always central. As a result, Russia perceived many U.S. actions as evidence of a domination/greed motive directed at Russia when the United States framed these issues in other ways and was later surprised and distrustful when the Russian Federation acted on its negative perceptions of the United States.

Second, the relatively small size of Europe compared to the modern scope of strategic transportation, military operational reach, and the tactical range of weapons creates a structure upon which a security dilemma/spiral dilemma can evolve. Neither state seems to have identified and articulated this problem. The strategic planning of both states tends to look at worst-case, surprise scenarios and think about intentions and capabilities rather than motives or long-term outcomes. This contributed to security dilemma/spiral dilemma dynamics being tangled with dynamics related to the other motives.

Third, just like the leaders of any state, Russian leaders have sometimes made decisions that fall short of rational expectations. The most notable example of this was President Yeltsin during the later 1990s when he managed to be perceived simultaneously as failing to protect Russian interests internationally and failing to deliver order and prosperity at home. The challenge of making a judgment about choices related to force in this era is illustrative of why a bounded rational basis was preferred to a more subjective interpretation. There is much more uncertainty in assessing why expectations were not met than determining whether or not they were. President Yeltsin's ultimately unsuccessful decisions could have resulted from (1) inattention due to overwhelming problems or (2) weakness or (3) a choice to accept international risk in the expectation that larger historical and economic trends would render it irrelevant or (4) some combination. The existing work could be a foundation for exploring these and related issues but was not the intended purpose of the dissertation.

Confirming and clarifying the three intuitions

In Chapter 1, the three intuitions that contributed to the motivation for and the approach adopted in the dissertation were stated. These intuitions were confirmed and clarified in the course of the dissertation.

The first intuition was that U.S. strategic planning processes could be improved upon to reflect better the complexity of the strategic environment and the interaction of collective actors. The researcher concluded that U.S. strategic planning processes would be improved by a deeper consideration of motives and by the statement and testing of causal theories about the outcomes of various U.S. behaviors when they interact with those of other states.

The second intuition was that the Russian Federation and the United States have a worse relationship than the interests of both suggest is desirable and this might be a result of failures of understanding. This intuition was confirmed. There was a spiral dilemma type of issue where Russia perceived threats from the United States that the United States did not intend to signal. The United States either did not perceive this to be true or did not find it sufficiently dangerous to warrant the changing of high-priority policies. Russia did not understand how deeply many states distrusted it and how much past Soviet behavior contributed to its statements not being credible to Western audiences. It also appears to have misperceived the impact of its own actions on the mobilization of the West against Russia.

The third intuition was that many ideas within the fields the researcher studied and practiced could complement each other to better understand problems like this one. This proved true and contributed to the somewhat surprising findings of Russian motives. For example, using the Offense–Defense Theory and operational art to examine military

power in the subcases led to the finding of structural security dilemma issues and provided evidence of restraint in armed conflict that would not have been possible using only one of these constructs.

Implications for testing and refining the findings

An important implication involves how the understanding developed in the dissertation might be tested and refined during its near-term use in strategic planning. The current U.S. strategic planning process and strategic documents are not required to explicitly state a causal theory of the environment and why other parties act as they do. They are also not required to state testable predictions for how and when the U.S. strategy is likely to alter the environment and shape the behaviors of other counterparties.

Future strategic documents should explicitly state what motives are believed to be driving the decisions of a counterparty, what their relative strengths and scoping conditions are at present, and what they are expected to be in specified future time horizons. Given this, it is possible to predict how the counterparty might react to different U.S. strategic behaviors. Strategic documents should include these predictions.

The expectation would be that for any specific behaviors, the impacts of chance, complexity, and the persistence of past understandings in the minds of the counterparty's present decision-makers would weaken the congruence of the expected behavior with a purely theoretical reaction. However, when aggregated over many interactions over many years, this would allow a much more rigorous assessment of strategies than currently exists.

The current system does not account for motives shown to be valid in the dissertation. This means that there is an unmonitored set of risks, which include the

possibility that current U.S. policy and strategy is not addressing actual causal motives or could be actively but unknowingly influencing them in a way that increases the likelihood of Russia continuing with or intensifying its use of military force against U.S. interests.

An observation that may be useful to improving long-term assessment is to pay less attention to the conventional focus on the circumstances surrounding the initiation of conflict and pay more attention to how conflict is terminated. It is easy for a state to use deceptive measures to confuse the issue of by whom and how a conflict was initiated. Logically, a state will not terminate conflict if it sees more benefits from continuing to fight than from terminating the fight. When a much more powerful state chooses to stop fighting despite having the power to continue fighting, it might be because they have achieved the true goal rather than the publicly claimed military and political objectives.

Formulating better sets of possible explanations for a state's behavior

The U.S. strategic planning system, which produced the current generation of strategy documents, is overly influenced by a focus on capabilities and intentions and does not place sufficient weight on the deeper and more important role of motives. This may contribute to explaining the long record of U.S. foreign and military policy delivering disappointing results at a very high cost despite having such an apparent advantage in power over most of its counterparties.

The method developed in the dissertation for structuring explanations of Russian strategic behavior does a much better job of explaining post-Cold War decisions about the use of force than the conventional method. This more complex process is worth the additional time and resources required to produce a more dependable guide for U.S.

strategy and policy. The method is time-consuming and requires a lot of information as inputs to the process. Nevertheless, given the importance of the issue at hand and the many other issues for which this method could be useful, the amount of work is well rewarded by a vastly superior understanding compared to other approaches. Scholars and strategists can afford to devote the time required and would benefit from drawing insight from what is usually considered separate or even competing fields of knowledge as well as from the ability to more explicitly state predictions and explanations and more completely and rigorously test questions related to strategic behaviors.

Part One found that the best approach is to hypothesize and test multiple potential explanations for strategic behavior, each with different implications for U.S. policy. For purposes of policy and strategy about a specific state, the use of motives and strategic choice theories is superior to the use of international relations theories intended to describe how the international system works using a small number of assumptions. The strategic choice approach takes a more comprehensive account of the factors and behaviors a state's leaders can observe and how they can replace generic assumptions about generic states with perceptions and beliefs about actual states.

This approach is superior to thinking primarily about intentions and capabilities or most likely and worst-case scenarios. Motives precede and are more fundamental than intentions, capabilities, and scenarios. They offer a much deeper way of understanding counterparty strategic logic and a much more powerful leverage point. President Biden's 2021 *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* highlights that "we will make smart and disciplined choices regarding our national defense and the responsible use of our

military, while elevating diplomacy as our tool of first resort."[272] Using motives as a tool to drive strategy would support this goal.

The process developed during Part One could be applied to any thinking actor, either collective or individual. The process allows ideas and concepts that are sometimes seen as competitors to be used in a complementary fashion. For example, both constructivist interpretations of Russian discourse, political polling, and a study of geography and history are useful to make sense of the political survival motive for a Russian Federation president. The process described required a relatively high level of knowledge and the time to iterate and reiterate grouping sources into sets with a common implication for strategic planning. Reproducing the full approach for another strategic actor is possible but requires significant time and expertise and selecting the right participants. Reproducing the approach with a group or groups of experts rather than as an individual may offer more depth of knowledge, but a strong lead designer would be required to arrive at sets of explanations that were more than simply a consensus of the participants' views.

An alternative for a time-constrained scholar or strategist is to begin simply from the hypothesis that a state has at least three motives influencing its decisions related to the use of military power: the international domination and self-protection motives and ensuring the continued power of the state's decision-maker. The designer or design team

---

272. Joseph Biden, *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* (White House Website: The White House, March 2021), 13, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/03/interim-national-security-strategic-guidance/.

could then improve upon this starting hypothesis and develop some competing hypotheses.

An important caveat is that the use of motives was helpful in the context of precise tests and methods derived from well-established and empirically supported scholarly theories. Policymakers and strategic planners have often not been fully inculcated with many important concepts and ideas related to these theories and tend to reframe very specific social science or military doctrine terms into forms that corrupt their usefulness. Without a rigorous process and some form of intellectual quality control, the approaches in this dissertation could add complexity without adding value to strategic planning.

Testing the explanations for a state's strategic behavior

The transition point between Part One and Part Two raised the question of the best method for testing motives. As demonstrated in Chapters 2 and 3, credible sources supporting each explanation offered examples supporting their views. Even though many sources did not specifically address motives, their arguments and examples supported the strategic implications aligned with each motive-based explanation. Therefore, the conventional social science approach of selecting several time-bound cases and showing that findings from the case supported the idea that the explanations were not compelling. Like many critical social science problems, this problem did not lend itself to the logic of the experiment, as the researcher could not manipulate any of the variables. However, the United States should attempt to manipulate some of these variables in the future to influence the Russian Federation's behavior and test the validity of the three motives.

A review of the methodological works by researchers who addressed similar issues in the Cold War led to the modification of methods proposed by Alexander George and Andrew Bennet for studying a single case using the congruence method. It was useful to apply the idea of falsification to the congruence testing and use a much more comprehensive case that included all of the possible times and places where Russia could have chosen to use force and then look for examples of incongruence. Instances of incongruence weaken confidence in or could cause the rejection of an explanation as plausible. If a reasonable explanation, supported by experts with examples, cannot be rejected when tested against the entire history of a state, then strategic planning regarding that state would be prudent to account for the possibility that that explanation is valid until something decisive changes in the state or its environment. If explanations can be shown to be of differing explanatory power, then it is reasonable to give them comparably less weight under certain conditions than other explanations for which confidence is higher under similar conditions.

In answering the structured, focused questions, it was beneficial to consider the possible outcomes of other Russian behaviors than the one that occurred. This helped answer the six structured, focused comparison questions in the correct context and reduced potential biases. This approach often led to the behavior being evaluated as much less risky and puzzling than it would have been if the behavior had been viewed without considering potential alternative behaviors and the general evolution of the strategic environment.

In evaluating uses of military force that could have happened or that did happen, it is useful to think of military operations as having two essential parts: a task and a

purpose. The task could be a large-scale offensive campaign or operation, a large-scale defensive campaign or operation, a counter-terrorist operation, security force assistance provided to a partner, peacekeeping, military information operations, a military demonstration, exercise short of armed conflict to communicate a message, or any other task that could be imagined. The task addresses how, when, where, by whom, and to whom the operation is executed. These questions draw significant attention in the policy and academic debate and are relatively easy to observe directly. Unfortunately, they are not vital questions for developing a future strategy.

A better indicator of the causal motive than the task is the purpose of the military operation. The purpose provides information about why the operation was conducted and its relationship to other events and behaviors. Problematically, the purpose is difficult to observe without access to the strategic guidance documents for an operation. Even in these documents, the true purpose may be obscured or replaced by a more acceptable purpose rationalizing the operation.

We can observe cases where the Russian Federation had escalation dominance or control but chose to terminate military operations or not use force. By looking at what the military task had achieved when Russia chose to terminate the use of force on its terms, we can estimate the purpose of the operation. It would be irrational to terminate a military operation that the state was winning after costs had been paid and risks were taken before the purposes were achieved. Terminating military force after having captured just enough land to ensure a frozen conflict rather than continuing military operations to capture an enemy's capital and change the regime indicates a very different

purpose in those cases where the correlation of military forces was such that Russia could choose either approach.

Issues for developing future U.S. policy options

The findings suggested that a U.S. President could reasonably seek to freeze or reverse the negative trend in the relationship by establishing certain conditions in the strategic environment. The primary active Russian behaviors that harm U.S. interests are the following: (1) operations aimed at political interference, (2) threats and a credible capability to initiate a war against NATO despite the likelihood that it would end badly for the Russian Federation, (3) threats and the credible capability to employ nuclear and other means should such a war go badly for Russia, and (4) increasingly close military ties with China and the implied suggestion that the United States could find itself at war with both Russia and China should war erupt with one of them. The primary passive Russian behavior damaging U.S. interests is retention of Russian control over portions of (1) Ukraine, (2) Georgia, and to a lesser degree of harm, (3) Moldova.

None of the observations and findings in the dissertation suggested a reasonably likely U.S. behavior that would end the three passive problems. It seems possible that the four active behaviors could be reduced or reversed by direct Presidential dialogue, diplomacy, and military-to-military dialogue means. Despite the damage to U.S. credibility in recent years by a variety of events, the military balance in Europe in 2021 allows the United States to maintain relations with Russia from a more powerful position than might have been the case if Russia had delayed its provocative actions until Europe and the United States conducted planned post-2015 military reductions. A U.S. President could use this position of modest advantage as the basis for a new global policy that

sought to move some nations from the category of competitors and potential wartime opponents into a less-risky category.

The findings suggested that under the current leadership, Russia might respond to a policy that quietly persuades it that halting and avoiding negative actions toward U.S. interests would increase the political security of the current leadership and not place significant Russian interests at risk. This should be coupled with communicating that negative actions would not only fail to actualize the domination/greed motive but also increase the risk posed to the other motives.

In many ways, this is a problematic approach for U.S. leaders. Nevertheless, it may make sense to consider options of this nature in terms of power politics and the long-term interests of the U.S. and its allies and partners. It may also make sense in practical terms since it is unlikely that the United States will have the intention, will, and capability to do the things that Russia fears. So, there is little harm in making that clear. Since it seems equally unlikely that the United States will have all three requirements to reverse the three passive Russian behaviors through conflict—intention, will, and capability—a more likely approach would be to create conditions where a more favorable Russian view of the U.S. leads Russia to change its policy on these behaviors or its overall behavior in a way that makes such behavior less damaging.

The case suggested that trust between the United States and the Russian Federation was first built slowly and then decayed rapidly. Presumably, this means reaching a relationship with less risk and costs that is still acceptable to both parties will be a long process. While this may not align with the electoral incentives of political

leaders, it also suggests that an early start, perhaps limited in scope, is prudent given the accumulation of risk over time.

The risk if these findings and implications are used in U.S. strategic planning and are found to be wrong can be mitigated by gradual policy adjustments accompanied by careful assessment of Russian reactions. The recently strengthened elements of deterrence should not be disassembled until Russian behaviors justify doing so, but the manner in which deterrence is conducted can be adjusted. The United States and NATO have created a window of opportunity where they face less risk from the Russian domination/greed motive than they have in the recent past. They may also face more risk from the political survival motive and self-protection motive than they realized. China is rapidly displacing Russia as the primary threat perceived by the United States and its allies. The next few years offer an opportunity to consider ways to rebalance the total risk to U.S. and Western interests posed by actors including Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, and VEOs. As the United States and NATO have no intention and no interest in initiating an armed conflict against Russia, a change in the relationship with Russia is worth considering. The Russian Federation's interference in Western politics may make that infeasible until some major and unexpected alteration occurs in the global environment.

.

Annex A: Structured, focused comparison from the Presidencies of Boris Yeltsin through the Acting Presidency of Vladimir Putin (25 December 1991–7 May 2000)

Scoping conditions 25 December 1991–7 May 2000

Five critical scoping conditions during this period may contribute to less predictable behaviors absent these conditions.

1. The Russian Federation retained only the territory within the borders of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and lost control over much of the Soviet and Imperial Russian population, infrastructure, and natural resources.

2. The Russian Federation faced a severe economic downturn and the disruption of the social order as it transitioned from the Soviet system. Russians identified much more strongly with religion than they did in Soviet times, which impacted social and political beliefs.

3. Russian Federation military forces faced a dramatic decrease in their size, structure, and readiness compared to the Soviet military.

4. President Yeltsin had significant health problems.

5. With the fragmentation of the Soviet Union into sixteen states, many ethnic Russians and some geographic regions and ethnic groups that were historically connected to Russia were beyond the borders of the Russian Federation.

Sequence of observable behaviors 25 December 1991–7 May 2000

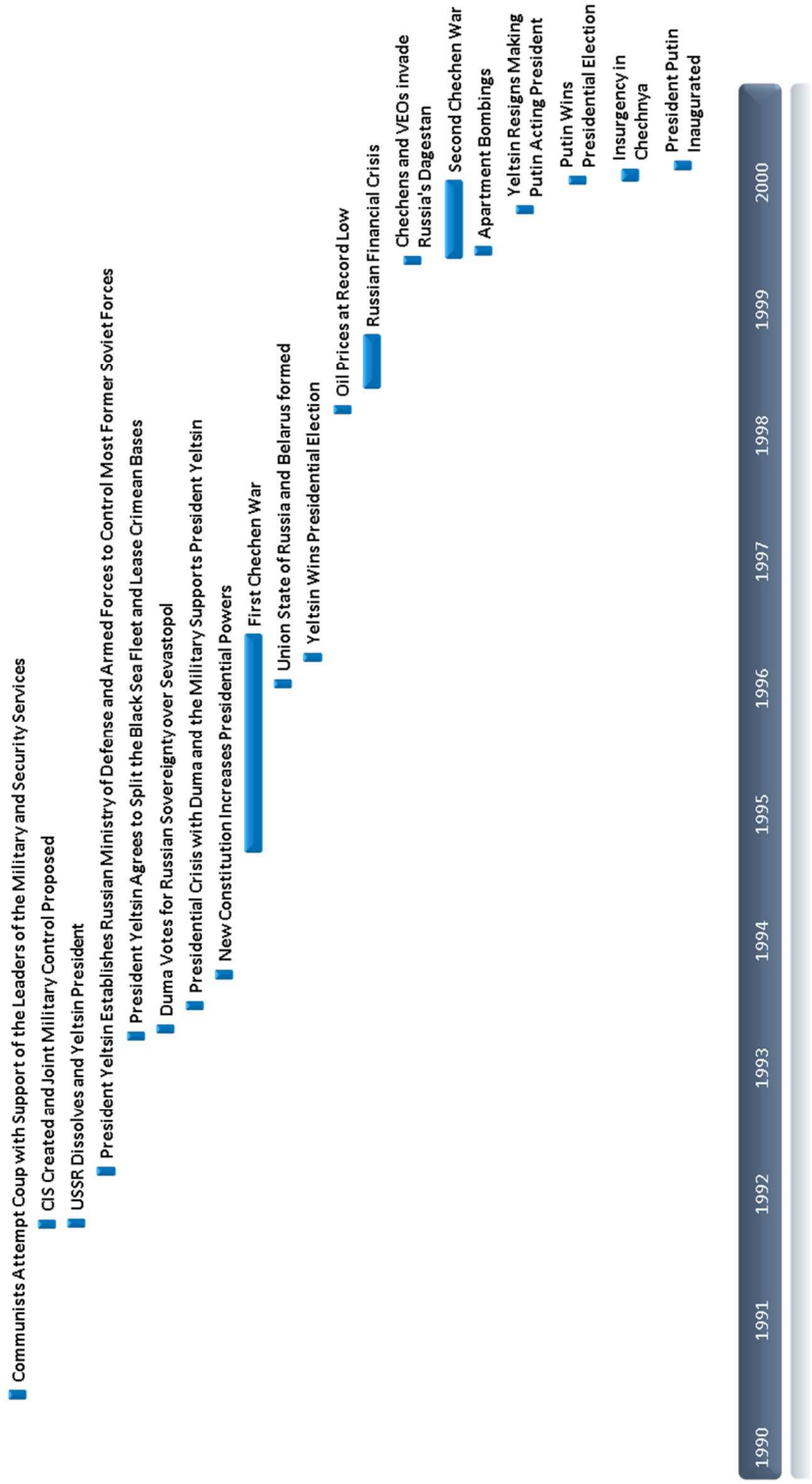

Figure 15. Russian Federation domestic conditions, events, and behaviors 1991–2000. Sources: See Step 10 of the method.

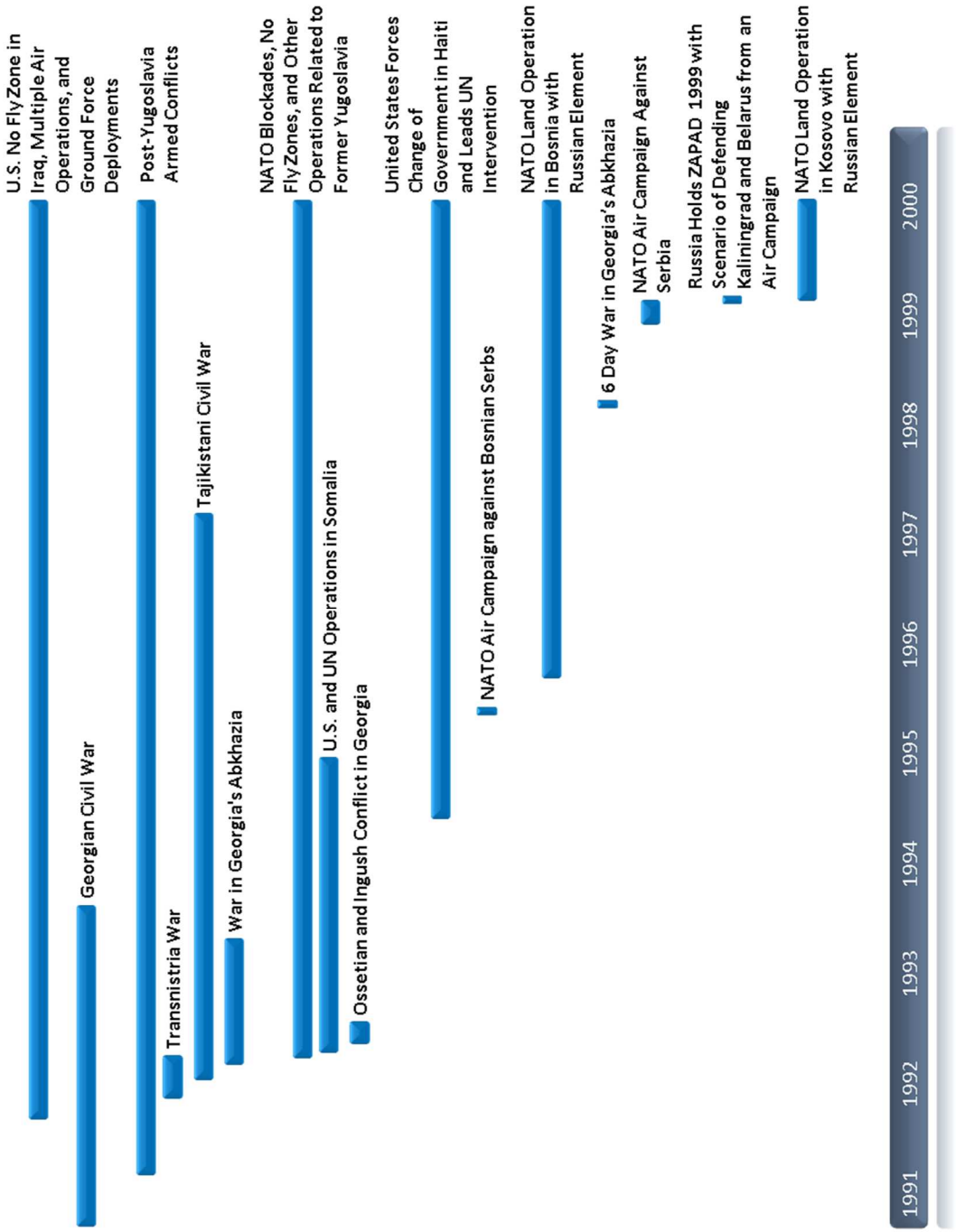

Figure 16. Military operations and exercises 1991–2000. Sources: See Step 10.

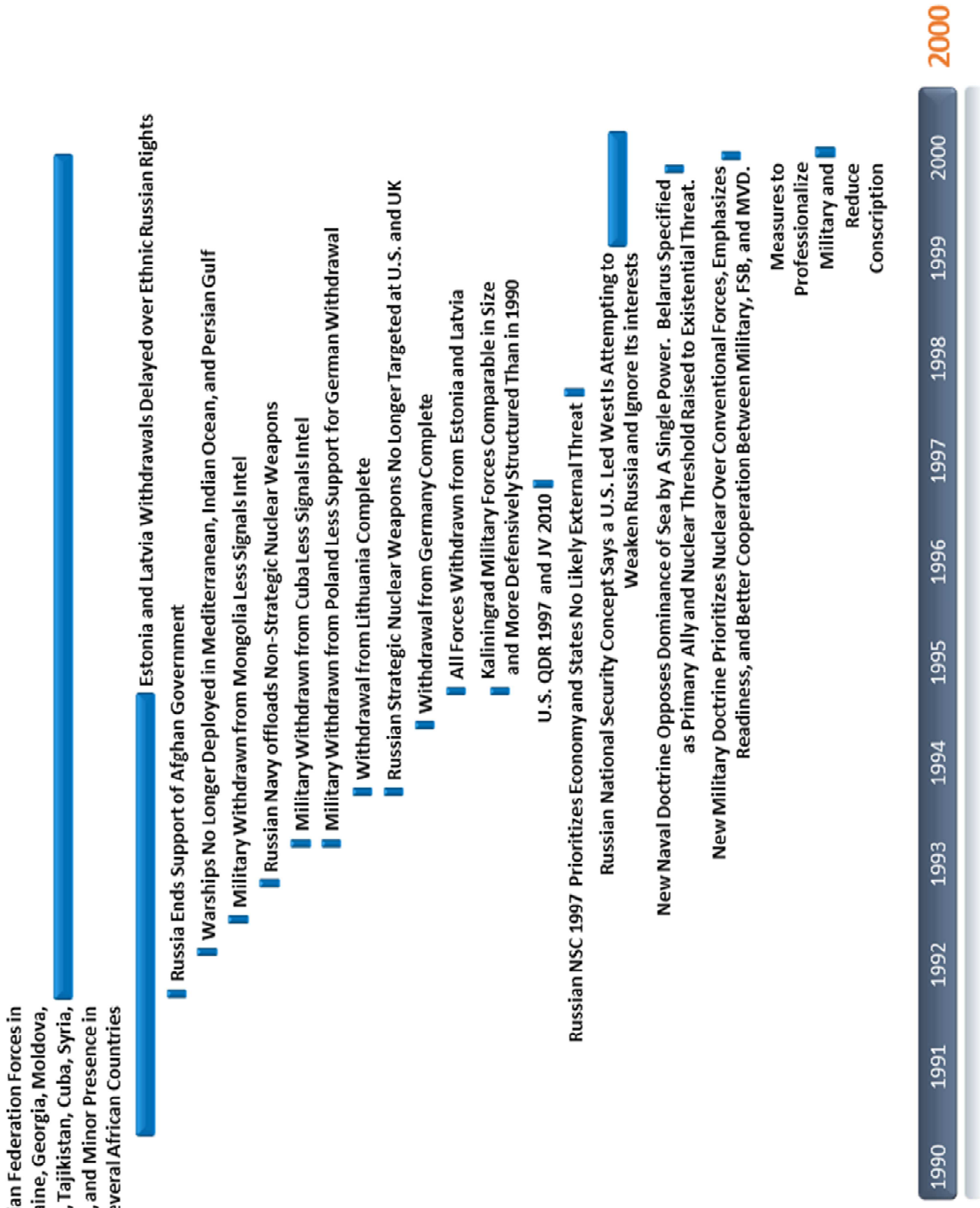

Figure 17. Military posture, capabilities, strategy, and doctrine 1991–2000. Sources: See Step 10.

Figure 18. International events and agreements 1991–2000. Sources: See Step 10.

Structured, focused comparison and evaluation of subcases

1. Russian Federation policy and strategy documents (Primarily 1997 and 1999)

1. Russia's strategy documents acknowledged that Russia was weaker than the United States but still powerful.[273]

The evidentiary value of Russian documents is high as the Russian Federation military's actual actions aligned with guidance, indicating they were true guidance and not some form of deception.

273. Boris Yeltsin, *Russian Federation National Security Blueprint* (Federation of Atomic Scientists Website; Moscow: Originally the Rossiiskaya Gazeta, December 30, 1997), https://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/blueprint.html. and Vladimir Putin, *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation* (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Website, January 10, 2000), https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/589768.

2. In December of 1997, President Yeltsin published the *Russian National Security Blueprint*. The document outlined Russia's national interests and means of pursuing them in a format like contemporary U.S. National Security Strategies. It restated his policy of prioritizing domestic economic and social issues over international security issues.[274]

> At the same time Russia's influence on resolving cardinal questions of international life which affect our state's interests has decreased significantly. In these conditions the desire of a number of states to weaken Russia's positions in the political, economic, and military spheres has increased. The process of creating a model of general and all-embracing security for Europe based on principles advanced in many respects on Russia's initiative entails considerable difficulties. The prospect of NATO expansion to the East is unacceptable to Russia since it represents a threat to its national security. Multilateral mechanisms for maintaining peace and security at both the global (United Nations) and regional (OSCE, CIS) levels are still insufficiently effective, which limits our potential when using such mechanisms to ensure Russia's national security interests by political and legal means. Russia is in a certain degree of isolation from the integration processes under way in the Asian and Pacific region. All this is unacceptable to it as an influential European-Asian power with national interests in Europe, the Near East, Central and South Asia, and the Asian and Pacific region.[275]

Acting President Putin later published the *National Security Concept of The Russian Federatio*n. This altered the priority of social and economic issues over security

---

274. Yeltsin, *Russian Federation National Security Blueprint*.

275. Yeltsin, *Russian Federation National Security Blueprint*. This citation is for a block quote. Should the block quote formatting be lost the quote begins with "At the same time…" and ends with "…Pacific region."

issues. It began with the assessment that the international system exhibited "two mutually exclusive tendencies."[276]

The first tendency was "improved mechanisms for multilateral governance of international processes."[277] The second tendency was "attempts to create an international relations structure based on domination by developed Western countries in the international community, under US leadership and designed for unilateral solutions (primarily by the use of military force) to key issues in world politics in circumvention of the fundamental rules of international law."[278] The policy response was for Russia to pursue multilateral cooperation through existing institutions diplomatically, strengthen central authority domestically, cooperate internationally to pursue better economic and social conditions, and improve Russian military capabilities.[279] The primary military guidance was "to provide the capability to respond adequately to any threats that may arise in the 21st century, with rational expenditures on national defense."[280]

The Russian military policy described in the document a policy that "the Russian Federation must possess nuclear forces capable of assuredly inflicting the desired extent of damage against any aggressor state or coalition of states in any conditions and circumstances."[281] This statement and the document's tone imply that nuclear weapons

---

276. Putin, *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation*.
277. Putin, *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation*.
278. Putin, *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation*.
279. Putin, *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation*.
280. Putin, *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation*.
281. Putin, *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation*.

are primarily for deterrence of aggression, but also that nuclear weapons might be used for a wide variety of purposes.

In terms of conventional forces, the guidance was that "the Russian Armed Forces in their peacetime fighting strength must be capable to reliably protect the country against air attack … as well as to deploy strategically to perform missions in a large-scale war."[282]

3, 4, and 5. Russian policy and strategy documents are not incongruent with any of the motives as making these public statements would be useful either to any type of state that was a temporarily weakened great power or to a political leader seeking to maintain a winning coalition under the circumstances that existed.

6. These documents do not weaken confidence in any of the explanations. They offer evidence of how Russia assessed the international variables and how the President wished the selectorate and his winning coalition to perceive his military and security policy. Russia's assessment of other actors changed for the worse during this period.

2. Nuclear weapons and missile defense (1991–2000)

1. Russia remained roughly balanced with the United States in terms of strategic nuclear weapons.[283]

The evidentiary value of these behaviors is moderate. The deterrent use of nuclear weapons was central to Russian military strategy in the 1990s, making reductions

---

282. Putin, *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation*.
283. IISS, *Military Balance,* vols 90–101.

a costly signal. On the other hand, given that Russia had fewer resources available than the Soviet Union, it had incentives to make agreements that maintained effective parity at a lower and less expensive level.

2. The military aspects of the post-cold war period were structured in part by bilateral and multilateral agreements related to nuclear weapons. Among other agreements on weapons of mass destruction, the United States and Russia implemented the START I Treaty and agreed on the START II Treaty. Together these and other agreements radically reduced the total number and types of strategic nuclear weapons deployed by both sides.[284] While functional equivalence and secure retaliation capabilities were preserved, the Russian Federation gave up more modern systems than did the United States. The United States was better able to maximize its capability under the limit and conduct verification.[285]

Under President George H. W. Bush, the United States pursued limited capabilities to deal with an accidental launch or rogue state. President Clinton supported the ABM Treaty and focused on tactical missile defense.[286] In order to preserve the ABM treaty while accommodating domestic politics, he sought to reach an agreement with Russia on a line of demarcation between theater and national missile defense.[287]

---

284. IISS, *Military Balance,* vols. 90–101.

285. Nancy W. Gallagher, Personal communication, Summer 2021.

286. Nancy W. Gallagher, Personal communication, Summer 2021.

287. Amy F. Woolf et al., *Arms Control and Nonproliferation: A Catalog of Treaties and Agreements* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, March 26, 2020), 13–15, https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo111470.

From the U.S. perspective, this would not change the U.S. calculation that Russia should be reassured against a change in U.S. intentions because Russia possessed a survivable second-strike capability. Both sides had previously reduced incentives for a first strike with mutual agreements. A Russian could interpret theater missile defense as a small-scale experiment that might lead to an American ability to field rapidly a more robust national-level system that weakened the effectiveness of the nuclear deterrent that Russia relied on as a hedge.

3 and 4. Russian behaviors were not incongruent with greed or security motives because economic pressures compelled Russia to reduce its conventional and nuclear forces regardless of what other parties did, and the agreements ensured other parties would also reduce their forces. The agreements were generally beneficial to Russia, whether it wanted to maintain as much relative power as possible until economic conditions improved or whether it permanently hoped to establish its security.

5. Russian behaviors were not incongruent with presidential political survival. They transformed the necessity of unilateral nuclear reductions into an opportunity for President Yeltsin to appear before the selectorate in a position equal to President Clinton. It gave a more politically palatable reason for the military drawdown than did financial weakness. Russian security elites resented the agreements, and they became more nationalist and less cooperative towards the United States.[288]

---

288. Nancy Gallagher, Personal communication, Summer 2021.

6. What observably happened regarding arms control does not weaken confidence in any of the explanations.

The United States continued interest in some form of missile defense created a chance that the United States would develop a technology that could be scaled up to defend strategically against the Russian arsenal. Because of the reduced size of both countries' missile forces, the scale of such a system would be smaller than it would have had to be during the Cold War. On the other hand, by 1997, Russia had relatively few items of bargaining value left with the United States; other than that, the ABM Treaty limited US freedom of action on missile defense. Therefore, they might have exaggerated their concern with that Treaty for bargaining purposes.

3. Conventional arms control and confidence-building (1991–2000)

1. The power differential in conventional forces swung in favor of the United States and NATO relative to Russia.[289]

The evidentiary value of Russia's behavior is moderate. Russia's reduction of its military forces was a costly signal; however, the agreements ensured some limitation on the size of Western forces that were not facing the same level of budgetary pressure.

2. From a Russian perspective, the 1990s were when numerous political and military agreements and significant regional and global structure changes occurred. The Convention on Forces in Europe (CFE), negotiated by the Soviet Union, limited the number of certain types of military equipment that could be kept in Europe. It also

289. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols 90–101.

specified measures for inspections that would confirm force levels and readiness and limited the size of forces deployed on the Soviet and NATO northern and southern flanks.[290]

Russia had objections to the flank limitations in the CFE treaty. These had been appropriate for the circumstances in which the Soviet Union expected to continue its existence. They were less appropriate for the new borders. The former Soviet Union's northern and southern flanks were Russia's southern area of separatist violence and Russia's northern frontier with non-allied nations.[291] Both were strategic terrain of greater geopolitical importance for Russia than they had been for the Soviet Union. The loss of the Baltic States and the independence of Belarus eliminated the zone in which the Soviet Union could have placed military forces on easily defendable terrain as a hedge against future problems with the West. Russia repeatedly raised the issue of modifying the flank limits and appeared to go to great lengths to comply with them. Russia even modified its commitment of forces during the First Chechen war to comply with CFE.[292]

CFE was complemented by the so-called "Vienna Documents," specifically intended to build confidence and mutual security. These allowed for a once unthinkable degree of openness about all parties' military forces.[293] Similarly, the Open Skies agreement allowed reconnaissance overflights of each other territories, beginning after

---

290. Woolf et al., *Arms Control and Nonproliferation: A Catalog of Treaties and Agreements*, 37–39.

291. Woolf et al., *Arms Control and Nonproliferation*, 37–39.

292. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol 95, 102–105.

293. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol 95, 105.

2000, and would support mutual reassurance that no offensive action was being secretly prepared or long-term advantage forbidden by the agreement sought.[294]

3 and 4. Russian behaviors were not incongruent with greed or security motives because economic pressures compelled Russia to reduce its conventional and nuclear forces regardless of what other parties did. The agreements ensured other parties would also reduce their forces. The agreements were generally beneficial to Russia, whether it wanted to maintain as much relative power as possible until economic conditions improved or whether it permanently hoped to establish its security.

5. Russian behaviors were not incongruent with presidential political survival. They transformed the necessity of unilateral conventional reductions into an opportunity for President Yeltsin to appear before the selectorate in a position equal to President Clinton and offer a more politically palatable reason for the military drawdown than did financial weakness.

6. What observably happened does not weaken confidence in any of the explanations.

The agreements also provided each side with a great deal of directly observable information on the others' military power. They provided first-hand observation opportunities that were useful in assessing how each side viewed themselves and the counterparty. From a Russian perspective, what observably happened served to limit the degree to which Europe's conventional military balance worsened. The fact that the

---

294. Woolf et al., *Arms Control and Nonproliferation*, 41–43.

United States was improving its ability to rapidly project forces from the homeland to anywhere on earth reduced the value of arms control agreements limited to Europe.

The Russian Government's amount of effort devoted to these agreements amid all its problems suggests they were highly valued. Russia's effort to visibly comply with the somewhat irrelevant flank limitations on military equipment during the First Chechen War suggests that it was important to Russia that it was believed to comply with and place value in the agreements.

4. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (1991–2000)

1. Russia had more power than any of these states and began the period in control of large military forces based in these countries.[295] All of these states had negative assessments of Russia and security concerns about it due to the Russian Imperial and Soviet occupation of their territories. Before these countries were on a path to NATO and EU membership, Russia's relative military capability was great enough to achieve almost any objective it desired and then force the termination of military force by all parties.

The evidentiary value of these behaviors is particularly high because Russia allowed a window of opportunity to pass in which it could have used military operations or exercises to deter NATO and the EU from expanding into these countries. If Russia had motives that would lead it to be aggressive against these countries, the incentives were to act against them before they were close to joining NATO.

---

295. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

The region includes strategic terrain. Russia's Kaliningrad exclave was geographically separated from Russia by Belarus and these three states. Geography and evidence from the Napoleonic and World Wars demonstrate that the region that included the Baltic States, northeastern Poland, and Kaliningrad is a strategic territory. It is the most geographically significant obstacle in the northern European geostrategic military corridor running through north-central Europe from the English Channel ports to Moscow and beyond.[296]

2. Russia delayed its withdrawal from Estonia and Latvia as bargaining leverage in a dispute over the rights of ethnic Russians denied citizenship and other rights based on language laws. It completely withdrew, with the issue largely unresolved. Russia concluded an agreement with Lithuania for Russian military transit from Belarus to Kaliningrad and withdrew all military forces from Lithuania.[297]

Russia did not conduct military operations or exercises intended to prevent or reverse the increasing Western orientation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania or to prevent them from joining NATO and the EU.[298]

3. Russian actions were incongruent with the greed motive. Despite its weak position relative to the Soviet Union, Russia was vastly more powerful than Poland and

---

296. Judgements about strategic terrain were made referencing National Geographic Society, *Atlas of the World*, 8th ed. (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2004). and applying military professional judgment. See also Dominic Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon: The True Story of the Campaigns of War and Peace* (New York: Viking, 2010). and Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin Volume II: Waiting for Hitler, 1928–1941* (New York: Penguin Books, 2017), Kindle.

297. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–95.

298. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

the Baltic States. Russia could easily have escalated border or ethnic issues into a small military operation that would have created a frozen conflict if it wished to do so.

A frozen conflict would have ended a state's ability to join NATO and the EU. This would have placed Russia in a better position to act on the greed motive when it recovered from the post-Soviet decline. A less risky option with a similar potential outcome would have been to conduct military exercises to prevent the eventual acceptance of the idea of expansion by EU and NATO member states.

