Chronology of Possible Russian Gray Area and Hybrid Warfare Operations

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There is no simple or reliable way to define the range of Russian “gray area” or “hybrid” civil and military operations that affect U.S. strategic interests. Many Russian low-level operations, military claims, and political acts are only reported as serving commercial interests, reflecting local claims or interests, or as supporting Russia’s broader security needs rather than as acts directed towards competition with the United States. Many others are covert or involve indirect action, competing through the support of unofficial disinformation campaigns, supposedly private business and NGO activities, or the support of foreign state and non-state actors.

The impact of gray zone and multi-domain operations on Russia’s strategic competition with the United States may be highly indirect, or the level of Russian government direction of such activities, and the motives behind Russian actions may be highly uncertain. Many of the activities described in this chronology do not have a direct impact on competition with the United States but have an impact on U.S. strategic partners, other states, and non-state actors. There also are gray zone operations that are not described accurately in open source literature or may not even be reported at all.

Much of the available reporting also is written in ways that highly compartmentalize civil, economic, and military activities. Military exercises involving air, land, and maritime claims are often described in tactical terms, but not in ways that explain that they too are a form of competition. Similarly, the motives behind civil activities like investments and major civil projects may only be reported in terms of their commercial merit or benefits, and not their overall strategic impact with the United States.

This chronology is not an attempt to define the motivations and reasoning behind Russian grand strategy, rather it attempts to provide a broad historical timeline of Russian civil, economic, and military actions that affect competition with the United States. Whether one calls such activities “gray area” or “hybrid” warfare, it is clear that both civil and military operations under this category work in tandem to advance Russian interests while seeking to avoid any escalation to serious conventional conflict with the U.S. – and especially to any form of conventional or nuclear warfare on Russian or U.S. territory.

Broadening the Definition of Gray Area, Hybrid, Irregular and Multi-Domain Operations

This does not mean that U.S. strategists have not addressed such issues, and there is a surprising amount of theory that attempts to precisely define the different aspects of U.S., Chinese, and Russian civil-military competition and conflict. This has led to many debates over exactly how to define terms like “Gray Area,” “Hybrid,” and “Irregular Warfare.” In some ways, such debates are just as counterproductive as trying to separate the military and civil dimension of Chinese and Russian competition.

The fact remains that there is no way to precisely define the differences between such operations, and a focus on creating a taxonomy which assumes that such rules exist is counterproductive. The history of war is at least as much the history of irrational decisions, unpredictable attacks, and escalation as it is the result of the dictates from a prewar strategy. Today, this risk of irrational
behavior is being steadily increased by major changes in great power relationships, the individual civil and military actions of great powers and lesser states, as well as the major shifts in military technology that have unpredictable real-world impacts.

Moreover, global competition means that most of the competition between the three great powers actually takes place in other countries. The United States and China – and to a lesser extent the United States and Russia – are involved in a constant process of both civil and military competition on a global basis where they may not use their own forces at all – or use them in very limited ways – and where economic competition may be more critical over time than military competition.

These broad streams of competition do not fit a narrow focus on the United States, China, and Russia – and they do not preclude many areas of cooperation and compromise between the competing powers. In many cases, specific areas of competition are shaped by opportunism and a process of action and interaction that will never fit any given attempt at military taxonomy or efforts to develop a clear doctrine.

Nevertheless, these theories deserve attention. Irregular warfare operations first garnered recent popular attention when Frank G. Hoffman labeled it as “hybrid war” in his 2007 Conflict in the 21st Century. He has since then revised his definition in 2009 to describe “hybrid warfare” as:

Any adversary that simultaneously and adaptively employs a fused mix of conventional weapons, irregular tactics, terrorism and criminal behavior in the battle space to obtain their political objectives.

Hybrid warfare is also interchangeably used with the term “gray zone operations,” which Hoffman defines as:

Those covert or illegal activities of non-traditional statecraft that are below the threshold of armed organized violence; including disruption of order, political subversion of government or non-governmental organizations, psychological operations, abuse of legal processes, and financial corruption as part of an integrated design to achieve strategic advantage.

In 2013, the Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation’s Armed Forces, General Valery Gerasimov, gave a speech that was recognized by many U.S. academics for defining the Russian understanding of irregular warfare known as “non-linear warfare,” which is when:

Wars are no longer declared, and having begun, proceed according to an unfamiliar template…the role of non-military means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness. The focus of applied methods of conflict has altered in the direction of the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other non-military measures – applied in coordination with the protest potential of the population. All this is supplemented by military means of a concealed character, including carrying out actions of informational conflict and the actions of special operations forces.

It is important to note, however, that Gerasimov’s article has been incorrectly labeled as the “Gerasimov doctrine,” and the Russian understanding of “non-linear warfare” has been recognized by many scholars and strategists to be a mirror image of Russia’s perception of U.S. activities in the irregular warfare domain.

In 1999, the Russian Major-General Vladimir Slipchenko believed that “sixth generation warfare” – or “no contact warfare” – would result in the next evolution of warfare that would become distant warfare that did not require contact. The transition to “sixth generation warfare” calls for technological advancement to ensure strategic leverage with limited conventional forces in a contemporary world that uses nuclear weapons.
The U.S. commands and the Department of Defense (DoD) have also formally acquired their own term of “multi-domain operations” (MDO), which the 2017 Report released by the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command defined as,5

Multi-Domain Battle is an operational concept with strategic and tactical implications. It deliberately focuses on increasingly capable adversaries who challenge deterrence and pose strategic risk to U.S. interests in two ways. First, in operations below armed conflict, these adversaries employ systems to achieve their strategic ends over time to avoid war and the traditional operating methods of the Joint Force. Second, if these adversaries choose to wage a military campaign, they employ integrated systems that contest and separate Joint Force capabilities simultaneously in all domains at extended ranges to make a friendly response prohibitively risky or irrelevant.

The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) later released a revised version in 2018, which broadened the definition of competition but still emphasized military conflict:6

Central idea. Army forces, as an element of the Joint Force, conduct Multi-Domain Operations to prevail in competition; when necessary, Army forces penetrate and dis-integrate enemy anti-access and area denial systems and exploit the resultant freedom of maneuver to achieve strategic objectives (win) and force a return to competition on favorable terms.

