IMPACT OF RUSSIA'S MILITARY TRANSFORMATION ON BLACK SEA SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

IMPACT OF RUSSIA'S MILITARY TRANSFORMATION ON BLACK SEA SECURITY

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After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russian Federation struggled to keep its economy, society, and military together, not to mention its borders throughout the 1990s. The bad shape of economy and rapidly decomposing capabilities of the armed forces weakened strategic posture and deterrent capability of Russia. Starting from early 2000s, Russia showed signs of recovery in economy, which in turn helped maintenance and upgrade of the armed forces. It was in this period that Russia showed more cooperation approach towards West, establishing and keeping strategic dialogue channels, collaboration, and partnership on several regional and global issues. Black Sea was, therefore, relatively calm in terms of geopolitical competition. The war with Georgia in 2008 was a turning point for military modernization while the Arab Spring and civil wars in Libya and Syria were alarm bells for Moscow. It was after these events that Russia started to be more assertive and it is the crisis in Ukraine in 2014 that represents the milestone for Black Sea region competition. Russia’s military modernization programs and doctrinal transformation manifests itself in the modernization of the Black Sea fleet and its activities. This thesis aims to provide a general overview of this transformation and its meaning for the security of the region.

Keywords: Russia, Black Sea, Armament, Defense Industry, International Security

ÖZ

RUSYA'NIN ASKERİ MODERNİZASYONUNUN KARADENİZ GÜVENLİĞİNE ETKİSİ

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Sovyetler Birliğinin dağılmasından sonra Rusya Federasyonu 1990lar boyunca uzun süre ekonomik, sosyal ve askeri yapısını ve aynı zamanda sınırlarını muhafaza etmek için mücadele vermiştir. Ekonominin ve silahlı kuvvetlerin hızla kötüye giden durumu, ülkenin stratejik gücünü ve caydırıcılık kapasitesini büyük ölçüde zayıflatmıştır. 2000lerin başlarından itibaren ekonomideki iyileşmenin sonucu olarak silahlı kuvvetlerin modernizasyonu yönünde adımlar atılmaya başlanmıştır. Bu süreçte Rusya, çeşitli bölgesel ve küresel meselelerde Batı ile diyalog ve iş birliğini öne çıkaran bir tutum sergilemiştir. Gürcistan'la 2008 yılında gerçekleşen savaş, silahlı kuvvetlerin modernizasyonu için bir dönüm noktası olmuştur. Ardından gelen Arap Baharı, Libya ve Suriye iç savaşları, Moskova açısından ciddi tehditler olarak algılanmıştır. Nitekim 2014 Ukrayna krizi, Karadeniz'in güvenliği açısından büyük bir dönüm noktası olmuştur. Rusya'nın askeri modernizasyon programları ve doktrin dönüşümü, Karadeniz Filosunun modernizasyonu ve faaliyetlerinde somut şekilde gözlenmektedir. Bu tezin amacı, söz konusu dönüşüm ve Karadeniz'in güvenliğine etkisiyle ilgili genel bir çerçeve sunmaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Rusya, Karadeniz, Silahlanma, Savunma Sanayii, Uluslararası Güvenlik

To my family

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A2/AD	Anti Access Area Denial
ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile
ALCM	Air Launched Cruise Missile
ASW	Anti-Submarine Warfare
AWACS	Airborne Early Warning and Control
BLACKSEAFOR	Black Sea Naval Force
BSF	Black Sea Fleet
C3I	Command, Control, Communications, Intelligence
CBSN	Chiefs of the Black Sea Navies
CGS	Chief of General Staff
CinC	Commander in Chief
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
EC	European Community
EPAA	European Phased Adaptive Approach
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
INF	Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces
MAP	Membership Action Plan
MD	Military Doctrine
MIRV	Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicle
MLRS	Multiple Launch Rocket System
MRBM	Medium Range Ballistic Missile
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NNWS	Non-nuclear weapon state
NPT	Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty
NSC	National Security Concept
NSS	National Security Strategy
OSCC	Open Skies Consultative Commission
OST	Open Skies Treaty
PGS	Prompt Global Strike
RFSC	Russian Federation Security Council
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SAM	Surface to Air Missile
SAP	State Armament Program
SLBM	Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile
SRBM	Short Range Ballistic Missile
SSBN	Nuclear powered ballistic submarine
SS	Diesel electric submarine
SSM	Surface to Surface Missile
SSN	Nuclear powered attack submarine
TBM	Tactical Ballistic Missile
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VDV	Vozdushno-desantnye voyska Rossii; Russian Airborne Forces

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 is one of the major milestones of modern political history. The disintegration of a state as well as the downfall of a political system had profoundly affected the global political, economic and social landscape, bringing an end to a period known as the Cold War. The bipolar world system ended, and many countries changed political system.

In the aftermath of the Cold War, Soviet Union's successor, the Russian Federation had gone through a period of social, political and economic crisis. During a prolonged period of depression, the state almost totally collapsed, resulting with widespread poverty, rise in corruption and organized crime and sharp decline in the status of the armed forces, starting from the nuclear arsenal. The bad shape of economy and rapidly decomposing capabilities of the armed forces weakened strategic posture and deterrent capability of Russia.

During the second half of the 1990s, NATO's activities in Europe, especially the operations in Bosnia and Kosovo caused concern for Russia, which already had had skepticism for the Alliance after the end of the Cold War. The consecutive waves of expansion to accept former Eastern Bloc states in 1999 and in 2004 further fueled these concerns and received criticism by Moscow that the NATO was aggressively expanding towards Russia by increasing footprint in Russia's hinterland.

After Vladimir Putin's assuming of presidency in 2000 and starting from 2003, Russia showed signs of recovery in economy, which in turn helped maintenance and upgrade of the armed forces. It was in this period that Russia showed more cooperation approach towards West, establishing and keeping strategic dialogue channels, collaboration and partnership on several regional and global issues. Black Sea was,

therefore, relatively calm in terms of geopolitical competition. However, starting from late 2000's things rapidly started to change. With more resources allocated for military modernization, Russia resumed its claims, aims and activities in the Black Sea region. Ukraine and Georgia's aspirations for becoming NATO members and the Alliance's show of willingness to accept these former Soviet states infuriated Moscow. Because of this, the 2008 war with Georgia can be considered as a counter move by Russia against NATO's expansion. The revolts and regime changes in Arab states, which is known as the "Arab Spring" as well as civil wars in Libya and Syria were alarming events for Russia, which feared expansion of such revolts into its southern Muslim dominated regions. The color revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine in 2003 and 2004 respectively were assessed as the United States (US) attempts to implement a political system in Russia's close periphery, to effectively circle it. Therefore, the Arab Spring was considered by Moscow as another direct threat to national security.

The 2008 war with Georgia was also a turning point for military modernization. The low performance of the armed forces triggered wide scale reforms to transform the Russian Armed Forces into an efficient, modern organization. Significant resources were allocated to start new development and production projects while the number of conscripts were lowered and living conditions of the personnel were improved.

The assets in the Black Sea region, particularly the Black Sea Fleet received great share from the modernization budget starting from mid 2000s, since the Black Sea region was assessed as a front with the NATO. Among the six Black Sea riparian states, three were NATO members (Bulgaria, Romania and Türkiye) while two others (Georgia and Ukraine) were aspiring to become members. As a result of the integration efforts with the NATO, Georgia and Ukraine established close military-political cooperation with the US and the EU. Russia saw this development as further encirclement by the NATO in the Black Sea, which is the gateway for the Caucasus and Central Asia.[1]

[1] Kaynak, Akif Bahadır. "Crimean Crisis And The Balance Of Power In The Black Sea Region." Current Debates in Social Sciences 2021 (2021): 83.

The uprising in Ukraine in 2013 because of a last minute withdrawal from a cooperation agreement by the then Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych and events leading to the downfall of the Ukraine government, which had close ties with Russia was assessed by Moscow as another attempt by the West to exert influence over Ukraine. The subsequent annexation of Crimea and start of conflict between the separatist Donetsk and Luhansk regions with Ukrainian government, can be claimed as Russia's response to the perceived encirclement by the NATO and the EU.

The modernization of the Russian Armed Forces after 2008 saw large scale investment in naval platforms, precision strike weapon systems, improvement of mobility for the ground forces. The Black Sea Fleet had expanded significantly between 2008 and 2022 with the introduction of submarines, frigates, and small scale surface combatants, all capable of firing long range land attack cruise missiles; delivery of modern strike aircraft equipped with sophisticated avionics and weapons systems. The nuclear forces received new ballistic missiles and new weapon systems were introduced, such as hypersonic land attack and anti-ship missile systems.

Russia's criticism towards the NATO had increased in late 2010's and in 2021 Russian President Putin openly challenged the US and the NATO and blamed them as acting aggressively in Russia's doorstep. The military build-up in late 2021 was followed by the initiation of a large-scale invasion of Ukraine, called as a "special military operation" by Moscow to overthrow the Ukrainian government and secure the Donbas region.[2] The Russia - Ukraine War represents another major milestone in modern military history, perhaps the starting point of another Cold War.

This thesis aims to provide an understanding for Russia's military modernization process after 2008 until 2022, and how it shaped the geopolitical landscape of the Black Sea region.

[2] Putin, Vladimir. "Address by the President of the Russian Federation". Presidency of Russia. February 24, 2022. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

1.1. Research Question and Argument

This thesis aims to find out if the military transformation of Russian Federation, especially the large-scale reforms initiated in 2008 pose a threat to the Black Sea security. In doing so, the thesis seeks to explore whether the nature of this transformation is aggressive or defensive.

In classical realism, the main actor is the state, and all decisions and actions are performed by states as principal actors. The background of international system is based upon an anarchical structure and the ultimate aim of states is survival. All actions, reforms, alliances, and decisions reflect this very basic aim. Naturally, the main asset in establishing the security and survival is achieving an effective military power. Since all states seeks survival, international system is subject to constant power struggle, against a backdrop of clash of interests.

Stephen Walt, an important scholar of realism, provides a definition of security with the concepts of threat and use of force. In doing so, he states that the military power of a state is the most crucial element in security. According to Walt, the concept of security incorporates readiness for war and establishing deterrent power.[3]

The crucial element of international system is its anarchic structure. This feature of the international system implies that all states need to achieve their own security, through the concept of self-help. Therefore, the definition, establishing and sustaining of security focuses on the state as the principal actor. Stephen Walt describes the security of a state actor as the ability to preserve territorial integrity and maintaining physical security of its citizens.[4]

One of the most fundamental elements of neorealist theory is the anarchic structure of the international system. This structure is the result of the international system not

[3] Walt, Stephen M. "Rigor or rigor mortis?: Rational choice and security studies." International security 23, no. 4 (1999): 5-48.

[4] Walt, Stephen M. "The renaissance of security studies." International studies quarterly 35, no. 2 (1991): 211-239.

having any upper authority or legal hierarchy. Neorealism states that states, which are the main actors in this system, try to increase their power in order to ensure their own security, and in this direction, they are armed and increase their national power. This effort to increase power creates a security dilemma: The security dilemma explains the dynamics and reasons of conflict based on uncertainty, which is the product of anarchical international system. The conflict may arise even if the participant states have no prior ambitions for doing so. The anarchical system locks states into a vicious cycle, in which one actor's threat perception and subsequent measures to achieve security triggers threat perception of another state, to seek more power to guarantee security. This cycle produces an ever-increasing risk of war, mainly because of the actors' constant investment into security, in terms of armament and security oriented policies. The defensive and offensive reflexes exhibited by the states appear as the components of systemic balance called defensive realism and offensive realism.[5]

Offensive realism states that states prioritize maximizing their power on the assumption that only the strongest state can survive. Accordingly, the only obstacle for states to pursue aggressive or expansionist policies is their weakness in the comparative balance of power compared to their rivals. States will begin to pursue aggressive policies when they gain power superiority over their rivals. There is no mechanism to deter states from pursuing such aggressive policies or to maintain the balance, due to the absence of actors such as any higher international authority or hierarchical structure. A prominent scholar of realism, John Mearsheimer state that in the anarchical environment of the international system, the security dilemma may lead competitor states away from cooperation. In other words, the security dilemma may negate the possibility of international cooperation.[6]

Defensive realism, on the other hand, seeks a balance with other states while increasing their own national power, in order to bring stability and security to the anarchic international system, which is fraught with uncertainty and risk, as states as rational

[5] Montgomery, Evan Braden. “Breaking Out of the Security Dilemma: Realism, Reassurance and the Problem of Uncertainty”, International Security, Vol. 31, No. 2, 2006, pp. 151-185.

[6] Mearsheimer, J. John. The Tragedy of Great Power Politics. New York: Norton, "Anarchy and the Struggle for Power", Chapter 2

actors. When there is a deterioration in the comparative balance of power with other states, they increase their power or act together with other states to restore the balance. In this respect, defensive realism envisages states to follow a balanced policy in order to maintain the security and stability of the international system. Therefore, issues such as acting together in solving problems between states and regional cooperation are at the forefront.[7] A proponent of defensive realism, Charles Glaser argues that security maximiser states may in fact seek and find ways to cooperate to establish security, despite the mutual mistrust and uncertainty makes it difficult to achieve such a cooperation.[8]

The main argument of this thesis is that Russian Federation had started to pursue a power maximizing, security oriented foreign policy from early 2000's and in line with this shift in strategy, has diverted significant resources in modernizing its armed forces. This continued investment in military modernization as well as restricting of the armed forces organization, doctrine and training, Russia has increased its military capacity to address perceived security threats through adoption of "aggressive defense". This aggressive defense policy has been most prominently observed in Russia's military activities and modernization of its forces in the Black Sea region. Russia's increasing military presence, especially since the annexation of Crimea in 2014 has further stimulated a vicious cycle of security dilemma.

1.2. Research Method

To analyze Russia's security policies and military modernization, this thesis relied mainly on in-depth analysis of primary and secondary sources in English, Turkish and Russian languages. Various databases such as SIPRI, The Military Balance and Jane's Defense containing information on financial and military indicators, armament transfers, armed forces inventories have been extensively analyzed. Regarding primary sources, the thesis made use of official documents and official transcripts of

[7] Taliaferro, Jeffrey W. "Security Seeking Under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited", International Security, Vol. 25, No. 3, 2001, pp. 128-161.

[8] Glaser, Charles L. "Structural Realism in a more complex world." Review of International Studies 29, no. 3 (2003): 403-414.

speeches, agreements, statistical reports, and online archives, while secondary resources include dissertations, articles on journals, newspapers, and books.

The qualitative aspect of this thesis consists of document analysis. The national security, defense strategy and armed forces modernization of the Russian Federation is outlined in several key documents. These documents are the National Security Concept, the Military Doctrine, and the State Armament Program. These strategic documents provide insight on the key findings, expectations, threat assessments and relevant measures devised by the Russian state mechanism. Therefore, a document analysis on these documents is essential to comprehend the essence of Russian military transformation. The document analysis assesses important statements and remarks in these documents, change over time and an extensive analysis of the latest versions.

The quantitative part of the research focuses on the numerical data regarding Russian Federation Armed Forces, with an emphasis on the forces in Black Sea region, most importantly the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Navy. Key parameters are figures on defense spending, number of equipment and comparison with those of other coastal states. In order to better describe the security situation in the region, the number of exercises and deployments by NATO in the region are also provided. Additionally, technical information of the key technologies, capabilities of the recently introduced equipment are presented, in order to assess the nature of the modernization process and also regional balance of power.

1.3. Literature Review

Russian military modernization, especially after the extensive reform process started in 2008, has been the subject of many scholarly research and reports. After the break-up of relations with the West and the emergence of a new, strained relations period often called as "Cold War 2.0", military re-organization, procurement and development programs run by Moscow have been widely monitored. Prominent Western think-tanks such as Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) have been active in assessing

the different aspects of Russian defense and security policies and programs.

There are several important studies that deal with the analysis of the context and structure of Russian strategic documents. Ahmet Sapmaz, for example, provides a good overview of these documents and their evolution over time.[9] Sapmaz's book excellently describes the transformation of Russian Federation's national security priorities and perceptions through these documents. Alperen Kürşad Zengin also presents a document analysis in assessing the national defense and security policies of Russia.[10]

In describing the change from a defensive, passive posture to a more aggressive, active foreign policy of Russia, Halit Gülşen analyses the Georgian War of 2008, Ukraine crisis in 2014 and intervention to Syrian Civil War in 2015 as case studies. These three cases provide better understanding in the "offensive defense" strategy of Russia.[11]

Andrew Monaghan provides an extensive overview on Russia's strategy and motivations in becoming a major power in the Cold War era in his 2022 book. In the book, titled "Russian Grand Strategy in the Era of Global Power Competition", Monaghan states that Russia felt the necessity to pursue a global approach, driven by competition and radical changes in global energy market as well as economy. Furthermore, according to Monaghan, Russia assesses that security threats and instabilities in one part of the world can directly affect another region. This perception manifests in Moscow's assessment of the Arab Spring as a threat to its own national security, based on the grounds that popular movements and uprisings in the Muslim world might trigger similar revolts in the Muslim dominated Caucasus region. Monaghan underlines that in establishing national security, unlike common perception, Russia does not pursue opportunistic or "ad hoc" policies. Rather,

[9] Sapmaz, Ahmet. Rusya Federasyonu'nun Askeri Güvenlik Refleksindeki Dönüşüm. Ankara, : Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, 2018.

[10] Zengin, Alperen Kürşad, "Rusya Federasyonu'nun Ulusal Güvenlik Politikalarına Yön Veren Belgeler ve Etki Eden Güvenlik Yaklaşımları", Master's Thesis, Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, Kahramanmaraş, January 2019

[11] Gülşen, Halit, "Rusya'nın Askeri Yayılmacılığı: Gürcistan, Ukrayna ve Suriye Müdahaleleri", ORSAM, Report 218, July 2018

Monaghan states, Russia follows a carefully planned strategy while showing signs of adaptability to certain opportunities and short term developments. Monaghan states that Russia's aggressive foreign policy gained pace after the events in Ukraine in 2014, but actually had started in 2000, right after Vladimir Putin's assuming of presidency. Russia's strategic transformation starting in early 2000's was the result of a careful assessment pointing to a change in international system.[12]

One of the most prominent Russian defense and security experts, Dmitry Gorenburg dissects Russian military transformation and in he presents an overall picture of the details of armament and development plans.[13] The armament priorities are also well detailed by Michał Pietkiewicz.[14] Barabanov, Makienko and Pukhov describe the modernization process in light of the 2008 Reforms and present the priorities of Russian military decision makers.[15]

All in all, the literature on the context, nature and progress of Russian military transformation is very well documented. The impact of this process on Black Sea has become recently popular in academic circles. Igor Delanoe, for example, analyses the impact of Russian navy modernization after the annexation of Crimea.[16] An important study under this topic is the article by Sharyl Cross. Cross examines the major security issues between NATO and Russia after the Crimea crisis.[17]

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[12] Monaghan, Andrew. "Conclusions: Moscow's strategy to become a ubiquitous power" in Russian Grand Strategy in the Era of Global Power Competition. Manchester University Press, 2022: 283 - 292

[13] Gorenburg, Dmitry. “Russia’s Military Modernization Plans: 2018-2027 – PONARS Eurasia.” PONARS Eurasia. www.ponarseurasia.org, February 23, 2022. https://www.ponarseurasia.org/russia-s-military-modernization-plans-2018-2027/. (accessed on June 23, 2022)

[14] Pietkiewicz, Michał . “The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation”, Polish Political Science Yearbook, vol. 47(3) (2018), pp. 505–520

[15] Barabanov, Mikhail, Constantin Makienko, and Ruslan Pukhov. Military reform: toward the new look of the Russian army. Valdai Discussion Club, 2012.

[16] Delanoe, Igor. "After the Crimean crisis: towards a greater Russian maritime power in the Black Sea." Southeast European and Black Sea Studies 14.3 (2014): 367-382.

[17] Cross, Sharyl, "NATO–Russia security challenges in the aftermath of Ukraine conflict: managing Black Sea security and beyond." Southeast European and Black Sea Studies 15.2 (2015): 151-177.

The article by Çelikpala and Erşen deals with the Turkish - Russian relations in the Black Sea region, from a policy analysis point of view.[18] There seems to be a gap however, regarding the Russian - Turkish relationship, especially through a military balance of power perspective. This thesis aims to describe the change of foreign policy posture and actions of Russian Federation through the military modernization that started in 2008. The extensive military reorganization and transformation, with the help of economic recovery in early 2000's has been the main factor in Russia's assertive and aggressive foreign policy. This study presents an overview on the impact of this process with its implications on the Black Sea Region, through establishing a link between Russia's military build-up and assertive policies in its periphery.

