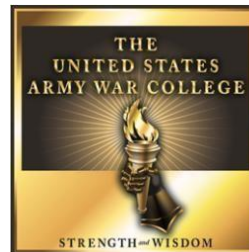


U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Russia Lacks Credibility

by

Colonel Ryan Blaine Wolfgram
United States Army

Under the Direction of:
Colonel Douglas V. Mastriano



United States Army War College
Class of 2016

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: A

Approved for Public Release
Distribution is Unlimited

The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved--OMB No. 0704-0188		
The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 01-04-2016		2. REPORT TYPE STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Russia Lacks Credibility			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) Colonel Ryan Blaine Wolfgram United States Army			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Colonel Douglas V. Mastriano			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA 17013			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited. Please consider submitting to DTIC for worldwide availability? YES: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or NO: <input type="checkbox"/> (student check one) Project Adviser recommends DTIC submission? YES: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or NO: <input type="checkbox"/> (PA check one)					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Word Count: 5020					
14. ABSTRACT Russia's strategic approach is complicated and uses an ambiguous form of warfare centered on non-military means to achieve its political ends. This makes it difficult for the U.S. to produce a coherent and synchronized foreign policy that can provide clear direction for actions to counter Russian aggression. During an interview with a member in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) for policy this comment was provided, "Policy is all over the place, coexists, and is sometimes contradictory and more often tangential." An example is the U.S. effort to counter Vladimir Putin's continued desire to extend his sphere of interest through the annexation of countries in his national interest. This window for the Baltic States to remain untouched by Russia's aggression is quickly closing and the U.S. opportunity to enact a policy of action is now.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Assurance, Deterrence, Cooperation, Policies					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 24	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UU	b. ABSTRACT UU	c. THIS PAGE UU			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (w/ area code)

U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Russia Lacks Credibility

(5020 words)

Abstract

Russia's strategic approach is complicated and uses an ambiguous form of warfare centered on non-military means to achieve its political ends. This makes it difficult for the U.S. to produce a coherent and synchronized foreign policy that can provide clear direction for actions to counter Russian aggression. During an interview with a member in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) for policy this comment was provided, "Policy is all over the place, coexists, and is sometimes contradictory and more often tangential." An example is the U.S. effort to counter Vladimir Putin's continued desire to extend his sphere of interest through the annexation of countries in his national interest. This window for the Baltic States to remain untouched by Russia's aggression is quickly closing and the U.S. opportunity to enact a policy of action is now.

U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Russia Lacks Credibility

The Cold War against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was the last time the United States (U.S.) successfully implemented a coherent Foreign Policy against the Kremlin. Henry R. Nau highlights President Reagan's successful application of foreign policy, "...exerting military leverage: using his defense budget to challenge the Soviet Union to an arms race, deploying Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force (INF) missiles and freedom fighters to raise the costs of Soviet military actions on the ground, and dangling his Strategic Defense Initiative at the negotiating table."¹ With rise of Vladimir Putin to President of Russia, the U.S. has struggled to find a lucid foreign policy to counter his expansionist agenda. This paper addresses recent U.S. foreign policy failures to effectively counter Russia's professed regional expansionist agenda in Eastern Europe. This will begin by considering the background to provide an analysis of U.S. and Russian relations. The goal is to not to change current policy, but to salvage what remains to protect our allies and counter Russia's expansionist agenda over the next year – a period of critical vulnerability.

This paper will address U.S. foreign Policy from 2009-2012, referred to by the Obama Administration as "reset." The paper will highlight Russia's utter disregard for this policy. From here, we shall review other supporting policies at play today and how each, through the elements of national power (Diplomatic, Information, Military and Economic (D.I.M.E)) have failed to counter Vladimir Putin's expansionist agenda.

From this discourse, there will be a presentation for two drivers of instability, which, if out of balance the associated risk would be significant. These are (1) Russia's economy and (2) the desire of Vladimir Putin to expand his sphere of interest.²

Understanding these two drivers of instability are vital as 2016 presents opportunity for

Russia and likewise a period of vulnerability for the U.S. After assessing the risks associated with countering Russia's agenda, the goal is to mitigate these actions with the elements of national power. This will lead to a conclusion that stresses the necessity for a coordinated approach, and thereby allows the leadership of the U.S. to salvage a failed policy and prevent Russia from extending its sphere of interest.