Tenets of the Multi-Domain Operations. The Army solves the problems presented by Chinese and Russian operations in competition and conflict by applying three interrelated tenets: calibrated force posture, multi-domain formations, and convergence. Calibrated force posture is the combination of position and the ability to maneuver across strategic distances. Multi-domain formations possess the capacity, capability, and endurance necessary to operate across multiple domains in contested spaces against a near-peer adversary. Convergence is rapid and continuous integration of capabilities in all domains, the EMS, and information environment that optimizes effects to overmatch the enemy through cross-domain synergy and multiple forms of attack all enabled by mission command and disciplined initiative. The three tenets of the solution are mutually reinforcing and common to all Multi-Domain Operations, though how they are realized will vary by echelon and depend upon the specific operational situation.

Multi-Domain Operations and strategic objectives. The Joint Force must defeat adversaries and achieve strategic objectives in competition, armed conflict, and in a return to competition. In competition, the Joint Force expands the competitive space through active engagement to counter coercion, unconventional warfare, and information warfare directed against partners. These actions simultaneously deter escalation, defeat attempts by adversaries to “win without fighting,” and set conditions for a rapid transition to armed conflict. In armed conflict, the Joint Force defeats aggression by optimizing effects from across multiple domains at decisive spaces to penetrate the enemy’s strategic and operational anti-access and area denial systems, dis-integrate the components of the enemy’s military system, and exploit freedom of maneuver necessary to achieve strategic and operational objectives that create conditions favorable to a political outcome. In the return to competition, the Joint Force consolidates gains and deters further conflict to allow the regeneration of forces and the re-establishment of a regional security order aligned with U.S. strategic objectives.

Multi-domain Warfare and Multi-domain Operations

In reality, many such operations will be civil and with not involve military forces in any way. Many others will be designed to avoid or minimize the risk of any direct clash between the U.S. and China or Russia, as well as to avoid any serious form of war or battle. China, in particular, is likely to use its growing economic strength to gain through the manipulation of “geoeconomics,” and both China and Russia are likely to use military force in ways more similar to the “geopolitical” competitions of the late 19th Century than the ideology-driven conflicts of the 20th Century, regardless of their continued use or non-use of Marxist and Communist rhetoric.

In this chronology, terms like “gray zone,” “hybrid,” “irregular,” and “multi-domain” are used to describe many forms of hegemonic competition and many operations that do not involve any form
of combat. For the purposes of this analysis, these terms can refer to any range of action from non-violent economic manipulation to low levels of violence using mercenaries. They can involve changes in deployment, basing, advisory missions, arms transfers, or military exercises; claims to military zones; use of sanctions and trade barriers; economic warfare; technological competition; information warfare; support of other states and non-state actors; and other forms of competition designed to gain strategic and tactical advantage as part of the current competition between the United States, China, and Russia.

This approach meets many of the criteria for multi-domain now being examined by the U.S. Joint staff, and it is used in the evolving definitions of “multi-domain” issued by the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). For example, one TRADOC document issued in 2018 focused on actual battle:

*Multi-Domain* Battle requires converging political and military capabilities—lethal and nonlethal capabilities—across multiple domains in time and space to create windows of advantage that enable the Joint Force to maneuver and achieve objectives, exploit opportunities, or create dilemmas for the enemy.

Multi-Domain Battle necessitates that the U.S. view the operating environment, potential adversaries, and their capability sets from a different perspective. We must define the warfighting problem based on the complexities of the modern battlefield, the rate of change in terms of information access and decision, and the role that non-traditional or proxy/hybrid actors play to shape operations, especially prior to armed conflict. Multi-Domain Battle requires the ability to maneuver and deliver effects across all domains in order to develop and exploit battlefield opportunities across a much larger operational framework. It must include whole-of-government approaches and solutions to military problems and address the use of multinational partner capabilities and capacity.

Multi-Domain Battle entails collaboration and integration of comprehensive effects and enablers. The rapid pace of modern conflict requires a mission command construct for executing Multi-Domain Battle that includes common networks, tools, and knowledge products. It also necessitates mission orders, shared understanding and visualization of the battlespace, and subordinate commanders executing operations with disciplined initiative within the senior commander’s guidance that is empowered from above. Command and control is only a component of that philosophy.

To conduct Multi-Domain Battle, all domains and warfighting functions are integrated to deliver a holistic solution to the problem. Federated solutions will not work. We need a comprehensive, integrated approach inherent in our forces.

However, another 2017 TRADOC document took a broader and more realistic view that included civil, economic, and non-combat operations:

Four interrelated trends are shaping competition and conflict: adversaries are contesting all domains, the electromagnetic spectrum (EMS), and the information environment and U.S. dominance is not assured; smaller armies fight on an expanded battlefield that is increasingly lethal and hyperactive; nation-states have more difficulty in imposing their will within a politically, culturally, technologically, and strategically complex environment; and near-peer states more readily compete below armed conflict making deterrence more challenging. Dramatically increasing rates of urbanization and the strategic importance of cities also ensure that operations will take place within dense urban terrain. Adversaries, such as China and Russia, have leveraged these trends to expand the battlefield in time (a blurred distinction between peace and war), in domains (space and cyberspace), and in geography (now extended into the Strategic Support Area, including the homeland) to create tactical, operational, and strategic stand-off. For the purpose of this document, Russia serves as the pacing threat. In fact, Russia and China are different armies with distinct capabilities, but assessed to operate in a sufficiently similar manner to orient on their capabilities collectively.

In a state of continuous competition, China and Russia exploit the conditions of the operational environment to achieve their objectives without resorting to armed conflict by fracturing the U.S.’s alliances, partnerships, and resolve. They attempt to create stand-off through the integration of diplomatic and economic actions, unconventional and information warfare (social media, false narratives, cyber-attacks), and the actual or
threatened employment of conventional forces. By creating instability within countries and alliances, China and Russia create political separation that results in strategic ambiguity reducing the speed of friendly recognition, decision, and reaction. Through these competitive actions, China and Russia believe they can achieve objectives below the threshold of armed conflict.

Press reports indicate that senior U.S. military planners are examining a similar approach to competition with China and Russia, although they continue to focus on the need for new approaches to multi-domain battle as critical elements in both deterring war and dealing with major levels of conflict if they occur. There are also some reports and background briefings that the NSC and the State Department are also examining new approaches to analyzing and countering all civil and military forms of competition with China and Russia.

