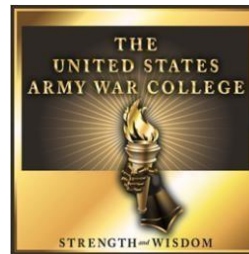


## Countering the Aggressive Russian Narrative: Setting U.S. Policy in Eurasia

by

Colonel James B. Bartholomees III  
United States Army

Under the Direction of:  
Colonel Robert E. Hamilton



United States Army War College  
Class of 2017

### 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)<br>01-04-2017  |                   | 2. REPORT TYPE<br>STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT |  | 3. DATES COVERED (From - To) |                                      |
| 4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE<br>Countering the Aggressive Russian Narrative: Setting U.S. Policy in Eurasia   |                   |   | 5a. CONTRACT NUMBER                      |                              |                                      |
|  |                   |   | 5b. GRANT NUMBER                         |                              |                                      |
|  |                   |   | 5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER               |                              |                                      |
| 6. AUTHOR(S)<br>Colonel James B. Bartholomees III<br>United States Army  |                   |   | 5d. PROJECT NUMBER                       |                              |                                      |
|  |                   |   | 5e. TASK NUMBER                          |                              |                                      |
|  |                   |   | 5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER                     |                              |                                      |
| 7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)<br>Colonel Robert E. Hamilton   |                   |   | 8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER |                              |                                      |
| 9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)<br>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.<br>To the best of my knowledge this SRP accurately depicts USG and/or DoD policy & contains no classified information or aggregation of information that poses an operations security risk. <b>Author:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>PA:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  |                   |   |  |                              |                                      |
| 13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES<br>Word Count: 6132  |                   |   |  |                              |                                      |
| 14. ABSTRACT<br>As the United States and European nations contend with rising Russian aggression, we are faced with a significant Russian information campaign designed to question western liberal values and portray Russia as the saviors of Eurasia. In order to rise above the chatter and create a clear, consistent imperative, the US should insist that Russia respect the sovereignty of its neighbors. Focusing on independent nation states prospering in liberal institutions of their choice, the US should work with its allies to counter the most egregious cases of Russian disinformation, while seeking to allay Russian fears by publicly rejecting any attempt to destabilize their government and domestic society. This paper will outline a renewed US narrative to support diplomatic, military, economic and informational messages for the benefit of joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multi-national execution across all domains. The goal of the US narrative change is to realistically address Russian aggression with a clear, united message while leaving open conditional invitations for Russia to enter existing European economic institutions. |                   |   |  |                              |                                      |
| 15. SUBJECT TERMS<br>Russian Aggression, Information Operations, Strategic Communications, NATO  |                   |   |  |                              |                                      |
| 16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:  |                   |   | 17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT               | 18. NUMBER OF PAGES<br>29    | 19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON      |
| a. REPORT<br>UU  | b. ABSTRACT<br>UU | c. THIS PAGE<br>UU                          |  |                              | 19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (w/ area code) |

## Countering the Aggressive Russian Narrative: Setting U.S. Policy in Eurasia

(6132 words)

### Abstract

As the United States and European nations contend with rising Russian aggression, we are faced with a significant Russian information campaign designed to question western liberal values and portray Russia as the saviors of Eurasia. In order to rise above the chatter and create a clear, consistent imperative, the US should insist that Russia respect the sovereignty of its neighbors. Focusing on independent nation states prospering in liberal institutions of their choice, the US should work with its allies to counter the most egregious cases of Russian disinformation, while seeking to allay Russian fears by publicly rejecting any attempt to destabilize their government and domestic society. This paper will outline a renewed US narrative to support diplomatic, military, economic and informational messages for the benefit of joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multi-national execution across all domains. The goal of the US narrative change is to realistically address Russian aggression with a clear, united message while leaving open conditional invitations for Russia to enter existing European economic institutions.

## Countering the Aggressive Russian Narrative: Setting U.S. Policy in Eurasia

...frankly the battlefield isn't necessarily a field anymore. It's in the minds of the people. It's what they believe to be true that matters.

—Admiral Mike Mullen<sup>1</sup>

During an Atlantic Council panel in November 2016, the former Supreme Allied Commander of Europe (SACEUR) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), General (retired) Breedlove, provided his assessment of the growing adversarial relationship with the Russian Federation. His candid comments rated the effectiveness of our instruments of national and international power, stating that NATO leveraged “Big E (Economic), some D (Diplomatic), very little M (Military) and almost no I (Information)” against our aggressive Russian competitors.<sup>2</sup> General Breedlove’s critical analysis during Russia’s most egregious actions in Ukraine provides an opportunity to reconsider our direction to deter Russian aggression outside of its sovereign borders. The strength of Russian information campaigns in Georgia and Ukraine combined with Admiral Mullen’s observation of the modern battlefield of the mind highlight the relevance of information dominance in support of military strategic gains. As General Breedlove observed, “force is back on the table to change internationally recognized borders in Europe.”<sup>3</sup> The breadth of study on the Russian Federation’s revanchist behavior impacting its nascent neighboring nations is extensive, though solutions for the US and NATO to deal with this problem remain unclear. As Europe struggles to unify economically through the European Union (EU), and is challenged with internal security issues from a deluge of refugees, NATO seeks to defend its member nations from Russian hybrid attacks while supporting the resiliency of aspiring NATO neighbors.

With a myriad of European challenges that Russia seeks to exploit, how should the US encourage Russia to respect the sovereignty of its neighbors? Are US and NATO strategic ends in the region realistic? Gen. Breedlove stated that NATO “desires a Europe that is whole, free, at peace and prosperous.”<sup>4</sup> In light of Russia’s tumultuous history and shifting borders over the centuries, how should we expect Russia to interact with its Western neighbors? In order to answer these questions, the US and NATO need to analyze Russia’s information campaign in order to better understand its sources and guiding rationale. This study will argue that to do so requires understanding the identities Russia ascribes to itself and to its Western interlocutors, since these identities guide Russian actions. The objective of this study is to inform our revised US policy towards Russia as well as bolster our national instruments of power, particularly our information narrative aimed at Russian threats on its neighbors.

