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Chronology of Possible Russian Gray Area and Hybrid Warfare Operations

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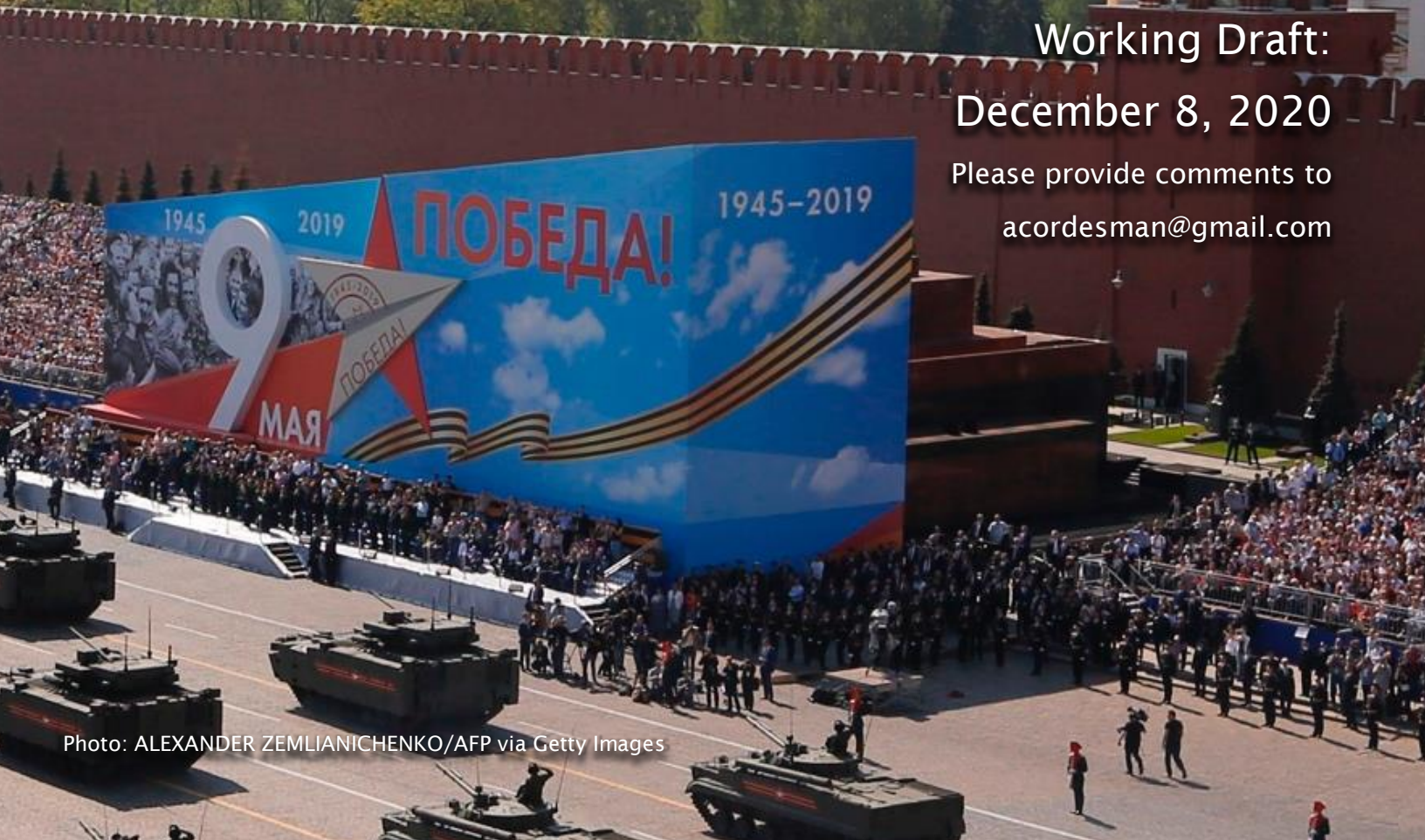


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Introduction

This chronology explores the full range of Russian competition with the United States. It focuses on the need to address all of the key aspects of this competition, including Russia's "gray area," hybrid warfare, and multi-domain/joint combined-domain operations.

It takes a different approach to defining such operations from those used in a number of official sources and other reports. As is discussed later in this chronology, the official and other open source reporting now available have serious limits.

As a result, this chronology is designed to illustrate key patterns in Russian activity that compete directly and indirectly with the United States, and it serves as a starting point for a more comprehensive analysis. It highlights the need to look beyond the boundaries of the current definitions of "gray area," hybrid warfare, and multi-domain operations, as well as beyond the narrow focus on direct competition between the U.S. and Russia that excludes indirect competition involving other countries and non-state actors as well as Russia's increasing cooperation with China.

It stresses the need to give the civil side of competition the same priority as the military and war fighting aspects of U.S. and Russian competition – and to do so on a global basis that stresses the fact that the most successful form of competition may be in the lower-level gray areas where there is little or no direct use of force in combat.

Many Russian low-level operations, cyber espionage, and political acts are only reported as serving commercial interests, reflecting local claims or interests, or 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, compete through the support of unofficial disinformation campaigns, use supposedly private business and NGO activities, or operate with the support of foreign state and non-state actors.

At the same time, this is also a working document that can only cover a limited number of the events involved in any given area of competition and that only highlights part of the major areas of competition – or campaigns – where Russia now competes. It is, however, being revised and expanded over time, and the authors will be grateful for any suggested revisions and additions. Please send these to Anthony H. Cordesman, Burke Chair in Strategy, at acordesman@gmail.com.

Finally, it is a supplement to a much broader analysis of U.S. strategic competition with both Russia and China that addresses the wider aspects of the changing military balance and the impact of broad areas of civil competition. This analysis is entitled *U.S. Competition with China and Russia: The Crisis-Driven Need to Change U.S. Strategy*. It is available on the CSIS website [here](#).

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Examining the True Scale of Russian and U.S. “Gray Area,” Hybrid Warfare, and Multi-Domain Operations in Competition

This chronology is not an attempt to define the motivations and reasoning behind Russian grand strategy. It instead 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.