1.4. Organization of the Chapters

This thesis consists of seven chapters. In the Introduction chapter, a general overview of the scope and aim of the thesis is presented as well as the theoretical background and research method.

In the second chapter, the geopolitical background of the Black Sea region after the dissolution of the Soviet Union is provided. In sub sections, major events that have contributed to the security perception and threat assessment of the Russian Federation are presented. Some of these events, such as the Operation Deliberate Force and the Kosovo War took place in regions adjacent to the Black Sea, but they have direct impact on the actions and perceptions of Russia, especially with regards to the militarization of the Black Sea region. The time period of events analyzed in this chapter is between 1991 and 2008, until the start of the Russo - Georgian War.

In the third chapter, major events in the Black Sea region starting with the 2008 Russo - Georgian War are discussed. These events have direct interaction with the decisions concerning Russian military build-up in the region as well as modernization decisions and roadmap. This chapter concludes with a brief overview of the prelude and the

[18] Çelikpala, Mitat and Erşen, Emre. "Turkey's Black Sea predicament: challenging or accommodating Russia?." Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs 23.2 (2018): 72-92.

outbreak of the 2022 Russo - Ukrainian War. This war, as of August 2022 is still continuing and has already had enormous impact on international system, security and regional geopolitics. Since it is an ongoing major event, its reasons, impact and relationship with Russia's security policies, military modernization and Black Sea security are subject for future studies.

The fourth chapter focuses on the defense and security policies of Russia, through the analysis of policy documents such as the National Security Strategy, Military Doctrine and State Armament Program. There have been several editions of each of these documents, since the establishment of the Russian Federation, however for the sake of preserving the focus of the thesis, only the latest editions of the mentioned documents are assessed in detail.

The fifth chapter presents detailed overview of the military modernization efforts of Russia since the initiation of 2008 reforms. Started by the then Minister of Defense Anatoly Serdyukov, the large-scale reforms within the Russian military have been implemented in various levels, i.e., organization, equipment, personnel, and defense industry. The chapter provides details on each of these levels and at each armed service level. An assessment section concludes this chapter.

The sixth chapter brings the analysis to Russia's military activities and deployment to the Black Sea region, with a particular focus on the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Navy, which is the primary military asset of Russia in the region. The chapter also includes brief information on the defense policies and military capabilities of the Black Sea riparian states.

The thesis is concluded with the seventh chapter, which discusses Russia's security policies since the dissolution of the USSR and through the reform process started in 2008. The chapter's discussion is centered around the research question.

CHAPTER 2

GEOPOLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE BLACK SEA REGION AFTER THE END OF THE COLD WAR

In a speech delivered in September 2016, Russian Chief of General Staff Valery Gerasimov said that "Several years ago, the capability of the fleet was sharply contrasted, in particular, with the Turkish navy, when it was said that Turkey is virtually the master of the Black Sea. Now everything is different."[19] Gerasimov's remarks represent the main motivation and aim of the Russian Federation with regards to its security policies and subsequent military modernization efforts in the Black Sea region. Russia's activities have been devised around regional competition, threat perception by regional competitors as well as from the NATO and investment into advanced military capabilities to increase deterrence.

The Black Sea, which lies between Europe and Asia, is a gateway to the Caucasus and Central Asia. The Black Sea connects to the Mediterranean Sea through the Turkish Straits. It is surrounded by six riparian states, namely Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Türkiye and Ukraine. Since the 18th century, it was place to the rivalry between Russian and Ottoman empires until the Soviet Revolution in 1917. That competition continued during the Cold War era, and after the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), there have been massive fractures in the geopolitical fault lines of the region.

[19] Kucera, Joshua. "Russia Claims 'Mastery' Over Turkey in Black Sea." EurasiaNet, September 25, 2016. https://eurasianet.org/russia-claims-mastery-over-turkey-black-sea. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

2.1. 1992 Open Skies Treaty

The Open Skies Treaty (OST) can be considered as one of the last strategic mutual confidence-building initiatives of the Cold War period. Signed in 1992 in Helsinki, the OST defines the framework for aerial surveillance flights over the territories of signatories.[20]

The OST has its origins in 1955, when the then-US President Dwight D. Eisenhower suggested unarmed surveillance aircraft of the USSR to fly over military facilities of the US to verify that no preparation is underway for strategic strike. This suggestion was subject to the condition that the USSR would allow the same for US aircraft. In 1989, US President George H. W. Bush revived the concept to increase strategic communication and therefore mutual confidence between NATO and Warsaw Pact.[21]

The preparation of the OST was opened by the Ottawa international Open Skies Conference in February 1990. This was followed by conferences in Budapest, Vienna and the final round being in Helsinki, which saw the signing by foreign ministers of 24 states on March 24, 1992. With the ratification procedure being completed by Russia and Belarus, the OST came into force on January 2, 2002.

The member states of the OST execute surveillance flights on a reciprocal basis. The treaty defines the technical details of the flights and establishes a quota for the number of flights, as well as their schedule. The geography, specifications, and number of military installations of the partner states determine the quota of the flights. The state which performs observation flight is designated as observing state and is bound by certain rules and limitations, such as a 72-hour notification period before the flight, sharing of the flight plans. The aircraft that are used in observation flights are specially modified to accommodate imaging and data processing equipment. There are also strict rules for the composition of the flight crew, which is required to be formed up

[20] U.S. Department of State. “Open Skies Treaty.” 2009-2017.state.gov. https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/avc/trty/102337.htm. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

[21] Strategic Comments. "The Open Skies Treaty". 2019. https://doi.org/10.1080/13567888.2019.1707489

by personnel from both observing and the observed states. The post-flight data processing procedures are also strictly monitored.[22]

The OST does not have a time limit. Since 2005, it has been reviewed every five years by member states. The Open Skies Consultative Commission (OSCC) is the executive organ of the OST, where all decisions about technicalities, procedures, modification, and resolution of disputes are taken unanimously.[23]

The execution of the OST has not been without issues. United States and Russia have accused each other with violations several times. In 2010, Russia restricted observation flights that are within a ten-kilometer strip along the disputed South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions, which had declared independence from Georgia. In 2014, Russia declared further limitations involving flights over the Kaliningrad semi-exclave.

In late 2019 it was reported that the US President Donald Trump was planning to withdraw from the OST. On May 21, 2020, President Trump, claiming Russia's persistent violations of the treaty, announced that the US would withdraw.[24] On November 22, 2020, the six-month period after the formal notification was completed and US withdrawal took effect.[25] This was followed by Russia's withdrawal, which was announced on January 15, 2021, and came into force on January 7, 2021.[26]

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[22] Spitzer, Hartwig. "The Open Skies Treaty: Entering full implementation at a low key." Helsinki Monitor 17 (2006): 83.

[23] U.S. Department of State. “Open Skies Treaty.” 2009-2017.state.gov. https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/avc/trty/102337.htm. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

[24] Pifer, Steven. “The Looming US Withdrawal from the Open Skies Treaty.” Brookings. www.brookings.edu, November 19, 2020. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/11/19/the-looming-us-withdrawal-from-the-open-skies-treaty/. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[25] Reif, Kingston, and Shannon Bugos. “U.S. Completes Open Skies Treaty Withdrawal". Arms Control Association. www.armscontrol.org, January 19, 2011. https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2020-12/news/us-completes-open-skies-treaty-withdrawal. (accessed on May 19, 2022)

[26] OSCE. "Conference of States Parties to the Open Skies Treaty discusses Russian Federation’s intent to withdraw from the Treaty". July 20, 2021. https://www.osce.org/oscc/493411. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

With the withdrawal of the two main signatory states, the future of the OST is unclear. Remaining member states held a videoconference on July 20, 2021, to discuss the implementation and further steps to keep the OST alive.[27]

2.2. 1994 Budapest Memorandum

After the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the successor states shared the Soviet military inventory. Among these, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine also inherited nuclear weapons, which had been based in their territories. These stockpiles included nuclear warheads, as well as ballistic missiles and bomber aircraft to carry them.

Almost one third of USSR's nuclear weapons had been based on Ukrainian soil and as a result, after Ukraine held the world's third largest nuclear stockpile. These weapons included 130 UR-100N (NATO code SS-19 "Stiletto") and 46 RT-23 Molodets (NATO code SS-24 "Scalpel") intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), carrying multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs). Each UR-100N was equipped with six MIRVs and each RT-23 carried ten MIRVs, making the total number of nuclear warheads that Ukraine possessed as 1,240. Another 14 RT-23 ICBMs were present in Ukraine, but they were without warheads.[28]

In addition to the ground-based missile fleet, Ukraine took over a total of 44 Tupolev Tu-95 (NATO code "Bear") and Tu-160 (NATO code "Blackjack") strategic bombers and more than 1,000 Kh-55 (NATO code AS-15 "Kent") air launched cruise missiles (ALCMs), capable of being equipped with nuclear warheads. Furthermore, there were

[27] Reif, Kingston, and Shannon Bugos. “Members Discuss Open Skies Treaty After Russia Withdraws". Arms Control Association. www.armscontrol.org, September 2021. https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2021-09/news/members-discuss-open-skies-treaty-after-russia-withdraws. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[28] Harahan, Joseph P. With Courage and Persistence: Eliminating and Securing Weapons of Mass Destruction with the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Programs. Defense Threat Reduction Agency, US Department of Defense, 2014.

around 3,000 tactical nuclear warheads in Ukraine, making the total number of nuclear weapons as 5,000.[29]

The dissolution of the USSR and the following period of political instability caused concern among the US and other NATO allies. The biggest issue was the risk of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorist organizations or rouge states. To address these risks, the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) initiative was started based on the Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act of 1991, also known as the Nunn-Lugar Act, in reference to the sponsors of the act senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar. The act went into force in December 1991 and thereafter the CTR program was initiated with the stated purpose of securing and dismantling nuclear weapons and their infrastructure in the former Soviet states and also to persuade Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).[30]

Shortly after the initiation of the CTR program, Russia, the US, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine signed the Lisbon Protocol on May 23, 1992, to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty of 1991 (START I). Under the protocol, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine declared their intention to eliminate all nuclear weapons on their territories, join the NPT and become Non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS).[31]

Following a shuttle diplomacy by the US between Ukraine and Russia, all parties agreed early 1994 to facilitate the CTR program funds for the removal of nuclear weapons in Ukraine. The agreement was declared through the Trilateral Statement, which was signed on January 14, 1994, in Moscow. This was followed by the signing of a memorandum during the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

[29] Pifer, Steven. “Honoring Neither the Letter Nor the Law.” Brookings. www.brookings.edu, July 28, 2016. http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2014/03/07-honoring-neither-letter-nor-law-ukraine-russia-pifer. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[30] Lugar, Richard (2009). "Cooperative Threat Reduction and Nuclear Security". Georgetown Journal of International Affairs. 10: 183–189.

[31] Pifer, Steven. The Trilateral Process: The United States, Ukraine, Russia and Nuclear Weapons. Brookings Institution, 2011.

(OSCE) conference in Budapest on December 5, 1994, by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (UK) and presidents of Russia, the US and Ukraine.[32]

The Budapest Memorandum confirmed commitments by the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the US to respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, independence, and sovereignty; to refrain use or threat of use of force against Ukraine's sovereignty or territorial integrity; to refrain from employing economic measures to coerce Ukraine, and to aid if Ukraine is attacked or threatened to be attacked with nuclear weapons. With the memorandum, Russia, the UK, and the US also declared their determination to provide positive and negative security assurances to all NNWS parties of the NPT.[33]

As David Yost argues, Ukraine had little interest in maintaining nuclear weapons, as the parliament of Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic declared even before the dissolution of the USSR that Ukraine would strictly adhere to "three nuclear-free principles", as to never acquire, manufacture or procure nuclear weapons".[34] The main significance of the memorandum is its handling by Ukraine as a legally binding treaty that underscores commitment by parties to the territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine. Therefore, the annexation of Crimea by Russia, and finally the 2022 invasion have been declared by Ukraine as breaches of the Budapest Memorandum.

2.3. 1995 Operation Deliberate Force

Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had gone through a violent political turmoil throughout the 1980s. Fueled mainly by ethnic and political tensions, this period was

[32] Orlov, Vladimir. "Security Assurances to Ukraine and the 1994 Budapest Memorandum: from the 1990s to the Crimea Crisis." Security Index: A Russian Journal on International Security 20, no. 2 (2014): 133-140.

[33] Memorandum, Budapest. "Memorandum on Security Assurances in connection with Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons." Budapest. Available online: http://www.pircenter.org/media/content/files/12/13943175580.pdf. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[34] Yost, David. "The Budapest Memorandum and Russia's intervention in Ukraine". International Affairs. Chatham House. May 12, 2015. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.12279. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

followed by the breakaway of the federal republics and finally the dissolution of the Yugoslav state in 1992.[35]

Shortly after declaration of independence by Slovenia and Croatia, armed conflict erupted with the Yugoslav People's Army (Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija; JNA). The JNA initiated operations against the newly formed Slovenian government on June 26, 1991. The conflict reached climax on July 2 when JNA executed coordinated air and artillery strikes against Slovenia Territorial Defense forces. Upon heavy fighting and casualties, Slovenian government called for cease fire, which was not accepted by Yugoslav government. Slovenian forces managed to inflict heavy casualties on JNA the following day, which made Yugoslav government accept a ceasefire. The war, which had lasted seven days, was officially ended by the signing of the Brioni Agreement on July 7, 1991. According to the agreement, which was signed in the Brijuni island of Croatia under the brokerage of the European Community (EC), Slovenia and Croatia agreed to postpone their processes towards independence for three months and defined the details with regards to Slovenia's borders. Subsequently, Slovenia was formally recognized by the EC on January 15, 1992, and joined the United Nations (UN) as a sovereign state on May 22 the same year.[36]

The other party of the Brioni Agreement, Croatia, also accepted to freeze its independence process. However, this did not ease the tensions between Croatian and Yugoslav government. The mostly homogenous ethnic composition of Slovenia contributed to a quick end to the armed conflict, whereas the ethnic structure of Croatia (along with Bosnia and Herzegovina) was a complicating factor for the crisis. The Serbian population within Croatia became one of the major issues between the two sides. The establishment of the Republic of Serbian Krajina (RSK) by ethnic Serbs within Croatia and subsequent declaration of secession on April 1, 1991, had further complicated the issue.[37]

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[35] Bağcı, Hüseyin. "Bosna-Hersek “Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Anlaşmazlıklara Giriş”." Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi 16, no. 27 (1994): 257-279.

[36] Mesić, Stjepan. "The Road to War", in The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1991–1995, ed. Branka Magaš and Ivo Žanić. Frank Cass, London, 2001

[37] Almond, Mark. Europe's backyard war: the war in the Balkans. William Heinemann, 1994.

In late July, JNA intensified military operations in Croatian territory. The newly formed Croatian army struggled to fight back, because of the UN arms embargo. The war intensified between August and October, and JNA naval assets imposed a blockade to Croatian ports along the Adriatic coast, which were essential for Croatian economy as well as transfer of smuggled arms for the army.[38]

The Croatian army's successful counterattacks on the JNA in late 1991, inflicted significant losses and resulted in with both sides signing an UN-brokered ceasefire agreement in Sarajevo on January 2, 1992. The agreement, also known as the Implementation Agreement, was devised by the US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, who was Special Envoy of the Secretary General of the UN. The Implementation Agreement helped ease the tensions and armed clashes scaled down, until the Croatian army's offensive against RSK forces began in early 1993. The renewed conflict continued until 1995, with the signing of the Erdut Agreement which started the process of establishing central control and minority rights.[39]

It can be argued that the most bloody and devastating war in the former Yugoslavia is the Bosnian War, which involved many ethnic groups and factions as well as foreign volunteers and mercenaries. The war led to the intervention of NATO, which resulted in with Bosnian Serbs accepting the conditions set out by the UN.

The Bosnian War broke out after a period of political crisis in 1991. On October 15, 1991, the Memorandum on the Sovereignty of Bosnia-Herzegovina was accepted by the Bosnia and Herzegovina parliament. This memorandum was met with fierce opposition of the Bosnian Serbs. This was followed by the declaration of the Republic of the Serbian People in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which would later be named as Republika Srpska, on January 9, 1992.[40] The accompanying unrest and small-scale

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[38] Almond, Mark. Europe's backyard war: the war in the Balkans.

[39] Cigar, Norman. "The Serbo-Croatian war, 1991: Political and military dimensions." The Journal of Strategic Studies 16, no. 3 (1993): 297-338.

[40] Burg, Steven L., and Paul S. Shoup. The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic conflict and international intervention. ME Sharpe, 1999.

armed clashes in the country escalated in April 1992, when JNA formations and Bosnian Serbs initiated large scale attacks. Sarajevo came under heavy shelling and Bosnian Serbs conducted mass killings of Bosnian civilians. The conflict further escalated and had become more complex with the outbreak of Croat - Bosnian War in late 1992 after the Bosnian Croats declared the Croatian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the meantime, the UN Security Council (UNSC) established United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) with Resolution 743 on February 21, 1992, with the mission of providing humanitarian relief to civilians in Bosnia. Upon invitation by the UN, NATO started Operation Deny Flight on April 12, to enforce a no-fly zone over Bosnia.[41]

The severity of the humanitarian crisis and reporting of mass killings of civilians had increased in 1994. Consecutive calls for ceasefire by international organizations did not produce effect. Upon increasing pressure by non-state organizations (NGOs) and general public, the UN formally requested NATO on February 6, 1994, to initiate air strikes against Serbian forces. The first combat action occurred on February 28, when NATO fighter aircraft shot down Serbian aircraft that violated the no-fly zone. The rest of 1994 saw very limited use of NATO aircraft against Serbian ground targets.[42]

Large scale NATO bombardment against Serbian targets commenced on August 30, 1995, supported by UNPROFOR artillery fires. Designated as "Operation Deliberate Force", the campaign's declared goal was to "attain the compliance of the Bosnian Serbs to cease attacks on Sarajevo and other safe areas; the withdrawal of Bosnian Serb heavy weapons from the Total Exclusion Zone around Sarajevo, without delay; complete freedom of movement of UN forces, personnel, and NGOs; and unrestricted use of Sarajevo airport."[43]

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[41] Shrader, Charles R. The Muslim-Croat civil war in central Bosnia: A military history, 1992-1994. Vol. 23. Texas A&M University Press, 2003.

[42] Beale, Michael O. Bombs over Bosnia: the role of airpower in Bosnia, Herzegovina. Air University Maxwell AFB AL School Of Advanced Airpower Studies, 1997.

[43] NATO. “Statement by the Secretary General of NATO”. September 5, 1995. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_24770.htm?selectedLocale=en. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

Operation Deliberate Force had been executed with the involvement of around 400 NATO aircraft, including combat aircraft, aerial refueling tankers, airborne early warning, and control (AWACS) aircraft and reconnaissance aircraft. A total of more than 3,500 sorties were flown and more than 1,000 bombs, about 70 per cent of which were precision guided munitions, were dropped on ground targets.[44] The airstrikes continued until September 14, to enable Serbs withdraw from the Sarajevo exclusion zone. The following negotiations were concluded by the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Agreement, which was signed on December 14, 1995.[45]

The Russian assessment on the Operation Deliberate Force centered around the role of NATO in the post-Cold War era. This view was manifested in the then-President Boris Yeltsin's statement that NATO had assumed roles of "both judge and the executor" in the Bosnian War. Russia accused NATO of assuming a biased position against Serbs and of conducting the air strikes as part of the war. From this perspective, the Operation Deliberate Force can be perceived as the first milestone of Russia's shaping of perception for NATO in the post-Cold War era.[46]

2.4. 1999 Kosovo War and Operation Allied Force

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, federal republics of Montenegro and Serbia as well as Serbian controlled regions in Croatia came together to form up a new Yugoslavia. These efforts produced the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in 1992. The unrest in the Albanian populated Kosovo region increased throughout the

[44] Haulman, Daniel L. "The United States Air Force and Bosnia, 1992-1995." Air Power History 60, no. 3 (2013): 24-31.

[45] Beale, Michael O. Bombs over Bosnia: the role of airpower in Bosnia, Herzegovina.