Though buzzwords such as “strategic communications,” “information operations,” and “narratives” are often relegated to complementing strategic or operational effects, the US military appreciates the centrality of ideology to an adversary’s center of gravity after fifteen years of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. Though the Russian Federation does not have a communist ideology from which to draw its populist strength, nor does it have the military might of the former Soviet Union, Russia is effectively employing information and message projection as its primary instrument of power unlike any nation state we have recently contested. Much like our arduous military encounters with insurgencies in the Middle East, the US and NATO are challenged in countering a belligerent Russia that openly questions national sovereignty across Eurasia. NATO Chief of Strategic Communications, Mark Laity, states that this is a common weakness

in Western communication campaigns.<sup>5</sup> “The enemy is fast, flexible, and more attuned to the cultures where they operate. We talk Narrative, but Narrative is where they beat us. We do messages and themes, and our opponents do Narrative and tap into cultures and religion.”<sup>6</sup>

Considering that the source of an effective narrative is an organization’s identity, the US must understand Russian identity in order to develop a strategy to counter it. As Mark Laity states, “right now we spend too much time on coordination and process” as we work with our allies and within our own bureaucracies reacting to Russian aggression.<sup>7</sup> Current US policy and processes limit our ability to counter Russia’s aggressive nature, which is likened to a “firehose of falsehood.”<sup>8</sup> In order to rise above the chatter and create a clear, consistent imperative, the United States should insist that Russia respect the sovereignty of its neighbors. Focusing on independent nation states prospering in liberal institutions of their choice, the US should work to counter the most egregious cases of Russian disinformation, while seeking to allay Russian fears by publicly disavowing any attempt to destabilize the Russian government and domestic society. Though actions speak louder than words, a strengthened US narrative consistent with our national identity has the potential to embolden our allies as well as deter further Russian aggression. This paper will outline a renewed US narrative to support diplomatic, military, economic and informational messages for the benefit of joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multi-national execution across all domains.

### The Russian World View

In order to appreciate Russia’s current revanchist approach, we should understand its national and cultural history over the last several hundred years. From

Napoleon's stretch to Moscow to the Nazi advance east, western adversaries learned Russia is a nation to contend with, not to conquer. Russia's sheer land mass encompassing eleven time zones makes it a formidable opponent in a land war.<sup>9</sup> The history of the Russian Empire and the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) over the centuries incentivized a strong, authoritarian state under Vladimir Putin "in which the regime seeks to legitimize its rule through... a foreign policy focused on enhancing the country's geopolitical influence."<sup>10</sup> Putin's thought process mirrors George Kennan's description of "antagonistic 'capital encirclement'" in his famous Long Telegram to the Secretary of State in 1946.<sup>11</sup> Witnessing the fracture of the USSR in 1991 under the Glasnost and Perestroika policies of Gorbachev, followed by economic and political turmoil under Yeltsin, President Putin capitalized on the lessons of failure to rebuild Russian pride through a narrative that presents the West as an adversary attempting to encircle and destabilize Russia.<sup>12</sup>

Though the Russian Federation's ethnic Russian population is in decline, Putin's experience as an operative in the former Ministry of State Security (KGB) and his interpretation of Russian Orthodox heritage and history shape his explanation of the Russian narrative as that of a righteous superpower. As the KGB morphed into the Federal Security Service (FSB), the core mission of the Russian intelligence agency remains to protect the integrity of the regime at all costs.<sup>13</sup> Putin holds preservation of the Russian national identity in the same light, stating during a speech in 2014 that "either we remain a sovereign nation, or we dissolve without a trace and lose our identity."<sup>14</sup> From its communist days, the Kremlin is well practiced at lying to its citizens and effectively uses social media to control its messages internally, and press its

agenda externally. Putin's centralized governance around "the Stavka, the high command in Russia," facilitates speedy decision making with minimal dissent, predominantly with the aim of preserving and expanding the Russian Federation.<sup>15</sup> The Kremlin's export of the news network *Russia Today* is a great example of President Putin's appreciation for the power of narrative projection and employment of "Maskirovika," the Russian art of deception.<sup>16</sup> *Russia Today's* motto, "Question More," literally transmits the intention of the media source to incite confusion and distrust, particularly of the West, in Russian and Western audiences alike.

The Russian national instrument of information also plays a significant role in their military strategy. Russian Chief of the General Staff, General Gerasimov, described the character of 21<sup>st</sup> century Russian warfare in the "New Generation Warfare" doctrine, which relies four times more on non-kinetic than kinetic means for operational and strategic effects.<sup>17</sup> This doctrine involves "military force and diplomacy, placing disinformation, and influencing the opponent's decision-making" in order to "weaken NATO and shape US and Western policies" to Russia's benefit.<sup>18</sup> Russia dominates the information spectrum in order to disrupt Western values and exploit strategic seams in NATO. The challenge of the US and its allies is not to allow ourselves to be flummoxed by the Russian "Firehose of Falsehood," encouraging poor strategic decisions that allow Russia to exploit seams in our democracies.<sup>19</sup> Before we can counter the dominant information arm of Russian "ambiguous warfare," the US and NATO must clearly appreciate Russian interests that drive their strategic narrative across Eastern Europe, the Black Sea and the states to Russia's south.<sup>20</sup>