The problem with even this definition, however, is that the military will only be part of such operations. Many multi-domain operations will not involve the actual use of military force. Multi-domain operation will often be entirely civil or economic – using non-military means to achieve a strategic or tactical objective. It many other cases, the use of military forces will be demonstrative, involve sharply limited operations, or be entirely in support of other state or non-state actors. Multi-domain operations will be the tools of Sun Tzu rather than Clausewitz.

It is equally important to note that such operations will be part of an enduring process of competition – and sometimes confrontation – between the U.S. and China, U.S. and Russia, or the U.S. against both China and Russia – that will occur indefinitely into the future, in many different ways, and in something approaching a global level.

Many such operations will be part of a “culture” of competition that is initiated and executed on something approaching a government-wide level without some master plan or detailed level of coordination. Some – like information warfare, using the Internet, or many lower-level industrial and technical espionage – will require mass efforts or be conducted on a target of opportunity level. This is clear from the number of lower level Chinese and Russian actors that have been identified in open source background briefings and from the number of reports on commercial, cultural, media, and trade efforts that are not associated in any way with the Chinese or Russian military.

In fact, one of the key issues for the U.S. is first how to develop intelligence and analysis capabilities capable of tracking the full pattern of diverse Russian civil-military competition, and assessing the relative impact, risk, and need for countermeasures. The one key question the U.S. will have to determine in the process is who in the Russian government is actually making such decisions, what are the organizational centers of such activity, how do they relate to other countries on a global basis, and what U.S. response is needed if any. So far, it is unclear that there is any clear structure in the various Departments of the U.S. government – or in the U.S. intelligence community – that actually addresses Russian strategic competition on this level.

In practice, finding new ways to compete that cut across the boundaries between civil, gray zone, and hybrid warfare is proving to be a critical part of American strategic competition with Russia. U.S. strategy must be based on the assumption that there are no fixed rules that define “gray zone” operations that clearly separate the use of military force from political and economic action or from competition based on a wide spectrum of different activities on a national, regional, and global basis. This assessment uses terminology like “gray zone” and “irregular warfare” operations as broad guidelines to stress the need for U.S. strategy to respond to the full range of options – from the grand strategic to the tactical level – as the United States competes with Russia.
There are clear historical precedents for doing so. They include most of the portions of human history when major powers of empires were not committed to something approaching total war. Human history—alongside such forms of competition—is a key focus of Clausewitz and especially Sun Tzu. It is also clear that Russia now actively competes with the U.S. on this basis, and any definition of this competition that excludes their full range of activities cannot be an effective basis for shaping U.S. strategy.

**Russian Strategy for Gray Zone Competition**

Russia has recognized its inability to challenge and compete with the United States using conventional force. Instead, this chronology demonstrates the myriad of Russia uses of gray zone operations in the military, economic, and civil sector that advance Russian priorities.

At the military level, Russia has not been able to challenge the United States. It has, however, made its own gains in Eastern Europe, Ukraine, and Syria by making limited use of its military forces and supporting other states and non-state actors. Russia has combined political, economic, and demonstrative military efforts to put pressure on the NATO states closest to its borders. More recently, there are reports that U.S. intelligence sources have assessed that Russia offered bounties to the Taliban to kill U.S. soldiers stationed in Afghanistan—although these have not been confirmed by the Secretary of Defense or senior military commanders.

Russia is currently investing a significant amount of private military contractors (PMCs) and resources into Libya. The country has become a regional backwash for Egypt, Turkey, Russia, and a mix of European powers. In bringing up Libya, this analysis does not recommend U.S. intervention, however, it raises the concern that the U.S. has become irrelevant in the matter, especially with Trump’s announcement supporting Hifter instead of the UN-backed government.

Russia’s involvement in Libya— including covertly flying fighter jets and sending in mercenaries—demonstrates a high Russian priority for the future of Libya, as such, it should be carefully observed by the United States.

Russia has also heavily invested in Syria. Despite the variety of actors in the region, the U.S. withdrawal did create a significant power vacuum that Russia and allied Syrian forces filled. Russia is strengthening its ties with the Kurdish SDF forces and creating a major base in eastern Syria. Not only will the U.S. withdrawal affect the power dynamics in Syria, but it will also have ripple effects across the Middle East.

Russia has used its energy exports, trade, and economic weapons as well. Russia is also attempting to diversify its economic partnerships in Africa—with the Central African Republic, Sudan, and others—by making contracts concerning natural resource deals and the use of private military companies (PMCs). It has done an increasingly expert job of exploiting the fault lines between the U.S. and its strategic partners with arms sales and advisory efforts—and more specifically by taking advantage of the political tensions in the Middle East. While it unclear that Russia focuses on the teaching of Sun Tzu, they clearly recognize that there are many areas of competition where they do not need to win, but they merely have to deny any form of “victory” to the U.S. or other national targets.

Current Russian operations in Georgia and Ukraine have focused on the political dimension while making relatively limited use of military force. Russia’s use of separatist forces in South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Donbass give Russia leverage to create domestic tensions in Georgia and Ukraine while also evading full blame.
More broadly, Russia has successfully used civil media and the Internet to attack the U.S. and many other Western countries through political and information warfare. Specifically, both China and Russia have made a concerted effort to spread disinformation and propaganda about the Coronavirus and redirect blame to the United States. High volumes of disinformation can serve as a distraction, and despite calls to cooperate jointly with the U.S. in order to find a solution for the Coronavirus, China is still carrying out aggressive actions in the South China Sea.

Russia has also exploited its role as a major energy supplier to Europe. It has used aid – alongside political efforts to manipulate international aid and peace negotiations – to play a political and military spoiler role in Syria and Libya. It has joined with China in the Shanghai Cooperation Council by shaping its trade and investment policies to retain its influence in Central Asia, send both political and military aid to play a spoiler role in Venezuela, and use arms transfers and loans broadly in order to gain strategic leverage.

With the upcoming U.S. presidential elections in November, Russia may again attempt to interfere and meddle. With the use of social media accounts to dissuade people to vote and cause disruptions to both political parties, Russia will have an overall effect on the future U.S. military posture, which will depend on the incoming administration.

The Uncertain Contents of this Chronology

This chronology organizes the broad range of Russian gray zone and multi-domain civil and military operations into geographical regions where Russia is attempting to assert its influence and compete with the United States.

The chronology also provides a map that color coordinates these operations into specific campaigns. These campaigns can represent either positive or negative gray zone operations. It is to be noted that countries which have a brighter and more vivid hue of a campaign’s color signify a strong positive economic, military, or civil relationship with Russia. These include, but are not limited to, arms sales, access to natural resources, military alliances, and joint civil development projects. Countries with friendly Russian relations that directly threaten U.S. global competition are also highlighted in black, and they include Iran and North Korea.