[46] Johnson, Rebecca J. "Russian Responses to Crisis Management in the Balkans." Demokratizatsiya 9, no. 2 (2001): 292. Gale Academic OneFile. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A76706286/AONE?u=googlescholar&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=d0aa0486. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

second half of 1990s. Following its formation, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) started attacks against FRY army in 1996.[47]

With the exception of a short-lived ceasefire in between October and December 1998, clashes between the KLA and FRY army continued, despite increasing pressure from the UN and NATO. Early 1999 saw a number of massacres against civilian population and on March 20, 1999, the OSCE mission to Kosovo left, due to the deteriorating security situation. On March 24, 1999, NATO Operation Allied Force against FRY targets.[48]

The Operation Allied Force was envisaged as a strategic air campaign, with the involvement of more than 1,000 allied aircraft operating from bases in Italy, Germany as well as US Navy aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt from the Adriatic. The operation had lasted over ten weeks and NATO aircraft flew more than 38,000 sorties. The FRY suffered heavy losses in terms of personnel, equipment, and infrastructure. As a result of a joint Finnish - Russian diplomatic effort, NATO stopped the bombing campaign on June 10, FRY agreed to withdraw forces from Kosovo. On June 11, Russian airborne forces landed at and established control of Slatina airport. A day after, US forces started entering Kosovo as peacekeepers under Operation Joint Guardian.[49]

Operation Allied Force triggered debates on the use and future of airpower. The operation was planned and executed as an exclusively aerial campaign to achieve political outcomes. Effective use of joint airpower formed up by allied nations, employing advanced technologies such as precision guided weapons, AWACS-led coordinated strikes, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and satellite communications led to a rapid victory with significantly low losses: The NATO forces had lost three

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[47] Cottey, Andrew. "The Kosovo war in perspective." International Affairs 85, no. 3 (2009): 593-608.

[48] NATO. “Kosovo Air Campaign (March-June 1999).” May 17, 2022. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49602.htm. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[49] Walters, Mary Elizabeth. “A Tantalizing Success: The 1999 Kosovo War.” The Strategy Bridge. thestrategybridge.org, July 9, 2021. https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/7/9/a-tantalizing-success-the-1999-kosovo-war. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

fighter aircraft and two helicopters with only two personnel killed in action whereas personnel loss of FRY is declared as more than 1,000.[50] The aerial bombardment inflicted serious damage to FRY infrastructure, defense industry and warfighting capability and simultaneous political pressure enabled the result.[51]

Russia's Foreign Minister during the period, Igor Ivanov claimed that NATO aimed to trigger a humanitarian crisis which would eventually result in with ethnic cleansing towards Yugoslavia. Ivanov went on to argue that this crisis would be used as a reason for full-scale invasion of the country. Ivanov assessed that the operation was as an example of NATO's new strategic direction and posture in the post-Cold War period.[52] Averre argues that Russia perceived the operation as an outcome of the political threat by NATO.[53] The operation was not initiated upon an invitation or endorsement by the UN, it was planned and executed solely by NATO. NATO's by-passing the UNSC deeply concerned Russia about the NATO trying to increase presence in Europe, which would eventually lead to Russia losing influence in the former Soviet states and Eastern Europe.

Russia's other main concern was the possibility of exploitation of the concept of "humanitarian intervention" as a cover to meddle with regional dynamics and internal politics. Russian political elites, and especially the Russian military saw this trend as attempts by the US to shape the European geopolitical landscape. The Operation Allied Force was perceived as an example of NATO's new role under intervention to humanitarian crisis and the assessment was that Russia's close peripheries such as

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[50] S Sayers, William A. “Operation Allied Force” Air Force Magazine. www.airforcemag.com, April 16, 2019. https://www.airforcemag.com/article/operation-allied-force-how-airpower-won-the-war-for-kosovo/. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

[51] Lambeth, Benjamin S. NATO's air war for Kosovo: A strategic and operational assessment. RAND Corporation, 2001.

[52] Stepanova, Ekaterina A. "Explaining Russia's Dissention on Kosovo." (1999). https://www.ponarseurasia.org/wp-content/uploads/attachments/pm_0057.pdf. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[53] Averre, David. "Russia, humanitarian intervention and the Responsibility to Protect: the case of Syria". International Affairs. Chatham House. July 15, 2015. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1468-2346.12343. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

Black Sea region, Caucasus and the Caspian Sea region would be targeted next.[54] With the shock and impact of the First Chechen War between 1994 and 1996 still fresh, Moscow evaluated the Operation Allied Force as an alarm signal.[55]

2.5. "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium" Article by Vladimir Putin

The first president of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin resigned on December 31, 1999, after a lengthy period of health problems. Yeltsin appointed Prime Minister Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, a former KGB officer as acting president until the elections on March 26, 2000.[56]

One day before Yeltsin's resignation, on December 30, 1999, an article by Putin with the title, "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium" was published by Nezavisimaya Gazeta (Независимая газета) newspaper. The article is the first comprehensive text summarizing Putin's views on statehood, economy, geopolitics, and world order.[57]

In the article, Putin states that the turn of the millennium also saw major events in world history, with profound changes in socio-economic and political organizations, rapid advances in science and technology, especially the direct impact of communication technologies and the evolution of leadership, thanks to the ever-improving standards in education, training, and corporate and social interactions. Putin builds up his view of the changing nature of societies upon these factors.[58]

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[54] Stepanova, Ekaterina A. "Explaining Russia's Dissention on Kosovo." (1999). https://www.ponarseurasia.org/wp-content/uploads/attachments/pm_0057.pdf. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[55] Averre, Derek. "From Pristina to Tskhinvali: the legacy of Operation Allied Force in Russia's relations with the West." International affairs 85, no. 3 (2009): 575-591.

[56] BBC. "Putin Takes Control in Russia." news.bbc.co.uk, December 31, 1999. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/585368.stm. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[57] Putin, Vladimir. "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium." originally printed in Nezavisimaya Gazeta (30 December 1999), http://www.ng.ru/politics/1999-12-30/4_millenium.html. (accessed on May 26, 2022)

[58] Putin, "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium."

According to Putin, there is great risk that not all countries in the world would benefit from the developments and advantages of the said transformation. This inequality of welfare, life standards and capabilities produced a gap that is very difficult to close.[59]

Putin then proceeds to provide a summary of the political, economic, and social situation in Russia. He first admits that Russia is not at the desired level of economic and social development. Furthermore, he states that the country is struggling with "difficult economic and social problems". Putin gives details on the several indicators of Russia's economy and compares with other countries such as the US and China. Putin emphasizes on the reduced research and development (R&D) spending of Russia and the alarmingly low innovation production activities.[60]

Under the section titles "The Lessons Russia (Needs) to Learn", Putin puts forward three main responses to the mentioned socio-economic problems. The first lesson is that Communism prevented Russian society from becoming dynamic and able to sustain self-development. Secondly, Russian people cannot take another major, radical shift in the structure of the political and socio-economic system. The Russian society had achieved its limits of tolerance for a new type of revolution. The economic and social reforms therefore should be incremental and based on free market and democratic norms. Thirdly, Russia cannot develop and prosper by applying the reforms, roadmaps, and strategies of other nations.[61]

Based on these findings, Putin puts forward three main topics as pillars of Russia's new endeavor in the new millennium. These are summarized under the titles, "Russian Idea", "Strong State" and "Efficient Economy".[62]

Under the "Russian Idea" part, Putin first assesses that any kind of development for Russia is not possible without first resolving the internally split and disintegrated

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[59] Putin, "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium."

[60] Putin, "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium."

[61] Putin, "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium."

[62] Putin, "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium."

structure of the society. The two major events of the 20th Century, the October 1917 Revolution and the dissolution of the USSR had left the Russian nation in a disintegrated state. Putin explicitly mentions that he is against the concept of a "state ideology of any form" in Russia. According to him, social accord can only be achieved in a voluntary fashion. Therefore, Putin claims, the achievement of a social accord among Russian people is of paramount importance.[63]

In explaining the "Strong State" idea, Putin states that the recovery of Russia depends on the structure and context of state policies. Putin underlines the importance of the strength of state as an essential element of robust policies. Putin presents democratic, rule-based state mechanism as the only way for Russia to achieve and sustain state power. Putin puts special emphasis on increasing cooperation between executive branch and civil society to develop institutional structure and norms to prevent corruption.[64]

Under the "Efficient Economy" section, Putin provides a detailed framework for economic growth, starting from the necessity of a long-term strategy. This strategy should be supported by developing an environment to support investments and state organs adhering to market mechanism. The detail and depth of the section shows how Putin sees a well-organized and functioning economic system as the key to improve the state mechanism. This section can be considered as the roadmap for Putin's economy policies in the coming period.[65]

Putin concludes the article with the statement that "Russia is in the midst of one of the most difficult periods in its history". The threat is so critical that Russia might become a second or may be third stage country. The key to overcome this threat, according to Putin, lies in the capability of Russian people to successfully mobilize their powers and work hard.[66]

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[63] Putin, "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium."

[64] Putin, "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium."

[65] Putin, "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium."

[66] Putin, "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium."

The article, because of both its timing and the context is very significant. It provides important information and clues of Putin's perception and strategies on Russia's political, social, and economic issues. The emphasis on democracy and market economy is striking. Also noteworthy is how Putin establishes a link between a powerful state and economic growth. Proposed financial system reform and reorganization includes radical changes that have impact on all levels of corporate and social lives, and such a change requires a strong posture by state organs.[67]

The most noteworthy feature of the article, however, is there is virtually no reference or mention of a foreign power, such as the US or NATO as responsible of Russia's problems. In other words, Putin does not describe any kind of foreign threat or the impact of foreign powers on Russia's socio-economic issues. Furthermore, Putin praises the importance of foreign investments, states that without the presence of foreign investment the recovery of Russian economy would be "long and painful" and suggests that everything should be done to attract foreign capital into the country. Although Putin does not get into the detail of the particulars, such as position towards foreign capital implicitly requires the presence of a more cooperative posture in foreign relations, especially with Western countries. In other words, Putin's economic development roadmap incorporates moderate foreign policy which focuses on economic cooperation, rather than competition.[68]

2.6. 2001 Establishment of BLACKSEAFOR

The concept for a joint naval task force by Black Sea riparian states was brought to agenda by Türkiye during the meeting of Navy commanders of Black Sea countries in Varna in 1998. Following technical and diplomatic negotiations, the agreement for the establishment of the Black Sea Maritime Cooperation Task Group (BLACKSEAFOR) was signed by Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Türkiye and Ukraine

[67] Putin, "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium."

[68] Drozdova, Oksana, and Paul Robinson. "A study of Vladimir Putin's rhetoric." Europe-Asia Studies 71, no. 5 (2019): 805-823.

in İstanbul on April 2, 2001. The first activation took place between September 27 and October 16, 2001, in Gölcük, under the coordination of Turkish Navy. [69]

The agreement defines the aims and missions of the BLACKSEAFOR as conducting search and rescue, humanitarian relief, mine warfare and environmental missions as well as improving military and diplomatic cooperation and communication through port visits and exercises. Political decisions regarding the force are taken through meetings held by the foreign or defense ministers or their authorized representatives.[70]

According to the agreement, BLACKSEAFOR can be assigned to an operation within the scope of the UN or the OSCE missions, or it can participate in other multinational activities. Although BLACKSEAFOR has been established for use in the Black Sea, it can also be assigned outside the Black Sea by unanimous consent of the parties when necessary. If deployed outside the Black Sea, the status of the force is determined by a specific arrangement for each case. A typical BLACKSEAFOR task force group is composed of at least 4-6 ships, one of which is a command and control ship, accompanied by surface warships, mine warfare, and auxiliary ships.[71]

On January 19, 2008, the "First Political Consultation" meeting took place in Ankara with the participation of foreign ministers of member states by the invitation of Türkiye. The main agenda of the meeting was the political and security cooperation on the future of the Black Sea. The importance of the BLACKSEAFOR as an asset of regional cooperation was also emphasized. With this meeting, BLACKSEAFOR had gained a political aspect, instead of being solely a military cooperation initiative.

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[69] Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “BLACKSEAFOR”. www.mfa.gov.tr. Accessed August 2, 2022. http://www.mfa.gov.tr/blackseafor.en.mfa. (accessed on May 19, 2022)

[70] Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “BLACKSEAFOR”. www.mfa.gov.tr. Accessed August 2, 2022. http://www.mfa.gov.tr/blackseafor.en.mfa. (accessed on May 19, 2022)

[71] Ulusoy, Hasan. "A new formation in the Black Sea: Blackseafor." PERCEPTIONS: Journal of International Affairs 6, no. 4 (1999). https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/perception/issue/49016/625293. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

BLACKSEAFOR was activated once a year until 2003, and starting from 2004, it has been activated twice a year, in August and April.[72]

The geopolitical situation in the Black Sea region directly affected the BLACKSEAFOR. After the 2008 Russo - Georgian War, Georgian Navy did not participate to the activations until 2011. After Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, Moscow accused Ukraine of lobbying other member states to freeze Russia's membership to the BLACKSEAFOR. No activation took place and the cooperation effectively ended. [73] And finally on November 27, 2015, shortly after Türkiye's shoot down of a Russian Air Force Su-24 jet near the Turkish - Syrian border, Russia suspended participation to the BLACKSEAFOR.[74]

2.7. 2004 NATO Expansion and Color Revolutions

The unified Germany became a NATO member in 1990, shortly after the completion of the process. German Federal Republic (Western Germany) had been a member since 1955. This was followed by the dissolution of the USSR and immediately thereafter, former Warsaw Pact member states started negotiations with the NATO on membership process. These negotiations resulted in with the acceptance of Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland into NATO in 1999. This wave of expansion towards the former Eastern Bloc is the product of the "Open Door Policy", based on the Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which requires unanimous consent of NATO members for making an invitation to a candidate member state.[75]

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[72] Bozkurt, Giray Saynur. "Security policy of Turkey and Russia in the Black Sea basin." Karadeniz Araştırmaları 30, no. 2 (2011).

[73] Kucera, Joshua. “Black Sea Naval Cooperation Another Casualty Of Ukraine War” Eurasia.net, July 23, 2014. https://eurasianet.org/black-sea-naval-cooperation-another-casualty-of-ukraine-war. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[74] TASS. “Russia Suspends Participation in BLACKSEAFOR Drills after Turkey’s Downing of Russian Jet” tass.com, November 27, 2015. https://tass.com/defense/839869. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[75] NATO. “Enlargement and Article 10.” NATO. www.nato.int, July 5, 2022. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49212.htm. (accessed on August 9, 2022)

The membership process is executed along the Membership Action Plan (MAP), which was formalized in the Washington Summit in 1999. This plan was designed for the nine aspiring former Eastern Bloc states (Albania, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), and laid out the necessary procedures and activities for integration. The MAP process was controlled through yearly reviews, which assessed the performance of the aspiring state's political and military bureaucracies in establishing successful integration and cooperation with the alliance as well as the overall readiness and willingness of the candidate.[76]

In 2002 NATO formally invited seven MAP states to the alliance. These were Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Upon completion of the MAP process, these states were formally accepted into the NATO on March 29, 2004.[77] This expansion increased the footprint of NATO in the Black Sea and Baltic Sea regions. With the inclusion of Romania and Bulgaria, NATO now had three Black Sea member states and had full coverage along the West and South coasts.

After the 1999 expansion, this second wave of expansion triggered debates among the NATO alliance as well as criticism from Russia.[78] The main objection for the acceptance of the ten former Eastern Bloc states is their level of preparedness for assuming responsibilities and undertaking obligations within NATO. This criticism was made especially the three states that were accepted in 1999.[79] Another argument against the expansion pointed to the risk of deterioration of relations with Russia.[80]

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[76] Barany, Zoltan. "Stretching the umbrella: NATO's eastern expansion." European View 8, no. 2 (2009): 231-238. DOI: 10.1007/s12290-009-0087-5

[77] NATO. “Seven New Members Join NATO.” www.nato.int, March 29, 2004. https://www.nato.int/docu/update/2004/03-march/e0329a.htm. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

[78] Zevelev, Igor. "NATO’s Enlargement and Russian Perceptions of Eurasian Political Frontiers." George Marshall European Centre for Security Studies (2015): 98-00.

[79] Averre, Derek. "NATO expansion and Russian national interests." European Security 7, no. 1 (1998): 10-54.

[80] Waltz, Kenneth N. "NATO expansion: A realist's view." Contemporary Security Policy 21, no. 2 (2000): 23-38.

The main argument defending the expansion was that, especially the four states of Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia of the 2004 expansion would contribute to the security and stability in the Balkans and Eastern Europe, connecting with the Southeastern flank of the alliance, i.e., Greece and Türkiye.

About the same time of NATO's 2004 expansion, two major events also took place in the Black Sea region, namely the Rose Revolution in Georgia and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, which dramatically changed the political landscape in the said countries.

In Georgia, the aftermath of the parliamentary elections on November 2, 2003, massive protests erupted against the President Eduard Shevardnadze government, claiming the elections were rigged and the opposition leader, Mikhail Saakashvili had won. Protests had evolved into a massive revolt against the government. Protestors carried roses during the event, leading to the naming of the process as "Rose Revolution". Following a meeting with the opposition, Shevardnadze resigned on November 23. Mikhail Saakashvili formed a new government, assessed as pro-Western.[81]

In Ukraine, presidential elections were held in late 2004. The two leading candidates were Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych and opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko. At the first round of elections on October 31, no candidate had at least 50 per cent of the votes and a second round was held on November 21. At the second round, Yanukovych achieved 49.46 per cent over Yushchenko, who had 46.61 per cent of the votes. There had been many reports from local and international observers that the second round was rigged, and the results were manipulated. These reports and widespread perception of a Russian influence over the elections triggered nation-wide protests by Yushchenko supporters, which used orange color as symbol (hence the name, "Orange Revolution"), starting on November 22. Upon increasing domestic pressure, the Supreme Court of Ukraine decided for a re-run of the second round to be held on December 26. This re-run was resulted with a victory by Yushchenko with 52

[81] Beacháin, Donnacha Ó., and Abel Polese, eds. The Colour Revolutions in the Former Soviet Republics. London, UK: Routledge, 2010.

per cent of the votes.[82] Throughout the election process, Moscow had publicly shown support for Yanukovych, which promised closer cooperation with Russia. Therefore, Russia perceived the victory by Yushchenko, who aimed for pro-Western policies towards integration with the EU and the NATO, as a major security risk.[83]

Russian perception for the Color Revolutions was centered around the assessment that the US was stimulating regime changes in the post-Soviet geography, thereby posing a threat to Moscow.[84] The official rhetoric by Russian government officials, starting from President Putin was that the West was using norms and values such as democracy, human rights, freedom of speech as disguises of interventionist policies. This move by the West was perceived as an intrusion to Russian sphere of influence.[85] The 2004 expansion wave of NATO was seen as an attempt to encircle and marginalize Russia. The Color Revolutions further reinforced this view.[86]

2.8. 2007 Munich Security Conference

The Munich Security Conference (MSC) is an annual conference held in Munich, Germany. The MSC covers issues in international security and brings leaders, decision makers, academics, researchers, and representatives of governments, international organizations, media, business, and non-governmental organizations from around the world. Organized by the independent, non-profit Stiftung Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz GmbH, the MSC is the largest event on international security.

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[82] BBC. "Timeline: Battle for Ukraine." news.bbc.co.uk, January 23, 2005. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4061253.stm. (accessed on May 19, 2022)

[83] Herd, Graeme P. "Russia and the" Orange Revolution" Response, Rhetoric, Reality?." Connections 4, no. 2 (2005): 15-28.

[84] Finkel, Evgeny, and Yitzhak M. Brudny. "Russia and the colour revolutions." In Coloured Revolutions and Authoritarian Reactions, pp. 23-44. Routledge, 2014.

[85] Wilson, Jeanne L. "The legacy of the color revolutions for Russian politics and foreign policy." Problems of post-communism 57, no. 2 (2010): 21-36.

[86] Makarychev, Andrey. "Russia, NATO, and the" Color Revolutions" Discursive Traps." Russian Politics & Law 47, no. 5 (2009): 40-51.