Russia's core national interests center on a return to global power that the USSR enjoyed as well as resumption of its regional "sphere of influence in the former Soviet space."<sup>21</sup> Ultimately, these expansive interests require domestic support and momentum against the West while justifying its "expanding control over Russian civil society."<sup>22</sup> In order for the narrative to be domestically effective, its citizens must view the Russian Federation as a victim of Western injustices, forcing Russians to chart their own way to be great again. Former Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter described Russian actions as "undercutting the work and contributions of others, rather than... making contributions of their own."<sup>23</sup> The purpose of Russia's undercutting is to justify its war footing to its suppressed populace, providing purpose to their suffering, while buying time for military and economic growth against a common Western enemy. Lacking a communist ideology, the Kremlin regenerated a pride in Russia, an identity that its repressed citizens could relate to from the Soviet days, that provides a consistent narrative clearly speaking to international and domestic audiences alike.<sup>24</sup>

### The Coherent Russian Narrative

President Putin's domestic rallying cry informs the Russian narrative as "the Saviors of ethnic Russia from the Evil West." Though Russia's narrative is not based on truth as Americans understand it, the foundations of Putin's arguments are based upon NATO member expansion over the last twenty years as well as US military led interventions in Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Libya.<sup>25</sup> Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, former US National Security Advisor under President Carter, stated that the Russian narrative is comprised of "false pride and misunderstanding of Russian history...combined with a quest for money."<sup>26</sup> Russia is thriving in an adversarial relationship with the West after previously capitulating to NATO desires, resulting in former Soviet republics and

Warsaw Pact allies officially joining NATO as sovereign nations, followed by the overthrow of a Libyan dictatorship in 2011. The Kremlin successfully sustains a campaign of fear against Western liberal institutions, not only towards Russian citizens, but also neighboring countries it wishes to isolate from NATO and the EU. Putin's assumption of a "proprietary attitude" towards former Soviet nations, termed the "Near Abroad," within the Russian "zone of privileged interests," serves as a reminder to NATO of where these nations owe their true allegiance.<sup>27</sup> The Kremlin adroitly wields its national instruments of power to support the Russian narrative and advance its interests of regional dominance and world power recognition.

Russia's diplomatic message focuses on protection of the "Compatriots" or the "Russian Diaspora," that it perceives are being treated unfairly in Eurasian states. The collapse of the Soviet Union left millions of ethnic Russians – and other groups with historical ties to Russia, such as Abkhazians and Ossetians – "stranded" in newly independent states outside of Russia. Russia has periodically argued that these populations were threatened by their new governments, and has used this alleged threat as justification for challenging sovereign borders and legitimizing Russian interventions in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. An observation from a Russian study group reflects the steady beat of patriotism extending beyond international Russian Federation borders:

The growing popularity of the slogan "*Rossiya ne brosayet svoikh—Russia does not abandon its own*"—reflects these feelings and resembles Russia's pan-Slavic attitudes toward Serbia before World War I... A Russian panelist declared that "our cause is just and we will prevail" to thunderous applause.<sup>28</sup>

Central to its diplomatic message is the Great Power identity lost with the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>29</sup> Putin's ability to rekindle this loss of identity does not

require communism or ideology to ignite the flames of Russian patriotism that propel the Russian Federation to a strong military stance.

Russia's diplomatic message logically informs its military message that it views NATO as a growing threat to the sovereignty of Russia. Putin argues that NATO is growing in strength despite the 1990 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which served to stall the growth of military force posture in Eastern Europe as well as Russia. As Russia observed an increasing number of Eastern European countries seeking NATO membership, it perceived this growth as an existential threat and rebuilt its military accordingly. In addition to the geographic enlargement of NATO, Russia perceived NATO to be more militarily active in areas where Russia has long-standing interests, such as the Balkans. "NATO's military intervention in the Kosovo crisis was interpreted in Moscow as a geopolitical coup," as well as a prime example of US imperialism.<sup>30</sup> Russia justifies its increased capability in its Western Command through snap exercises of tens of thousands of Soldiers as well as military actions in Syria to protect its sovereignty and its allies from what it claims are active Western and terrorist threats. Though Russia's development of its military force and enhancement of its nuclear capability in recent years are important to its narrative of strength, Russian strategists learned from the failure of the Soviet Union to strengthen their economy with state sponsored energy businesses that compel neighboring state transactions as much as or more than military might.

Russia's economic message relies on the benefit of interior Eurasian lines of communication and natural energy resources to convince buffer state leadership that they are better off dealing with Russia than the "Evil West." The Center for Strategic and

International Studies (CSIS) report on Russia's "Unvirtuous Cycle" of economic and political influence on its neighboring countries describes how Russia exploits nations to the point of economic and political dependency, termed "state capture."<sup>31</sup> Appealing to buffer states with energy requirements, Russia seeks to "break US and Western dominance of the international and democratic liberal order" by winning over states in a series of bilateral engagements in corrupt business practices by bribing senior leaders and manufacturing scandals to paralyze their options to freely operate.<sup>32</sup> By embroiling nations such as Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria in economic and political corruption scandals, Russia's economic messages erode US trust in these nations despite their NATO and EU membership. Russia's desire to erode trust in Western institutions and values spans the information spectrum and has entered into the US homeland in ways that we would have never imagined.

Russia's information message is amazingly powerful and has most recently resonated during our US presidential elections, generating the first foreign impact of its type in US history. Russian cyberattacks into the Democratic Nation Committee and Clinton campaign are evidence that the Kremlin wishes to disrupt US democratic institutions and those like them throughout Europe.<sup>33</sup> "They want to essentially erode faith in the US government or US government interests," said Clint Watts, a fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute who along with two other researchers has tracked Russian propaganda since 2014. "This was their standard mode of operation during the Cold War. The problem is that this was hard to do before social media."<sup>34</sup> Russian attacks on the discrepancies and inconsistencies of the US democracy provide a coherent message to domestic and international audiences alike.