There is no simple or reliable way to define the range of Russian operations that affect U.S. strategic interests. Competition occurs at a wide range of civil and military levels – as well as on a global basis – and “gray area” and hybrid operations are often only part of a much broader pattern of Russian, U.S., and “third country” operations. At the same time, the analysis of Russian competition cannot be restricted to military competition or direct competition with the United States.

Economic competition in areas like petroleum and natural gas can have a major strategic impact on NATO, the MENA region, and Asia. The relative progress of the U.S. and Russia in the overall mix of civil-military science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields may be more important over time than any aspect of military competition – as can their interaction with other centers of STEM development in Europe, China, and the rest of Asia. *The U.S. need to make this a key focus of its overall strategic planning, intelligence, and analytic activities.*

Much of today’s reporting and analysis tends to 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 by their overall strategic impact with the United States.

The impact of gray zone and multi-domain operations on Russia’s strategic competition with the United States may be highly indirect and focus largely on third countries and non-state actors. The level of Russian government direction of such activities and the motives behind Russian actions may be highly uncertain.

Other aspects of competition might have an impact on the U.S. as a result of impacting other countries. 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 that affect U.S. interests. There also are gray zone operations that are not described accurately in open source literature or may not even be reported at all.

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

These issues have led to many debates over exactly how to define terms like “Gray Area,” “Hybrid Warfare,” “Multi-Domain Warfare,” and “Irregular Warfare.” In some ways, these debates are as counterproductive as the efforts to separate the military and civil dimensions of Russian

competition and Russian cooperation with China and other states in order to compete with the United States.

There are no rules or rigid patterns in Russian competition with the United States, and there is no way to precisely define the differences between such operations. Efforts to create a taxonomy which assumes that such rules exist is counterproductive, and it ignores the fact that the history of war has often begun after decades of competition at a civil level; in outside states; and through the use of military forces to intimidate, pressure third countries, create hostile partnerships, and shape strategic environments that have often led to unintended levels of conflict.

These realities need to be kept in mind when analyzing U.S. competition with both Russia and China. 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 rational dictates of 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 much of the competition between the three great powers – the United States, China, and Russia – takes place in shaping the behavior of other countries and non-state actors through a complex mix of actions at both the civil and military level. Russia is clearly seeking to develop its overall economy and the supporting elements of its civil society, to compete directly with the United States.

At the same time, however, the United States and Russia – and to a greater extent the United States and China – are involved in a constant process of both civil and military competition on a global basis where civil trade, investment, and presence in foreign countries play a critical role. In many areas of military competition, they may not use their own forces at all – or use them in very limited ways – and 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. They also take on many specialized and regional forms and often operate in areas far from the areas where the U.S. and Russia plan for direct combat or warfighting.

Defining the Undefinable

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:¹

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,²

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,³

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.⁴ 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 Evolving U.S. Official View of Gray Area, Hybrid, Irregular, and Multi-Domain/Joint-All Domain Operations

From a U.S. viewpoint, the ongoing debate over how to reshape U.S. forces to provide advanced capabilities for multidomain – or joint-all domain – operations seems to provide the best picture of how the uses of military force are now shaping U.S. and Russian competition. They are also indicative of the sweeping changes that are coming in joint warfare, military technology, and tactics. They are not limited to a specific type of warfare, and the U.S. military and intelligence community increasingly recognizes that the terms should be "multidomain" or "joint-all domain" operations – involving mixes of military and civil action, purely civil forms of competition, as well as warfare.

They also are just beginning to reshape the strategy, programs, plans, and budgets of the various departments of the U.S. government – as well as those of Russia, China, and other advanced powers. The Department of Defense (DoD), the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the military services, and the major U.S. military combatant commands have made major efforts to address how military forces will need to be transformed to support such operations over at least the next three to four years, but progress is difficult at best and has been limited by the unstable political leadership of U.S. national security efforts since 2016.

The U.S. is almost certainly at least half a decade away from fully developing plans, programs, and budgets for such multi-domain operations. It will face a range of changes in technology, international business, and force capabilities. It also seems likely to keep making striking changes in the conditions for multi-domain warfare indefinitely into the future.

Each military service has taken a different path to even defining the term “multi-domain.” Operations. Consider the definition of “multi-domain operations” (MDO), used in a 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.

This definition had changed significantly a year later. 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.

Secretary of Defense Esper and the Joint Chiefs of Staff do seem to have focused on reaching a consensus as to how to approach these issues in 2019 and 2020, but Secretary Esper only became Secretary of Defense on July 23, 2019, and was later fired by President Trump for unrelated issues on November 9, 2020. Nevertheless, General John Hyten, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, did announce a new U.S. Department of Defense joint war-fighting concept at a meeting in the Hudson Institute in July 2020, and one designed to define at least the military side of future all-domain operations and to cut across the service barriers that affect different military operations.

General Hyten made it clear that he was only talking about military operations, and that the issues involved will still under review even at the conceptual level, but he stressed that,⁷

If you look at our joint doctrine now and you look at how we fight wherever we go, wherever we go if we have to fight, we establish the forward edge of the battle area. We establish the fire support coordination line, the forward line of troops and we say, okay, Army can operate here, Air Force can operate here. That's transitioned into the desert into defining kill boxes where we assign areas of operation in order to operate into there, but naval forces can go here, air forces can go here, naval air forces go here, allies can go here. Everything is about lines.

In the future, those lines are eliminated, which means an army capability can have on its own platform, the ability to defend itself or the ability to strike deep into an adversary area of operations. A naval force can defend itself or strike deep. An air force can defend itself or strike deep. Marines can defend itself or strike deep, everybody, and in order to do that, the key piece to do that altogether is an integrated version of command and control which is called Joint All-Domain Command and Control, but it's really combined in Joint All-Domain Command and Control because we have to be able to do it with our allies and partners too because if we figure out how to do it in the United States, but then since we do everything as a coalition, when we bring a coalition together, they have to understand how to fit in it because we have to draw the line for them.

