

Russia's Defence Policy

By Muhammad Sarmad Zia

Introduction

In the words of Emperor Aleksander III, "Russia has only two reliable allies — the army and navy."¹

The drafting of Russian Defence Policy is an intricate and heavily complex process that involves several factors and drivers. It has much to do with the country's expansive territory, bordering North-Korea and China on its eastern flank and Europe on its western-side, its unique history of Soviet era and the subsequent disintegration, its nuclear power status and its ability to balance the global system.

In the course of its shift from the Soviet Union to Russian Federation, it went through several changes vis-à-vis its political and economic systems. Under the new system, the president is the head of the state and exercises maximum control whereas the prime minister is essentially the head of government and appointed by the president.

Russia's president determines the basic direction of Russia's domestic and foreign policy and represents the Russian state within the country and in foreign affairs. The president appoints and recalls Russia's ambassadors with consultation of the legislature, accepts the credentials and letters of recall of foreign representatives, conducts international talks, and signs international treaties.²In the formation of Russia's policies,

currently, the president has assumed a key role. President Putin exercises maximum influence over both upper and lower houses – Federation Council and State Duma. Russia's foreign and defense ministries are instrumental in reassessing foreign relations on regional and international levels as well as reevaluating defence requirements, threat perception and defence relations with different states. Apart from that, The Security Council of the Russian Federation (SCRF) also plays a vital role. The SCRF's influential domain helps it take up nearly any issue of national importance, including economics, finance, demographics, and at times, even cultural.³

The defence and foreign policies are fundamental parts of Russia's overall policies. With regards to the defence policy of the Russian Federation, the details of the policy framework are laid out in a document titled "Russia's military doctrine," which stipulates its domestic and foreign threats and threat perceptions, military developments, need and use of strategic nuclear force, and the defence relations with different countries. Over the past two decades, the military doctrines have been updated five times to address the evolving strategic and global scenarios.

It is also important to understand Russia's top leadership, especially President Putin. He has been in power for the last 17 years and is the final decision-maker on all major foreign, security, and defense issues. In office as president since 2000 (with a term as prime minister from 2008 to 2012), Putin is by now one of the world's most experienced leaders. It is also true that he exerts maximum power in the country which is largely attributed to his unwavering popularity among people of Russia. Putin's worldview is very indigenous and his nationalist demeanor has helped build up his image in the

country. The Russian people believe him to be their true representative owing to his foreign policy through which he plans on reviving the great-power status of Russia. The anti-Russian rhetoric in the west only serves to strengthen and support Putin's case in Russia.

Threat Perception

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia has come a long way from a demoralized nation whose institutions were in disarray. Russia's security and insecurity matrix is visible in its transition period, but certain elements of Russian Defence Policy remain essentially its core national interests. In the words of Winston Churchill, "I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. But there may be a key, and that key is Russian national interest."⁴

Russia, unfortunately, does not enjoy the security provided by geographical features on its borders. The administrators and leaders of Russia have always had problems with this phenomenon as insecurity arising from easily accessible borders has been a nuisance for them. Sans Pacific Ocean and the Arctic Ocean, it is surrounded by flat-lands which make it easier for foreign powers and adversaries to have a direct access to Russian mainland. Both Lenin and Stalin resolved the issue by assimilating neighboring lands such as the Baltic States into the Soviet ideological framework. Stalin went a step ahead and carved out some parts of Europe, Belarus and Ukraine among others, to inhibit the pro-capitalist elements. Pummeled by the turbulence of the Middle East from the south, political tempests in the Central Asia and continuous invasions from the European peninsula have ingrained a deep sense of

vulnerability in the Russian mindset. Russia feels that the only way to secure its borders is by acquiring more land with which it can protect itself. Thus, basing the Russian security on a preemptive attack has become a norm. Essentially, it translates into Russian security being given priority over the sovereignty of its neighboring states. Whilst it is abhorred by idealists, states are taken as rational actors who would go to any lengths to ensure their own survival in the realist paradigm.