Putin's information message is gaining traction with his citizens and the Russian diaspora because it appeals to those who perceive latent imperialism in US promotion of our ideas and values. Putin's message that "the West is corrupting our society" is appealing to conservative Orthodox communities that interpret Western progressive efforts, such as open acceptance of homosexuality and gay marriage, as hostile and unwelcomed. The Kremlin information arm creates propaganda videos such as *I'm a Russian Occupant*, which are well produced, thoughtfully crafted cinema projects that seem ludicrous to US audiences but resonate with ethnic Russians as well as disenfranchised European audiences that may not benefit from the liberal Western view of international order.<sup>35</sup> In reaction to the near-continuous US diplomatic criticism of Russian domestic injustice, Putin skillfully highlights the moral corruption of Western society to sustain the upper hand with his constituents.

Given Russia's coherent narrative threaded through all of its instruments of national power, the US and its allies are faced with several policy options. In order to avoid overreacting to Russia's hostile narrative resulting in a strategic misstep, the US and NATO have opted to play it safe and not fall victim to Russian "Reflexive Control" efforts, which play upon the miscalculations of its opponents who react to Russian deception operations.<sup>36</sup> Western trepidation as well as US experiences in the Middle East have arguably led us towards a general policy of appeasement, informing the default US narrative of this decade.

### The Running US Narrative

The US narrative, whether intentional or not, has been "Let's all just get along." Given its arguable position as the greatest economic and military world power, the US assumes the best in Russia's intentions, isolating Russia's narrative to President Putin

as the proximate cause for a shift toward undermining Western liberal institutions. The US and NATO have not squarely answered Russia's aggressive narrative since Putin resumed power as Russian President in 2012.<sup>37</sup> The US narrative projects a hopeful attitude that Putin will eventually understand the rationality of the democratic point of view just as Gorbachev and Yeltsin did, allowing for inevitable cooperation. This liberal view of Russia and geopolitics leaves the US and NATO vulnerable to the strength of Russia's patriotic narrative aimed at unifying citizens of the Russian Federation with ethnic Russians in neighboring Eurasian nations. The Western liberal narrative does not recognize this Russian argument, leading to four weaknesses that the US must contend with.

The first weakness of the current US narrative is that we perceive that the "Goodness of the West" is implied in the UN, NATO, democracy, and the end of the Cold War. As Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski recently stated "We have an exaggerated sense on the public level of the degree to which the world is prepared to follow us."<sup>38</sup> A widely held belief that Russia would eventually follow Western ways led to a liberal view that the Russian Federation simply needed more time and support to transition from communism to a true democracy.

Since 1991, U.S. policymakers, scholars, and journalists have largely operated under the assumption that post-Soviet Russia was on a bumpy and faltering, yet real road to democracy. This assumption has blinded observers to the reality that Russia was on a successful road to becoming a kleptocratic autocracy.<sup>39</sup>

As the US dismissed Russia's aggressive foreign policy in hopes of future diplomatic improvements, we offered Russia a seat at the table through the expansion of the G8 Summit and support for Russian accession to the World Trade Organization. A series of three US presidential "resets" with Russian Federation presidents are

evidence of our cyclical return to a hopeful liberal outcome. Russia's growing desire to tightly control its populace, its state supported economy, and its authoritative governance structure with a highly compensated oligarchy demonstrate that US and Western engagement strategies are failing to convince Russia to embrace democracy and only embolden stronger actions to coerce its neighboring states.<sup>40</sup>

Our democracy's separation of business and government creates a second weakness, in that Western states are unable to exert the kind of economic leverage that Russia can. The independence and transparency of Western media leave the West susceptible to attack and constantly on the information defensive against a Russian state that firmly controls its media and key sectors of its economy. The best economic message that the US combined with the EU have been able to muster came from sanctions taken after Russia's invasion of Crimea. US and EU sanctions for nearly three years have been answered by Russia's incremental actions to gradually chip away at the resolve of neighboring countries.<sup>41</sup> Given that natural resource energy companies such as Gazprom are essentially run by the state of Russia, the Kremlin is able to absorb short term losses from sanctions while politically coercing neighboring nations to sustain export opportunities.<sup>42</sup> A recent Atlantic Council study on the effectiveness of sanctions on Russia revealed "the West has not publicly reacted to the other forms of hybrid warfare that Russia wages against Ukraine, mostly economic and trade."<sup>43</sup> Over years of conflict in Ukraine, Russia seems to be willing to endure and maneuver around current sanctions in hopes the West will lose its resolve and EU agreement will eventually fracture.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, the impact of static sanctions combined with the West's strong human rights message is leveraged by Moscow against its people to

reinforce the idea that the West is the cause of Russia's problems, not only financially, but also morally and ethically.

A third weakness that we should appreciate is that the Kremlin leverages western human rights and democratization qualifications against the US in the war of ideas. The US liberal desire to bring democracy to all states over time facilitates a host of US interest groups to ostensibly invade Russian information space and proselytize our progressive Western values that are not uniformly appreciated by Eastern Orthodox culture. The US lacks an appreciation for the syncretism of Russia and other Eastern nations that do not mirror Western values. Putin uses this vulnerability against the West in portraying ethnic Russians as under Western attack, economically, militarily and morally. The moral attack of socially progressive Europe on the conservative Eastern Orthodox society provides credibility to Russia's narrative that it desires to save all Russians, regardless of their citizenship, from the "Evil West."<sup>45</sup> The perceived Western moral attack fuels Russia's imperative for Putin to save the Russian civilization from Western moral corruption. This moral imperative emboldens Russian ambiguous imperial action where otherwise it might be opposed, internally and internationally.

Finally, the fourth weakness of the current US narrative is a hesitation to act for fear of military escalation and reentry into another Cold War. "Enlargement has made NATO itself a politically and culturally more diverse organization, where decision consensus will be harder to achieve."<sup>46</sup> Russian actions under the New Generation Warfare doctrine are so ambiguous that they do not reach our current deterrence thresholds for us to initiate action. However, President Putin has been clear about his goals: to expand Russian power under the narrative of protecting the Russian diaspora



without regard for the sovereignty of its neighboring countries.<sup>47</sup> More importantly, Russia's aggressive narrative is supported by action that should not be confused or distorted by disinformation in propaganda campaigns.