Background

When President Obama took office in 2009, he instituted a new approach towards Russia. This was evident in Vice President Biden's visit to Munich, where he declared, "it's time to press the reset button and to revisit the many areas where we can and should be working together with Russia."³ Ruth Deyermond suggested that the "... the reset aimed to reverse the severe decline in US -Russia relations which had taken place during the presidencies of Vladimir Putin and George W. Bush."⁴ Although Russia was under the leadership of Dmitry Medvedev, Vladimir Putin really retained the key to power. Yet, President Medvedev and President Obama seemingly advanced this so-called reset and promoted a foreign policy that appeared somewhat neoliberal. For the moment, it seemed that the reset was working. As Ms Dreyermond declared, "The signing of a new arms control treaty; Russian assistance on Afghanistan; greater Russian cooperation on Iran; the Russian decision not to block United Nations-sanctioned action in Libya in spring 2011 and Russia's accession to the WTO are all indicators of this success."⁵

However, the failures from this policy outweigh the achievements thereby making reset an inhibitor to an effective strategy for countering Russian aggression. For example, the annexation of Crimea, violations of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty⁶ and the shoot down of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17⁷ stand as a stark

testimony in the failure of this policy. These forced the U.S. to reevaluate its foreign policy towards Russia. "DOD is focusing on assuring Allies and partners, deterring aggression, and leaving open the possibility for cooperation on issues of critical national security importance."⁸

This means that assurance is showing our commitment towards not just our North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies, but to partners that the U.S. has standing bilateral agreements. These numerous military-to-military exercises reinforce our policy of assurance to our allies and partners, as well as assist in shaping deterrence towards Russia. Glen Hastedt definition of deterrence states that it, "succeeds by threatening a would-be aggressor with an unacceptable level of damage should it engage in the unwanted behavior."⁹ He goes on to describe two ways of implementing such a strategy, "first is through 'trip wires' as seen in Syria, and the second is through a nuclear response."¹⁰ The cooperation portion of this policy addresses the desire to end nuclear proliferation and reduce existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons.

Two actions conducted by Russia's military have validated Vladimir Putin's agenda as well as provided some insight into his grand strategy. Gustav Gressel says, that "Russia's military modernization and re-emergence as an expansionist, revisionist actor on Europe's eastern borders has profound strategic consequences for Europe."¹¹ These actions are a precursor of how Vladimir Putin intends to achieve his strategic ends.

The first action occurred as a result from the war with Georgia. The effects of this affected the Russian economy as noted by Jacek Wieclawski,

Quite surprisingly for the Russian governing elite the intervention in Georgia generated a massive outflow of capital from the Russian market resulting in a huge drop of indexes on the Moscow Stock Exchange and depreciation of the Russian ruble. The outflow reached about \$130 billion at the end of 2008 and Russian attempts to stabilize ruble largely failed.¹²

Mr. Gressel says that, “Russian forces were slow in mobilising and deploying to the theatre... Tactical and operational planning was poor and inflexible, as was leadership. Situation awareness was poor, and led to many incidents of ‘friendly fire’.”¹³ Therefore, while Russia took some time to learn from its military blunders, it openly challenged U.S. foreign policy in one area – the INF Treaty.

Josh Rogin, a senior correspondent for the Daily Beast on national security affairs, reported the first documented occurrence.

November 27, 2012, two top Obama administration officials held a closed-door hearing,...acting Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Rose Gottemoeller and Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs Madelyn Creedon told lawmakers that Russia had violated the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF).¹⁴

This was in many ways, the true reemergence of Vladimir Putin as the President of Russia and his exercising of control that even threatened the civil liberties of its citizens. A BBC News article says, “US state department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said the US was ‘concerned about both the verdict and the disproportionate sentences... and the negative impact on freedom of expression in Russia’.”¹⁵ This violation and others directly challenged U.S. interests as listed in the National Security Strategy, “American values are reflective of the universal values we champion all around the world— including the freedoms of speech... choose leaders democratically; and the right to due process and equal administration of justice.”¹⁶ These events along with the modernization of Russia’s military, adaptation of tactics, and the education of its leaders

to confront the West, was beginning of the end for President Obama's reset policy. The policy completely collapsed with the annexation of Crimea and the ongoing Russian led war in eastern Ukraine.

Expansionist Agenda Revisited

The encroachment of Eastern Ukraine was the next step in Mr. Putin's grand strategy for an expansionist, revanchist agenda. To gain insight as to why Vladimir Putin is pursuing this agenda, it is helpful to consider a recent study that looked at the population of ethnic Russians now living in Ukraine. The study stated, "Most people living in the eastern part of the country hardly knew any Ukrainian and preferred to speak Russian. All these people suddenly became strangers in their own land."¹⁷ This example explains Russian diaspora. Mr. Putin wants to correct this by reconnecting Russians back to Russia, saying in a recent interview with 60 minutes.