4. Russia's actions were incongruent with a security motive unless one assumes that all other powers will have benign motives at all future times, which seems imprudent. Russia withdrew from strategic terrain without gaining any assurance on the security issues related to this terrain. Russia failed to make a significant effort to link withdrawal to a revision of Europe's security order or a formal guarantee against NATO and EU expansion.

Russia also failed to act before states that viewed it negatively were able to increase their effective power greatly by joining NATO and the EU.

5. Russian actions are incongruent with the logic of presidential survival. He made little effort to protect the rights of Russians in Estonia and Latvia. He intermittently opposed NATO expansion only after the Russian military became an essential part of his winning coalition, which was more congruent with political survival, and the change in behavior supports the argument that survival motives were important.

6. Russian behaviors were congruent with presidential political survival motives, which weakens confidence in that explanation. Russian behaviors on a matter of great

geostrategic importance were incongruent with security-seeking or greedy motives. This reduces confidence in all three of the international explanations. This contributes to the puzzling nature of the problem. From later perspectives, it appears that Russia changed its position. This makes later Russian claims appear insincere.

These events altered the variables by creating a structural problem of distinguishing the offensive deployment of military forces from the defensive deployment of military forces. The Baltic States and portions of northeastern Poland were located within the major geostrategic barrier in northcentral Europe's strategic level military movement corridor. Once they joined NATO, Russia's geographic advantage in defense was greatly reduced regardless of NATO's intentions. On the other hand, it also created a potential vulnerability to NATO's credibility, as these states were overall less easy for NATO to defend than its existing members were. Thus, both parties had an incentive to increase their military capability after NATO expansion. The good relations that existed under Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin would mitigate this issue, but this situation created a potential security dilemma if political relations changed.

Modern weapons allow for more rapid operations by any party when they begin inside this barrier compared to beginning facing the barrier. A state having any modern military capability located in this strategic territory, even for solely defensive purposes, has at least some ability to be the shield behind which an offensive force could rapidly concentrate for an attack from a position of advantage.

Modern missiles and aircraft have an operational reach that is so great that it is impossible to possess modern air, sea, and land fires capabilities or air and missile defense capabilities in this region without creating the technical ability to interdict other

states' internal and external lines of communications and strike strategic targets deep inside other states' territory.

5. NATO operations and PFP exercises (1991–2000)

1. Russia was less powerful than NATO in potential and fielded military power.[299]

The evidentiary value of these behaviors is high. While the PFP exercises were relatively low visibility, the NATO operations in Bosnia and Kosovo were central issues during the period. Therefore, using them for deceptive signaling or bargaining purposes would be unlikely.

2. Russia participated in numerous exercises as part of NATO's Partnership for Peace.[300] This was a relatively low-cost and low-risk way to cooperate.

Russia diplomatically opposed the air campaigns against the Bosnian Serbs in 1995 and Serbia in 1999. Given that Russia had historically supported the Slavic and Orthodox Serbians against the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires and that Russia was simultaneously engaged in religious and ethnic conflict domestically, it was reasonable to expect that Russia would oppose these air campaigns. It joined in the land-based peacekeeping operations because it gave it a measure of influence over the course

---

299. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.
300. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

of the operation and the region's political future without directly opposing or directly supporting NATO during the actual fighting.[301]

It opposed the air campaigns and yet participated in the land peacekeeping force while accepting a lesser status in the military command structure than the United States, Germany, Britain, and other states, which is somewhat puzzling. This occurred primarily due to efforts by all parties to establish some workable relationship between Russia and NATO despite real differences in interests. Building this relationship and creating a stable post-Cold War European security order were prominent issues for all relevant states. They may, at times, have been less immediate and less emotionally and politically charged than ongoing crises in the former Yugoslavia that were highlighted in the media. The NATO operations in Bosnia and Kosovo were deeply unpopular in Russia. President Yeltsin's approval rating dropped from a little above 30% to just above 10% during the Bosnian War and from less than 30% to less than 10% during the Kosovo War.[302] Levada Opinion polls show that before the Kosovo War, the United States had an advantage of roughly fifty points in terms of the percentage of Russian's offering positive rather than negative evaluation. This plummeted to a deficit of twenty points during the war.[303]

A famous incident that was initially expected to be of evidentiary value was the movement of Russian paratroops from the peacekeeping force in Bosnia to Kosovo's

---

301. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 95–101. and Service, *History of Modern Russia*, 539.

302. Treisman, "Presidential Popularity," 592.

303. Levada, Russian Public Opinion 2018, 154.

Pristina Airport ahead of the arrival of U.S. paratroops. On examination, it is not clear that this behavior has any evidentiary value. Firsthand accounts from the U.S. paratroopers indicate that the Russian forces welcomed them and were under the impression that they were supposed to meet U.S. forces at that location and that the Americans would then supply them with food and other support.[304] Military units traditionally race to be the first to seize prestige objectives regardless of the plan. Pristina Airfield was the closest thing to a prestige objective in Kosovo and a natural place for military forces that expect to be resupplied by air to locate.

3. Russian behaviors are not incongruent with the greed motive. Given NATO's power advantage, it would be logical to appease NATO until Russia could recover from the Soviet collapse and its consequences.

4. Russian behaviors are not incongruent with a security motive in that Russia would expect NATO to reciprocate later to Russian cooperation.

5. Russian behaviors related to NATO operations and PFP exercise were not incongruent with the President's logic of political survival until roughly 1997. After that time, they are incongruent, which contributed to the decline in Yeltsin's approval to the single digits. NATO operations in Bosnia and Kosovo were important and unpopular in Russian domestic politics.

6. This subcase does not weaken confidence in any international explanation. It does highlight the difficulty of making and evaluating rational choices and

---

304. Firsthand account of a participant in this event communicated to author.

communicating with others when one has multiple and competing interests involved in an issue.

This subcase did weaken confidence in the domestic political survival explanation after 1997 when the United States and NATO operations became a domestic political issue.

6. Moldova (1991–2000)

1. Russia was vastly more powerful than any of the parties in Moldova. Part of Moldova had once been Romanian Bessarabia, and another part had been part of Russia. Moldova was more pro-Romanian than pro-Russian but maintained moderately cooperative relations with Russia.[305] The Dniester River is a strategic territory of moderate value. It was a significant obstacle on the southern of the two major east-west geostrategic military corridors in Europe, but this is critical only if the intention includes the defense of Ukraine as a Russian partner.[306]

The evidentiary value of these behaviors is high. Russia's relative military capability was great enough to achieve almost any objective it desired in Moldova and then force the termination of military force by all parties.

2. Russia initially controlled military forces in all of Moldova. Moldova has close ethnic and historical ties with Romania and could have unified with it. In the closing days of the Soviet Union, ethnic Russians established control of the east bank of

---

305. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

306. Judgements about strategic terrain were made referencing National Geographic Society, *Atlas of the World*. and applying military professional judgment.

the Dniester. There was an armed conflict between ethnic militias. Russia conducted military operations that prevented the ethnic Russian Transnistrians' defeat by ethnic Romanian militias and Moldovan government forces.[307] Russia made agreements with Moldova to withdraw from Transnistria but did not do so during this period.[308]

3. Given the scoping conditions, Russian behavior was incongruent with greedy motives. It chose not to escalate and then terminate the conflict by using its superior power to defeat the Moldovan government and either formally annex Transnistria or impose a compliant Moldovan government. It simply refused to stop providing security to ethnic Russians and controlling moderately strategic territory by withdrawing. Over time, Western observers have come to see this Russian behavior as more continuously aggressive and proactive than the behavior appears when considered in the context of the period.

4. Creating and sustaining a frozen conflict was not incongruent with a security-seeking motive in that it retains the strategic territory of the Dniester River and forces Moldova to become a neutral buffer state with no prospect of joining NATO or the EU or unifying with Romania. Ukraine was seen as a close partner of Russia, so the terrain had some value to the military defense of the three predominantly Slavic post-Soviet states. An important nuance supporting this finding is that Russia simply declined to give up its preexisting military control of the region. This is different from actively taking something it did not initially have.

---

307. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.
308. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 95, 106.

5. These behaviors were not incongruent with presidential political survival as they provided a temporary way to avoid the domestic political problems created by ethnic Russians residing in a potentially Western aligned Moldova or a potentially enlarged Romania.

6. Russian actions are incongruent with the greed motive; this weakens confidence in the explanations that Russia is either a purely greedy or a greedy type of state. Confidence is not weakened in political survival motives.

As in Georgia, it is interesting that Russia did not seek a permanent resolution to the issue and instead chose to manage instability. From a Russian perspective, these outcomes temporarily stabilized the independent variables related to material, information, and political survival.

This subcase also helps explain the puzzles. Viewed absent the broader context of this period, Russian behavior appears more aggressive than it does when considered in that context, with the scoping conditions, and under the rigorous standards of the *RTIP* and Selectorate Theory. Absent these analytical tools, an observer would interpret Russia's actions as simply occupying a weaker state's territory. The actual events have been demonstrated to be much more complex. Rather than risk-taking behavior and active behavior when the context and theories are applied, it appears to be a risk-avoiding and passive behavior.

7. Ukraine (1991–2000)

1. Russia was more powerful in potential and fielded military power than Ukraine. Initially, Ukraine was a nuclear-armed state and had the smallest relative power

disadvantage with Russia of any former Soviet state.[309] Crimea is strategic terrain because it offers several of the better naval ports on the Black Sea, and land access is severely constrained to very narrow chokepoints and bridges.[310]

The evidentiary value of these behaviors is moderate. Russia's relative military capability was great enough to achieve almost any objective it desired in Ukraine and then force the termination of military force by all parties. Relations between the three Slavic newly independent states were close for most of the period. A soft power approach seemed reasonably likely to sustain this situation.

2. Russia did not conduct military operations or coercive exercises against Ukraine despite widespread Russian concerns with the loss of historical parts of Imperial Russia in the Donets River basin and Crimea that led to the Duma declaring Russian sovereignty over Sebastopol early in the period. These territories had a majority ethnic Russian population. The post-Soviet borders denied Russia the strategic territory of Crimea, required the Black Sea Fleet's division, and required Russia to secure a base for its share of that fleet. The Black Sea Fleet status and its bases and infrastructure in Crimea and elsewhere was a significant issue. Through lengthy negotiations, Russia, Georgia, and Ukraine cooperated to control and eventually divide the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet. Ukraine leased bases in Crimea to Russia until 2017, which allowed it to share bases with the smaller and less capable Ukrainian navy.[311]

---

309. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

310. Judgements about strategic terrain were made referencing National Geographic Society, *Atlas of the World* and applying military professional judgment.

311. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

3. Russia's behaviors were moderately incongruent with a greed motive as it could have imposed territorial or policy changes by force or threat of force, including taking control of Crimea or portions of the Donets Basin at any point after Ukraine denuclearized. Russia also did not attempt to keep the entire fleet.

4. Russian behaviors are not incongruent with a security motive despite the risk of losing access to naval bases in Crimea and the inclusion of many ethnic Russians in a Ukrainian state. Russia most likely assumed that the three Slavic former Soviet Republics of Ukraine, Belarus, and the Russian Federation with close ties would continue very close cooperation or even establish some form of union.

5. Russian behaviors are not incongruent with the logic of the presidential survival motive in that the lease shifted the politically lethal risk of Russia being expelled from Crimea to a future President at the lowest possible short-term risk and cost. The inclusion of historical Imperial Russian territory and ethnic Russians was an issue but not at the time sufficiently critical to threaten presidential survival.

6. This subcase moderately weakens confidence in the greedy motive and the two corresponding explanations. It does not weaken confidence in the other two explanations.

From a Russian perspective, these events largely stabilized the variables. It did not resolve important issues but simply shifted its resolution into a future period.

8. Belarus (1991–2000)

1. Russia was vastly more powerful than Belarus. Belarus generally had positive behaviors towards Russia.[312] Russian behaviors are of high value because it had sufficient military power to impose any outcome it wanted, and the territory of Belarus is of decisive military importance in the historical examples of defending Russia from outside attack.

2. Aleksandr Lukashenko became President in 1994 on a platform of economic reform and fighting corruption.[313] Belarus gradually shrunk the size of the military forces it controlled and remained equipment with former Soviet equipment. It participated in few outside military engagements but was a member of Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the CIS. The Russian Federation took over the Soviet nuclear assets in the country and withdrew them during this period. The *Zapad* wargame includes Belarus.[314]

In 1999 Russia and Belarus signed a number of agreements, including the "Union Treaty."[315] These agreements established a common military district oriented on defense against attacks from countries to the west. The Union Treaty planned to first develop

---

312. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

313. Reuters, "Populist in Belarus Sweeps To a Presidential Victory," *New York Times*, July 11, 1994, https://www.nytimes.com/1994/07/11/world/populist-in-belarus-sweeps-to-a-presidential-victory.html.

314. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

315. Michael Wines, "Russia and Belarus Agree To Join in a Confederation," *New York Times*, December 9, 1999, https://www.nytimes.com/1999/12/09/world/russia-and-belarus-agree-to-join-in-a-confederation.html.

common economic policies and then a common currency and defense policy. Ultimately a shared parliament and executive would have some unspecified responsibilities over the two countries.[316]

3., 4., and 5. Nothing that happened regarding Belarus was incongruent with any of the motives as it appeared that these two Slavic former Soviet republics were on track for a close union that would have actualized all three motives at low cost.

6. Confidence is not reduced in any explanation.

9. Georgia (1991–2000)

1. Russia was more powerful than any of the parties in Georgia. The region's remote areas, notably the Kodori Gorge, were used as a sanctuary for Chechen separatists and Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs).[317] Much of Georgia can be considered strategic territory, including its Black Sea ports and the rugged areas of the Caucasus Mountains, which geographically and militarily separate Asia from Europe.[318]

The evidentiary value of these behaviors is high. Russia's relative military capability was great enough to achieve almost any objective it desired in Georgia and then force the termination of military force by all parties.

---

316. Michael Wines, "Russia and Belarus Agree To Join in a Confederation," *New York Times*, December 9, 1999, https://www.nytimes.com/1999/12/09/world/russia-and-belarus-agree-to-join-in-a-confederation.html.

317. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101. The term VEOs is used here in the same way it is used in U.S. documents to provide a neutral term.

318. Judgements about strategic terrain were made referencing National Geographic Society, *Atlas of the World* and applying judgment.

2. As the Soviet Union went into decline, ethnic and political rivalries in Georgia led to multiple occurrences of armed conflict. This included atrocities and ethnic cleansing between Georgians, Abkhazians, and Ossets. There was also armed conflict between rivals for control of the central government. Russia gained control of most military forces in Georgia when the Soviet Union ceased to exist. Russian military forces provided limited but decisive support to the pro-Russian faction that won the civil war to control the Georgian state. It also supported all sides in the Georgian versus Abkhazian and Ossetian conflict by providing just enough support for these forces to stabilize their areas of control. Russia became the dominant power in a peacekeeping mission that effectively froze the boundaries between the three warring ethnicities in Georgia. The United Nations (UN) and OSCE (Organization for Security Co-operation and in Europe) cooperated with this Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peacekeeping mission, and there was no significant international resistance to it at the time.[319]

Russia cooperated with the central government under pro-Russian and former Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze throughout the period. Russia maintained a sizeable military presence inside government-controlled Georgia in addition to its commitment to the CIS peacekeeping force. At the end of the period, Russia's military forces were the largest CIS peacekeeping force component in Georgia. Russia also had roughly three oversized brigades based in Georgia with the agreement of the government.[320]

---

319. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

320. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 100, 125–126.

3. Russia's actions are not incongruent with the greed motive. They ensured a policy change to a pro-Russian Georgian government and effectively took control of separatist regions while maintaining more military power in the country than Georgia itself possessed.

4. Russia's actions are not incongruent with a security-seeking motive in that it retained control of what was historically considered strategic territory. Under the scoping condition, Russia could be expected to provide security to ethnic Russians outside of the Russian Federation and ethnicities tied to Russian identity. The Georgians, Abkhazians, and Ossets qualify under this condition for protection security-seeking Russian Federation even though they fought each other.

5. Russian actions are not incongruent with a domestic political survival motive because freezing the conflict made it a politically minor issue at a much lower cost than imposing additional territory or policy changes on the three competing ethnicities. Loss of bases in Georgia or continued large-scale ethnic fighting would have become a negative political issue for the president.

6. Because Russian actions are not incongruent with any of the three possible motives, this subcase does not weaken confidence in any of the four explanations.

These outcomes were not a permanent resolution to the issues. From the Western military perspective, which focuses on decisive outcomes, this is confusing because Russia did not use all its available power. From a Russian perspective, the outcomes contributed to a stabilizing effect on the independent variables related to material,

information, and political survival at a reasonable cost. In context with the rest of the case, it shows a pattern of "managed instability."[321]

10. Armenia and Azerbaijan (1991–2000)

1. Russia was by far the strongest power and was Armenia's only potential ally. Russia had historically strong ties to the Armenians. There was Soviet air and missile defense infrastructure in Azerbaijan that amounted to strategic terrain for purposes of nuclear war.[322]

The evidentiary value of these behaviors is high. Russia's relative power was great enough to achieve almost any objective it desired in Armenia and Azerbaijan and then force termination.

2. Russia initially controlled military forces in both states. Azeris and Armenians had historical issues that erupted into fighting between militias with the collapse of central authority. Russian forces provided discrete but decisive support to Armenian forces that ensured they retained the ethnic Armenian region of Nagorno-Karabakh inside Azerbaijan's border. Russia then led efforts that established and enforced a CIS peacekeeping mission that froze the conflict in cooperation with other international organizations.[323]

This appears puzzling in that Russia could have supported Armenia, with which it was more closely aligned historically, culturally, and religiously. The two could have

---

321. Nancy W. Gallagher suggested the use of this term.
322. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.
323. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

inflicted a defeat on Azerbaijan that was sufficiently decisive to annex the territory or impose regime or policy change on Azerbaijan. Russia was constrained from doing so by its enduring need for cooperation from both states and by its desire not to inflame tensions inside a Russian Federation that was multi-ethnic and multi-religious.

3. Russian behaviors in Armenia and Azerbaijan were not incongruent with greedy motives. The need for active support for Russia's continued operation of Soviet air and missile defense sites and the relatively low priority of the region compared to others bordering Russia limited Russian options.

4. Russian behaviors in Armenia and Azerbaijan were not incongruent with a security-seeking state seeking to prevent disorder on its border that would impact strategic terrain. It did not have a feasible solution to both permanently end the frozen conflict and ensure Russian access in both countries, so a frozen conflict provides the most security.

5. Russian behaviors were not incongruent with the logic of presidential survival. They are part of a pattern of seeking to minimize crises on Russia's border that could spill over into Russia and become political problems at the lowest cost.

6. Russian behavior in Armenia and Azerbaijan does not weaken confidence in any of the four explanations.

From a Russian perspective, these events did not significantly alter any variables; however, they left unresolved problems for future periods. This case is another example of the preference for managed instability.

11. Other European issues, including NATO and the EU (1991–2000)

1. Russia was less powerful than NATO in military terms and less powerful than the EU in economic terms.[324]

The evidentiary value of these behaviors is high. The regional security order and the U.S. relationship with which it is intertwined are Russian existential interests and not suitable for bargaining or deception behaviors over long periods.

2. At the strategic level, NATO was the premier security organization globally, and the EU was the premier economic and increasingly the premier social and political organization in Europe. During this period, NATO changed from a focus on the territorial defense of member states into an organization able to conduct out-of-area missions.[325] The European Union's power to order social and economic behaviors inside member states grew dramatically with the establishment of the Schengen zone, the Treaty of Rome, and the transition to the Eurozone.

Too few peaceful and cooperative years had passed to establish the level of trust that would have made either side willing to commit and trust commitments to collective security, so neither an end to NATO nor Russian membership was unlikely absent transformational events or the passage of a considerable period without conflict.

This left the problem that there seemed no way to keep NATO or expand it and include Russia in a security structure that combined military and political guarantees of

---

324. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

325. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

mutual security. Neither side would reach its voters' required level of trust to achieve such an agreement in a decade and perhaps not in a generation.

From a Western perspective, the problem of European security arrangements appeared largely but not completely resolved satisfactorily, so this seemed less of a vital concern in 1995 than it does twenty-five years later. The Russian Federation showed a preference for addressing issues in the OSCE. Each state was free to act as an individual in this venue, which reduced the NATO/Non-NATO dichotomy that could occur in other venues and brought many former Soviet states with good relations with Russia into the discussion. The United States did not afford the same importance to the OSCE despite the Helsinki Accords' importance in the late Cold War.

For its part, Russia entering NATO would, in some ways, reduce its status. Relations between NATO and Russia were never defined in a way that both sides found a suitable long-term solution. On nuclear issues, Russia's ability to bring the superpower United States to the table and gain agreements preserved a patina of lost superpower status. NATO military forces had always been placed under the NATO command authority of a U.S. military officer who served as both the United States European Command Commander-in-Chief and the Supreme Allied Command Allied Power Europe. For Russia to join, it would almost certainly have to agree that its contribution of military units to NATO would be under SACEUR's military authority, which would have been almost without precedent in Russian and Soviet history. It seems unlikely that a Russian President could accept this given the domestic political consequences.

Multiple rounds of unsatisfactory agreements between NATO and Russia attempted to establish a unique relationship in which NATO as an Alliance of states was

the peer of a weakened Russia on its own. Unsurprisingly these agreements were militarily unsatisfactory. More emphasis could have been placed on enduring these unsatisfactory military conditions as a bridging strategy while trust between the sides grew.

NATO expansion was politically attractive to President Clinton and other heads of state in NATO and a cheap yet powerful security guarantee for potential new members. Because Russia had yielded all its tradable power positions in the former Warsaw Pact and some Soviet states without getting a formal agreement on NATO expansion or mutual collective security, NATO had little incentive not to expand. From a Western perspective, this approach had a domestic political advantage and long-term economic value. While few in the West took the idea of war in Europe too seriously, joining NATO required a nation to improve and make interoperable military forces. Thus, its bases and infrastructure became largely interoperable and capable of supporting the presence of other NATO countries' forces.[326]

These countries added little to NATO's power projection potential when NATO was explicitly changing its focus from the collective defense of Allied territory to out of area operations. Therefore, the transaction might reasonably lead a Russian to ask how much return-on-investment NATO would get to guarantee the security of states that were not likely to project power. This might suggest that other motives were at work.

There was no evidence of a plan by NATO or the United States to station significant forces on the new allies' territory. A Russian military observer would note

---

326. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

that one feature the new allies added to NATO was ports, airfields, road, and rail infrastructure developed to support a rapid offensive westward by the Warsaw Pact. In theory, this infrastructure would be just as critically important to a military force heading east as it was intended to be useful for a military force heading west. Forces using the new NATO states' infrastructure would be at roughly the range to Moscow and Saint Petersburg that was shown in Iraq, Bosnia, and Kosovo to be the operational reach of NATO air and missile attack on a Soviet-style defense. No amount of trust could change this military fact. Trust could only change the importance of this fact, and if that trust were to change for the worse in the future, this could become a much more important fact.

In practice, NATO had no such plan, and the Warsaw Pact infrastructure was decayed and not very useful. As part of economic integration, the EU was engaged in civil projects to upgrade ports, airfields, roads, and rail infrastructure in the region.

1999 was a decisive year for the European security structure. In that year, Russia lost three formal allies when Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan declined to extend their membership in the CSTO.[327] Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary joined NATO.[328] After failing to gain UN approval over Russian and Chinese objections, NATO and the United States went to war against Serbia over its behavior in its Kosovo

---

327. Collective Security Treaty Organization, "Collective Security Treaty Organization," Accessed October 4, 2020, https://en.odkb-csto.org/, https://en.odkb-csto.org/25years/.

328. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "What Is NATO? Member Countries," NATO Website, Accessed November 19, 2020, https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html.

province. Russia terminated most forms of cooperation with NATO, including the NATO-Russia Council, which it had been hoped would be the basis for some longstanding relationship. Russia then took on a role in the Kosovo peacekeeping operation led by NATO and agreed to subordinate its forces in sectors commanded by Alliance members rather than insist on a Russian commanded sector or some other arrangement.[329]

3 and 4. Russia's behaviors in cooperating with NATO other than on expansion were not incongruent with either a greed or a security motive. In either case, cooperation with a relatively stronger power during a time of weakness was rational. However, the expansion of NATO was harmful to future efforts to actualize either the domination/greed motive or the self-protection/security motive. Failure to take a stronger position and potentially use force in some from below the level of armed conflict to influence existing members to halt expansion was incongruent with these motives. It is possible that these motives existed, but no action was taken because of overly optimistic assumptions about the future.

5. Russia's behaviors were not incongruent with domestic political survival motives from two perspectives. First, joining either organization would have been unacceptable to most Russians. Second, cooperating with them allowed Russians to perceive themselves as still a great power despite their inability to stop NATO and the EU from expanding or preventing NATO operations that were unpopular. By 1999, this logic no longer worked for President Yeltsin with Russians.

---

329. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 99–101.

However, from another perspective, the failure to act against NATO and EU expansion was incongruent but may be explained by optimistic assumptions about the future or the larger power gap.

6. Russian behaviors towards NATO and the EU do not weaken confidence in any of the explanations decisively, but on the issue of NATO and EU expansion, they do weaken confidence with the important caveat that this could have occurred not because of an absence of the motive but rather because of by optimistic assumptions about the future or the larger power gap.

Regardless of intent, EU expansion into a former Russian trade partner causes an economic problem for Russia, and NATO expansion worsens the balance of power. Overall, this subcase suggests that there are actually real structural problems that make it unlikely that Russia and the members of NATO would have been satisfied as members of the same security organization if its scope replaced NATO. In the same way, actually real structural problems make it unlikely that EU member states and Russia would be comfortable in the same international organization if it required the same degree of social, economic, and political conformity to a centrally decided common standard that the EU requires.

Viewed as individual issues or even aggregated over the two-year intervals between U.S. elections, these events can be deceptive if viewed without the full context. Taken as a whole, the events of the 1990s could lead a rational actor to revise drastically their estimate of the variables that Glaser argued existed at the start of the decade.

Material power had changed. The United States and NATO now had a significant and growing power advantage over Russia in potential and fielded conventional power.

Russia maintained effective parity in nuclear weapons. It was possible that a very successful US missile defense program could alter this in the future, even though that was not the current stated intention.

Additionally, the traditional advantage of defense had changed in a complex way. Western air and missile power had a decisive advantage over Soviet-style defenses. Western precision air and missile capabilities had shown in Desert Storm, Bosnia, and Kosovo that they could arrive anywhere with the sea space and airfields needed for basing within weeks. They then had operated against strategic targets using only conventional precision weapons at almost no cost in lives to the West. While such an air campaign was ongoing, the United States had demonstrated that it could project across the ocean a potent land force. It could then sustain them without the traditional vast stockpiles required to support an offensive that had historically favored the defense.

From the U.S. perspective, the collective wisdom view emphasized that the United States was too slow in all these actions, given the 24-hour news cycle. This created intense political pressure on Western leaders by showing the voting public tactical military events that in the information environment of earlier wars would have occurred without their knowledge or would have been reported well after the fact. U.S. leaders believed that the best U.S. strategy was to speed up and strengthen these capabilities in the future.

U.S. intent, actions, and words were not aligned to communicate a message that would reassure Russia that it was likely to be rewarded for cooperation with the United States despite structural, interest, identity, or value-based differences.

12. Central Asia (1991–2000)

1. Russia was much more powerful in potential and actual military power than any state in this region.[330]

The evidentiary value of these behaviors is high. Russia's relative military capability was great enough to achieve almost any objective it desired in Central Asia and then force the termination of military force by all parties.

2. Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan became members of the CSTO. The CSTO conducted numerous military exercises and developed cooperation mechanisms, most of which had a counter-terrorism focus. Turkmenistan, located on the Iranian and Afghanistan border, shared joint control with Russia of all military forces on its territory. All five nations had generally pro-Russian and authoritarian leaders. Russian participation in support of the Tajikistan government defeated a coalition that initially included both modernizers and Islamists. Russian behaviors allowed Russia to maintain a pro-Russian government at a relatively low cost. Russia provided military assistance and support to Central Asian states against VEOs. The pro-Russian Afghan government continued to stalemate its opponents until shortly after Russia ceased supplying aid. Then the government forces collapsed, and Afghanistan became a sanctuary for VEOs, some of whom launched attacks into Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and later against the United States. Russian para-military border forces worked inside and in cooperation with these states and against VEOs based in Afghanistan and elsewhere.[331]

---

330. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.
331. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

3. Russian behaviors are incongruent with greedy motives. Russia did the minimum required to avoid state failure in the former Soviet Union states. Russia could have maintained a higher degree of military presence and control or annexed territory. Abandoning the surprisingly resilient Afghan government was also incongruent with greedy motives.

4. Most Russian behaviors are not incongruent with a security motive as they sought to cooperate with relatively weaker neighbors against common enemies. Abandoning the Afghan government was incongruent with a security motive because it made the problems in states closer to Russia worse and the cost of supporting that government was not prohibitive in that light.

5. Russian behaviors are not incongruent with presidential survival motives because they sought to contain the VEO threat near Russia's border region at the lowest possible cost. Ending support to the Afghan government was congruent with presidential political survival because its final collapse added to the negative legacy of involvement in that country linked to the Communist Party, Yeltsin's fiercest political opponents.

6. Russian behaviors in this subcase are incongruent with greedy motives. This weakens confidence in the explanations that Russia is a greedy or purely greedy state. Russian behaviors are moderately incongruent with a security motive, which moderately weakens confidence in the explanation that Russia is a security-seeking or greedy state. Russian behaviors are not incongruent with presidential political survival motives, which does not weaken confidence in the corresponding explanation.

In this instance, the rigorous analytical process helped clarify meaning. Absent the context and theories applied, Russia could be considered to dominate these states

when it did much less than it could have. These states viewed Russian support as necessary. Russia was the only great power that was willing and able to support them against existential threats. The fact that they were authoritarian and illiberal states could lead a Western observer to take a skeptical view of these states' motives and of Russia in supporting them, which may lead to the wrong conclusions.

From a Russian perspective, Central Asia's outcomes contributed to stabilizing the independent variables related to material, information, and political survival. It left problems unresolved. This supports the pattern of managed instability that runs through the period.

13. Other global issues (1991–2000)

1. Russia was more powerful than any of the countries from which it withdrew military forces.[332]

These behaviors' evidentiary value is high because these bases' value was so significant and irreplaceable in a future conflict that withdrawal from them for bargaining or deception purposes is unlikely.

2. Russia inherited the Soviet Union's global military presence. This included advisors, bases, or stationed forces in Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Congo, Cuba, India, Cambodia, Laos, Libya, Mali, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, Syria, Vietnam,

---

332. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

and Yemen. Russia also had substantial forces in Germany, and some were still based in Poland.[333]

By the end of this period, Russia had withdrawn from most of its global bases. It withdrew all but military signals intelligence forces from Cuba and Mongolia. It had a much-reduced presence in Syria and Vietnam. A handful of advisors were spread across Africa. The Soviet Union had largely completed the military withdrawal from Poland. Russia withdrew the remaining forces after they finished supporting the withdrawal from Germany.[334]

While the Soviet Union had agreed to withdraw the forces in Germany and some other locations, it is a standard unstated assumption that agreements are for the prevailing circumstances. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to vastly different circumstances for Russia. Russia did not use the withdrawal from any of these locations as bargaining leverage to secure any formal security guarantee or written agreement on NATO expansion or other issues, even though it would lose such powerful leverage as it withdrew. If Russia had either greed or security motives or thought Western powers had malign motives, it would have been foolish not to halt or delay the withdrawal until something more formal was agreed.

More recently, statements about informal verbal agreements made at the time have become a source of contention. This is unusual, as historically, great powers have not placed significant long-term value in such unwritten agreements. The lack of any

---

333. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 91, 30–45.
334. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 100, 125–126.

observable effort to establish formal security agreements as a condition of the withdrawal suggests that at the time, Russia saw neither opportunities nor threats in the current and future strategic environment for which a global military presence would have been relevant.

3. Russian withdrawals were incongruent with the greed motive. While expenses had to be reduced, options such as cold status bases, rotational forces, or minimally staffed prepositioned equipment would have allowed Russia to retain access to these bases until the situation improved.

4. Russian withdrawals from beyond the former Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact without any security guarantee were incongruent with a security-seeking motive.

5. They were not incongruent with the logic of political survival. Any prestige value global military presence provided as a public good was relatively insignificant compared to the domestic environment's economic, social, and security problems.

6. What observably happened weakens confidence that Russia had a greed motive or a security motive. This weakens confidence in the explanations that Russia is a purely greedy, or a greedy state with both motives, or a security-seeking type of state. It does not weaken confidence in the motive and explanation of domestic political survival.

From the Russian perspective, what observably happened would reduce Russia's assessment of its military power in a future conflict with a great power state, particularly the United States. Russia would expect some other powers' reciprocal action if Russia intended its behavior as a costly signal about Russian motives. Failing this, it would negatively revise its assessments of the information variables related to motives.

14. The First Chechen War (1994–1996)

1. While Russia had more potential power than did the separatist Chechens, in terms of available fielded military power, they were surprisingly close to equal in 1994.[335]

2. In 1994, the FSB attempted to support a Chechen faction seeking to replace the Dudayev government, which was claiming independence, with assistance from Russian military units. This ended in a significant defeat for the Russian government forces. The televised coverage of captured Russians worsened President Yeltsin's public approval and was followed by his decision to launch a major military and security service operation without a deliberate period of planning and preparation.[336]

The Chechen forces were numerous, well equipped, fighting in mountainous, wooded, and urban terrain, magnifying the normal defense over offense. The Russian forces were not a cohesive and well-trained force but rather a mix of FSB and MVD units, Naval Infantry, and low and middle readiness Army units pulled from locations across Russia. The larger units were hastily thrown together ad hoc collections of individual reservists issued equipment they were not trained on using. Perhaps because of political pressure for a quick victory, insufficient time and effort were devoted to planning, preparing, and intelligence work. This contributed to the failure of military

---

335. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101. and Service, *History of Modern Russia*, 531–536.

336. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 95, 102–104. and Service, *History of Modern Russia,* 531–536.

operations and Russia's emphasis on heavy use in populated areas of air, artillery, and rocket fire, followed by massed frontal attacks.[337]

Russian officers trained in the Soviet way of war failed to recognize that their actions were televised across Russia and beyond in the new information environment. The apparent failure of military forces, the indiscriminate use of fires in areas where the civil population was intermingled with combatants, and human rights violations by Russian forces and the local militias dominated Russia's news and further undermined President Yeltsin's support.[338]

Internationally, the Russian failure in the information environment contributed to Western actors sympathizing with the Chechens and acting almost as if Chechnya were not internationally recognized as part of Russia. As a result, Russia felt it received insufficient support in acting against Chechen leaders seeking refuge in Europe. Chechen forces and VEOs operating from Chechnya conducted attacks outside of Chechnya on civilians and treated military prisoners brutally, but while this was widely publicized inside Russia, it was overshadowed in Western media.[339]

Following the 1996 election, President Yeltsin sent retired General Alexander Lebed, a popular military figure who had run against Yeltsin, as his representative in the region. Russia could not reestablish control, and an agreement was reached that

---

337. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 95, 102–104.

338. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 95, 102–104. and Service, *History of Modern Russia*, 531–536.

339. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101. and Service, *History of Modern Russia*, 531–536.

temporarily suspended the fighting and left the separatist government in control of the region.[340]

3, 4, and 5. What happened in the First Chechen war was not incongruent with greedy, security-seeking, or presidential political survival motives. Ensuring the state's continued territorial integrity is a basic function of the state and a political leader and does not require much explanation or provide much evidence.

6. What observably happened does not weaken confidence in one or more of the four theories. It suggests that differences in how the operation was perceived inside and outside Russia could contribute to the puzzles' existence.

The very visible military failure of Russian forces, the human rights violations, and the use of massed firepower in civilian areas would make other states lower their estimates of Russia's military power and worsen their assessments of Russia's motives.

An observer could easily associate the aggressiveness of Russian military means with aggressive ends. All theories assume a state wishes to preserve its territory and population. The way it was attempted was so aggressive and inappropriate that how it was conducted could obscure why it was conducted.

The Russian military learned from their experience with the post-Soviet interaction of military operations and the information environment. In the Second Chechen War and later, there would be a more deliberate and effective shaping of the information environment surrounding Russian military operations. As the 1996 Russian

---

340. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

presidential Election occurred during the First Chechen War, it would have been difficult not to notice the difference between the political impact of the military failure to control the information environment on the topic of Chechnya and the effectiveness of the Yeltsin political campaign and its blend of western media techniques and oligarchic control of the major media outlets.

Because of these events, Russia would have reduced its military power assessment and would be less confident in President Yeltsin's effectiveness.

15. The Second Chechen War and the 2000 election (1999–2000)

1. The relative potential power advantage of the Russian Federation had grown as Russia began to recover from the Soviet collapse. In terms of actual fielded power, Russia was modestly better off than during the First Chechen War.[341]

The evidentiary value of these behaviors is low for the greed and security motives as a state is assumed motivated to use military force when needed against internal threats and in self-defense against actors, including non-state actors attacking the state. These events are dramatic and commonly cited as evidence by those ascribing the war to deliberate diversionary politics to ensure Prime Minister Putin's election to the Presidency. Therefore, they must be considered carefully in the light of diversionary political theories, which might be an important alternative explanation or a refinement to the way the Selectorate Theory addresses these.

---

341. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 90–101.

2. In August 1999, Chechen militias invaded the neighboring region of Dagestan. Then several apartment buildings were bombed with heavy loss of life. A series of unusual incidents occurred that led to accusations that the security services staged the incidents to create an opportunity for the not widely known or popular Prime Minister Putin to rally the country before the election through the successful use of military force in Chechnya. The odd events included the apparent withdrawal of Russian security forces just before the invasion of Dagestan, the apparent announcement in the Duma of one of the bombings before it occurred, and the discovery of possible explosive material being placed in an apartment building by government security services later explained as an exercise.[342]

On the other hand, an eventual return to conflict in the region was inevitable if Russia were to fulfill the basic function of a state in preserving its territorial integrity and sovereignty. Furthermore, the first Chechen War experience hardly provided a basis for anyone to assume Russia was likely to win the kind of quick, cheap, and decisive victory that would be politically popular in the time available before the May election. It cannot be ruled out that Russian leaders chose to reopen a probably inevitable conflict at the most politically helpful time.

Whatever the truth behind the initiation of the conflict, Putin's leadership of the military use of force in Chechnya was hugely popular. His approval rating soared from

---

342. IISS, *Military Balance*, 100, 109–115. and Service, *History of Modern Russia,* 546–550.

31% in the month before the bombings to 81% after President Yeltsin resigned and made Putin the Actin President on 31 December 1999.[343]

Russia managed the Second Chechen War more carefully than the first. President Putin publicly linked it to the long string of terrorist attacks culminating in the Apartment bombings. President Putin used anti-terrorist legal authorities, which allowed him to minimize the involvement of the Duma. Larger and reasonably well-prepared military forces combined with FSB and MVD forces with the total reaching 100,000 troops and were more effective than in the previous war.[344]

This force attempted to control the information about its operations better, used massive air and ground fires in civilian areas, and violated human rights. It first decisively defeated the forces that had moved into Dagestan and then systematically took control of Chechnya. This culminated with weeks of intense combat in which Russian forces took control of the regional capital of Grozny by January of 2000. By summer, Russian forces effectively controlled the region, but combat transitioned to an insurgency that continued for years. The MVD and FSB forces were prominent in countering the insurgency, but the military also participated under the authorities of President Putin's counter-terrorist campaign.[345]

3 and 4. As with the First Chechen War, what observably happened was not incongruent with greed or security motives. The Second Chechen War was not

---

343. Treisman, "Presidential Popularity in a Hybrid Regime," 590.
344. IISS, *Military Balance*, 100, 109–115.
345. IISS, *Military Balance*, 100, 109–115.

incongruent with any of the international explanations as internal security is a basic state function.