During the 2007 conference, on February 10, Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered a speech. This speech, because of its tone and contents is usually referred to as one of the main milestones in the post-Cold War era international environment.[87]

Putin started his speech by quoting Franklin D. Roosevelt on the indivisibility of security: "When peace has been broken anywhere, the peace of all countries everywhere is in danger". He then claimed that the proposed unipolar world order after the Cold War had not been realized and in fact, this concept implied the presence of "one master, one sovereign". Putin stated that this system, being undemocratic was unacceptable and impossible.[88]

Putin said that the world was witnessing an unrestricted use of force in the international system, which itself was the main reason of endless conflicts, without any means or assets of resolution. Here Putin implicitly referred to the US-led NATO military operations in Bosnia and Kosovo in 1995 and 1999, respectively. He said that the issue had become more complicated with disrespect for the basic principles and norms of international system. Putin openly criticized the US of as overstepping its national borders in through economic, political, cultural, and educational tools and policies.[89]

Putin then compared the economic indicators of several developing countries with the US and claims that there is sufficient economic potential in other parts of the world to form new centers of growth, and therefore become political influence nodes thereby contributing to a multi-polar world. Putin underlined the importance of multilateral diplomacy through transparency and predictability but claimed that the trend in international relations is in the opposite direction. In fulfilling his claim, Putin said

[87] Fried, Daniel, and Kurt Volker. “The Speech In Which Putin Told Us Who He Was.” Politico. www.politico.com, February 18, 2022. https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2022/02/18/putin-speech-wake-up-call-post-cold-war-order-liberal-2007-00009918. (accessed on May 1, 2022)

[88] Putin, Vladimir. "Speech and the following discussion at the Munich conference on security policy." Presidency of Russia 10, no. 2 (2007).

[89] Putin. "Speech and the following discussion at the Munich conference on security policy."

that the only legitimate mechanism for the decision to use force or impose sanctions should be the UN, not the EU or the NATO.[90]

In commenting about NATO's expansion, Putin referred to the then-NATO General Secretary Manfred Woerner, who he quoted as saying "the fact that we are ready not to place a NATO army outside of German territory gives the USSR a firm security guarantee". Accusing NATO of not fulfilling the guarantees, Putin said that the expansion is irrelevant with the modernization of the Alliance or contribution to the security of Europe. Putin said that the eastward expansion of NATO "represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust". Putin questioned the main motivation for the expansion by asking against whom the expansion was intended.[91]

Putin also reiterated Russia's disturbance with the US plans to establish Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) system in Europe and stated that this initiative contained the risk of triggering another arms race. He also proposed a revision to the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which was signed in 1987 between the US and USSR, to cover other countries.[92]

The speech caused immediate and widespread criticism and concern among Western leaders. The then-Secretary General of NATO, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said that Putin's speech was "disappointing and not helpful".[93] Most criticism was about the harsh and openly challenging tone of the speech. However, as the then-US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates mentioned, there had been tendency by many Western decision-makers to underestimate the collective psychological trauma and memories of the downfall of the USSR, and the mismanagement of NATO-Russia relations.[94] Therefore, Vladimir

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[90] Putin. "Speech and the following discussion at the Munich conference on security policy."

[91] Putin. "Speech and the following discussion at the Munich conference on security policy."

[92] Fidler, Stephen, and Demetri Sevastopulo. “Financial Times.” Putin rails against US foreign policy. www.ft.com, February 10, 2007. https://www.ft.com/content/b4eef8e6-b91d-11db-a5bc-0000779e2340. (accessed on August 9, 2022)

[93] Watson, Rob. “Putin’s Speech: Back to Cold War?” BBC. news.bbc.co.uk, February 10, 2007. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6350847.stm. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[94] Gates, Robert M. "Duty: Memoirs of a secretary at war." New York (2014).

Putin's speech can be considered as an explicit warning to the NATO on Russia's security concerns and consequent steps.

2.9. 2008 NATO Bucharest Summit

The 20th summit of the NATO was convened in Bucharest, Romania between 2 - 4 April 2008. One of the main agenda items of the summit was the status of aspiring members, i.e., Albania, Croatia, Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Ukraine and Georgia. NATO did not issue an invitation to FYROM for the summit, due to an outstanding issue with Greece on the formal name of the country. Greece had earlier declared that it would veto FYROM's admittance to the Alliance without resolving the issue.

At the summit, NATO decided to formally invite Albania and Croatia to being membership process. These states would become members on April 1, 2009. Additionally, NATO also took a decision for other two Balkan states, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. The two states had decided to implement Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) for close cooperation and integration with NATO. During the summit, it was decided by the NATO to initiate Intensified Dialogue with these states to develop strategic communication, cooperation, and partnership on political, military, and financial levels.[95] Therefore, the Bucharest Summit marks an important milestone in the expansion of NATO's footprint in the Balkans.

For Ukraine and Georgia, then-Secretary General of the NATO, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer stated that the two states would eventually become members of the NATO, and reiterated appreciation for their commitment to NATO operations as well as to the integration process. Despite this, the MAP process for the two states was not initiated, instead, the Alliance started a period of monitoring for the democratic reforms and

[95] NATO. "Bucharest Summit Declaration Issued by NATO Heads of State and Government". (2008). https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm. (accessed on August 15, 2022)

progress. The decision on initiating the MAP was left to a review to take place in a foreign ministers meeting in December 2008.[96]

Another major topic of the Bucharest Summit was the establishment of a comprehensive missile defense system network for the NATO. The declaration about the summit underlined the Alliance's concern about the ballistic missile proliferation.[97] In countering this threat, NATO initiated works on integrating US missile defense capabilities, particularly those deployed in Europe with NATO's existing air and missile defense systems. Shortly after the summit, on July 8, 2008, the US and Czech Republic signed treaty for the establishment of a radar base for the BMD system.[98] Next month, on August 14, 2008, another agreement was signed between the US and Poland.[99]

Although Russian President Vladimir Putin stated satisfaction with the NATO's decision on not to accept Ukraine and Georgia as members, Russia was disturbed by the Alliance's declaration that the two states would eventually be members.[100] This position was underlined by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov, when he said, "we will do all we can to prevent Ukraine's and Georgia's accession into NATO and to avoid an inevitable serious exacerbation of our relations with both the alliance and our neighbors".[101] Russia's unease was later manifested in a statement by Russian

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[96] Arbuthnot, James. "The Bucharest Summit and the Future of NATO." The RUSI Journal 153, no. 3 (2008): 40-44.

[97] NATO. “Bucharest Summit Declaration Issued by NATO Heads of State and Government”. (2008). https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm. (accessed on August 15, 2022)

[98] Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. “U.S., Czech Republic Sign Radar Pact.” www.rferl.org, July 8, 2008. https://www.rferl.org/a/Rice_In_Prague_To_Sign_Controversial_Radar_Pact/1182367.html. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[99] Baczynska, Gabriela. “U.S., Poland Sign Missile Shield Deal”. Reuters. www.reuters.com, August 14, 2008. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-shield-poland-idUSLE807520080814. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

[100] Isachenkov, Vladimir. “Departing Putin Seeks to Stop NATO Gains.” Associated Press, March 31, 2008. http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080331/ap_on_re_eu/russia_vs_nato_1. (accessed on May 1, 2022)

[101] Deutsche Welle. “Russia Talks Tough in Response to NATO’s Eastward Expansion.” www.dw.com, November 7, 2017. https://www.dw.com/en/russia-talks-tough-in-response-to-natos-eastward-expansion/a-3261078. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs on December 10, 2021, in which Russia demanded security guarantees from the NATO and urged to "formally disavow the decision of the 2008 NATO Bucharest Summit that ‘Ukraine and Georgia will become NATO members".[102]

Apart from the membership of Ukraine and Georgia, Russia's threat perception was further fueled by the missile defense system initiative by the NATO. Establishing missile defense sites in Czech Republic and Poland was explicitly criticized by Moscow, on the grounds that this attempt would destabilize the security of Europe and require countermeasures by Russia, as Lavrov noted.[103]

[102] Agenda.ge. “Russia Urges NATO to Rescind Commitment to Georgia, Ukraine.” August 9, 2022. https://agenda.ge/en/news/2021/3902. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

[103] Dawar, Anil. “Putin Warns Nato over Expansion.” The Guardian. www.theguardian.com, April 4, 2008. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/apr/04/nato.russia. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

CHAPTER 3

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BLACK SEA REGION BETWEEN 2008 AND 2022

The year 2008 is a major turning point for the Black Sea security. In August 2008, Russia and Georgia fought a short war, and its effects has resonated in the Russian – NATO relations as well as the Black Sea geopolitics.

3.1. 2008 Russo - Georgian War

During the dissolution of the USSR, tensions had escalated between the Georgian government and South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the two autonomous regions within Georgian administrative borders. The tensions turned into violent conflict in early 1991 in South Ossetia and in 1992 in Abkhazia. These regions sought independence from Georgia, which itself declared independence on April 9, 1991. The wars between Georgian forces and the South Ossetian and Abkhazian breakaway regions ended with Russian brokered ceasefire agreements in June 1992 and December 1993, respectively.[104]

The two wars resulted in with Georgia's loss of effective control over these territories. The two regions declared independence, but they were not internationally recognized. A joint international peacekeeping force, formed up by Georgian, Russian and Ossetian militaries had established security in South Ossetia until early 2000's. However, shortly after Vladimir Putin's election to Russian Presidency in 2000 and the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003, security situation in South Ossetia began to

[104] König, Marietta. "The Georgian-South Ossetian Conflict." Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg/IFSH (ed.), OSCE Yearbook (2004): 237-249.

deteriorate. The period between 2004 and 2008 had seen several diplomatic efforts by both sides and also limited scale armed clashes and operations. Several initiatives and plans by both Georgian government and Russian backed South Ossetia and Abkhazia did not produce result. Georgian attempts in establishing control over South Ossetia were also unsuccessful.[105]

Starting from February 2008, Russia initiated steps towards recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. On March 21, 2008, the State Duma passed a resolution that calls on the Russian President to formally recognize these regions. Georgia increased military activity and Russia in response increased the number of military personnel with the peacekeeping force in Abkhazia in May. Armed clashes between Georgian army and South Ossetian forces intensified in July. After a bomb attack on Georgian police on August 1, Georgian army started operation on South Ossetian positions.[106]

The escalation turned into a full-scale war between Georgia and Russia on August 8, when Russian army started attacking Georgian forces and invaded Tskhinvali. The next day, another column of Russian armored vehicles entered Abkhazia in the strategic Kodori Valley. Russian army then initiated a full-scale attack on Georgian military, striking logistics bases, command and communication centers, industrial facilities in different parts of the country. After five days of intense bombing by Russian air force and artillery units, on August 12, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev announced agreement by both sides on the cessation of hostilities and a ceasefire. The agreement was signed by Georgia on August 15, and by Russia the next day.[107]

As a result of the war, Georgia effectively lost control over South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Russia formally recognized the two breakaway regions on August 26. This

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[105] Danish Association for Research on the Caucasus. "The Georgian - South Ossetian Conflict, chapter 4." http://www.caucasus.dk/chapter4.htm. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[106] Nygren, Bertil. "The 2008 Russia-Georgia War." In Routledge Handbook of Russian Security, pp. 377-387. Routledge, 2019.

[107] Cornell, Svante E., and S. Frederick Starr, eds. The guns of August 2008: Russia's war in Georgia. ME Sharpe, 2009.

decision was condemned by the EU, NATO. Shortly after recognition, Russia increased the number of troops in South Ossetia and Abkhazia and has constantly expanded military presence in these regions.[108]

Despite overwhelming military victory, the war with Georgia showed major flaws and deficiencies in Russian military. Russian command, control, communications, computer, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) infrastructure failed to perform adequately, resulting in with loss of coordination and communication among deployed units. Communication and navigation systems performed poorly, forcing troops to use commercial systems. Overall combat readiness of combat aircraft, armored vehicles and transport units turned out to be low. Another major issue was the lack of sufficient number of combat ready personnel, especially in the air force squadrons. Based on the assessments on the performance of Russian military during the war, a large-scale reform process was initiated in 2008 by the then Minister of Defense Anatoly Serdyukov.[109]

3.2. 2014 Annexation of Crimea and Conflict in Donbas

Ukraine President Viktor Yanukovych, who lost seat in 2004 after the Orange Revolution, became a candidate again for the 2010 elections and won against Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. Following his inauguration, Yanukovych stated that his first aim was Ukraine's integration with the EU through following a balanced policy with Russia. Yanukovych defended a neutral state status for Ukraine, implying membership for neither NATO nor the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) would be pursued.[110]

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[108] Kofman, Michael. “The August War, Ten Years On: A Retrospective on the Russo-Georgian War.” War on the Rocks. warontherocks.com, August 17, 2018. https://warontherocks.com/2018/08/the-august-war-ten-years-on-a-retrospective-on-the-russo-georgian-war/. (accessed on May 1, 2022)

[109] Bartles, Charles K. "Defense reforms of Russian defense minister Anatolii Serdyukov." The Journal of Slavic Military Studies 24, no. 1 (2011): 55-80.

[110] Shveda, Yuriy, and Joung Ho Park. "Ukraine's revolution of dignity: The dynamics of Euromaidan." Journal of Eurasian Studies 7, no. 1 (2016): 85-91.

In line with integration, the EU and Ukraine started drafting the Association Agreement in March 2012. The EU explicitly warned Ukraine of human rights abuses, worsening conditions regarding rule of law and freedom speech, and warned Ukraine that the agreement would not get into effect without progress in these issues. Russia, on the other hand, responded to Ukraine's initiative towards integration with the EU as imposing customs and import restrictions, effectively stopping imports from Ukraine. Despite growing internal pressure to proceed with the agreement, on November 21, 2013, Ukrainian government suspended process for the signing of the Association Agreement. This decision was met with widespread reaction and protestors, organizing through social media, began gathering Maidan Nezalezhnosti, henceforth commonly referred to as "Euromaidan", in the capital city of Kiev, demanding Yanukovych's resignation and resuming the process for the Association Agreement.[111] Demonstrations rapidly escalated and in December turned into a violent riot. Many demonstrators were shot and killed during clashes, which continued until February 2014. On February 22, Yanukovych and many ministers and government officials fled from Ukraine to Russia. A transition government was formed, led by Arseniy Yatsenyuk. This development was described by Russia as a coup d'état.[112]

The day after Yanukovych's departure from Ukraine, street demonstrations started in Crimean port city of Sevastopol. Protesters carrying Russian flags demanded a referendum for independence and unification with Russia. Similar protests also took place, almost simultaneously in other cities of Crimea, namely Simferopol and Kerch.[113] On February 27, heavily armed militia carrying military grade equipment but without any national insignia or identification labels started taking control of administrative buildings, military facilities, and strategic locations in Crimea. Named

[111] Shveda, Yuriy, and Joung Ho Park. "Ukraine's revolution of dignity: The dynamics of Euromaidan."

[112] BBC. “Putin: ‘Unconstitutional Coup’ in Ukraine.” www.bbc.com, March 4, 2014. https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-26436575. (accessed on August 11, 2022)

[113] Saluschev, Sergey. "Annexation of Crimea: Causes, analysis and global implications." Global Societies Journal 2 (2014).

as "little green men" in reference to their green-color uniforms, these militia were assessed to be in fact belonging to Russian special operation units.[114]

The Crimean parliament passed a resolution for the independence on March 11, 2014.[115] On March 17, the Republic of Crimea was formally recognized by Russia and the next day Russia and the unilaterally founded Republic of Crimea signed the Treaty on Accession of the Republic of Crimea to Russia. With the ratification of the treaty by Russian Federal Assembly and Federation Council, Crimea became a subject of the Russian Federation on March 21.



Figure 1. Crimean Peninsula

With the annexation, the strategic port city of Sevastopol had become under full control of Russia. Shortly after, Russia denounced the Partition Treaty on the Status

[114] Galeotti, Mark. "Hybrid war" and "little green men": How it works, and how it doesn't." Ukraine and Russia: People, politics, propaganda and perspectives 156 (2015).

[115] Memmott, Mark. "Crimean Parliament Passes 'Declaration Of Independence." NPR.org. www.npr.org, March 11, 2014. https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2014/03/11/288980634/crimean-parliament-passes-declaration-of-independence. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

and Conditions of the Black Sea Fleet, which was signed with Ukraine in 1997. This treaty had established the framework and conditions of use of ports and facilities in Crimea by both states' navies.[116] Russian military also seized control of a number of Ukraine Navy vessels in Sevastopol at the time of annexation. Many Ukraine army equipment, ammunition and weapons were also seized.[117]

International reaction to the annexation was largely negative. The US and the EU condemned Russia and accused Russia of undermining security in Europe. Moscow's relations with the West quickly deteriorated following imposing of economic sanctions by the EU and the US. The sanctions covered restrictions against Russian state-owned institutions in finance, energy, and defense sectors as well as measures in import and export of military and dual-use high technology products, oil exploration and production equipment and related technologies.[118]

Shortly after the Euromaidan events and the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, the unrest rose in the Donbas region, which is formed up by Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. On April 7, armed pro-Russia militia stormed Ukraine police offices in Donetsk and Luhansk, looting weapons, and equipment. Ukraine security forces subsequently initiated an operation, named "Anti-Terror Operation" (ATO). The acting President Oleksandr Turchynov stated that the events were part of a larger plan by Russia to further destabilize Ukraine, overthrow the government and annex the Donbas region. Following declaration of independence of the "Luhansk People's Republic" and "Donetsk Republic" as well as statement by both sides on their aim to join Russia under the name of "Novorossiya", armed clashes escalated in May 2014.[119]

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[116] Zadorozhnii, Oleksandr. "Russia's Annexation of Crimea in the Light of Russian-Ukrainian Agreements on the Black Sea Fleet." Ukraine Analytica 03 (5) (2016): 47-55.

[117] Lombardi, Ben. Crimea-Naval and Strategic Implications of Russia's Anexation. DRDC-Centre for Operational Research and Analysis Ottawa, Ontario Canada, 2014.

[118] Christie, Edward Hunter. "Sanctions after Crimea: Have They Worked?" NATO Review. www.nato.int, July 13, 2015. https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2015/07/13/sanctions-after-crimea-have-they-worked/index.html. (accessed on August 5, 2022)

[119] Fischer, Sabine. "The Donbas Conflict." Stiftung Wissenschaft Und Politik 10 (2019). https://css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/resources/docs/SWP_2019RP05_fhs.pdf. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

Ukraine government forces inflicted significant losses on separatist groups until August 2014. In response, Russia dispatched several army convoys which crossed the border and delivered what Moscow declared as "humanitarian aid" in the separatist controlled parts of Donbas. Subsequently, Russian army started a conventional military operation in the border region of Donbas.[120] In September, clashes spread to the Sea of Azov port city of Mariupol, one of Ukraine's industrial centers.[121]

To establish a ceasefire, a trilateral group by representatives from Ukraine, Russia and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) prepared an agreement in Minsk, Belarus. Signed on September 5, 2014, the Minsk Protocol collapsed in January 2015, followed by escalation in Donetsk. Renewed attempts to broker a ceasefire succeeded with the signature of a new agreement, called Minsk II on February 12, 2015, by Ukraine, Russia, OSCE and separatist leaders, witnessed by France and Germany. At the time of signing, about one third of Donbas region was under control by separatists, which received substantial military aid from Russia. After the agreement, clashes decreased significantly until early 2017 when Ukraine and Russian forces exchanged heavy artillery fire in the region. The escalation continued until early 2022 with frequent clashes and mostly in the Donbas region.[122]

3.3. 2015 Russia's Presence in Syria

Syria was one of the closest allies of the USSR in the Middle East during the Cold War. Relations, military, and economic relations had been very close during the rule of Syrian President Hafez Assad. As a result of the need for military support against Israel and the policies of the USA in the region, Syria established close military

[120] CNBC. “Russia Masses Military Vehicles as Aid Convoy Waits near Ukraine Border.” www.cnbc.com, August 15, 2014. https://www.cnbc.com/2014/08/15/russia-masses-military-vehicles-as-aid-convoy-waits-near-ukraine-border.html#_gus. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[121] Matsuzato, Kimitaka. "The Donbas War and politics in cities on the front: Mariupol and Kramatorsk." Nationalities Papers 46, no. 6 (2018): 1008-1027.

