

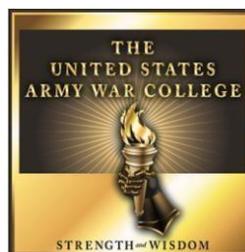
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Russia's Foreign Policy: Can Deterrence and Sanctions Bridle Russia?

by

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Abstract

“Founding Act on Mutual relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation” signed in Paris on May 27th 1997 was supposed to be the act of warm, cooperative relations which ensures lasting peace in the Euro-Atlantic region. More importantly, the Founding act included commitments to norms of international behavior in accordance with UN charter and OSCE documents as well as explicit commitments to respect sovereign states and their right to choose the means to ensure their security. However, Russia's thaw policy lasted until the appearance of the new Russian president Vladimir Putin in 1999. Russia's new president, exploiting opportunity of economic growth, started to consolidate and centralize political power in his hands. During the period of V.Putin and D.Medvedev's presidency Russia's behavior had changed back to almost old soviet rhetoric's. The current aggressive and assertive Russian behavior and rhetoric was reflected in its National security strategy, Foreign policy, and Military doctrine.

Russia's Foreign Policy: Can Deterrence and Sanctions Bridle Russia?

On December 8th, 1991, political leadership of Russia, Belorussia and Ukraine signed the agreement called Commonwealth of Independent States, which officially signified collapse of the USSR. Russia became dethroned from being a super power in the world. The world began to experience the Russia's defrosting foreign policy with initial signs of Russia's societal democratization as well as political and economic alteration. Eastern Europe experienced withdrawal of Russian nuclear arsenal and conventional forces. "Founding Act on Mutual relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation" signed in Paris on May 27th 1997 was supposed to be the act of warm, cooperative relations which ensures lasting peace in the Euro-Atlantic region.¹ More importantly, the Founding act included commitments to norms of international behavior in accordance with UN charter and OSCE documents as well as explicit commitments to respect sovereign states and their right to choose the means to ensure their security.² However, Russia's thaw policy lasted until the appearance of the new Russian president Vladimir Putin in 1999. Russia's new president, exploiting opportunity of economic growth, started to consolidate and centralize political power in his hands. During the period of V.Putin and D.Medvedev's presidency Russia's behavior had changed back to almost old soviet rhetoric's. The current aggressive and assertive Russian behavior and rhetoric was reflected in its National security strategy, Foreign policy, and Military doctrine. This paper proceeds in three sections where the first section examines roots of historical and contemporary motives of Russia's aggressive and assertive Foreign policy towards Eastern Europe. (See figure Russia's driving factors and motives). The second section will analyze and question suitability of currently employed economic sanctions and deterrence strategy.

Finally, the third section will provide general recommendations what else could be done to reinforce sanctions policy implementation and deterrence strategy.



Figure 1. Russia's Foreign Policy Driving Factors and Motives

Historical Perspective

In order to grasp Russia's current policy motives there is a need to look at its history since Russia's political ambitions and foreign policy and motives of today are coded in their actions in the past. Looking at Russia's history consolidates understanding of Russia's motives and might provide answers to the question of why Russia acts as it acts? Since nations historical memory matters it is important to mention that Russia, since the 13th century, was under constant harassment by other countries. In the period of 1200 – 1480 Russia was sacked and ruled by Tatars. During the 14th - 15th centuries, Russia was constantly under harassment by Lithuanians, its

some areas of Russian land were attached to Grand Duchy of Lithuania. From 16th to 17th centuries, parts of Russia's lands were often invaded and jointly ruled by the Polish kingdom and Lithuanian Grand Duchy.³ As Tim Marshal, author of the book "Prisoners of Geography" asserts:

In the past five hundred years they have been invaded several times from the west. The Poles came across... in 1605, followed by the Swedes... in 1708, the French... in 1812, and the Germans... in 1914 and 1941. Looking at it another way, if you count from Napoleon's invasion of 1812, but this time include the Crimean War of 1853-56 and the two world wars up to 1945, then the Russians were fighting on average in or around the North European Plain once every thirty-three years.⁴

Supplementing Tim Marshal's statement about Russia's fear of constant hostile intent and actions of the hostile power, other authors observe Russia's fear by affirming that: "Russia's historical exposure to attack and invasion, including the defeats imposed on the Soviet Union during the early stages of Hitler's *Operation Barbarossa* in 1941, remains in the DNA of today's and tomorrow's Russian political leaders and commanders."⁵

Considering historical facts of the 13th – 20th centuries, the Russia's first historical memory and motive to oppose someone is ingrained with the constant notion of fear, constant threat and distrust of its neighbors in the West.

Russia's expansionist experience has deep roots and traditions in history as well. Already in the middle of the 16th century, Ivan the Terrible had started campaigns towards countries at the Baltic Sea to obtain access to the sea.⁶ The further, more successful progress, had been made by other Russian tsars. At the end of the 17th century new Russia's historic epoch began with the rise of Peter the Great. His period of headship was characterized by intensive and energetic foreign policy implementation. He tried to overcome Russia's economic and cultural backwardness, insisted on