For the purposes of this analysis, countries that remain gray demonstrate either a neutral relationship with Russia or a relationship that does not share significant – whether it be positive or negative – statecraft with Russia. However, that does not negate the fact that Russia may be attempting to further develop its relationship with these countries.

The following map includes an Active Measures campaign, a Broader West/EU campaign, an Eastern Europe/Western Balkans campaign, a Western Border campaign, a Near Abroad campaign, a Syrian campaign, a Middle East campaign, a Sino-Relations campaign, an Africa campaign, a Latin America campaign, a Southeast Asia/India campaign, and an Arctic campaign.

The Active Measures campaign is a broad influence campaign specifically against the United States. These gray zone operations range from espionage to cyber-attacks to election meddling.

The Broader West/EU campaign is similar to the Active Measures campaign, but it targets mainland Europe, and more specifically NATO. Gray zone operations also include espionage, cyber-attacks and meddling, but they also heavily use trade coercion and military demonstrations near NATO sites.
The Southeastern Europe/Western Balkans campaign is a more targeted campaign towards the geographical and cultural region that can be coerced to sharing favorable relations with Russia. Many of these countries either already have membership to the European Union and NATO or they have attempted to join, but these countries also have the opportunity to be influenced more heavily by Russia.

The Western Border campaign includes the Baltic states, Ukraine and Georgia. This campaign is more specific than the Near Abroad campaign because although these countries are also post-Soviet states, Russia uses more aggressive and negative gray zone operations, specifically the threat of territorial occupation.

The Near Abroad campaign use gray zone operations on states of the former Soviet Union (FSU) including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Moldova. Many of these operations involve positive trade unions and diplomatic relations.

The Syrian campaign is Russia’s military efforts in the Syrian Civil War, which also involves Russia’s relations with Turkey.

The Middle East campaign is Russia’s attempt to expand its influence in the Middle East with the Gulf States, Israel and the Levant. There has been limited progress in this campaign, but it is still notable to track with Russia’s presence in Syria.

The Sino-relations campaign is the Russia’s attempt to develop a stronger relationship with China.

The Africa campaign has recently received high levels of attention by the Kremlin to expand its influence on the African continent. This campaign includes debt forgiveness, Russian access to natural resource, military training, and a practice ground for Russian private military companies (PMCs).

The Latin America campaign is Russia’s expanding influence in the backyard of the United States. Although Russia has very novel relationship with most countries in Central America and South America, it has already developed notable relations with Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua.

The Southeast Asia/India campaign is another upcoming campaign that expands Russia’s relationship in the region. However, due to China’s strong presence, Russia has only formed initial relationship although they do include some arms sales.

The Arctic campaign focuses on Russian gray zone operations to stake a claim to the natural resources and strategic military position in the Arctic.

By organizing Russian gray zone operations into geographical campaigns, this chronology does not attempt to reveal Russia’s specific motivations and objectives. However, it does provide the scale and special extent to which Russia is performing acts of competition against the United States.

It should be stressed, however, that this chronology is a rough working attempt to illustrate the full range and depth of Russian competitive activities, and it is seriously limited by the failure of the U.S. government to provide open source reporting on Russian activities. Most of the limited open source official reporting on such operations since the U.S. issued a new strategy in 2017 has focused on China, and the U.S. has only issued one annual report on Russian Military Power – in 2017 – since the break-up of the Former Soviet Union. This represents a fundamental failure within
the United State government to respond to such Russian and Chinese activities and to compete in terms of the media, the Internet, and information warfare.

It also means that this chronology focuses largely on Russian military efforts. There has been extensive general reporting on Russian disinformation efforts, efforts to influence elections, manipulation of trade terms, and other civil actions, but most such reporting is general in character and lacks detail or relies on uncertain sources. These are areas where a major open source effort is required that can declassify intelligence and official reporting, and that can make the full patterns on Russian activity clear.

Many of the entries are uncertain or ambiguous while many more have almost certainly been omitted or have never been reported – although there is little point in trying to classify such actions. A full analysis would involve a wide range of country experts and military experts, as well as aggressive open source reporting by the U.S. government at both the civil and military levels. It also would require substantial intelligence analysis at classified levels to be truly comprehensive. It still, however, illustrates the broader patterns of Russian activity in competing with the United States and serves as a starting point for a far more comprehensive analysis.

An full analysis of how U.S. competition with Russia interacts with U.S. strategic competition with both Russia and China is provided in a separate Burke Chair analysis, entitled U.S. Competition with China and Russia: The Crisis-Driven Need to Change U.S. Strategy. This report is available on the CSIS website here.

Comments and Suggested Additions and Corrections

This is a rough working paper. Please send comments and suggest additions and corrections to Anthony H. Cordesman, Burke Chair in Strategy, CSIS, at acordesman@gmail.com.
Chronology of Russian Gray Zone Operations

Active Measures Campaign

Russia’s active measures or aktivnye meropriyatiya are part of a civil gray zone operations campaign, which utilizes disinformation and deception to delegitimize and influence U.S. domestic and foreign policy. The gray zone tactics of this campaign include election meddling, forgeries, cyber-attacks, espionage, and even the manipulation of U.S. domestic political groups.

December 2012: President Obama signs the Magnitsky Act which blacklisted Russian government officials and their assets in the United States. Russia responded by banning Americans from adopting Russian children and banning American NGOs from operating in Russia.

2015-2017: U.S. right-wing leaders meet with ultranationalist Russian political leaders. The Base, a U.S. neo-Nazi group, has its headquarters in Russia.

April 2016: The U.S. Democratic National Committee became aware that Russian hackers had compromised their system and were releasing private information and stolen documents onto WikiLeaks.

May 2016: Fake social media accounts linked to Russia posted anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim content to target nationalists in Texas. This is one of many examples, which Russian-linked operatives using fake social media accounts to amplify political unrest in the United States.

July 27, 2016: The Russian General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) hacked the email accounts of the U.S. presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and her staffers during her presidential campaign.

September 14, 2016: Russian hackers leaked emails of former Secretary of State Colin Powell.

November 2016: The St. Petersburg Company known called the “Internet Research Agency” deployed thousands of accounts on Facebook, Twitter and other platforms leading up to the presidential elections.