Sources of Russia's Threat Perception

Furthermore, in what is an almost seven-decade old on-and-off rivalry between the then Soviet Union and NATO and now between Russian Federation and NATO, the security perceptions of Russia need to be analyzed deeply. Russia asserts that the presence of NATO in the Eastern Europe is a major factor responsible for deteriorating relationship with the west. It claims that the intention of the NATO is to use its power to perform global functions without due respect for international law.⁵ Its intention to bring the military infrastructure of NATO member-states to the borders of Russia, including the enlargement of the organization, represent a danger (though not a threat which, in the Doctrine's terminology, is far more serious than danger) to national security.⁶ This way, NATO is underestimating the real peril that a confrontation of any kind would inherently entail.

Keeping the recent history in view, it is but natural for Russia to fear for its safety and security. NATO's military exercise called "Anakonda" in which more than 31,000 soldiers from 24 NATO countries and former-Soviet "Partnership for Peace" states including Ukraine are held biannually across Poland since 2006. Additionally, some 14,000 US troops joined 12,000

Polish and around 1,000 soldiers from Britain for the exercises. These exercises involved some 3,000 vehicles, 105 planes and 12 naval vessels.⁷ Russia contends that presence of NATO right at its doorstep is alarming and a cause for concern.⁸ It defends its troops' presence on its border with the Eastern European Countries by citing the NATO presence in the region which it terms unwarranted. Moreover, to deter NATO, Russia has been seeking out new partnerships.

Militancy in Russia is another source of trouble for the country's law enforcement agencies. The threat emanating from the Middle East, Afghanistan and Russia's regions of Chechnya and Dagestan have posed internal security threats to the country. The Caucasus Emirate⁹, an offshoot of Al-Qaeda, is also an irritant that Russia has to deal with. Since 2015, the Russian involvement in the Syrian conflict has attracted the attention of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) towards Russia which is deemed to be one of its core adversaries. Russia's fear for its internal security is justified as ISIS has repeatedly threatened Russia.¹⁰

Evaluation of Russian Military Doctrines

The disintegration of USSR, in 1991, resulted in the formation of 15 newly independent states. Russia, being the largest and most powerful of these states emerged as the successor of the former Soviet Union. It also meant that Russia's borders had changed requiring it to prepare itself to deal with new kinds of threats and security risks. Since Russia inherited not only the bulk of Soviet responsibilities but also the prestige in the region, it had to redefine its role in the new world order in a uni-polar world. However, after much discussion among Russian policy makers, ultimately, it came to the conclusion

that the threats to Russian national security remained the same as they were under USSR. This was posited in the unofficial military doctrine of 1992.¹¹ A military doctrine is a document that is the fundamental set of principles that guides military forces as they pursue national security objectives.¹²

Military Doctrine 1993

The disintegration of USSR left a weak Russian economy.¹³ Keeping in view the weaker economic and military power of Russia vis-à-vis other major powers, the new government in Russia took calculated steps to address the potential security and military dangers it was faced with. Russia's changing political environment also became a factor in securing internal problems. First, it was important for the newly formed government to consolidate Russia from within. Owing to the economic and political pressures, it was decided that Russia would not deploy its armed forces save for individual or collective self-defence, safeguarding its citizens, its territory, the armed forces, other troops, or its allies. Thus, to ward off external pressures so that it can focus on its domestic issues, Russia dropped its commitment of no-first-use of Nuclear Weapons or NFU policy if its survival and territorial integrity are threatened.¹⁴ It was essentially one of the limited options Russia was left with as neither could it afford a conventional conflict nor did it want to succumb to any external threat posed by NATO. This policy change was necessitated by expansion of NATO in 1990's. The 1993 doctrine was instrumental in the consolidation of Russian military structure and withdrawal of its troops within its own borders.