expanding political, commercial as well cultural relations with the Europe. As a prerequisite for that, Russia required convenient and secure axis to the seas. The only way for Russia to attain these objectives - conquer other nations and lands. Therefore, to do that, Peter the Great tried to get access to the Baltic Sea by fighting Sweden.⁷ Russia's imperialist and expansionist ambitions began in 1721, when Peter the Great announced Russia as empire and crowned himself as emperor. At that time Russia became the rock solid authoritarian government with intrusive social control traditions, militarized foreign policy, assembled the biggest army in Europe, and raised the idea of distinctive people and culture. Moreover, in times of Peter the Great, Moscow had matured the idea of conquering the world and started to believe in replacing the Roman Empire majesty.⁸ The following Russian tsars continued Russia's foreign policy and starting from 1721 till 1795, acquired territories of Eastern Europe (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland) in such way gaining the access to the Baltic Sea.⁹ Therefore by the period of the 17th – 20th centuries, Russia became a strong power, dominant in Europe and Eurasia. Russia gained and sustained possession of lands that never belonged to Russia until the second decade of the 20th century. Russia naturally thinks that nations living in close proximity of the Baltic Sea always belonged to the Russian empire. Peter the Great's testament¹⁰, on how to subjugate Europe and conduct Russian foreign policy is considered to be political forgery. The testament was called Russo-phobic by some authors and considered to be misleading.¹¹ However, considering historical facts of 19th and 20th centuries as well as today's Russian modus operandi, no matter how unrealistic document looks it is very concurrent with contemporary conduct of Russia's foreign policy.

Other periods of enduring Russian historical memory contains conviction that Eastern European territories west of Russia belonged to the great empire in the period between 1918 and 1920, when Soviet Russia made an unsuccessful attempt to recapture territories that belonged to them before WWI. Finally, on August 29th, 1939 by signing the treaty of non-aggression between Germany and Union of Soviet Socialist Republic, Eastern Europe fell under the sphere of Soviet influence.¹² Later, followed by Soviet occupation, which lasted fifty years, again Eastern European countries were considered integrated part of today's Russia.

Contemporary Russia's foreign policy instincts in terms of historical Eastern European perspectives are very predatory. The article 41 of the paragraph "Information Support for Foreign Policy Activities" in the concept of the foreign policy of the Russia Federation states that Russia in its public diplomacy "will seek to ensure its objective perception in the world, develops its own effective means of information influence on public opinion abroad...and take necessary measures to counteract information threats to its sovereignty and security."¹³ Such informational support to foreign policy activities takes form of reshaped historical facts about Eastern Europe as well as blames of others in attempting to falsify Russia's national and world history.¹⁴ Russia's informational campaign significantly oriented to unleash historical nostalgia towards Soviet times and its target audience – former citizens and their descendants of former USSR.

Russia's historical and political memory started to play a very important role in the nation's life since rise of V.Putin. Russia's political and strategic memory of having nations of Eastern Europe in their possession over almost two centuries enforces an

enduring sense of ownership over those territories. Thus, fear in combination with the constant threat, strong and enduring sense of historical ownership of the former territories, economical, geospatial interests combined with military interest motivates Russia to oppose NATO and the U.S., and again drag Eastern Europe into Russia's embrace. Having analyzed the historical perspective which encompasses Russia's fear and threat from its neighbors as well as mentality of ownership of the former territories, there is a need to explore the geographical domain.

Geographical Context

Geographical terrain features represented in Eastern Europe is another important factor of Russia's current assertive Foreign policy and its constant aggressive opposition against its neighbors and NATO alliance. Tim Marshal's statement asserts that:

Poland represents a relatively narrow corridor into which Russia could drive its armed forces if necessary and thus prevent an enemy from advancing Moscow. But from this point the wedge begins to broaden; by the time you get to Russia's border it is more than two thousand miles wide, and is flat all the way to Moscow and beyond. Even with a large army you would be hard pressed to defend in strength along this line.¹⁵

This excerpt perfectly illustrates Russia's geospatial fear and facilitates understanding why Russia is so assertive in exercising its foreign policy towards Eastern Europe.

Another important geographical features to Russia is the Baltic states ice free seaports.

Russia's only nonfreezing seaport in the Baltic sea is in Kaliningrad. Whole year operational sea ports represent the "lungs" of the Eastern European economy, but to Russia, they threaten security and are a constant headache. As Tim Marshal asserts "...lack of warm-water ports with direct access to the oceans has always been Russia's Achilles' heel, as strategically important to it as the North European plain."¹⁶

Dimitri Glinski and Peter Reddaway in their article “The Yeltsin era in the Light of Russian History: Reform or Reaction?” reassert:

Meanwhile, partly because of the lack of natural geographic barriers along Russia’s amorphous western border, “the East” – too often misperceived as a monolith without internal interdictions – remained the major source of psychological insecurity, an object of both rivalry and imitation for the Russian elites.¹⁷

Therefore, current Eastern European countries being NATO members causes geographical disadvantages to Russia as well as represents geographical threats, thus forming Russia’s assertive foreign policy towards its Western neighbours. To manifest historical and geographical ownership as well as to diminish mentioned disadvantages and risks, Russia attempts to have a physical foot print in Eastern Europe and appeals to human rights and legitimate interests of compatriots living abroad and “upholding their rights...and its ties with historical homeland...”.¹⁸ These Russian policies are especially visible and exercised in Estonia and Latvia where Russian speaking „compatriots reaches number up to 28 percent in Latvia and Estonia 24 percent. Such similar Russian speaking “physical foot print” gave “legitimate” right to protect compatriots in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine 2014.