In an instant 25 million Russian people found themselves beyond the borders of the Russian state, although they were living within the borders of the Soviet Union. Then, all of a sudden, the USSR collapsed -- just overnight, in fact...And all of a sudden, they turned out to be outside the borders of the country. You see this is a huge problem. ...Do you think it's normal that 25 million Russian people were abroad all of a sudden? Russia was the biggest divided nation in the world. It's not a problem? Well, maybe not for you. But it's a problem for me.¹⁸

The Russian president is using the diaspora to exploit a vulnerability in the region via a proxy separatist movement. With this in mind, Russian General Valery Gerasimov (Army Chief of Staff) asserted, "...that the involvement of the population's protest potential was becoming a new method for carrying out combat operations."¹⁹

Covington goes on to say, "Russia today is a system change power. Putin's breakout strategy is designed to destabilize, and the approach seeks to unfreeze frozen conflicts, break rules, and foster tensions where useful to accelerate the melting away of

Europe's proven security principles and rules."²⁰ The Russian Chief of Staff agrees with this emerging Russian military approach:

Gerasimov states that non-military versus military methods are his focus... He makes the important comment that non-military measures are occurring at a rate of 4:1 over military operations. This is an important point, and one that encourages the use of surrogates. Covert operations, to include information warfare measures and special operations forces, accompany such methods.²¹

Though this strategy is not new, it brilliantly exploits ethnic divides to create a line of buffer zones around Russia's borders. This is what Dmitri Trenin calls, "liberating the territory of Novorossiya."²²

The vision Mr. Putin's has for Russia is as a powerful regional hegemony with the territory to threaten the very stability of Europe. Understanding this expansionist agenda, in light of the insolvent U.S. reset policy, demonstrates that the West is overdue for a viable policy and strategy. This reevaluation is necessary because of not only the war in Ukraine and the occupation of Crimea, but also Russia's continued violation of treaties and agreements. The growing list of Moscow's broken promises and treaty violations include the Budapest Memorandum, the INF and the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) among others.

U.S. Policies

In light of the breach of treaties and violations of international borders, the U.S. must act swiftly to counter this assertive Russian policy. Before being able to grapple with this, however, the U.S. needs to act to get its own house in order. Among the chief obstacle is its annual budget as encapsulated through the act of sequestration or better known as the Budget Control Act of 2011.²³ Mr. Kogan, a senior fellow with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, states the following in reference to this law, "The

Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011 imposed caps on discretionary programs reducing funding by more than \$1 trillion over the ten years from 2012 through 2021.”²⁴ Though a budget passed, providing the Department of Defense the necessary funds to meet identified requirements, it will expire in 2017. If a follow-on budget does not pass, then the constraints listed in the BCA of 2011 will reduce the Department of Defense’s ability to accomplish U.S. objectives during the remaining years. This will affect modernization, training and trigger additional reductions in force structure thereby creating an opportunity for a potential adversary to challenge the U.S.

Russia has demonstrated that it will no longer abide by the INF. Of this, New York Times reporter Michael Gordon said, “The United States has concluded that Russia violated a landmark arms control treaty by testing a prohibited ground-launched cruise missile...”²⁵ This undermines cooperation for nuclear arms control,²⁶ and can trigger an arms race. A recent article published in Russia Direct stated,

That the head of the Russian delegation at negotiations discussing military security and arms control, Anton Mazur, announced that as of March 11, Moscow will cease its participation in the Joint Consultative Group within the framework of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). In this manner, Russia has withdrawn from the treaty that it suspended back in 2007.²⁷

The CFE limits military force structure and thereby prevents U.S. and NATO an ability to counter Russian aggression.²⁸ With Russia no longer limiting its behavior within the confines of the INF and if the remaining signatories continue to abide by the treaty, they are not only risking the credibility of U.S. policy but also leaving exposed the credibility of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) is clear on its position regarding security and unequivocally states, that, "The first is the “security of ... allies/partners and

the second is the international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security and opportunity.”²⁹ These core interests highlighted in both the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), soon to be called the Defense Strategy Review (DSR), and the National Military Strategy (NMS) show our written resolve to pursue two of the six national security interests nested within the NSS.