5. What happened was also not incongruent with presidential political survival motives. Importantly, how it happened has led to suspicions that Russian security services initiated the war by staging or inciting the initial crisis. With the available evidence, it is not possible to state whether this is true conclusively. Similar suspicion surrounds the initiation of other conflicts. Therefore, this dissertation places less emphasis on the potentially confusing events surrounding war initiation than on the much more observable conditions under which wars are terminated.

This was very useful in evaluating many other subcases but was less useful in this case, as Russia declared the Second Chechen War terminated when its forces occupied the key terrain; however, the conflict immediately transitioned into an insurgency, so actual military termination was not achieved in this period for this subcase.[346]

6. The events of the Second Chechen War do not weaken confidence in any of the explanations. The relatively better performance of Russian forces in the Second Chechen War would have modestly improved Russia's estimate of their power.

---

346. IISS, *Military Balance*, 100, 109–115.

Annex B: Structured, focused comparison from the first two Presidencies of Vladimir Putin through the Presidency of Dimitry Medvedev (8 May 2000–May 2012)

Scoping conditions 8 May 2000–May 2012

Scoping condition 5 remained relevant, and four new scoping conditions emerged during this period. These may contribute to less predictable behaviors absent these conditions.

5. With the fragmentation of the Soviet Union into sixteen states, many ethnic Russians and some geographic regions and ethnic groups that were historically connected to Russia were beyond the borders of the Russian Federation.

6. The Russian Federation's economy grew rapidly from 2000 to 2008. After suffering a setback in 2008 around the time of the global financial crisis, it resumed strong growth.

7. Society became less equal than in Soviet times and less free than in the 1990s but also was less intrusive than in Soviet times and more stable than in the 1990s. Russians identified more strongly with religion than in Soviet times, and this had social and political consequences.

8. Russian Federation leaders sought to complete the post-Soviet drawdown and transform the legacy forces into military and security forces appropriate for the new environment.

9. Political power became more centralized around the President and federal government, elections became less free and fair, and corruption was a significant issue.

Sequence of observable behaviors 8 May 2000–May 2012

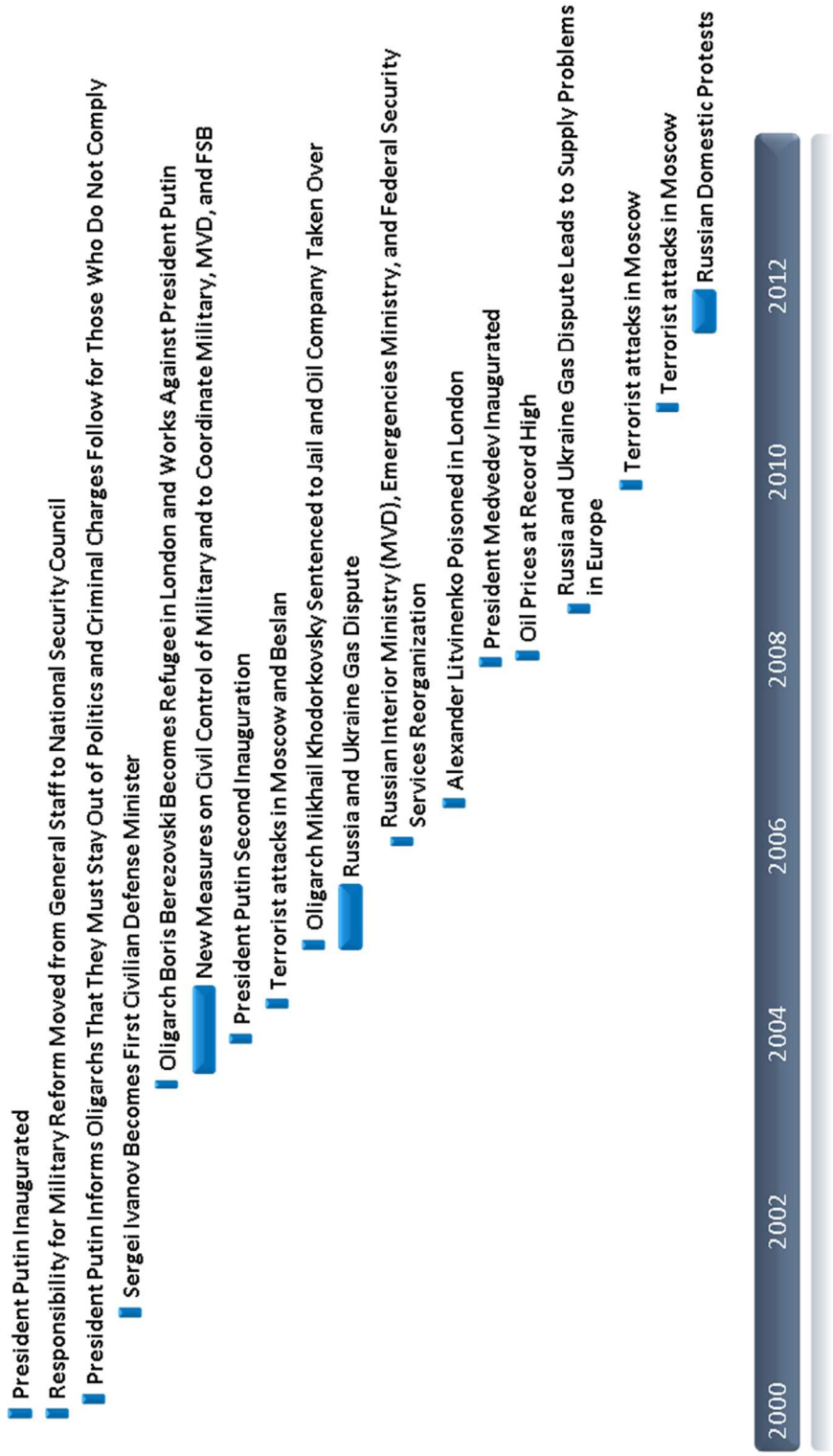

Figure 19. Russian Federation domestic conditions, events, and behaviors 2000–2012. Sources: See Step 10.

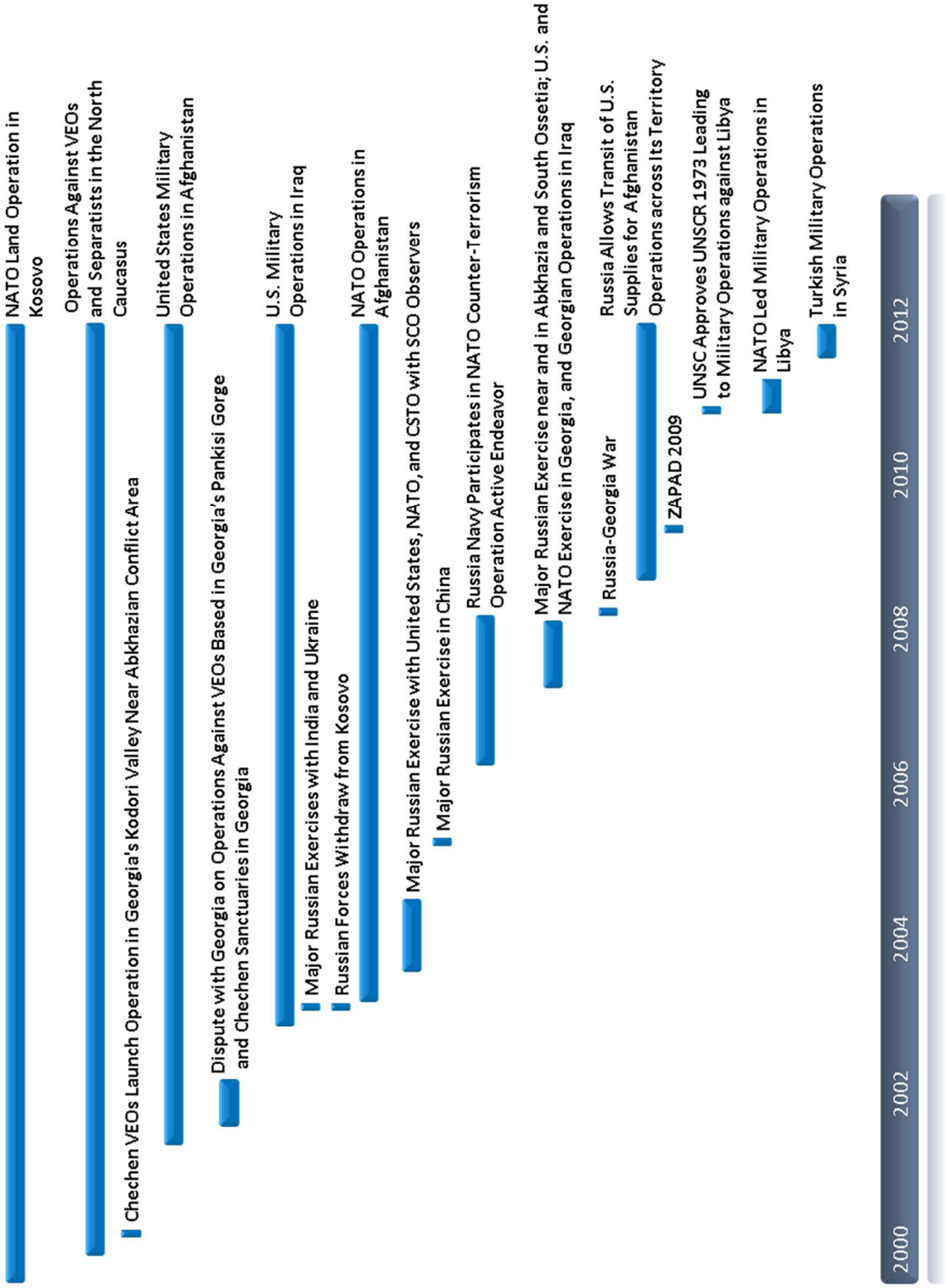

Figure 20. Military operations and exercises 2000–2012. Sources: See Step 10.

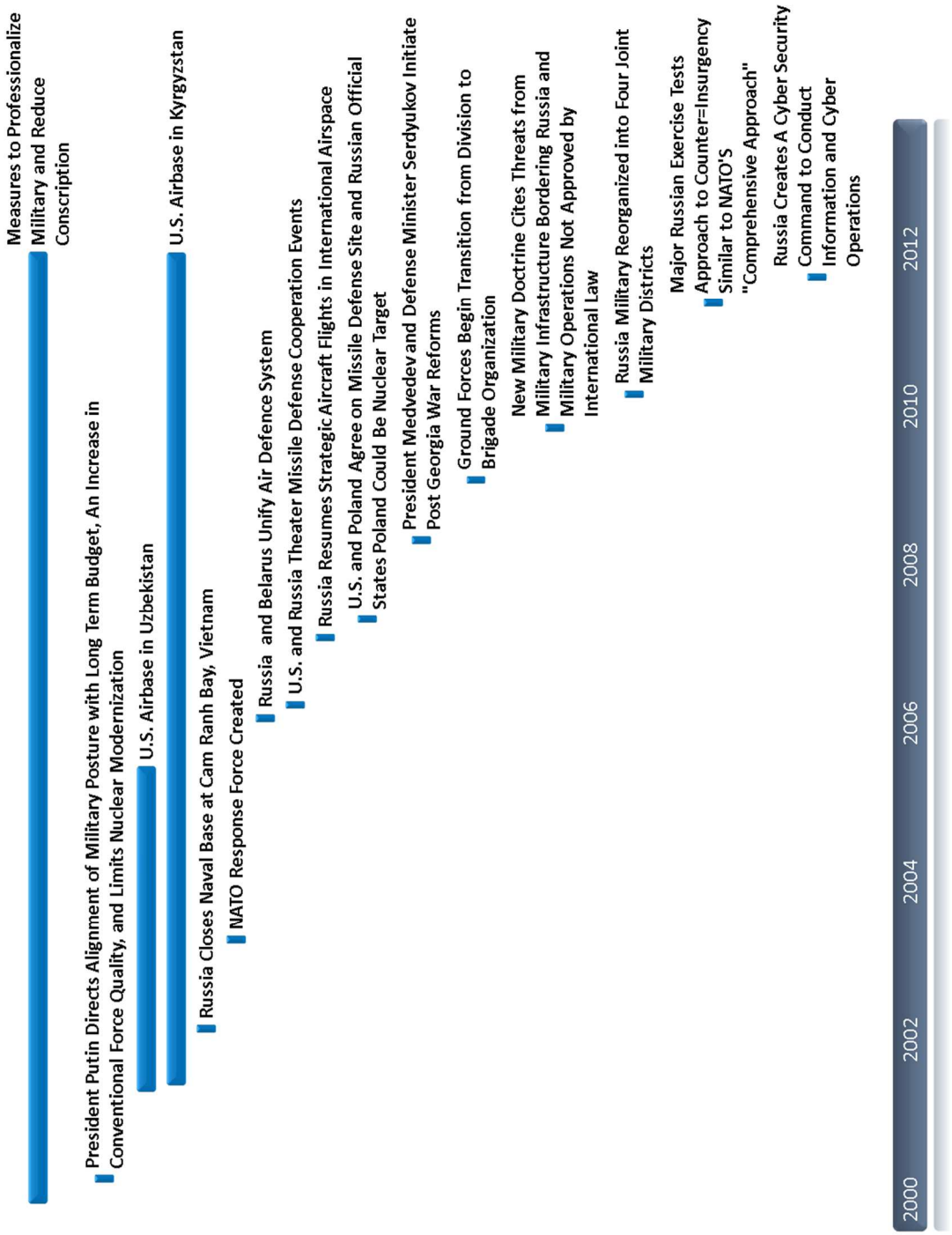

Figure 21. Military posture, capabilities, strategy, and doctrine 2000–2012. Sources: See Step 10.

Figure 22. International events and agreements 2000–2012. Sources: See Step 10.

Structured, focused comparison and evaluation of subcases

16. Russian Federation policy and strategy documents (2000–2012)

1. Russia was weaker than NATO and the United States but still powerful relative to many others.[347]

The evidentiary value of these Russian documents is high as Russian actions were consistent with the documents.

2. Russia entered the period with strategic guidance documents developed during President Putin's acting Presidency, which reprioritized conventional over nuclear forces and increased the focus on Russian ground forces relative to other services.[348]

Despite the challenges of active counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism operations, the Russian military's modernization and reform were a high priority. President Putin was actively involved in supervising this process. President Putin strengthened control of the military by civilian leadership and pressed for a faster professionalization and a reduction in the role of conscription. He also directed the reform of the large, militarized forces involved in internal security operations. Separate command structures for border guards, internal security, presidential protection, and counterterrorism were arranged to report directly to the President.[349]

---

347. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.
348. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–103.
349. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–103.

In 2003, the Russian Minister of Defense published an important defense "White Paper" calling out as threats the:

> …deployment of foreign troops in the territory of new NATO members and countries that aspire to join the bloc; armed force used by ad hoc coalitions; persistence of Cold War stereotypes that aggravate the international situation; reducing the role of the UNSC is a dangerous tendency; demonstration of military power close to the borders of Russia; expansion of military blocs; and infringement on the rights and interests of Russian citizens in foreign states.[350]

A major focus under President Medvedev was improving the performance of the military and the fielding of new weapons systems out to 2015. New capabilities beyond the range of traditional armed conflict were also established, including a military command for cyber operations.[351]

In 2010, a new *Military Doctrine* was published to replace the 2000 version. It described the United States and NATO as threatening. The response described was to mix of "political, diplomatic, legal, economic, environmental, informational, military, and other instruments to protect Russian Federation national interests and those of its allies."[352]

---

350. Stephen Blank, *Russian Military Politics and Russia's 2010 Defense Doctrine* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2011), 16, http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB1050.pdf. This citation is for a block quote. Should the block quote formatting be lost the quote begins with "…deployment of foreign troops…" and ends with "…foreign states."

351. Blank, *Russian Military Politics*, 29–35.

352. Blank, *Russian Military Politics*, 40.

3, 4, and 5. Russian policy and strategy documents are not incongruent with any of the motives as making these public statements would be useful to any type of state that was temporarily weakened or to a political leader seeking to maintain a winning coalition under the circumstances that existed.

6. These documents do not weaken confidence in any of the explanations. They offer evidence of how Russia assessed the international variables and how the President wished the selectorate and his winning coalition to perceive his military and security policy. Russia's assessment of other actors changed dramatically for the worse during this period.

17. Nuclear weapons and missile defense (2000–2012)

1. The United States and Russia were effectively equal in military nuclear power because neither had first strike capability to destroy the other's retaliatory strike capability. Russia was likely to have to reduce its nuclear capabilities to fund conventional force reform. The United States was proceeding with missile defense research. Russia stated a belief that this would disturb stability.[353]

Because of the importance of nuclear weapons, the evidentiary value of these behaviors is high.

2. At the beginning of this period, President Putin had shifted the priority for Russia's capability development from nuclear to conventional forces as part of a downturn in the relationship. President Bush was interested in fielding a form of missile

---

353. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

defense capable of defeating the nuclear ICBMs that might be built in the future by Iran and other smaller powers. After the two states were unable to reach an agreement on missile defense, the United States withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and then Russia withdrew from the START II Treaty. The discussion ended on a SALT III Treaty.[354]

In addition, a near-simultaneous dialogue resulted in the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) being signed in the spring of 2002. This treaty called for a reduction in strategic nuclear warheads to a level between 2,200 and 1,700 for each state. Curiously, this treaty lacked many details on limits and verification that were part of previous nuclear treaties. This may be explained by the statement by the Congressional Research Service that the United States largely pursued the treaty because it did not alter U.S. plans and "Secretary of State Powell supported the conclusion of a "legally binding" agreement because he believed it would help President Putin's standing with his domestic critics."[355]

The U.S. announcement that its missile Defense program would include systems based in former Warsaw Pact states was followed by Russian nuclear threats. Before any physical progress could be made on these sights, President Obama was elected. The decision was made to not build the fixed locations but instead employ a phased approach with mobile systems if the threat of Iranian nuclear missiles developed.[356]

---

354. Woolf et al., *Arms Control and Nonproliferation*, 13–16.
355. Woolf et al., *Arms Control and Nonproliferation*, 17.
356. Woolf et al., *Arms Control and Nonproliferation*, 16.

On a more cooperative note, President Bush and Putin agreed that their countries would negotiate some replacement to the START I Treaty due to expire in 2009. This process resulted in the signing of the New START Treaty in 2010. This Treaty included the details on limits and verifications associated with most treaties and reduced strategic warheads for each to 1,500. During the negotiation, the two parties also signed a memorandum that stated the views of each on missile defense. Most notably, the United States stated that its missile defense systems would not threaten Russian capabilities. Russia stated it would withdraw from the ABM Treaty if its capabilities were threatened.[357] This statement is interesting and unusual in that it essentially is an agreement to disagree. It was also tacit recognition that neither party had reached the point in the evolution of events where it needed to make a decision on the issue. While this seems like a non-event, it is a significant contrast to the events of 2000 to 2008 in which essentially the same decisions were made but in a manner that damaged the relationship.

Under the Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI), the two worked to secure nuclear materials worldwide at risk of seizure by VEOs. Under the 2000 and 2010 versions of the Plutonium Management and Dispositions Agreement (PMDA), they both worked to dispose of excess stocks of their plutonium.[358]

3 and 4. Russia's choices are not incongruent with either or both of the motives of greed and security. Russia was engaged in a long land war in the Caucasus and needed

---

357. Woolf et al., *Arms Control and Nonproliferation*, 18–22.
358. Woolf et al., *Arms Control and Nonproliferation*, 24.

to prioritize the reform of its conventional forces. This gave it a powerful incentive to reach an agreement that maintained parity with a wealthier United States.

5. Russia's choices were also not incongruent with presidential political survival. President Putin and President Putin's most effective competitors were Communists and Nationalists, who would have used a Russian nuclear capability gap against him politically. Later in the period, some effective political opponents advocated a more Westernized Russia. By showing he could manage cooperation with the United States from a position of apparent strength, he removed a potential source of arguments against his effectiveness from their possible criticisms.

6. Russia's actions do not weaken confidence in any of the explanations. From a U.S. perspective, Russia seemed either unreasonable or deceptive in their argument that the U.S. system could defend against their large arsenal with a degree of effectiveness that would reduce mutual deterrence.

The simultaneous existence of competition in some areas with cooperation in others demonstrates that they are not mutually exclusive and can simultaneously exist.

18. Conventional arms control and confidence-building (2000–2012)

1. The relevant conventional arms control efforts included all Euro-Atlantic states. Assessing relative power is challenging because Russia still maintained a large conventional force and prioritized trying to professionalize it while fighting in the Caucasus for much of the period. NATO largely abandoned the concept of territorial defense and was focused on countering terrorism and insurgency in failed states outside of its traditional area. Neither was in any position to initiate a conventional war. In the

longer term, NATO's ability to mass air and missile capability quickly and back this up with rapidly deployable special operations forces and finally to deploy heavily armored formations by sea from the United States gave it a margin of superiority in Russian assessments.[359] The evidentiary value of these behaviors is high as Russia cited the potential threat of NATO conventional capabilities with increasing frequency and focused its military on conventional capabilities over nuclear capabilities.

2. The Open Skies Treaty allowed Euro-Atlantic nations to overfly each other's territory with camera-equipped fixed-wing aircraft to promote confidence that none were preparing or posturing forces for combat operations. The Treaty was signed in 1992. Flights began in 2002 and continued throughout the period. Smaller nations were able to participate individually or by sharing aircraft.[360]

Both the United States and Russia were supposed to complete eliminating their chemical weapons during this as part of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Neither completed the process during the period, although it appeared to be more a result of technical problems and the low priority of the issue. Neither maintained any significant capability to employ chemical weapons, although both maintained a robust capability to defend against chemical weapons on the battlefield or by VEOs.[361]

In December of 2007, Russia suspended compliance with the CFE Treaty, which limited the signatories' amount and location of major conventional combat equipment. In

---

359. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.
360. Woolf et al., *Arms Control and Nonproliferation*, 41–43.
361. Woolf et al., *Arms Control and Nonproliferation*, 46–49.

2011, the United States suspended its compliance with the portion of the Treaty that required it to share data with Russia. Before the suspension, Russia had stated that it wished the Baltic States and other states not already included to join the Treaty and wanted the Treaty altered to address the new situation in which there were NATO states bordering Russia. The Flank Zone limits were modified in the 1990s. They were still lower than Russia's desire in both the region facing the Baltic States and the Caucasus. NATO had little interest in altering the Treaty and linked Russian withdrawal from Moldova and Georgia to any major alteration.[362]

3. Russian behaviors are not incongruent with the greed motive as the Open Skies Treaty and its desired changes in the CFE would be logical ways to mitigate its relative weakness while attempting to build up power. If we were testing for congruence rather than incongruence, the fact that Russians suspended CFE obligations nine months before the War in Georgia would look suspiciously like part of a Russian campaign against Georgia. Whether this is true or not cannot be proven or disproven with the kind of information the dissertation seeks to use. This is one of many examples that show the relative advantage of testing for incongruence.

4. Russian behaviors are not incongruent with a security-seeking motive. To the degree that Russia had a security-seeking motive on this group of behavior, it would tend to make them suspicious of NATO's motives. Russia had a demonstrable point that the Treaty was no longer aligned with the political-military situation, and since NATO expressed the intention to comply with Russia's concerns, there largely seemed little

---

362. Woolf et al., *Arms Control and Nonproliferation*, 37–41.

reason for NATO not to also agree to some alteration along these lines as part of the overall cooperation that existed in most of the 1990s and much of this period.

5. Russian behaviors are not incongruent with presidential political survival as they were a means to consistently demonstrate that the Russian President was defending Russian interests against NATO. There was a relatively limited domestic risk with this approach.

6. Russia's behaviors do not weaken confidence in any explanation. If Russia were strongly influenced by security motives relative to other motives, its beliefs about NATO's motives would worsen.

19. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania (2000–2012)

1. Russia was vastly more powerful than these states. From 2004, they were NATO members and thus could draw on NATO's power. U.S. and NATO member ground forces were almost entirely committed to a cycle of train up, deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan, and recovery during this period leaving no meaningful ready reserve of ground forces.[363]

These behaviors' evidentiary value is high because they occur in a region of great geopolitical, historical, and military significance to Russia. President Putin was born in

363. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

Leningrad, and his wife was born in Kaliningrad. He grew up immersed personally immersed in the region's symbolism and history.[364]

2. In the first part of the period, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania completed the transition to NATO and EU standards and became members of both organizations in 2004. The Baltic States used their small militaries primarily to contribute a visible presence to Iraq and Afghanistan operations and established a closer relationship to the U.S. military and President Bush's administration than many larger traditional allies. NATO s did not place any forces, bases, or infrastructure in these states at that time and had no intention to do so.[365]

Conflict between the ethnic and religious groups that eventually evolved into Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, and Germany can be traced back into prehistory. This conflict remains important to the identity of a significant portion of the inhabitants of the region. During this period, there was considerable effort to address this by reaching border agreements between Russia and its neighbors. The Latvian and Russian border agreement was completed in 2007. Both countries made relatively large concessions. Latvia agreed that a portion of territory included in the inter-war Latvian Republic but lost under the Soviet Union would remain Russian. Russia did not achieve

---

364. Putin, Vladimir, Nataliya Gevorkyan, Natalya Timakova, and Andrei Kolesnikov, *First Person: An Astonishingly Frank Self–Portrait of Russia's President Vladimir Putin,* Translated by Catherine A. (Fitzpatrick, New York: Public Affairs, 2000).

365. Researcher's personal experiences.

anything regarding Latvia's citizenship policies, which left ethnic Russians who had lived in the Latvian SSR before 1991 without Latvian citizenship.[366]

The Estonian and Russian border agreement was signed in 2005 by the two countries' foreign ministers. Like the Latvian treaty, both sides made significant concessions; however, they later hedged against these concessions during domestic ratification. Russia did not gain an improvement in the status of ethnic Russians who were non-citizens in Estonia despite many having lived there for generations. Estonia did not regain the border territories it had lost during the Second World War. The Estonian ratification process included references to the 1920 Treaty of Tartu between Estonia and the Soviet government in Moscow. This Treaty included inside Estonian territory areas that were later transferred to the Russian SSR. The Treaty of Tartu is also an important symbol in competing Russian and Estonia narratives about the Second World War and the history of the Soviet Union. In response, Russia stopped work on the agreement. Near the end of this period in 2012, the negotiations were reopened. The Treaty was signed in February 2014, shortly before Russia moved against Ukraine, but ratification was not completed during this period.[367]

Lithuania allowed the transit of military forces to Russia across its territory to and from Kaliningrad. Minor border adjustments were made. Notably, Lithuania had few

---

366. Patrick Lannin, "Russia, Latvia Finally Seal Border Treaty," *Reuters,* December 18, 2007, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-latvia/russia-latvia-finally-seal-border-treaty-idUSL185044920071218.

367. Dezan Shira & Associates, "Estonia May Drop Territorial Claims with Russia," *Russia Briefing Dezan Shira & Associates*, March 2, 2020, https://www.russia-briefing.com/news/estonia-may-drop-territorial-claims-russia.html/.

ethnic Russian's and had given citizenship to all residents in 1991.[368] A factor rarely mentioned is that the two had an incentive to cooperate on resolving their borders as the borders in question included territories taken from Germany and Poland after World War II.

In the spring of 2007, Europe's first interstate crisis in many years erupted between Estonia and Russia. The Estonian government relocated Soviet war graves and a monument from a central location in Tallinn to a military cemetery outside the city. This was perceived by ethnic Russian's long resident in Estonia without citizenship rights as an act of political and historical significance. Ethnic Russian were involved in civil unrest for several days in Tallinn, and large-scale and effective cyber-attacks struck the Estonian government and businesses. Supplies of fuel from Russia were halted for several days. The crisis passed after several days. The role and degree of involvement of the Russian government have never been conclusively proven publicly.[369] In the

---

368. Benas Gerdziunas, "Russia's Military Corridor in Lithuania That Never Was," *Lithuanian National Television*, February 19, 2020, https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1143876/russia-s-military-corridor-in-lithuania-that-never-was. and Minorities at Risk Project, "Chronology for Russians in Lithuania," UNHCR Website, 2004, https://www.refworld.org/docid/469f38b6c.html.

369. Mark Markoff and John Landler, "Digital Fears Emerge after Data Siege in Estonia," *New York Times*, May 29, 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/29/technology/29estonia.html. and Matt Apuzzo, "Russia's Playbook for Disrupting Democracy," *New York Times*, September 6, 2016, https://nyti.ms/2ZXHgV2.

aftermath, NATO established its first facility in the Baltic States by creating a cyber-defense center in Tallinn.[370]

The Imperial and Soviet militaries had maintained a significant portion of their military forces in the area of rough terrain, forests, and rivers running from Tallinn to Minsk. This region was the most significant natural barrier to military movement in the generally flat military corridor that runs from the channel ports to Moscow. A state that controls the area at the beginning of a war has a defensive advantage hard to find in northern Europe and can attack into more easily traversed terrain to the east and west.

After the August 2008 War in Georgia, there was concern that Russia could make some form of limited military attack to split NATO by seizing territory from the Baltic States, which some members of NATO might be unwilling or unable to support the cost of recapturing. With NATO ground forces stretched to the breaking point to support Iraq and Afghan operations and an expectation that the planned end of NATO combat operations in Afghanistan in 2014 would lead major to major cuts in NATO ground and air forces, there seemed to be a window of vulnerability to such an operation. There was no effort to establish forces in the region, but exercises such as *Baltic Host* began to look at the problem of bringing NATO forces into the region as a deterrent during a crisis using the existing Soviet-style infrastructure of rail, ports, roads, and airfields. The results lead to recommendations that the states focus on EU-funded efforts to integrate

---

370. NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, "NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence," NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence Website, Accessed July 5, 2021, https://ccdcoe.org/about-us/.

the Baltic States into the European transportation infrastructure.[371] Unintentionally, this had the effect the Russian claimed to fear from the Baltic States joining NATO because infrastructure usable by NATO would be created on its border.

3. At the time, the researcher supported the widely held view that Russian behaviors were more likely motivated by greed than by security motives. With the full context of the period laid out neutrally, the researcher was stunned to find that Russian behaviors such as the negotiation of border treaties and not interfering with EU and NATO accession are incongruent with a greed motive before 2007. After that date, they are not incongruent with a greed motive but are much weaker evidence of a greed motive than they appeared when the problem was ongoing.

Russia could have derailed or frozen the NATO and EU membership process with military actions, including a significant crisis short of war before 2004. Border and citizenship issues could have been used as a pretext for doing so. NATO was in no position to respond quickly with all of its forces committed or reorganizing for counterinsurgency.

4. Russian behaviors regarding the Baltic States are of mixed congruence with a security-seeking motive. The border treaties make no sense in terms of greedy or domestic political motives but make sense as an effort to make the best of a bad geopolitical situation in the regions. Also, not acting to prevent NATO and EU membership was considered less powerful evidence during this period than in the last because the key decisions had largely already been made in the earlier period or very

---

371. Researcher's personal experiences.

early in this period so that acting would have risked a strong NATO or U.S. reaction. The greed motive might have justified the risks but probably not a security motive. The lack of notable *Zapad* exercises between 2000 and 2008 suggests these motives were not coupled with a perception of imminent threat. The 2009 *Zapad* scenario publicly rehearsed war in the region, which is more congruent with this motive. The actual structural security dilemma created by the small size, military defensive value, and the ability to range valuable cities, lines of communications, and chokepoints with even defensively oriented forces made security concerns reasonable.

5. Russian actions before 2007 are moderately incongruent with domestic political survival motives as the agreements' failure to protect ethnic Russian was certain to be a political issue used against President Putin. Russian actions in either not acting against Russian citizens launching cyber-attacks or ordering them during the crisis are not incongruent with a presidential political survival motive. They seem more calibrated to serve this motive than to serve an international motive. They were insufficiently strong to gain anything desired by a greed motive and too strong to prevent a Western reaction that harmed a security-seeking motive.

6. To the researcher's surprise, Russian actions during the period moderately reduced confidence in the greedy motive and weakly reduced confidence in the domestic political survival motive. If the period is cut into smaller periods, what can be seen is that the security motive was strongest early in the period. Domestic political survival was strongest later in the period.

20. Poland (2000–2012)

1. Russia was much stronger than Poland; however, Poland benefited from NATO membership. Unlike most European states, Poland had retained a focus on territorial defense when most states were focused on countering insurgency out of the NATO area.[372] Poland and Russia had historically bad relationships.

Because of the military geography and history of the region, these behaviors are of high evidentiary value.

2. Russia displayed an interesting mix of behaviors towards Poland in the period. Russia first largely ignored, then threatened, and then conciliated Poland. Russia was consistent in its policy documents expressing concern for the Kaliningrad exclave and its opposition to NATO infrastructure or basing in countries bordering Russia. It did not take any significant action directed at Poland during the first half of the period.[373]

When the United States in 2008 announced plans for a missile defense base in Poland, this changed. Public threats related to nuclear weapons were made. Then in 2009, the *Zapad* exercise publicly rehearsed an invasion of Poland that included nuclear strikes and the seizure of Gdansk in response to armed action by a Polish minority in Belarus. This violated a perceived norm that had evolved in Europe that nations did not publicly name each other as enemies and did not visibly plan or exercise for war against each other. By breaking this norm and others Russia spurred NATO to develop the very

372. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.
373. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

plans, infrastructure, and bases Russia consistently stated it viewed as a serious threat. Russia gained almost nothing that a credible exercise against an imaginary enemy would not have achieved in terms of demonstrating Russian capability and resolve in 2009.[374]

Interestingly, in 2010 Russia dramatically departed from Moscow's long-standing denial of the Katyn Massacre of Polish military officers by the Soviet KGB during World War II. Vladimir Putin personally spoke at a commemoration of the event and endured criticism by his political opponents. This was a change from the increasingly prevailing Russian practice of glorifying the Soviet past and would have been personally difficult for President Putin as a former KGB officer. It was a powerful way of improving relations both with Poland and with Americans with Polish heritage. Tragically, this approach proved ill-fated when the Polish Prime Minister's aircraft crashed due to bad weather while flying to a separate commemoration with much of Poland's military leadership aboard. While this was almost certainly the result of human error, it undid much of the potential for improved relations that Putin had chosen to pay a domestic political price to pursue.[375]

3. Russian actions were not incongruent with the greed motive as there was little to be gained from confrontation with a NATO Poland under the conditions that existed from 2000 to 2008. The Russian actions in 2008 and 2009 were congruent with a greed

---

374. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

375. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–109. and Michael Schwirtz, "Putin Marks Soviet Massacre of Polish Officers," *New York Times*, April 5, 2010, https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/08/world/europe/08putin.html?searchResultPosition=4. and Liz Robbins, "Layers of History and Grief in Katyn," *New York Times*, April 10, 2010, https://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/04/10/layers-of-history-and-grief-in-katyn/?searchResultPosition=1.

motive in that they attempted to change Polish policy with threats of military force. Russian actions in 2010 were incongruent with a greed motive as they delegitimized Moscow's past use of force against Poland in a way that the Soviet Union and Russia had never done before.

4. What observable happened was not incongruent with a security motive if the intent of Russia's actions in 2008 and 2009 was to deter the development of military capabilities and bases that could pose a security threat to Russia in the future. The recognition of Katyn was a powerful way to reduce tensions between the states and would be congruent with a security-seeking motive.

5. What observable happened was not incongruent with the logic of political survival with the single extremely powerful expectation of Putin's acknowledgment and commemoration of the Katyn Massacre. Therefore, confidence in the explanation that political survival motive is moderately weakened. Given the number of Soviet abuses under Stalin, it is significant that President Putin chose to sacrifice his political interest to acknowledge this one. The Polish presidential plane crash overshadowed this event, and it perhaps did not achieve the intent of communicating the signal about Russian motives that was intended. Additionally, NATO military attention in 2010 was focused on the Afghan Surge and less on events in Europe.

6. Confidence in the explanation that political survival motives explain Russian choices about the use of force is moderately weakened. Confidence in explanations that either or both greedy and security motives are not weakened.

Russia's oddly inconsistent behaviors towards Poland in 2008, 2009, and 2010 may suggest answers to the problem's three most puzzling aspects. At the time, the

nuclear threats and the *Zapad* 2009 scenario were seen as aggressive and an unwarranted threat that violated a norm against serious planning and exercises for war between Euro-Atlantic states. In 2009, it seemed reasonable that Russia wanted to threaten Europe militarily to increase its regional power. If that were true, then it would seem President Putin's actions on Katyn undermined that threat.

It seems equally plausible that they were deterrent actions focused on the smaller issues of Missile Defense and Kaliningrad that were poorly designed in that they created second-order problems for the more important issue of relations between the Euro-Atlantic states. They communicated a signal that contributed to the military actions occurring in NATO that Russia most feared. If this were at least partially true, President Putin's unprecedented acceptance of domestic political risk on the Katyn issue would make more sense as an effort to respond to escalated tensions that were heading in a direction President Putin found problematic.

There was not a significant reassessment of Russian motives at that time. In the United States, voters with Polish ethnicity were no longer as important as they once were to presidential elections, and the U.S. security bureaucracy was focused far more on the Afghan surge than on Europe. In Europe, the plane crash overshadowed the event itself. Therefore, if Putin's Katyn initiative was intended as a de-escalation signal to Western leaders and a response to President Obama's Reset policy, that message was not effective in influencing U.S. and European policy.

21. Moldova (2000–2012)

1. Russia was vastly more powerful than Moldova and had the military option to impose almost any military outcome it desired.[376]

The evidentiary value of these events is high, as Russia could have chosen to pursue alternate outcomes, including withdrawal, annexation, or independence, with a reasonable chance of success.

2. No significant combat occurred, but Russian military power allowed the ethnic Russian region to be effectively separate from Moldova. The issue became more prominent internationally during the period and was unhelpful to Russian policy as NATO attempted to link withdrawal from Moldova with meeting Russian concerns such as the accession of the Baltic States to the CFE treaty. Russia repeatedly agreed with the Moldovan government to withdraw and did not claim the region either as part of Russia or a separate state.[377]

3. What observably happened was incongruent with the greed motive as Russia chose not to militarily impose a permanent change in territory or policy on Moldova. Although it retained military control of the region, it simultaneously undermined any argument that could be made for a permanent presence by agreeing to leave and not making any permanent claims.

4. What observably happened was incongruent with security motives. If Russia viewed the ethnic Russians as part of a larger concept of Russia, then it failed to set any

---

376. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.
377. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

conditions for their permanent transition to independence or annexation by Russia. Withdrawal also was a potential bargaining chip with other powers to gain concessions on more vital security interests, yet Russia chose not to use this option. Additionally, the moderate value of the region of the strategic terrain to Russia, which in the 1990s considered possible some form of union or military alliance with Ukraine as possible, largely disappeared during this period. The use of the region as a strategic territory to defend Ukraine from the western direction was rendered irrelevant by Ukraine's drift away from Russia.

5. What observably happened was congruent with the logic of presidential political survival. No constituency in Russia had any significant interest in the withdrawal. Given the popular view that ethnic Russian should be protected wherever they lived, any withdrawal created a potential opportunity for a challenger to question the President's effectiveness. The President's simplest solution was simply to take no decisive action as almost any option had more risk than doing nothing.

6. What observably happened weakens confidence that either greed or security motives explain Russian choices on military force. It also reinforces the pattern of managed instability accepted by Russia even when more decisive potential actions existed. It does not weaken confidence in political survival motives.

22. Ukraine (2000–2012)

1. Russia was more powerful than Ukraine and had significant land and sea forces at leased bases in Crimea.[378]

The evidentiary value of these behaviors is high. The Crimea was strategic terrain and included many ethnic Russians.