July-September 2017: The United States and Russia engage in a tit for tat with diplomatic officials after Congress approves new sanctions for Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. elections.

July 15, 2018: Maria Butina was charged and arrested for acting as an unregistered foreign agent for Russia in the United States. She had infiltrated conservative groups in the U.S., including the National Rifle Association (NRA), to promote Russian interests in the 2016 presidential elections.

February 2020: Fake Russian social media accounts amplified a conspiracy theory that Democrats would manipulate an app used during the Iowa Caucus to manipulate votes.

April 21, 2020: The Senate Intelligence Committee has unanimously endorsed the U.S. intelligence community’s conclusion that Russia conducted a sweeping and unprecedented campaign to interfere in the 2016 presidential election.

The heavily-redacted report, based on a three-year investigation, builds on a committee finding nearly two years ago that the January 2017 intelligence community assessment (ICA) on Russia was sound. The spy agencies also found that Russia sought to shake faith in American democracy, denigrate then-candidate Hillary Clinton and boost her rival Donald Trump. 12
April 1, 2020: Russia sends the world’s biggest cargo plane of medical aid to the United States. The aid serves a coronavirus propaganda.

April 10, 2020: After months of denial, Russia finally admits the Coronavirus has pushed Moscow’s health care system to the limit.

June 9, 2020: Russia condemns U.S. for hypocrisy after George Floyd’s death.

Broader West/EU Campaign

The Broader West/EU campaign is another form of Russia’s active measures or aktivnye meropriyatiya campaign, which also utilizes disinformation and deception to delegitimize the European Union. Russia also attempts to place pressure on NATO members by harassing NATO sites.

April 21, 2000: Russian President Vladimir Putin approves the 2000 Military Doctrine. The doctrine listed a main external threat as “attempts to ignore (infringe) the Russian Federation's interests in resolving international security problems, and to oppose its strengthening as one influential center in a multipolar world” in which the Russian Federation would respond by “giv[ing] preference to political, diplomatic, and other nonmilitary means of preventing, localizing, and neutralizing military threats at regional and global levels.”


January 27, 2008: Russia sends two long-range bombers to the neutral waters Bay of Biscay off the French and Spanish coast. This is notably the first large-scale military exercise next to territory of NATO members to demonstrate strength.

April 2010: A Polish plane carrying Lech Kaczynski, the Polish president, crashes in thick fog in western Russia, killing all 96 people on-board. A Russian investigation blames the Poles, while a Polish investigation pins some of the blame on Russian air traffic controllers.

February 2013: Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov’s publishes and essay that is misleadingly known outside Russia as the Gerasimov doctrine. The essay called for developing nature of warfare, to prepare for future threats and conflicts.

October 2017: Russian social media accounts supported the Catalonian separatist cause in Spain and influence the independence referendum.

October 2019: Negotiations completed with Russian, Danish, and German officials to begin construction of Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

March 2020: The EU’s East StratCom Task Force collected more than 80 coronavirus-related disinformation cases on popular European media channels since January 22, 2020. Russian trolls spread conspiracies that migrants had brought covid-19 to Europe, the virus is a bio-weapon created by the United States or the United Kingdom, and the virus was linked to 5G technology.

May 29, 2020: U.S. B-1Bs carried out Bomber Task Force mission over Ukraine for the first time, prompting Russian condemnation.

June 1, 2020: Russia accused the U.S. and its NATO allies of conducting “proactive” military drills near its border and requested the U.S. scale down its military drills during the coronavirus outbreak.
June 10, 2020: Two formations of Russian bombers were intercepted by F-22 Raptor fighters after they entered the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone.

June 11, 2020: Russia’s Foreign Ministry on Thursday welcomed President Donald Trump’s reported plan to withdraw more than a quarter of U.S. troops from Germany, saying it would help bolster security in Europe.

June 11, 2020: Russian combat jets have flown training missions over the Baltic Sea in parallel with NATO’s BALTOPS 2020 drills.

**Southeastern Europe/Western Balkans Campaign**

The Southeastern Europe/Western Balkans campaign is a targeted campaign towards the countries near Russia’s border which share geographical and cultural similarities with Russia. These countries are more easily coerced to sharing favorable relations with Russia although many of them either already have membership to the European Union and NATO or they have attempted to join.

**September 2005:** Russia and Germany agree to the construction of the Nord Stream pipeline to allow direct gas supply from Russia to Western Europe bypassing transit countries in Eastern Europe.

**2006:** Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the EU Vladimir Chizhov claimed that Bulgaria would serve as the perfect “trojan horse” in the European Union.

**October 21, 2019:** Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov confirmed that Bulgaria would complete its stretch of the Turkstream gas pipeline by 2020 and on January 1, 2020, Bulgaria began receiving natural gas via the Turksteam pipeline.

**March 27, 2020:** North Macedonia becomes NATO’s 30th member.

**April 1, 2020:** Russia condemns North Macedonia’s ascension into NATO and highlights NATO airstrikes against Yugoslavia in 1999.

**June 2020:** Russia claims that any resolution in the peace talks with Serbia and Kosovo must be approved by Russia through the UN Security Council.

**June 2020:** Russia accuses Romania of plagiarism and betraying its own interests after a new Romanian defense strategy lists Russia as a threat to regional stability.

**June 2020:** Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, one of Moscow’s closest ally in the Balkans, gained control of nearly all the seats of the parliamentary elections.

**June 2020:** Russia supports Greece’s maritime law against Turkey. Russia’s Ambassador to Athens Andrei Maslov also stressed that Greece as a Mediterranean country has full rights to participate in the Libya conflict.

**July 2020:** Russia supports Turkey’s conversion of the Hagia Sophia mosque in Constantinople into a mosque, upsetting its Greek counterparts.

**Western Border Campaign**

The Russian Western Border campaign targets the Baltic states, Ukraine and Georgia. These post-Soviet states border Russia, and are targeted with more aggressive and negative gray zone operations, specifically the threat of territorial occupation.
Chronology of Russian Gray Zone and Hybrid Operations

**Estonia**

**October 2006:** Estonian President signs bill to relocate Bronze soldier monument.

**April 27, 2007:** Bronze soldier monument is relocated.

**April 27, 2007:** Russia boycotts various Estonian goods.

**May 3, 2007:** Siege of Estonian embassy in Moscow.

**May 3, 2007:** Estonian Ambassador leaves Russia.

**May 3, 2007:** Russia suspends oil deliveries to Estonia.

**May 16, 2007:** Russia conducts cyberattacks on Estonia.

**February 12, 2020:** Estonia’s foreign intelligence agency assess the likelihood of a military attack from Russia remains low, but any confrontation between Russia and the West could quickly become “a threat situation” for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

**Latvia**

**June 5, 2000:** Latvia’s admission to NATO may prompt the deployment of 300,000 troops in Belarus near the Latvian border.