The two interests listed in the QDR and the NMS, “the security, confidence, and reliability of our allies; and the preservation and extension of universal values”³⁰ are vital to protecting the core interests of the U.S. In reviewing these documents, there is a consistent theme of building partner capacity (BPC). BPC is the U.S. military working with allies and partners to provide for the defense of their interests while protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their homeland. The U.S. enables this capability through exercises and training designed to assist in raising the level of proficiency for these militaries. Another consideration in regards to BPC is assisting in the acquisition of military equipment. For example, “approving a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Lithuania for Stryker Infantry Carrier Vehicles and associated equipment,”³¹ and “approving a possible Foreign Military Sale to Estonia for Javelin missiles.”³² BPC allows for broad latitude in the protection of U.S. interests abroad while providing for the assurance that the U.S. is a valuable partner in the protection of sovereignty and the territorial integrity of our allies and partners.

Elements of National Power

In reviewing these three separate policies, it is clear how each can have a direct or indirect impact on the overall U.S. foreign policy towards Russia. What does require a little more explanation is how all the elements of national power (D.I.M.E) have proven ineffective in addressing Russia’s aggression. Concerning the Diplomatic element,

President Putin has continually shown a nuanced interpretation for every violation of a treaty, violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity and disregard for human rights.

An example is evidenced with Russia's interpretation for its non-support of the CFE and the INF; its continual ignoring of requests for a withdrawal from Georgia, Crimea and Eastern Ukraine; and finally a disregard for the civil liberties of its civilians – freedom of speech. In each of these, the diplomatic element of power, whether it is the President of the U.S., Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense, produced nothing and actually strengthened the image and popularity of Vladimir Putin.³³ With the Information element of power, Russia presents Western powers as the evildoers by continually spinning the information and creating a common enemy for the people of Russia to unite.³⁴ The U.S. struggles to dominate the information domain and has little success in moving public opinion unless Mr. Putin miscalculates and crosses a red line with his own population.

The economics involved have amounted to sanctions against Russia, but when asking the average Russian citizen about the effect of sanctions on the economy, “86% stated it was having an effect.”³⁵ In a recent blog by Mr. Wilson, a former chief economist for Ernst & Young, he said, that, “The economic sanctions imposed after the invasion of the Crimea peninsula have produced deeper damage than anyone expected...western countries have prevented Russian companies from raising money in Europe and the United States and have also blocked arms trades.”³⁶ Gustav Gressel confirmed this by commenting, “Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and collapsing energy prices, have caused severe setbacks for Russian rearmament programmes.”³⁷ However, he adds, “Although the low oil price, among other factors, may cause delays,

most modernisation programmes should yield their first results by 2020.”³⁸ Though rearmament is suffering, Russia's military modernization continues. The last element of national power is that of the military. It is noteworthy that military actions carried out by the U.S. continue to assure our allies and partners in the region of its commitment to create a capability focused on interoperability between national militaries. Exercises such as these have, “sent a signal to Russia regarding NATO resolve.”³⁹ However, Russia is also signaling to the western powers.

A Russian ‘snap exercise’ conducted in March 2015, which brought together 80,000 military personnel... The NATO ‘Allied Shield’ exercise conducted in June 2015, which brought under one framework four distinct exercises taking place along the Eastern flank of the Alliance, totaling 15,000 personnel from 19 Members states and three partner states.⁴⁰

The large number of Soldiers and assets the Russians employed validated what Gressel highlighted as the culmination of training months prior, “All of the exercises involved the quick mobilisation of Russian transport to the theatre and the earliest possible “resuming” of offensive operations.”⁴¹ These exercises whether the *Zapad* or the *Lagoda*, “...indicate that Russia’s military thinking is offensive in nature, and geared towards expansion, not defence.”⁴²

Mr. Gressel goes even further to say, that, the lack of modernization of forces in Europe will do little to counter the technological advances of the Russian military.⁴³ Specifically he states, “During the post-Cold War ‘interbellum’ (1989-2014) the readiness of some European member states’ armies degraded considerably.”⁴⁴ After considering the military element of national power to include taking a glimpse at our allies and partners capabilities and capacities, it is evident that the period from 2008 to 2014 saw the initial reform of the Russian military while the U.S. reduced its footprint in Europe and embraced a policy of

BPC. Gressel sums it best, “European armies in particular are not large enough to practise combined arms manoeuvre warfare on their own, still less to carry out larger joint operations.”⁴⁵ Russia’s recent conduct of snap exercises gives cause for concern in the ability of the U.S. to assure our allies and partners with military force in a manner that would effectively counter Russia’s aggression.