Context of Constant Threat

In the above sections described Russia’s historical motives and factors (historical fear, sense of ownership) combined with geographical vulnerability solidifies one notion of undividable threat. The devastating blow which breached the Russian geographical and historical sphere of influence and deepened their sense of insecurity, was the NATO expansion in 1999 and acceptance of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. Later, in 2004 Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, seven former Warsaw Pact members and three former Soviet republics, as

formal members of NATO defense alliance. Russia's military doctrine, published in 2014, article II, point 12, sub-point a clearly defines the main external military risks:

build-up of the power potential of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and vesting NATO with global functions carried out in violation of the rules of international law, bringing the military infrastructure of NATO member countries near borders of the Russian Federation, including by further expansion of the alliance.¹⁹

Therefore keeping in mind historical facts and today's Moscow rhetorics, any of such acts is crossing the red line drawn by the Kremlin. Early inspirations of Georgia and Ukraine to align with EU and NATO were categorically countered by Russia. As Tim Marshal asserts "For the Russian foreign policy elite, membership in the EU is a stalking horse for membership in NATO, and for Russia, Ukrainian membership of NATO is a red line."²⁰ Furthermore, "Any members of any of these three (including Moldova) could spark a war".²¹ Russia's foreign policy concept paragraph „Strengthening International Security” article 32 k clearly manifests insecurity in Europe. Russia's commitment is „to strengthen regional stability in Europe, to ensure bringing the conventional arms control regime in Europe into line with the current reality, as well as strict compliance by all parties with the agreed confidence and security building measures.”²² An additional, vividly expressed sense of threat caused by the U.S. and NATO is articulated in paragraph „Russia in today's world“ of the Russian National security strategy, where it is repeatedly stated, that U.S. and NATO is seen as foreign aggressive powers building military capacity in the vicinity of Russian Federation and practising subversion of legitimate political regimes, provoking conflicts and destabilizing the region which negatively affects interests of Russian Federation.²³ Therefore, the manifestation of Russia's constant foreign policy, in the context of threat, is continues show of force in close proximity of new NATO borders to deter U.S. and NATO as well as to show

determination to respond militarily where “the ultimate goal in the near abroad is to control the government or ensure the failure of a pro-Western leadership. In Europe, the goal is to weaken NATO and the EU.”²⁴ Russian regimes consider NATO and EU as an instruments of the U.S., therefore their primary goal is to undermine American influence and dominance in the region. Such efforts were drastically exercised with the rise of Russia’s current president which leads us to the next section.

Russia’s Ruling Regime

Another significant factor of contemporary foreign policy in Russia its leadership. The world’s literate society may clearly identify that all Russia’s instruments of power and spheres of influence are in one’s man hands.²⁵ As former consultant to Kremlin, Gleb Pavlovsky asserts „those who meet with Putin leave with only a vague idea of what they are supposed to do. ”²⁶

In 1998 Vladimir Putin was picked by Russia’s president Boris Yeltsin as head of FSB. In 1999 he appointed V.Putin as acting prime minister and furthermore as Boris Yeltsin’s successor - acting president. As Stephen Kotkin, author of article „Resistible rise of Vladimir Putin” writes „bit by bit, however, using stealth and dirty tricks, V.Putin reasserted central control over the lever of powers within the country – the TV stations, the gas industry, the oil industry, the regions”.²⁷ The factor of global rising of prices fossil fuel, oil and gas boomed the Russia’s economy. As stated by the same author „A new, grateful Russian middle class was born, some 30 million strong, able to travel and shop abroad easily. More broadly, Russian society was transformed: cell-phone penetration went from zero to 100 percent, unemployment dropped from 12.9 percent to 6.3 percent, and the poverty rate fell from 29 percent to 13 percent. Wages rose, pensions were doled out, and the immense national debt that had been accumulated by

previous leaders was paid off early.”²⁸ Sudden economic prosperity enforced with determined Putin’s rhetoric and actions towards problem solving inward and outward of the Russia’s border, consolidated Putin’s image both inside and outside the country. Being in the position of central power and having sense of return of former glory Putin starts aggressively and assertively implementing foreign policy to make Russia great once again. In doing that, he commences to raise national pride of his society and begins to strengthen national identity which will be analyzed in the following section. To justify his foreign policy actions both inside and especially outside Russia’s borders he started to reassemble former Russian empire and the USSR.

Above all, we should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century. As for the Russian nation, it became a genuine drama. Tens of millions of our co-citizens and co-patriots found themselves outside Russian territory. Moreover, the epidemic of disintegration infected Russia itself.²⁹

Such rhetorics of Putin’s officialy legalized an essential break out in Kremlin’s ideology. During the Michail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin presidencies, the public opinion about soviet regime was slowly declining³⁰, while V.Putin returned Russia to the times when the soviet regime was glorified. Now, this official public discourse is broadcasted in all former soviet areas. As will be revealed in the next section, such Kremlin’s maneuver is useful to the current regime. Such official narrative conveys constructs of majesty of the former USSR. This is kind of a „castle” which keeps Vladimir Putin and his rulling inner circle in power. Concluding the above statement, prior the presidency of Vladimir Putin, USSR mentality, both, in domestic governance issues and foreign relation issues, was not swept away, it took a temporary halt and slightly shrunk, while Putin’s ascension and his constant efforts return the Russian federation to the path of the USSR.

In Search and Strengthening of Identity as a Foreign Policy Tool

Igor Zevelev, author of the report on „Russia National Identity and Foreign Policy” asserts that „In 2012-2016, Russian national identity discourse and foreign policy became blended to an extraordinary degree.”³¹ The same author continues that „The collapse of the Soviet Union meant much more for Russia than just the loss of colonies. It was a loss of identity. Political, historical, cultural, ethnic boundaries, as well as subjective mental map held by most Russians, share no congruence”.³² Therefore, in order to be able shake and shape the world according your particular point of view as well as strengthen your in position globally you need a starting point. Something that considers you as a power, and something that empowers you. Vladimir Putin during his third term of presidency started to indoctrinate Russia’s national identity. Lilia Shevtsova, former senior associate of Russian domestic Politics and Political institution program Moscow center, supplements Igor Zevelev stating that: “Russia demonstrates an example of a nation that dwells upon its national identity for centuries, and this has become its elites’ national hobby. Every time the Russian society faces a problem, the Kremlin starts a new campaign in search of a national identity.”³³