**July 4, 2018:** Latvian government prohibits any Latvian school or university from teaching a language that is not recognized by the European Union in an attempt to cease Russian language dissemination.

**June 30, 2020:** Latvia bans Russian state-controlled news channel, RT. Russia responds that this is an act of Russophobia.

**Lithuania**

**March 2014:** Lithuanian officials claim that Russia is attempting to create a false history that denies the Baltic states’ right to exist. The Lithuanian defense minister, Raimundas Karoblis, said, “They are saying our capital Vilnius should not belong to Lithuania because between the first and second world wars it was occupied by Poland.”

**August 2020:** Lithuania is concerned that Russia will use the crisis in Belarus to invade with military forces.

**Russia in Georgia**

**November 2003:** Georgian Rose Revolution takes place.

**March 2006:** Russia bans Georgian agricultural, wine, and mineral water imports.

**January 22, 2006:** Russia destroys gas and electricity lines from Russia to Georgia.

**September 28, 2006:** Russia recalls its ambassador in Georgia.

**April 3, 2008:** Georgia requests inclusion in Membership Action Plan.

**April 4, 2008:** Putin warns Bush that supporting Ukraine and Georgia’s bid to NATO membership would cross Russia’s red line.

**June 2008:** Russia sends troops to Abkhazia.
**August 2008:** Russia issues passports to Georgian citizens so Russia could legitimize its invasion during the 2008 Russo-Georgian War. The Russian policy of “compatriots protection” upholds all rights of any Russian citizen, which included ethnic Georgians living in the contested regions who received Russian passports. Russia claimed that Georgia had attacked Russian citizens residing in the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia — as a result, Russia simultaneously delegitimized the actions of the Georgian government while legitimizing its invasion to protect “Russian citizens.”

**August 2008:** Russia conducts military exercise on Russian border.

**August 2008:** Russia conducts cyber-attacks on Georgia.

**February 20, 2020:** Russian military intelligence agency known as GRU carried out a cyber-attack on Georgia. Hackers debilitated thousands of government and private websites to go offline, and they also interrupted television broadcast. Specifically, the Russian hacking unit known as Sandworm with tied to the GRU was linked to the attacks.

**August 7-12, 2008:** Russo-Georgian War starts after Russia backs Georgian separatist regions, Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

**Ukraine**

**2004:** Pro-Western “Orange Revolution” takes place.

**January 1, 2006:** Gazprom cuts off oil supplies to Ukraine after disputes over prices. Gazprom resumes oil supplies a day later and Ukraine agrees to Russian prices.

**January 7, 2009:** Russia halts oil and gas supplies to Ukraine after disputes about oil prices. Oil supplies to southeastern Europe were also disrupted.

**2015-2016:** Russian hackers turned off the power in parts of Ukraine using code.

**Crimea**

**November 2014:** Russia annexes Crimea.

**November 21, 2013:** Kiev suspends trade talks with the European Union and restores economic ties with Moscow.

**November-February 2013/2014:** Mass anti-government and anti-Russia riots begin in Ukraine.

**December 17, 2013:** Putin agrees to bailout $15 billion of Ukrainian debt and slash a third of the price of Russian gas supplies to Ukraine.

**February 14, 2014:** Russia accuses EU of seeking Ukraine in its “sphere of influence.”

**2014:** Russia leaked a phone call between the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland and U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt. They were discussing two potential members that could be in Ukraine’s government, but this phone call was manipulated to insinuate that the Maidan revolution had been directed by the West.

**February 22, 2014:** Ukrainian President Yanukovych is removed from office.

**February 27, 2014:** Unmarked “green” armed men invade Crimea and raise Russian flag and Putin gains parliamentary approval to invade Ukraine.
After Russian troops landed in Crimea, they seized Ukrainian communication infrastructure — such as the television towers and radio towers — so that Russia could control the content distributed to the local audiences.

Russia uses actresses to act as witnesses in the news. They played characters ranging from an Odessa resident, to a protestor in Crimea, and even as a concerned mother of a Ukrainian soldier. They provide additional support for fabricated stories that are distributed in the news.

Zvezda, a Russian television network run by the country’s Ministry of Defense posted a video which claimed to be taken in Eastern Ukraine. The video alleged that the Ukrainian military was using phosphorous bombs against civilians. However, it was actually a video from fighting in Fallujah, Iraq in 2004.

**March 4, 2014:** Russian navy blocks Strait between Crimea and Russia.

**March 8, 2014:** Russian forces fire warning shots to prevent unarmed international military observer mission from entering Crimea.

*Donetsk and Luhansk*

**May 11, 2014:** Pro-Russian separatists in Donetsk and Luhansk declare independence as "people's republics" after the referendums, which were not recognized by Kiev or the West.

**July 17, 2014:** Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 from Amsterdam is shot down near the village of Grabove, in rebel-held territory close to the border with Russia.

Russia denies it had armed rebels and argues instead that a Ukrainian fighter jet had flown near the airliner at the time.

**February 12, 2015:** After marathon talks in the Belarus capital, Minsk, an agreement is reached to end the fighting. The leaders of Russia, Ukraine, Germany and France announce that a ceasefire will begin on 15 February. The deal also includes weapon withdrawals and prisoner exchanges, but key issues remain to be settled.

**December 29, 2019:** Pro-Russian separatists and Ukraine have concluded a long-awaited prisoner exchange of 200 prisoners, the office of the Ukrainian president said.

Ukraine's government received 76 captives, with the pro-Russian separatists reportedly taking 124.

*Near Abroad Campaign*

*The Near Abroad campaign targets states of the former Soviet Union (FSU) — including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Moldova — which share a more positive relationship with Moscow. Many of these operations involve positive trade unions and diplomatic relations.*

**January 1, 2010:** Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan agree to join the Eurasian Customs Union. In 2014, the Eurasian Customs Union was integrated into the Eurasian Economic Union. In 2015, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia joined the Eurasian Customs Union.