2. Russia and Ukraine had a relationship unlike any of Russia's partners. Russia put forth multiple programs during this period for economic and security cooperation among the post-Soviet states. Ukraine's policy was to participate in some but not all and limit its position when joining. Expert commentators attribute this to Ukraine's elite's desire to maintain some independence from Russia despite being economically dependent on Russia's gas and oil supplies and needing Russia as a trade partner more than Russian needed Ukraine.[379]

At the same time, President Leonid Kuchma began a relationship with NATO and the EU that could lead to membership. He contributed troops to NATO and U.S.-led military operations. Ukraine itself was politically divided, with the more ethnically Ukrainian western part of the country being more pro-Western and the more ethnically Russian east being more pro-Russian. In 2004, the Orange Revolution occurred after Prime Minister Victor Yanukovych, considered more pro-Russian, appeared to win the

---

378. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

379. Rilka Dragneva and Kataryna Wolczuk, "Between Dependence and Integration: Ukraine's Relations with Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 68, no. 4 (2016): 678–698, https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2016.1173200.

presidential election by fraud against Viktor Yushchenko, considered more pro-Western. Following civil unrest and the apparently deliberate poisoning with dioxin of Yushchenko, the election was overturned. Yushchenko became President. He continued limiting membership in Russian-led organizations and worked towards closer integration with NATO and the EU.[380]

Between 2005 and 2009, there were serious disputes between Russia and Ukraine regarding payments and other oil and gas issues. The dispute in 2009 was the most serious. It disrupted supplies to the EU and threatened to become more severe. This crisis reduced confidence in Russia and Ukraine as suppliers of energy to EU nations and created fears that Russia was using energy security issues to pressure European nations. In fairness, it does appear Ukraine was not making correct payments under the agreements in place.[381]

In 2010, President Viktor Yanukovych returned to the Presidency. His policy was that Ukraine should join the EU but stay militarily neutral and join neither NATO nor the CSTO. In the summer, he sighed an agreement with President Medvedev, which reduced the price of energy sold to Ukraine in exchange for a 25-year extension on the leased bases in Crimea. Other Ukrainian politicians, prominent among them Yulia

---

380. Adrian Karatnycky, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution," *New York Times*, April 12, 2005, https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/cfr/international/20050301faessay_v84n2_karatnycky.html?pag.

381. "Timeline: Gas Crises between Russia and Ukraine," *Reuters*, January 12, 2012, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-ukraine-gas-timeline-sb/timeline-gas-crises-between-russia-and-ukraine-idUSTRE50A1A720090112.

Tymoshenko, argued the agreement was unconstitutional as the Ukrainian constitution forbids foreign bases after 2017.[382]

3 and 4. Russia not using force to resolve its Ukraine issues is not incongruent with greedy and/or security motives, with the notable exception of the failure to intervene on behalf of the pro-Russian elected government during the 2004 to 2005 Orange Revolution. It seemed reasonable that changes in policy could be achieved with support to pro-Russian political candidates. A greed motive state could have seen this risk as acceptable, but a security-seeking motive state would be unlikely to accept this much risk.

5. Russian choices about the use of military force are not incongruent with presidential survival motives, with the notable exception of the failure to intervene in support of the pro-Russian elected government in the face of the 2004 to 2005 Orange Revolution. The most severe disaster for the Russian President would be Ukraine joining NATO and/or evicting Russia from Crimea. During this period, Ukraine did not reach a point at which either of these events was irreversible without a military operation. The efforts to bring a pro-Russian candidate to the Presidency and prevent these outcomes without fighting seemed to bring success during the period.

6. Russian choices on military force do not weaken confidence in any of the explanations, with the notable exception of the failure to intervene in support of the pro-

---

382. Ivan Watson and Maxim Tkachenko, "Russia, Ukraine Agree on Naval-Base-for-Gas Deal," *CNN*, April 21, 2010, https://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/europe/04/21/russia.ukraine/index.html?hpt=T2. and Clifford J Levy, "For Kremlin, Ukraine Election Cuts Two Ways," *New York Times*, February 8, 2010, https://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/09/world/europe/09ukraine.html.

Russian elected government in the face of the 2004 to 2005 Orange Revolution. They do contribute to the growing pattern of accepting the management of instability rather than taking higher risk military operations to achieve a decisive and enduring result.

At the time, these events were regarded as decisively important international events, and it was expected that they would shed important light on Russian motives. Reexamining them in a broader context led to the conclusion that they provide less evidence than expected because of the scoping conditions for the period.

Russia's failure to use some form of military power to halt or reverse Ukraine's movement towards NATO and the EU and its failure to intervene in the 2004 Orange Revolution are in many ways failures to protect its interests. On the other hand, it seemed reasonable that the many gas crises would provide strong evidence for Russia imposing its will on Ukraine. The critical Crimean naval base lease was also expected to be important.

When looked at with the full context of all the subcases during this period, Russian's options to use military force appear less credible than they did at the time. Russia's military was heavily committed in the Caucasus. It was not very differently structured than the Ukrainian military, although it was bigger, better funded, and overall, more effective. Intervening in the Orange Revolution may have been more consistent with Moscow's past decision-making when Warsaw Pact allies experienced political turmoil, but the military balance did not make a successful military intervention at a reasonable cost seem very likely. Certainly, Russian performance in Chechnya and Georgia did not demonstrate the operational skill needed to intervene in Ukraine decisively. On balance, the relatively evenly divided Ukrainian political scene made it

reasonable that most of the goals that would be sought in a military intervention could be achieved more cheaply and with less risk of international consequences and domestic disruptions by supporting pro-Russian political candidates. This seemed to bear fruit in 2010 when the Orange Revolution's loser returned to power and quickly resolved many significant issues in the relationship to Russia's satisfaction.

The energy security crisis is also assessed as being less about Russian motives than was previously suspected. We expect rational actors to maximize profits, which Russian and Ukrainian energy companies attempted to do.

The eventual linkage of a resolution of the energy issue to an extension of the lease was another case of managing instability as the financial arrangement seems not to do what either government claimed and depended on the continuation of a pro-Russian President and their ability to resolve the Ukrainian Constitution's limit of 2017 for the bases.

23. Belarus (2000–2012)

1. The Russian Federation was more powerful than Belarus. The general tone of Belarussian behaviors towards Russia was positive but notably less favorable than Russia desired. Russia seemed to desire faster progress towards the Union State and more military access and cooperation than Belarus was willing to grant.[383]

2. Little progress occurred in bringing about the Union state, Belarus military power was relatively level, and Belarus remained outside the EU and NATO but also

383. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

seemed unwilling to move any closer to the Russian Federation. The *Zapad* 2009 exercise was conducted from Belarus, and the scenario that became public involved an attack into Poland that aroused considerable alarm in the West.[384]

President Lukashenko remained in power for the entire period and arrested political opponents. His support for progress on the Union Treaty largely halted after President Putin made a proposal in 2002 for Belarus to simply join the Russian Federation. Belarus attempted to occupy a place that was neither Western nor too close to Russia, which may have contributed to the intensity of disputes over energy supplies and transit fees with Russia.[385]

3., 4., and 5. Nothing that happened regarding Belarus was incongruent with any of the motives as nothing ever occurred that moved the relationship into a bad enough state that further military action was clearly useful. While it appears President Putin would have liked Belarus to join the Russian Federation, it also appears that President Lukashenko allowed sufficient military access for exercises and cooperation on defense planning that it was not worth pushing matters further.

6. Confidence is not reduced in any explanation.

---

384. IISS, *Military Balance,* vols. 100–113.

385. Steven Lee Myers, "Belarus Learns That Days of Wine and Roses Are Over," *New York Times*, January 12, 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/12/world/europe/12russia.html?searchResultPosition=1. and Andrew E. Kramer, "Gas Deal With Belarus Gives Control of Pipeline to Russia," *New York Times*, November 27, 2011, https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/26/world/europe/in-deal-with-belarus-russia-gets-control-of-yamal-europe-pipeline.html?searchResultPosition=3

24. Georgia (2000–2012)

1. Russia was stronger than Georgia or its separatist regions.[386] By 2008, Georgia's large force contribution to U.S. operations in Iraq and its strong partnership with NATO reduced Russia's options to impose military solutions in Georgia.

The evidentiary value of these behaviors is high as they held a high priority for both the U.S. and Russian Presidents.

2. Russia initially maintained a substantial garrison in Georgia and led the CIS peacekeeping force in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. Russia had agreed with NATO in 1999 to withdraw from Moldova and Georgia. Russia had strongly positive relations with the Georgian Government under former Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze. In 2004 the Rose Revolution occurred. Afterward, the newly elected President Mikhail Saakashvili took the country on a path towards the EU and NATO. Russia had substantial forces stationed in the country but did not intervene in the Revolution. VEOs and Chechen separatists operated out of or sheltered in Georgia's Kodori Gorge region in the northwest and in the Pankisi Gorge region in the southeast. Georgia worked with the United States to eliminate VEOs in the Pankisi Gorge, but Russia and Georgia disputed the approach to the Kodori Gorge, and Georgia refused to turn over detainees wanted by Russia.[387]

In 2006, Russia agreed to remove its forces from garrisons in government-controlled areas of Georgia. In 2007 and 2008, relations between Russian and Georgia

---

386. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.
387. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–109.

altered for the worse. Georgia became a major contributor to U.S.-led operations in Iraq and NATO operations in Afghanistan and actively sought membership in the EU and NATO. Russia noticeably increased the tempo of military exercises on the Georgian border and improved military lines of communication between Russia and the separatist regions. In the spring of 2008, Russia officially recognized documents provided by the separatist governments and took other measures that Georgia saw as just short of Russian recognition of their independence. In the summer of 2008, a major NATO exercise occurred in Georgia, including the presence of the U.S. parachute brigade stationed in Italy.[388]

On 1 August 2008, a series of small attacks were made by separatist forces on Georgian government forces. On 7 August, Georgian President Saakashvili ordered a major Georgian operation towards the separatist Ossetia capital of Tskhinvali. On 8 August, large Russian forces moved into Georgia and inflicted a serious defeat on Georgian forces. A large force of motorized rifle troops and paratroopers moved through the Roki tunnel under the Caucasus Mountains into South Ossetia. Paratroopers arrived by air transport into Abkhazian airfields while naval infantry landed by sea. They relatively quickly drove back the Georgian forces. Instead of attacking Tbilisi, which was less than 100 kilometers away, and attempting to achieve a decisive defeat and potentially change the regime in Georgia, they instead occupied areas in and near South

388. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–109.

Ossetia and Abkhazia useful for long-term defense. They also seized areas unrelated to the proximate cause of the conflict, including the Kodori Gorge.[389]

The United States began a humanitarian airlift and flew a Georgian infantry brigade home from Iraq. Russia did not interfere with these operations but seized some unguarded U.S. military vehicles awaiting shipment home following the NATO exercise.[390]

3. and 4. In the context of the information available for Russia at the time, Russia's actions are moderately incongruent with the greed motive. The failure to intervene in support of the elected pro-Russian government during the 2003 Rose Revolution was incongruent with the greedy motive. The Russian military operation in Georgia is used as an example in the policy debate by those ascribing aggressive motives to Russia. The dissertation finds that paradoxically, Russia deliberately orchestrated the war but did so in a way that moderately weakens confidence in the greed motive. Russia chose not to pursue the defeated Georgia forces, attack Tbilisi, attempt to decapitate the regime with air, missile, and special operations attacks, or move beyond the territory useful for defending the separatist enclaves. Russia had forces uncommitted at home. Georgian military forces were largely combat ineffective when combat terminated. These behaviors are less congruent with a greed motive than with a security motive because Russia was trying to maintain what it actually controlled despite the formal lines on a political map.

---

389. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 109.
390. Author's firsthand experience.

In the context of the information available for Russia at the time, Russia's actions are not incongruent with a security motive, with the important exception of the failure to intervene in support of the elected pro-Russian government during the 2003 Rose Revolution. It is true that Russia effectively ended U.S., NATO, and Georgian policy that George would enter the EU and NATO and established security for the separatist regions as to maintain their claims as independent states; however, this is not sufficient proof of because it is also consistent with a security motive. Georgia had been less than fully helpful to Russia in its internal struggle with VEOs and separatists. The conflict allowed it to seize some of the relevant terrain and impose a cost on Georgie for this problem. It also allowed Russia to stop change in the environment and keep the policy and territory that it had stable. Russia viewed EU and NATO membership as an economic and military threat as it would impose an economic wall and create a NATO ally on its border in a region Russia had long dominated.

5. The failure to intervene in support of the elected pro-Russian government during the 2003 Rose Revolution was incongruent with the presidential political survival motive. It accepted a notable setback to Russia that it had the military power to prevent militarily. Other Russian behaviors are not incongruent with the logic of presidential survival regardless of whether it initiated the war or was responding to Georgia's attack. Many may disagree with it this particularly controversial finding. The facts supporting this finding are undisputed, while other explanations rely on disputed facts. This interpretation is not essential to the overall findings of this dissertation as it relies on a much wider set of behaviors.

NATO expansion was a serious issue in Russia, as was Russia's inability to prevent the U.S. from conducting military operations unpopular in Russia. Georgia is relatively easy for Russia to mass forces in, while it is comparatively difficult for the United States to deploy and sustain a comparable force there. Therefore, it is a much more desirable place for a confrontation with a U.S. partner than almost anywhere else is. Terminating the fighting so rapidly ensured that U.S. and NATO military forces would not have time to act even if they desired to do so.

6. This dissertation found that Russian behavior moderately weakened confidence in the explanation based purely on a greed motive and slightly weakened confidence in the explanation that both greed and security motives were the explanation. It did not weaken confidence in the other two explanations.

Interpreting these events in a way that allows evaluating them for incongruence with motives is an important and interesting challenge. There are several important points to be resolved, and many of these were not addressed in the policy debate.

First, Russia did not intervene in the 2004 Rose Revolution despite having military forces in the country with the agreement of the President, who was ousted in that revolution. Second, Georgia made an unprecedented realignment from its traditional posture of alignment with or domination by Russia after 2004. Third, in the last months of the Putin Presidency and the first months of the Medvedev Presidency, Georgia occupied a much more central place in Russian policy than before. Russia dramatically increased its de facto level of recognition of the separatists and publicly rehearsed military action in the region. Fourth, although President Saakashvili initiated large-scale ground combat, he did so in response to a series of small attacks on his forces that were

not consistent with the longer-term pattern in the area. Fifth, the Russian forces went into combat in Georgia in a breathtakingly short time, given the need, even if there was an existing plan, to shift from peacetime to combat operations and transition from garrisons in Russia into combat in Georgia. Sixth, after defeating Georgia's military and securing routes that would have allowed massive reinforcements to enter Georgia and occupy the country instead, it simply established a better defensive perimeter around Abkhazia and South Ossetia and areas where VEOs has operated. Finally, although sufficient to defeat Georgia, the Russian military performance was somewhat embarrassing because of its inability to exploit dominance in land and air forces.

One explanation for many of these issues is that Russia made a deliberate decision for war with Georgia. After carefully preparing to do so, it used the separatists to goad the Georgians into initiating the conflict in line with the Russian military concept of reflexive control. Reflexive control means that the adversary is shown actions and information expected to make them act reflexively in a way desired by Russia.[391]

This would be consistent with Russian activities before the crisis and the breathtaking speed of the military response to the Georgia operation. Several pieces of public information suggest Russia provoked a Georgian reaction, which it was prepared to defeat. These include intercepted communications released by Georgia. In these reports, Ossetian border guards state that Russian military forces took up positions inside the Roki tunnel the night before the Georgian attack, which implies the Georgian attack

---

391. Timothy Thomas, "Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17, no. 2 (2004): 237–256, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1351804049045052

was anticipated well before it was actually decided. The guards correctly state the name of the unit commander the primary type of equipment. Russian military officers did not dispute the accuracy of the intercept but offered other interpretations that did not fit the facts in terms of the number and locations of troops and the arrangements between Georgia and Russia for peacekeeping.[392] There are insufficient verifiable public documents to prove many aspects of this incontestably. This is one of the reasons the test of incongruence is particularly appropriate in evaluating their behaviors.

On the other hand, prior Russian and Soviet military history, except in the late 1980s and the 1990s, is a story of expansion and decisive operations against capitals to annex countries or keep them as satellites. Russia did not attempt to do so in Georgia, although it had the potential to do so, most notably in 2004 and 2008.

25. Armenia and Azerbaijan (2000–2012)

1. Russia was more powerful than either party. The Russian Federation based air and ground combat forces in Armenia and based long-range air and missile defense infrastructure in Azerbaijan.[393]

Russia's observable behaviors towards these states are of only moderate evidentiary value, as there seems no viable military option for Russia during this period that would be better than the status quo.

---

392. Dan Bilefsky, C. J. Chivers, Thom Shanker, and Michael Schwirtz, "Georgia Offers Fresh Evidence on War's Start," *The New York Times*, September 16, 2008, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/16/world/europe/16georgia.html.

393. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

2. Armenia and Azerbaijan continued to be technically at war with each other. There were small military engagements resulting in fatalities during the period. Armenia and Azerbaijan both participated in international military operations, including in NATO missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan and OSCE missions in former Yugoslavia. The OSCE maintained a presence in both countries.[394]

Russia maintained significant forces in Armenia, which, while not actively signaled as intended to prevent an attack by the stronger Azerbaijan military, may have that effect. Simultaneously, Russia maintained important air and missile defense infrastructure in Azerbaijan that would be difficult to replace. Armenia and Azerbaijan are relatively weak countries and Russia has been a reliable security partner, so they have little incentive to cause Russia's problems by denying them basing or reigniting the conflict.[395]

3., 4, and 5, Russian behaviors towards Armenia and Azerbaijan are not incongruent with greedy, security-seeking, or presidential political survival motives. The existing military cooperation achieves all of Russia's important interests in these countries; it would be counterproductive to take any military action.

6. The case of Armenia and Azerbaijan does not weaken confidence in any of the explanations. It does support the idea that managed insecurity can be congruent with the achievement of Russian security interests and that decisive resolutions to the conflicts are not perceived as a necessity by Russian decisionmakers.

---

394. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.
395. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

26. Other European issues, including NATO and the EU (2000–2012)

1. There was a significant overlap in the membership of the EU and NATO. The EU military concept proposed in the 1990s did not amount to much significance, but the EU became the dominant economic and political structure in Europe while NATO was the dominant military structure.[396]

Russian behaviors in this area are of high evidentiary value because of their central importance to Russian interests.

2. During this period, NATO transitioned from a focus on territorial defense into a global military power structured for operations inside weak or failed states. It expanded to include almost the entire former Warsaw Pact and the three Baltic states. It had stated that Ukraine and Georgia would eventually become members. There were what appear to be honest efforts by both sides before 2008 to find some suitable arrangements between NATO and Russia.[397] NATO members had little incentive to pursue any Euro-Atlantic security structure that offered them less security and certainty than NATO membership. Russia did not fit inside NATO. Neither side seriously considered Russia as a NATO member. This left Russia isolated, but it did not mean that NATO made a strategic decision to isolate NATO or that Russia decided to oppose NATO.

The EU expanded essentially in tandem with NATO and increasingly became involved in ordering economic affairs and social policy, leading to political disputes within the EU and the Brexit referendum. Given Russia's increasingly corrupt economic

---

396. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.
397. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–109.

practices and increasingly traditional social views, the conventional assumption after the Cold War that Russia would eventually become a "normal" European country became untenable during this period without a fundamental alteration of political power inside Russia.

Russia consistently opposed NATO expansion during the period, but until the 2008 Georgia War, it took no military action to make it infeasible or change the risks NATO members saw in expanding. President Putin made a highly public and international address in 2007 in which he expressed his objections to the trend in global and European security.[398] In 2009, President Medvedev offered a draft of a new security treaty that would have moved away from a structure in which most states belonged to a single alliance.[399] Neither of these was positively received in the West. It seemed somewhat suspicious that Russia was asking other states to give up a security structure that worked very well for them and replace it with one that had unknown dynamics.

3 and 4. Russian actions before 2008 are inconsistent with greedy and security motives as they passed up opportunities to use various existing issues as a pretext for military operations to halt NATO and EU expansion. After 2008, Russian actions were not incongruent with either or both motives.

---

398. Vladimir Putin, "Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy," Kremlin Website, February 10, 2007, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034.

399. Dmitry Medvedev, "The Draft of the European Security Treaty," Kremlin Website, Updated November 29, 2009, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/6152.

5. Russian actions are not incongruent with presidential political survival motives as staying outside of both NATO and the EU and opposing them below the level of armed conflict offered a higher likelihood of political survival than joining them or engaging in armed conflict with them.

6. Russian actions before 2008 are incongruent with both international motives but are not incongruent afterward. Therefore, confidence in the international explanations is weakened before but not after 2008. Confidence is not weakened in presidential political survival motives.

27. Central Asia (2000–2012)

1. Russia was the most powerful regional state.[400] After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, a U.S.-led coalition, and a NATO-led coalition began conducting combat operations in Afghanistan, which altered the balance of power in deployed military forces in the region.

These behaviors' evidentiary values are high as they impacted important Russian border and internal security issues and the important interests in Afghanistan and with the United States.

2. Russia maintained small air bases in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, an under-strength Motor Rifle Division of about 5,000 troops in Tajikistan, and strategic air and missile defense infrastructure in Kazakhstan. Russia exercised and cooperated routinely with the CSTO and focused on stabilization and countering VEOs in the region. The

---

400. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

CSTO created a brigade-sized rapid deployment force for counter-terrorism missions in the region.[401]

The United States established airbases in 2001 at Manas, Kyrgyzstan, to support operations in Afghanistan. Kyrgyzstan had revolutions in 2005, the Tulip Revolution, and again in 2010. After the 2010 revolution, the President of Kyrgyzstan announced his intention not to renew the lease.[402]

The United States also operated an airbase at Karshi-Khanabad, Uzbekistan, beginning in 2001. In 2005, following political violence in Uzbekistan, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization issued a statement calling for the United States to leave both bases and the President of Uzbekistan ordered the base in his country closed.[403]

Russia may have placed pressure on Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan's governments to close the bases after initially supporting their use on what initially appeared to be a temporary basis for what was expected to be a short war in Afghanistan. Russia supported the United States and NATO operations in Afghanistan late in the period by allowing the transit of NATO equipment across Russia and Central Asia.[404]

---

401. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

402. Jim Nichol, *Kyrgyzstan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, August 30, 2013), https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/97-690.pdf.

403. Congressional Research Service (Authorship redacted), *Uzbekistan's Closure of the Airbase at Karshi-Khanabad: Context and Implications* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, March 29, 2006), https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20060329_RS22295_4f97732b6b30a4671efb594442a61629f24968ec.pdf.

404. Researcher's personal experiences.

3 and 4. Russian actions are not incongruent with greedy or security motives as they largely maintained the access to territory and influence over a policy they desired and found a way to allow NATO to continue operations in Afghanistan while denying the United States bases in the region outside of Afghanistan.

5. Russian behaviors are not incongruent with presidential survival motives. Russian President showed they could force outside powers to reverse their penetration into Central Asia outside of Afghanistan and yet allowed sustainment of NATO and U.S. operations stabilizing Afghanistan across Russian territory, thus reducing the risk of instability in the region that might spread to Russia.

6. These behaviors do not reduce confidence in any explanation.

28. Other United States issues (2000–2012)

1. The United States remained more powerful than Russia; however, militarily, the gap was less severe in some respects than in the 1990s and more severe in others. The Russian economy improved, and the Russian military became more capable. The United States militarily demonstrated that it had become more able to deploy worldwide and remove governments, although it proved less capable of managing the situation after those governments were removed. It also had a less powerful presence in Europe and was deeply committed to multiple conflicts. It also lost focus on interstate war and was absorbed with counterterrorism and counterinsurgency.[405]

---

405. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

The evidentiary value of behaviors in the relationship was high as it was Russia's most important relationship, even if it was not so for the United States.

2. The first few years of the administrations of President Putin and George W. Bush saw a recovery from the downturn in relations that occurred in 1999. Relations with Russia were much less important to President Bush in making international policies than were relations with the United States for President Putin. Multiple cooperation venues existed, including the NATO Russia Council, and multiple arms control treaties were negotiated. From a Russian perspective, there was relatively little value offered by the United States. On every issue where the two parties diverged, the United States pursued and usually gained its own goals regardless of Russia's interests. There is no evidence that this was a calculated policy against Russia. It seems more reasonable to conclude that Russia had relatively little value to offer that would make the United States willing to sacrifice its interests in one area to make gains in another. This, however, would be an even more humiliating interpretation of the events of the period for a Russian to accept than the less probable one of calculated U.S. malice.

The September 11, 2001 attacks and the subsequent U.S. Global War on Terror defined the global security environment for at least a decade. President Putin's support established a strong personal relationship with President Bush but achieved little in terms of concrete outcomes for Russia.

Russia cooperated with what the United States initially envisioned as a rapid and decisive military campaign in Afghanistan and supported temporary U.S. use of old Soviet bases in central Asia. This soured for both sides as the war transitioned into a

lengthy U.S. and then NATO-led war that seemed to keep the United States in Central Asia permanently.

The U.S.-led coalition military operation in Iraq removed a former Russian partner government and created instability that impacted Russia's Syrian partner. It also demonstrated an improved ability to project forces across oceans and topple a regime. The size of the force used for the 2003 invasion was less than a third the size of the 1991 force. It was deployed from the United States and attacked in less than half the time required for the force used in 1991.[406] While the United States has little to be pleased with in terms of the ability of this force to manage the situation after removing the Iraqi regime, Russia and others could not fail to notice the speed and lethality with which the United States transitioned from peace to war and removed the regime.

President Bush's freedom agenda and his emphasis on NATO expansion were consistent with U.S. values and tradition but had a certain zero-sum quality from a Russian perspective. As Russia became less free politically, more corrupt economically, and more socially conservative, it became more unsuitable for a place in the order that the United States seemed to be promoting.

The war in Georgia was a defining moment. Either the United States pushed too far forward and allowed the Georgian President's decision to entangle it in a real crisis with Russia or Russia decided to confront the United States and provoked the Georgian President into actions that placed the onus of crisis initiation on him. Either way, Russia found itself with an opportunity to inflict a visible defeat on a U.S. partner at a time and

---

406. Researcher's personal experiences.

place where the United States was at a military disadvantage. Russia terminated the fighting before the situation escalated into a full direct power confrontation. The aftermath created an enduring source of conflict in the relationship from the United States' perspective. The war turned Russia and Russian leaders into domestic political issues in the United States, which decreased the United States President's flexibility going forward. It began a cycle of sanctions and competition that was difficult for anyone to unwind without looking weak.

President Obama's policies place even less emphasis on Russia than then had President Bush. In fact, the primary policy initiatives were to reset the relationship back to appoint when the United States could ignore Russia and militarily and diplomatically refocus on the Pacific over Europe and the Middle East, which explicitly meant a reduction in U.S. military power in Europe. Vice President Biden and Secretary of State Hilary Clinton were both publicly engaged in efforts to reset relations with Russia. Two events significantly altered the relationship. Inside Russia, a variety of factors produced fairly widespread and long-lasting protests from 2010 into 2012. The Arab Spring began with unrest across the Middle East and North Africa. The fact that citizens in these countries protested against governments that denied them access to political power and economic opportunity hardly needs explanation. From the perspective of those ruling in these countries, it was more convenient and self-justifying to look for foreign influences as an explanation.

Nothing in the recent history of the United States offered evidence that it could ignite or direct such widespread protests. Given U.S. policy to be engaged everywhere, it could not avoid some measure of involvement in ongoing events that could be used as

evidence of intent and capability that was not present. Neither Secretary Clinton nor Vice President Biden nor Senator McCain could fail to take some public stance on these events if they wished to perform their current job and survive as viable U.S. politicians. They were incentivized to take strong positions against President Putin's survival interest that he would honestly or cynically be likely to interpret as against Russia's interests. This set up the initial conditions and relationships for the massive election interference that would dominate the next period.

Simultaneously, the United States found key European allies increasingly concerned about the refugee flow into Europe. It needed the continued commitment of these allies to Afghanistan and perhaps against Russia. The United States eventually found itself in the position where it felt it necessary to intervene militarily in Libya. This was not an intentional area of focus for President Obama. He acted to sustain a leading role in Europe and prevent the kind of events that had marred President Clinton's legacy with the accusation that he somehow was responsible for failing to prevent atrocities in Rwanda by leading a military intervention of Euro-Atlantic states in Africa. What Russia saw was that the United States changed the regime of one of its few partners despite assurances made when Libya gave up chemical weapons.

3 and 4. Russian behaviors are not incongruent with either or both of the greed or security-seeking motive. Given the scoping conditions, it is credible to say that on almost every issue, it would be valid for Russia to act that way to prevent its exiting regional interests from being harmed, as it would be to say Russia was trying to impose its interests on regional states. Given that in almost all of these cases, the United States and Russia had competing interests in addition to their interests in the relationship, it becomes

almost impossible not to find evidence to support either motive. This influenced the methodological decision to look instead for incongruence in the entirety of the evidence. It also explains why the policy debate has been so intense and contradictory. More importantly, it helps explain why the two states have been unable to build a suitable relationship despite repeated claims by each that it wanted a better relationship, and the other was at fault.

5. What observably happened was not incongruent with presidential survival motives. Importantly, the dissertation looks for technically valid explanations supporting useful strategies and not making moral judgments or assessing blame. Policymaking cannot fail to be informed by electoral politics. The period's public record leaves little doubt that Russian Presidents corrupted the election processes, used violence, and imprisonment against political opponents, and benefited from corrupt business practices. These make it much harder for the United States simply to seek a rational means of influencing Russia if that means it appears to condone or reward such behaviors.

6. These behaviors do not weaken confidence in any of the explanations but provide evidence of how important variables were changing.

Both sides clearly took a much more malign view of the other's motives as this period evolved. This may not have been entirely justified as both sides were devoting considerable attention to improving the relationship. There were structural issues in that the two states had very different worldviews. Their interests on issues other than the relationship frequently clashed. If the only issue in question were the bilateral relationship, both sides appear to have been interested in cooperation or at least not competing. The two states had little to gain and much to risk in direct competition.

There was also little real value that they could offer each other to overcome the clashes of interest in regional and topical issues. Notably, both sides had two different Presidents during this period, and they tried a number of approaches without any lasting success in improving the relationship.

In light of the degree to which election and political interference operations by Russian military intelligence will dominate the next case, it is worth considering why such operations did not occur earlier. Before the 2010 *Military Doctrine*, Russian strategy did not emphasize political warfare to the Soviets' degree. The capabilities for cyber and political warfare were largely unavailable in this period. Additionally, there was little incentive for such an operation. In the 2008 and 2012 elections, there was little advantage for Russia regardless of the outcome. In fact, both sides competed to be more visibly strong against Russia.

29. Other global issues (2000–2012)

1. Russian behaviors are of moderate significance because Russian global military affairs were largely arms sales, and given the conditions, it needed to sell arms to anyone willing to buy them. Those willing to buy them were most likely those unwilling or unable to buy from Western countries. Additionally, having abandoned the significant global footprint inherited from the Soviet Union, it seems unlikely that it could significantly change this posture under the prevailing conditions.

2. Russia closed its naval and air base at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam. It maintained limited presence outside of the former Soviet Union, other than for signals intelligence or UN and OSCE missions. It did maintain a base in Syria. Russia resumed strategic aircraft flights, including patrols near the airspace of the United States and NATO

members. It also conducted maritime activities in the Mediterranean and with Venezuela and participated in multinational counterpiracy efforts in the Indian Ocean.[407]

Russia was active in the international arms market, competing with France and the United States in sales to countries North Africa and the Middle East. Russia also became the arms supplier of choice for nations such as Iran to whom the U.S. did not want arms sold. Arms sales were an important revenue source to sustain the Russian defense industrial base, as there were often insufficient funds for Russia to equip its own units with the best equipment it could produce, and much legacy equipment remained in service.[408]

3. and 4. Russian actions are not incongruent with greed or security- motives, given the conditions. Russia had made the decision in the earlier period to withdraw and given the state of the Russian military, delaying a large-scale return to a meaningful global posture is reasonable. Selling arms could be congruent with any set of motives.

5. Russian behaviors are not incongruent with political survival motives. They are low-risk ways to show Russia is a significant power and that the President is responding to unpopular U.S. and NATO actions, particularly after the Georgia War.

6. Russian global posture does not weaken confidence in any of the explanations, mostly because there was not much Russia could do given the conditions but provide evidence of how important variables were changing. Russian actions seemed very dramatic at the time because they were such a departure from the norm that they seemed

---

407. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.
408. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

very important. In retrospect, they were military ludicrous. The small number of Soviet-era ships and planes capable of participating in these missions had no chance of achieving anything operationally significant with conventional weapons in armed conflict against NATO or the United States.

They created an effective impression in the information environment that achieved political effects. As the dominant effect was to increase the likelihood of U.S. and NATO preparation for conflict with Russia, this was counterproductive against any international motives and made sense more in the context of domestic political motives.

Arms sales may also create a deceptively strong set of unintentional signals. For example, like other powers, Russia subsidizes its procurement costs by selling an export version of the equipment it produces for its use. This incentivized it to sell to any willing buyers such as Iran. This entangled yet more issues in the global environment and made assessing motives in real-time very challenging.

On the other hand, shortly after Russia began to beat out the French in supplying North African countries like Algeria and Libya,[409] the Arab Spring and NATO's Operation in Libya removed many of the regimes friendly to Russia. The unfortunate correlation between cooperation with Russia and suffering a color revolution or U.S.-led military operation could only have worsened Russia's beliefs about the world.

---

409. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

30. Domestic counterinsurgency and counterterrorism (2000–2012)

1. Russia was stronger than the separatists and VEOs it fought in the Second Chechen War and in the lengthy counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism campaigns during this period.[410] Due to the nature of such conflicts, conventional superiority was less useful than in interstate conflict.

The evidentiary value of these behaviors is low for the greed and security motives as a state is assumed motivated to use military force when needed against internal threats and in self-defense against actors, including non-state actors attacking the state. The evidentiary value for presidential political survival is high because this is a vital role of the President to provide the public good of security.

2. The Second Chechen War's large-scale combat operations were primarily during the previous period. The end of large-scale combat operations was the start of smaller-scale insurgent and terror operations that lasted for years. Russian military operations improved over time in Chechnya, and the management of the information domain notably improved. The massed use of firepower in ways that caused significant civil casualties and the evidence of human rights abuses[411] meant that no Western power would publicly align itself with Russia's military operation even though they were themselves involved in military operations against groups with similar ideologies. This left Russia isolated in a world where dozens of countries were involved in coalition

410. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

411. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

military operations against VEOs with similar ideologies that had attacked Western interests.

Russia suffered multiple catastrophic, high-profile terror attacks, including the deliberate massacre of hundreds of children at a school in Beslan, attacks on civilian targets in Moscow, and other major Russian cities.[412]

3 and 4. Russian actions do not provide significant evidence for greed or security motives as a state is assumed motivated to conduct these types of operations. They may have shaped Russian perception and misperception in ways relevant to the alternate explanation.

5. Russian actions were not incongruent with presidential political survival. In fact, they were so important to the popularity of President Putin that unprovable accusations were sometimes seen in the press that terrorist incidents were false flag operations intended for political purposes. This may have obscured the provable fact that Russia was targeted by separatist forces and VEOs and did not find significant support from other states against these threats.

6. These behaviors are not evidence for the three international explanations. They do not weaken confidence in the presidential survival explanation.

---

412. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 100–113.

Annex C: Structured, focused comparison from the third into the fourth Presidencies of Vladimir Putin (8 May 2012–30 September 2020)

Scoping conditions 8 May 2012–30 September 2020

Scoping conditions 5 and 7 remained relevant scoping conditions, and three new conditions emerged during this period. These may contribute to less predictable behaviors absent these conditions.

5. With the fragmentation of the Soviet Union into sixteen states, many ethnic Russians and some geographic regions and ethnic groups that were historically connected to Russia were beyond the borders of the Russian Federation.

7. Society became less equal than in Soviet times and less free but more stable and prosperous than in the 1990s. Russians identified more strongly with religion than in Soviet times and this had social and political consequences.

10. The Russian Federation economy, which had been growing strongly until 2014, fell significantly after the events in Crimea and recovered slowly before the global setback caused by COVID-19.

11. Russia fielded new military and paramilitary forces and capabilities.

12. Presidential terms beginning in 2012 were extended to six years with a two consecutive term limit. Vladimir Putin will be in office under this condition until May of 2024.

Sequence of observable behaviors 8 May 2012–30 September 2020

Figure 23. Russian Federation domestic conditions, events, and behaviors 2012–2020. Sources: See Step 10.

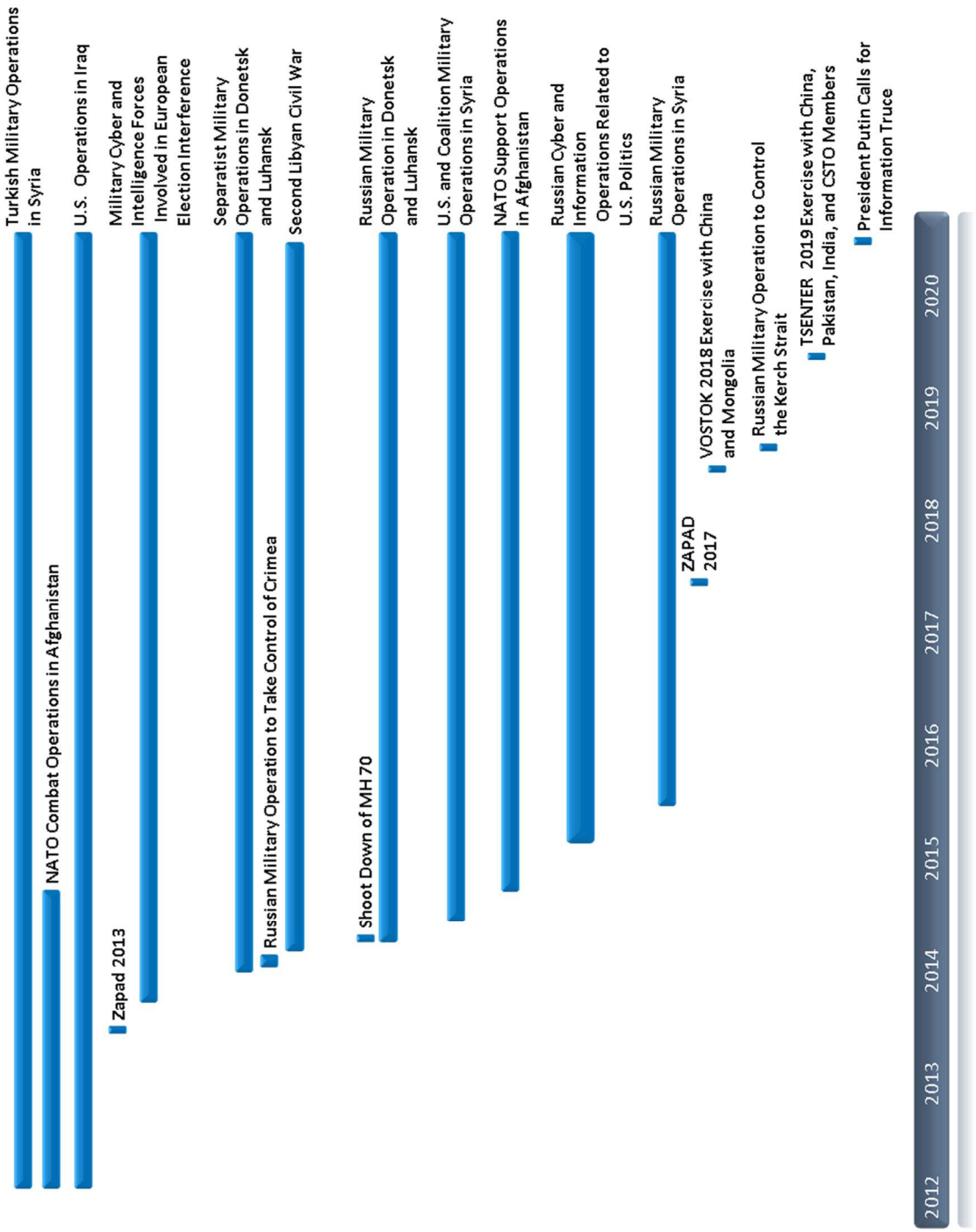

Figure 24. Military operations and exercises 2012–2020. Sources: See Step 10.