[122] Hurak, Ihor. "the Minsk Agreements of 2015: a Forced Step or a Small Achievement of the Ukrainian Side Within the Diplomatic Confrontation Around the War in the Donbas." The Copernicus Journal of Political Studies 1 (7) (2015): 124-140.

cooperation with the USSR. As part of the military partnership, Syria provided with a naval base in the port of Tartus. Tartus played a crucial role as a springboard for the Soviet Navy in the Mediterranean.[123]

Following the collapse of the USSR and during the ensuing political, economic, and military hiatus period, Russian - Syrian relations had remained at relatively low levels. After Vladimir Putin's election to presidency, in early 2000's significant improvement was observed in terms of economic and political relations. In line with Russia's efforts to increase effectiveness in the Middle East, closer dialogue and cooperation was established between Moscow and Damascus.[124]

From the outbreak of the civil war in Syria in 2011, Russia has followed a policy that fully lines up the Assad regime. Russia has supported the Assad regime on international platforms, which enabled Syrian regime room for maneuver.[125] For example, a possible US military intervention was prevented with the UNSC resolution dated September 28, 2013, which has assumed a guarantor role in the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles since 2013. During this period, Russia effectively used the UN apparatus and the UNSC to support the Syrian regime.[126]

The armed opposition and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) had accumulated significant advances on Syrian regime forces until 2015. Damascus officially invited the Russian armed forces to the country in July 2015. With the agreement signed on August 26, 2015, Hmeimim Air Base near Latakia was opened to the use of the Russian Air Force. With the arrival of the first combat aircraft in

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[123] Orhan, Duygu Dersan. "Rusya dış politikasında Orta Doğu: Arap Baharı sonrası tehditler ve fırsatlar." Avrasya Etüdleri 53, no. 1 (2018): 87-116.

[124] Sapmaz, Ahmet. Rusya Federasyonu'nun Askeri Güvenlik Refleksindeki Dönüşüm. Ankara, : Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, 2018.

[125] Bağcı, Hüseyin. "Strategic Depth in Syria–From the Beginning to Russian Intervention." Valdai Discussion Club (2015).

[126] Baev, Pavel K. "The Impacts of the Syrian Intervention on Russian Strategic Culture." George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies. www.marshallcenter.org, January 1, 2033. https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/security-insights/impacts-syrian-intervention-russian-strategic-culture-0. (accessed on May 19, 2022)

September, Russia has been actively militarily involved in the Syrian Civil War. Shortly after, Russian Navy arrived at the Tartus Naval Base and Russian warships began patrolling in the Eastern Mediterranean. [127] [128]

After the initial combat aircraft deployment to Hmeimim, Russian army personnel, mostly consisting of special operations forces started deploying to Syria. Meanwhile, Russian Navy started a logistics support operation using naval and civilian support ships. Named as "Syrian Express", the ships carried substantial number of weapons, ammunition, spare parts, and other equipment for both Russian and Syrian forces.[129]

With the active involvement of Russian army, the course of the war in Syria had begun to change. Regime forces recaptured the cities of Palmyra in March and Aleppo in December 2016. These were followed by the recapture of Deir Zor and its environs in November 2017. By the end of 2019, as a result of the operations carried out with also the support of Iran and Hezbollah, the city of Idlib in the northwest of the country remained as the only settlement in the hands of the regime opponents.

As Michael Kofman points out, one of the main reasons for Russia's involvement in the Syrian civil war is to restore Bashar al Assad's power and authority, ensuring continuation of his rule.[130] Through restoration of Assad's power, Russia aimed to maintain the status of Tartus naval base, thereby presence in the Mediterranean and Middle East. Another motivation for Russia in supporting Assad was deterring the West. To do this, Russia deployed sophisticated weapons and equipment in Syria, such as the S-400 air defense system, land based anti-ship missile launchers and electronic

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[127] Ekşi, Muharrem. "The Syria Crisis As a Proxy War and the Return of the Realist Great Power Politics." Uluslararası Kriz ve Siyaset Araştırmaları Dergisi 1.2 (2017): 106-129.

[128] Sapmaz, Ahmet. Rusya Federasyonu'nun Askeri Güvenlik Refleksindeki Dönüşüm. Ankara, : Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, 2018.

[129] Kaim, Markus, and Oliver Tamminga. "Russia's military intervention in Syria: its operation plan, objectives, and consequences for the West's policies." (2015): 4.

[130] Kofman, Michael. "Syria and the Russian Armed Forces: An Evaluation of Moscow's Military Strategy and Operational Performance." Foreign Policy Research Institute. www.fpri.org, September 25, 2020. https://www.fpri.org/article/2020/09/syria-and-the-russian-armed-forces-an-evaluation-of-moscows-military-strategy-and-operational-performance/. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

intelligence systems.[131] Also, Russian Navy in the area as well as air and ground units performed exercises with Syrian army. The extensive military deployment and activities, Russia projected power into a junction point at the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, at the doorstep of NATO's southern flank. This approach can be considered as a countermeasure to Moscow's threat perception with regards to the NATO expansion in the Eastern Europe and increased activities in the Black Sea.

Syrian campaign also provided a valuable testing ground for the Russian Armed Forces, to test new and upgraded weapons, platforms, equipment, and tactics. As Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu stated, Russia has tested over 320 types of weapons and equipment in Syria until August 2021. The combat experience and feedback from the field provided valuable input in improving the performance and characteristics of these systems.[132] Russian military also has put special emphasis on deploying as many personnel to Syria as possible, to gain first-hand combat experience. As Russian Chief of Staff Valery Gerasimov stated that between September 2015 and October 2018, over 63,000 Russian military personnel had served in Syria.[133] From this perspective, the Syrian deployment has served as a "proof-of-concept" for the reform process initiated after the 2008 war with Georgia.[134]

3.4. 2019 Dissolution of the INF Treaty

At the 2008 Bucharest Summit, NATO declared that proliferation of ballistic missiles posed a direct threat to allied nations. In response, NATO decided to establish a comprehensive missile defense system, which would be configured in a layered,

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[131] Kofman, Michael. “Russia’s War in Syria: Assessing Russian Military Capabilities and Lessons Learned - FPRI.” Foreign Policy Research Institute. www.fpri.org, September 9, 2020. https://www.fpri.org/research/eurasia/russias-war-in-syria-assessing-russian-military-capabilities-and-lessons-learned/. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[132] TASS. “All of Russia’s Latest Weapons Tested in Syria, Says Defense Chief.” tass.com, August 30, 2021. https://tass.com/defense/1331715. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[133] BBC. “Russia Says 63,000 Troops Have Seen Combat in Syria.” www.bbc.com, August 23, 2018. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-45284121. (accessed on May 19, 2022)

[134] The International Institute for Strategic Studies. “The Military Balance 2022”. Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003294566

networked manner. The US capabilities and systems would be central to this framework. The US early warning and defense systems deployed in Europe would be part of the allied missile defense architecture. At the 2009 Strasbourg / Kehl Summit, NATO decided to take solid steps towards the alliance missile defense system capability, starting from military and political analysis of deployment options.[135]

After the Strasbourg / Kehl Summit, the then-US President Barack Obama approved the "European Phased Adaptive Approach" (EPAA) plan for deploying missile defense early warning and interceptor sites in Europe. [136] The EPAA replaced a previous plan that was devised under George W. Bush administration, which included an interceptor base in Czech Republic.[137] In line with the EPAA, the US started negotiations with host countries for the systems, namely Poland and Romania.[138] On February 4, 2010, Romanian Supreme Council of National Defense approved the country's participation to the EPAA and upon conclusion of the negotiation process, on September 13, 2011, Romania and the US signed in Washington the agreement on the deployment of the ballistic missile defense system in Romania.[139] [140] The US also went on forward with another missile defense site in Poland, based on an agreement

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[135] NATO. "Strasbourg / Kehl Summit Declaration". www.nato.int. April 4, 2009. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52837.htm. (accessed on August 9, 2022)

[136] Erdurmaz, Ali Serdar. "NATO Ballistic Missile Defence Systems And Turkey". Foreign Policy Institute. www.foreignpolicy.org.tr. February 22, 2017. https://foreignpolicy.org.tr/nato-ballistic-missile-defence-systems-and-turkey/

[137] Bosilca, Ruxandra-Laura. "The Evolution of Missile Defense Plan from Bush to Obama. Implications for the National Security of Romania". INCAS Bulletin. 4. 2012. 10.13111/2066-8201.2012.4.2.14.

[138] Dodge, Michaela. “Real Clear Defense.” A Decade of U.S.-Romanian Missile Defense Cooperation: Alliance Success, March 19, 2021. https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2021/03/19/a_decade_of_us-romanian_missile_defense_cooperation_alliance_success_768925.html. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

[139] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania. "Romania’s participation in the Missile Defense System". https://www.mae.ro/en/node/2161. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[140] United States Department of State. "Ballistic Missile Defense Agreement Between the United States of America and Romania". September 13, 2011. https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/09/172258.htm. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

signed in 2008. The 2008 agreement was amended in July 2010 and was ratified by the Polish parliament in 2011. The US also signed another agreement with Türkiye in September 2011 regarding the installation of the AN/TPY-2 X-band radar system in Kürecik, Malatya, as part of the EPAA.[141]

Therefore, the year 2011 marked a major milestone in the establishment of the NATO missile defense shield. The agreements for the installation of the missile defense sites in Poland and Romania also were significant in terms of the military posture of NATO in Eastern Europe and in the Black Sea region.

The systems that have been installed in Poland and Romania are designated as "AEGIS Ashore".[142] The system contains components of the AEGIS air and missile defense command, control and interceptor system installed on US air defense warships.[143] The main element of the AEGIS system is the AN/SPY-1 radar, which was developed to detect air threat, including ballistic and cruise missiles over long ranges. The AEGIS system collects data from on-board radars as well as from other sources through datalink, combines and analyses them and makes threat assessment to provide input for air defense weapon systems. All of the detection, analysis and engagement functions can be executed in full-automatic mode.

Another component of the AEGIS Ashore system is the Mk 41 vertical launching system (VLS). The Mk 41 is capable of housing and launching different types of air defense and cruise missiles, including the Standard Missile 2, 3, 6 and Tomahawk Cruise missile. AEGIS Ashore system is designed to host three Mk 41 systems each having eight missile containers. The US announced that the AEGIS Ashore facility in

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[141] Erdurmaz, Ali Serdar. "NATO Ballistic Missile Defence Systems And Turkey". Foreign Policy Institute. www.foreignpolicy.org.tr. February 22, 2017. https://foreignpolicy.org.tr/nato-ballistic-missile-defence-systems-and-turkey/. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[142] Kimball, Daryl. "The European Phased Adaptive Approach at a Glance". Arms Control Association. March 2022. https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Phasedadaptiveapproach. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[143] Karako, Tom. “Aegis Ashore.” Missile Threat. missilethreat.csis.org, June 23, 2021. https://missilethreat.csis.org/defsys/aegis-ashore/. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

Romania would be equipped with the Block IA, Block IB, and Block IIA versions of the Standard Missile 3 (SM-3).[144] The SM-3 is a ballistic anti-missile interceptor capable of intercepting outside the atmosphere (exoatmospheric).[145] The groundbreaking for the AEGIS Ashore system in in Deveselu, Romania took place in 2013 and the system achieved operational status in May 2016.[146] The site in Poland is expected to be operational by the end of 2022.[147]

NATO's missile defense system initiative and US deployment of sophisticated missile defense systems in Eastern Europe has been one of the major issues in US - Russia relations and contributed to Russia's threat perception regarding NATO's *modus operandi*.

Russia expressed severe criticism on the US agreements with Poland and Romania for the installation of AEGIS Ashore sites.[148] Moscow's main argument was that the AEGIS Ashore system deployment was a direct breach of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, signed in 1987 by the USSR and the US. Central to this

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[144] Missile Defense Advocacy. "Romania – Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance.". missiledefenseadvocacy.org, June 26, 2018. https://missiledefenseadvocacy.org/intl_cooperation/romania/. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[145] Raytheon Missiles & Defense. "SM-3 Interceptor". www.raytheonmissilesanddefense.com.https://www.raytheonmissilesanddefense.com/what-we-do/missile-defense/interceptors/sm-3-interceptor. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

[146] D'hondt, Lucy. "Aegis Ashore Ballistic Missile Defence System Goes Online in Romania". Finabel. finabel.org, March 4, 2020. https://finabel.org/aegis-ashore-ballistic-missile-defence-system-goes-online-in-romania/. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[147] Lopez, Todd. "Aegis Ashore in Poland on Target for 2022 > U.S. Department of Defense > Defense Department News." U.S. Department of Defense. www.defense.gov, November 19, 2021. https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2849023/aegis-ashore-in-poland-on-target-for-2022/. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[148] Russia Today. "Moscow Voices Alarm as NATO Romanian Missile Defense Base Goes Live". www.rt.com, May 11, 2016. https://www.rt.com/news/342696-russia-us-missiles-romania/. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

objection was the presence of Mk 41 VLS with the site. The Mk 41 is able to fire interceptor missiles as well as Tomahawk cruise missiles.[149]

The INF Treaty was developed to eliminate the threat of ballistic missiles in Europe and up to intermediate range, which is 5,500 kilometers. The treaty prohibits development and deployment of all cruise and ballistic missiles with a range between 500 and 5,500 kilometers. [150] The treaty also incorporated a verification mechanism, which called for mutual inspections. Signed on February 1, 1987, by presidents Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, the INF went into force in 1988. The INF had played a vital role in eliminating the risk of a nuclear war in Europe.[151]

Russian President Vladimir Putin voiced his country's criticism about the context of the INF for the first time in 2007, during his speech in Munich Security Conference. Following this debate, starting from mid-2010's, the US and Russia accused each other of breaching the treaty. The US accused Russia of developing a new type of cruise missile, namely the 9M729 and deploying them in Kaliningrad.[152] The 9M729 is claimed to have range in excess of 500 kilometers, well above the lower threshold of the INF.[153] Russia, on the other hand accused the US of violating the treaty by installing a cruise missile launcher in Poland and Romania. The Mk 41, which is

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[149] TASS. "Russia slams US Aegis Ashore missile deployment in Europe as direct breach of INF Treaty". www.tass.com. November 28, 2018. https://tass.com/politics/1032585. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[150] Treaty Between The United States Of America And The Union Of Soviet Socialist Republics On The Elimination Of Their Intermediate-Range And Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty). "U.S. Department of State." 2009-2017.state.gov. https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/avc/trty/102360.htm. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

[151] Kimball, Daryl. "The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty at a Glance". Arms Control Association. www.armscontrol.org, January 28, 2004. https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/INFtreaty.

[152] NATO. "Official Text: Statement on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, 04-Dec.-2018." www.nato.int, December 4, 2018. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_161122.htm. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[153] Dahlgren, Masao, and Jeremy Chin. "9M729 (SSC-8) | Missile Threat." Missile Threat. missilethreat.csis.org, March 31, 2022. https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/ssc-8-novator-9m729/. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

developed to be used on board warships to fire different types of air defense and land attack missiles, can fire the Tomahawk cruise missile and Russia claimed that the AEGIS Ashore sites in Eastern Europe have in fact been deployed to provide a strike capability against Russia.[154] While mutual accusations continued, the US declared withdrawal from the INF on October 20, 2018. On February 1, 2019, the US announced suspension its obligations, followed by formal withdrawal on August 2, 2019.[155] On August 5, 2019, Russia declared the elimination of the treaty.[156]

The dissolution of the INF Treaty marks a milestone in the post-Cold War era in Europe. The treaty had played an important role in the balance of power between the NATO and Russia.[157] After the treaty, both Russia and the US increased their efforts in developing advanced precision guided missile systems and hypersonic weapons. Meanwhile, Russia has continuously underlined opposition to NATO missile defense system installations in Eastern Europe, stating that the systems are in fact targeting Russia, instead of stated purpose of forming a defensive perimeter against the ballistic missile threat from Iran.[158] According to Russia's claims, the missile defense system

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[154] Steinberger, William. "Overview of the United States Withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty." (2019). https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=can. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[155] United States Department of State. "U.S. Withdrawal from the INF Treaty on August 2, 2019". state.gov, August 2, 2019. https://2017-2021.state.gov/u-s-withdrawal-from-the-inf-treaty-on-august-2-2019/index.html. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

[156] Presidency of Russia. "Statement by the President of Russia on the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles". August 5, 2019. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61271. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[157] Kimball, Daryl. "The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty at a Glance". Arms Control Association. www.armscontrol.org, January 28, 2004. https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/INFtreaty. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[158] Sankaran, Jaganath. "Defending Against Iranian Missile Threats Without Diluting the Russian Deterrent." RAND. www.rand.org. February 13, 2015. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR957.html. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

created a risk of disturbing the strategic balance of power, posing an existential threat to Russia.[159]

3.5. 2020 Second Nagorno Karabakh War

The Nagorno Karabakh region in the South Caucasus is subject to dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The region belongs to, and internationally recognized as such, Azerbaijan. However, most of the region has been governed by the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR), also known as Republic of Artsakh.

Since late 1980's, there have been many armed conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The first Nagorno Karabakh War in early 1988 as an intra-ethnic violence and escalated during the dissolution of the USSR. The conflict turned into a war in late 1991 and was ended with a ceasefire brokered by Russia through Bishkek Protocol, signed on May 5, 1994. After the ceasefire, Azerbaijan had effectively lost control over the region. Throughout the following years there has been many small-scale fire exchanges between Armenian and Azerbaijani troops in the region, sometimes escalating to a larger scale clash, as seen in 2016.[160]

On July 12, 2020, Armenian and Azerbaijani troops exchanged fire along the border line, particularly in the northern sector of the border and long the border line with Nakhcivan. Both sides accused each other of breaching the ceasefire and the clashes continued until the end of the month. Despite a pause for the skirmishes, tensions remained high until September. On September 27, Azerbaijan army started bombing NKR targets in Stepanakert, the de facto capital city of the NKR. Azerbaijani army made extensive and coordinated use of drones, artillery, and precision guided missiles on NKR and Armenian army bases, logistics depots as well as armored and artillery

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[159] Oğuz, Şafak. “Missile Defense in Europe: Against Whom?, Articles Şafak Oğuz | Insight Turkey.” Insight Turkey. www.insightturkey.com, June 4, 2018. https://www.insightturkey.com/articles/missile-defense-in-europe-against-whom. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[160] Köse, Güçlü, and Keisuke Wakizaka. "The Historical Dynamics of the Second Karabakh War and the Shift in Turkey’s Policy: The Effects of the Syrian Civil War." Karadeniz Araştırmaları Dergisi (2022).

units.[161] Armenian response was largely in the form of artillery fire on Azerbaijan forward units. Azerbaijan also effectively employed cyber and electronic warfare on NKR and Armenian forces.[162]

As a result of effective and precise firepower, Azerbaijani troops achieved significant gains in Nagorno Karabakh, recapturing Shusha, the second biggest city of the region on November 9. This development prompted Armenia, which suffered devastating losses to its army, to call for a ceasefire. An agreement signed by the presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia the same day. As a result, Azerbaijan retook a large portion of Nagorno Karabakh, including Shusha.