Russia’s current history, national pride, identity, traditions and religion were formed throughout the last three centuries within a framwork of an imperial mindset.³⁴ Due to uniqueness and distinctiveness of Russian culture, civilization versus nation, special values and attitudes, distinct “spiritual” and “universalism”, Russian “cultural and historical codes”, “cultural matrix”, “genes”, Russian “ethnos” the main feature of Moscow’s new foreign policy is the securitization of identity.³⁵ Due to the above stated assertions the possibility of “the disruption of traditions and the consonance of history“

are viewed as existential threats.³⁶ Russian minister of foreign affairs confirms the statement about existential threat by pointing out that „Russian people possessed a cultural matrix of their own and an original type of spirituality and never merged with the West”.³⁷ In addition, he makes an argument that “the source of the threat come from European West that has attempted to put Russian land under full control and to deprive Russians of their identity.”³⁸ Therefore as a conclusion, there is a need to repetively underline Igor Zevelev observation that in current Russias discourse “...the main threat to Russian national identity is twofold: globalization and a decadent West. In Putin’s universe, preservation of national identity as a major foreign policy goal becomes even more critical...”.³⁹

Roots of the Russia’s Political Ambitions in Todays Foreign Policy

Russia’s political ambitions and intent implies all above named Russia’s Foreign policy driving factors (see figure). But perhaps one of the main factor is the historical and enduring Russia’s opposition towards the West. It is not a new phenomenon, it existed throughout the whole history. Such historical opposition is additionally reinforced with the events after the Cold War when the West, failed to integrate and embrace Russia as an equal partner.⁴⁰ Former U.S. ambassador to the USSR Mr. George Kennan expressed his disappointment about NATO enlargement in 1999 and the lack of understanding towards Russia by stating that “I think it is the beginning of a new Cold War. I think the Russians will gradually react quite adversely and it will affect their policies. I think it is a tragic mistake. There was no reason for this whatsoever. No one was threatening anybody else”.⁴¹ Therefore based on the events prior and after the Cold War, Russia’s leadership point of view, that the hub of almost all problems Russia faces today is disbalanced global domination by the U.S. which willing, plan and execute to

cordoned Russia from becoming an equal partner. According to Stephen Kotkin, professor of History and International Affairs at Princeton University “Russia’s elites believe, nearly universally, that the United States took advantage of Russia in 1991 and has denied the country its rightful place as an equal in international diplomacy ever since.”⁴² Igor Zevlev supports and confirms the above statement by addressing that “Western policies towards Eurasia since the collapse of the Soviet Union have only strengthened Russian anxieties. Moscow is confident that the main goal of the United States and Europe in Eurasia is blocking any Russian attempt to develop as a regional hegemonic power.”⁴³ V. Putin during his so-called “Crimea speech” on March 18, 2014 confirms statements of the above-cited authors by stating that “we have every reason to assume that the infamous policy of containment, led in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, continues today.”⁴⁴ Moreover, looking from a purely security point of view, Russia’s fear of the U.S. and NATO has reasonable doubts. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia no longer constituted a threat to the U.S. and the West. However, from the Russian perspective, the U.S. and NATO continued to conduct expansion even in the absence of a real threat and the enemy. As an additional factor towards Russia’s patience, colorful revolutions near the Russia’s border, which Russia assured were done not without the Americans’ help, Georgia’s and especially Ukraine’s signs of aspiration to lean towards the West triggered Russia’s military actions. Russian political scientist Sergey Karaganov during his interview about NATO expansion said that NATO expansion could be kept away only by an iron fist.⁴⁵ Russia’s deep distrust of NATO as a defensive alliance is coded in Russia’s political leadership mindset and vividly expressed in S. Karaganov’s interview where he states:

Why do we believe that Ukraine joining NATO is something we simply cannot countenance? The reasons are many. To begin with, Russia would have 2000 kilometers of unprotected and indefensible borders. We do not know how the Alliance will change in the future. When Russia was very weak, and barely existed as a state, NATO, which had been a defensive alliance throughout the Cold War, transformed itself into an offensive alliance. It attacked Yugoslavia in 1995 and again in 1999. The organization's leader, the United States, attacked Iraq. So, it would help to deny the Alliance any such opportunity.⁴⁶

Therefore, Russia's feelings of insecurity added with political intent and ambitions are stone carved in their strategic documents, such as their National Security Strategy and their Foreign policy concept reinforced in their Military doctrine. Russia, in its foreign policy concept heading towards a multipolar world, sees a unipolar political system as an unfair treatment of other countries. Russia views the U.S. and NATO activities on the world stage as a "one way" policy, not considering opinions of the others. Para c and e of the General Provision in the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation focuses on addressing global issues on equal terms allowing other partner nations to collective decision making process and giving issue solving primacy to the United Nations. Russia also stating that relationships among foreign states should be based on liberal principals avoiding hegemonic and bloc network alliances to lead the world where Russia is part of international forum.⁴⁷

Therefore Russia's rhetoric about multi-polarity is their tool to create anti-American coalition, shake and degrade the unipolar international system dominated by the U.S. hegemony. They aim to become the regional power and re-conquer position and recognition of the Cold War time period. In order to do that Russia, uses all instruments of power and tries to use ancient Roman rulers' maxim "Divide et impera" (Divide and rule). According to Russia, the target audience of the future anti-American coalition, should be countries of Europe, China, the Middle East, Central and South

America. To divide EU and NATO countries, gain international recognition and power, counter the U.S. dominance, Russia uses its foreign policy by exercising diplomacy and economic levers. Russia's conceivable factors of insecurity and threats caused by the U.S., NATO and EU, reveals and justifies V.Putin's foreign policy modus operandi.