This doctrine essentially worked as a bridge during the transition from a Soviet to democratic Russian Federation

setup. At the time, Russia was carving a new identity and establishing itself as a new state. It did not want to engage in a long conflict. In fact, Russia had to implement economic reforms to survive. It therefore adopted a military doctrine that did not incite any form of adversarial relations with any of the neighboring or major powers. Russian military and political leaders appreciated that Russia needed time to evaluate its current strength and nurture its weak economy to develop. This realization in itself was important because the disintegration may have continued, after breaking up of USSR, had the centre of Russian state allowed to further weaken. Had that happened it would have led to loss of control over its massive territory.

Military Doctrine 2000

In the following years, Russia realized that NATO would not back down as it continued to advance towards its borders and was alarmed by the bombing of Kosovo by NATO in 1999.¹⁵ The bombing was seen by Russia as disregard for its status in the world and claim as a regional power in Europe. Russia termed it a violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, Russia found NATO encroaching upon its sphere of influence by incorporating former Warsaw Pact members into NATO. This impelled Kremlin to bolster its security infrastructure with a special reference to the mobility and response time of the troops deployed at the European borders. Russia's fears and apprehensions are visible in the Military Doctrine (MD) of 2000,¹⁶ wherein it seeks to define its trepidations through the lens of a weak Russian defence apparatus. The basis of MD 2000 is its military strength and combines different segments of power such as economy, politics and strategy in order to emphasize on its military

security. During this period it sought to modernize the armaments and military equipment. The MD of 2000 focused more on the revamping of Russian styled military structure and the role of Russian military in the sphere of its influence.

The 2000 doctrine was a brainchild of the new government under Vladimir Putin who had just assumed office. It shows the quickness of the framework's modification – from preventing wars to localizing and neutralizing threats to the Russian Federation. The shift in the policy reveals the growing military strength that Russia had been acquiring through structural reforms and modernization of weapons systems over the last seven to eight years. Russia's worldview is also seen to have been modified from positive to somewhat skeptical of the current world order.

Military Doctrine 2010

In 2010, Russia introduced a new Military Doctrine which was more comprehensive and encompassing than its predecessors. It listed out the possible threats and dangers to the Russian Federation. The issuance of this doctrine points to the growing military and economic muscle of the Russian Federation which had been boosted by a strong economy and dynamic leadership combo of Putin and Medvedev. It can be extrapolated as the readiness of Russian military which has gone from war prevention to being able to go on an offensive if the need arises. By 2010, Russia had recuperated from the economic lapse of 1990's as well as the economic crisis of 2008. Russia's war with Georgia in 2008 gave the military and political leaders an insight into the technological, logistical and mobility shortcomings in Russian military. It showed the gaps in the war strategy and its due application; hence, providing

the military to learn from and rectify its mistakes. It was also felt that Russian military industrial complex required a serious overhaul to match the modern military standards.

In 2010, a wholly pessimistic view of international system can be found as the basis of Russian understanding of the global order. Russian apprehension over the lack of equal security for all states and unfair treatment of weak states is also visible in the doctrine. The doctrine stipulates, "the existing international security architecture (system), including its international-legal mechanisms, does not ensure equal security for all states."¹⁷

Military Doctrine 2014

President Vladimir Putin signed the new Russian Military Doctrine into effect on 25th December 2014, replacing 2010 version. It was drafted by a Security Council working group. The Security Council had been commissioned to review its earlier doctrines and draft a fresh doctrine keeping in view the threat environment and new role that Russia was seeking at the world stages before the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis in July 2013.¹⁸In its military doctrine of 2014, Russia laid out a set of comprehensive rules that establish the functional order for the next few years. This doctrine features the threat perceptions of Russia apropos the foreign and domestic dimensions and how Russia can come to grips with them. As a result, Russia has listed the US and NATO as its adversaries as opposed to the earlier doctrines. Its new military doctrine also calls for a more aggressive stance toward NATO, boosting presence in the Arctic region and strengthening cooperation with India and China.¹⁹ Furthermore, the new doctrine allows joint setting up of missile defence systems by Russia and its

allies, a move previously not provided for in the doctrine. It has, to an extent helped soften the attitude of the west while keeping them on their toes. The West's erroneous assumption of Putin's Russia as a weak power, took them by surprise when Putin annexed Crimea in 2014.²⁰