The Drivers of Instability

Western economic sanctions are having an effect on the Russian way of life for its citizens. Pew Research demonstrates this and the articles from Wilson and Gressel validate the impact to society and the military. The concern is in the identification of the tipping point, for this driver of Instability. What will transpire when Russian economic conditions deteriorate too much and if Vladimir Putin decides to color the issue by stoking national pride with the annexation of one of the Baltic States? Mr. Wilson states, “The drop in the value of trade is indicative of the collapse in economic activity. During the first eight months of [2015], imports have declined by 39 percent while exports have dropped by almost 30 percent.”⁴⁶ Could this be an indicator of future aggression? Mr. Gressel adds, “...unforeseen events in world politics might persuade Russia that its European export market might collapse anyway or that the chances for expansion are now better than they will be.”⁴⁷ The struggling Russian economy could be the trigger that drives President Putin to continue his expansionist agenda.

This leads to the next driver of instability - President Vladimir Putin. He was the master puppeteer of Russia during his first two terms as president, then behind the scenes as the Prime Minister of Russia before re-ascending to where he is again president. Mr. Putin is a driver of instability because of how he views

the region. Of this, Covington says, "Putin's choice reflects a view that Russia can only address its non-competitiveness by changing the world around Russia, and most critically, by changing the European security system."⁴⁸

Covington continues, "His policy requires a changed Europe to enhance Russian strategic competitiveness and requires a changed Europe to avoid political change inside Russia."⁴⁹ Therefore, no matter what the policy, it is a necessity that the current European security structure must change.⁵⁰ A recent Rand study stated, "Putin's view of foreign policy is deeply shaped by his own experience, including as a former KGB officer, and that a zero-sum, strictly realpolitik view of the world permeates all his interactions with the West."⁵¹ Putin is a realist who not only sees opportunity but also is awaiting for the appropriate time to realize his expansionist agenda. His overall end state is the establishment of Russia as a de facto regional hegemony.

Risk

There are three risks that challenge the credibility of U.S. foreign policy. The first of these is not implementing a coherent strategy that safeguards the credibility of the NATO alliance. The second risk is Russian exploitation of disparate U.S. policies. The final risk is not implementing an improved strategy. The impact of these risks if not properly addressed will have disastrous consequences and will open the door for Russia to openly challenge NATO's Article V and the global reach of the United States.

President Obama reaffirmed the U.S. position on NATO in 2014, "Article 5 is crystal clear: An attack on one is an attack on all. So if, in such a moment, you ever ask again, 'who will come to help,' you'll know the answer -- the NATO

Alliance, including the Armed Forces of the United States of America. We'll be here for Estonia."⁵² To ensure the credibility of the U.S. and its obligations under Article V of the NATO Treaty it is imperative that a comprehensive strategy materialize. Yet, Russia continues to prepare its military for rapid notice deployments against NATO members in Eastern Europe.⁵³ In mitigating this risk, BPC will enable our partners in defending against gray zone conflict, specifically hybrid warfare.⁵⁴ Any action initiated by Russia requires a response, and if the U.S. action is slow or perceived as a show of non-support to its NATO members then the credibility of U.S. foreign policy is threatened.

Risks of disparate or contradictory policies, when taken collectively, reduce the effectiveness of an overarching U.S. foreign policy. The current, recurring congressional policy on funding unnecessarily threatens the U.S. military by placing self-induced domestic pressure that reduces the combat effectiveness of the U.S. military. This caustic policy limits the readiness of our armed forces, reduces the training readiness of the total force and cripples its ability to provide a timely response in defense of NATO.

U.S. Defense Policy and Russia's disregard for the CFE and INF treaties, places self-imposed constraints on the other treaty signatories and limits the U.S. ability to show assurance in times of conflict by not providing a substantial force to ensure a credible deterrence. Then there are the U.S. national strategic documents that mention how the approach of BPC limits deterrence through increased assurance. Some believe the reason for this approach is the common

belief that this is a cost saving measure created by “budget hawks on the hill”⁵⁵ to work in the confines of the CBA mentioned earlier.

The remaining risk is in not implementing a revised strategy that allows a whole of government approach to work toward a clear strategic end state. This end should counter Russian aggression in a proactive manner vice the typical reaction to Russian acts of violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity after the fact. What adds to this risk is the element of time. It is the author’s assessment that for the next 12 months the U.S. is vulnerable to belligerent actors testing the will of the political leaders of this country. With this being an election year, and the President’s constructivist view,⁵⁶ President Putin may see an opportunity to achieve an easy win.

Risk Mitigation

To mitigate the risks identified above, there is a requirement to synchronize all factors affecting U.S. foreign policy towards Russia. There must be a unifying effort by the National Security Council (NSC) to support the synchronization of these policies through the development of a strategy to focus the elements of national power. To bring these disparate policies in line, there must be discussion on dissolving the CFE or at least modifying it to allow for the movement and basing of military forces and equipment in the Eastern European region to better assure our Allies threatened by the Russian *Zapad* and *Lagoda* exercises.