Russia and its Economic Policy as Foreign Policy Tool

Russia's economy cripples due to the following three factors, first being continuous low oil and gas prices in the market. The second cause due to sanctions coming from West and third, Russia's inability and failure to conduct structural reforms when Russia was economically capable to do so.⁴⁸ The following problems severely restrict Russia's ability to achieve its goals – to become equal and capable regional and world power. Simply stating – ambitions exists but potency is limited. Therefore being rigorously constrained, Russia searches for various ways to strengthen its economy. One of the ways that Russia attempts is to approach China and establish more profitable economic relationships. This could be called “When god closes a door, he opens a window” phenomenon when Western market approach restricted, economic posture of Russia shifted towards Eurasia and China (EEU) to enable its economic potency. Such Russia economic shift may cause speed up of a new alternative non-West dominated global financial system.⁴⁹ Another course of actions for Russia is economic strength with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). However economic efficiency of CIS is not as effective as Russia wishes.⁵⁰ Despite employed sanctions, Russia still insist on trading with EU. According to the European commission, “Russia is the third trading partner of the EU and the EU is the first trading partner of Russia”.⁵¹ Russia's revenues from the EU, consisted of almost 68 percent in 2013 while EU crude import from Russia accounts for approximately 72 percent.⁵² EU countries had

long historical, political and economic relation with Russia. Therefore throughout the decades, European countries, especially East European countries' economies become very dependent on Russia's raw material, oil and gas. Such interdependence has been:

a deliberate strategy. For the last twenty years or so, the West expanded trade and tried to integrate powers such as Russia...into the international system. This...was based on two assumptions. The first was that economic interdependence would lead gradually but inexorably to democratization. The second was that economic interdependence would turn these powers into 'responsible stakeholders'.⁵³

Therefore this factor was not left without Russian attention. Russia's intention is to put "an oil and gas needle" and "price dilemma" on as many EU countries as possible. However, mostly dependent East European countries' policies are to diversifying and reducing economic dependence from Russia. Therefore, Russia's foreign policy efforts "divide and gain" in pursuit of economic prosperity is directed to fragment the EU, while they seek for a friendly political parties and governments that are not so radical towards Russia. EU integral disagreements regarding EU migration policy, BREXIT and economic issues shake the unity of the EU drastically. Being opportunistic, Russia seizes the initiative to pursue and deepen the EU cracks.

If Russia was not, initially, in any doubt about NATO's alliance commitments and the EU's institutional strength, now, between populist political movements and very public soul-searching about Europe's future, Moscow may well feel that it has real openings to challenge European and Western unity and its institutions.⁵⁴

Moreover, the Kremlin "perceives that Europe lacks the mettle and cohesion to pay the price that its principles dictate" and seeks to divide Europe and break the trans-Atlantic link. Business interests are Europe's interests in Russian eyes, and these interests, which require a strong and reliable Russian partner, will eventually reassert themselves.⁵⁵ Therefore, Russia's application of foreign policy to solve its economic

issues is focused on funding European political parties that support “the clear Russia aim of weakening Western will to fight, maturing doubts over NATO, the EU...and economic sanctions”.⁵⁶ Victims of this foreign policy are several countries. The Czech Republic economic adviser to the president of the Czech Republic, Martin Nejedly demonstrated extreme sympathy to Kremlin policy.⁵⁷ Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orban, also reinforcing his relationship with Moscow. As Hungarian sociologist Pal Tamas, an expert on Russian-Hungarian relations asserted:

According to Russian state philosophy, Orban is like the Biblical Jonas who was swallowed by the whale - in this case, by the EU - and who is giving signs from within the whale's belly... And since there are other small ones inside the whale, Orban's signs could encourage them, too. This would be to Putin's liking.⁵⁸

Russian stimulus identified and confirmed by Igor Sutyagin, the Russia’s specialist at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) who said “Russian influence operations running in France, the Netherlands, Hungary as well as Austria and the Czech Republic, which has been identified by Russian agents as an entry-point into the Schengen free movement zone”.⁵⁹

Concluding Russia’s activities to influence its economics through leverages of policy of foreign affairs it is of utmost importance to understand that Russia does not significantly differentiate between EU, NATO and US. To Russia it is the same “old West” with wrong values and ill interests which tries to diminish the influence and power of the exceptional Russia in the region and in the world. Therefore Russia, understanding that her overall actions will be ill perceived by the West, pursues exploiting her own kind of “you fight your way, we fight our way” methods in dealing with the issues to gain economic advantage.

Economic Sanctions as Method to Bridle Russia

Having analyzed driving factors of Russia's Foreign policy, this section of the paper will examine ways that are currently employed against Russia. This section is oriented to answer the question of the paper whether currently employed constraints will manage to bridle Russia or it will cause more damage with its second and third order effects.

Due to annexation of Crimea and further deterioration of Ukraine's territorial sovereignty, sanctions to Russia were imposed from March 2014. It contains a freeze of property to certain number of Russian individual as well as institutions, restrictions to travel, and suspension of dialogue regarding the Russia and EU visa regime, certain restrictions in economic sector etc. The application of these sanctions by the EU commission were prolonged till March 15, 2017. Along with the EU, the U.S. also imposed sanctions towards Russia focusing on Russia's defense, financial and energy sectors.⁶⁰ The aim of the sanctions is threefolded. It is designed to coerce, constrain and signal Russia about its unappropriated behavior which will not be tolerated.⁶¹ Therefore it is clear that current sanctions represents more political reason (to implement Minsk accords) versus economic. Analysis in previous section reveals, policy of sanctions, imposed by the U.S. and EU, are not unified. Probably this is due to political nature of sanctions and lack of consistent multilateral support. As Intended unity of effort is fragmented by politics and bussiness interest and puts profit interests above moral and values. There are two schools of thought when it come to explanation whether sanctions succeeds to change target behaviour or fails. Lets proceed by firstly examining camps of critics who neglects effects of sanctions employed against Russia.