*Moldova*

**March-June 1992:** Moldova starts conflict with separatist rebels who claim the Dniester Republic (Transnistria).
May 8, 1997: Moscow facilitates the signing of the Primakov Memorandum which normalizes relations between Moldova and Transnistria.

December 2002: OSCE extends deadline for withdrawal of Russian weapons from Transnistria into 2004 but Russia says its troops will stay until a settlement is reached.

March 23, 2005: Moldova sign three-year action plan with the European Union.

April 22, 2005: Russia bans meat, fruit, vegetable imports from Moldova.

January 2, 2006: Russia cuts gas to Moldova.

March 14, 2006: Moldova signs a custom union with Ukraine.

September 2006: Transnistria referendum overwhelmingly backs independence from Moldova and a plan eventually to become part of Russia.

March 18, 2009: Moldovan President Valdimir Voronin and the leader of Transnistria, Igor Smirnov, agree to Russian peacekeepers remaining in Transnistria.

October 2, 2013: Russia expels Moldovan workers from Russia.

April 28, 2014: Moldova and the EU agree to visa liberalization.

October 22, 2014: Russia bans imports of meat and canned goods from Moldova.

Belarus

December 1999: The Kremlin and Belarus sign a treaty to merge the two countries into a Union State.

August 16, 2020: Hundreds of thousands of protesters rallied for the ousting of Belarus’ President Alexander Lukashenko.

August 16, 2020: The Kremlin announced a “readiness to render the necessary assistance to resolve the challenges facing Belarus,” implying it would be willing to amass military intervention to quell riots.

Syrian Campaign

The Syrian campaign is Russia’s military efforts to support the Assad regime in the Syrian Civil War, and also affects Russia’s relations with Turkey.

Syria

September 2015: Russia carries first airstrike in Syria claiming to target ISIS but attacking mostly anti-Assad rebels.

June 2015: Russian security analysts travelled to Syria to identify a military base location.

November-December 2015: Russia begins to deploy ground troops in Syria.

2015: Russia begins hospital bombing campaign with Syria.

December 1, 2015: Russia announces deployment of S-400 surface-to-air missiles to Syria and a Slava-class guided missile cruiser off Syria’s coast.

December 18, 2015: Russia signs an ambitious plan with UN to end the war in Syria. The next day, Putin warns that Russia is ready to scale up its military intervention in Syria.
September 17, 2018: Russia negotiated a peace deal, the Sochi agreement. However, Russian and Syrian attack in December cause a mass migration of refugees towards the Turkish border.

January 7, 2020: Putin visits Syria for the second time in three years. This follows the death of Soleimani by U.S. forces on January 3, 2020. Putin’s visit is intended to signify Russia’s dominance in Syria.

February 10, 2020: After Soleimani was killed, Iraq considered deepening its ties with Russia when the Kremlin approached Iraqi Security Forces after noticing growing tensions between with the United States.

February 12, 2020: Russia’s Foreign Intelligence Service, Sergei Naryshkin, made an official visit to Oman. Oman is the only GCC member that did not suspend relations with Assad. Oman’s opposition to the Saudi intervention in Yemen aligns with Moscow’s views. Russia attempts to strengthen its relationship with Oman.

February 7, 2020: Russia launches campaign to overtake the M5 highway in Syria.

To see the full scope of Russia’s campaign in Syria, see CSIS’s “Moscow’s War in Syria.”

Turkey

November 24, 2015: Turkish F-16 jet shoots down Russian warplane in Syria. Putin warns of serious consequence.

November 24, 2015: Russian foreign minister cancels planned visit to Turkey.

November 25, 2015: Russia suspends military cooperation with Turkey.

November 25, 2015: The Just Russia political party submits bill to Russian parliament proposing to criminalize denial of the 1915 Armenian genocide.

November 28, 2015: Russia bans Turkish citizens from working for some Russian companies and ends visa-free travel to Russia.

November 28, 2015: Russia bans imports of Turkish fruit, vegetables, poultry, and salt; Russia bans charter flights to Turkey starting January 1, 2016.

December 1, 2015: Russian-Turkish cultural center in Moscow closes.

December 2, 2015: Russia recalls Russian exchange students in Turkey.

December 2, 2015: Russian officials claim evidence that Turkey sold oil to ISIS.

December 2, 2015: Turkey signs liquid natural gas deal with Qatar.

December 3, 2015: Russia suspends talks on TurkStream pipeline project.

December 7, 2015: Russia complains to UN Security Council that Turkey sent troops to Iraq without the Iraqi government’s consent.

December 13, 2015: Russian destroyer Smetlivy fires on a Turkish vessel near Greece.

July 13, 2019: Turkish and Russian tensions subside and Russia sells Turkey S-400 missile defense system.

October 9, 2019: Turkey invades Syria in “Operation Spring of Peace.”
February 27, 2020: Turkey lost 33 soldiers in an attack at Idlib, and Ankara blamed Bashar al-Assad. When Moscow could not adequately control its Syrian partner, Russia stood by as Turkish forces conducted a drone centered offensive against the Syrian military that wiped out hundreds of Syrian personnel and fighters affiliated with Lebanese Hezbollah.

**Middle East Campaign**

The Middle East campaign is Russia’s attempt to expand its influence in the Middle East with the Gulf States, Israel and the Levant. There has been limited progress in this campaign, but it is still notable to track with Russia’s presence in Syria.

2016: Russia and Saudi Arabia formed an alliance to restrict oil production and keep oil prices high.

October 2019: After Russian President Vladimir Putin’s tour of the United Arab Emirates, Moscow signs deals worth more than $1.3 billion with Abu Dhabi.

November 2019: Egypt publicizes its intent to buy Russian fighter jets.

February 2020: After the death of Soleimani, Iraq and Russia discussed prospects for deepening military ties between the two countries.

March 10, 2020: Russia refused OPEC’s request to cut oil production. Oil prices plunged a day after when Russia and Saudi Arabia vowed to compete for market share. Russia appears to be targeting the U.S. shale industry and responding to U.S. sanctions preventing the completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

July 2020: Russia and Iran discuss renewing a 20-year agreement pertains to a series of petrochemical and weapons deals signed by the two sides in 2001.

**Sino-Relations Campaign**

The Sino-relations campaign is Russia’s attempt to develop a stronger relationship with China as a force multiplier against the West.

1992: China and Russia issue the Joint Statement on the Basis of Mutual Relations between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation, recognizing each other as friendly countries.