Russia's role and involvement in the Second Nagorno Karabakh War is subject to debate.[163] Many scholars assess that Moscow has been skeptical towards the Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. As Alexander Krylov, a prominent researcher on Caucasus and President of the Society of Caucasian Studies stated, many people in Russia believe that Pashinyan has been leading Armenia along the path of Ukraine, towards NATO.[164] There has also been criticism from Russia that Pashinyan is in fact controlled by external actors, such as George Soros.[165] The fact that Russia has not provided active support for Armenia during the war can be taken as a reflection of Moscow's aim to increase control and influence over Armenia, through directing the

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[161] Amirkhanyan, Zhirayr. "A Failure to Innovate: The Second Nagorno-Karabakh War." USAWC Press. press.armywarcollege.edu, March 9, 2022. https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol52/iss1/10/. (accessed on May 19, 2022)

[162] Bivainis, Andrius. "Multi-Dimensional Assessment of the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War." Security & Defence Quarterly. securityanddefence.pl, February 25, 2022. https://securityanddefence.pl/Multi-dimensional-assessment-of-the-Second-Nagorno-Karabakh-War,146180,0,2.html. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

[163] Minzarari, Dumitru. "Russia's Stake in the Nagorno-Karabakh War: Accident or Design?". Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP). www.swp-berlin.org, November 12, 2020. https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/russias-stake-in-the-nagorno-karabakh-war-accident-or-design. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[164] Armenia is Governed from Soros Office, Not from Pashinyan`s One." Arminfo. arminfo.info, August 10, 2020. https://arminfo.info/full_news.php?id=54275&lang=3. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[165] Kerimkhanov, Abdul. "Russian Analyst: Pashinyan Follows Soros' Commandments [EXCLUSIVE]." Azernews.Az. www.azernews.az, September 30, 2019. https://www.azernews.az/analysis/156508.html. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

blame and responsibility of the defeat on the Pashinyan government, thereby weakening it. Another aim could be increasing the belief among Armenians that their country cannot survive against the Azerbaijani threat without full support of Russia. This level of threat might have been achieved with the large-scale losses of Armenian army and territory. From this perspective, the position of Russia during the war can be considered as part of the defensive measures applied in the Black Sea region against Western influence.[166]

3.6. Vladimir Putin's Speech on February 21, 2022

In early 2021, Russia started to deploy large number of military units near the border region with Ukraine and in annexed Crimea. Russia accused Ukraine of violating the Minsk II Protocol. The first wave of buildup halted on April 22, when Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu announced that troops that participated in the military exercises in the border region were returning back to their bases.[167]

Shortly after Russia withdrawing a number of troops from the border, on July 12, 2021, an article by Russian President Vladimir Putin titled "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians" was published on the official web page of the Presidency of Russia. In the article, Putin focuses on the history and the socio-political structure of Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians. Putin claims that all these three nations in fact belong to one triune nation. Putin explicitly denies the Ukraine as a separate entity or an independent nation. From this point, Putin claims that, based on large number of Russians living in Ukraine, the presence of Ukraine as a state is a threat to Russia. Putin proceeds to discuss the legitimacy of the borders of Ukraine and states that the

[166] Mirovalev, Mansur. "What Role Is Russia Playing in the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict?" Al Jazeera. www.aljazeera.com, October 19, 2020. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/19/is-russia-reduced-to-a-secondary-role-in-nagorno-karabakh. (accessed on August 9, 2022)

[167] Shuster, Simon. "Inside the Power Struggle Breaking up Russia and Ukraine | Time." Time. time.com, February 2, 2022. https://time.com/6144109/russia-ukraine-vladimir-putin-viktor-medvedchuk. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

existence of Ukraine is an "anti-Russia project", devised by external powers as early as 17th century.[168]

The views and arguments put forward by Putin in the article were later echoed by prominent Russian statesmen and scholars, such as the deputy chairman of the Security Council of Russia Dmitry Medvedev and Putin's former adviser Vladislav Surkov.[169] [170] The article was later added to the curriculum of military-political training program of Russian Ministry of Defense.[171]

Russia resumed military buildup around Ukraine in October 2021, with more troops being massed along the border as well as in Belarus.[172] During the buildup, Russia demanded security guarantees from the NATO, whereby no former Soviet states, especially Ukraine would be accepted as member and cancellation of military activities in Eastern Europe.[173] Diplomatic efforts from many different states, such as France failed to produce results.[174]

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[168] Putin, Vladimir. "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians". Presidency of Russia. July 12, 2021. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[169] Kommersant. “Почему Бессмысленны Контакты с Нынешним Украинским Руководством”. www.kommersant.ru, October 10, 2021. https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5028300. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[170] Interfax. “Сурков Заявил, Что России Тесно в Границах ‘Похабного’ Брестского Мира.” www.interfax.ru, February 15, 2022. https://www.interfax.ru/russia/822172. (accessed on May 1, 2022)

[171] RBK. “Шойгу Обязал Военных Изучить Статью Путина Об Украине”. www.rbc.ru, July 15, 2021. https://www.rbc.ru/politics/15/07/2021/60f0475d9a7947b61f09f4be. (accessed on August 12, 2022)

[172] Rainsford, Sarah. “Russia-Ukraine Border: Why Moscow Is Stoking Tensions” BBC News. www.bbc.com, November 27, 2021. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-59415885. (accessed on August 14, 2022)

[173] Roth, Andrew. “Russia Issues List of Demands It Says Must Be Met to Lower Tensions in Europe” the Guardian. www.theguardian.com, December 17, 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/dec/17/russia-issues-list-demands-tensions-europe-ukraine-nato. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

[174] Nathan Hodge, Pavolva, Uliana, Mawad, Dalal and Bashir, Nada, CNN, Eliza Mackintosh. “Macron Meets with Putin, Leading Europe’s Diplomatic Efforts to Defuse Ukraine Crisis - CNN.”

Against this backdrop, on the evening of February 21, 2022, Vladimir Putin delivered a speech which was broadcast live. Putin started the speech stating that the situation in Donbas was very dire and said that Ukraine is an inseparable part of Russian history and culture. Putin then went on detailing his claims about the Ukrainian and Russian history, with special emphasis on the 1917 Revolution and its effects on the ethnic composition of the Russian Empire. This part of the speech is essentially a summary of Putin's 2021 article.[175]

In the second part of the speech, Putin claimed that Ukraine constantly failed to abide by the Minsk II Protocol and violated ceasefire, presenting direct threat to the people of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR). Putin accused Ukraine of aiming to get nuclear weapons and to allow NATO troops deploy on its territory. He claimed that NATO did not fulfill its promise on not to expand towards Eastern Europe. In the last part, Putin said that in order to protect the people living in these states, a Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance would be signed. He ended the speech declaring his intention to recognize the independence and sovereignty of the DPR and the LPR.[176]

The speech, especially with its tone and remarks about Russian Empire and Russian nationalism caused concern among Western public and decision makers. Putin was accused of historical revisionism and bending history according to political aims. Meanwhile, the speech was also considered as an ultimatum, signaling Russia's next move in Ukraine.[177]

CNN. edition.cnn.com, February 7, 2022. https://edition.cnn.com/2022/02/07/europe/ukraine-russia-news-monday-intl/index.html. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[175] Putin, Vladimir. "Address by the President of the Russian Federation." Presidency of Russia, February 21, 2022, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[176] Putin, Vladimir. "Address by the President of the Russian Federation." Presidency of Russia, February 21, 2022, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[177] Daniszewski, John. "Analysis: Putin's Take on History May Lay Groundwork for War." Analysis: Putin's take on history may lay groundwork for war. apnews.com, February 22, 2022. https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-europe-russia-poland-vladimir-putin-f00872897f338dbedd857cd1d880e9d3. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

3.7. 2022 The Beginning and the Reason of the Russo - Ukrainian War

Starting from late 2021, Russia had deployed a significant military force along its border with Ukraine, in the annexed Crimea and in Belarus. On December 17, 2021, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared Russia's proposition on security guarantees, consisting of two documents, one to be signed by Russia and the US and the other by Russia and the NATO. These guarantees covered a commitment by NATO not to accept Ukraine as member and to reduce its military assets in Eastern Europe.[178] NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced on January 12, 2022, that the alliance rejected the offers.[179] Meanwhile, as of early February 2022, the number of soldiers deployed around Ukraine had totaled as much as 190,000.[180]

On early hours of February 24, 2022, Vladimir Putin's speech was broadcast by Russian state television. The speech announced start of a large-scale military operation against Ukraine, named as "special military operation". Putin stated in his speech that all efforts towards reaching a common ground with the NATO failed and NATO's expansion to the east posed an existential threat to Russia. Putin accused NATO of arming Ukraine and encouraging the Kiev government against Russia. In announcing the start of the military operation, Putin stated that Russia was operating under Article 51 of the UN Charter, to protect people of the DPR and LPR. Additionally, Putin stated the purpose of the operation as "to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, as well as bring to trial those who perpetrated numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including against citizens of the Russian Federation".[181] This statement implies that Russia

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[178] TASS. “Draft security guarantee agreements offered by Russia are not ultimatum, Putin says” tass.com, December 21, 2021. https://tass.com/politics/1378727. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[179] Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. “NATO Rejects Russian Security Demands, But Says It’s Open To More Diplomacy.” www.rferl.org, January 12, 2022. https://www.rferl.org/a/nato-russia-council-talks/31650372.html. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[180] Wintour, Patrick. “Russia Has Amassed up to 190,000 Troops on Ukraine Borders, US Warns.” The Guardian. www.theguardian.com, February 18, 2022. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/18/russia-has-amassed-up-to-190000-troops-on-ukraine-borders-us-warns. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

[181] Putin, Vladimir. "Address by the President of the Russian Federation". Presidency of Russia. February 24, 2022. http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

sought for the overthrow of Ukraine government and arrest Ukrainian political and military figures, starting with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky.

The operation started with a large-scale aerial bombardment by cruise and ballistic missiles, fired against various bases, depots, and installations of the Ukrainian army. Simultaneously, armored columns started entering Ukraine from Belarus and Crimea. Russian special operations forces executed an heliborne assault against the Gostomel Airport, near Kiev to capture the airport as a staging area for a rapid capture of Kiev and overthrow of the Ukraine government.[182]

In response to the invasion, Ukraine Armed Forces quickly started a defensive campaign, consisting of small-unit operations using anti-tank guided missiles and small drones, armed drones, and extensive artillery. Russian forces suffered significant losses and their maneuvers were hampered by poor planning and problems in logistics and coordination.[183] After failing to capture Kiev and losing the initial momentum because of heavy losses, Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu announced in March the conclusion of the first phase of the operation and start of the second phase, concentrating on the Donbas region.[184] All Russian forces that invaded the north and northeastern parts of Ukraine retreated and were diverted to the Donbas sector after March. As of July 2022, Russian forces had control of Mariupol capture of which established a land link between Crimea and Donbas, as well as Kherson in south Ukraine. Ukraine, receiving extensive weapon and equipment support from Western countries focused its counter attacks in the Kherson sector in late July, to repel Russian forces.

Immediately after the start of the war, the US and the EU have imposed a wide range of economic, political, and industrial sanctions on Russia. Russian persons and

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[182] Dalsjö, Robert, Michael Jonsson, and Johan Norberg. "A Brutal Examination: Russian Military Capability in Light of the Ukraine War." Survival 64, no. 3 (2022): 7-28.

[183] Rahman, Sarika, Kendall Carll, Eli Pearl, Michelle Liou, and Joy Park. "Current Status of the War in Ukraine." Foreign Policy (2022).

[184] TASS. “Main goals of first stage of special military operation in Ukraine accomplished — Shoigu” tass.com, March 29, 2022. https://tass.com/politics/1428893. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

institutions have been banned from many organizations and transactions, such as the SWIFT system. In parallel, the US, and many NATO countries have started supplying large number of military platforms, weapons, equipment, and ammunition to Ukraine.[185] The rapid shifting of the geopolitical environment in Europe manifested in the joint application by Sweden and Finland to NATO, which was submitted in May 2022.[186] The two Scandinavian states were formally invited to membership by the NATO during the Madrid Summit in June.[187]

[185] van Bergeijk, Peter. "Economic sanctions and the Russian war on Ukraine: a critical comparative appraisal." ISS working papers. General series 699 (2022).

[186] Henley, Jon. "Sweden and Finland to Formally Submit Nato Bids 'Hand in Hand' ." The Guardian. www.theguardian.com, May 18, 2022. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/17/finland-parliament-approve-nato-sweden-turkey. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

[187] NATO. "Madrid Summit Declaration Issued by NATO Heads of State and Government (2022)." www.nato.int, June 29, 2022. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_196951.htm. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

CHAPTER 4

DEFENSE AND SECURITY POLICIES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The defense and security policies of the Russian Federation are governed by a set of documents. These documents, each prepared, reviewed and approved through separate processes, provide insight to Russia's perception regarding the international system, domestic and external environment, economic, technological, military, and social structures, and interactions as well as security paradigm.

The most important of these documents is the National Security Strategy, followed by the Military Doctrine. These documents are essential to understand Russia's defense policies and its motivations.

4.1. National Security Strategy

The National Security Strategy of Russian Federation (NSS; Стратегия национальной безопасности Российской Федерации) document provides a general framework on the perception of Russian Federation on international security, internal and external threats, as well as Russia's priorities regarding threats, defense, science, technology, and social issues. The NSS documents put emphasis on Russia's threat perception and threat analysis. It provides a comprehensive view of security. The NSS is essentially a political document, and it presents the Russian state's views as well as goals to ensure the security of individuals, institutions, and the state as a whole in political, military, technological, economic, and social levels. The document is prepared by the Russian Federation Security Council (RFSC) and signed into law by the Russian President.[188]

[188] Bakshi, Jyotsna. "Russia's National Security Concepts and Military Doctrines: Continuity and Change." Strategic Analysis. ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu, October 0, 2000. https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/sa/sa_oct00baj01.html. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

During the tenure of President Boris Yeltsin, a National Security Concept (NSC; Концепция национальной безопасности Российской Федерации) document was prepared in 1997. This document was updated shortly after Vladimir Putin assumed presidency in 2000. The NSC was replaced by a new format, the NSS, signed by the then-President Dmitry Medvedev on May 12, 2009. This was updated by the new NSS, signed by President Vladimir Putin on December 31, 2015. This version was prepared in the aftermath of the Euromaidan events in Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in the Donbas region of Ukraine. Therefore, the NSS 2015 reflected the threat perception and planned measures by Russia with regards to NATO's activities and expansion and the security situation in the close periphery of the country. The NSS 2015 was updated by a new document, signed by Putin on July 2, 2021.[189]

4.1.1. 2021 National Security Strategy

The NSS 2021 states that the document is based upon the connection and mutual dependence between national security and socio-economic improvement of the Russian Federation. However, unlike the previous document, there is more emphasis on stability and security of the Russian economy.[190]

The NSS 2021's evaluation of the status of international relations centers around the assessment that there are multiple economic and political centers of gravity. The current world order is marked by forming of many global and regional leader countries, based on economic and technological development. This trend directly confronts with the Western states' position to preserve their hegemony. While the NSS 2015 evaded to explicitly name the US or Europe as direct threat or unfriendly

[189] Cooper, Julian. "Russia's Updated National Security Strategy." NATO Defense College. www.ndc.nato.int, July 19, 2021. https://www.ndc.nato.int/research/research.php?icode=704#_ednref2. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[190] Официальный интернет-портал правовой информации. "Стратегии Национальной Безопасности Российской Федерации." publication.pravo.gov.ru, July 3, 2021. http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202107030001.

countries, the NSS 2021, underlines that the necessary climate that enables partnership and cooperation ceased to exist, only to be replaced by transaction-based relations.[191]

The 2015 version of the NSS presented a list of ten parameters to evaluate the state of the national security, such as per capita GDP, the share of GDP allocated to science, technology development and education, the share of modern weapon systems in the inventory of armed forces. These indicators are not present in the NSS 2021 and according to Julian Cooper this is because of the deterioration in Russian economy and resultant recline in these indicators.[192]

On the military aspect, the NSS 2021 states that the US intention to deploy medium range missiles in Europe poses a great risk for Russia. A US global missile defense shield is referred to as a security risk. Particular emphasis was given on NATO's activities and expansion towards Russia's borders. The document does not mention any intention or willingness by Moscow to establish dialogue with the NATO in resolving this issue or reach a common ground. Similarly, the document does not mention any plans or intention to form up or continue cooperation with the EU on security or energy issues.[193]

Compared with the NSS 2015, the NSS 2021 focuses more on Russia's internal issues and topics, such as economic development, socio-economic challenges, development in science and technology, and information security. Some of the challenges and risks

[191] Rumer, Eugene, and Richard Sokolsky. "Russia's National Security Narrative: All Quiet on the Eastern Front." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. carnegieendowment.org, May 23, 2022. https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/05/23/russia-s-national-security-narrative-all-quiet-on-eastern-front-pub-87185. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

[192] Buchanan, Elizabeth. "Russia's 2021 National Security Strategy: Cool Change Forecasted for the Polar Regions". Royal United Services Institute. rusi.org, July 14, 2021. https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/russias-2021-national-security-strategy-cool-change-forecasted-polar-regions. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[193] Leszczenko, L., and O. Tarnavska. "Russia's 2021 National Security Strategy in the Context Of The State's Strategic Culture." Actual Problems of International Relations 1, no. 147 (2021): 18-26.

that Russia faces under these topics are presented as poverty, decline in scientific and technological superiority, dependence on foreign input in industrial activities.[194]

Overall, the NSS 2021 can be considered as an important document that manifests Russia's new position in the international environment, particularly against the US and the NATO. Russia has evidently dropped dialogue or cooperation with the West from its agenda. With underlining rise of multiple power centers in the world order, Russia puts more priority on regional collaboration while focusing on development of its economic, technological, and social structure.

4.2. Military Doctrine

The Military Doctrine (MD; Военная доктрина Российской Федерации) document defines the security risks against Russian Federation and outlines the necessary measures required by the Armed Forces to prevent them. The document lays the foundation for the Armed Forces to prepare to face the security challenges, prevent and eliminate them. The MD is especially important to understand Russian Federation's threat perception, defense planning and strategy as well the outline of its defense policies.[195]

The MD document does not only reflect Russia's threat assessment but also provides framework for how Russian Armed Forces will plan, organize, and equip to be ready for possible conflicts. In this essence, the MD forms the baseline for the organizational structuring, armament, training, and indoctrination of the Russian Armed Forces.

The first MD in the post-Soviet period was prepared in 1992 and was published in draft form in the military-theoretical journal of the Ministry of Defense, the Military Thought (Военная мысль). The draft was refused, and a new doctrine was prepared

[194] Buchanan, Elizabeth. "Russia's 2021 National Security Strategy: Cool Change Forecasted for the Polar Regions". Royal United Services Institute. rusi.org, July 14, 2021. https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/russias-2021-national-security-strategy-cool-change-forecasted-polar-regions. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[195] Pietkiewicz, Michał . "The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation", Polish Political Science Yearbook, vol. 47(3) (2018), pp. 505–520

next year. The 1993 MD was approved in November 1993. Only the summary chapter of this document was released for the public. It mentioned threats from the West but also described new forms of threat such as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, and regional conflicts in Russia's close periphery. Observations of the 1991 Gulf War were obvious, as in the definition of requirement for precision guided missiles and air defense systems. The 1993 MD defined two main defense policy objectives: First to preserve nuclear deterrence and second, tackle the challenge of regional conflicts through peace enforcement and peacekeeping operations. The MD called for a smaller yet more maneuverable force structure, equipped with mobile and flexible platforms, having rapid deployment capability. An important feature of the 1993 MD is the change from traditional "no first strike" policy for nuclear weapons. This change can be commented as an attempt in compensating the weakening of the conventional forces.[196]

Shortly after NATO's Operation Allied Force in Kosovo, a new MD was prepared in October 1999. Approved by President Vladimir Putin on April 21, 2000. The 2000 MD did not make much change to the definition of external threats but clearly based on the Chechnya experience, put special emphasis on terrorism, ethnic and sectarian conflict within Russian Federation, interference on Russian politics. The MD underlined Russia's frustration for the international community's disregard for Moscow's concerns in regional conflicts and crises.[197]

The third MD was approved on February 5, 2010. The document is distinctive because for the first time Russia explicitly declares that it reserves the right to first use of nuclear weapons in a conventional conflict under certain conditions such as direct and existential threat to the state. Prepared after the 2008 Russo - Georgian War, the document describes NATO's activities and its expansion as a threat. The development

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[196] Lehovich, Vladimir. Issues for the US Navy in the Black Sea Region: Country Profiles and Recommendations: Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia. Center for Naval Analyses, 2000. https://www.cna.org/archive/CNA_Files/pdf/d0000572.a2.pdf. (accessed on May 19, 2022)

[197] Kofman, Michael, Anya Fink, Dmitry Gorenburg, Mary Chesnut, Jeffrey Edmonds, and Julian Waller. Russian Military Strategy: Core Tenets and Operational Concepts. CNA, 2021. https://www.cna.org/archive/CNA_Files/pdf/russian-military-strategy-core-tenets-and-operational-concepts.pdf. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

of global missile defense shield, regional conflicts, territorial claims against Russia and international terrorism are also mentioned as external threats. This document was replaced by the 2014 MD.[198]

4.2.1. 2014 Military Doctrine

The latest MD, which went effective on December 25, 2014, was shaped by the effects of the Arab Spring, Syrian Civil War and Ukraine crisis. The documents states that global competition, increase in the number and severity of regional crises and conflicts as well as economic and financial problems pose serious security threats. The document assumes Russian Federation may find itself directly confronted by several of these risks. The MD accepts that the risk for an all-out conventional inter-state war is low, however, regional conflicts and crises pose military threats to Russia.[199]

The MD lists the major external security threats as below:[200]

a) NATO's military activities and significant increase of power, expansion by accepting new members, as well as violation of international rules, especially in the near periphery of the Russian Federation.

b) Increase in instability in states and regions, as a direct threat to regional and global security.

c) Overseas military operations and deployments in the form of power projection in regions close to Russian Federation and its allies.

d) Development and deployment of advanced strategic weapon systems such as prompt global strike, deployment of military assets to outer space, advanced

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[198] Congressional Research Service. "Russian Armed Forces: Military Doctrine and Strategy", August 20, 2020. https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/IF11625.pdf. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

[199] The Economist. “Putin’s New Model Army.” www.economist.com, May 24, 2014. http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21602743-money-and-reform-have-given-russia-armed-forces-it-can-use-putins-new-model-army. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

[200] The Embassy of the Russian Federation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. "The military doctrine of the Russian Federation" (Press release). London: June 29, 2015. https://rusemb.org.uk/press/2029. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

precision guided weapons, and ballistic missile defense systems, as a threat to disturb strategic stability and deterrence.

e) Threats against territorial integrity of the Russian Federation and its allies as well as intervention to internal politics.

f) Increase of use and development of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons as well as systems that are used to carry such weapons, i.e., ballistic and cruise missiles.

g) Disrespect and violation of international treaties and agreements, especially those that are about arms control.

h) Military operations in the close periphery of the Russian Federation, especially without consent of the UN Security Council and in violation of the UN Charter, international agreements and norms of international law.

i) Ongoing armed conflicts in the close periphery of the Russian Federation as well as risk of new conflicts.

j) Increasing threat of international terrorism, religious and ethnic extremism, combined with the lack of adequate international cooperation against terrorism, illicit trafficking and smuggling.

k) Ethnic, religious and social tensions turning into armed conflict and terrorism, radicalism of all kinds, increased deployment of private military companies and mercenaries, especially in regions close to Russian Federation and its allies.

l) Deployment of information and communication technologies for military and espionage aims, violating international law and agreements, undermining national sovereignty, integrity and regional and global security.

m) Regime changes and uprisings in the close periphery of the Russian Federation and its allies.

n) Intelligence, disinformation and manipulation operations of foreign states against the Russian Federation.