Nikolay Pakhomov asserts, "However hard for the Russian economy, the sanctions have not delivered a devastating blow, which could have led to a significant change in Kremlin policy. These measures were arguably not created to ruin the Russian economy, which is too large and important for the world to do without".⁶² He continues that "Instead, they became a crash course for Russian policy makers and elites, reminding them that for Russia to truly secure an independent standing in international relations it should be ready and able to withstand international pressure, especially in the economic sphere".⁶³ The former National Security adviser under the U.S president Bill Clinton expressed his doubts over the effectiveness of economic sanctions stating that: "The stated objective of sanctions is to get Russia to change its behavior, and this is unlikely to work. Sanctions are more likely to galvanize the will of the other side. Great powers, especially nuclear superpowers, do not allow themselves to be extorted."⁶⁴ As a negative side effect, sanctions helped Putin's regime to mobilize Russian society, strengthen Kremlin position and current policy as well as convince society that sanctions directed against people and not the Kremlin. According Andrei Kolesnikov: "Russians perceive Western pressure and sanctions to be aimed not at Putin and his cronies, but at Russia and its citizens" therefore he continues that "...Russians have a long tradition of defending their compatriots from outsiders" and that "Presented with a real or imagined threat to the fatherland, the average Russian supports the country's leaders" He concludes by summarizing that "Russians of all walks of life have shown that they prefer passive adaptation over protest. In the face of growing economic pressures, Russia's middle class is steering clear of political involvement. The working class is no different. The more the West increases its

pressure, the less likely it becomes that this will change.”⁶⁵ Clifford Gaddy, a Russia expert at the Brookings Institution, solidifies above observations and states that:

“Russians want a better standard of living, but not if it means they aren’t treated as a great power. Given a choice of being Sweden or Russia, most Russians would sacrifice Sweden’s comforts and choose Russia for its great-power status.”⁶⁶

Samuel Charap and Bernard Sucher in their article “Why sanctions on Russia will backfire” confirms previous author observation by stating that:

Imposing sanctions on Russia when it was already falling into a downward economic spiral, Washington has given Mr.Putin a powerful political instrument to deflect blame for the consequences of his own baleful decision in Ukraine. The Kremlin model of “state capitalism” was already struggling and its performance would have been poor without the geopolitical upheaval that Mr.Putin has created. American sanctions arrived with perfect timing, providing him an alibi that he has skillfully used to confuse the Russian people about the cause of their economic woes.⁶⁷

The same authors reaffirm that:

Even if sanctions are carefully crafted to punish specific actors, ordinary Russians perceive the West’s sanctions to be directed against them and it is they who are being forced to bear the real costs of soaring inflation, the ruble’s collapse and slowing growth. Russians’ sense that they are under attack has generated an understandable “rallying around the flag” phenomenon. Mr. Putin’s all-time-high approval ratings are one result; the other is the near-complete marginalization of dissenting voices.⁶⁸

There is also an argument that Russia could become more belligerent if sanctions continue and deepen the country’s crisis at the same time, such depression would worsen the economic woes of the EU and might have a global effect.⁶⁹ Lastly, several historical examples have shown when sanctions were also applied to Cuba for over half a century, but the Castro’s regime was still in effect. The embargo imposed on North Korea caused populace difficulties, but the ruling regime remained in power and were

supported by China and Russia. Sanctions against Iraq, in 1990, only enriched Saddam Hussein's and impoverished Iraqi population.⁷⁰

As Russia's overall economy has shown declining results it is hard to evaluate what constituted negative results, whether it be the decline of gas and oil prices, or failure to perform economic reforms or sanctions. Never the less, supporters of sanctions theory states that sanctions do work. Sanctions imposed to Iran in 2006 can be named a success story, to Belorussia in 1998 – partially successful. Donald E. deKieffer provides more optimistic attitude in terms of sanctions that employed towards target nations. He states that those who disclaim effects of sanctions simply miss the point: "of course they don't work in an economic context. They most certainly do work for the purpose for which they were intended, viz to categorically stake out the political position of one country *vis-a-vis* its trading partners and political adversaries."⁷¹

Stanislav Secrieru, senior research fellow at the Polish Institute of International Affairs provides more tangible statistics which proves that sanctions did have an impact in Russia's overall economic performance. He assured that despite the fact that sanctions were designed to have mid to long term effect, they already have a heavy burden on Russia.⁷² He claims that on the political-diplomatic level, the sanctions brought Russia's efforts to joint international organizations to a standstill, which reduced Russia's freedom of manoeuvre on the international scene (accession to OECD, suspended rights at PACE, removal from G8 forum, halted U.S. – Russia military cooperation and talks on investment treaty, suspended NATO-RUS military and civilian cooperation, etc).⁷³ Due to this fact, Russia tilts towards China but from the position of weakness. However, despite Russia's economic opening to Beijing, Russia's imports from China, in