The U.S. needs to reinforce the Budapest memorandum with its own style of hybrid warfare. This will reestablish the damaged credibility of the U.S. by not conducting a visible counter action to Russia’s violation of Ukrainian and

Georgian sovereignty and territorial integrity. This strategy should incorporate all the elements of national power. There has been sufficient use of the diplomatic and the economic elements of power but what is lacking is the use of military force and an effort to counter Russia's antagonistic information campaign. A recent Rand study stated,

Western media proved to be particularly vulnerable to Russian information warfare operations because, in line with the principle of providing balanced opinions, enough airtime had to be provided for the Russian narratives as well, even if they were blatantly false, often self-contradictory interpretations.⁵⁷

The U.S. media establishment and social media conglomerates need to join in the fight and contribute by blocking Russian narratives. This leads to considering the involvement of industry and its requirement to mobilize a nation to work together in its fight against an armed aggressor. The remaining consideration is that of time. The next year is one of increased vulnerability and if the U.S. is going to remain a leader on the world stage then it must not fall victim to what Henry Nau phrased as, "the malaise of multilateralism."⁵⁸

Conclusion

U.S. foreign policy requires coordination to be credible in effectively countering Russia's professed regional expansionist agenda in Eastern Europe. The policy of reset has failed and the current U.S.-Russia policy of assurance, deterrence and cooperation needs expansion. In reviewing all three disparate policies affecting foreign policy, it is easy to see the impact, but it was not until this discussion that the seams became visible and therefore U.S. credibility is at stake. This allowed for some analysis in considering two drivers of instability, economics and Mr. Putin, and how each contribute to three types of risk to the established foreign policy being credible and effective at

countering Russian aggression. In discussing the risks, the articulation of a few mitigations actions can suggest ways for incorporating two underutilized elements of the D.I.M.E. – Information and the Military elements. The current U.S. foreign policy is ineffective because of the constraints established in these underlying policies. This produces an uncoordinated effort preventing the credibility of an effective comprehensive foreign policy. This, along with the element of time presents a vulnerability for the U.S. and a corresponding opportunity for belligerent actors to capitalize on an assessed weakness.

To salvage the credibility of U.S. foreign policy, senior leaders must address the lack of synchronization. Policy fratricide will continue if there is no unifying effort orchestrated by the National Security Council (NSC) to support the synchronization of disparate policies. For example, with an unsupported CFE then the U.S. could move and base military forces and equipment in Eastern Europe and thereby ensure the NSC addresses all three disparate policies by modifying each to support the overall foreign policy of assurance and deterrence. The NSC Deputies meeting is the appropriate entity to ensure a coherent, coordinated and credible foreign policy because the appropriate leaders in attendance can represent the interests for the underlying policies affecting the overarching foreign policy. At this meeting, identification of the seams will show the gaps requiring corrections. Sending these corrected gaps to the NSC Primaries meeting will guarantee implementation actions ensuring underlying policies are correct and certify a focused comprehensive foreign policy.

The second area to ensure credibility is by incorporating the U.S. media establishment and social media conglomerates to join in the fight and contribute to

blocking Russian narratives. A way to implement this recommendation is through the creation of joint venture between the Department of Defense and U.S. companies. This would most likely require a revision of existing rules and regulations allowing the access of private companies to sensitive military events or situations so the creation of an effective counter information campaign can produce a viable strategy to counter the Russian narratives. This acknowledges that the U.S. military cannot win in the Information arena without the assistance of industry.

The final recommendation is to protect against the element of time by immediately supporting the two previous recommendations, within the next 45 days. With a non-supported CFE, the U.S. can permanently base a division headquarters, with enablers, in Eastern Europe during the summer of 2016 to provide the appropriate synchronization of forces and efforts within the region. This might look like a Division Tactical Action Center (DTAC) under the command of a one star general officer forward positioned in Latvia with the ability to employ long-range strike munitions, also known as enablers, to cities in Russia. This action will send the appropriate message to Russia and reinforce the U.S. foreign policy of deterrence. Within 45 days, the NSC should convene to approve the move and basing of a DTAC to Latvia while ensuring it has the requisite enablers to be a credible and effective tool for President Obama to counter any expansionist agenda by Russia.