Russia's Nuclear Policy

The dependence on Nuclear Weapons in Russian military narrative has remained in focus since 1991 after the fall of Soviet Union. Feeling a sense of vulnerability since it was unable to support a sizeable army, it increased its reliance on nuclear weapons as a means of deterrence, as stated in the nuclear doctrine of 1993,

The aim of the Russian Federation's policy in the sphere of nuclear weapons is to eliminate the danger of nuclear war by deterring the launching of aggression against the Russian Federation and its allies.²¹

It also reassessed its nuclear policy; with regards to a nuclear weapon option against NPT states, Russia abandoned a No First Use to possible use of Nuclear Weapons in Europe if NATO continued to deploy its missile defence system in Czech Republic and Poland. Moreover, the previous policy of non-use of nuclear weapons in a conventional war was also discarded. The doctrine of 1993 declared that Russia would be prepared to use nuclear weapons if Russian state faced a threat and disproportionately large conventional forces were used to seize its territory. Russia asserted that it "should possess nuclear forces that are capable of guaranteeing the infliction of the desired extent of damage against any aggressor state or coalition of states in any conditions and circumstances." ²²

Again, the 2010 doctrine stipulates that “Russia reserves the right to use nuclear weapons in response to a use of nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction against her and (or) her allies, and in case of an aggression against her with conventional weapons that would put in danger the very existence of the state.”²³

However, Russia did not retain the Soviet option of conducting a surprise or preemptive attack. Rather it has stuck to using the weapons merely as a deterrent to both conventional and nuclear attacks and to be used only if it were attacked with no chance of survival, as denoted in the 2010 doctrine that nuclear use would be essential in case of an attack, “that would put in danger the very existence of the state.”²⁴

However, Russia has been seeking to considerably reduce its nuclear arsenal since 1991. It has shown inclination to reduce its arsenal both on bilateral basis with the United States as well as on multi-lateral platform to minimal levels in order to strike strategic stability. In 2007, Russia's ministry of defence declared that the Russian Federation had completed the removal of all warheads from its ground forces, 50 percent from its air force, 30 percent of its naval warheads and 60 percent of its missile defense warheads.²⁵ By 2010, the number was updated to 75 percent for non-strategic nuclear weapons inventory.²⁶

Collective Security Treaties and Peace Initiatives

To cater to the threat of terrorism emanating from Afghanistan and Central Asia, President Putin has ensured Russia's active participation in Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) to tackle terrorism in the region.²⁷ Furthermore, it has created

a Rapid Action Force within the CSTO which serves as special force intended to be used to repulse military aggression, conduct anti-terrorist operations, fight transnational crime and drug trafficking, and neutralize the effects of natural disasters. This force consists of 70,000 soldiers and Russia contributes forces from the Russian Airborne Troops known as Vozdushno-desantnye voyska Rossii (VDV).

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has also recently approved a draft to combat extremism and terrorism. Known as Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), the organization is committed to fight terror and the trafficking of narcotics in Central Asia. This is essentially an endeavor on Russia and China's part to secure their neighborhood against extremism, separatism and terrorism which the director of RATS refers to as the three evil forces.²⁸

Russian military has incorporated new ways to handle conventional wars in both limited and full blown wars. The new policy features a mixture of soft and hard power as well as other elements such as economic strangulation, use of electronic warfare, propaganda techniques, disturbance in the society through political uprisings and any other available tools. This allows the Russian military to achieve its goals more freely and easily as it did in Crimea. The assimilation of these new ways is also meant to allow Russia to do the needful without causing much bloodshed. Thus, such a policy employment is essentially a major shift from the traditional ways of Russia that were used in Georgia in 2008.