With these four weaknesses in mind, a renewed US narrative directed towards Russia is paramount before Russia decides to illegitimately seize more terrain outside of its borders. Garry Kasparov warned in 2015 that "Winter is coming," and that we should "rouse ourselves from our complacency" and be "bold enough to eradicate" injustice in order to sustain international order.<sup>48</sup> Our narrative must articulate that the cost of inaction over time will only grow as Russia continues to bully its neighbors and expand its malignant influence West through a variety of domains.<sup>49</sup> "Finding clarity in ambiguity and enabling decision making" is essential to leading with strength as the US has led in Europe over the last 70 years.<sup>50</sup> Our strong US narrative must be heard and understood by our citizens, our allies in NATO and across Europe, but specifically directed at Russia for their careful consideration.

### The New US Narrative

The US can avoid a fourth presidential administration post-Cold War "reset" with Russia by simply insisting that independent nation state sovereignty must be honored across all domains as a principal imperative of international order. A new strategic narrative should contain insights from the major theoretical paradigms of international relations. From realism, the US narrative should accept the view of the state as the dominant actor in the international system and should support the concept of state sovereignty across Eurasia. From constructivism, the new narrative should seek to understand the historical sources of Russia's fearful world view and its view of the "threat" emanating from the West, without making excuses for or accepting aggressive

Russian behavior towards its neighbors. From liberalism, the new narrative should leave the door open to including Russia in Euro-Atlantic institutions if and when it proves it can abide by the rules of those institutions. A strong narrative is reflective of our Western identity, by which the US National Security Strategy highlights our collective value of free democracies and the international order which we are prepared to enforce if required.<sup>51</sup> More importantly, it is a US interest for growing powers such as Russia to abide by international norms before they grow powerful enough to force the US back into a Cold War.

We should clearly communicate that our strategic end is a responsible Russia that respects the sovereignty of its neighboring states and is willing to consider entering vibrant Western economic institutions.<sup>52</sup> The foundation of this narrative is Russian adherence to the Westphalian model from which modern nation states derive their sovereignty, despite Putin's desire to push these boundaries and draw attention away from international order which the Russian Federation took part in establishing in Eurasia over the last 25 years.<sup>53</sup> Just as Joseph Nye described his theory of soft power as a "contest of competitive credibility," he notes that the information age demands that our credibility is rooted in our narrative.<sup>54</sup> These efforts support the strategic narrative that the US is willing to lead NATO by example by holding Russia accountable for its actions in any domain. A recent strategy recommendation from the Heritage Foundation provided a similar conclusion: "(The US) must reply to undesirable Russian actions calmly, firmly, and without evasions, so that the Russian regime will understand in advance that it cannot act without consequences."<sup>55</sup> Russian hacking into the Democratic National Committee regained traction in the US media for the very reason

that malign Russian influence should receive visibility across Europe. It is essential for Western nations to unapologetically illuminate illicit Russian activities outside of its borders and encourage our partners and allies to do the same.<sup>56</sup>

The new US narrative should focus less on Russian domestic injustice and more on Russian revanchist actions aimed against foreign nations. Lieutenant General Tim Ray, deputy commander of US European Command, recently captured this focus when he stated that NATO should deter Russian aggression by “ensuring the territorial integrity of our allies.”<sup>57</sup> This refined narrative risks losing support of human rights groups that serve to protect the rights of Russian citizens, but given Russia’s controlling oligarchy and declining civil liberties, Western efforts to speak out against the injustices to Russian citizens only feeds the Russian social message that the West is attempting to corrupt their conservative Orthodox society. Whether this is true or false is irrelevant; our diplomatic efforts to shape Russian domestic policy are detracting from our message that nations should be more concerned about protecting their own citizens from Russian malignant influence than about the rights of Russian citizens. This is also a means of countering Russia’s heightened paranoia that may arise from a strong stance against their exploitation of their neighbors. As Former Secretary of Defense Ash Carter stated recently, “the United States does not seek a new Cold War with Russia,” so our narrative needs to clearly and consistently articulate that we remain open to discussion, but only if Russia respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other nations.<sup>58</sup> Shifting the US narrative to counter Russia’s aggressive narrative will influence all of our instruments of national power, with a sharper message that US citizens, our allies, and the Kremlin can clearly understand and act upon.

The US is already projecting a strong message of solidarity with NATO, but it needs to increase its open diplomacy with allied nations to illuminate “Gray Zones” in their countries for Western visibility and potential assistance.<sup>59</sup> The US diplomatic message should be “Russian (malignant) influence is not just a domestic governance challenge, but a national security threat.”<sup>60</sup> As US diplomats across Europe speak with conviction about our democratic values, they should encourage free press, non-government organizations, as well as European institutions to expose and fight unwanted Russian influence. The US must demonstrate that it will honor and bolster its commitments to institutions and treaties, specifically NATO, to carry out its policies across Eurasia. Liberal institutions should remain open to nations, including Russia, that wish to conform to and abide by the values that these organizations espouse. Though some scholars argue that NATO expansion during the Clinton administration eventually incited Russian aggression today, the US offered Russia the same opportunities that it did to Eastern European nations to join NATO.<sup>61</sup> Ukraine sacrificed military capability after the Cold War to enter the international order and work to join NATO, and the US should not abandon these commitments so long as Ukraine is willing to fight for its independence from the Russian Federation.<sup>62</sup> In the same light, Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria and other NATO nations are fighting Russian corruption in the shadows, threatening their fledgling democracies.<sup>63</sup> The US diplomatic message should encourage all European nations to invest in their own democracies by shedding light on Russian foul play, publicly discouraging their malign practices, and promoting healthy engagement in diplomatic and economic institutions.