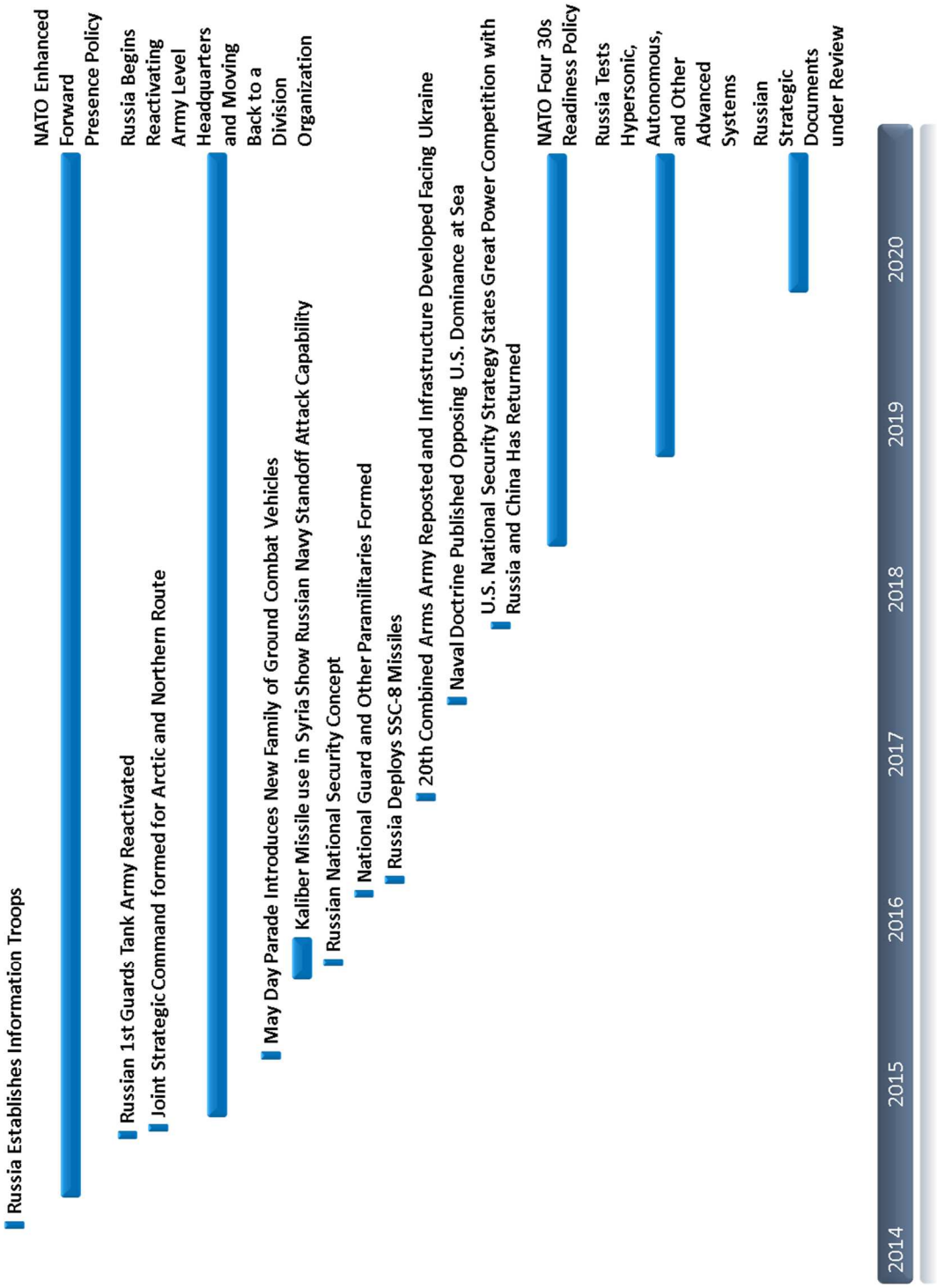

Figure 25. Military posture, capabilities, strategy, and doctrine 2012–2020. Sources: See Step 10.

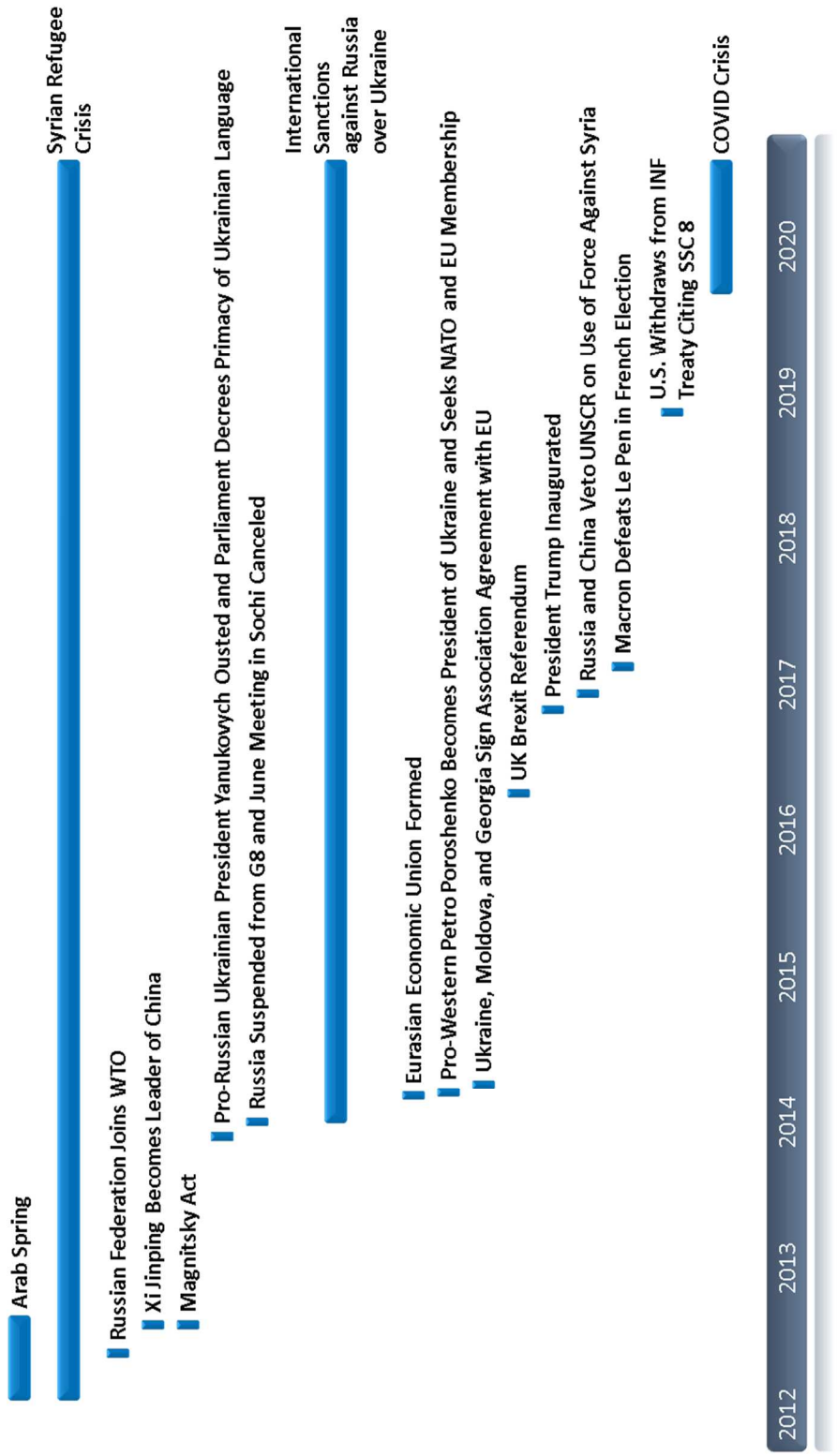

Figure 26. International events and agreements 2012–2020. Sources: See Step 10.

Structured, focused comparison and evaluation of subcases

31. Russian Federation policy and strategy documents (2012–2020)

1. The evidentiary value of the publicly observable strategy is moderate as Russian leaders could provide various interpretations for why they wanted to develop new military capabilities and how they wanted to use them.

2. In 2012, Sergey Shoigu was appointed Defense Minister and charged with completing the transformation of the Russian Military into a professional force designed for modern conditions.[413] In addition, in 2012, Russia created a Cyber Security Command inside the military that allowed the military to conduct all forms of operations in cyberspace better.[414] The General Staff was placed directly under the control of the President.[415] This may seem a small point, but in Russian history, the relationship of the head of state, the civilian ministry, and the general staff have frequently been shifted in to reflect the head of states preference for centralization and their trust in the officer corps loyalty to the head of state.[416]

In December of 2014, Russia published a new military doctrine that explicitly identified NATO and the creation of military infrastructure on Russia's border as threats.

---

413. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 113, 199.

414. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 113, 200.

415. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 114, 161.

416. William C. Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600–1914* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

It also identified missile defense and subversion aimed at overthrowing governments as an increasingly dangerous threat.[417]

In 2016, Russia created a National Guard under the President's direct control, which brought together numerous internal security paramilitaries and integrated them into a substantial armed force with an authorized strength of 340,000. This force includes existing formations such as the MVD Internal Troops and forces trained for riot control, counterterrorism, correctional officers, and internal security.[418] Such a force could be a useful tool to a President facing a color revolution, a military coup, or needing to conduct rear area security or occupation duties during a conventional military armed conflict against another state.

In 2017 Russia published a new *Naval Doctrine* that sought to create a Russian Navy capable of challenging U.S. domination of the global sea lanes of communication and provide it with modernized nuclear deterrence capabilities.[419]

Further supporting the Russian military's transformation to meet the new strategic guidance, the Russian military created The Information Troops and reestablished the Soviet-era Main Directorate for Political-Military Affairs, responsible for political-military information operations.[420]

---

417. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 116, 164.
418. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 117, 186.
419. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 118, 169.
420. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 119, 166.

While it attracted less interest in the West, Russia also reorganized its conventional military forces in a manner that allowed it to conduct interstate war. The addition of an Arctic command completed the process of establishing Joint Commands.[421] Simultaneously, the process of transforming land forces to a Brigade Based organization suitable for crisis response and counterinsurgency was reversed. Divisions and Combined Arms Armies (CAAs), more suitable for large-scale operations, became the basis of organization for much of the Russian military.[422]

In 2020, the entire family of Russian strategic documents was under review, including the *National Security Strategy*, *The Military Doctrine*, *The Naval Doctrine*, and the *Arctic Strategy*.[423]

3. and 4. Russian observable actions in this area are not incongruent with either a greed motive or a security motive.

5. Observable Russian actions were not incongruent with presidential political survival motives. Notably, a significant shift placed multiple armed groups under the President's direct control. While this may simply reflect a desire for a flat organization, it is also a traditional approach by authoritarian leaders to prevent any rival from seizing power by a coup, and it reduces the likelihood that armed forces will defect to the side of protesters in the case of large-scale political unrest.

---

421. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 115, 159.

422. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 114, 162–163. and IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 117, 184–186.

423. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 120, 168.

6. What observably happened does not weaken confidence in any of the explanations.

32. Arms control (2012–2020)

1. Arms control cooperation became so limited in this period that it is not necessary to differentiate between nuclear, conventional, and confidence-building behaviors.

2. The New START Treaty remained in effect during this period; however, little progress was made on renewing it after the 2021 expiration.[424]

Both President Obama's and President Trump's admirations saw the Russian SSC-8 missile as a breach of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and, in 2019, the United States withdrew.[425]

No progress was made to returning to the CFE or replacing it, but the Open Skies Treaty remained in effect with reductions in access and a reduced level of cooperation.[426]

3, 4, 5, and 6. Russian behaviors are not incongruent with any of the motives and do not weaken confidence in any of the explanations. This is in part because of the lack of active behaviors to observe, which is expected given the context of the period and the lack of cooperation.

---

424. Woolf et al., *Arms Control and Nonproliferation*, 21–22.
425. Woolf et al., *Arms Control and Nonproliferation*, 3.
426. Woolf et al., *Arms Control and Nonproliferation*, 40–43.

Russia's behavior in fielding the SSC-8 at the cost of the INF Treaty seems puzzling. It would seem unlikely that a single system makes a sufficient difference to Russian military power to justify losing the Treaty's limitation on the United States. Perhaps the reasoning for this decision was rooted in domestic politics.

33. Politics and defectors in Europe (2012–2020)

1. Traditional measures of military power seem less relevant to the cyber and information military operations that Russian military units, primarily the GRU, conducted against the European states from at least 2016 to the present.[427]

These behaviors are of high evidentiary value as they influence the most important great power relationship and occupy a central part of the global political and information environment.

2. Russia almost certainly used the GRU to assassinate Russian citizens who defected to the European countries and publicly opposed the Russian leadership. Interestingly they often did so in using poisons and toxins identifiable as Russian rather than kill more anonymously. They appear not to have used or attempted violence against any civilian or military officials or private citizens in the West, with the possible exception of the alleged planned Montenegrin coup.[428]

---

427. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 112–120.

428. Michael Schwirtz, "Top Secret Russian Unit Seeks to Destabilize Europe, Security Officials Say," *New York Times*, October 8, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/08/world/europe/unit-29155-russia-gru.html.

It is reasonable to believe they conducted cyber and information operations against the United Kingdom during the Scottish Independence Referendum, The Brexit vote, the 2019 Election UK election, and the 2016 French Election. Russia almost certainly used these same capabilities against many European states and continued to do so despite the knowledge in the public debate that Russia was doing so.[429]

3. The observable behaviors are consistent with a greed motive as Russia attempts to change numerous peer and weaker states' policies and leadership.

4. The observable behaviors are be incongruent with a security motive as they are creating a generation of Europeans who will have intense personal and political resentment of Russia. Absent these military operations, they would likely have had a much greater interest in domestic affairs than in a renewal of great power competition in Europe.

5. The observable behaviors are not incongruent with presidential political survival motives. They make much more sense as a low-risk way to protect one man during his lifetime than as a long-term way for a state to establish relations with neighboring states.

---

429. Laura Galante and Shaun Ee, *Defining Russian Election Interference: An Analysis of Select 2014 to 2018 Cyber Enabled Incidents*, Washington, D.C.: Atlantic Council Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, September 2018, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Defining_Russian_Election_Interference_web.pdf. and Schwirtz, "Top Secret Russian Unit." and Matt Apuzzo and Adam Satariano, "Russia Is Targeting Europe's Elections. So Are Far-Right Copycats," *New York Times*, May 12, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/12/world/europe/russian-propaganda-influence-campaign-european-elections-far-right.html?auth=login-google.

6. Confidence in explanations based on greedy and political survival motives is not weakened. Confidence in the explanations that include a security motive is weakened.

34. Ukraine (2012–2020)

1. Russia was more powerful than Ukraine, and initially, this advantage was larger as Ukraine was poorly prepared for armed conflict.[430]

The evidentiary value of these behaviors is high as they were the most important international military armed conflict during the period for Russia and occurred in a neighboring state that has historically been an area of vital interest to Russia.

2. In 2010, Viktor Yanukovych defeated Yulia Tymoshenko for the presidency of Ukraine. This was a favorable development for Russia. Yanukovych was more pro-Russian and negotiated an agreement to extend the Crimean military bases leases into the 2040s. Tymoshenko was a leader in opposing the extension of the Russian leases on military bases past 2017.[431]

In late 2013, protests began in Kyiv against Yanukovych when he chose a Russian-backed financial bailout rather than steps towards EU membership. The protests grew in strength and escalated into violence on 20 February 2014, with almost fifty protesters and three police officers killed. Arguments have been made that either

---

430. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 112-120.

431. Clifford J. Levy, "For Kremlin, Ukraine Election Cuts Two Ways," *New York Times*, February 8, 2010, https://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/09/world/europe/09ukraine.html.

Western forces or Russian forces provoked the violence by shooting at police. There is photographic, and video evidence of men in civilian clothes with civilian hunting weapons engaging police, and then the police appear to have caused most of the attributable deaths with rifle fire at short range.[432]

Simultaneously, protests occurred in Crimea and other parts of Ukraine with confrontations between essentially pro-Russian and pro-Western civilians. The crisis in Kyiv terminated with the Parliament removing President Yanukovych, who fled to Russia on 22 February 2014 after security forces abandoned him.[433]

Russian forces were already based in Crimea and were legally allowed to move about the area. They had substantially benefited from the Russian military reform efforts since 2008 and were in a much better readiness for combat than Ukrainian forces. On the night of 26 March, Russian Forces began seizing key chokepoints controlling movement inside Crimea. On the 27th, Russian military forces seized key government buildings and forced a vote to abolish Crimea's existing government. Meanwhile, other Russian military forces took up positions at the Isthmus of Perekop and the Chonhar Peninsula, which were extremely narrow chokepoints connecting Crimea with the rest of Ukraine. On 19 March, Russia annexed Crimea, and by 24 March, all Ukrainian military forces

---

432. Mattathias Schwartz, "Who Killed the Kiev Protesters? A 3-D Model Holds the Clues a Team of Civilian Investigators Used Cellphone Videos, Autopsy Reports and Surveillance Footage to Reconstruct a Virtual Crime Scene," *New York Times*, May 30, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/30/magazine/ukraine-protest-video.html.

433. Andrew Higgins and Andrew E. Kramer, "Ukraine Leader Was Defeated Even before He Was Ousted," *New York Times*, January 3, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/04/world/europe/ukraine-leader-was-defeated-even-before-he-was-ousted.html.

had either changed sides or withdrawn from Crimea, apparently terminating armed conflict.[434]

In retrospect, these actions allowed Russian control of Crimea at almost no military risk. The Russian military forces could hardly be engaged with deadly force by the unprepared Ukrainians until they took these key locations and made their intentions clear. Once they did so, it would have required a very large military operation for Ukraine to launch a counterattack. The relative levels of readiness of the two countries' forces made such a counterattack infeasible without lengthy Ukraine preparations that Russia could easily overmatch. By the time it was clear that more Russian forces were present than those allowed by agreement, any chance to deter or defeat them was well past.

On 6 April, the armed conflict began between ethnic Russian separatists with Russian Federation government support against the Ukrainian government. The conflict is centered on the self-declared separatist governments in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts of Ukraine. As the Ukrainian government made progress against the separatists, Russia gradually increased its support and direct participation in combat to sustain separatist control of Donetsk and Luhansk. It did not expand the military conflict into new areas or act to change the government in Kyiv. The shoot down of a civilian airliner, Malaysian Airlines Flight 17, with almost three hundred civilians, mainly from western Europe, abroad in July brought the conflict home to the European public and contributed to the

---

434. IISS, *Military Balance,* vol. 115.

strong NATO and EU response to the conflict. In August, a significant Russian military operation restored the separatist's positions and was followed in September by a ceasefire.[435]

Despite various international efforts to end the conflict through sanctions and negotiation, the line of military contact stabilized well inside Ukraine. Fighting has continued episodically up to the present time. The most significant episode of heavy fighting occurred in 2017. In 2020, coronavirus and international efforts led by France and Germany contributed to a relatively consistent ceasefire.[436]

3. What observable happened in Ukraine is partially incongruent with greedy motives. Russia seized another state's territory, which meets the definition of the kind of action a greed motive would lead a state to take against a weaker power. It is interesting that Russia did not attempt more if a greed motive were the primary explanation. Ukraine was not postured to defend itself. The limited military objectives of seizing Crimea and then supporting the separatists could reasonably have been expanded to restore the pro-Russian president with operations aimed at Kyiv. This would fit better with the Soviet pattern of invading satellites drifting out of the Russian orbit to change the regime.

4. What observable happened in Ukraine is not incongruent with a security motive, except for the timing of the operation in a way that reversed a drawdown of NATO military power for interstate war. The surprise and shock in the West when this

---

435. IISS, *Military Balance,* vol. 115.

436. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 115–120.

operation occurred and the natural bias of Western observers obscure the fact that Ukrainian membership in the EU and NATO would create economic and military problems for Russia. The loss of access to Crimea would be a significant loss of what for Russia is strategic terrain. However, it was widely discussed in the media that the United States and most NATO states were planning to cut their military forces' size after the ISAF combat mission concluded in 2014.[437] If Russian fears were the motive, it might have made more sense to delay this operation until perhaps 2016, and then if it appeared no other option was available, these operations could have been conducted when NATO was less capable, and Russia was relatively stronger than in 2014.

5. What observable happened in Ukraine is not incongruent with presidential political survival motives. Crimea has a powerful historical place in Russian identity. The expulsion of Russian forces from Crimea would be the equivalent of a military defeat for Russia. Military defeats have traditionally led to threats to the survival of the leadership in Moscow. The timing seems more like a response to the crisis rather than a carefully planned and deliberate strategy.

6. The events in Ukraine do not weaken confidence in any of the explanations.

---

437. Isabelle de Pommereau, "France's Afghanistan Pull-out Signals War Fatigue Driving European Defense Cuts," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 25, 2012, https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2012/0525/France-s-Afghanistan-pull-out-signals-war-fatigue-driving-European-defense-cuts. and John Van Diver, "Pentagon Lays out Significant Cuts to U.S. Forces in Europe," *Stripes*, February 16, 2012, https://www.stripes.com/news/pentagon-lays-out-significant-cuts-to-u-s-forces-in-europe-1.168861.

35. Belarus (2012–2020)

1. Russia was much more powerful than Belarus, with which it was connected to as a Union State.[438] Belarus generally had positive behaviors towards Russia.

2. Belarus altered its military strategy during this period to prioritize preparation for a color revolution with Western support. The *Zapad* 2017 scenario featured such an operation followed by a joint Belarus and Russian Federation attack on the Baltic States while NATO and U.S. forces were present.[439]

There was, in fact, political unrest directed at the continued rule of President Lukashenko and credible allegations of election fraud and the use of violence against protestors and political opponents. The political opposition did have Western sympathies but did not seem to be controlled by outside forces as Presidents Lukashenko and Putin alleged. President Putin very publicly threatened to use force to protect Presidents Lukashenko, although he framed this as potential law enforcement rather than a formal military operation. In practice, the Russian security reforms make this a somewhat irrelevant distinction as there are large law enforcement forces organized on military lines.[440]

---

438. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 112–120.

439. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 112–120. and Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, "Deputy Defence Minister Lieutenant General Alexander Fomin Held Briefing on Preparation for the Zapad 2017 Joint Exercise," Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation Website, August 28, 2017, http://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12140207@egNews.

440. Andrew Higgins, "Putin Warns Belarus Protesters: Don't Push Too Hard," *New York Times*, August 27, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/27/world/europe/belarus-russia-putin.html. and *IISS, Military Balance*, vols. 112–120.

3., 4., and 5. Nothing that happened regarding Belarus was incongruent with any of the motives as nothing ever occurred that moved the relationship into a bad enough state that further military action was clearly useful. While it appears President Putin would have liked Belarus to join the Russian Federation, it also appears that President Lukashenko allowed sufficient military access for exercises and cooperation on defense planning that it was not worth pushing matters further.

6. Confidence is not reduced in any explanation.

36. Montenegrin coup (2016)

1. The military operation by the GRU to support a violent coup in Montenegro deserves specific attention. It is a more aggressive action than seen elsewhere in Western and Central Europe, where the GRU was using nonviolent information and cyber operations to interfere in elections and limiting the use of violence to only targeting Russian defectors rather than Western political and military leaders. Russia is militarily stronger than Montenegro, but because of geography, it would be unlikely to be able to use conventional military power against it without a major effort to deploy by air and sea.[441]

2. Montenegro is a small state on the Adriatic that split peacefully from Serbia in 2006. Montenegro then proceeded to join most Western and global structures and, in 2016, was proceeding towards NATO and EU membership. Shortly before the 2016 parliamentary election, Serbian and NATO officials notified the Montenegrin

441. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 112–120.

government of an alleged plot for a coup "aimed at toppling Montenegro's government, killing the prime minister and bringing a pro-Russian alliance to power."[442]

Montenegrin officials reacted by arresting the parties named and later led the nation into NATO. Montenegrin and Russian citizens were convicted of the allegations by a Montenegrin court. At least two of the individuals appear likely to have been serving GRU officers.[443]

3. Russian behaviors appear not incongruent with greedy motives. Assuming the relatively credible evidence is true, Russia made a direct attempt to change the policy and leadership of a weaker state that was no meaningful threat to Russia and hardly mattered to the regional balance of power.

4. Russian behaviors are incongruent with security motives as the consequences of Montenegro joining NATO were relatively low, and the risk of involving Russia in a crisis by attempting a coup seems too large to justify the potential gains.

5. Russian actions appear incongruent with presidential political survival motives. It physically seems dangerous for the Russian president to break the long-standing European norm against violence against political leaders of other states, and there seems little to gain or lose politically from the fate of Montenegro. While U.S. and

---

442. Stevo Vasiljevic, "Russians, Opposition Figures Sentenced over Role in 2016 Montenegro Coup Attempt," *Reuters*, May 9, 2019, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-montenegro-court/russians-opposition-figures-sentenced-over-role-in-2016-montenegro-coup-attempt-idUSKCN1SF144. and Andrew E. Orovic and Joseph Kramer, "Two Suspected Russian Agents among 14 Convicted in Montenegro Coup Plot," *New York Times*, May 9, 2019, https://nyti.ms/2VTzGN2.

443. Orovic and Kramer, "Two Suspected Russian Agents among 14 Convicted." and Vasiljevic, "Russians, Opposition Figures Sentenced."

NATO action had led to the deaths of state leaders outside of Europe during the case, the norms were somewhat different among Euro-Atlantic countries.

6. Observable Russian behaviors in the Montenegrin Coup do not weaken confidence in the explanation using only the security motives but weaken confidence in security-seeking explanations and the explanation based on presidential political survival motives.

37. Managed instability in Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan (2012–September of 2020)

The evaluation of this subcase was completed immediately before the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in October of 2020. The researcher predicted that Russia would seek to deescalate the situation based on its motives, as no other path would serve its conflicting motives. This appears to have happened.

1. Russia was stronger than all the parties involved in these frozen conflicts and could have reinitiated armed conflict and forced termination on its own terms.[444]

These conflicts' evidentiary value is high, as Russia has a decisive military superiority in these areas.

2. Russia was involved in at least four frozen conflicts during the period, and remarkably little change occurred over the eight years in any of them. Russian forces continued to occupy the Transnistria region of Moldova. Russian forces also occupied the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In Armenia and Azerbaijan, the

444. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 112–120.

Russian military forces' exact role in keeping the conflict frozen is somewhat less clear. The Nagorno-Karabakh region continues to claim sovereignty despite Azerbaijan's government's much greater military capabilities.[445]

Remarkably little happened in these frozen conflicts during the period.

3. Russian behaviors are somewhat puzzling to evaluate against the expectations of greedy motives. They are not incongruent with a greed motive as strictly defined in terms of changing the policy or territory of another state, but Russia does not really make changes during this period. It simply maintains past changes. After almost three decades with little change in the status quo, the question arises of how long this should be considered a frozen conflict and if, at some point, it should simply be recognized that these regions are no longer part of the internationally recognized state. The historical European practice of rearranging borders by agreement among great powers seems like it could convert these frozen conflicts into settled issues. This would allow all parties to move on and even allow the states losing territory to become EU and NATO members. This might be a better alternative for these states than continuing to be frozen out of both Russian and NATO cooperation.

4. Russia's acceptance of the status quo is not incongruent with security-seeking international motives, with the exception of the continued occupation of Moldova. Moldova is not of sufficient military value to matter whether it joins NATO, yet the operation caused Russia international problems.

---

445. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 112–120.

5. Russia's observable behaviors did nothing to alter the status quo, which is not incongruent with presidential political survival motives. The status quo created international issues for Russia but was acceptable domestically compared to the alternatives of withdrawing from these regions and allowing the internationally recognized government to reignite the conflict or initiating a conflict with the internationally recognized government to force it to accept the independence or annexation of the region formally.

It is often argued that Russia uses ethnic Russians and historically associated groups outside its borders as a pretext for conflict. The patterns and sequences of behaviors do not seem to support these arguments. In most cases, Russia does not gain much other than the ability to continue protecting these people from its military operations and pays the price internationally to do so with other states. Its continued presence is a check on NATO and EU expansion, but its presence began before the EU, and NATO presence was a realistic possibility.

6. Russian observable behaviors do not weaken confidence in any of the explanations of the continued stalemate. They do support answers to the puzzles linked to the idea that Russia is perfectly comfortable managing instability rather than seeking to impose a decisive outcome that seems too costly and risky for the potential benefits.

38. Other European issues, including NATO and the EU (2012–2020)

1. Russian military reforms and the transition of most NATO forces away from territorial defense roles into deployable counterinsurgency forces narrowed the power gap, but it remained in NATO's favor military. The EU, whose membership overlapped

with that of NATO, mustered insignificant military power as an organization but was politically and economically the dominant power in Europe.[446]

Russian observable behaviors relevant to this relationship are of high evidentiary value because of their central importance to Russia.

2. Relations with NATO improved modestly from the low after the 2008 war, and early in the period, there were small cooperative military efforts in areas such as counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, and counter-proliferation.[447] *Zapad 2013* featured large-scale offensive joint operations against a thinly disguised NATO opponent.[448] For its part, NATO conducted a matching exercise, *Steadfast Jazz 2013*, in the Baltic that was unprecedented in size and location.[449] However, there was widespread public discussion that NATO states were likely to make deep cuts in their land forces and in capability for traditional armed conflict.[450] Russian actions had not at that point led these countries to see the need to sustain even the relatively low level of military force size and readiness,

---

446. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 112–120.

447. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Relations with the European Union," NATO Website, July 31, 2020, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50090.htm.

448. Pauli Jarvenpaa, *Zapad-2013: View from Helsinki* (Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2014), https://jamestown.org/report/zapad-2013-a-view-from-helsinki/.

449. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO's Steadfast Jazz Exercise Gets Underway," NATO Website, November 2, 2013, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_104648.htm.

450. Steven Erlanger, "Memo from Europe: Shrinking Europe Military Spending Stirs Concern," *New York Times*, April 22, 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/23/world/europe/europes-shrinking-military-spending-under-scrutiny.html.

compared to 20th-century levels, which allowed them to conduct the relatively small operation in Afghanistan.

The Russian Federation operations in Crimea altered NATO beliefs about the possibility of great power interstate war in Europe. The spread of the conflict to Luhansk and Donets and the shoot down of MH 17 sustained a crisis atmosphere in Europe. NATO members decided to reorient their military policies towards defense and deterrence through a forward military presence. In 2016, NATO formalized a policy of "Enhanced Forward Presence" (EFP) in which small multinational battle groups were established on the territory of member states bordering Russia.[451] While none of these forces were large enough to have an offensive role, they greatly reduced Russia's potential window for a surprise military attack to split NATO and brought NATO forces onto Russia's border.

The EU made modest expansions in Europe, but its interest in Ukrainian membership was essentially frozen by Russian action in Crimea. In 2016, a NATO and EU declaration established a new security relationship that, in effect, committed both to improving military capabilities and to coordinating more closely in future exercises and operations.[452]

---

451. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO Fact Sheet: NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence," NATO Website, May 2017, http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_05/1705-factsheet-efp.pdf.

452. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Relations with the European Union," NATO Website, July 31, 2020, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50090.htm.

In 2014, Russia established the Eurasian Economic Union. By the end of the period, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan had joined, which linked them economically to Russia and limited their ability to cooperate with the EU.[453]

In 2017, Russia conducted *Zapad 2017* with a public scenario that showed NATO forces in their peacetime locations with some of the reinforcements NATO might deploy in a crisis. Interestingly, while the deployments looked reasonably similar to how U.S. and NATO doctrine would lead them to deploy for a deterrent and defense operation, these deployments were described as a screening force for the arrival of a larger force intended to attack Belarus and perhaps Russia.[454]

A review of military doctrine leads to the interesting observation that both sides use essentially the same military operational concept early in an armed conflict regardless of whether they plan on defending their territory or attacking or counterattacking into territory controlled by an opponent. Therefore, deployments early in a crisis are, largely, NOT distinguishable as offensive or defensive, and neither military seems to recognize this fact, nor does their doctrine address the issue of offense-defense distinguishability.

---

453. Eurasian Economic Union, "The Eurasian Economic Union," Eurasian Economic Union Website. Accessed October 4, 2020, http://www.eaeunion.org/?lang=en#about.

454. Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, "Deputy Defence Minister Lieutenant General Alexander Fomin Held Briefing on Preparation for the *Zapad* 2017 Joint Exercise," Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation Website, August 28, 2017, http://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12140207@egNews. and Michael Kofman, "Tag: *Zapad* 2017," Russia Military Analysis Website, December 22, 2017, https://russianmilitaryanalysis.wordpress.com/tag/zapad-2017/.

Throughout the period, Russia reorganized its forces for interstate war and focused its best units in the Western Military District and the Southern Military District.[455]

In 2018, NATO heads of state reemphasized Article 5 and laid out a series of steps to improve readiness for war in response to what they characterized as "Russia's aggressive actions, including the threat and use of force to attain political goals, challenge the Alliance and are undermining Euro-Atlantic security and the rules-based international order."[456] They called for NATO nations to prepare to deploy thirty ground battalions, thirty air combat squadrons, and thirty warships into armed conflict in 30 days.[457] While this is an extremely modest goal compared to 20th-century European military readiness standards, it represented a major reversal of 21st-century policies and will take years to achieve.

NATO planned in the summer of 2020 to hold its largest exercise since the termination of the Cold War-era *REFORGER* exercise, Defender 2020. This would have included deploying elements of an entire U.S. Army Corps, including 20,000 U.S. troops, but was reduced in size during to the COVID 19 crisis.[458] This represented an investment

---

455. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 115–120.

456. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Brussels Summit Declaration," NATO Website, July 11, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.html.

457. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Press Conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg Following the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in Defence Ministers' Session," NATO Website, June 8, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_155264.htm.

458. North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Defender-Europe 20," NATO Website, Accessed October 6, 2020, https://shape.nato.int/defender-europe.

that would not have been considered absent Russian behaviors. The United States decided to rebase 12,000 troops out of Germany, which was widely unpopular, but other aspects of the decision might increase NATO's readiness for combat by positioning the major U.S. headquarters closer to their NATO equivalents and thus allowing both to be more effective.[459]

3. Russia's actions were moderately incongruent with a greed motive because they reduced its potential power advantage in Europe and had no realistic chance of altering NATO or EU territory or policy other than precluding Ukraine from joining. At the time, Russia's actions were shocking and alarming, but they seem, in retrospect, more like an elaborate display of power than a decisive use of force.

4. Russian observable behaviors were moderately incongruent with a security motive as they reversed an expected improvement in the power balance and mobilized other states against Russia.

5. Russian actions are not incongruent with presidential political survival motives. They reinforce the theme that implacable enemies surround Russia. The president is the best protection against these enemies while taking almost no risk that would trigger actual conflict and potentially lead to a disastrous defeat for Russian military forces, which would likely threaten the president's political survival.

---

459. Mark Markoff and John Landler, "U.S. Will Cut 12,000 Forces in Germany," *New York Times*, July 29, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/29/world/europe/us-troops-nato-germany.html.

6. Once again, the findings are different from the initial expectations and moderately reduce confidence in the greed and security motives and do not weaken confidence in the presidential political survival motive.

39. Central Asia (2012–2020)

1. Russia was the strongest power in Central Asia. Russia was the most important security partner of the former Soviet states of Central Asia and cooperated with them against VEOs.[460] The evidentiary value of the Central Asian stability is of high evidentiary value because Russia largely had freedom of action. These states are important to preserving stability in adjoining areas of Russia. The evidentiary value of the behaviors in Afghanistan is debatable.

2. What observable happened was that Russia promoted cooperation with these and other states through the CSTO and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) while possibly acting against U.S. interests in Afghanistan. Outside of Afghanistan, the region was remarkably stable and uninteresting for the purposes of the dissertation.[461]

The GRU may have provided limited support to the Taliban, including incentives to attack U.S. and coalition troops.[462]

---

460. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 112–120.

461. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 112–120.

462. Charlie Savage, Eric Schmitt, and Michael Schwirtz, "Russia Secretly Offered Afghan Militants Bounties to Kill U.S. Troops, Intelligence Says," *New York Times*, July 29, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/26/us/politics/russia-afghanistan-bounties.html.

3, 4, and 5. The surprising stability of Central Asia is not incongruent with any of the motives as Russia seems to have achieved equilibrium between motives and must now manage the resulting situation.

6. The observable behaviors do not weaken confidence in any explanation.

40. Interference in U.S. politics (~2016–2020)

1. Traditional measures of military power seem less relevant to the cyber and information military operations that Russian military units, most effectively the GRU, conducted against the United States from at least 2016 to the present.

2. Russia did not interfere significantly in the 2012 elections, perhaps because it was still developing relevant capabilities and perhaps because it saw little incentive to do so. While a full recounting is not helpful or required here, the basic outlines of these operations are limited cyber operations against various civilian networks that allowed the Russian military to gain access to moderately embarrassing internal communications from a relatively low-security network used by Hilary Clinton's political campaign. How this information was used, rather than how it was acquired, was groundbreaking. The use of military or military-controlled Russians to flood the U.S. information environment, primarily using English language internet sites and social media, with divisive words and

images aimed at weakening Secretary Clinton's candidacy, was relatively unprecedented in size, intensity, and effectiveness.[463]

Notably, while Russian military personnel played a leading role in these operations, they killed no one, crossed no border, and exploited people's cognitive biases and weaknesses using words and images rather than attacking physical military strengths. Had Americans not been so receptive to the images and words used to divide them by the Russian military, the operation would have ended and appeared farcically amateurish or, at best, like a rather ugly political campaign. The operation resembled a political campaign rather than a traditional military campaign.

While it is unprovable whether this military campaign altered the outcome of the 2016 election, there are some interesting and important provable facts. First, despite the election's outcome, the next U.S. *National Security Strategy* directed the United States government to prioritize great power competition with Russia and China, so the results were hardly a triumph for Russia. Second, the GRU showed restraint in not altering election results it may have had access to, not using violence, and not manufacturing false flag operations with actual physical effects inside the United States. They simply told competing groups of Americans what they needed to hear to act according to their existing biases and judgments. Third, Russia chose to continue this military campaign

---

463. Mueller, *Russian Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election.* and National Intelligence Council, *Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent U.S. Elections*. and Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *Open Hearing on the Intelligence Community's Assessment on Russian Activities and Intentions in the 2016 U.S. Elections.*

for years after it had been discovered. Russia did not feel the risks and reward balance required military termination.

As the operation continued, it contributed to intensified political unrest and division inside an increasingly inwardly focused United States. While this certainly had some value for Russia, it is not clear that any U.S. actions that it might have taken against Russia were prevented as a result. What is certain is that these operations created an intensely negative perception of Russia among supporters of the political party, which had historically advocated greater cooperation with Russia and whose Presidents had been more willing to work with Russia on issues like missile defense and nuclear arms control. This appears to be a major political disaster for Russia directly resulting from military operations below armed conflict. The operations have to aligned the U.S. Democratic Party and its leaders against Russia. Russia did not gain effective support from the U.S. Republican Party and its leaders and voters on any matter of policy and strategy. These American's are largely disinterested in cooperation with Russia and remain supporters of the U.S. military policies and capabilities that Russia claims to fear. The U.S. military spent these years intensely preparing for war with Russia or China when they had expected to be instead retrenching after a generation of war.

3. Russian observable behaviors are not incongruent with a greed motive as they attempted to alter the leadership and policies of the United States with an innovative use of military force.

4. Russian observable behaviors are only assessed as moderately incongruent as Russia may have concluded that cooperation would not occur, so it had little to lose. Even this assessment is reconsidered in Chapters 1, 4, and 5.

5. Russian observable behaviors are not incongruent with presidential political survival motives. They make more sense as a temporary measure that will disrupt the United States' international focus during the Presidency of a single individual while creating generations of problems for the Russian state.

6. Confidence in explanations using greedy and presidential political survival motives is not weakened. Confidence in the explanations that include a security motive is arguably weakened.

While Russia will always fear the United States economy allowing it to buy a solution to Russian deterrent capabilities, the existence of a low-cost and effective Russian military capability to impose political pain with operations like this could be a factor in some future mutual deterrence. If that prevented these operations from actually being used against U.S. interests, then it would amount to success for both sides.

41. Syria and Iraq (2012–2020)

1. The Russian Federation had maintained a military presence in Syria since Soviet times, even as it withdrew from almost all the other Soviet global bases.[464]

The behaviors linked to Syria are of high value as they were a central global security issue, and ISIL had begun operations against Russia as part of ongoing problems inside Russia.