Protecting the credibility of the U.S. requires the implementation of the aforementioned mitigation strategies and recommendations by the senior leaders within the government. Otherwise, President Putin will continue with his expansionist agenda and the U.S. will lose its standing as a global hegemony. This will forever change the

security situation in Europe and undermine the seventy years of general peace and stability that the United States, in concert with its allies, has provided the region. Failure to act with determination, could forever damage U.S. and European relations and cooperation. Such a breach of trust could have catastrophic economic effects that would be nearly impossible for Washington, D.C. to overcome.

Endnotes

¹ Henry R Nau, "Obama's Foreign Policy," *Policy Review* no. 160 (April 2010): 27-47, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/216435230?accountid=4444> (accessed December 12, 2015), 38-39.

² Tim Marshall, "Russia and the Curse of Geography: Want to Understand why Putin Does What he Does? Look at a Map," *The Atlantic*, October 31, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/10/russia-geography-ukraine-syria/413248/> (accessed November 11, 2015).

³ The White House, "Remarks at the 45th Munich Conference on Security Policy," February 7, 2009, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-vice-president-biden-45th-munich-conference-security-policy> (accessed April 17, 2012).

⁴ Ruth Deyermond, "Assessing the Reset: Successes and Failures in the Obama Administration's Russia Policy, 2009–2012," *European Security* 22, no 4 (2013): 501, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2013.777704> (accessed December 12, 2015).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Kingston Reif, "Russia Still Violating INF Treaty, U.S. Says," *Arms Control Association Online*, July/August 2015, https://www.armscontrol.org/ACT/2015_0708/News/Russia-Still-Violating-INF-Treaty-US-Says (accessed November 21, 2015).

⁷ "US President Blames Russian Backed Separatists for Malaysian Jet Crash," *The Herald Globe Online*, July 19, 2014, <http://www.heraldglobe.com/index.php/sid/223906785> (accessed November 21, 2015).

⁸ Source cited under condition of anonymity, January 14, 2015.

⁹ Glenn P. Hastedt, "Alternative Futures," in *American Foreign Policy: Past, Present and Future* (Lanhan, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 325.

¹⁰ Ibid., 511.

¹¹ Gustav Gressel, *Russia's Quiet Military Revolution, and What it Means for Europe* (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, October 2015), 13, http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/Russias_Quiet_Military_Revolution.pdf (accessed December 12, 2015).

¹² D. Sindelar, "2008 In Review: Was This The Year That Russia Peaked?" *RFE/RL Features*, January 3, 2009, quoted in Jacek Wieclawski, "Challenges for the Russian Foreign Policy - the Lesson of the Georgian Conflict," *Asian Social Science* 7, no. 8 (August 2011): 15, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/886544825?accountid=4444> (accessed December 12, 2015).

¹³ Gressel, *Russia's Quiet Military*, 2.

¹⁴ Josh Rogin, "US Reluctant to Disclose to All NATO Allies that Russia is Violating INF Treaty," *The Atlantic Council*, blog entry posted December 7, 2013, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/us-disclosed-to-some-but-not-all-nato-allies-that-russia-violated-inf-treaty> (accessed December 12, 2015).

¹⁵ "Pussy Riot Jail Terms Condemned as 'Disproportionate'," *BBC News*, August 18, 2012, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-19302986> (accessed December 12, 2015).

¹⁶ Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, February 2015), 20.

¹⁷ Artem Kureev, "Russian Diaspora: A Tool of Soft Power?" *Russian Direct Online*, November 11, 2015, <http://www.russia-direct.org/opinion/russian-diaspora-tool-soft-power>, accessed November 21, 2015).

¹⁸ Vladimir Putin, "Putin, Once a KGB Spy, Always a KGB Spy," *CBS News*, September 27, 2015, <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/once-a-kgb-spy-always-a-kgb-spy/> (accessed, September 30, 2015).

¹⁹ V. Gerasimov, "The Value of Science Is in Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying Out Combat Operations," *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer Online*, February 26, 2013, <http://vpk-news.ru/articles/14632>, quoted in Timothy Thomas, "Russia's Military Strategy & Ukraine: Indirect, Asymmetric--and Putin Led," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, September 2015, 454.

²⁰ S.R. Covington, "Putin's Choice for Russia," *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs*, August 2015, 14

²¹ Gerasimov "The Value of Science," 455.

²² "Novorossiia" was the name of the northern coast of the Black Sea conquered from the Ottomans in 1768–1791 and annexed by the empire during the reign of Catherine II. Most of Novorossiia is in present-day Ukraine. Dmitri Trenin, *Post-Imperium: A Eurasian Story* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Online, 2011), 100, <http://carnegieendowment.org/pdf/book/post-imperium.pdf> (accessed November 21, 2015).