On Putin's instructions, the Russian defence minister Sergei Shoigu has been in contact with his Chinese counterpart. Russia is working on a military relationship with China and

supports the Chinese claim over South China Sea where the US is resisting its authority.²⁹ The US' presence in South China Sea is seen as an alarming matter by China which claims it to be a traditional and historical part of China.³⁰ Furthermore, to ward off the threat posed by the US to the region, China and Russia have since been conducting joint military exercises. Since the US has begun deploying a missile shield, Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) in South Korea,³¹ Russia and China have tacitly been planning to show their military capabilities.

With reference to Afghanistan, the recent Russian peace initiative in order to help stabilize the state is important. The trans-national terrorist organizations such as Islamic State or Daesh are encroaching upon the security vacuum in Afghanistan. Russia's efforts to curtail such a development are crucial for the region's security. It has been playing an active role in the region and has convened meetings inviting all stakeholders in the region to discuss the future of Afghanistan. Its contact with Taliban is also aimed at bringing them to the table for a dialogue.

Use of Power

Crimea

In a turn of events, Crimea became an important factor dividing the Western world and Russia when Russia annexed Crimea on the 8th of March in 2014. President Putin justified the involvement of Russia in Crimea for two reasons; protecting the Russian people, and creating the right conditions for a referendum for Crimean people to decide whether they wanted to remain with Ukraine or join Russia.³²

Russia's annexation of Crimea with such a swift action came as a huge surprise to the rest of the world, especially Russia's rivals comprising NATO states. It showed the effectiveness, coordination, planning and training of the soldiers. Thus, the green men also came to be known as the "polite people".³³ Russia's use of non-linear warfare or at times hybrid warfare was instrumental in annexing Crimea. This method was essentially the use of psychological operations, more commonly known as PSYOP,³⁴ and covert deployment of military, and once detected, not acknowledging their presence in the region.

Syria

On the request of Syria's Bashar-ul-Assad for military aid, Russia began its operations in Syria in late September, 2015.³⁵ Prior to this, Putin had vetoed any foreign military operation in Syria and stated,

No one wants the United Nations to suffer the fate of the League of Nations, which collapsed because it lacked real leverage. This is possible if influential countries bypass the United Nations and take military action without Security Council authorization.³⁶

The Russian Air force began its strikes in the North-West Syria on ISIS hideouts. Russia has time and again asserted that its air campaign in Syria is aimed against militants of the Islamic State and al-Qaida-linked groups, and not at the rebels such as Free Syrian Army³⁷ or the civilians.³⁸ Russia supports Bashar-ul-Assad as the de facto leader of the country and his government as the only legitimate government of Syria. It alleges that the West's toppling of the legitimate regimes in

Iraq and Libya resulted in the strengthening of militant organizations such as Al-Nusra and mainly ISIS or ISIL.

Conclusion

In the wake of the several conflicts that Russia has either willingly or otherwise become a part of in the last few years, Russia's defence policy had to be functional on a multi-dimensional level. Kremlin is actively finding new ways to defend Russian interests as well as achieve its goals. Perhaps, Russia's actual understanding of the post-Soviet world has come recently. Putin extended a hand of friendship towards the US after the 9/11 tragedy and thought it would bury the hatchet. However, the continued aggression of the west in the Middle East and addition of new members into NATO from Russia's sphere of influence impeded this process. Simultaneously, the US under George W. Bush's leadership did not take up Russia's friendliness as worthy of their consideration. Under such circumstances, Moscow had little option but to strengthen its defence apparatus to guard against potential aggression and potential threats emanating at the regional and global level.