We've now defeated the whole advantage we get, but if we can do this altogether, we create such a huge advantage for the future joint combined force that it will create huge challenges for our competitors around the world to try to figure out how to do it. So, that's the path we've been going down for a while and it's starting to actually mature and come to fruition now, so it's pretty exciting to see.

... So, one of the things we always watch is how China and Russia deal with each other. So, I won't get into the detailed scenarios that we do in classified exercises, but I'll just say that we always look at worst case situations and make sure we understand them and make sure that we have the ability to respond to a worst case situation.

When we talk about allies and partners we always talk about how they're our greatest advantage over our competitors, and they are, over every adversary that we can think of, the fact that when we get in a scrape we have a lot of friends that come with us. That's probably our biggest advantage in the world today and will be as far as I can see in the future. But as we've worked with our allies in the past, we've tried to have combined interoperability is the catchphrase. We want to make sure that when our allies come with us, whether they come with us in the air, at sea, on the land, that they have capabilities to allow them to interoperate with the tactical units they're falling in with.

So, if they're flying a fighter, you want to make sure the fighters can communicate. If they're falling in on the ground, you want to make sure that this platoon can talk to this platoon and you don't have to come up with a different structure, but what we see as we look into the future is that the real challenge is going to be integrating at a command and control level above the tactical level, so when you get to the operational and even the strategic level.

So, when we as a joint and combined force give direction to the force, the entire force has to understand it, so they can respond quickly. It's actually one of the basic tenets of how you operate as a military. It's what we learn when we're lieutenants is how to execute with mission-type orders when you're young and when you're taught centralized control, decentralized execution, but because we've been in a fight against violent extremism for the last 20 years, we haven't actually practiced that as much as you would think.

In many ways, it's going back to the basics, but going back to the basics with new capabilities that really change the battlefield completely, which means our allies now, it's not just at the capability level, they have to be able to understand at the operational level, which means we have to share information at that level, which we haven't been able to do. So, that command and control relationship is going to be critically important to build as we go forward.

Ambitious as these goals may sound, they are described in terms that are essentially limited to changes in military tactics. Ultimately, however, they imply a revolution in virtually every aspect of weapons and military technology; in the use of space and long-range precision strike as well as hypersonic systems and matching defenses; in every aspect of C4, IS&R, battle management, and

communications; and in linking the civil and military advances in technology in every area from artificial intelligence to ergonomics.

They also will be shaped as much by the relative progress in every aspect of development in civil STEM capabilities as well as in military ones – and also by the ability to compete in advances in the civil dimension as well as the military one. As General Hyten also notes, they will also be reinforced or limited by the advances made by strategic partners and by their level of interoperability and integration with U.S. operations. This is particularly true because at both the civil and military level, an effective strategic partner will be a far more cost-effective solution to a given aspect of global competition than actions by the United States.

Given what is already known about the coming advances in technology, it is also clear that there is no currently foreseeable point in time in which this complex matrix of interacting innovations will achieve anything approaching real stability in the next quarter century – if ever.

Taking the Right Approach to Defining Multi-Domain Warfare and Joint-All Domain Operations

This makes it important to stress yet again that – as was the case between the Napoleonic Wars and World War I as well as between World War I and World War II – many multi-domain operations will be civil and will 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 by using the manipulation of “geo-economics,” 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.

Accordingly, terms like “gray zone,” “hybrid,” “irregular,” and “multi-domain/joint-all domain” are used generically and loosely 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:⁸

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, an earlier TRADOC document took a broader and more realistic view that included civil, economic, and non-combat operations,⁹

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.0F1 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.1F2 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.2F3 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.

Evolving the Right Approach to Strategic Competition

Every U.S. military service, military command, and civilian element of the Department of Defense seems to be undergoing a similar process in its own efforts to define multi-domain operations. 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.¹⁰ There are also some reports and background briefings that the NSC and the State Department are examining new approaches to analyzing and countering all civil and military forms of competition with China and Russia.

Integrating all of the elements of the U.S. national security structure will be critical. The problem with any definition, however, is that military competition will only be part of such operations.

Many multi-domain operations will not involve the actual use of military force. Multi-domain operations will often be entirely civil or economic – using non-military means to achieve a strategic or tactical objective. In 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.

Accordingly, this chronology examines Russian actions from the perspective that U.S. strategy must now 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.

Looking Beyond the Present Patterns of Competition and Response

Moreover, most 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 – where today’s weapons, technology, and the strategies and tactics they support will have a limited lifespan, and also where the overall level of national technology, manufacturing, and every aspect of operations will change with a speed that nations have never before had to deal with at the same rate or level.

This is a process that now seems likely to continue indefinitely into the future, in many different ways, and in many different forms on a global level – with each major or smaller power pursuing different approaches to its strategic partners and other states.

The failure of the new national and military strategies – which the U.S. advanced in 2017 and 2018 to adequately address the fact that direct military competition between the world’s three leading military powers – was only part of a broad mix of different forms of global competition – most of which were likely to be dominated by civil, gray area, and hybrid operations involving strategic partner and third countries – and is a critical failure in strategic thinking the U.S. still needs to correct.

Many such operations will be part of a “culture” of competition that is initiated and executed on something approaching a government-wide level and probably without some detailed master plan or level of coordination. Some forms of competition – like information warfare, space competition, using the Internet, or many lower-level industrial and technical espionage – will require mass efforts while others will 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 how to develop new intelligence and analysis capabilities that are capable of tracking the full pattern of diverse Russian civil-military competition, and that can assess the relative impact, risk, and need for countermeasures. Another key question will be for the U.S. to determine who in the Russian government is actually making such decisions, what are the organizational centers of such activity, how much do they coordinate, how do they relate to other countries on a global basis, and what U.S. response is needed.

In practice, finding new ways to compete that cut across the boundaries between civil, gray zone, and hybrid warfare – and actually implement multi-domain approaches to each challenge – is already proving to be a critical part of American strategic competition with Russia. 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 the overall patterns in Russian strategic competition on these levels.

The Need for Better U.S. Government Declassified and Open Source Reporting

It should be stressed that this chronology – and any open source attempt to list all of the aspects of Russian competition with the United States – is also limited by the failure of the U.S. government to provide adequate 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 States government to respond to such Russian and Chinese activities and to compete in terms of the media, the Internet, and information warfare.