The MD describes the main internal risk as follows: [201]

[201] The Embassy of the Russian Federation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. "The military doctrine of the Russian Federation" (Press release). London: June 29, 2015. https://rusemb.org.uk/press/2029. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

a) Activities aimed at changing by force the constitutional system of the Russian Federation; destabilizing domestic political and social situation in the country; disrupting the functioning of state administration bodies, important state and military facilities, and information infrastructure of the Russian Federation.

b) Activities of terrorist organizations and individuals aimed at undermining the sovereignty and violating the unity and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation.

c) Subversive information activities against the population, especially young citizens of the State, aimed at undermining historical, spiritual, and patriotic traditions related to the defense of the Motherland.

d) Provoking inter-ethnic and social tensions, extremism, stirring up ethnic and religious hatred or enmity.

One remarkable feature of the 2014 MD is the emphasis given on internal threats. Unlike the previous MD documents, this version for the first times opens a new topic for internal military threats. Furthermore, the document adds "information space" for the first time as a domain while assessing military threats. This approach shows Russia's focus on internal threats, information and psychological operations and resources allocated for these activities.[202]

The MD states the necessity to defend the whole "zone of influence" of Russian Federation but does not elaborate the exact borders and limits of the mentioned zone. MD puts emphasis on the threat emanating from military activities in countries and regions adjacent to this abstract zone.[203]

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[202] İsmailov, Elnur. "Rusya-Batı Krizi Çerçevesinde Rusya'nın Yeni Askeri Doktrini", BİLGESAM. February 2015. http://www.bilgesam.org/Images/Dokumanlar/0-66-20150227231190.pdf. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[203] Pietkiewicz, Michal. "The military doctrine of the Russian Federation." Polish Pol. Sci. YB 47 (2018): 505.

Another striking feature of the document is explicit mention of the Prompt Global Strike (PGS) project of United States. The PGS envisages capability to strike anywhere in the world within one hour through hypersonic precision guided weapon systems. It is clear that PGS is source of great concern for Russian military planners. The document focuses on countermeasures and systems to defend against PGS, through conventional assets.[204]

4.3. State Armament Program

Russian Federation's armament policies, modernization and acquisition plans and budget allocations are governed through 10-year armament programs, named State Armament Program (SAP; государственной программы вооружения). Each SAP provides details for the first half of the 10-year period and reviewed every 5 years. In accordance with the SAP, the Ministry of Defense prepares a State Defense Order (SDO; Государственный оборонный заказ) for each year.[205]

The SAP is the essential instrument in planning, overseeing, and controlling the modernization of the inventory of Russian Armed Forces, during its transformation and disposing of Soviet-era equipment. The most prominent indicator in assessing the progress of this transformation is the percentage of modern equipment in the total inventory. The SAP sets out goals for each armed service in terms of share of modern equipment to the total inventory. For example, the SAP 2020 determined that the share of modern submarines in the submarine fleet would be 71 per cent by 2020.[206]

The SAP assigns priorities and framework for defense procurement, research, and development (R&D), infrastructure development, training, and organizational implementations for all armed services of the Russian Federation. The SAP is prepared

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[204] Pietkiewicz, Michal. "The military doctrine of the Russian Federation." Polish Pol. Sci. YB 47 (2018): 505.

[205] Cooper, Julian. “Russia’s state armament programme to 2020: a quantitative assessment of implementation 2011-2015”. Stockholm: FOI, 2016.

[206] Cooper, Julian. “Russia’s state armament programme to 2020: a quantitative assessment of implementation 2011-2015”.

in accordance with the NSS and MD documents. The latest SAP, SAP 2027 covers the period between 2018 and 2027. The previous SAP, SAP 2020 covered 2011 and 2020. A review, which was planned to take place in 2016 was postponed because of deterioration in Russian economy and issues with the state budget.

4.3.1. SAP 2020 and SAP 2027

The SAP 2020 incorporated experiences and feedback from the 2008 Russo - Georgian War. A total of 19.4 trillion rubles were allocated for procurement and modernization, whereas 1.7 trillion was allocated for the development of the defense industry. The Russian Navy received the greatest share from the budget compared to other services, with around 25 per cent of the total procurement budget.[207] Significant portion of this spending had been done for the upgrade and improvement of the nuclear submarine fleet; mainly ballistic missile armed nuclear submarines (SSBNs). The second highest share was for the Russian Air Force, with 18 per cent. Procurement of around 600 fixed wing aircraft and 1,100 helicopters was planned.[208] Additionally, acquisition of more than 100 divisional units of surface to air missile (SAM) systems was planned. Ground forces received the lowest share, around 14 per cent. With the allocated budget, procurement of more than 2,300 main battle tanks, 17,000 armored vehicles and 2,000 artillery pieces was planned. For the upgrade of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), 5 per cent of the procurement budget was spared. The remaining 13 per cent was to be spent for other types of equipment, mostly communications and command & control systems.[209]

During the time period covered by the SAP 2020, particularly in the first 5 years, Russian defense industry had been able to deliver the required number of equipment to Russian Armed Forces. It should be noted that this mentioned first half period of

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[207] Cooper, Julian. “Russia’s state armament programme to 2020: a quantitative assessment of implementation 2011-2015”. Stockholm: FOI, 2016.

[208] Oxenstierna, Susanne. "The Russian defence budget and the state armament programme up to 2020." In SIPRI, 17th Annual International Conference on Economics and Security Stockholm, Sweden, pp. 14-15. 2013.

[209] Congressional Research Service. "Russian Armed Forces: Military Modernization and Reforms. July 20, 2020. https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/IF11603.pdf

the SAP 2020 corresponds to the time when Russia had relatively better relations with the West, before the annexation of Crimea. Russian defense industry had had access to modern Western production technologies, software, and machinery during this period.

Another noteworthy trend during the implementation of the SAP 2020 is that delivered platforms and equipment are mostly upgrades or variants of existing ones, which were designed and first introduced in the late-Soviet period. The Su-30 and Su-34 combat aircraft, upgraded T-72 and T-80 main battle tanks are examples to this trend. All these platforms were first introduced during the Soviet era. Fully new designs, such as the T-14 Armata main battle tank, Su-57 combat aircraft or Project 1171.1 Ivan Gren class landing ship were either at design or testing stage during the SAP 2020.[210]

Thirdly, during SAP 2020 and until 2014, Russia had begun importing weapon systems and platforms from Western countries. For example, a highly controversial agreement was signed between Russia and France for the construction of two Mistral class amphibious assault ships for the Russian Navy.[211] The agreement included an option for two more ships, which were to be built in Russia through transfer of technology. The deal represented the first sale of sophisticated military technology from a NATO country to Russia. Around the same time, Russia ordered Searcher unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) from Elbit of Israel.[212] The deal included transfer of UAV technology to Russia and the Searcher was to be produced by Russia under the name "Forpost".[213] Another major contract was signed with IVECO from Italy in

[210] Malmlöf, Tomas, and Johan Engvall35. "6. Russian armament deliveries." Russian Military Capability in a Ten-Year Perspective–2019 (2019): 115.

[211] Deutsche Welle. “Russia Agrees to Landmark Purchase of Two Warships from France”. www.dw.com, November 7, 2017. https://www.dw.com/en/russia-agrees-to-landmark-purchase-of-two-warships-from-france/a-14735429. (accessed on May 1, 2022)

[212] NDTV. “Russia to Buy Spy Drones from Israel.”. www.ndtv.com, April 10, 2009. https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/russia-to-buy-spy-drones-from-israel-391742. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[213] Lappin, Yaakov. “The Jerusalem Post.” Report: Moscow purchased 10 Israeli drones, September 8, 2015. https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/politics-and-diplomacy/report-russia-purchased-ten-israeli-drones-415575. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

2012 for the LMV armored wheeled tactical vehicle. The contract also covered licensed production of the vehicle under the name "Rys" in Russia.[214] Russia also purchased large quantities of sophisticated navigation, targeting and communication equipment from Thales of France, to upgrade its main battle tanks.[215]

The SAP 2020 was replaced by the new program for the period between 2018 and 2027. The latest plan allocates almost the same amount of budget (approximately 19 trillion rubles) for procurement, maintenance, and upgrade of equipment. The funds for the improvement of defense industrial base are also the same (1 trillion rubles) with the previous plan. The SAP 2027 aimed the share of modern equipment in Russian Armed Forces inventory as 70 per cent by 2021. The overall tone and context of the SAP 2027 can be considered as more modest, compared to the previous one. It focuses on consolidating achievements which are result of the SAP 2020.[216]

Experiences from Ukraine and Syrian conflicts manifest themselves in SAP 2027. Additionally, sanctions imposed by West following the annexation of Crimea in 2014 show their impact on the modernization and acquisition programs. Field experience in Syria in terms of tactics, techniques, equipment, and systems are explicitly visible in terms of prioritization of projects. Additionally, import substitution is given a top priority due to cut out of influx of Western production machinery and subsystems.[217]

The weapon systems that were prioritized in the plan are high-technology weapons such as cruise missiles, hypersonic weapon systems, UAVs, equipment for individual

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[214] Strick, Benjamin. "The War Trade: How Italy Sold Armoured Vehicles To Russia + Their Deployment With Syrian Army Militias - Bellingcat." bellingcat. www.bellingcat.com, December 20, 2019. https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2019/12/20/the-war-trade-how-italy-sold-armoured-vehicles-to-russia-their-deployment-with-syrian-army-militias/. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[215] Rettman, Andrew. "French Eyes for a Russian Tiger." EUobserver. euobserver.com, August 25, 2015. https://euobserver.com/investigations/129953. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

[216] Gorenburg, Dmitry. "Russia's Military Modernization Plans: 2018-2027 – PONARS Eurasia." PONARS Eurasia. www.ponarseurasia.org, February 23, 2022. https://www.ponarseurasia.org/russia-s-military-modernization-plans-2018-2027/. (accessed on June 23, 2022)

[217] Barrie, Douglas, and Henry Boyd. "Russia's State Armament Programme 2027: A More Measured Course on Procurement." IISS. www.iiss.org, February 13, 2018. https://www.iiss.org/blogs/military-balance/2018/02/russia-2027. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

soldiers and advanced command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems. For the nuclear deterrence component, the plan states that 90 per cent of Russia's ICBM force should be modern by 2021, with the introduction of the mobile RS-26 Rubezh and the silo-based RS-28 Sarmat ballistic missiles.

For ground forces, the plan aimed for the completion of development and start of serial production of the T-14 Armata main battle tank, Kurganets-25, and Boomerang armored fighting vehicles. The T-14 is the very first ground combat vehicle that has been designed and developed after the end of the Cold War. Special emphasis is given to developing rapid reaction forces and power projection capability, such as manufacture and upgrade of new transport aircraft, light armored fighting vehicles, landing ship and improvement of the equipment and training of airborne forces (VDV; Воздушно-десантные войска России).[218]

For Russian Air Force, the SAP 2027 called for the delivery of more upgraded Su-30SM and Su-35S combat aircraft and the development of the Su-57 fifth generation combat aircraft, which is expected to enter serial production by 2025. Unlike the previous plan, the SAP 2027 allocated less resources for the modernization of the Russian Navy. One of the factors that contributed to the less ambitious naval shipbuilding program is the adverse effect of the sanctions that were applied after the annexation of Crimea and financial challenges as well as deteriorating capacities of shipyards.[219]

[218] Boulègue, Mathieu and Connoly, Richard. "Russia's New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027." (2018). https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2018-05-10-russia-state-armament-programme-connolly-boulegue-final.pdf. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[219] Blank, Stephen J. "The Russian military in contemporary perspective." (2019). https://publications.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/3705.pdf. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

CHAPTER 5

MILITARY TRANSFORMATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The armed forces that Russia inherited from the USSR was large in numbers, but when Vladimir Putin assumed presidency in 2000, its effectiveness and readiness had diminished. The status of the armed forces stimulated Putin to initiate a large-scale reform process. His ambition and determination manifested in his famous remark, "The army has 1.4 million men, but there is no one to wage war".[220]

Putin's focus was the improvement of rapid reaction and deployment capabilities. The transformation, however, turned out to be much more complex and slower than anticipated, mainly because of internal resistance from the armed forces. The process was particularly problematic in the professionalization of the army. The arguments, indicators and reports put forward by the General Staff were often in direct confrontation with the ambitions of Putin. According to Rod Thornton, Putin concluded that he needed assistance of an important ally in the process.[221] He started by appointing Anatoly Serdyukov as the Minister of Defense. Serdyukov is the first Russian Minister of Defense with a civilian background: His previous post was the Minister of Tax, which had provided him immense experience in dealing with complex bureaucratical structures, and inter-governmental power dynamics. Immediately after assuming office, Serdyukov started working on the reduction of military personnel, especially the number of conscripts. His efforts were largely neutralized by the passive resistance from the higher echelons of the army. The army's performance in the 2008

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[220] Bryce-Rogers, Athena. "Russian military reform in the aftermath of the 2008 Russia-Georgia War." Demokratizatsiya 21, no. 3 (2013): 339.

[221] Thornton, Rod. “Military Modernization and the Russian Ground Forces.” USAWC Press. press.armywarcollege.edu, June 1, 2011. https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/577. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

Russo - Georgian War, however, provided the necessary justification to Putin and Serdyukov to finally overcome the conservative and obscurant cadres within the Russian Armed Forces.[222]

5.1. Serdyukov Reforms

As a result of the weak performance of the army in the 2008 Russo - Georgian War, especially the low level of preparedness for war, except for the Strategic Missile Forces, and also the observation of the significant advances in terms of technology and capabilities by USA and other NATO countries, and increased risk of asymmetric warfare, preparations for a large scale reorganization and modernization of Russian Armed Forces were started. A detailed reform plan, was announced in October 2008 by Anatoly Serdyukov.[223] The main elements of the plan, which went effective in 2009 were as follows: [224] [225]

a. *Reduction of the number of personnel in the armed forces:* The number of soldiers, which was 1.35 million in 2007, has been gradually reduced to 1 million despite all the resistance in the army. In this context, the number of generals, which was 1,108 in 2008, decreased to 610 in 2012. The number of personnel assigned to the Ministry of Defense headquarters has been reduced from 53,000 to 13,400.[226]

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[222] Thornton, Rod. "Military Modernization and the Russian Ground Forces." USAWC Press. press.armywarcollege.edu, June 1, 2011. https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/577. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

[223] Nichol, Jim. "Russian military reform and defense policy." (2011). https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc93904/m1/1/high_res_d/R42006_2011Aug24.pdf. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[224] Sapmaz, Ahmet. Rusya Federasyonu'nun Askeri Güvenlik Refleksindeki Dönüşüm. Ankara, : Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, 2018.

[225] Putin's new model army" The Economist. www.economist.com. May 24, 2014. http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21602743-money-and-reform-have-given-russia-armed-forces-it-can-use-putins-new-model-army. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[226] Barabanov, Mikhail, Constantin Makienko, and Ruslan Pukhov. Military reform: toward the new look of the Russian army. Valdai Discussion Club, 2012.

b. *Professionalization:* The number of officers, which was around 335,000, was reduced to 220,000 in line with the goal of shrinking and becoming more effective and professional. It was aimed to reduce the number of draftees gradually and not to include drafted soldiers in frontline operational missions by 2020. Again, as of 2020, although 50 per cent of the army was aimed to be composed of professional soldiers. The aims to abolish senior petty officer and increased use of contracted soldiers were not reached. Within the scope of personnel training, it is planned to gradually decrease the number of military schools from 65 to ten. Three of these schools were structured as military training and research centers, six as military academies and one as a military university.

c. *Establishment of joint strategic commands:* In 2010, the Western, Southern, Central and Eastern Military Regional Commands were established. These were followed by the establishment of the Northern Fleet Joint Strategic Command in 2014. Within the scope of this structuring, the structure in military district, army, division, and regiment order was replaced by a two-tier command structure in the military district command and brigade order. In the air force, it was envisaged to switch from regiment-based structuring to air base-based structuring.

5.2. Gerasimov Doctrine

The reforms initiated by Serdyukov triggered major changes within the organization and structure of the Russian Armed Forces. However, on November 6, 2012, Serdyukov was removed from the office by Vladimir Putin, because of an ongoing corruption case. Putin appointed Sergei Shoigu as the new Minister of Defense the same day. Three days later, on November 9, 2012, Putin dismissed General Nikolai Makarov, who was seen as close to Serdyukov, from the Chief of General Staff position and appointed the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, General Valery Gerasimov as his successor.[227]

[227] BBC. "Profile: Russia's New Military Chief Valery Gerasimov." www.bbc.co.uk, November 9, 2012. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-20270111. (accessed on June 23, 2022)

Shoigu and Gerasimov continued the reform and transformation progress, but Gerasimov soon after his appointment, started to form the baseline of a new military and strategic thinking within the Russian Armed Forces. The very first manifestation of Gerasimov's approach was in the form of his speech, "The Value of Science is in the Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying out Combat Operations" ("Ценность науки в предвидении: Новые вызовы требуют переосмыслить формы и способы ведения боевых действий") that was published in Military Industrial Courier (Военно-промышленный курьер) web site on February 26, 2013. [228]

In the article Gerasimov presents a combination of Soviet-era military tactics with contemporary technologies and military thinking. His approach puts more emphasis on "non-kinetic" means to conduct war, such as psychological and social warfare, economic sanctions, political coercion, establishing coalitions. He states that military and non-military actions should be deployed in harmony. Gerasimov defines four main military actions, which are strategic deterrence, strategic deployment or power projection, warfare, and peacekeeping operations.[229]

Because of the mixed use of military and non-military assets and actions, Gerasimov's set of ideas is frequently used as the definition of "Hybrid Warfare". Gerasimov is often referred to as the mastermind of Russian military transformation and his ideas are presented as "doctrine", however prominent scholars on Russian military and security such as Michael Kofman and Mark Galeotti object this recognition, stating that Gerasimov's presentation of ideas and methods, lacking methodology, comprehensiveness, and depth, does not constitute a doctrine.[230] [231]

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[228] Gerasimov, Valery. “Ценность Науки в Предвидении.” Военно-промышленный курьер. vpk-news.ru, February 26, 2013. https://vpk-news.ru/articles/14632. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[229] Gerasimov. “Ценность Науки в Предвидении.”

[230] Giles, Alexander. “Valery Gerasimov’s Doctrine,” 2020. https://doi.org/DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.10944.35848.

[231] Galeotti, Mark. "The mythical ‘Gerasimov Doctrine’and the language of threat." Critical Studies on Security 7, no. 2 (2019): 157-161.