2. In 2011, Syria was descending into a Civil War, which was in some ways connected to the ongoing conflict in Iraq from which the United States was then

464. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 112–120.

attempting to withdraw. Russia diplomatically supported Syria's existing government.[465] In 2014 and 2015, ISIL gained control of large portions of Iraq and Syria. More than 25 countries were involved in military operations in Iraq and Syria, including such seemingly disinterested parties as Estonia, Singapore, and Canada, who were part of a U.S.-led coalition that was opposed to the existing Syrian government.[466]

In the fall of 2015, Russia began employing tactical aircraft based in Syria and missiles from warships against targets in Syria. It also supported the Syrian government with special operations forces and private military contractors.[467]

Russia and the Syrian government seemed to act purposely in almost the most frightful way possible. For example, the New York Times published evidence that Russia used information provided to avoid attacks on hospitals and other places protected by international law as a source of targeting data to destroy hospitals in areas controlled by the opposition.[468] These types of behaviors seem like an irrelevant military pattern of actions that simply makes it difficult for others to cooperate against common enemies at the strategic level in exchange for, at best, some limited tactical attrition of the enemy, which is probably not even effective as it mobilizes people against Russia.

---

465. IISS, *Strategic Survey 2015*, Vol. 115. (London: Routledge, 2015), 122–130, https://doi.org/10.1080/04597230.2015.1077059.

466. IISS, *Strategic Survey 2015*, Vol. 115, XIX.

467. IISS, *Strategic Survey 2016*, Vol. 116, 115–127.

468. Evan Triebert and Christiaan Hill, "12 Hours. 4 Syrian Hospitals Bombed. One Culprit: Russia," *New York Times*, October 13, 2019, Updated May 4, 2020, https://nyti.ms/2IM8M21.

3 and 4. Russian behaviors are not incongruent with greed and security motives, although they are also less strong evidence for those behaviors than expected. The how of those behaviors creates an impression of casual brutality and disregard for the laws and customs of war that obscures this fact. Russia did not use its force to defend the policy and territory of one of its closest allies during four years of war and the entrance into combat against it of more than twenty-five nations, including the United States. This is a remarkable behavior if greed or security motives are the best explanation of Russian choices about military force.

5. Russian behaviors are not incongruent with presidential political survival motives. Secure in his post-Crimea popularity surge Russia sat out the defeats of the Syrian government by VEOs and two dozen states that cost it control of most of its territory. Shortly after ISIL became involved in internal Russian security, Russia was employing its most potent military force on land, sea, and air inside Syria.

6. The Russian military behaviors in Syria do not weaken confidence in the explanations based on greed or security motives or on presidential political survival motives. They are also no dramatic evidence supporting any of those motives as Russia had been present in Syria since 1991 and would be expected to oppose VEOs linked to Russia's domestic problems.

Importantly, the West was shocked to see the Russian military conduct joint operations, but in fairness, they did nothing that demonstrated capabilities the United States had not used on a larger and more effective scale as early as 1991. The apparently deliberate attacks on protected targets and civilians seem to have little real military value

and make it politically almost impossible for Western countries to cooperate with Russian military forces.

There were a number of incidents between Russian and Syrian and U.S. or connected forces and a larger number of combat engagements by their proxies. Notably, Turkey shot down a Russian fighter[469] and the United States shot down a Syrian fighter.[470] A Russian mercenary group attacked a U.S. base and was almost annihilated by Western airpower.[471] Surprisingly few examples exist of the escalation of incidents and misadventures between the two sides. Contrary to expectations, the Russian desire to avoid conflict with the United States may be relatively high, which suggests deterrence may be a less challenging task than it otherwise might be and that the risk of accidents leading to escalation may be lower than previously feared.

42. China (2012–2020)

1. China was probably a near-peer in terms of conventional military power early in the period and may o have exceeded it. Both sides had a credible nuclear second-strike capability against each other.[472]

---

469. Neil MacFarquhar and Steven Erlanger, "NATO-Russia Tensions Rise after Turkey Downs Jet," *The New York Times*, November 24, 2015, https://nyti.ms/1Sh5S1f.

470. Michael R. Gordon and Ivan Nechepurenko, "Russia Warns U.S. After Downing of Syrian Warplane," *New York Times*, June 19, 2017, https://nyti.ms/2sGDSRg.

471. Thomas Gibbons-Neff, "How a 4-Hour Battle between Russian Mercenaries and U.S. Commandos Unfolded in Syria," *New York Times*, May 24, 2018, https://nyti.ms/2GMKOj0.

472. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 112–120.

2. In 2014, China published *China's Military Strategy,* which emphasized space, cyber, air, and maritime power over landpower. It pursued a program of using landfills to turn reefs and shoals in the South China Sea into air and maritime bases as part of an attempt to claim vast tracts of territory and economic zones belonging under international law to other countries.[473] Throughout the period, China used its growing economic might to fuel relatively rapid improvements in its military capabilities.[474]

The Russian Federation and China are both members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, along with India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.[475] They do not appear to share any active goals but share the negative goal of opposing intervention in the domestic affairs of states, which they appear to view as setting a precedent for operations against them. Neither appears to have any near-term interest in each other's territory or in increasing land power on their borders, although in the longer term, this may not be true.

They began conducting combined military exercises that seemed to practice operations against the United States. In 2017, China and Russia held the *Joint Sea 2017* exercise with maritime forces in the Baltic Sea.[476] In 2018, Chinese military forces

---

473. IISS, *Military Balance*, vol. 116, 211 and 221–222.

474. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 112–120.

475. Shanghai Cooperation Organization, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization," Shanghai Cooperation Organization Website, October 4, 2020, http://eng.sectsco.org/about_sco/.

476. Andrew Higgins, "China and Russia Hold First Joint Naval Drill in the Baltic Sea," *The New York Times*, July 25, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/25/world/europe/china-russia-baltic-navy-exercises.html.

participated in *Vostok 2018,* which was claimed to involve "about 3,200 troops from the People's Liberation Army" and to be the largest exercise held on Russian soil since the Cold War.[477]

3., 4., and 5. Nothing that happened regarding China was incongruent with any of the motives, as any of the motives might have led to Russia finding a better relationship with an increasingly powerful China to be useful. Notably, this is no evidence they are bound by anything more than a desire to be seen to have a potential military partner against the United States. They share no ideological or other interest that binds them other than this consideration.

6. Confidence is not reduced in any explanation.

43. Other global issues (2012–2020)

1. The evidentiary value of Russia's global military cooperation and posture is high as Russia had incentives to seek allies and partners to balance U.S. power.

2. Russia maintained forces in Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia against the will of those states. Russia maintained nuclear, space, of air defense infrastructure in Belarus, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan. Russia stationed military forces in Syria, Tajikistan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan in cooperation with those states.[478]

---

477. Andrew Higgins, "300,000 Troops and 900 Tanks: Russia's Biggest Military Drills Since Cold War," *The New York Times*, August 28, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/28/world/europe/russia-military-drills.html.

478. IISS, *Military Balance,* vol. 120.

Russia's primary political-military cooperation organizations are the CSTO and SCO. CSTO members include Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.[479] This group is useful for conducting internal counterinsurgency and counterterrorism or for the mutual protection of their regimes, but it cannot project military power against another great power in the same way as NATO. The SCO includes the Russian Federation, China, India, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.[480] These countries conducted relatively large military exercises together during the period; however, there is not the kind of cooperation or structure that would allow these states to fight as an Alliance even if they wished to do so.

Russia also established or maintained military relationships with Turkey, Venezuela, Iran, Iraq, and Hezbollah. These relationships included coalition combat operations and arms sales that the United States opposed. Russian aircraft and ships conducted air and sea operations with a greater frequency than had been seen since Soviet times. While this was a very notable event in the media, the military value of such a small number of relatively antiquated platforms was much less than the value they created in the information environment.[481]

---

479. Collective Security Treaty Organization, "Collective Security Treaty Organization," Collective Security Treaty Organization Website, Accessed October 4, 2020, https://en.odkb-csto.org/, and https://en.odkb-csto.org/25years/.

480. Shanghai Cooperation Organization, "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization," Shanghai Cooperation Organization Website, October 4, 2020, http://eng.sectsco.org/about_sco/.

481. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 112–120.

3. The observable behaviors are not incongruent with a greed motive as these instances of cooperation and somewhat increased global posture modestly increase Russian military power. They are on a relatively small scale and seem more important symbolically than militarily.

4. The observable behaviors are not incongruent with a security motive as they could simply reflect attempts to balance U.S. power through relations with those states that do not fit well in the existing global order.

5. The observable behaviors are not incongruent with presidential political survival motives. These are very low-risk behaviors that can be used to demonstrate the president's effectiveness in shaping relationships with other important states and projecting Russian military power in the Russian domestic information environment.

6. The observable behaviors do not weaken confidence in any explanation.

44. Domestic Counterinsurgency and counterterrorism (2012–2020)

1. The Russian military was engaged throughout the period in counterinsurgency, internal security, and counter-terrorist operations against separatists and VEOs. Russia was more powerful than all of these parties but those separatists and VEOs who employed strategies that did not require them to hold ground were better able to avoid having military termination imposed on them by Russian military power.[482]

482. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 112–120.

These have low evidentiary value for greed and security motives as states are assumed to seek to maintain their territory and sovereignty. They have high value for presidential political survival motives.

2. A insurgency and terrorism followed the Second Chechen War. After 2015, this included some terrorist operations by ISIS directed from strongholds in Syria and Iraq. Local and regional Russian governments operated large and effective security forces. Russia reorganized its internal security structures to respond better to the insurgency.[483] The reorganizations also provided leaders at all levels with loyal and effective military forces under their direct control, which was useful in preventing or countering any potential coup or revolution.

3 and 4. The domestic security aspects of these operations are not useful evidence for the international motives. It is important in shaping Russian perceptions overall but is assumed to be a basic state function.

5. Russian observable behaviors are not incongruent with presidential political survival motives. Russia is sometimes accused of conducting false flag operations against itself for political diversionary purposes. This can neither be proven nor disproven in the context of the dissertation. While it is possibly true, it seems like unnecessary overkill that would risk undermining the publics' belief in the president's effectiveness because there was usually a sufficiently significant verifiable separatist or VEO threat to use for diversionary purposes if desired.

---

483. IISS, *Military Balance*, vols. 112–120.

6. These behaviors are not used to evaluate international motives but are important context as they were major military operations. They do not weaken confidence in presidential political survival motives.

Annex D: Images of explanation sets

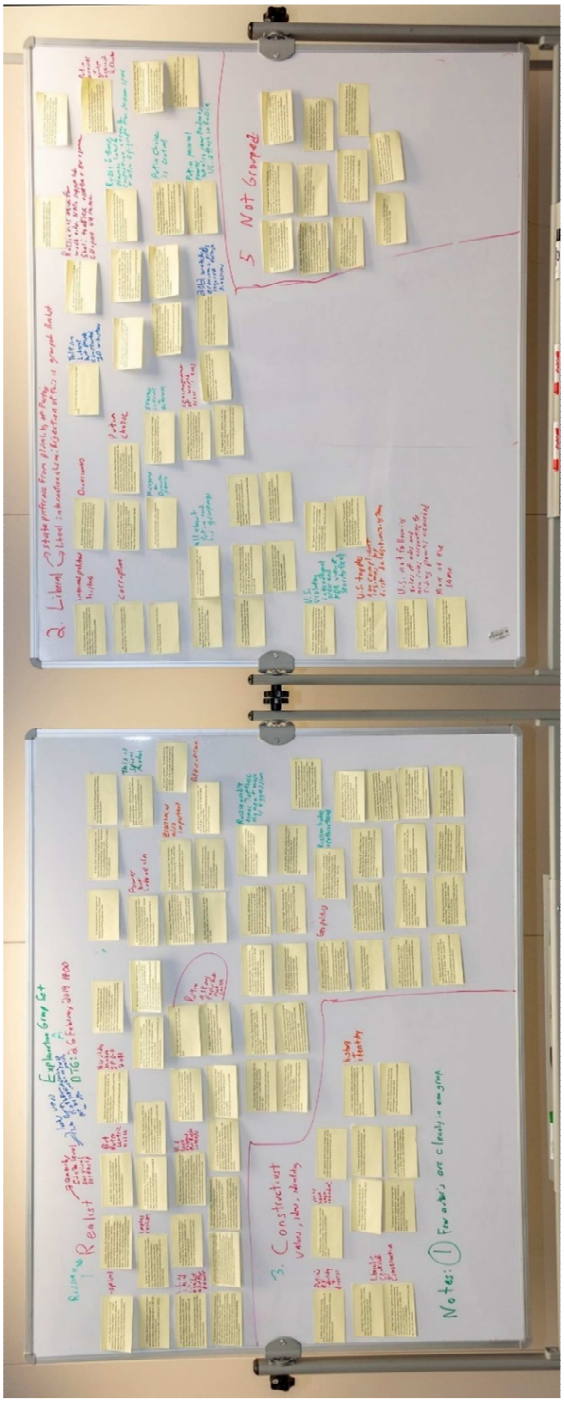

Figure 27. Photo of sources as arranged for Explanation Set A. Photo credit: Scott Finger.

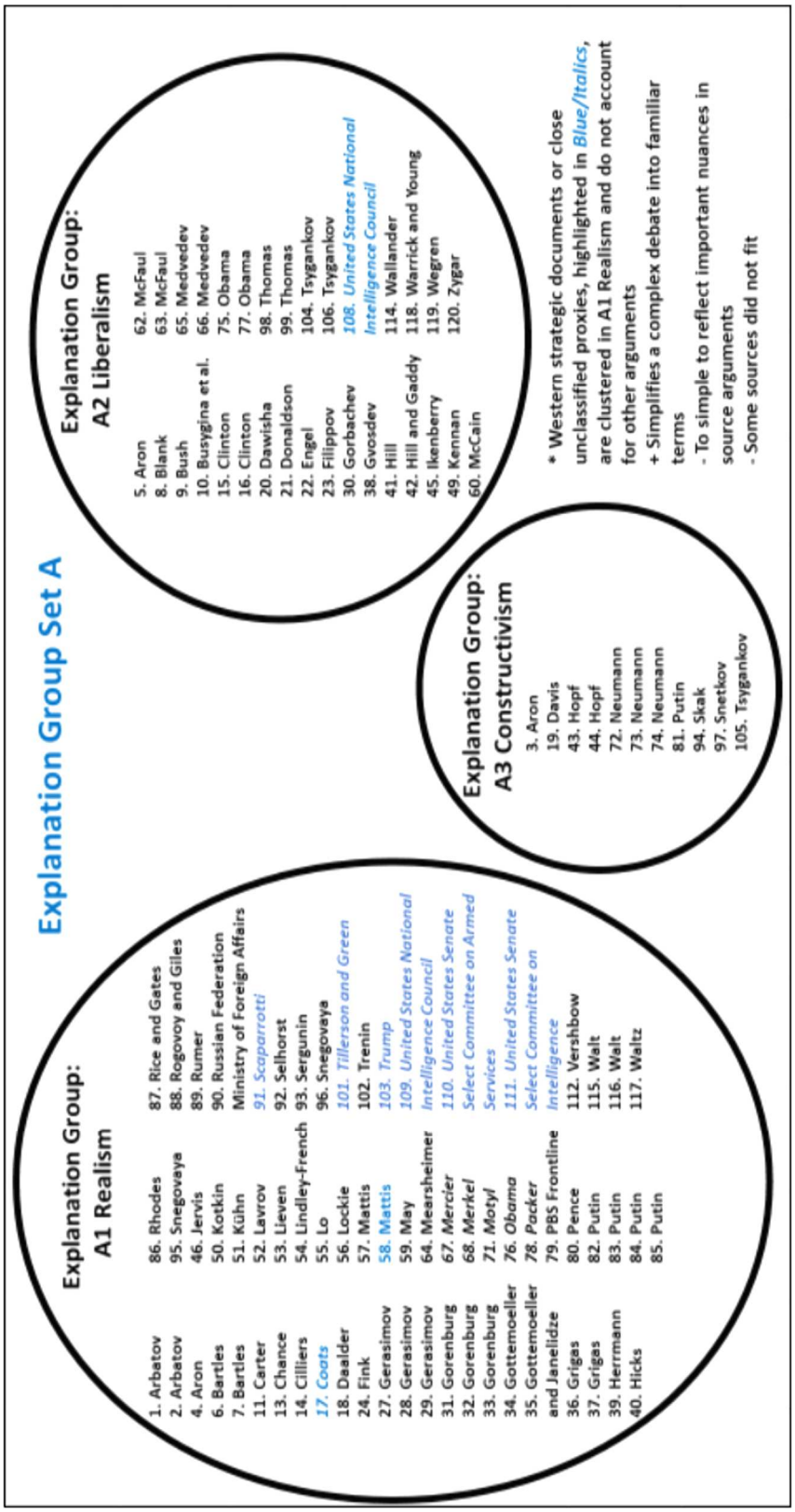

Figure 28. Summary of sources as arranged for Explanation Set A.

Figure 29. Photo of sources as arranged for Explanation Set B. Photo credit: Scott Finger.

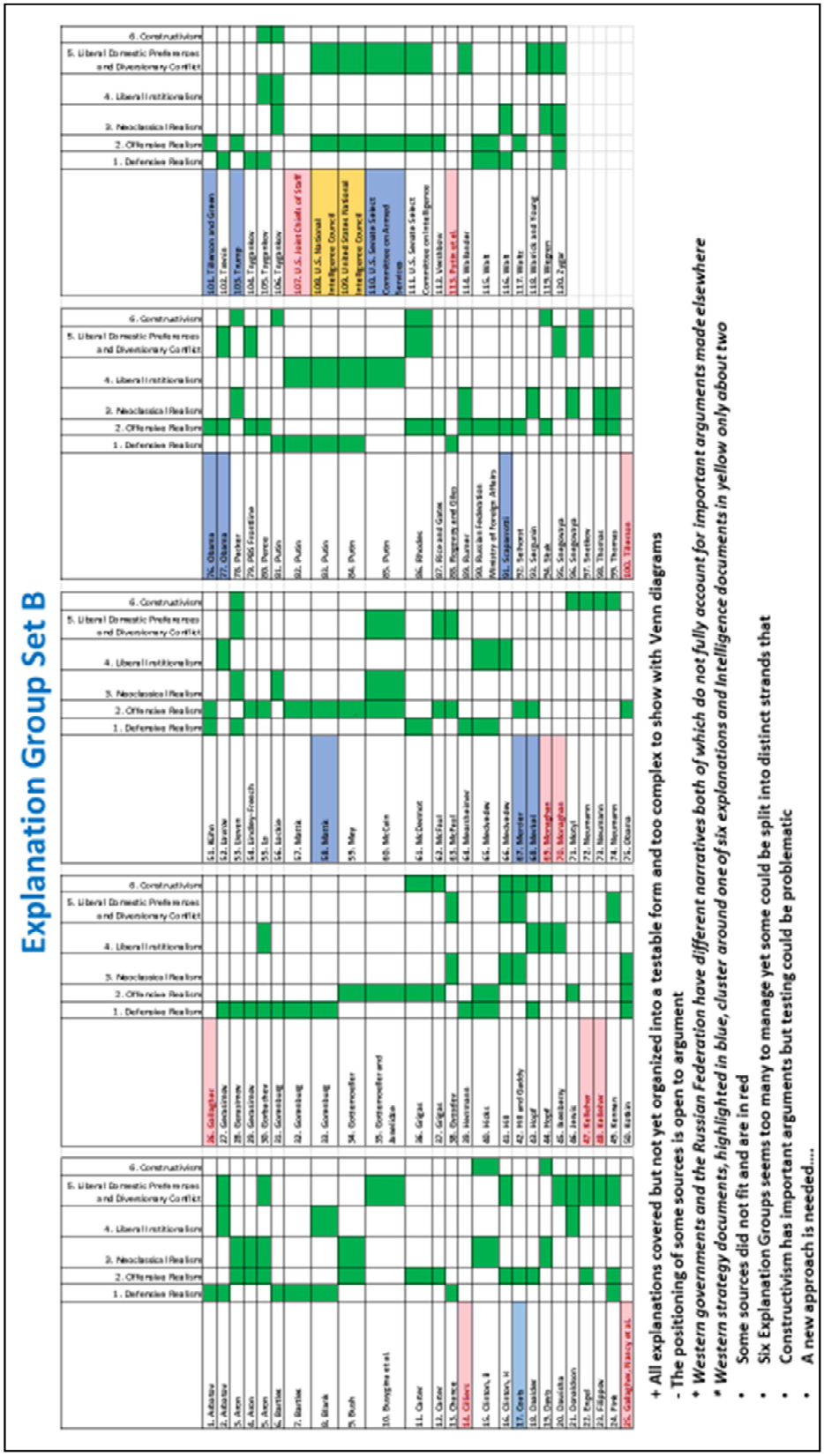

Figure 30. Summary of sources as arranged for Explanation Set B.

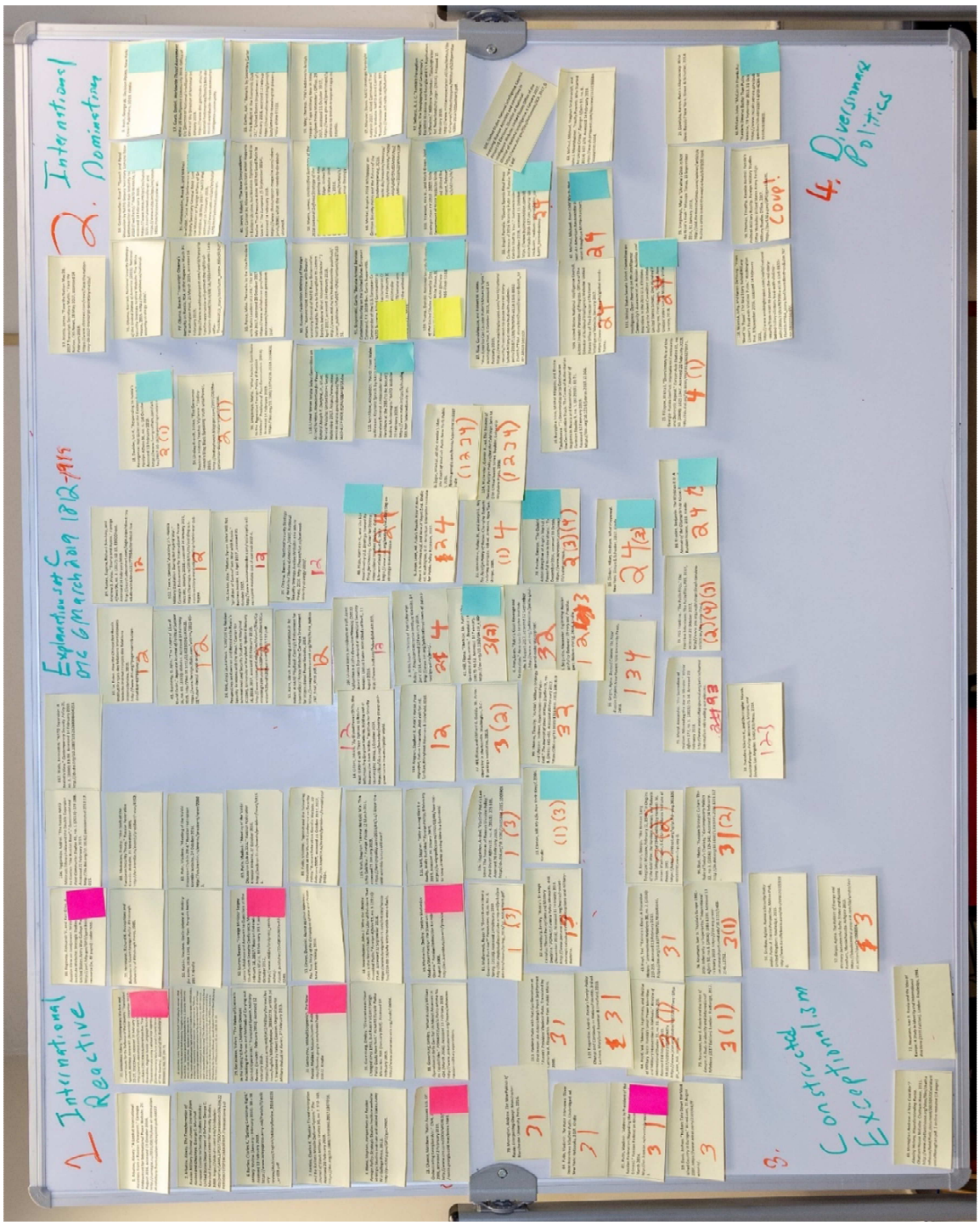

Figure 31. Photo of sources as arranged for Explanation Set C. Photo credit: Scott Finger.

1. Arbatov
2. Arbatov
3. Aron
4. Aron
5. Aron
6. Bartles
7. Bartles
8. Blank
9. Bush
10. Busygina et al.
11. Carter
12. Carter
13. Chance
14. Cilliers
15. Clinton
16. Clinton
17. Coats
18. Daalder
19. Davis
20. Dawisha
21. Donaldson
22. Engel
23. Filippov
24. Fink
25. Gallagher et al.
26. Gallagher
27. Gerasimov
28. Gerasimov
29. Gerasimov
30. Gorbachev
31. Gorenburg
32. Gorenburg
33. Gorenburg
34. Gottemoeller
35. Gottemoeller and Janelidze
36. Grigas
37. Grigas
38. Gvosdev
39. Herrmann
40. Hicks
41. Hill
42. Hill and Gaddy
43. Hopf
44. Hopf
45. Ikenberry
46. Jervis
47. Kelleher
48. Kelleher
49. Kennan
50. Kotkin
51. Kühn
52. Lavrov
53. Lieven
54. Lindley-French
55. Lo
56. Lockie
57. Mattis
58. Mattis
59. May
60. McCain
61. McDermot
62. McFaul
63. McFaul
64. Mearsheimer
65. Medvedev
66. Medvedev
67. Mercier
68. Merkel
69. Monaghan
70. Monaghan
71. Motyl
72. Neumann
73. Neumann
74. Neumann
75. Obama
76. Obama
77. Obama
78. Packer
79. PBS Frontline
80. Pence
81. Putin
82. Putin
83. Putin
84. Putin
85. Putin
86. Rhodes
87. Rice
88. Rogovoy
89. Rumer
90. Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs
91. Scaparrotti
92. Selhorst
93. Sergunin
94. Skak
95. Snegovaya
96. Snegovaya
97. Snetkov
98. Thomas
99. Thomas
100. Tillerson
101. Tillerson and Green
102. Trenin
103. Trump
104. Tsygankov
105. Tsygankov
106. Tsygankov
107. United States Joint Chiefs of Staff
108. United States National Intelligence Council
109. United States National Intelligence Council
110. United States Senate Select Committee on Armed Services
111. United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
112. Vershbow
113. Putin et al.
114. Wallander
115. Walt
116. Walt
117. Waltz
118. Warrick and Young
119. Wegren
120. Zygar

Figure 32. Reference list for a summary of sources as arranged for Explanation Set C.

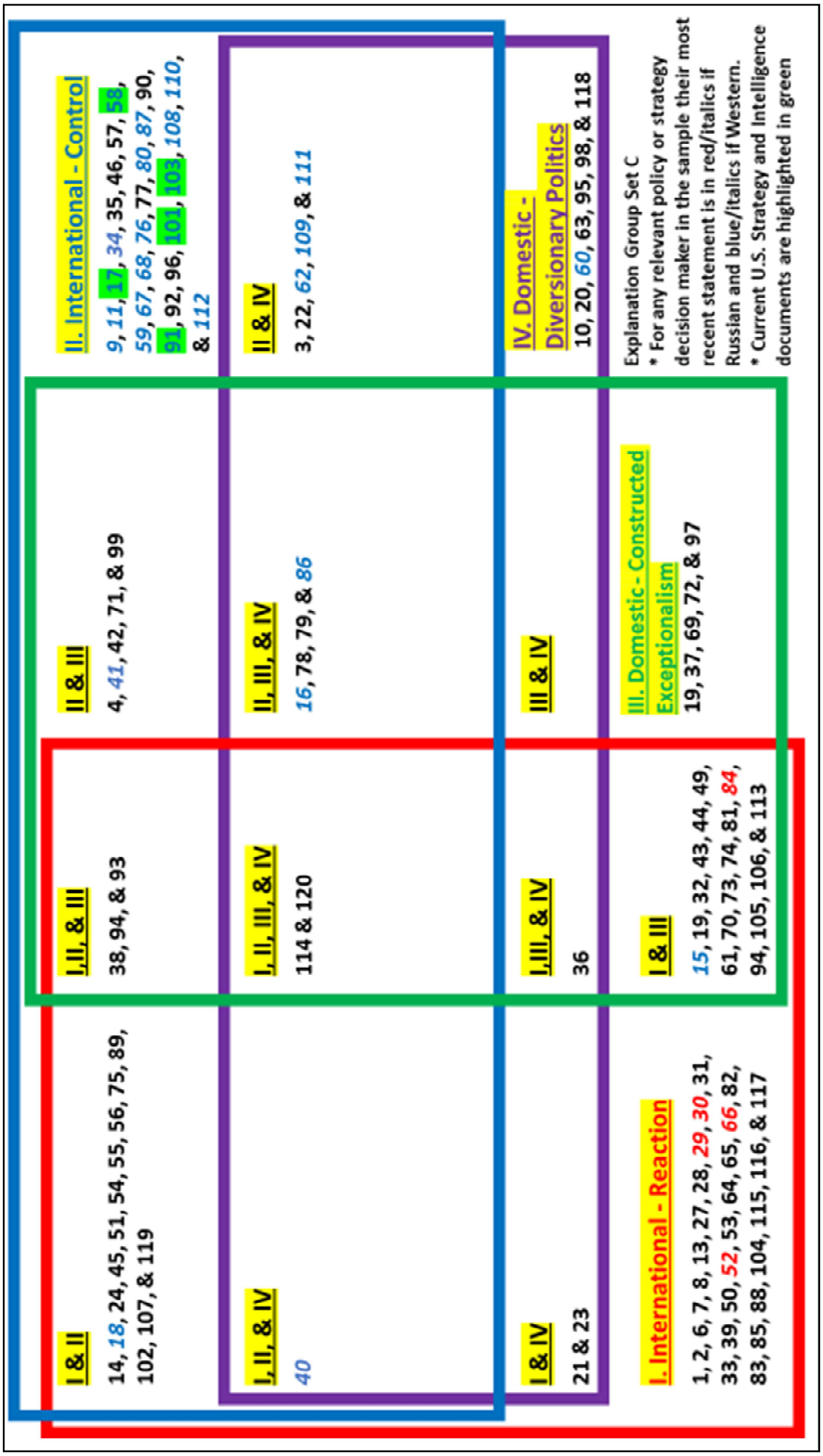

Figure 33. Summary of sources as arranged for Explanation Set C.

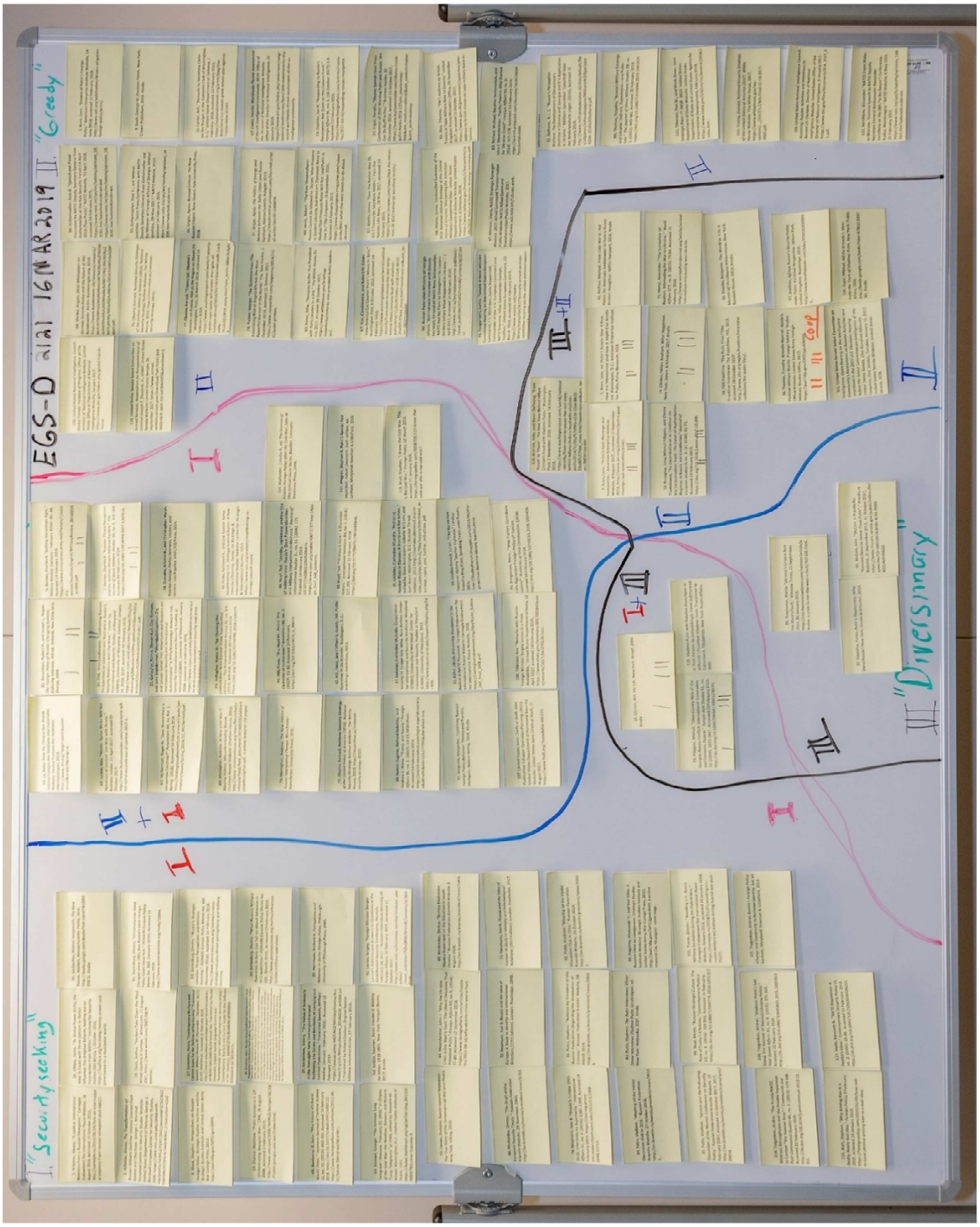

Figure 34. Photo of sources as arranged for Explanation Set D. Photo credit: Scott Finger.

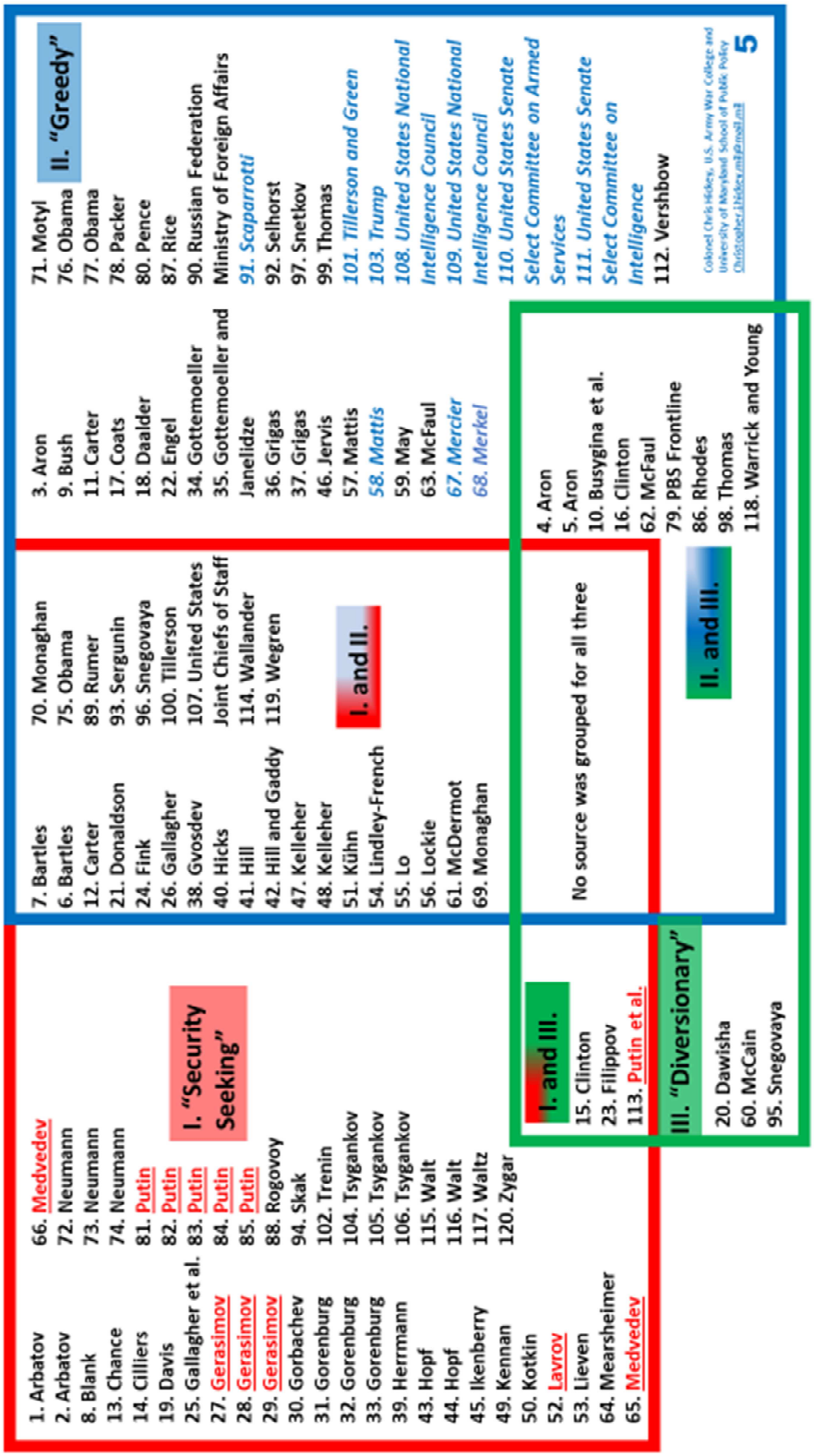

Figure 35. Summary of sources as arranged for Explanation Set D.

Figure 36. Photo of sources as arranged for Explanation Set E. Photo credit: Scott Finger.