Given the complexity of Russia's state sponsored economy and the fact that Europe draws a third of its energy resources from Russia, the US needs to work with NATO and the EU to increase visibility on the effectiveness of sanctions on Russia. The US economic message should be that Russia will continue to pay for its transgressions against its neighbors. The US must work with the EU to periodically tighten sanctions and fill loopholes so long as Russia fails to respect the sovereignty of neighboring states such as Ukraine.<sup>64</sup> This sends a clear message to Russia that reinforces the narrative of the value of sovereignty of nation states over domestic injustice, combatting cognitive atrophy and acceptance of a multi-year unjustified military invasion. A recent CSIS study recommended that the US Treasury Department design a "Financial Crimes Enforcement Network focused solely on tracing and prosecuting illicit Russian-linked financial flows."<sup>65</sup> This concept is a great investment not only for the benefit of exposing Russian economic corruption, but also informing constant revision of sanctions. These revisions should be measured and appropriately placed on Russia as well as other nations that fail to abide by international norms. Revised sanctions must be clearly and frequently communicated to the Russian government as well as US and European citizens to develop an informal means of eroding the Kremlin's message to Russian citizens that the West is responsible for its problems. In addition to official messages and statements, western media can assist in telling the accurate story of sanctions as well as the lies propagated by Russia for its benefit.

To combat Russia's "Firehose of Falsehood", our core information message should be that Russian leadership have chosen to depart from decades of agreements despite the trust and confidence of NATO. As "Russian leadership seek to turn plurality

of opinion – a virtue of open societies – into a vulnerability,” our obligation is to speak to the value of liberty and freedom that democratic societies enjoy and that Russia openly shuns.<sup>66</sup> President Obama shared in his final presidential press conference that the unhealthy political bifurcation of today’s American society serves as a liability for autocracies such as Russia to exploit.<sup>67</sup> President Obama’s message of vulnerability provides opportunity for strength as we communicate the value of “civil society independent media, and increased transparency” to our citizens and allies.<sup>68</sup> While shedding light on political and economic corruption fomented by Russia in its neighboring states, the US should unapologetically discredit President Putin’s leadership and intentions for personal financial power. While President Obama shared the advantage that Russia has taken of our open democracy, he provided a bold yet necessary statement: “The Russians can’t change us or weaken us... but they can impact us if we lose track of who we are, if we abandon our values.”<sup>69</sup> Without intending to antagonize Russia, President Obama delivered a strong statement that was long overdue. Russia’s critical capability against the US is arguably not its growing military might, but its ability to shake the fabric of our democracy through its aggressive information campaign. Sustaining this context is important to shaping our new military message to Russia as well as our allies.

The new US military message must reinforce the running message of reliance on NATO to shift from assurance to deterrence, but should begin to realistically and openly address the specific hybrid threats that Russia is pressing with its New Generation Warfare doctrine. NATO nations combined possesses 5 times the military strength and over 18 times the combined defense budget of Russia.<sup>70</sup> The military message should

be that NATO will exercise combined capability with regularity and without apology in order to deter Russian aggression as Georgia and Ukraine experienced over the last decade. General Milley's comments during the 2016 Association of the United States Army conference address the strength of our military that Russia must understand and continue to appreciate to avoid miscalculation. Generically addressing enemies of our nation, he stated, "the United States military... will stop you and we will beat you harder than you've ever been beaten before; make no mistake about that."<sup>71</sup> Though his comments may be viewed as bellicose and provocative, they send a clear message of US willingness to utilize military capability towards nations that doubt US resolve.

Demonstrating proficiency across all domains is necessary to reassuring our allies as well as encouraging them to wisely spend their national resources on relevant defensive capabilities. The US should lead NATO in discussing specifically how to deter Russian aggression, from warfare in cyberspace to countering its growing Anti-Access / Area Denial systems across Eastern Europe. The US military absolutely requires the increased European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), but it also needs a forward stationed Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) headquarters to synchronize NATO military and information efforts with interagency support of diplomatic and economic instruments. This CJTF is necessary not only to synchronize military decisive elements of power in the event of high order kinetic operations, but more importantly to closely monitor Russian hybrid indicators and inform graduated responses with organic European solutions. Our military message should clearly communicate our unwavering support to the Ukrainian Army and ensure that Russia understands that we are learning from the Kremlin initiated insurgency. This is the most concrete manner that NATO and other

allied countries can demonstrate US resolve to hold borders and support fledgling democracies that desire connection to NATO and the EU.

### Conclusion

A strong US narrative supporting independent nation state sovereignty is necessary not only to reach the Kremlin, but also to send a clear message to our partners and allies that we stand firmly in our convictions and principles as a dominant global power. Though this narrative may seem provocative and likely to push Russia away from future liberal opportunities, a constructivist view of this problem set informs a clearer understanding of how Russia will act on the international stage to restore regional and global power. The goal of the US narrative change is to realistically address Russian aggression with a clear, united message while leaving open conditional invitations for Russia to enter existing European political and economic institutions.<sup>72</sup> As outlined in the current National Security Strategy, the US must continue to lead and set the example to send a clear message to Russia, our allies in Europe and nations watching this situation throughout the world.<sup>73</sup> As the Joint Staff focuses on synchronizing global strategy, it captured the importance of a strong US narrative: “The pervasive presence of media in many forms and the interconnectivity of populations will elevate the importance of the narrative to the point that it could determine the strategic outcome of a military action.”<sup>74</sup>