Russian defence policy is based on internal and external threats to Russia's territorial sovereignty and integrity. These threats can be in the form of conventional wars, nuclear attacks, proxy wars, militant threats, information warfare, propaganda, cyber warfare and many other new and innovative ways. In the future, Russia would have to be prepared for even newer types of warfare which could be laser based attack or machines that might be able to generate country wide earthquakes or famines. Similarly, a multitude of internal threats also worry the Kremlin. The internal threats

can stem from a single source (Oil/Gas) base of the economy, an imperfect system of government and a divided civil society. Moreover, the social and political polarization of Russian society could harm the country from within as such a disintegration of society would exacerbate the declining growth, result in loss of cohesiveness among the Russian people, and disturb the population as a whole. Another threat would essentially be in the form of growth of organized crime and increase in the scale of terrorist activities from within Russia in Chechnya and Dagestan regions, and the exacerbation of interethnic relations. All of these create a broad spectrum of internal threats to the country's national security.

*Muhammad Sarmad Zia is a
Research Assistant at CISS*

End Notes

¹"Russia's Military on the March in Asia," *The National Interest*, July 25, 2013, <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/russias-military-the-march-asia-8772>

²"The Constitution and Government Structure," Country Studies, <http://countrystudies.us/russia/69.htm>

³"A Five-Year Outlook for Russian Foreign Policy: Demands, Drivers, and Influences," Carnegie Moscow Center, March 18, 2016, <http://carnegie.ru/2016/03/18/five-year-outlook-for-russian-foreign-policy-demands-drivers-and-influences/ivkm>

⁴Bobo Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002)

⁵ "Breaking International Law in Syria. US-NATO's "Humanitarian Air Strikes", Centre for Research on Globalization, November 29, 2015 <http://www.globalresearch.ca/breaking-international-law-in-syria-us-natos-humanitarian-air-strikes/5492208>

⁶ Michael Cox et al, *International Yearbook CIDOB 2010. Country profile, Russian Federation* (Barcelona: CIDOB, 2010)

⁷ "Nato launches biggest war game in eastern Europe since cold war amid Russia tensions," *The Telegraph*, June 7, 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/06/nato-launches-biggest-war-game-in-eastern-europe-since-cold-war/>

⁸ Kyle Mizokami, "Huge NATO Exercise Is a Rehearsal for a Russian Invasion," *Popular Mechanics*, June 7, 2016, <http://www.popularmechanics.com/military/weapons/news/a21229/us-nato-exercise/?click=my6sense>

⁹ Note: The Caucasus Emirate is a Sufi nationalist organization created in October 2007 by Doku Umarov, after he resigned from his position as president of the Republic of Ichkeria (the self-proclaimed secessionist government of Chechnya). The group aims to establish an independent Caucasus Emirate ruled under Shariah and to wage global jihad.

¹⁰ Alleged ISIS video threatens Putin, Russia with attacks," *RT*, August 1, 2016. <https://www.rt.com/news/354105-russia-isis-threats-putin-terrorism>

¹¹ "James F. Holcomb and Michael M. Boll, Russia's New Doctrine: Two Views," Defence Technology Information Center, July 20, 1994, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a283590.pdf>

¹² Definition of "Military Doctrine" as available on RAND website, <https://www.rand.org/topics/military-doctrine.html>

¹³ Denis Aven, "Russia's Economic Transition: Challenges, Results and Overhang," *Yale Economic Review*, April 2, 2013, <http://www.yaleeconomicreview.org/archives/380>

¹⁴ "Special Intelligence Report," Office of Russian and European analysis, February 7, 2000, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0005460644.pdf