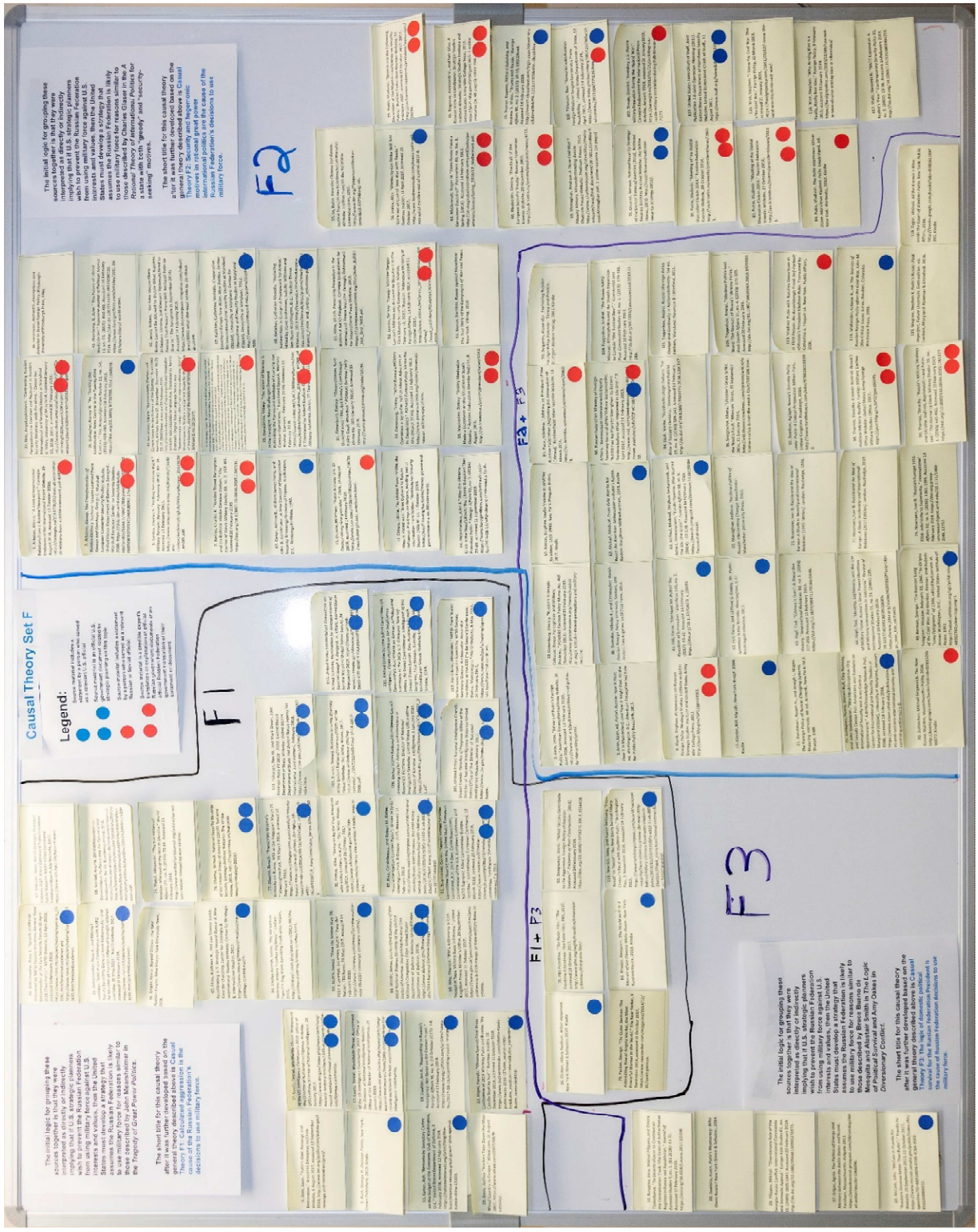

Figure 37. Photo of sources as arranged for Explanation Set F. Photo credit: Scott Finger.

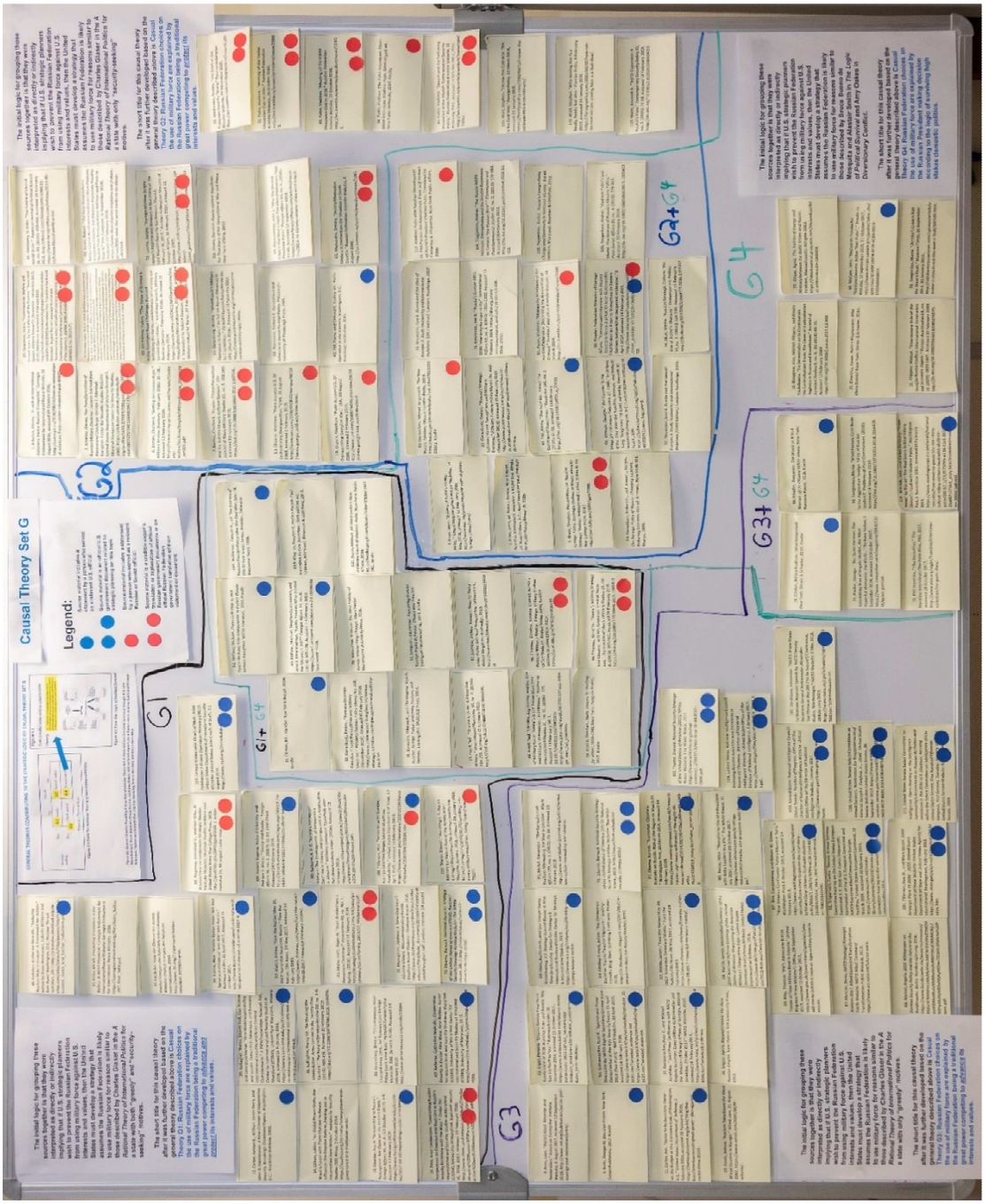

Figure 38. Photo of sources as arranged for Explanation Set G. Photo credit: Scott Finger.

Annex E: Researcher's biography and contact information

Christopher John Hickey teaches at the United States Army War College, where he serves as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Professor of Military Studies Chair. He is a U.S. Army Colonel in the Strategist Functional Area and served in assignments in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Europe. He was the lead planner at United States European Command for all Russian Federation and NATO-related contingency plans from 2007 to 2010. He then attended the NATO Defence College in Rome before serving in NATO positions in Afghanistan and Norway. Prior to becoming a Strategist, he taught at the United States Military Academy at West Point. He served with the 1st Cavalry Division, the 82nd Airborne Division, and the 3rd Infantry Division in the United States, Korea, Haiti, and Iraq as an Infantry Officer. He received a BA in International Studies from Johns Hopkins University, a Master's in Public Policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and a Master of Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College.

He can be contacted at Christopher.hickey@armywarcollege.edu.

Annex F: Disclaimer

Except where specifically cited otherwise, the views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in the text are solely those of the author and they do not necessarily reflect the views of the author's employer, organization, dissertation committee, or other group or individual, including the University of Maryland, the United States Army War College, the United States Army, the United States Department of Defense, or any other government or institution. Any claims that this document justifies Russian Federation violations of international law or criticizes U.S. policy are incorrect and possibly a deliberate misrepresentation by a foreign government that may have accessed this document previously. The author did not have available any relevant classified information while preparing this document.

The researcher believes that the GRU and possibly other actors accessed this document and may have modified it during its creation. Certain steps were taken to minimize the potential to tamper with the document, including the possible alteration of text or citations to enable later charges of plagiarism. A similar approach to discrediting Western officials and academics may have already occurred in several cases.

Annex G: Sources used in designing the explanation sets

Arbatov, Alexey. "A Look at International Relations from a Russian Viewpoint." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Website, 26 August 2016. A Look at International Relations From A Russian Viewpoint - Carnegie Moscow Center - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Arbatov, Alexey. *The Transformation of Russian Military Doctrine: Lessons Learned from Kosovo and Chechnya*. Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany: United States Department of Defense George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, 2000. https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/marshall-center-papers/transformation-russian-military-doctrine-lessons-learned-kosovo-and-chechnya/transformation-russian-military.

Aron, Leon. *Drivers of Putin's Foreign Policy: Statement before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs On US Policy toward Putin's Russia*. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 14 June 2016. https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep03253.

Aron, Leon, ed. *Putin's Russia: How It Rose, How It Is Maintained, and How It Might End*. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 2015. Kindle.

Aron, Leon. "Putin's Goal: Revenge and Restoration." American Enterprise Institute Website, 8 August 2017. https://www.aei.org/articles/putins-goal-revenge-and-restoration/.

Bartles, Charles K. "Getting Gerasimov Right." *Military Review* 96, no. 1 (January–February 2016): 30–38. https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20160228_art009.pdf.

Bartles, Charles K. "Russian Threat Perception and the Ballistic Missile Defense System." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 30, no. 2. (April–June 2017):152–169. https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2017.1307016.

Binnendijk, Hans and Catherine McArdle Kelleher. "NATO Reassurance and Nuclear Reductions: Creating the Conditions" in *Reducing Nuclear Risks in Europe: A Framework for Action*. Edited by Steve Andreasen, Isabelle Williams, and Sam Nunn, 96–117. Washington, D.C.: Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2011.

Blank, Stephen. *Perspectives on Russian Foreign Policy*. Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2012. http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo29905.

Bush, George W. Decision Points. New York: Crown Publishers, 2010. Kindle.

Busygina, Irina, Mikhail Filippov, and Elmira Taukebaeva. "To Decentralize or to Continue on the Centralization Track: The Cases of Authoritarian Regimes in Russia and Kazakhstan." *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 9, no. 1 (2018): 61–71. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euras.2017.12.008.

Carter, Ashton B. "Remarks by Secretary Carter on the Budget at the Economic Club of Washington, D.C." United States Department of Defense, 2 February 2016.

https://nationalinterest.org/print/blog/the-buzz/america-reveals-great-power-plan-against-russia-china-15103.

Carter, Ashton B., William James Perry, and John D. Steinbruner. *A New Concept of Cooperative Security*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1992.

Chance, Matthew. "Putin Accuses U.S. of Orchestrating Georgian War." *CNN*, 28 August 2008. http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/europe/08/28/russia.georgia.cold.war/index.html.

Cilliers, Jakkie. "As Global Power Shifts, the West Is Faced with Three Options to Retain Influence: Pre-Emptive Reform, Holding out or Insurrection from Within." Institute for Security Studies (ISS) Africa, 1 October 2014. https://issafrica.org/iss-today/money-power-and-governance-in-a-multipolar-world.

Clinton, Bill. *My Life*. New York: Knopf, 2004. Kindle.

Clinton, Hillary Rodham. *What Happened*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017. Kindle.

Coats, Daniel. *Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community 2019*. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 29 January 2019. https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/congressional-testimonies/item/1845-statement-for-the-record-worldwide-threat-assessment-of-the-us-intelligence-community.

Daalder, Ivo H. "Responding to Russia's Resurgence: Not Quiet on the Eastern Front." *Foreign Affairs* 96, no. 6. (16 October 2017): 1–8. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2017-10-16/responding-russias-resurgence.

Davis, Joshua. "Hackers Take Down the Most Wired Country in Europe." *Wired*, 21 August 2007. https://www.wired.com/2007/08/ff-estonia/.

Dawisha, Karen. *Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014.

Donaldson, Robert H. and Joseph L. Nogee. *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*. 4th ed. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009.

Engel, Pamela. "Obama Spends Final Press Conference of 2016 Warning Putin and Russia: 'We Can Do Stuff to You.' " *Business Insider*, 16 December 2016. https://www.businessinsider.com/obama-russia-putin-hacks-2016-12?utm_source=copy-link&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=topbar&utm_term=desktop.

Filippov, Mikhail. "Diversionary Role of the Georgia-Russia Conflict: International Constraints and Domestic Appeal." *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 10. (2009): 1825–1847. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09668130903278975.

Fink, Anya Loukianova. "Contrasting Russian Perspectives on Coercion and Restraint in Russia's Security Relations with the West." Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM), University of Maryland, Updated January 16, 2018.

http://www.cissm.umd.edu/sites/default/files/Contrasting%20Russian%20Perspectives%20on%20Coercion%20and%20Restraint%20121517.pdf.

Gallagher, Nancy, Steven Kull, Clay Ramsay, and John Steinbruner. "Worldpublicopinion.Org and Levada Center Poll: Americans and Russians on International Security and Arms Control Questionnaire." A PIPA/Knowledge Network Poll, Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM), University of Maryland, January 2008. https://www.cissm.umd.edu/publications/americans-and-russians-international-security-and-arms-control-questionnaire-0.

Gallagher, Nancy W. "Re-Thinking the Unthinkable: Arms Control in the Twenty-First Century." *The Nonproliferation Review* 22, no. 3–4. (2015): 469–498. https://doi.org/10.1080/10736700.2016.1149279.

Gerasimov, Valery. "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying out Combat Operations." *Military Review* 96, no. 1 (January–February 2016): 23–29. Translated by Robert Coalson. Original source *Military-Industrial Kurier*, 2013. https://www.armyupress.army.mil/portals/7/military-review/archives/english/militaryreview_20160228_art008.pdf.

Gerasimov, Valery. "Russian General Staff Chief Valery Gerasimov's 2018 Presentation to the General Staff Academy: Thoughts on Future Military Conflict." *Military Review* 99, no. 1. (January–February 2019): 130–138. Translated by Harold. O. Orenstein. https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/Jan-Feb-2019/Gerasimov-Future/.

Gorbachev, Mikhail Sergeevich. *The New Russia*. Malden, Massachusetts: Polity, 2016. Kindle.

Gorenburg, Dmitry. "Circumstances Have Changed since 1991, but Russia's Core Foreign Policy Goals Have Not." *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 560*. January 2019. http://www.ponarseurasia.org/node/10094.

Gorenburg, Dmitry. "Russia's Strategic Calculus: Threat Perceptions and Military Doctrine." *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 448*. November 2016. http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/russias-strategic-calculus-threat-perceptions-and-military-doctrine.

Gorenburg, Dmitry. "What Russia's Military Operation in Syria Can Tell Us About Advances in Its Capabilities." *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 424*. March 2016. http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/advances-russian-military-operations.

Gottemoeller, Rose E. "Speech and Panel Discussion by NATO Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller at the Kyiv Security Forum 13 April 2018 (Two Parts)." NATO Website, 13 April 2018. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_153591.htm?selectedLocale=en.

Gottemoeller, Rose E., and Mikheil Janelidze. "Joint Press Conference with NATO Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of

Georgia, Mikheil Janelidze, 29 May 2017." NATO Website, 2017. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_144599.htm?selectedLocale=en.

Grigas, Agnia. *The Politics of Energy and Memory between the Baltic States and Russia*. Farnham, Massachusetts: Ashgate 2013. https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/umdcp/detail.action?docID=1068896.

Grigas, Agnia. *Beyond Crimea: The New Russian Empire.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016.

Gvosdev, Nikolas K. and Christopher Marsh. *Russian Foreign Policy: Interests, Vectors, and Sectors*. Los Angeles: SAGE/CQ Press, 2014.

Herrmann, Richard K. *Perceptions and Behavior in Soviet Foreign Policy.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985.

Hicks, Kathleen H. and Lisa Sawyer Samp. *Recalibrating U.S. Strategy toward Russia: A New Time for Choosing*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2017. https://www.csis.org/analysis/recalibrating-us-strategy-toward-russia.

Hill, Fiona and Clifford G. Gaddy. *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2015.

Hill, Fiona. "The Next Mr. Putin? The Question of Succession." *Daedalus* 146, no. 2. (Spring 2017): 41–52. https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_a_00433.

Hopf, Ted. "Identity, Legitimacy, and the Use of Military Force: Russia's Great Power Identities and Military Intervention in Abkhazia." *Review of International Studies* 31, no. S1. (2006): 225–243. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40072157?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

Hopf, Ted. "'Crimea Is Ours': A Discursive History." *International Relations* 30, no. 2. (2016): 227–255. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117816645646.

Ikenberry, G. John. "The Future of Liberal World Order." *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 16, no. 03 (September 2015): 450–455. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1468109915000122.

Jervis, Robert. "The New Sleepwalkers: Russia Cannot Be Allowed to Dictate What Happens in Eastern Ukraine, but Western Diplomats Need to Realize That Pressure Alone Will Not Lead Putin to Give In." *The European*, 5 September 2014. https://www.theeuropean-magazine.com/robert-jervis/8961-what-the-west-needs-to-do-about-ukraine#.

Kelleher, Catherine McArdle. *Cooperative Security in Europe New Wine, New Bottles*. College Park, MD, University of Maryland Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM), 2012.

Kennan, George. "The Kennan 'Long Telegram': Moscow, February 22, 1946." in *Origins of the Cold War: The Novikov, Kennan, and Roberts "Long Telegrams" of 1946*. Edited by Kenneth M Jensen, 17–32. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1991 https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112048502782;view=1up;seq=3.

Kotkin, Stephen. *Stalin Volume II: Waiting for Hitler, 1928–1941*. New York: Penguin Books, 2017. Kindle.

Kühn, Ulrich. *Preventing Escalation in the Baltics: A NATO Playbook*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2018. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Kuhn_Baltics_INT_final_WEB.pdf.

Lavrov, Sergey. "Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's Address and Answers to Questions at the 53rd Munich Security Conference, Munich, February 18, 2017." Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 18 February 2017. http://www.mid.ru/en/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2648249.

Lieven, Dominic. *Russia against Napoleon: The True Story of the Campaigns of War and Peace*. New York: Viking, 2010.

Lindley-French, Julian. The Gerasimov Doctrine: History Teaches Vigilance." Lindley-French's Blog Blast: Speaking Truth unto Power, 2015. http://lindleyfrench.blogspot.com/2015/08/the-gerasimov-doctrine-history-teaches.html.

Lo, Bobo. *How the Chinese See Russia*. Paris: Institut Français des Relations Internationales, 2010. http://www.ifri.org/?page=contribution-detail&id=6379&lang=uk.

Lockie, Alex. "Mattis: Syrian Strike Will Not 'Spiral out of Control' into War with Russia." *Business Insider*, 11 April 2017. http://www.businessinsider.com/russia-syria-will-not-spiral-escalate-out-of-control-2017-4.

Mattis, James. "Face the Nation May 28, 2017 Transcript: Secretary Mattis." *CBS News Face the Nation,* 28 May 2017. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/face-the-nation-may-28-2017-transcript-secretary-mattis/.

Mattis, James. *Unclassified Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge*. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Defense, 2018. https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf.

May, Theresa. "PM's Address to British Troops at Tapa Military Base in Estonia." United Kingdom Prime Minister's Office, 29 September 2017.

McCain, John. "McCain in Pravda.Ru: "Russians Deserve Better Than Putin."" Senator McCain's Website, 19 September 2017. https://www.mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/speeches?ID=6BF10974-EF09-4C8A-95E8-8502A0BBB822.

McDermott, Roger N. "Does Russia Have a Gerasimov Doctrine?" *Parameters* 46, no. 1, (2016): 97–105. https://press.armywarcollege.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2827&context=parameters.

McFaul, Michael. From Cold War to Hot Peace: An American Ambassador in Putin's Russia. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018. Kindle.

McFaul, Michael, Stephen Sestanovich, and John J. Mearsheimer. "Faulty Powers: Who Started the Ukraine Crisis?" *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 6. (2014): 167–178. https://search.proquest.com/docview/1618198684?accountid=4444.

Mearsheimer, John J. "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin." *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (September–October 2014): 77–89. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-08-18/why-ukraine-crisis-west-s-fault.

Medvedev, Dmitry. "Dmitry Medvedev Made a Statement on the Situation in South Ossetia." Kremlin Website. Updated 8 August 2008. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/1043.

Medvedev, Dmitry. "The Draft of the European Security Treaty." Kremlin Website. Updated 29 November 2009. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/6152.

Mercier, Denis. *NATO Strategic Foresight Analysis 2017*. Norfolk, VA: NATO Allied Command Transformation, 2017. https://www.act.nato.int/futures-work.

Merkel, Angela. *2016 Whitepaper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr*. Berlin: Bundesregierung, 2016. https://www.gmfus.org/publications/white-paper-german-security-policy-and-future-bundeswehr.

Monaghan, Andrew. *A 'New Cold War'? Abusing History, Misunderstanding Russia*. London: Chatham House, 2015, http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_document/20150522ColdWarRussiaMonaghan.pdf.

Monaghan, Andrew. *The New Politics of Russia: Interpreting Change*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016.

Motyl, Alexander. "The Surrealism of Realism: Misreading the War in Ukraine." *World Affairs* 177, no. 5. (2015): 75–84. http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/surrealism-realism-misreading-war-ukraine.

Neumann, Iver B. *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations*. 1996 Edition. London: Routledge, 1996.

Neumann, Iver B. *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations*. 2017 Edition. London: Routledge, 2017.

Neumann, Iver B. "Russia's Europe 1991–2016: Inferiority to Superiority." *International Affairs* 92, no. 6. 2016): 1381–1399. https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1111/1468-2346.12752.

Obama, Barack. "Transcript: Obama's Remarks on Russia, NSA at the Hague on March 25." *Washington Post*, 25 March 2014. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/transcript-putin-says-russia-will-protect-the-rights-of-russians-abroad/2014/03/18/432a1e60-ae99-11e3-a49e-76adc9210f19_story.html?utm_term=.68be3fc9a923.

Obama, Barrack. *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2010, maintained by National Security Strategy archive website, http://nssarchive.us/national-security-strategy-2010/.

Obama, Barrack. *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2010, maintained by National Security Strategy archive website, http://nssarchive.us/national-security-strategy-2015/.

Packer, George. "The Quiet German: The Astonishing Rise of Angela Merkel, the Most Powerful Woman in the World." *The New Yorker*, 1 December 2014. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/12/01/quiet-german.

PBS Frontline. "The Putin Files." *PBS*, 2017. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/interview-collection/the-putin-files/.

Pence, Mike. "Remarks by the Vice President with Baltic Leaders in a JPA." The White House Website, 31 July 2017. https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-vice-president-baltic-leaders-jpa/.

Putin, Vladimir. "Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy." Kremlin Website, 10 February 2007. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034.

Putin, Vladimir. "Address by President of the Russian Federation (Regarding the Annexation of Crimea)." Kremlin Website, 18 March 2014. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603.

Putin, Vladimir. "Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club in 2014." Kremlin Website, 24 October 2014. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603.

Putin, Vladimir. "Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club in 2016." Kremlin Website, 27 October 2016. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53151.

Putin, Vladimir, Nataliya Gevorkyan, Natalya Timakova, and Andrei Kolesnikov. F*irst Person: An Astonishingly Frank Self-Portrait of Russia's President Vladimir Putin*. Translated by Catherine A. Fitzpatrick, New York: Public Affairs, 2000.

Rhodes, Benjamin. *The World as It Is: A Memoir of the Obama White House*. New York: Random House, 2018. Paperback and Kindle.

Rice, Condoleezza, and Robert M. Gates. "How America Can Counter Putin's Moves in Syria." *Washington Post*, 8 October 2015. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/from-reset-to-pause-the-real-story-behind-hillary-clintons-feud-with-vladimir-putin/2016/11/03/f575f9fa-a116-11e6-8832-23a007c77bb4_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.580201ddc65f.

Rogovoy, Aleksandr V., and Keir Giles. *A Russian View on Landpower*. Strategic Studies Institute Website: Strategic Studies Institute and United States Army War College Press, 2015. http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo63669.

Rumer, Eugene, Richard Sokolsky, and Andrew S. Weiss. "Trump and Russia." *Foreign Affairs* 96, no. 2. (2017): 12–19. https://www.jstor.org/stable/i40204353.

Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Kommersant Interview with Deputy Secretary General of NATO Rose Gottemoeller, "NATO Had No Plans to Strengthen Its Eastern Borders before What Happened in Ukraine."" 2 April 2017. http://www.mid.ru/en/nedostovernie-publikacii/-/asset_publisher/nTzOQTrrCFd0/content/id/2716352.

Scaparrotti, Curtis. *Senate survey Services Committee Hearing on the United States European Command, F.Y. 2019 Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, Commander of the U.S. European Command and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Testifies*. Stuttgart: United States European Command, 12 March 2018, https://www.eucom.mil/media-library/transcript/36273/senate-armed-services-committee-hearing-on-the-united-stateseuropean-command-f-y-2019.

Selhorst, Tony. "Russia's Perception Warfare: The Development of Gerasimov's Doctrine in Estonia and Georgia and It's Application in Ukraine." *Militaire Spectator: Tijdschrift Voor Het Nederlandsche Leger* 185, no. 4 (2016): 148–164. http://www.militairespectator.nl/sites/default/files/uitgaven/inhoudsopgave/Militaire%20Spectator%204-2016%20Selhorst.pdf.

Sergunin, Alexander. *Explaining Russian Foreign Policy Behavior: Theory and Practice*. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2016. Kindle.

Skak, Mette. "Russian Strategic Culture: The Role of Today's Chekisty." *Contemporary Politics* 22, no. 3. (2016): 324–341. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2016.1201317.

Snegovaya, Maria. "Ukraine's Crisis Is Not the West's Fault." *Moscow Times*, 15 September 2014. http://old.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/ukraine-s-crisis-is-not-the-west-s-fault/507100.html.

Snegovaya, Maria. "What Factors Contribute to the Aggressive Foreign Policy of Russian Leaders?" *Problems of Post-Communism* 67, no. 1 (2018):93–110. https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2018.1554408.

Snetkov, Aglaya. *Russia's Security Policy under Putin: A Critical Perspective*. Milton Park, UK: Routledge, 2015.

Stone, Oliver. and Vladimir Putin. *The Putin Interviews: Oliver Stone Interviews Vladimir Putin*. New York: Hotbooks, 2017. Audiobook.

Thomas, Timothy. *Kremlin Kontrol: Russia's Political-Military Reality*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: United States Army Foreign Military Studies Office, 2017, https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo106695.

Thomas, Timothy. "Russia's Military Strategy and Ukraine: Indirect, Asymmetric-and Putin-Led." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 28, no. 3. (2015): 445–461. https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2015.1061819.

Tillerson, Rex. "Remarks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at a Press Availability." United States Department of State Website, 12 April 2017. https://www.state.gov/secretary/20172018tillerson/remarks/2017/04/270136.htm.

Tillerson, Rex W. and Mark Green. *Joint Strategic Plan: 2018–2022*. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of State and United States Agency for International Development, February 2018, https://www.state.gov/joint-strategic-plan/.

Trenin, Dimitri. "Avoiding U.S.-Russia Military Escalation During the Hybrid War." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Website, January 2018. https://carnegie.ru/2018/01/25/avoiding-u.s.-russia-military-escalation-during-hybrid-war-pub-75277.

Trump, Donald. *National Security Strategy of the United States of America [2017]*. Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/.../2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf.

Tsygankov, Andrei. *Russia's Foreign Policy Change and Continuity in National Identity*. 3rd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013.

Tsygankov, Andrei. "The Russia-NATO Mistrust: Ethnophobia and the Double Expansion to Contain "the Russian Bear."" *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 46, no. 1. (2013): 179–188. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2012.12.015.

Tsygankov, Andrei. "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4. (2015): 279–303. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1060586X.2015.1005903.

United States Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning*. Washington, D.C.: The Joint Staff, 11 August 2011, https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=685339.

United States National Intelligence Council. *Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent U.S. Elections*. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 6 January 2017, https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf.

United States National Intelligence Council. *Global Trends: Paradox of Progress*. Washington, D.C.: Office of The Director of National Intelligence, January 2017, https://www.dni.gov/index.php/global-trends-home.

United States Senate Select Committee on Armed Services. *Nomination for Reappointment of General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC*. Washington, D.C.: United States Senate, 26 September 2017, https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/download/?id=7EBB53A3-56E0-457F-860E-91FAA38A4BF5&download=1.

United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. *Open Hearing on the Intelligence Community's Assessment on Russian Activities and Intentions in the 2016 U.S. Elections: Hearing before the Select Committee on Intelligence of the United States Senate, One Hundred Fifteenth Congress, First Session, Tuesday, January 10, 2017*. Washington, D.C.: United States Senate, 2018, https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/hearings/open-hearing-intelligence-communitys-assessment-russian-activities-and-intentions-2016-us.

Vershbow, Alexander. "NATO: From Wales to Warsaw; Keynote Speech by NATO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Alexander Vershbow at the 2BS ('to Be

Secure') Conference, Budva, Montenegro." NATO Website, 6 May 2016. https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/opinions_130583.htm?selectedLocale=en.

Wallander, Celeste A. ed. *The Sources of Russian Foreign Policy after the Cold War*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996.

Walt, Stephen. "Why Arming Kiev Is a Really, Really Bad Idea." *Foreign Policy.* 9 February 2015. https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/02/09/how-not-to-save-ukraine-arming-kiev-is-a-bad-idea/.

Walt, Stephen. "I Knew the Cold War. This Is No Cold War." *Foreign Policy.* 12 March 2018. https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/12/i-knew-the-cold-war-this-is-no-cold-war/.

Waltz, Kenneth N. "NATO Expansion: A Realist's View." *Contemporary Security Policy* 21, no. 2. (2000): 23-38. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13523260008404253.

Warrick, Joby, and Karen DeYoung. "From 'Reset' to 'Pause': The Real Story Behind Hillary Clinton's Feud with Vladimir Putin." *Washington Post*, 3 November 2016. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/from-reset-to-pause-the-real-story-behind-hillary-clintons-feud-with-vladimir-putin/2016/11/03/f575f9fa-a116-11e6-8832-23a007c77bb4_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.580201ddc65f.

Wegren, Stephen K. *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*. Sixth ed. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

Zygar, Mikhail. *All the Kremlin's Men: Inside the Court of Vladimir Putin*. New York: Public Affairs, 2016. Kindle.

Annex H: Escalation Dynamics

While not an objective of the dissertation, an official involved in U.S. strategic planning asked that future work address the detailed implications of the three motives for escalation dynamics. Table 9 and Table 10 are the first step towards this effort and are included as they may help suggest a way forward for future research.

Table 9. *Implied escalation dynamics for the presidential political survival motive.*

Escalation dynamics related to domestic politics		
	If the Russian Federation President believes …	Impact on the presidential survival motive
1	... using force is likely to strengthen the broad winning coalition with most Russians.	Escalatory
2	... using force is likely to sustain the broad winning coalition with most Russians in the face of a threat of a potential weakening.	Escalatory
3	... using force is likely to weaken the broad winning coalition with most Russians.	De-escalatory
4	... not using force is using force is likely to weaken the broad winning coalition with most Russians.	Escalatory
5	... using force is likely to strengthen the fallback winning coalition with elites and security services.	Escalatory
6	... using force is likely to sustain the fallback winning coalition with elites and security services in the face of a threat of a potential weakening.	Escalatory
7	... using force is likely to weaken the fallback winning coalition with elites and security services.	Highly de-escalatory
8	... not using force is likely to weaken the fallback winning coalition with elites and security services.	Highly escalatory
9	... there is a threat to the broad coalition and an opportunity to manage it with a diversionary use of force.	Escalatory
10	... there is a threat to the fallback coalition of elites and security services and an opportunity to manage it with a diversionary use of force.	Highly escalatory
11	... the broad winning coalition with most Russians is attempting to or is preparing to replace him.	Escalatory
12	... the inner coalition of elites and security services is attempting to or is preparing to replace him.	Escalatory
13	... the United States is trying to cause the broad winning coalition with most Russians to attempt to replace him.	Highly escalatory
14	... the United States is trying to cause the inner coalition of elites and security services to attempt to replace him.	Intensely escalatory
15	... believes the United States is trying to ensure his political survival	Intensely de-escalatory

Table 10. *Implied escalation dynamics for the greed/domination motive and the self-protection/security motive.*

Escalation dynamics related to military power			
Current Russian available military power is …		Impact on domination/greed motive	Impact on self-protection/security motive
16	… greater than current U.S. available military power (for both this includes the contributions of allies and partners).	Escalatory	De-escalatory
17	… comparable to current U.S. available power (for both this includes the contributions of allies and partners).	Neutral	Neutral
18	… less than current U.S. available power (for both this includes the contributions of allies and partners).	De-escalatory	Escalatory
Trend is that Russian military power will …		Impact on domination/greed motive	Impact on self-protection/security motive
19	… increase in the future relative to U.S. military power for both this includes the contributions of allies and partners).	De-escalatory	De-escalatory
20	… be stable in the future relative to U.S. military power for both this includes the contributions of allies and partners).	Neutral	Neutral
21	… decrease in the future relative to U.S. military power for both this includes the contributions of allies and partners).	Escalatory	Escalatory
The context or scenario for the Russian use of force gives them …		Impact on domination/greed motive	Impact on self-protection/security motive
22	… an advantage if they initiate offensive operations.	Escalatory	Neutral
23	… a disadvantage if they initiate offensive operations.	De-escalatory	De-escalatory
24	… an advantage if they establish a deterrent or defensive posture and await initiation of offensive operations.	Neutral	De-escalatory
25	… a disadvantage if they establish a deterrent or defensive posture and await initiation of offensive operations.	Escalatory	Escalatory
26	… them the ability to distinguish between a counterparties deterrent or defensive posture and preparations for offensive operations.	De-escalatory	De-escalatory
27	… no ability to distinguish between a counterparties deterrent or defensive posture and preparations for offensive operations.	Escalatory	Escalatory
Escalation dynamics related to information			
Russian Federation/Russian Federation President believes …		Impact on domination/greed motive	Impact on self-protection/security motive
29	… using force will end or greatly reduce current cooperation with the U.S. that protects Russian interests.	De-escalatory	De-escalatory
30	… existing cooperation with U.S. does not protect Russian interests.	Escalatory	Escalatory
31	… a U.S. use of force against Russian interests is imminent.	Highly escalatory	Highly escalatory
32	… a U.S. use of force against Russian interests is to be expected in the future.	Escalatory	Escalatory
33	… even if it uses force, it will in the future have cooperation with the U.S. that protects Russian interests.	Escalatory	Escalatory
34	… using force will end or greatly reduce future cooperation with the U.S. that protects Russian interests.	De-escalatory	De-escalatory
35	… future cooperation with U.S. will not protect Russian interests.	Escalatory	Escalatory

Bibliography

Books and documents

Arbatov, Alexey. The Transformation of Russian Military Doctrine: Lessons Learned from Kosovo and Chechnya. Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany: United States Department of Defense George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, 2000. https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/marshall-center-papers/transformation-russian-military-doctrine-lessons-learned-kosovo-and-chechnya/transformation-russian-military.

Ariely, Dan. *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions*. New York: HarperCollins e-books, 2015. Kindle.

Aron, Leon. *Drivers of Putin's Foreign Policy: Statement before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs On US Policy toward Putin's Russia*. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 14 June 2016. https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep03253.

Aron, Leon, ed. *Putin's Russia: How It Rose, How It Is Maintained, and How It Might End*. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 2015. Kindle.

Blank, Stephen. *Perspectives on Russian Foreign Policy*. Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2012. http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo29905.

Biden, Joseph. *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*. Washington, D.C.: The White House, March 2021. https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/03/interim-national-security-strategic-guidance/.

Binnendijk, Hans and Catherine McArdle Kelleher. "NATO Reassurance and Nuclear Reductions: Creating the Conditions" in *Reducing Nuclear Risks in Europe: A Framework for Action*. Edited by Steve Andreasen, Isabelle Williams, and Sam Nunn, 96–117. Washington, D.C.: Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2011.

Blank, Stephen. *Russian Military Politics and Russia's 2010 Defense Doctrine*. Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2011. http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB1050.pdf.

Bull, Hedley. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. 4th ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, Randolph M. Siverson, James D. Morrow, and Alastair Smith. *The Logic of Political Survival*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003. Hardback and Kindle.

Bush, George W. *Decision Points*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2010. Kindle.

Buzan, Barry. *The National Security Problem in International Relations*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1983.

Carter, Ashton B., William James Perry, and John D. Steinbruner. *A New Concept of Cooperative Security*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1992.

Clinton, Bill. *My Life*. New York: Knopf, 2004. Kindle.

Clinton, Hillary Rodham. *What Happened*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017. Kindle.

Coats, Daniel. *Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community 2019*. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 29 January 2019. https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/congressional-testimonies/item/1845-statement-for-the-record-worldwide-threat-assessment-of-the-us-intelligence-community.

Congressional Research Service (Authorship redacted). *Uzbekistan's Closure of the Airbase at Karshi-Khanabad: Context and Implications*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 29 March 2006. https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20060329_RS22295_4f97732b6b30a4671efb594442a61629f24968ec.pdf.

Dawisha, Karen. *Putin's Kleptocracy: -Who Owns Russia?* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014. Hardback and Kindle.

Donaldson, Robert H. and Joseph L. Nogee. *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*. 4th ed. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009.

Evera, Stephen Van. *The Spiral Model vs. The Deterrence Model*. Cambridge: MIT, 2009. http://ocw.mit.edu.

Fuller, William C. *Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600-1914*. New York: Free Press, 1992.

Galante, Laura and Shaun Ee. *Defining Russian Election Interference: An Analysis of Select 2014 to 2018 Cyber Enabled Incidents*. Washington, D.C.: Atlantic Council Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security, September 2018. https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Defining_Russian_Election_Interference_web.pdf.

George, Alexander and Andrew Bennett. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. BCSIA Studies in International Security. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005. Paperback and Kindle.

Gheciu, Alexandra, William C. Wohlforth, and Andrew H. Kydd. "Game Theory and the Future of International Security," in *The Oxford Handbook of International Security*, Edited by Alexandra Gheciu and William C. Wohlforth. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198777854.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780198777854-e-13.

Glaser, Charles L. *Rational Theory of International Politics: The Logic of Competition and Cooperation*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010. Paperback and Kindle.

Gorbachev, Mikhail Sergeevich. *The New Russia*. Malden, Massachusetts: Polity, 2016. http://books.google.com/books?vid=isbn9781509503872. Kindle.

Grigas, Agnia. *The Politics of Energy and Memory between the Baltic States and Russia*. Farnham, Massachusetts: Ashgate 2013.

https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/umdcp/detail.action?docID=1068896. Hardback and Kindle.

Grigas, Agnia. *Beyond Crimea: The New Russian Empire*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016.

Gvosdev, Nikolas K. and Christopher Marsh. *Russian Foreign Policy: Interests, Vectors, and Sectors*. Los Angeles: SAGE/CQ Press, 2014.

Herrmann, Richard K. *Perceptions and Behavior in Soviet Foreign Policy.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985.

Hickey, Christopher John. *Integrating Game Theory into Strategy, Design, and Joint Operational Planning*. Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: United States Army War College, 2015.

Hickey, Christopher John. *Developing and Applying a Design Approach to Evaluate the Dominant Explanations for Why the Russian Federation Uses Interstate Force*. Toronto: International Studies Association 2019 Annual Conference, 2019.

Hickey, Christopher John, Robert Bradford, and Celestino Perez. "Design, Assessment, and the Causal Imperative in Complex Operations and Campaigns." *The Journal of Defense Modeling and Simulation*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1548512919856111.

Hicks, Kathleen H. and Lisa Sawyer Samp. *Recalibrating U.S. Strategy toward Russia: A New Time for Choosing*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2017. https://www.csis.org/analysis/recalibrating-us-strategy-toward-russia.

Hill, Fiona and Clifford G. Gaddy. *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2015. Paperback and Kindle.

International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). *The Military Balance*. London: Published annually by or for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1990–2020. 29 vols. https://www.iiss.org/publications/the-military-balance.

International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)*, Strategic Survey 2015–2016*. vols. 115–116. London: Routledge, 2015–2016. https://doi.org/10.1080/04597230.2015.1077059.

Jarvenpaa, Pauli. *Zapad-2013: View from Helsinki*. Washington, DC: The Jamestown Foundation, 2014. https://jamestown.org/report/zapad-2013-a-view-from-helsinki/.

Jervis, Robert. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. rev. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press; 2017.

Jervis, Robert. *How Statesmen Think: The Psychology of International Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017.

Jussel, Paul. *The U.S. Invasion of Russia*. Historical exhibit. Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Viewed 2017.