Though we are less inclined to get involved in intrastate human rights and domestic issues in Russia, we will simply utilize rewards to consistently encourage democratic states to thrive in the global economy. Through modern US mediums such as *Current Time*, a “Russian-language television network... aimed at audiences inside Russia as well as the borderlands of the former Soviet Union,” we should clearly and



consistently communicate this paper's recommended messages to Russian speaking societies without questioning Russian Federation sovereignty.<sup>75</sup> These messages across diplomatic, economic, information and military instruments of power will demonstrate that we will work with all nation states and value international order above all, but that we are willing to commit US military might to preserve the sanctity of nation states that are unfairly threatened or risk breach of their territorial, economic, or moral integrity. Consistently pressing this narrative will empower civilian and military leaders at all levels to act with confidence as we carry out US foreign policy in the new presidential administration.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Admiral Mike Mullen, "Admiral Mullen's Speech on Military Strategy, Kansas State University, March 2010," public speech, Kansas State University, Kansas City, March 3, 2010, <http://www.cfr.org/defense-strategy/admiral-mullens-speech-military-strategy-kansas-state-university-march-2010/p21590> (accessed December 6, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> General (retired) Philip Breedlove, "Keynote on Russia Policy with Gen. Breedlove," public speech, Atlantic Council, Washington, DC, November 3, 2016, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/events/webcasts/new-dawn-russia-and-the-west-after-the-us-presidential-elections> (accessed November 28, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas P. Galvin and Charles D. Allen, *A Primer on Organizational Communication Campaigning* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, June 27, 2016), 2.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Laity, quoted in, Ibid., 2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Christopher Paul and Miriam Matthews, *The Russian 'Firehose of Falsehood' Propaganda Model: Why it Might Work and Options to Counter it* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, September 2016), 1.

<sup>9</sup> The World Fact Book: The Central Intelligence Agency, "Central Asia: Russia," July 1, 2016, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rs.html> (accessed November 28, 2016).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> George Kennan, "The Long Telegram: The Charge of the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State," telegram, Moscow, USSR, February 22, 1946, <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm> (accessed November 28, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> The World Fact Book, "Central Asia: Russia."

<sup>13</sup> Andrei Soldatov, "Putin has Finally Reincarnated the KGB," *Foreign Policy*, September 21, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/09/21/putin-has-finally-reincarnated-the-kgb-mgb-fsb-russia> (accessed November 28, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly," December 4, 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47173> (accessed March 25, 2017).

<sup>15</sup> Fiona Hill, "Understanding and Deterring Russia: U.S. Policies and Strategies," *Brookings Institute*, February 10, 2016, <https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/understanding-and-deterring-russia-u-s-policies-and-strategies> (accessed November 30, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> Dmitry Adamsky, *Cross-Domain Coercion: The Current Russian Art of Strategy*, Proliferation Papers 54 (Brussels, Belgium: Institut des Relations Internationales (IFRI), November 2015), 24.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Frederick W. Kagan et al., *US Grand Strategy: Destroying ISIS and Al Qaeda, Report Two* (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War January 2016), 30, [http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/PLANEX%20Report%202%20FINALFINAL\\_0.pdf](http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/PLANEX%20Report%202%20FINALFINAL_0.pdf) (accessed December 2, 2016).

<sup>19</sup> Paul and Matthews, *The Russian 'Firehose of Falsehood' Propaganda Model*, 1.

<sup>20</sup> R. Reed Anderson et al., *Strategic Landpower and A Resurgent Russia: An Operational Approach to Deterrence*, Integrated Research Project (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, May 2016), 13.

<sup>21</sup> John Herbst, "Assessing and Addressing Russian Revanchism," *PRISM* 6, no. 2 (July 18, 2016): <http://cco.ndu.edu/Publications/PRISM/PRISM-Volume-6-no-2/Article/840804/assessing-and-addressing-russian-revanchism/Herbst> (accessed December 2, 2016).

<sup>22</sup> Kagan et al., *US Grand Strategy: Destroying ISIS and Al Qaeda, Report Two*, 27.

<sup>23</sup> Ashton Carter, "A Strong and Balanced Approach to Russia," *Survival* 58, no. 6 (December 2016 – January 2017): 56.

<sup>24</sup> Galvin and Allen, *A Primer on Organizational Communication Campaigning*, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure: America and the World in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Oxford Press, 2016), 380.

<sup>26</sup> John Hamre and Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Brzezinski Institute on Geostrategy: On Europe and Russia," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, video file, <https://www.csis.org/programs/brzezinski-institute-geostrategy/brzezinski-institute-projects/conversation-brzezinski> (accessed December 2, 2016).

<sup>27</sup> Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure*, 355.

<sup>28</sup> Graham Allison and Dimitri K. Simes, "Russia and America: Stumbling to War," *The National Interest*, April 20, 2015, <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/russia-america-stumbling-war-12662?page=4> (accessed December 2, 2016).

<sup>29</sup> Igor Zevelev, *Russian National Identity and Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 2016), 7.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Ruhle, "NATO Enlargement and Russia: Myths and Realities," *NATO Review Magazine*, November 2016, <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2014/Russia-Ukraine-Nato-crisis/Nato-enlargement-Russia/EN/index.htm> (accessed December 6, 2016).

<sup>31</sup> Heather A. Conley et al., *The Kremlin Playbook: Understanding Russian Influence in Central and Eastern Europe*, (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 2016), 3.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 8.

<sup>33</sup> Eric Lipton, David E. Sanger and Scott Shane, "The Perfect Weapon: How Russian Cyberpower Invaded the US," *New York Times Online*, December 13, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/13/us/politics/russia-hack-election-dnc.html> (accessed December 16, 2016).

<sup>34</sup> Craig Timberg, "Russian Propaganda Efforts Helped Spread 'Fake News' during Election, Experts Say," *The Washington Post Online*, November 24, 2016, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/russian-propaganda-effort-helped-spread-fake-news-during-election-experts-say/2016/11/24/793903b6-8a40-4ca9-b712-716af66098fe\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/russian-propaganda-effort-helped-spread-fake-news-during-election-experts-say/2016/11/24/793903b6-8a40-4ca9-b712-716af66098fe_story.html) (accessed November 25, 2016).