- ¹⁵“Kosovo conflict,” Britannica Encyclopedia, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Kosovo-conflict>
- ¹⁶“Draft Russian Military Doctrine,” Federation of American Scientists, <https://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/991009-draft-doctrine.htm>,
- ¹⁷“Text of newly-approved Russian military doctrine,” http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf
- ¹⁸Margarate Klein, “Russia’s New Military Doctrine,” *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik German Institute for International and Security Affairs* 9 (2015):1-4
- ¹⁹Jaroslav Adamowski, “Russia Overhauls Military Doctrine,” *Defense News*, January 10, 2015, <http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/policy/2015/01/10/russia-military-doctrine-ukraine-putin/21441759/>,
- ²⁰ Sergey Salushev, “Annexation of Crimea: Causes, Analysis and Global Implications.” *Global Societies Journal*, 2 (2014): 37-46.
- ²¹ English translation: The Basic Provisions of the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, <https://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/russia-mil-doc.html>,
- ²² Cited by Amy F. Woolf, “Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons,” Congressional Research Service, February 21, 2017, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RL32572.pdf>
- ²³ “Text of the New Russian Military Doctrine,” Carnegie Endowment, February 5, 2010, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf
- ²⁴ Nikolai Sokov, The new, 2010 Russian Military Doctrine: The Nuclear Angle, Center for Nonproliferation Studies, CNS Feature Story, Monterey, CA, February 5, 2010.
- ²⁵ Robert S. Norris and Hans M. Kristensen, “Russian Nuclear Forces, 2010,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, January/February 2010, p. 79.
- ²⁶ Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, “Russian Nuclear Forces, 2011,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, vol. 67, no. 3 (May/June 2011), p. 71.

²⁷ "Former Soviet states boost defense capability in joint drills," *Sputnik International*, July 22, 2008, <http://sputniknews.com/world/20080722/114629594.html>

²⁸ "Counter Terrorism Committee," Security Council Counter Terrorism Committee October 24, 2014, <https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/blog/2014/10/24/counter-terrorism-committee-welcomes-close-cooperation-with-the-regional-anti-terrorist-structure-of-the-shanghai-cooperation-organization/>,

²⁹ Anton Tsvetov, "Did Russia Just Side with China on the South China Sea?" *The Diplomat*, April 21, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2016/04/did-russia-just-side-with-china-on-the-south-china-sea/>

³⁰ Paul Mcleary and Adam Rawnsley, "China Warns U.S. on South China Sea; Russian Military Buildup Kicks Off," *Foreign Policy*, May 31, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/05/31/situation-report-china-warns-u-s-on-south-china-sea-fat-leonard-claims-more-victims-russia-military-buildup-underway-north-korea-fail-syria-fighting-pushing-toward-raqqa-and-lots-more>

³¹ "China rebukes US for anti-missile shield in South Korea," *Financial Times*, March 8, 2017, <https://www.ft.com/content/5e1345d4-02de-11e7-ace0-1ce02ef0def9>

³² Vladimir Putin, interviewed by Kirill Kleymenov, *Direct Line with Vladimir Putin*, Channel One, April 17, 2014.

³³ "Russia Unveils Monument To 'Polite People' Behind Crimean Invasion," *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, May 7, 2015, <http://www.rferl.org/content/russia-monument-polite-people-crimea-invasion/27000320.html>

³⁴ Psychological operations (PSYOP) are planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of governments, organizations, groups, and individuals, definition. http://www.military.com/ContentFiles/techtv_update_PSYOPS.htm

³⁵ "Russia's military action in Syria – timeline," *The Guardian*, March 14, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/14/russias-military-action-in-syria-timeline>

³⁶ Vladimir V. Putin, "A Plea for Caution from Russia," *The New York Times*, September 11, 2013,

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/12/opinion/putin-plea-for-caution-from-russia-on-syria.html?_r=0

³⁷ "Russia denies Russian or Syrian jets attacked US-trained SDF forces," *Rudaw*, March 1,

2017, <http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/syria/010320172>

³⁸ Lizzie Dearden, "Russia denies killing civilians in Syrian air strikes while threatening to reveal alleged US 'collateral damage,'" *The Independent*, January 15, 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/russia-denies-killing-civilians-in-syrian-air-strikes-while-threatening-to-reveal-alleged-us-a6814951.html>