Kahneman, Daniel, Paul Slovic, and Amos Tversky. *Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Kalb, Marvin. *Imperial Gamble: Putin, Ukraine, and the New Cold War*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2015.

Kelleher, Catherine McArdle. *Cooperative Security in Europe: New Wine, New Bottles*. College Park, MD, University of Maryland Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM), 2012.

Kennan, George. "The Kennan 'Long Telegram': Moscow, February 22, 1946." in *Origins of the Cold War: The Novikov, Kennan, and Roberts "Long Telegrams" of 1946*. Edited by Kenneth M Jensen, 17–32. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1991 https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112048502782;view=1up;seq=3.

Kotkin, Stephen. *Stalin Volume II: Waiting for Hitler, 1928–1941*. New York: Penguin Books, 2017. Kindle.

Kühn, Ulrich. *Preventing Escalation in the Baltics: A NATO Playbook*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2018. https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Kuhn_Baltics_INT_final_WEB.pdf.

Kydd, Andrew H. *International Relations Theory: The Game Theoretic Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Levada Analytical Center. *Russian Public Opinion 2018*. Moscow: Levada Analytical Center, 2019. https://www.levada.ru/en/annual-yearbook/.

Lieven, Dominic. *Russia against Napoleon: The True Story of the Campaigns of War and Peace*. New York: Viking, 2010.

Lo, Bobo. *How the Chinese See Russia*. Paris: Institut Français des Relations Internationales, 2010. http://www.ifri.org/?page=contribution-detail&id=6379&lang=uk.

Mastriano, Douglas and Derek O'Malley. *Project 1704: A U.S. Army War College Analysis of Russian Strategy in Eastern Europe, an Appropriate U.S. Response, and the Implications for U.S. Landpower*. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2015. https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1274.

Mattis, James. *Unclassified Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge*. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Defense, 2018. https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf.

McFaul, Michael. *From Cold War to Hot Peace: An American Ambassador in Putin's Russia*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018. Paperback and Kindle.

Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. rev. ed. New York: Norton, 2003. Paperback and Kindle.

Mercier, Denis. *NATO Strategic Foresight Analysis 2017*. Norfolk, VA: NATO Allied Command Transformation, 2017. https://www.act.nato.int/futures-work.

Merkel, Angela. *2016 Whitepaper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr*. Berlin: Bundesregierung, 2016. https://www.gmfus.org/publications/white-paper-german-security-policy-and-future-bundeswehr.

Middlebrook, Martin. *The Argentine Fight for the Falklands*. rev. ed. Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military Classics Book, 2003. Kindle.

Monaghan, Andrew. *The New Politics of Russia: Interpreting Change*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016.

Monaghan, Andrew. *Power in Modern Russia: Strategy and Mobilisation*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017.

Murray, Williamson, and Allan Reed Millett. *Calculations: Net Assessment and the Coming of World War II*. New York: Free Press, 1992.

National Geographic Society. *Atlas of the World*. 8th ed. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2004.

Nichol, Jim. *Kyrgyzstan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 30 August 2013, https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/97-690.pdf.

Neumann, Iver B. *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations*. 1996 Edition. London: Routledge, 1996.

Neumann, Iver B. *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations*. 2017 Edition. London: Routledge, 2017.

Oakes, Amy. *Diversionary War: Domestic Unrest and International Conflict*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012. Paperback and Kindle.

Obama, Barrack. *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2010, maintained by National Security Strategy archive website, http://nssarchive.us/national-security-strategy-2010/.

Obama, Barrack. *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2010, maintained by National Security Strategy archive website, http://nssarchive.us/national-security-strategy-2015/.

Oye, Kenneth A. *Cooperation under Anarchy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986.

Pfonner, Michael R. *Systemism Orientation Package Mk V*. Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 2019.

Peter Pomerantsev, *Nothing Is True and Everything Is Possible: Adventures in Modern Russia*. London: Faber and Faber, 2017.

Putin, Vladimir. *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation*. Moscow: The Kremlin, 10 January 2000, https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/589768.

Putin, Vladimir. *Russian Federation National Security Strategy*. Moscow: The Kremlin, 31 December 2015, https://russiamatters.org/node/21421.

Putin, Vladimir, Nataliya Gevorkyan, Natalya Timakova, and Andrei Kolesnikov. *First Person: An Astonishingly Frank Self-Portrait of Russia's President Vladimir Putin*. Translated by Catherine A. Fitzpatrick, New York: Public Affairs, 2000.

Rhodes, Benjamin. *The World as It Is: A Memoir of the Obama White House*. New York: Random House, 2018. Kindle.

Mueller, Robert S. III. *Report on the Investigation into Russian Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election*. Washington, D.C.: Department of Justice, March 2019, https://www.justice.gov/archives/sco/file/1373816/download.

Rogovoy, Aleksandr V. and Keir Giles. *A Russian View on Landpower*. Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2015, http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo63669.

Ryan, Alex J. "Applications of Complex Systems to Operational Design," in *Unifying Themes in Complex Systems: Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on Complex Systems*. Cambridge, MA: New England Complex Systems Institute, 2011, 1252–1266, http://necsi.edu/events/iccs2011/papers/40.pdf.

Scaparrotti, Curtis. *Senate survey Services Committee Hearing on the United States European Command, F.Y. 2019 Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, Commander of the U.S. European Command and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Testifies*. Stuttgart: United States European Command, 12 March 2018, https://www.eucom.mil/media-library/transcript/36273/senate-armed-services-committee-hearing-on-the-united-stateseuropean-command-f-y-2019.

Sergunin, Alexander. *Explaining Russian Foreign Policy Behavior: Theory and Practice*. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2016. Paperback and Kindle.

Service, Robert. *The Penguin History of Modern Russia: From Tsarism to the Twenty-First Century*. Fourth edition. London: Penguin Books, 2015.

Snetkov, Aglaya. *Russia's Security Policy under Putin: A Critical Perspective*. Milton Park, UK: Routledge, 2015.

Stone, Oliver and Vladimir Putin. *The Putin Interviews: Oliver Stone Interviews Vladimir Putin*. New York: Hotbooks, 2017, Audiobook.

Thomas, Timothy. *Kremlin Kontrol: Russia's Political-Military Reality*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: United States Army Foreign Military Studies Office, 2017, https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo106695.

Tillerson, Rex W. and Mark Green. *Joint Strategic Plan: 2018–2022*. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of State and United States Agency for International Development, February 2018, https://www.state.gov/joint-strategic-plan/.

Trump, Donald. *National Security Strategy of the United States of America [2017]*. Washington, D.C.: The White House, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/.../2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf.

Tsygankov, Andrei. *Russia's Foreign Policy Change and Continuity in National Identity*. 3rd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013.

United States Department of the Army. *Army Design Methodology, Army Techniques Publication 5-0.1*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, July 2015, https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/atp5_0x1.pdf.

United States Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Description of the National Military Strategy 2018*. Washington D.C.: The Joint Staff, 2018, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Publications/UNCLASS_2018_National_Military_Strategy_Description.pdf.

United States Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning*. Washington, D.C.: The Joint Staff, 16 March 2018. https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/concepts/joint_concept_integrated_campaign.pdf?ver=2018-03-28-102833-257.

United States Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Joint Publication 5-0, Doctrine for Planning Joint Operations*. Washington, D.C.: The Joint Staff, 13 April 1995, https://www.bits.de/NRANEU/others/jp-doctrine/jp5_0%2895%29.pdf.

United States Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning*. Washington, D.C.: The Joint Staff, 26 December 2006, https://www.bits.de/NRANEU/others/jp-doctrine/jp5_0%2806%29.pdf.

United States Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning*. Washington, D.C.: The Joint Staff, 11 August 2011, https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=685339.

United States Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Planning*. Washington, D.C.: The Joint Staff, 16 June 2017, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp5_0_20171606.pdf.

United States Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Joint Doctrine Note 1-18, Strategy*. Washington, D.C.: The Joint Staff, 25 April 2018 and updated 3 June 2019, https://www.jcs.mil/Doctrine/Joint-Doctrine-Pubs/Joint-Doctrine-Notes/.

United States National Intelligence Council. *Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent U.S. Elections*. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 6 January 2017, https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf.

United States National Intelligence Council. *Global Trends: Paradox of Progress*. Washington, D.C.: Office of The Director of National Intelligence, January 2017, https://www.dni.gov/index.php/global-trends-home.

United States Senate Select Committee on Armed Services. *Nomination for Reappointment of General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC*. Washington, D.C.: United States Senate, 26 September 2017, https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/download/?id=7EBB53A3-56E0-457F-860E-91FAA38A4BF5&download=1.

United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. *Open Hearing on the Intelligence Community's Assessment on Russian Activities and Intentions in the 2016 U.S. Elections: Hearing before the Select Committee on Intelligence of the United States Senate, One Hundred Fifteenth Congress, First Session, Tuesday, January 10, 2017*. Washington, D.C.: United States Senate, 2018, https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/hearings/open-hearing-intelligence-communitys-assessment-russian-activities-and-intentions-2016-us.

Wallander, Celeste A. ed. *The Sources of Russian Foreign Policy after the Cold War*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996.

Walt, Stephen. *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987.

Waltz, Kenneth N. *Theory of International Politics*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979. Kindle.

Wegren, Stephen K. *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*. Sixth ed. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

Woolf, Amy F., Paul K. Kerr, and Mary Beth Dunham Nikitin. *Arms Control and Nonproliferation: A Catalog of Treaties and Agreements*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, March 26, 2020, https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo111470.

Yarger, Harry R. "Toward a Theory of Strategy: Art Lykke and the Army War College Strategy Model," in *The U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues*, 45-52. http://publications.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/2088.pdf. Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010.

Yarhi-Milo, Keren. *Knowing the Adversary: Leaders, Intelligence, and Assessment of Intentions in International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014. Paperback and Kindle.

Yeltsin, Boris. *Russian Federation National Security Blueprint*. Moscow: The Kremlin, 30 December 1997, https://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/blueprint.html.

Zygar, Mikhail. *All the Kremlin's Men: Inside the Court of Vladimir Putin*. New York: Public Affairs, 2016. Paperback and Kindle.

Journals

Bartles, Charles K. "Getting Gerasimov Right." *Military Review* 96, no. 1 (January–February 2016): 30–38. https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20160228_art009.pdf.

Bartles, Charles K. "Russian Threat Perception and the Ballistic Missile Defense System." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 30, no. 2. (April–June 2017):152–169. https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2017.1307016.

Biddle, Tami Davis. "Coercion Theory: A Basic Introduction for Practitioners." *Texas National Security Review* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2020): 94–109. http://dx.doi.org/10.26153/tsw/8864.

Borghard, Erica and Shawn W. Lonergan. "The Logic of Coercion in Cyberspace." Security Studies 26, no. 3 (2017/07/03 2017): 452–81. https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2017.1306396.

Borghard, Erica and Shawn W. Lonergan. "Deterrence by Denial in Cyberspace." *Journal of Strategic Studies* (2021): 1–36. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2021.1944856.

Bryan, James and Anastassiya Perevezentseva. "Elite Response to Protest in Authoritarian Settings: Evidence from Russia." *Democratization* 28, no. 6 (2021): 1133–51. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2021.1892076.

Buchanan, Richard. "Wicked Problems in Design Thinking." *Design Issues* 8, no. 2 (1992): 5–21. https://www-jstor-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/stable/1511637?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

Busygina, Irina, Mikhail Filippov, and Elmira Taukebaeva. "To Decentralize or to Continue on the Centralization Track: The Cases of Authoritarian Regimes in Russia and Kazakhstan." *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 9, no. 1 (2018): 61–71. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euras.2017.12.008.

Daalder, Ivo H. "Responding to Russia's Resurgence: Not Quiet on the Eastern Front." *Foreign Affairs* 96, no. 6. (16 October 2017): 1–8. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2017-10-16/responding-russias-resurgence.

Dragneva, Rilka, and Kataryna Wolczuk. "Between Dependence and Integration: Ukraine's Relations with Russia." *Europe-Asia Studies* 68, no. 4 (2016): 678–698. https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2016.1173200.

Efimova, Anna and Denis Strebkov. "Linking Public Opinion and Foreign Policy in Russia." *International Spectator* 55, no. 1 (2020): 93–111. https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2019.1700040.

Fearon, James D. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 379–414. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706903.

Filippov, Mikhail. "Diversionary Role of the Georgia-Russia Conflict: International Constraints and Domestic Appeal." *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 10. (2009): 1825–1847. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09668130903278975.

Gallagher, Nancy W. "Re-Thinking the Unthinkable: Arms Control in the Twenty-First Century." *The Nonproliferation Review* 22, no. 3–4. (2015): 469–498. https://doi.org/10.1080/10736700.2016.1149279.

Gerasimov, Valery. "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying out Combat Operations." *Military Review* 96, no. 1 (January–February 2016): 23–29. Translated by Robert Coalson. Original source *Military-Industrial Kurier*, 2013. https://www.armyupress.army.mil/portals/7/military-review/archives/english/militaryreview_20160228_art008.pdf.

Gerasimov, Valery. "Russian General Staff Chief Valery Gerasimov's 2018 Presentation to the General Staff Academy: Thoughts on Future Military Conflict." *Military Review* 99, no. 1. (January–February 2019): 130–138. Translated by Harold. O. Orenstein. https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/Jan-Feb-2019/Gerasimov-Future/.

Glaser, Charles L. Andrew H. Kydd, Mark L. Haas, John M. Owen, and Sebastian Rosato. "Correspondence: Can Great Powers Discern Intentions?" *International Security* 40, no. 3 (2016): 197–215. https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_c_00230.

Harry, Charles and Nancy Gallagher. "Classifying Cyber Events: A Proposed Taxonomy." *Journal of Information Warfare* 17, no. 3 (2018): 17–31. https://www.jinfowar.com/journal/volume-17-issue-3/classifying-cyber-events-proposed-taxonomy.

Hill, Fiona. "The Next Mr. Putin? The Question of Succession." *Daedalus* 146, no. 2. (Spring 2017): 41–52. https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_a_00433.

Hopf, Ted. "Identity, Legitimacy, and the Use of Military Force: Russia's Great Power Identities and Military Intervention in Abkhazia." *Review of International Studies* 31, no. S1. (2006): 225–243. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40072157?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

Hopf, Ted. "'Crimea Is Ours': A Discursive History." *International Relations* 30, no. 2. (2016): 227–255. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117816645646.

Ikenberry, G. John. "The Future of Liberal World Order." *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 16, no. 03 (September 2015): 450–455. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1468109915000122.

James, Patrick. "Systemist International Relations." *International Studies Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (2019): 781–804. https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqz086. https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqz086.

Lieber, Keir A. "Mission Impossible: Measuring the Offense-Defense Balance with Military Net Assessment." *Security Studies* 20, no. 3 (2011): 451–459. https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2011.599193.

Lilly, Bilyana and Joe Cheravitch. "The Past, Present, and Future of Russia's Cyber Strategy and Forces." *12 International Conference on Cyber Conflict,* May 2020: 129–155. https://doi.org/10.23919/CyCon49761.2020.9131723.

Lynn-Jones, Sean M. "Offense-Defense Theory and Its Critics," *Security Studies* 4, no. 4 (1995): 660–691. https://doi.org/10.1080/09636419509347600.

Marten, Karen. "The 'KGB State' and Russian Political and Foreign Policy Culture." *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 30, no. 2 (2017): 131–51. https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2017.1270053.

McDermott, Roger N. "Does Russia Have a Gerasimov Doctrine?" *Parameters* 46, no. 1, (2016): 97–105. https://press.armywarcollege.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2827&context=parameters.

McFaul, Michael, Stephen Sestanovich, and John J. Mearsheimer. "Faulty Powers: Who Started the Ukraine Crisis?" *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 6. (2014): 167–178. https://search.proquest.com/docview/1618198684?accountid=4444.

Mearsheimer, John J. "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions that provoked Putin." *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (September–October 2014): 77–89. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-08-18/why-ukraine-crisis-west-s-fault.

Motyl, Alexander. "The Surrealism of Realism: Misreading the War in Ukraine." *World Affairs* 177, no. 5. (2015): 75–84. http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/surrealism-realism-misreading-war-ukraine.

Mansfield, Edward D. and Jack Snyder. "Incomplete Democratization and the Outbreak of Military Disputes." *International Studies Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (2002): 529–549. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3096128.

Neumann, Iver B. "Russia's Europe 1991–2016: Inferiority to Superiority." *International Affairs* 92, no. 6. 2016): 1381–1399. https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1111/1468-2346.12752.

Putnam, Robert D. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games." *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 427–460. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2706785.

Reiter, Dan and Allan C. Stam. "Democracy and Battlefield Military Effectiveness." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 3 (1998): 259–277. https://www.jstor.org/stable/174514.

Rittel, Horst W. J. and Melvin M. Webber. "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning." *Policy Sciences* 4, no. 2 (1973): 155–169. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF01405730.

Rivera, David W, and Sharon Werning Rivera. "The Militarization of the Russian Elite Under Putin." *Problems of Post-Communism* 65, no. 4 (2018): 221–32. https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2017.1295812.

Rosato, Sebastian. "The Inscrutable Intentions of Great Powers." *International Security* 39, no. 3 (2015): 48–88. https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00190.

Rumer, Eugene, Richard Sokolsky, and Andrew S. Weiss. "Trump and Russia." *Foreign Affairs* 96, no. 2. (2017): 12–19. https://www.jstor.org/stable/i40204353.

Selhorst, Tony. "Russia's Perception Warfare: The Development of Gerasimov's Doctrine in Estonia and Georgia and its Application in Ukraine." *Militaire Spectator: Tijdschrift Voor Het Nederlandsche Leger* 185, no. 4 (2016): 148–164. http://www.militairespectator.nl/sites/default/files/uitgaven/inhoudsopgave/Militaire%20Spectator%204-2016%20Selhorst.pdf.

Simon, Herbert A. "A Behavioral Model of Rational Choice." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 69, no. 1 (1955): 99–118. https://doi.org/10.2307/1884852.

Simon, Herbert A. "Rational Choice and the Structure of the Environment." *Psychological Review*. 63, no. 2 (1956): 129–38. http://pages.ucsd.edu/~mckenzie/Simon1956PsychReview.pdf.

Skak, Mette. "Russian Strategic Culture: The Role of Today's Chekisty." *Contemporary Politics* 22, no. 3. (2016): 324–341. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2016.1201317.

Snegovaya, Maria. "What Factors Contribute to the Aggressive Foreign Policy of Russian Leaders?" *Problems of Post-Communism* 67, no. 1 (2018):93–110. https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2018.1554408.

Thomas, Timothy. "Russia's Reflexive Control Theory and the Military." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 17, no. 2 (2004): 237–256. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13518040490450529.

Thomas, Timothy. "Russia's Military Strategy and Ukraine: Indirect, Asymmetric-and Putin-Led." *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 28, no. 3. (2015): 445–461. https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2015.1061819.

Treisman, Daniel. "Presidential Popularity in a Hybrid Regime: Russia under Yeltsin and Putin." *American Journal of Political Science* 55, no. 3 (2011): 590–609. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00500.x.

Tsygankov, Andrei. "The Russia-NATO Mistrust: Ethnophobia and the Double Expansion to Contain "the Russian Bear."" *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 46, no. 1. (2013): 179–188. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2012.12.015.

Tsygankov, Andrei. "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand: The Sources of Russia's Ukraine Policy." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 31, no. 4. (2015): 279–303. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1060586X.2015.1005903.

Walt, Stephen. "Why Arming Kiev is a Really, Really Bad Idea." *Foreign Policy*. 9 February 2015. https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/02/09/how-not-to-save-ukraine-arming-kiev-is-a-bad-idea/.

Walt, Stephen. "I Knew the Cold War. This is No Cold War." *Foreign Policy*. 12 March 2018. https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/12/i-knew-the-cold-war-this-is-no-cold-war/.

Waltz, Kenneth N. "NATO Expansion: A Realist's View." *Contemporary Security Policy* 21, no. 2. (2000): 23–38. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13523260008404253.

Wendt, Alexander. "Anarchy is what States make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 391–425. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706858.

News reports

Apuzzo, Matt. "Russia's Playbook for Disrupting Democracy." *New York Times*, September 6, 2016. https://nyti.ms/2ZXHgV2.

Apuzzo, Matt and Adam Satariano. "Russia Is Targeting Europe's Elections. So Are Far-Right Copycats." *New York Times*, May 12, 2019. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/12/world/europe/russian-propaganda-influence-campaign-european-elections-far-right.html?auth=login-google.

Bilefsky, Dan, C. J. Chivers, Thom Shanker, and Michael Schwirtz. "Georgia Offers Fresh Evidence on War's Start." *The New York Times*, September 16, 2008. https://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/16/world/europe/16georgia.html.

Chance, Matthew. "Putin Accuses U.S. of Orchestrating Georgian War." *CNN*, August 28, 2008. http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/europe/08/28/russia.georgia.cold.war/index.html.

Davis, Joshua. "Hackers Take Down the Most Wired Country in Europe." *Wired*, August 21, 2007. https://www.wired.com/2007/08/ff-estonia/.

Diver, John Van. "Pentagon Lays out Significant Cuts to U.S. Forces in Europe." *Stripes*, February 16, 2012. https://www.stripes.com/news/pentagon-lays-out-significant-cuts-to-u-s-forces-in-europe-1.168861.

Engel, Pamela. "Obama Spends Final Press Conference of 2016 Warning Putin and Russia: "We Can Do Stuff to You." " *Business Insider*, December 16, 2016. https://www.businessinsider.com/obama-russia-putin-hacks-2016-12?utm_source=copy-link&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=topbar&utm_term=desktop.

Erlanger, Steven. "Memo from Europe: Shrinking Europe Military Spending Stirs Concern." *New York Times*, April 22, 2013. https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/23/world/europe/europes-shrinking-military-spending-under-scrutiny.html.

Gerdziunas, Benas. "Russia's Military Corridor in Lithuania That Never Was." *Lithuanian National Television*, February 19, 2020. https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1143876/russia-s-military-corridor-in-lithuania-that-never-was.

Gibbons-Neff, Thomas. "At Point 18 in Eastern Ukraine, the War Grinds on, Night after Night." *Washington Post*, August 15, 2015. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/at-point-18-in-eastern-ukraine-the-war-grinds-on-night-after-night/2015/08/15/fffcf2c0-405f-11e5-9561-4b3dc93e3b9a_story.html.

Gibbons-Neff, Thomas. "How a 4-Hour Battle between Russian Mercenaries and U.S. Commandos Unfolded in Syria." *New York Times*, May, 24 2018. https://nyti.ms/2GMKOj0.

Gordon, Michael R. and Ivan Nechepurenko. "Russia Warns U.S. After Downing of Syrian Warplane." *New York Times*, June 19, 2017. https://nyti.ms/2sGDSRg.

Higgins, Andrew, and Andrew E. Kramer. "Ukraine Leader Was Defeated Even before He Was Ousted." *New York Times*, January 3, 2015. https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/04/world/europe/ukraine-leader-was-defeated-even-before-he-was-ousted.html.

Higgins, Andrew. "China and Russia Hold First Joint Naval Drill in the Baltic Sea." *The New York Times,* July 25, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/25/world/europe/china-russia-baltic-navy-exercises.html.

Higgins, Andrew. "300,000 Troops and 900 Tanks: Russia's Biggest Military Drills Since Cold War." *The New York Times*, August 28, 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/28/world/europe/russia-military-drills.html.

Higgins, Andrew. "Putin Warns Belarus Protesters: Don't Push Too Hard." *New York Times*, August 27, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/27/world/europe/belarus-russia-putin.html

Jervis, Robert. "The New Sleepwalkers: Russia Cannot Be Allowed to Dictate What Happens in Eastern Ukraine, but Western Diplomats Need to Realize That Pressure Alone Will Not Lead Putin to Give In." *The European*, September 5, 2014. https://www.theeuropean-magazine.com/robert-jervis/8961-what-the-west-needs-to-do-about-ukraine#.

Karatnycky, Adrian. "Ukraine's Orange Revolution." *New York Times*, April 12, 2005. https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/cfr/international/20050301faessay_v84n2_karatnycky.html?pag.

Kramer, Andrew. "Gas Deal with Belarus Gives Control of Pipeline to Russia." *New York Times*, November 27, 2011. https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/26/world/europe/in-deal-with-belarus-russia-gets-control-of-yamal-europe-pipeline.html?searchResultPosition=3.

Lannin, Patrick. "Russia, Latvia Finally Seal Border Treaty." *Reuters*, December 18, 2007. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-latvia/russia-latvia-finally-seal-border-treaty-idUSL185044920071218.

Levy, Clifford J. "For Kremlin, Ukraine Election Cuts Two Ways." *New York Times*, February 8, 2010. https://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/09/world/europe/09ukraine.html.

Levy, Clifford J. "Ukraine Woos Russia with Lease Deal." *New York Times*, April 21, 2010. https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/22/world/europe/22ukraine.html.

Lockie, Alex. "Mattis: Syrian Strike Will Not 'Spiral out of Control' into War with Russia." *Business Insider*, April 11, 2017. http://www.businessinsider.com/russia-syria-will-not-spiral-escalate-out-of-control-2017-4.

MacFarquhar, Neil and Steven Erlanger. "NATO-Russia Tensions Rise after Turkey Downs Jet." *The New York Times*, November 24, 2015. https://nyti.ms/1Sh5S1f.

Markoff, Mark and John Landler. "U.S. Will Cut 12,000 Forces in Germany." *New York Times*, July 29, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/29/world/europe/us-troops-nato-germany.html.

Markoff, Mark and John Landler. "Digital Fears Emerge after Data Siege in Estonia." *New York Times*, May 29, 2007. https://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/29/technology/29estonia.html.

Mattis, James. "Face the Nation May 28, 2017 Transcript: Secretary Mattis." *CBS News Face the Nation,* May 28, 2017. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/face-the-nation-may-28-2017-transcript-secretary-mattis/.

Myers, Steven Lee. "Belarus Learns That Days of Wine and Roses Are Over." *New York Times*, January 12, 2007. https://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/12/world/europe/12russia.html?searchResultPosition=1.

Nakashima, Ellen. "U.S. Cyber Command Operation Disrupted Internet Access of Russian Troll Factory on Day of 2018 Midterms." *Washington Post*, February 27, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-cyber-command-

operation-disrupted-internet-access-of-russian-troll-factory-on-day-of-2018-midterms/2019/02/26/1827fc9e-36d6-11e9-af5b-b51b7ff322e9_story.html.

Nakashima, Ellen. "U.S. Cybercom Contemplates Information Warfare to Counter Russian Interference in 2020 Election." *Washington Post*, December 25, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/us-cybercom-contemplates-information-warfare-to-counter-russian-interference-in-the-2020-election/2019/12/25/21bb246e-20e8-11ea-bed5-880264cc91a9_story.html.

Obama, Barack. "Transcript: Obama's Remarks on Russia, NSA at the Hague on March 25." *Washington Post*, March 25, 2014. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/transcript-putin-says-russia-will-protect-the-rights-of-russians-abroad/2014/03/18/432a1e60-ae99-11e3-a49e-76adc9210f19_story.html?utm_term=.68be3fc9a923.

Orovic, Andrew E. and Joseph Kramer. "Two Suspected Russian Agents among 14 Convicted in Montenegro Coup Plot." *New York Times*, May 9, 2019. https://nyti.ms/2VTzGN2.

Packer, George. "The Quiet German: The Astonishing Rise of Angela Merkel, the Most Powerful Woman in the World." *The New Yorker*, December 1, 2014. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/12/01/quiet-german.

PBS Frontline. "The Putin Files." *PBS*, 2017. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/interview-collection/the-putin-files/.

Pommereau, Isabelle de. "France's Afghanistan Pull-out Signals War Fatigue Driving European Defense Cuts." *Christian Science Monitor*, May 25, 2012. https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2012/0525/France-s-Afghanistan-pull-out-signals-war-fatigue-driving-European-defense-cuts.

Reuters. "Populist in Belarus Sweeps to a Presidential Victory." *New York Times*, July 11, 1994. https://www.nytimes.com/1994/07/11/world/populist-in-belarus-sweeps-to-a-presidential-victory.html

Rice, Condoleezza, and Robert M. Gates. "How America Can Counter Putin's Moves in Syria." *Washington Post*, October 8, 2015. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/from-reset-to-pause-the-real-story-behind-hillary-clintons-feud-with-vladimir-putin/2016/11/03/f575f9fa-a116-11e6-8832-23a007c77bb4_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.580201ddc65f.

Robbins, Liz. "Layers of History and Grief in Katyn." *New York Times*, April 10, 2010. https://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/04/10/layers-of-history-and-grief-in-katyn/?searchResultPosition=1.

Savage, Charlie, Eric Schmitt, and Michael Schwirtz. "Russia Secretly Offered Afghan Militants Bounties to Kill U.S. Troops, Intelligence Says." *New York Times*, July 29, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/26/us/politics/russia-afghanistan-bounties.html.

Schwartz, Mattathias. "Who Killed the Kiev Protesters? A 3-D Model Holds the Clues a Team of Civilian Investigators Used Cellphone Videos, Autopsy Reports and

Surveillance Footage to Reconstruct a Virtual Crime Scene." *New York Times*, May 30, 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/30/magazine/ukraine-protest-video.html.

Schwirtz, Michael. "Putin Marks Soviet Massacre of Polish Officers." *New York Times*, April 5, 2010. https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/08/world/europe/08putin.html?searchResultPosition=4.

Schwirtz, Michael. "Top Secret Russian Unit Seeks to Destabilize Europe, Security Officials Say." *New York Times*, October 8, 2019. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/08/world/europe/unit-29155-russia-gru.html.

Snegovaya, Maria. "Ukraine's Crisis Is Not the West's Fault." *Moscow Times*, September 15, 2014. http://old.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/ukraine-s-crisis-is-not-the-west-s-fault/507100.html.

"Timeline: Gas Crises between Russia and Ukraine." *Reuters*, January 12, 2012. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-ukraine-gas-timeline-sb/timeline-gas-crises-between-russia-and-ukraine-idUSTRE50A1A720090112.

Triebert, Evan and Christiaan Hill. "12 Hours. 4 Syrian Hospitals Bombed. One Culprit: Russia." *New York Times*, October 13, 2019. Updated 4 May 2020. https://nyti.ms/2IM8M21.

Vasiljevic, Stevo. "Russians, Opposition Figures Sentenced over Role in 2016 Montenegro Coup Attempt." *Reuters*, May 9, 2019. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-montenegro-court/russians-opposition-figures-sentenced-over-role-in-2016-montenegro-coup-attempt-idUSKCN1SF144.

Warrick, Joby, and Karen DeYoung. "From 'Reset' to 'Pause': The Real Story Behind Hillary Clinton's Feud with Vladimir Putin." *Washington Post*, November 3, 2016. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/from-reset-to-pause-the-real-story-behind-hillary-clintons-feud-with-vladimir-putin/2016/11/03/f575f9fa-a116-11e6-8832-23a007c77bb4_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.580201ddc65f.

Watson, Ivan and Maxim Tkachenko. "Russia, Ukraine Agree on Naval-Base-for-Gas Deal." *CNN*, April 21, 2010. https://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/europe/04/21/russia.ukraine/index.html?hpt=T2.

Wines, Michael. "Russia and Belarus Agree to Join in a Confederation." *New York Times*, December 9, 1999. https://www.nytimes.com/1999/12/09/world/russia-and-belarus-agree-to-join-in-a-confederation.html.

Websites

Arbatov, Alexey. "A Look at International Relations from a Russian Viewpoint." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Website. Accessed August 26, 2016. A Look at International Relations From A Russian Viewpoint - Carnegie Moscow Center - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Aron, Leon. "Putin's Goal: Revenge and Restoration." American Enterprise Institute Website. Accessed August 8, 2017. https://www.aei.org/articles/putins-goal-revenge-and-restoration/. Note: Several versions by this author with this title have appeared and the text sometimes differs.

Carter, Ashton B. "Remarks by Secretary Carter on the Budget at the Economic Club of Washington, D.C." United States Department of Defense. Accessed February 2, 2016. https://nationalinterest.org/print/blog/the-buzz/america-reveals-great-power-plan-against-russia-china-15103.

Cilliers, Jakkie. "As Global Power Shifts, the West Is Faced with Three Options to Retain Influence: Pre-Emptive Reform, Holding out or Insurrection from Within." Institute for Security Studies (ISS) Africa. Accessed October 1, 2014. https://issafrica.org/iss-today/money-power-and-governance-in-a-multipolar-world.

Churchill, Winston. "The Russian Enigma." BBC Broadcast, October 1, 1939. Accessed November 7, 2021. http://www.churchill-society-london.org.uk/RusnEnig.html.

Collective Security Treaty Organization. "Collective Security Treaty Organization." Accessed October 4, 2020. https://en.odkb-csto.org/. and https://en.odkb-csto.org/25years/.

Dezan Shira & Associates. "Estonia May Drop Territorial Claims with Russia." Russia Briefing Dezan Shira & Associates. Accessed March 2, 2020. https://www.russia-briefing.com/news/estonia-may-drop-territorial-claims-russia.html/.

Eurasian Economic Union. "The Eurasian Economic Union." Accessed October 4, 2020. http://www.eaeunion.org/?lang=en#about.

Freedom House. "Freedom in the World: Country and Territory Ratings and Statuses, 1973-2020 (Excel)." Accessed November 7, 2021. https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/2020_Country_and_Territory_Ratings_and_Statuses_FIW1973-2020.xlsx.

Fink, Anya Loukianova. "Contrasting Russian Perspectives on Coercion and Restraint in Russia's Security Relations with the West." Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM), University of Maryland. Updated January 16, 2018. http://www.cissm.umd.edu/sites/default/files/Contrasting%20Russian%20Perspectives%20on%20Coercion%20and%20Restraint%20121517.pdf.

Gallagher, Nancy, Steven Kull, Clay Ramsay, and John Steinbruner. "Worldpublicopinion.Org and Levada Center Poll: Americans and Russians on International Security and Arms Control Questionnaire." A PIPA/Knowledge Network Poll, Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM), University of Maryland. Updated January 2008. https://www.cissm.umd.edu/publications/americans-and-russians-international-security-and-arms-control-questionnaire-0.

Gorenburg, Dmitry. "Circumstances Have Changed since 1991, but Russia's Core Foreign Policy Goals Have Not." *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 560*. January 2019. http://www.ponarseurasia.org/node/10094.

Gorenburg, Dmitry. "Russia's Strategic Calculus: Threat Perceptions and Military Doctrine." *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 448*. November 2016. http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/russias-strategic-calculus-threat-perceptions-and-military-doctrine.

Gorenburg, Dmitry. "What Russia's Military Operation in Syria Can Tell Us About Advances in Its Capabilities." *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 424*. March 2016. http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/advances-russian-military-operations.

Gottemoeller, Rose E. "Speech and Panel Discussion by NATO Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller at the Kyiv Security Forum 13 April 2018 (Two Parts)." NATO Website. 13 April 2018. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_153591.htm?selectedLocale=en.

Gottemoeller, Rose E., and Mikheil Janelidze. "Joint Press Conference with NATO Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Mikheil Janelidze, 29 May 2017." NATO Website. Updated May 29, 2017. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_144599.htm?selectedLocale=en.

Kofman, Michael. "Tag: *Zapad* 2017," Russia Military Analysis. Accessed December 22, 2017. https://russianmilitaryanalysis.wordpress.com/tag/zapad-2017/.

Lavrov, Sergey. "Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's Address and Answers to Questions at the 53rd Munich Security Conference, Munich." Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Accessed February 18, 2017. http://www.mid.ru/en/press_service/minister_speeches/-/asset_publisher/7OvQR5KJWVmR/content/id/2648249.

Lindley-French, Julian. "The Gerasimov Doctrine: History Teaches Vigilance." Lindley-French's Blog Blast: Speaking Truth unto Power. 2015. http://lindleyfrench.blogspot.com/2015/08/the-gerasimov-doctrine-history-teaches.html.

May, Theresa. "PM's Address to British Troops at Tapa Military Base in Estonia." United Kingdom Prime Minister's Office. Accessed September 29, 2017. https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-address-to-british-troops-at-tapa-military-base-in-estonia.

McCain, John. "McCain in Pravda.Ru: 'Russians Deserve Better Than Putin.'" Senator McCain's Website. Accessed September 19, 2017. https://www.mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/speeches?ID=6BF10974-EF09-4C8A-95E8-8502A0BBB822.

Medvedev, Dmitry. "Dmitry Medvedev Made a Statement on the Situation in South Ossetia." Kremlin Website. Updated August 8, 2008. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/1043.

Medvedev, Dmitry. "The Draft of the European Security Treaty." Kremlin Website. Updated November 29, 2009. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/6152.

Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation. "Deputy Defence Minister Lieutenant General Alexander Fomin Held Briefing on Preparation for the *Zapad* 2017 Joint

Exercise." Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation Website. Accessed August 28, 2017. http://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12140207@egNews.

Minorities at Risk Project. "Chronology for Russians in Lithuania." UNHCR Website, 2004. Accessed November 7, 2021. https://www.refworld.org/docid/469f38b6c.html.

Monaghan, Andrew. *A 'New Cold War'? Abusing History, Misunderstanding Russia*. London: Chatham House. 2015. http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_document/20150522ColdWarRussiaMonaghan.pdf.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "Brussels Summit Declaration." NATO Website. Accessed July 11, 2018. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "Defender-Europe 20." NATO Website. Accessed October 6, 2020. https://shape.nato.int/defender-europe.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "NATO Fact Sheet: NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence." NATO Website, May 2017. http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_05/1705-factsheet-efp.pdf.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "NATO's Steadfast Jazz [2013] Exercise Gets Underway." NATO Website. Last modified November 2, 2013. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_104648.htm.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "Press Conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg Following the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in Defence Ministers' Session." NATO Website. Last modified 8 June 2018. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_155264.htm.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "Relations with the European Union." NATO Website. Accessed July 31, 2020. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50090.htm.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "What Is NATO? Member Countries." NATO Website. Accessed November 19, 2020. https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html.

NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence. "NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence." NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence Website. Accessed July 5, 2021. https://ccdcoe.org/about-us/.

Pence, Mike. "Remarks by the Vice President with Baltic Leaders in a JPA." The White House Website. Last updated July 31, 2017. https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-vice-president-baltic-leaders-jpa/.

Putin, Vladimir. "Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy." Kremlin Website, Last modified February 10, 2007. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034.

Putin, Vladimir. "Address by President of the Russian Federation (Regarding the Annexation of Crimea)." Kremlin Website. Last modified March 18, 2014. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603.

Putin, Vladimir. "Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club in 2014." Kremlin Website. Last updated October 24, 2014. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603.

Putin, Vladimir. "Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club in 2016." Kremlin Website. Last updated October 27, 2016. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53151.

Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Kommersant Interview with Deputy Secretary General of NATO Rose Gottemoeller, 'NATO Had No Plans to Strengthen Its Eastern Borders before What Happened in Ukraine.'" Last updated April 2, 2017. http://www.mid.ru/en/nedostovernie-publikacii/-/asset_publisher/nTzOQTrrCFd0/content/id/2716352.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization. "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization." Shanghai Cooperation Organization Website. Accessed October 4, 2020. http://eng.sectsco.org/about_sco/.

Tillerson, Rex. "Remarks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at a Press Availability." United States Department of State Website. Last modified April 12, 2017. https://www.state.gov/secretary/20172018tillerson/remarks/2017/04/270136.htm.

Trenin, Dimitri. "Avoiding U.S.-Russia Military Escalation During the Hybrid War." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Website. Last modified January 2018. https://carnegie.ru/2018/01/25/avoiding-u.s.-russia-military-escalation-during-hybrid-war-pub-75277.

Vershbow, Alexander. "NATO: From Wales to Warsaw; Keynote Speech by NATO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Alexander Vershbow at the 2BS ('to Be Secure') Conference, Budva, Montenegro." NATO Website. Last updated May 6, 2016. https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/opinions_130583.htm?selectedLocale=en.

Zimmerman, William, Sharon Werning Rivera, and Kirill Kalinin. *Survey of Russian Elites*. Moscow, Russia. 1993-2016. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. Last Updated September 9, 2019. https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR03724.v6.