<sup>35</sup> Elias Groll and Reid Standish, "Laser Bears and Occupants: These are the Masterpieces of Delusional Russian Propaganda," *Foreign Policy*, March 3, 2015, [http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/03/03/laser\\_bears\\_and\\_occupants\\_these\\_are\\_the\\_masterpieces\\_of\\_delusional\\_russian\\_propaganda](http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/03/03/laser_bears_and_occupants_these_are_the_masterpieces_of_delusional_russian_propaganda) (accessed December 6, 2016).

<sup>36</sup> Kagan et al., *US Grand Strategy: Destroying ISIS and Al Qaeda, Report Two*, 30.

<sup>37</sup> Stephen Lee Myers, *The New Tsar: The Rise and Reign of Vladimir Putin* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 71.

<sup>38</sup> Hamre and Brzezinski, "The Brzezinski Institute on Geostrategy: On Europe and Russia."

<sup>39</sup> James Jay Carafano et al., *US Comprehensive Strategy Toward Russia*, Heritage Foundation, Special Report #173 on Russia and Eurasia (Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation, December 9, 2015), 4, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2015/12/us-comprehensive-strategy-toward-russia> (accessed December 3, 2016).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>41</sup> Sergey Aleksashenko, *Evaluating Western Sanctions on Russia* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council December 2016), 7.

<sup>42</sup> Garry Kasparov, *Winter is Coming: Why Vladimir Putin and the Enemies of the Free World Must be Stopped* (New York: Public Affairs, 2015), 163.

<sup>43</sup> Aleksashenko, *Evaluating Western Sanctions on Russia*, 7.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>45</sup> Irina Kosterina, "Global Security Forum 2016: Russia Today and Tomorrow: Implications from the US," *Center for Strategic and International Studies Panel*, December 1, 2016, video file, <https://www.csis.org/events/global-security-forum-2016-russia-today-and-tomorrow-implications-us> (accessed December 16, 2016).

<sup>46</sup> R. Craig Nation, "Regional Studies in a Global Age," in *U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2012), 169.

<sup>47</sup> Kasparov, *Winter is Coming*, 210.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 267.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 248.

<sup>50</sup> U.S. Army Special Operations Command, *White Paper: Perceiving Gray Zone Indications* (Fort Bragg, NC: U.S. Army Special Operations Command, March 16, 2016), 4.

<sup>51</sup> Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy 2015* (Washington, DC: The White House, February 2015), 23.

<sup>52</sup> James B. Bartholomees III, *Background Paper, Revision of US Policy with Russia*, National Security Policy and Strategy Paper (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, November 18, 2016), 4.

<sup>53</sup> Michael Hayden, "Understanding the New Global Disorder: Three Tectonics," December 15, 2014, <http://www.fpri.org/article/2014/12/understanding-the-new-global-disorder-three-tectonics> (accessed March 25, 2017).

<sup>54</sup> Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, April 5, 2004), 7.

<sup>55</sup> Carafano et al., *Heritage Foundation, Special Report #173 on Russia and Eurasia*, 5.

<sup>56</sup> Alina Polyakova et al., *The Kremlin's Trojan Horses* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, November 2016), 24.

<sup>57</sup> "US Military Vows more Complex Training in Europe to Deter Russia," *Reuters*, January 8, 2017, [http://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-russia-idUSKBN14S0MX?utm\\_source=Sailthru&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Early%20Bird%](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-russia-idUSKBN14S0MX?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Early%20Bird%20)

[20Brief:%2001.09.2017&utm\\_term=Editorial%20-%20Early%20Bird%20Brief](#) (Accessed January 23, 2017).

<sup>58</sup> Carter, "A Strong and Balanced Approach to Russia," 56.

<sup>59</sup> Polyakova et al., *The Kremlin's Trojan Horses*, 24.

<sup>60</sup> Conley et al., *The Kremlin Playbook*, 30.

<sup>61</sup> Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure*, 380.

<sup>62</sup> Carter, "A Strong and Balanced Approach to Russia," 51.

<sup>63</sup> Conley et al. *The Kremlin Playbook*, 33.

<sup>64</sup> Aleksashenko, *Evaluating Western Sanctions on Russia*, 17.

<sup>65</sup> Conley et al., *The Kremlin Playbook*, 31.

<sup>66</sup> Polyakova et al., "The Kremlin's Trojan Horses," 25.

<sup>67</sup> Barack Obama, "Final Presidential Press Conference," public speech, The White House, Washington D.C., December 16, 2016.

<sup>68</sup> Polyakova et al., *The Kremlin's Trojan Horses*, 25.

<sup>69</sup> Obama, "Final Presidential Press Conference."

<sup>70</sup> John W. Nicholson, "NATO's Land Forces: Strength and Speed Matter," *PRISM* 6, no. 2 (July 18, 2016): <http://cco.ndu.edu/Publications/PRISM/PRISM-Volume-6-no-2/Article/835046/natos-land-forces-strength-and-speed-matter> (accessed December 21, 2016).

<sup>71</sup> General Mark A. Milley, "AUSA Eisenhower Luncheon," public speech, AUSA Conference, Washington D.C., October 4, 2016, 5.

<sup>72</sup> Bartholomees, *Background Paper, Revision of US Policy with Russia*, 8.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2030 (CCJO)*, Draft Working Document, Predecisional (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, June 28, 2016), 3.

<sup>75</sup> "A way to get Real News to Russia," *The Washington Post Online*, February 12, 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-way-to-get-real-news-to-russia/2017/02/12/5ef3b36a-ef17-11e6-b4ff-ac2cf509efe5\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.be25609d9902](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-way-to-get-real-news-to-russia/2017/02/12/5ef3b36a-ef17-11e6-b4ff-ac2cf509efe5_story.html?utm_term=.be25609d9902) (accessed February 23, 2017).