the first seven month of 2015, declined by 36 percent.⁷⁴ Sectorial sanctions together with decline in oil prices and Russia's counter sanctions towards the West deepened recession of Russia's economy by dropping 3.6 percent in the first half of 2015. He also argues that sectorial sanctions brought to halt ambitions in the Arctic, namely deep water, shale, Arctic oil and LNG projects.⁷⁵ Russia's military acquisitions and modernizations programs have been also impacted by sanctions and risks to meet the 2020 timeline.⁷⁶ Sanctions to individuals severely impaired their financial freedom as well as freedom to travel, conduct business or represent Russia.⁷⁷ Eurostat trade statistics confirmed that Russia entered recession, with GDP growth of -2.2 percent for the first quarter of 2015, as compared to the first quarter of 2014.⁷⁸ According to World Bank, the first half of 2016 statistics showed that GDP slowed down to 2.2 percent, and stagnation of global trade has been slowest since 2013.⁷⁹ Russia's stock exchange also took a huge hit as capital was leaving Russia. The RTS index lost more than 50 percent in 2014, making the Russian stock market the worst performer in the world, even worse than Greece's or Nigeria's. By the end of 2014, Russian stock exchange capitalization (517 billion USD) was below that of Apple Inc. alone (647 billion USD).⁸⁰ According to Stanislav Secieru report, retail sales play a crucial role in consumption-oriented sectors of economy which contributed up to 9 percent of Russia's GDP. But due to sanctions, in the first half of 2015, retail sales fell by 8.1 percent, which is unprecedented since the 1998 financial crisis.⁸¹ Russia's total external debt, in 2002 was 151 billion USD while in June 2014 it has reached record high 732 billion USD.⁸² The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has been supporting Russia for more than two decades which includes 792 projects totaling 24.3 billion euros. The majority of lending

went in support of Russia's private sector, industry, trade, agricultural sectors, but due to sanctions, bank put a lending ban.⁸³ Russia's national currency suffered an accelerated decline and hit 11.4 percent at the end of 2014, and by March 2015, it spiked to almost 17 percent, which manifests highest inflation in last decade.⁸⁴

Summing up, despite what critics of sanctions argue, even in short terms, employed sanctions severely restricted and slowed down Russia's economy, scared off investors, constrained financial sector, encumbrance Russian individuals, impeded military acquisition and modernization process and at the same time restricted its foreign policy freedom of action. As Jonatan Masters asserts, sanctions may achieve their desired economic effect, but they may fail to change behavior as it happened with the UN sanctions on Afghanistan in 2000 and 2001. It exacted a heavy toll but failed to move the Taliban regime to surrender Osama bin Laden.⁸⁵ Sanctions did not change Russia's leadership behavior yet but have impacted economy already. According to the U.S. State department, perhaps it hasn't been a major factor to Russia's macroeconomic performance since 2014 but for sure it hasn't helped.⁸⁶ And if sanctions continue, in a mid and long perspective, it will metastases and paralyze Russia's economy even more. According to comprehensive studies, sanctions "fail to achieve their goals in 66 percent of cases, and they fail 79 percent of the time when designed to discourage military misadventures."⁸⁷ However, notwithstanding historical failures of previous sanctions, hence we may conclude that Russia was impaired and brought to a halt for further unclear assertive actions either in Ukraine or in Europe. As Stanislav Secieru observed, without the sanctions, Ukraine's *de facto* border in the east would probably be very different from the current one, even more drastically reshaping the

military strategic environment in Central Europe.⁸⁸ Finally, sanctions to Russia and perhaps to other hostile state-actors, signaled and showed determination of the democratic world community that similar steps won't be tolerated which is the most important factor of nonverbal signaling.

Military Deterrence Strategy as Method to Temper Russia

Due to diplomatic and political sanctions, Russia, switched on its foreign and security policy instruments followed by aggressive rhetoric. It resulted in a massive propaganda campaign, both domestically and externally. Embarked on various activities to undermine the effectiveness of the sanctions, prevent new ones and remove pre-existing ones. Russia launched a number of irresponsible reckless military activities. As Stanislav Secieru observes:

Kremlin raised saber-rattling to a new level, aiming to induce fear in Europe of a potential military conflict with Russia. Regular warnings about the coming of WWII and nuclear doomsday were backed by multiple military drills across Russia, increasing incidents of violations of NATO and EU Member State airspace, provocative flights or naval training near territorial waters, imitation of nuclear attacks from the air, harassment of military ships and near collisions with civilian aircraft or military jets.

Russia's increased various military activities close to NATO, as well as Finland and Sweden borders or airspace (ordinary and snap exercises, airspace and maritime violations). According to a NATO report, it represents the highest numbers since the end of the Cold War.⁸⁹ Such vague and assertive Russia's military actions challenged NATO to come up with a deterrence strategy. According to NATO Secretary General's annual report, NATO has increased its number of NATO Response Force to 40,000 and formed robust Very High Readiness Joint Task Force which is able to react on short notice.⁹⁰ Poland and Baltic countries, frontiers of NATO, were reinforced by various size battle groups. NATO Force Integration Units were also established and settled in

Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia.⁹¹

Currently ongoing U.S. led European Reassurance Initiative and NATO's deterrence strategy could be named as confrontation approach, deepening distrust between the Russia and the U.S. including NATO and the EU. Its ways and overall approach is similar to the Cold War scenario with its estrangement policy and consequences of possible future arms race. Willingness and ability to prevent conflicts does not necessarily prevent them. As stated in the article "Deterrence Theory and the Spiral Model Revisited":

...conflicts is inherent in the interstate system. In seeking security, states face a troubling dilemma: even entirely defensive measures – with no aim other than self-preservation – may set off a sequence of actions and reactions that ends only in war. In other words, when a state move to fend off a potential attack, it may inadvertently threaten the security interest of another, leading to a response, then a counter – response, a counter-counter-response, and so on, until an all-out conflict occurs.⁹²