There has been extensive media and NGO 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, lacks detail, or relies on uncertain sources. As a result, the open source data now available are entries that are uncertain or ambiguous, and data on many actions have been omitted because they have never been publicly reported.

A full chronology – and analysis of Chinese and Russian actions – requires comprehensive open source reporting by the U.S. government at both the civil and military levels. It must draw upon a wide range of classified intelligence and other analysis to be properly accurate and comprehensive. Only the United States government can declassify suitable intelligence and official reporting, as well as make the full patterns of Russian activity clear.

Such efforts seem more than justified and do not present meaningful security risks. The U.S. can easily declassify the necessary data without revealing sources and methods. The open source results would be a key tool in informing U.S. policymakers and analysts and in informing strategic partners and other countries, media, and analysts. As other declassified U.S. reports have shown, information is a powerful weapon against concealment and disinformation.

Organizing the Chronology by Campaign

The following portions of this chronology address these issues by organizing 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. No attempt is made to address every case.

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.

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 the Active Measures campaign, the Nuclear campaign, the Broader West/EU campaign, the U.S.-Russian Bering Strait Air and Maritime Campaign, the Southeastern Europe/Western Balkans campaign, the Western Border campaign, the Near Abroad campaign, the Syrian campaign, the Middle East campaign, the Sino-Relations campaign, the Africa campaign, the Latin America campaign, the Southeast Asia/India campaign, and the Arctic campaign.

Key Russian Gray Area, Hybrid, and Multidomain “Campaigns”

The chronology flags illustrative recent examples of Russian action in the following major areas of Russian competition:

- *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 Nuclear Campaign* is Russia's attempt to maintain a strategic advantage against the United States with its nuclear arsenal.
- *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 U.S.-Russian Bering Strait Air and Maritime Campaign* is a passive military campaign which engages U.S. forces by challenging the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone and the Bering Strait maritime border.
- *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. These countries are more favorable toward the West and hostile toward Russia. 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* uses 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* reflects Russia's military efforts in the Syrian Civil War, which also involves Russia's relations with Turkey.
- *The Middle East campaign* reflects 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* shows the history of the Russia's attempts 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* reflects 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 a 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.

Russian Strategic Competition

In addressing each campaign, this chronology does not attempt to reveal Russia's specific motivations and objectives. It focuses on illustrating the recent scale and extent to which Russia is performing acts of competition against the United States. It does, however, reflect the fact that Russia has recognized its inability to challenge and compete with the United States in ways that do not present a serious risk of engaging in a war it cannot win. The chronology deliberately demonstrates the myriad of Russia uses of gray zone operations in the military, economic, and civil sector that advance Russian priorities.

Russia has made its 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.¹¹

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.¹² 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.

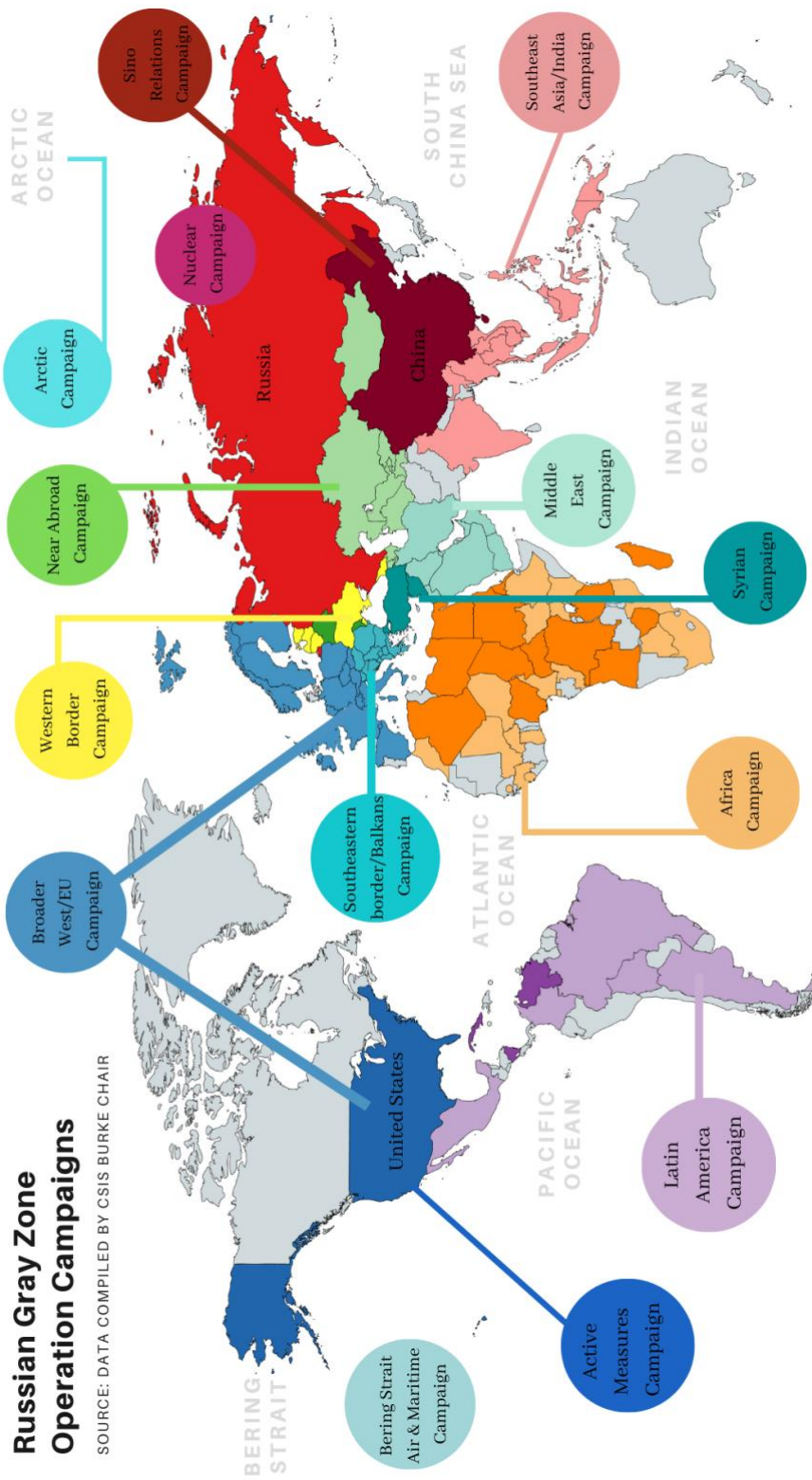
Current Russian operations in Georgia and Ukraine have focused on the political dimension while making relatively limited use of military force. Russia's use of separatist forces in South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Donbass give Russia leverage to create domestic tensions in Georgia and Ukraine while also 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.