²³ *Budget Control Act of 2011*, Public Law, 112th Congress (2011-2012), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/112th-congress/senate-bill/365?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22s.365+budget+control+act+2011%22%5D%7D> (accessed December 12, 2015).

²⁴ Richard Kogan, "How the Across-the-Board Cuts in the Budget Control Act Will Work," revised April 27, 2012, <http://www.cbpp.org/research/how-the-across-the-board-cuts-in-the-budget-control-act-will-work> (accessed December 12, 2015).

²⁵ Michael R. Gordon, "Russians' Test Called Breach of Missile Pact," *New York Times Online*, July 29, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/29/world/europe/us-says-russia-tested-cruise-missile-in-violation-of-treaty.html?_r=0 (accessed December 12, 2015).

²⁶ Ash Carter, "Remarks at Atlantik Brücke: 'U.S., Germany, & NATO are Moving Forward Together'," June 22, 2015, <http://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Article/606684> (accessed December 12, 2015.)

²⁷ Artem Kureev, "The Real Reason Why Russia Finally Left the CFE Treaty," *Russia Direct*, March 17, 2015, <http://www.russia-direct.org/opinion/real-reason-why-russia-finally-left-cfe-treaty> (accessed December 12, 2015).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Obama, *National Security Strategy*, 2.

³⁰ U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, March 2014), 60-61.

³¹ "Lithuania - M 1126 Stryker Infantry Carrier Vehicles (ICV) with 30mm Cannon and M2 Machine Guns, and Related Support Equipment," *Defense Security Cooperation Agency*, Transmittal No. 15-78 (November 5, 2015): http://www.dsca.mil/sites/default/files/mas/lithuania_15-78.pdf, (accessed December 12, 2015).

³² "Estonia – Javelin Missiles," *Defense Security Cooperation Agency*, Transmittal No. 14-54 (October 7, 2014): http://www.dsca.mil/sites/default/files/mas/estonia_14-54.pdf (accessed December 12, 2015).

³³ Katie Simmons, Bruce Stokes, and Jacob Poushter, "NATO Publics Blame Russia for Ukrainian Crisis, but Reluctant to Provide Military Aid: In Russia, Anti-Western Views and Support for Putin Surge," June 2015, 28, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/06/10/nato-publics-blame-russia-for-ukrainian-crisis-but-reluctant-to-provide-military-aid/> (accessed December 12, 2015).

³⁴ Ibid., 30.

³⁵ Ibid., 27.

³⁶ William T. Wilson, "Russia's Economy: What Do the Numbers Tell Us?" *The National Interest*, blog entry posted November 10, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/russias-economy-what-do-the-numbers-tell-us-14300> (accessed December 13, 2015).

³⁷ Gressel, *Russia's Quiet Military*, 5.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Thomas Frear, Łukasz Kulesa, and Ian Kearns, "Preparing for the Worst: Are Russian and NATO Military Exercises Making War in Europe More Likely?" August 2015, 4, http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/preparing-for-the-worst-are-russian-and-nato-military-exercises-making-war-in-europe-more-likely_2997.html (accessed December 13, 2015).

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1-2.

⁴¹ Gressel, *Russia's Quiet Military*, 11.

⁴² Ibid., 12.

⁴³ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Wilson, "Russia's Economy."

⁴⁷ Gressel, *Russia's Quiet Military*, 12.

⁴⁸ Covington, "Putin's Choice for Russia," 2.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 2-3.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Olga Oliker, et al., "Russian Foreign Policy in Historical and Current Context: A Reassessment," *Perspective*, 2015, 21, <http://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE144.html> (accessed December 13, 2015).

⁵² "President Obama the People of Estonia," September 3, 2014, *The White House*, video file, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2014/09/03/president-obama-addresses-people-estonia#transcript> (accessed January 9, 2016).

⁵³ Gressel, *Russia's Quiet Military*, 3.

⁵⁴ United States Special Operations Command, *The Gray Zone*, White Paper (Washington, DC: United States Special Operations Command, September 9, 2015).

⁵⁵ Discussion with OSD-P personnel, telephone discussion, Washington, DC, November 2, 2015.

⁵⁶ Nau, "Obama's Foreign Policy," 36.

⁵⁷ Andràs Ràcz, "Russia's Hybrid War in Ukraine: Breaking the Enemy's Ability to Resist," *The Finnish Institute of International Affairs*, no. 43 (2015): 52.

⁵⁸ Nau, "Obama's Foreign Policy," 29.