1996: China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan - dubbed the Shanghai Five - meet in Shanghai and agree to cooperate to combat ethnic and religious tensions in each other’s countries.

June 15, 2001: Leaders of China, Russia and four Central Asian states launch the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and sign an agreement to fight ethnic and religious militancy while promoting trade and investment. The group emerges when the Shanghai Five - China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan - are joined by Uzbekistan.


August 18, 2005: China and Russia hold their first joint military exercises.

July 2008: China and Russia sign a treaty ending 40-year-old border dispute which led to armed clashes during the Cold War.
February 2009: Russia and China sign $25 billion deal to supply China with oil for next 20 years in exchange for loans.

May 21, 2014: China signs a 30-year deal worth an estimated $400bn for gas supplies from Russia’s Gazprom.

January 27, 2020: Russia delivers S-400 to China.

March 4, 2020: Russia accuses China of technology theft. “Unauthorized copying of our equipment abroad is a huge problem. There have been 500 such cases over the past 17 years. China alone has copied aircraft engines, Sukhoi planes, deck jets, air defense systems, portable air defense missiles, and analogues of the Pantsir medium-range surface-to-air systems,” said Yevgeny Livadny, Rostec’s chief of intellectual property projects.15

February 2020: Russia closed its border with China and banned Chinese nationals from entering the country due to concerns over COVID-19.

Africa Campaign

The Africa campaign is Russia’s effort to expand its influence on the African continent. This campaign includes debt forgiveness, Russian access to natural resource, military training, and a practice ground for Russian private military companies (PMCs).

2014: The Wagner Group, a Russian private military company that maintains close ties to the Kremlin and which has reportedly been active in a number of conflict zones, from Ukraine to Libya and beyond, is created.

December 13, 2018: U.S. National Security Advisor Ambassador John Bolton accuses Russia of selling arms to African countries in exchange for votes at the UN.16

Mozambique

Russia has deployed 200 mercenaries to Mozambique to fight ISIS.

Zimbabwe

March 15, 2018: Russia’s JSC Afromet and Zimbabwe’s Pen East Ltd sign a joint venture to produce up to 855,000 ounces (27 tonnes) of platinum group metals and gold per year from the Darwendale PGM project.

Angola

January 12, 2018: Russian miner Alrosa signs deal with Angolan local producer Catoca Mining to secure a diamond production base outside of Russia.

Central African Republic

April 14, 2019: Valery Zakharov, a former Russian intelligence official, stepped in as an official military advisor to CAR’s president.

Sudan

2017: Half of Sudan’s arm purchases were Russia sources in exchange for a Russian mining firm, M-invest, to receive preferential access to gold reserves in Sudan.

Madagascar
November 2018: A Russian company controlled by Mr. Prigozhin, a close friend of Vladimir Putin, acquired a major stake in a government-run company that mines chromium, a mineral valued for its use in stainless steel.

November 2018: Russia attempt to swing Presidential elections, but campaign materials were riddled with grammatical mistakes.

Cameroon

November 2017: Russian mining company strikes a deal with former President al-Bashir in exchange for Russian PMCs and supplies of Russian weapons.

Nigeria

November 11, 2014: United States refuses to sell weapons to Nigeria to fight Boko Haram.

October 24, 2019: Nigeria signs contract with Russia for 12 Mi-35 helicopter gunships.

Libya

September 2019: Moscow backs Hifter’s forces in Libya, the Kremlin sees Libya as an ideological platform to discredit the West. While Russia is supporting the warlord Khalifa Hifter, who is also backed by the UAE and Egypt, Turkey is supporting the U.N. installed government in the Libyan capital, Tripoli. Turkey has made investments in Libya for gas drilling rights and a compensation deal before the civil war broke out.

Latin America Campaign

The Latin America campaign is Russia’s expanding influence in the backyard of the United States. Although Russia has very novel relationship with most countries in Central America and South America, it has already developed notable relations with Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua.

Venezuela

January 28, 2019: United States imposes sanctions on the state-owned oil company, Petróleos de Venezuela.

March 8, 2019: Russia’s state-owned oil company, Rosneft, accepted Venezuelan crude oil as a form of “loan repayment.” Rosneft would purchase Venezuela’s premium Merey 16 crude at a steep discount and then use those proceeds from the sale to go into the loan repayment from the 2014 arm sale of Russian weapons. It is also assumed that Russia is handling 70 to 80 percent of Venezuela’s oil.

Southeast Asia/India Campaign

The Southeast Asia/India campaign is Russia’s attempt to expand its influence in the region. However, due to China’s strong presence, Russia has only formed initial relationships.

May 2016: Russia and Cambodia sign a landmark agreement to cooperate on peaceful nuclear energy development.

April 2018: Russia and Indonesia draft a new strategic partner agreement.

May 2018: Vietnam authorizes Russian company, Rosneft, to drill in the South China Sea against China’s wishes.

October 2018: Russia and India sign pact to build six new nuclear reactors in a new site in India.
November 2018: Russia is elevated to a strategic partner with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

2018: Russia and India sign a $5 billion military hardware deal.

October 12, 2019: Russia President Vladimir Putin and Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte agreed to boost defense and trade ties, and Duterte urged Russian firms to invest in railway and transport infrastructure as part of his “Build, Build, Build” program to drive growth in the Philippines.

March 2020: Russia offered selling India 3 old kilo-class hulls and the refitting of 3 Indian Kilo-class submarines.

June 26, 2020: Russia will speed up the delivery of S-400 to India in light of recent standoffs between China and India.

**Arctic Campaign**

The Arctic campaign focuses on Russian gray zone operations to stake a claim to the natural resources and strategic military position in the Arctic.

August 2007: Russia plants flag on North Pole seabed claiming its right to billions of dollars in oil and gas reserves in the Arctic Ocean.

January 2017: Russia deploys the Sopka-2 radar systems on Wrangel Island (300 miles from Alaska) and Cape Schmidt to improve operational awareness.

September 2018: Russia launches supersonic Oniks cruise missiles from the new Siberian Islands to demonstrate readiness to efficiently guard the Arctic and engage in protection of the Russian archipelagos and coastal zone.

August 2019: Russia carries out the Ocean Shield Exercise to test out its bastion defense capabilities.

January 30, 2020: Russia approves a number of decrees from its new Arctic Strategy, including building at least 40 Arctic vessels, upgrading four regional airports, constructing railways and seaports and facilitating massive exploitation of Arctic natural resources – all by 2035.