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 become 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 post anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim content to target nationalists in Texas. This is one of many examples in which Russian-linked operatives used fake social media accounts to amplify political unrest in the United States.
- **July 27, 2016:** The Russian General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) hacks the email accounts of the U.S. presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and her staffers during her presidential campaign.
- **September 14, 2016:** Russian hackers leak emails of former Secretary of State Colin Powell.
- **November 2016:** The St. Petersburg Company, known as the "Internet Research Agency," deploys 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 exchange with diplomatic officials after Congress approves new sanctions for Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. elections.
- **July 15, 2018:** Maria Butina is 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 amplify a conspiracy theory that Democrats would manipulate an app used during the Iowa Caucus to skew votes.
- **April 21, 2020:** The Senate Intelligence Committee unanimously endorses 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.¹³
- **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.
- **July 16, 2020:** Russian spies target U.K, U.S., and Canadian organizations researching the Covid-19 vaccine.
- **September 1, 2020:** Facebook removes a network of fake accounts created by Russian operatives who were attempting to undermine the Biden campaign.
- **September 10, 2020:** Microsoft identifies Russian hackers, known as Strontium, that are targeting political parties and advocacy groups.
- **October 19, 2020:** The U.S. charges Russian GRU officers for multiple global cyberattacks.

Nuclear Campaign

The Nuclear Campaign is Russia's attempt to maintain a strategic advantage against the United States with its nuclear arsenal.

- **June 2000:** The U.S. withdraws from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.
- **May 2002:** Russia and the U.S. sign Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, or the Moscow Treaty, to eliminate about two-thirds of each side's nuclear warheads in the next ten years.
- **2007:** The U.S. plans to place anti-missile interceptors in Poland and the Czech Republic. Russia responds by planning to place a missile shield in Southern Russia and Azerbaijan.
- **July 2009:** The U.S. calls for a reset in relations with Russia. U.S. President Obama and Russian President Medvedev agree on a framework that would cut each side's arsenal by up to one-third.
- **2010:** The U.S. and Russia sign the New START treaty in Prague to replace the 1991 START I treaty that expired in December 2009.
- **2019:** The U.S. withdraws from the INF Treaty. The withdrawal comes after Russia denies having a prohibited cruise missile as well as its involvement in Ukraine, Syria, and U.S. election meddling.
- **July 28, 2020:** The U.S. and Russia enter a new phase of talks on nuclear arms control in Vienna.

- **August 20, 2020:** The Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corporation releases a documentary including full footage of the largest nuclear bomb, Tsar Bomba, that was ever tested. The release coincided with the 75th anniversary of Russia's nuclear industry.
- **October 20, 2020:** Russia states it could agree to a U.S.-proposed freeze on each side's nuclear warheads and to extend the START treaty by one year.

Broader West/EU Campaign

The Broader West/EU campaign is another form of Russia's active measures or *aktivnyye meropriyatiya* campaign, which also utilizes disinformation and deception to delegitimize the European Union. This campaign also includes Russian military pressure on NATO members and harassment of 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.”¹⁴
- **November 2006:** Former Russian spy is poisoned with polonium-210 in London by Russian agents.
- **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 an 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 support the Catalan separatist cause in Spain and influence the independence referendum.
- **October 2019:** Russian, Danish, and German officials agree to negotiations that will begin construction of Nord Stream 2 pipeline.
- **March 2020:** The EU's East StratCom Task Force collects 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.

- **June 1, 2020:** Russia accuses the U.S. and its NATO allies of conducting “proactive” military drills near its border by the Barents Sea and requests the U.S. scale down its military drills during the coronavirus outbreak.
- **June 11, 2020:** Russia’s Foreign Ministry on Thursday welcomes 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 fly training missions over the Baltic Sea in parallel with NATO’s BALTOPS 2020 drills.
- **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.
- **August 20, 2020:** Putin’s critic, Alexei Navalny, is poisoned with a nerve agent, Novichok. He is transferred to a hospital in Berlin, Germany.
- **September 9, 2020:** Germany considers halting the construction of Nord Stream 2 pipeline after the poisoning of Putin’s critic Alexei Navalny.

U.S.-Russian Bering Strait Air and Maritime Campaign

The U.S.-Russian Bering Strait Air and Maritime Campaign is a passive military campaign which engages U.S. forces by challenging the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone and the Bering Strait maritime border.

- **June 1, 1990:** The U.S. and the Former Soviet Union agree to the provisional USA/USSR Maritime Boundary Agreement, which delineates the maritime border between Russia and the U.S. across the Bering Sea.
- **September 2014:** A squadron of 6 Russian military aircraft are intercepted by U.S. fighter jets before entering Alaskan airspace.
- **April 17, 2017:** 2 Russian Tu-95 bombers are intercepted by U.S. fighter jets near Kodiak Island.
- **April 18, 2017:** Russian Tu-95 bombers fly near the Aleutian Islands towards Alaska before being intercepted by a U.S. reconnaissance plane.
- **June 2018:** The U.S. and Russia agree to shipping routes across the Bering Strait.
- **September 2018:** U.S. fighter jets intercept 4 Russian military aircraft after they enter the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone.
- **May 2019:** U.S. F-22 Raptors intercept Russian aircraft off the coast of Alaska.
- **August 1, 2019:** 2 Russian Tu-142 maritime reconnaissance anti-submarine warfare aircraft enter the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone.
- **January 30, 2020:** Senior Russian officials agree to end the provisional 1990 accord for the maritime border between the U.S. and Russia across the Bering Sea.