If such actions continues acting in such a way, they might cause a "back against the wall" effect where Russia might act radically in response to its security challenges. As observed by Clifford Gaddy, Russian expert at Brookings Institution, "It's not a matter of how much pain you can impose, but how much they can tolerate. And how much they can tolerate depends on the motivation for behavior", he also admits that, "Russia's dispute with the United States and Europe was a 'matter of national interest and survival' and not just greed."⁹³ According to the characterization of John J. Mearsheimer "deterrence is persuading an opponent not to initiate a specific action because the perceived benefits do not justify the estimated costs and risks."⁹⁴ Current NATO deterrence is exactly about that. European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) is to deploy forces in Eastern Europe, increase its number of exercises, improve infrastructure, enhance prepositioning and build partners capacity. The Enhanced Reassurance

Initiative later takes the form of Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP). That fuels Russia's fear, anger and confirms their conviction about the West's hostile nature and intentions that threatens their legitimate security interest in the Eastern Europe. Currently, what the West is doing, to Russia looks like provocation, actions directed against Russia, containment, exclusion of Russia as a equal and legitimate international partner, which is reflected in Russia's foreign policy concept. A precise observation made by Olga Olikier about Russia's foreign policy, "This means that when the United States takes a step back, Russia sees weakness. When it takes a step forward, Moscow sees threat."⁹⁵ While, regardless of what Russia does, from the West its seen as certain suspicious, vague and reckless activities, and possible manipulation. In sum, it is a dividends of Cold War period.

As analysis of the previous section reveals, Russia's foreign policy trends are to search for new allies, tries to inflict damage to coherence of NATO and the EU. As violence fuels the violence, aggressive action, be it even defensive posture, reaps aggressive response. Another factor of doubt is how long sanctions and enhanced forward presence can stand? Having in mind globalization and today's dynamics, profit oriented mentality, pragmatism versus values and morals of certain countries' political parties and influential individuals, it is the question of time, how long elements of deterrence strategy can stand. The same can be said about the EU and NATO countries' societies where the EU being the partially dependent and connected with business and economic ties with Russia may not withstand long sanctions and a deterrence period. There is an additional deteriorating factor of such actions towards Russia; world multi-

polarity that Russia is enforcing. During the Cold War period when bipolarity existed, the containment policy was relatively easy to achieve. According to John J. Mearsheimer:

Deterrence is more difficult in a multipolar world because power imbalances are commonplace, and when power is unbalanced, the strong become hard to deter. Power imbalances can lead to conflict in two ways. First, two states can gang up to attack a third state. Second, a major power might simply bully a weaker power in a one-on-one encounter, using its superior strength to coerce or defeat the minor state.⁹⁶

Same as the sanctions theory, the deterrence theory also has two camps: supporters and opponents. But regardless, deterrence opponent's analysis and thoughts as well as the above expressed doubts towards employed actions, currently ongoing deterrence is a working strategy. Despite unfavorable geographical conditions, favorable to Russian aspect of A2/AD, restrictive Suwalki gap, affected nations proximity to Russia, current insufficient posture of NATO forces and Russia's numerical military superiority, commitment and determination of NATO allies as well as fear of punishment, so far, preventing Russia to overstep the threshold.⁹⁷

What Else Could Be Done to Strengthen Effects of Sanctions and Deterrence?

From first glance, it seems that currently employed sanctions and established deterrence strategy is one ongoing grand strategy to bridle Russia. Someone may argue that sanctions and deterrence accumulates synergy and produce a unified effect, meaning that Russia changes its behavior towards Ukraine and cools down in Eastern Europe. But technically looking, the purpose of sanctions is political – to change Russian behavior and force her to reinforce Minsk accord while the deterrence strategy manifests in persuading Russia not to take hostile actions towards NATO members. It is important to recognize that sanctions and deterrence are aimed at the same target, but their purpose is dual. Therefore combination of current two different strategies into one

grand strategy to bridle Russia may bring a desired and cumulative effect. Current instruments of national power expressed Diplomatically and Militarily. Both instruments are marginally supplemented by an Information instrument. Therefore the first recommendation would be to combine both strategies into a coherent one and direct towards unified and consolidated purpose to reach the end. Secondly, both, economic sanctions and military deterrence should be whole Alliance governments approach in order to avoid possible single institution error, technical or capability gap. Thirdly, the robust and enduring Strategic communication campaign must be designed and executed to inform both, domestic and external audiences. One of the line of efforts for the strategic communication should include Russia's population as well, in order to counter ethnocentric messages delivered by centralized propaganda. The forth recommendation includes measures to diminish Russia's power to foment EU, NATO, U.S. and other supporting coalition partners countering Russia's ability to build sanctions and deterrence oriented anti coalition. Needless to say, but open, transparent and interest-related dialogue should not only be maintained but also enhanced across all domains. Position based arguments and dialogue should be avoided. Last but not least, the recommendation would be not only to maintain international partners to support EU, NATO and the U.S. efforts but to search for new one, based on interest and values, engaging them across all spectrum of DIME domains.

Conclusion

The answer to the question raised in the beginning of this paper whether Russia can be bridled by sanctions and deterrence, could be straight forward and short – yes, if Alliance sustains unity and counters Russia's aggressive military assertiveness and narratives and if it unifies and integrates its sanctions policy and deterrence strategy

into one. Risk always exists as part of any strategy. After examining Russia's foreign policy driving factors and motives, it can be concluded that to Russia, the current political situation might be seen as existential condition, and if it is so, the current set of sanctions and deterrence strategy will not any time soon change Russia's behavior. The current deterrence process takes form in a force race and combining with sanctions, takes formula of constant confrontational approach. Contrary, deterrence and sanctions as currently working strategies could crumble and may lead to Cold War scenario number 2.0. Separated deterrence and sanctions strategies should be taken and lifted to Grant strategic level and comprehensive approach should be applied. If the situation demands, all DIME should be employed for a considerable amount of time to convince Russia not to proceed with aggressive actions and force her to feel that application of comprehensive approach will outweighs Russia's intended gains.

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