- **June 10, 2020:** Two formations of Russian bombers are intercepted by U.S. F-22 Raptor fighters after they entered the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone.
- **June 17, 2020:** US. F-22s intercept two formations of Russian bombers off the coast of Alaska.
- **June 24, 2020:** U.S. F-22s intercept 2 Russian maritime patrol aircraft (IL-38) near the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone.
- **June 27, 2020:** U.S. F-22s intercept 4 Russian Tu-142 reconnaissance planes near the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone.
- **August 26, 2020:** A Russian submarine surfaces near Alaska as part of a Russian military exercise.
- **August 28, 2020:** U.S. F-22s intercept 6 Russian aircraft in the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone.
- **September 22, 2020:** Russia releases a statement that 2 of its Tu-160 Blackjack strategic bombers flew a non-stop mission of more than 25 hours.

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.

- **June 15, 2020:** Russian Su-27s intercept 2 U.S. B-52s over the Black Sea.
- **August 28, 2020:** 2 Russian Su-27 Flankers intercept a U.S. Air Force B-52 over international waters of the Black Sea.

Bulgaria

- **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.
- **June 2016:** Bulgaria refuses to join Romania, Turkey, and Ukraine as part of the "common NATO" Black Sea Fleet against Russia.
- **December 2017:** Bulgaria and Russia agree to a \$40 million contract to maintain Russian MiG-29 aircraft.
- **February 2019:** Bulgaria reopens a 2015 poisoning case of Emilian Gebrev, a Bulgarian arms dealer who was poisoned by Russian agents in Bulgaria.
- **July 2019:** Bulgaria finalizes \$1.67 billion agreement with the U.S. to purchase eight F-16 fighter jets.
- **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 Turkstream pipeline.

- **January 2020:** Bulgaria announces that it will replace half of its Russian natural gas consumption with imports from the United States.
- **January 24, 2020:** Bulgaria expels 2 Russian diplomats for espionage in Bulgaria.

North Macedonia

- **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.

Montenegro

- **September 2017:** Two Russians are put on trial for the involvement in the 2016 Montenegrin coup plot, which would prevent Montenegro's accession into NATO.

Serbia-Kosovo

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

Romania

- **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.

Greece

- **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.

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.
- **August 25, 2020:** Four Russian naval ships were detected near Latvian territorial waters when two NATO frigates were on a visit to the Lithuanian port of Klaipeda.

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.

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.
- **May 29, 2020:** U.S. B-1Bs carried out Bomber Task Force mission over Ukraine for the first time, prompting Russian condemnation.
- **September 10, 2020:** The U.S. Treasury Department places sanctions on Andriy Drekach, a pro-Russian member of the Ukrainian Parliament for operating a covert information campaign against the upcoming 2020 U.S. Presidential Election.

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 billions 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 Yanukovich 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 Crime and Russia.
- **March 8, 2014:** Russian forces fire warning shots to prevent unarmed international military observer mission from entering Crimea.
- **September 20, 2020:** Russia accused the U.S. and NATO of provoking tensions in the region and increasing intelligence flights over 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.
- **October 2016:** Russia is accused of meddling in Moldovan elections.
- **February 2018:** Moldova demands for Russian troops to withdraw from Transnistria.
- **August 2018:** Moldova declares it will diversify gas supply away from Russia.
- **August 2019:** Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu visits Moldova, marking the first visit since Moldova's independence 28 years ago.
- **September 2019:** Russia and Moldova sign various deals at the Russia-Moldova Economic Forum.

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.
- **August 27, 2020:** Putin releases a statement that Russian forces are ready to enter Belarus “if necessary.”
- **September 22, 2020:** Russia deployed three battalion tactical group (BTG) to Belarus as part of the Slavic Brotherhood military exercise.
- **October 2, 2020:** The United States and the European Union implement sanctions against 41 Belarusian officials who were part of Lukashenko's inner circle.
- **October 12-16, 2020:** Russia conducts Unbreakable Brotherhood military exercise with Belarus in Vitebsk, Belarus.

Armenia-Azerbaijan

Armenia

- **August 2010:** Armenia and Russia extend Russian Base in Gyumri, Armenia for 25 years.
- **September 2013:** Armenia joins Russian Customs Union instead of one with the European Union.

Azerbaijan

- **January 2007:** Azerbaijan's state oil company stops pumping oil to Russia after dispute over energy prices.
- **June 2013:** Azerbaijan begins \$1 billion arms deal with Russia, which involves the delivery of tanks, rocket launchers, and artillery cannons.

Nagorno-Karabakh

- **1991:** Leadership of Nagorno-Karabakh declares the region an independent republic.
- **1992:** A full scale war develops around Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces.
 - **1994:** Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh sign a ceasefire.
- **March 2008:** Fighting breaks out again in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- **August 2014:** A deadly clash occurs between Armenia and Azerbaijan over an enclave in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- **April 2016:** Fighting again starts up in Nagorno-Karabakh.

- **February 2017:** Fighting again starts up in Nagorno-Karabakh.
- **September 27, 2020-November 10, 2020:** Armenia accuses Azerbaijan of taking the first shot in the disputed area of Nagorno-Karabakh. Clashes and prisoner captures continue.
- **October 10, 2020:** Russia brokers a ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- **October 18, 2020:** Both Armenia and Azerbaijan accuse each other of violating the ceasefire, and Russia attempts to broker a new ceasefire.
- **October 26, 2020:** The United States attempts to broker a ceasefire.
- **November 10, 2020:** Russia dispatches 2,000 peacekeeper forces to Nagorno-Karabakh.

Kazakhstan

- **January 2005:** Russian President Putin and Kazakh President Nazarbayev signed an agreement approving the official border.
- **May 2014:** Kazakhstan signs an agreement with Russia and Belarus to join the Eurasian Economic Union.

Kyrgyzstan

- **February 2012:** Kyrgyzstan announces that it will shut down Russian military base in Kant.
- **August 2012:** Russia gained a prolongation period for the base in Kant.
- **June 2014:** Kyrgyzstan closes U.S. base in Manas.
- **October 4, 2020:** Riots break out in Kyrgyzstan after recent parliamentary elections.
- **October 7, 2020:** Putin express concern over the situation, stating that Russia is obliged by a security treaty to prevent a total breakdown of the country.

Tajikistan

- **April 2003:** Russian President Putin visits Tajikistan and announces Russia's plan to boost its presence in the country.
- **July 2008:** Russia agrees to write-off Tajikistan's \$240 million debt in exchange for a Soviet-designed space tracking station in Tajikistan.
- **November 2017:** Russia and the CSTO conducts an anti-terrorist military exercise in Tajikistan.

Turkmenistan

- **July 2007:** Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan agree to build a new pipeline north of the Caspian Sea which would transfer Turkmen gas to Russia.
- **June 2016:** Russian Defense Minister Shoigu visits Turkmenistan to offer help with its border along Afghanistan.

- **October 2017:** Turkmen President Berdymukhammedov infamously offers Russian President Putin a puppy.

Uzbekistan

- **February 2009:** Uzbekistan allows the U.S. to transport supplies through the country to Afghanistan.
- **April 2017:** Russia and Uzbekistan sign an agreement to expand military-technical cooperation.
- **September 2018:** Uzbekistan signs a deal with Russian state-run nuclear company, Rosatom, to build an \$11 billion tomic power plant.

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.

- **August 17, 2020:** U.S. and SDF forces received fire most-likely from Russian and Assad forces after passing through a checkpoint near Tal al-Zahab.
- **August 25, 2020:** Russian convoy in Syria engaged in an armored vehicle clash with U.S. and SDF forces.

To see the full scope of Russia's campaign in Syria, see CSIS's "Moscow's War in Syria."¹⁵

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.

Bahrain

- **August 2011:** Russia and Bahrain sign an arms deal after the U.K and France banned deliveries of security equipment following protests.
- **April 2014:** Bahrain and Russia sign a deal to cooperate on investments after the U.S. and the EU apply sanction to Russia following the annexation of Crimea.

Iraq

- **October 2017:** Russian oil company, Rosneft, agrees to take control of Iraqi Kurdistan's main oil pipeline.
- **February 2020:** After the death of Soleimani, Iraq and Russia discussed prospects for deepening military ties between the two countries.

Iran

- **July 2016:** Russia and Iran agree to build nuclear capabilities in Iran.
- **November 2016:** Russia delivers S-300 to Iran following an \$800 million deal signed in 2007.
- **July 2019:** Russia and Iran sign a memorandum of understanding he formalizes military cooperation in Syria.
- **October 2019:** Iran joins the Eurasian Economic Union.
- **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.

Kuwait

- **November 2014:** Kuwait and Russia sign a memorandum of understanding for cultural, transportation, energy, and investment cooperation.

Oman

- **February 2019:** Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov states that Oman and Russia share a similar stance on Syria.
- **February 2020:** Russian Director of Foreign Intelligence Service Naryshkin made an official visit to Oman.

Saudi Arabia

- **2016:** Russia and Saudi Arabia formed an alliance to restrict oil production and keep oil prices high.
- **2018:** Russian President Putin and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman infamously exchange a high-five during the G20 summit when Saudi Arabia was facing international pressure for the killing of journalist, Jamal Khashoggi.
- **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.

United Arab Emirates

- **June 2018:** Russia signs a strategic partnership agreement with the UAE.
- **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.
- **July 15, 2020:** Russian President Putin and Emirati Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed discuss developments about Libya over the phone.

Afghanistan

- **June 26, 2020:** The *New York Times* releases a piece which alleges that Russia has been paying Taliban to kill American service personnel in Afghanistan.
- **September 14, 2020:** Commander of U.S. CENTCOM, Gen Frank McKenzie, states there is not enough evidence to corroborate rumors that the Russian government paid the Taliban to kill American service members.

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.
- **July 16, 2001:** China and Russia sign "Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation Between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation."
- **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.¹⁶
- **February 2020:** Russia closed its border with China and banned Chinese nationals from entering the country due to concerns over COVID-19.
- **September 17, 2020:** Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu states that Russia is increasing its military presence in the Far East.
- **October 23, 2020:** Putin states there is not a need for a Russia-China military alliance “right now.”

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.¹⁷

Morocco

- **March 2016:** Russia and Morocco sign an agreement on mutual protection of secret information.
- **January 2018:** Morocco signs an agreement to import Russian beef.
- **October 2019:** Russia’s state development bank VEB and Morocco sign a deal to develop \$2.2 billion oil refinery in Morocco.

Algeria

- **March 2006:** Russia and Algeria sign major arms deals.
- **August 2006:** Russian state-owned oil company, Gazprom, and Algerian state-owned gas company, Sonatrach, sign a memorandum of understanding.

Egypt

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

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.
- **May 2020:** U.S. AFRICOM obtains imagery of Russian aircraft being flown from Syria to Libya with military cargo and air defense equipment.

The Gambia

- **September 2016:** Russia and the Gambia sign an agreement on military cooperation.

Guinea

- **2014:** Russian mining company Rusal signs deal with Guinea guaranteeing special rights to natural resources.
- **April 2018:** Russia and Guinea sign a cooperation on peacekeeping, counterterrorism, and search and rescue at sea.
- **January 2019:** Russia backs Guinea's suggestion to change constitution in order for President Alpha Conde to run a third-term.

Sierra Leone

- **August 2018:** Russia and Sierra Leone agree to a deal, which includes a supply of weapons and military assistance.
- **January 2019:** Russia and Sierra Leone agree to renew cooperation and implement joint projects in the mining industries, fisheries, and the energy sector.

Mali

- **June 2019:** Russia and Mali agree to strengthen cooperation in the energy and military sector.

Burkina Faso

- **August 2018:** Russia and Burkina Faso agree to a counterterrorism deal.

Ghana

- **June 2016:** Russia and Ghana sign a military and technical cooperation agreement.

Niger

- **August 2017:** Russia and Niger sign a detail to organize working meetings of military experts and cooperation military education

Nigeria

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

- **August 2017:** Russia and Nigeria sign a deal which includes peacekeeping forces, military training, and efforts against terrorism and piracy.
- **October 24, 2019:** Nigeria signs contract with Russia for 12 Mi-35 helicopter gunships.

Chad

- **August 2017:** Russia and Chad sign a deal on counterterrorism operation and joint training exercise.

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.
- **November 17, 2020:** Russia and Sudan agree to establish a military base near the city of Port Sudan. The agreement stipulates that the plot of land will be free of charge for the next 25 years and will would allow nuclear ships to dock at the port.

Eritrea

- **September 2018:** Russia and Eritrea sign a deal which allows Russia to build a logistic center in the country.

Ethiopia

- **April 2018:** Russia and Ethiopia sign a deal to cooperate on counterterrorism and to provide peacekeeping forces.

Cameroon

- **April 2015:** Russia and Cameroon sign a deal to enhance military and technical cooperation.
- **November 2017:** Russian mining company strikes a deal with former President al-Bashir in exchange for Russian PMCs and supplies of Russian weapons.

Central African Republic

- **August 2018:** Russia signs a military operation with the Central African Republic to train armed forces.
- **April 14, 2019:** Valery Zakharov, a former Russian intelligence official, stepped in as an official military advisor to CAR's president.

Congo

- **November 2012:** Russia and the Congo sign agreements to cooperate on the peaceful use of nuclear energy and on communication.

Democratic Republic of Congo

- **October 2019:** Russia and the DRC sign a memorandum of cooperation to rehabilitate the rail system.

Rwanda

- **October 2016:** Russia and Rwanda sign a deal which supplies weapons and other military equipment.

Burundi

- **August 2018:** Russia and Burundi sign a deal to cooperate on counterterrorism and the joint training of troops.

Tanzania

- **January 2018:** Russia and Tanzania sign a deal for arms shipments as well as joint training and research.

Angola

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

Zambia

- **April 2017:** Russia and Zambia sign a deal which includes the supply of weapons and the delivery of spare parts.

Mozambique

- **January 2017:** Russia signs a deal which includes the deliveries of military equipment and spare parts.

Zimbabwe

- **October 2015:** Russia and Zimbabwe sign a deal which includes the supply of weapons and cooperation on producing military products.
- **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.

Botswana

- **August 2018:** Russia and Botswana sign a deal which commits the two countries to keep working together on peacekeeping and military training.

Eswatini

- **February 2017:** Russia and Eswatini sign a deal which agree on the supply of weapons, maintenance, and other military assistance.

South Africa

- **September 2014:** Russia and South Africa sign a secret agreement on strategic nuclear cooperation.
- **April 2017:** A South African High Court Ruling deemed the nuclear deal unconstitutional.

- **October 2019:** 2 Russian nuclear-capable Blackjack bomber make a symbolic visit to South Africa.

Madagascar

- **November 2018:** A Russian company controlled by Mr. Prigozhin, a close friend of Valdimir 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.

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.

Mexico

- **2012:** Mexico purchases Mi-8 transport helicopters from Russia for \$20 million.

Cuba

- **October 2001:** Russia shuts down Lourdes radar spy station in Cuba.
- **July 2014:** Russia writes off \$32 billion debt from Cuba.
- **May 2016:** Russia installs four power generators in Cuba.
- **May 2017:** Russia begins shipping 249,000 barrels of oil to Cuba.
- **February 2019:** Russia loans Cuba \$33 million to maintain Soviet-era military equipment.
- **October 2019:** Russia and Cuba sign an agreement to upgrade the rail system.

Nicaragua

- **May 2016:** Russia and Nicaragua sign an \$80 million deal to provide 50 tanks.

Colombia

- **December 2019:** Colombia experiences disinformation attacks from Russia and Venezuela to destabilize the government.

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.

Brazil

- **June 2017:** Russia and Brazil sign a bilateral agreement to increase trade and economic relations.

Bolivia

- **July 2019:** Russia and Bolivia sign agreement to increase cooperation in the energy sector.

Argentina

- **December 2018:** Russia and Argentina sign a nuclear competition agreement.

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.

- **November 2018:** Russia is elevated to a strategic partner with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Myanmar

- **June 2016:** Russia and Myanmar sign a military cooperation agreement.

Thailand

- **October 2020:** Russia and Thailand sign a deal to increase trade by \$10 billion over the next three years, to develop joint research on COVID-19, and to increase Russian imports of Thai farm products.

Laos

- **January 2020:** Russia delivers a round of tanks and armored vehicles to Laos.

Cambodia

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

Malaysia

- **December 2019:** Malaysia considers a deal with Russia to purchase fighter jets.

Indonesia

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

Vietnam

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

Philippines

- **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.

India

- **October 2018:** Russia and India sign pact to build six new nuclear reactors in a new site in India.
- **2018:** Russia and India sign a \$5 billion military hardware deal.
- **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.

Nepal

- **November 2019:** Russia and Nepal sign military cooperation agreement which would also supply helicopters.
- **September 2020:** Russia agrees to supply Nepal with 25 million doses of the Sputnik-V Covid-19 vaccines.

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.
- **August 11, 2020:** Russia claims that 3 of its MiG-31s intercepted Global Hawk operating over the Chukchi Sea in the Arctic Ocean.

- **October 3, 2020:** Russia's newest nuclear-powered icebreaker, *Arktika*, sailed to the North Pole.
- **October 20, 2020:** The U.S. sent a warship, the USS Ross, to the Barents Sea while the Russian navy was conducting a military drill in the region.
- **October 29, 2020:** Russian sends ten submarines to the North Atlantic as part of a military exercise. Two nuclear submarines, the Nizhny Novgorod and Pskov, are reported to engage in deep dives in the neutral waters of the Norwegian Sea.
- **November 2, 2020:** Russia commissions a new diesel-electric icebreaker ship, the Viktor Chernomyrdin, which is the most powerful non-nuclear icebreaker in the world.

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