5.3. Restructuring of the Russian Armed Forces

The main administrative body of the Russian Armed Forces is the Ministry of Defense, while the General Staff of the Armed Forces acts as the main commanding and supervision body. The relationship between the two posts, especially the position of the General Staff has changed since the dissolution of the USSR. In late-Soviet period and until 2008, the General Staff's role and influence had been more prominent. However, recently it has become more of a strategic planning and advisory body for the ministry. The Russian Armed Forces consist of three armed services and two troop commands. These are as follows:[232]

- Armed services
    - Ground Forces (Сухопутные войска)
    - Navy (Военно-морской флот)
    - Aerospace Force (Воздушно-космические силы)
- Troop commands
    - Strategic Rocket Forces (Ракетные войска стратегического назначения Российской Федерации)
    - Airborne Troops (Воздушно-десантные войска России)

After the dissolution of the USSR, Russia maintained the "military district" scheme for the administration of military formations throughout the large geography of the country. Each military district is established based on a certain geographical region. The districts have ground forces, air force and navy formations under their command and they are responsible of conducting operations in their respective area of responsibility. Each service is responsible maintaining readiness. The number, area of responsibility and the composition of these military districts have changed several times.[233] A major change was implemented on December 1, 2010, in line with the

[232] Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation. "Structure". https://eng.mil.ru/en/structure/forces/type.htm. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[233] Center for Strategic and International Studies. “Understanding the Russian Military Today.” www.csis.org, September 30, 2021. https://www.csis.org/programs/europe-russia-and-eurasia-program/russia-and-eurasia/understanding-russian-military-today. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

suggestions of the 2008 Serdyukov reforms and four military districts were established. These are as follows:[234]

- Western Military District: Headquarters in Saint Petersburg. Responsible of the western part of Russia, as well as the defense of Moscow.
- Southern Military District: Headquarters in Rostov-on-Don. Responsible of North Caucasus, Black Sea region and western part of the Caspian Sea.
- Central Military District: Headquarters in Ekaterinburg. Responsible of Central Asia and also Russian military presence in former Soviet states in this region.
- Eastern Military District: Headquarters in Khabarovsk. Its jurisdiction covers the northeastern and eastern parts of the country, and the Pacific.

In 2014, the Northern Fleet of the Russian Navy was separated from the Western Military District and was given a district status under the name of "Northern Fleet Joint Strategic Command". On January 1, 2021, its name was changed to Northern Military District, becoming the fifth administrative body of the armed forces.[235]

Together with the administrative composition, the major transformation in Russian Armed Forces structure has been in the number and professionalization of the personnel. According to the latest officially stated figure in 2017, the total number of personnel is 1,013,628. The Russian Ministry of Defense announced in 2021 that around 30 per cent of the total number of personnel were conscripts.[236]

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[234] Zatsepin, Vasily and Tsymbal, Vitaly. "Military Economy and Military Reform in Russia." Gaidar Institute for Economic Policy. ideas.repec.org, 2018. https://ideas.repec.org/p/gai/ppaper/ppaper-2018-316.html. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

[235] McDermott, Roger. "Russia's Northern Fleet Upgraded to Military District Status." Jamestown Eurasia Daily Monitor. jamestown.org, January 6, 2021. https://jamestown.org/program/russias-northern-fleet-upgraded-to-military-district-status/. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[236] Zatsepin, Vasily, and Vitaly Tsymbal. "Military Economy and Military Reform in Russia." 2020. Available at SSRN 3213288

5.4. Major Military Modernization Programs

The sharp decline in oil prices between 2014 and 2016 as well as international sanctions due to the annexation of Crimea took heavy toll on Russian economy. The annual growth rate was 0.94 per cent between 2014 and 2019. Military spending increased steadily between 2012 and 2015, but decreased after 2015, only to moderately recover in 2019 with the help of rising oil prices. According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) The Military Balance 2022 report, Russia's total military expenditure, including administrative and social expenses increased from 3.9 per cent of GDP in 2019 to 4.2 per cent in 2020.[237]

Table 1. Russian military spending data.

	National Defense Budget		Annual State Defense Order		Total Military Expenditure	
Year	**Rubles (trillion)**	**% of GDP**	**Rubles (trillion)**	**% of National Defense Budget**	**Rubles (trillion)**	**% of GDP**
2011	1.516	2.52	0.575	37.9	2.029	3.38
2012	1.812	2.66	0.677	37.4	2.505	3.68
2013	2.104	2.89	0.894	42.5	2.787	3.82
2014	2.479	3.14	1.450	58.5	3.224	4.08
2015	3.181	3.83	1.800	56.6	4.026	4.85
2016	2.982	3.48	1.600	53.7	3.831	4.47
2017	2.666	2.90	1.400	52.5	3.704	4.03
2018	2.827	2.72	1.450	51.3	3.928	3.78
2019	2.997	2.74	1.500	50.1	4.211	3.85
2020	3.169	2.96	1.500	47.1	4.460	4.17
2021	3.381	2.78	1.500	48.1	4.590	3.77

Source: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, The Military Balance 2022[238]

[237] The International Institute for Strategic Studies. “The Military Balance 2022”. Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003294566

[238] The International Institute for Strategic Studies. “The Military Balance 2022”. Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003294566.

The COVID-19 has had severe impact on the Russian economy, but there has been limited negative effect on military spending. However, the accompanying financial volatility, increase in the cost of certain components, raw material and technologies severely affected weapons production, especially naval shipbuilding industry. As seen in Figure 2, the percentage of the total military expenditure in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) saw a sharp decline in 2015 and had never reached the same level until the end of 2021.[239]

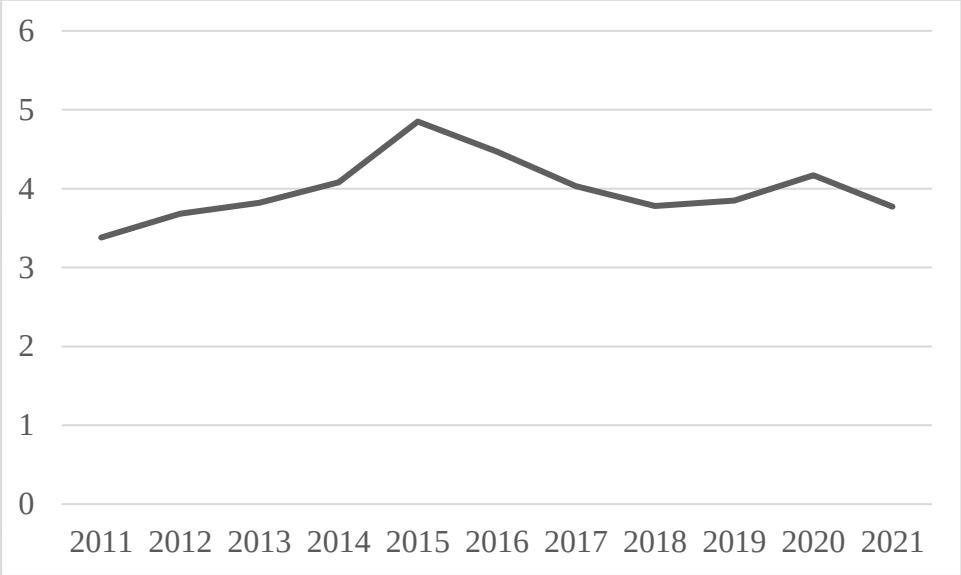


Figure 2. Russia's share of total military expenditure in GDP. Source: The Military Balance 2022[240]

The effects of the Western sanctions after 2014 and financial challenges manifest themselves in the development and manufacture capacity of Russian defense industrial base. The SAP 2027 envisages 70 per cent of the inventory of Russian Armed Forces to be modern by 2027. With the exception of Nuclear Forces, priority is given to modernize the existing legacy platforms or manufacture new variants of them.

[239] The International Institute for Strategic Studies. "The Military Balance 2022". Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003294566

[240] The International Institute for Strategic Studies. "The Military Balance 2022". Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003294566.

5.4.1. Nuclear Forces

Russian Federation's nuclear deterrence policy is governed by the "Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence" document, which was approved by Vladimir Putin on June 8, 2020.[241] The document provides the general principles and set of policies in establishing the nuclear deterrence, conditions, and context on the use of nuclear power and a classification of strategic threats.[242]

Russia's strategic deterrence is based upon a "triad" of nuclear forces, which are composed of air, naval, and land components. The air component is formed up by long range strategic bombers and the nuclear armed cruise missiles and bombs. The naval component is the long-range ballistic missile equipped nuclear powered submarines (SSBNs). Finally, the land component is formed up by two elements: Static (silo based) and mobile (wheeled vehicle or railroad based) nuclear armed missiles.[243]

For the naval component, the SAP 2027 focuses on the completion of programs that were started by the previous SAP. One of the most important programs is the Project 955A Borei II class SSBNs. Three Project 955 Borei I class SSBNs entered service in 2012, 2013 and 2014. The modernized version, Project 955A started with the laying down of the first boat, the Knyaz Vladimir in July 2012. This boat entered service in 2020 and followed by the commissioning of the second boat, in 2021. Five more Project 955A submarines are under construction but it is unclear if more boat will be

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[241] Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence - Вопросы международной безопасности и стратегической стабильности - The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. “Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence.” archive.mid.ru, June 8, 2020. https://archive.mid.ru/en/web/guest/foreign_policy/international_safety/disarmament/-/asset_publisher/rp0fiUBmANaH/content/id/4152094. (accessed on May 19, 2022)

[242] Mevlütoğlu, Arda. “Rusya Federasyonu’nun Nükleer Caydırıcılık Siyaset Belgesi’nin Anlattıkları (ve Anlatmadıkları).” Siyah Gri Beyaz. www.siyahgribeyaz.com, January 7, 2020. https://www.siyahgribeyaz.com/2020/07/rusya-federasyonunun-nukleer-caydrclk.html. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[243] Kristensen, Hans M., and Korda, Matt. "Russian nuclear forces, 2020." Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists 76, no. 2 (2020): 102-117. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2020.1728985. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

ordered. The Project 955A are being supplemented by the legacy Project 667BDRM (NATO code "Delta IV") class submarines, which are being equipped with the newly developed Sineva submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). Design and development studies for the Borei II class are not expected to start during SAP 2027, an indication of financial and industrial constraints.[244]

The air element of the nuclear deterrence is formed by the Tupolev Tu-160 (NATO code: "Blackjack") and Tu-95 (NATO code: "Bear") long range bombers. The Tu-160 was developed in 1980's and the first models of the Tu-95 entered service in 1956. Under the SAP 2027, an extensive upgrade is being applied to the Tu-160 fleet whereas the Tu-95's are upgraded to the Tu-95MS variant; both receiving improvements in powerplant, avionics and communication systems. It was also decided to re-start the production of the Tu-160, for the Tu-160M2 variant. The first new production Tu-160M2 entered service in 2021 and the SAP 2027 calls for the delivery of 50 Tu-160M2s. The main armament of the Tu-95MS and the Tu-160M2 is the Kh-101 air launched cruise missile, which entered service in 2012.[245] The number of Tu-95MS, Tu-22M3 and Tu-160 bombers is around 135.[246]

Meanwhile, an upgrade program for the Tu-22M3 (NATO code: "Backfire") heavy bomber aircraft is continuing under a contract signed in 2014. The project aims to bring the aircraft to the same capabilities as Tu-160M2. The upgraded Tu-22M3, designated Tu-22M3M, is planned to remain in service for an extra 20 to 30 years. A project to replace the legacy Tu-95 and Tu-22M3s, under the "Prospective Aviation Complex for Long-Range Aviation" (PAK DA; Перспективный авиационный комплекс дальней авиации) project is in design stage, but the decision to resume the

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[244] Boulègue, Mathieu and Connoly, Richard. "Russia's New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027." (2018). https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2018-05-10-russia-state-armament-programme-connolly-boulegue-final.pdf. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[245] Project, Missile Defense. "Kh-101 / Kh-102 | Missile Threat." Missile Threat. missilethreat.csis.org, July 31, 2021. https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/kh-101-kh-102/. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[246] The International Institute for Strategic Studies. "The Military Balance 2022". Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003294566

Tu-160 production means that the completion of the PAK DA program's design and development phase will not occur during the SAP 2027.[247]

The land component of the nuclear forces is composed of a combination of RS-24 Yars (NATO code: SS-27 Mod2) and RS-28 Sarmat (NATO code: SS-X-30 "Satan 2") intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). The mobile RS-24 Yars replaces the previous generation silo-based RT-2PM2 Topol-M (NATO code: SS-27 "Sickle B"), which is being taken out of service. Financial problems and the impact of sanctions on the supply chain, which cut off import of certain electronic and mechanical components, delayed the start of production of the RS-24 Yars ICBMs. The silo-based RS-28 Sarmat ICBM, which also suffered from similar problems as RS-24, is planned to enter service by the end of 2022. The RS-28 will replace the R-36M2 Voevoda (NATO code: SS-19 "Satan") and will form the backbone of Russian ground based nuclear deterrence.[248]

In improving its nuclear arsenal, Russia puts special emphasis on hypersonic weapon systems. Hypersonic flight is described as the flight regime in which the air platform flies five times or more than the speed of sound. Nuclear or conventional warhead equipped missiles that are flying at hypersonic speeds pose great danger to air defense systems, because of the difficulty to detect and track by early warning systems, thereby leaving very little reaction time to the defender.[249] The US withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) and the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaties, as well as developments in the NATO missile shield and missile defense sites in the

[247] Reim, Garrett. “Russia Starts Building First Stealth Bomber: State Media” Flight Global. www.flightglobal.com, May 27, 2020. https://www.flightglobal.com/fixed-wing/russia-starts-building-first-stealth-bomber-state-media/138569.article. (accessed on May 19, 2022)

[248] Kristensen, Hans M., and Korda, Matt. "Russian nuclear forces, 2020." Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists 76, no. 2 (2020): 102-117. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2020.1728985. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[249] Egeli, Sitki. “Hayaldi, Gerçek Oldu! Hipersonik Silahlar.” Panorama. www.uikpanorama.com, March 28, 2020. https://www.uikpanorama.com/blog/2020/03/28/hayaldi-gercek-oldu-hipersonik-silahlar-sitki-egeli/. (accessed on May 1, 2022)

eastern Europe can be considered as triggering Russian ambitions to allocate significant resources on hypersonic weapons.[250]

Russia had already inherited several hypersonic weapon projects from the USSR, which started developing such systems in 1980s. After Russia's recovery in economy in early 2000's, these programs were resumed and given top priority in the consecutive SAP's. Russian President Vladimir Putin unveiled several new weapon system projects during a conference on March 1, 2018. In his presentation, Putin underlined the strategic role of the newly developed hypersonic weapons, namely the Avangard, the Tsirkon and the Kinzhal.[251]

The Avangard is a "hypersonic glide vehicle" (HGV), which is carried by the UR-100NUTTKh (NATO code: SS-19 Mod 3 "Stiletto"), RS-26 Rubezh or RS-28 Sarmat ICBMs. It can carry conventional or nuclear warheads to a maximum distance of 6,000 kilometers. The first test fire of the Avangard took place in 2018 and it was accepted into service in 2019.[252]

The Kinzhal is a derivative of the 9M723 tactical ballistic missile of the Iskander M system, and it is modified to launched from aircraft such as MiG-31K or Tu-22M3M. The missile has a range of more than 2,000 kilometers when fired from the MiG-31K or 3,000 kilometers when fired from the Tu-22M3M. The missile can carry around 500 kg of conventional or nuclear warhead. Starting from 2021, Russian Air Force has deployed Kinzhal equipped MiG-31K aircraft to the Kaliningrad semi-exclave and Hmeimim air base in Syria.[253]

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[250] Mevlütoğlu, Arda. “Why Hypersonic Weapon Systems Are Critical for Russia.” Politics Today. politicstoday.org, July 22, 2022. https://politicstoday.org/why-hypersonic-weapon-systems-are-critical-for-russia/. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[251] Hodge, Nathan, Barbara Starr, Matthew Chance, and Emma Burrows. “Putin Claims New ‘invincible’ Missile Can Pierce US Defenses.” CNN. edition.cnn.com, March 1, 2018. https://edition.cnn.com/2018/03/01/europe/putin-russia-missile-intl/index.html. (accessed on June 23, 2022)

[252] Dahlgren, Masao. “Avangard.” Missile Threat. missilethreat.csis.org, July 31, 2021. https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/avangard/. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[253] Dahlgren, Masao, and Shaan Shaikh. “Kh-47M2 Kinzhal.” Missile Threat. missilethreat.csis.org, March 19, 2022. https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/kinzhal/. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

The Tsirkon is a hypersonic anti-ship missile, designed to be launched from warships and submarines. It was first unveiled in 1995 and the first test fire was performed in 2012. The Tsirkon entered service in 2017 and is under production for equipping the Project 1144 Kirov class Admiral Nakhimov cruiser; Project 11356R Admiral Grigorovich and Project 22350 Admiral Gorshkov class frigates as well as Project 885 Yasen class nuclear attack submarines. Powered by a scramjet engine, the Tsirkon is claimed to fly 10 times more than the speed of sound and has a range of approximately 1,000 kilometers.[254]

5.4.2. Aerospace Forces

The Russian Aerospace Forces (RuAF; Воздушно-космические силы) had been allocated around 25 per cent of the procurement budget in the SAP 2020 and several new development, upgrade and procurement programs were initiated during the period covered. The SAP 2027 allocated more resource for the sustainment and procurement activities, with greater emphasis on improving air transport and power projection capabilities. For the combat aviation, priority was given to improving air to ground strike capabilities in terms of procurement of tactical bombers and armed UAVs, upgrade of close air support aircraft and acquisition of precision guided weapon systems.[255]

A significant portion of the RuAF combat aircraft fleet consists of aircraft that were developed during the late-Soviet period. The most prominent example is the Su-27 (NATO code: "Flanker"), which entered service in 1985 and formed the baseline to several different designs such as Su-30, Su-34, and Su-35. The number of combat aircraft, excluding nuclear capable bombers is around 1,000, more than 370 of which

[254] Cooper, Julian. Russia's Invincible Weapons: Today, Tomorrow, Sometime, Never?. Changing Character of War Centre, Pembroke College, University of Oxford, 2018.

[255] Boulègue, Mathieu and Connoly, Richard. "Russia’s New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027." (2018). https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2018-05-10-russia-state-armament-programme-connolly-boulegue-final.pdf. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

are tactical bombers and ground attack aircraft. Most of the combat aircraft inventory is nearing end of service life, such as the Su-27, MiG-29, Su-24, and Su-25 jets.[256]

Under the SAP 2027, most of the programs concerning tactical combat aircraft are either modernization or manufacture of modified variants of legacy aircraft. Despite this, there are several new development projects, such as the Su-57 and the Okhotnik. The Su-57 aircraft is the output of the "Prospective Airborne Complex of Frontline Aviation" (PAK FA; Перспективный авиационный комплекс фронтовой авиации) project, which was envisaged as a replacement of the Su-27 family. The program was started in 1998 and the design requirements called for a fifth-generation fighter aircraft with advanced sensors and communication systems, a wide range of precision guided weapon systems and low observability. The Su-57 is the first original combat aircraft design that was produced by the Russian Federation. [257]

The first prototype of the Su-57 made its first flight on January 29, 2010. The first serial production model flew for the first time on December 23, 2017. The program has been plagued by significant delays in the development of the engine and avionics. [258] Russian Ministry of Defense gave an order for 76 aircraft in June 2019 and the first aircraft was accepted into service in December 2020. The SAP 2020 called for the induction of 60 Su-57s by the end of 2020, but this plan had not been realized. Under the SAP 2027, deliveries of the 76 jets are planned to be completed by 2028.[259]

The most modern fighter aircraft in the inventory is the Su-35S, a further developed variant of the legacy Su-27. An order for the first 48 aircraft was given in 2009 and delivered began in 2012. The aircraft is equipped with modern radar, electronic

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[256] The International Institute for Strategic Studies. “The Military Balance 2022”. Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003294566

[257] Boulègue and Connoly. "Russia’s New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027."

[258] Bauer, Ryan, and Peter A. Wilson. "Russia’s Su-57 Heavy Fighter Bomber: Is It Really a Fifth-Generation Aircraft?." The RAND Blog 17 (2020).

[259] TASS. “Russian Defense Ministry to Get 76 Su-57 Fighter Jets.” tass.com, June 27, 2019. https://tass.com/defense/1065905. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

warfare systems and guided weapons. It was also ordered by China and Egypt. The significant delays in the Su-57 project and relatively low number of aircraft ordered has made the Su-35S the mainstay of the multi-role fighter fleet of the RuAF.[260]

The backbone of ground strike fleet is formed up by the Su-34, a specialized attack variant of the Su-27 fighter. The Su-34 was developed to replace the Su-24 (NATO code: "Fencer") tactical strike aircraft and both SAP 2020 and SAP 2027 allocated great resource to its production. The Su-34 can be equipped with various electronic warfare and targeting systems and can carry more than 8,000 kg of weapons.[261]

As a result of experiences from Georgia and Syria, the modernization of strategic power projection capability is given top priority in the SAP 2027. Within this scope, new cargo aircraft development and modernization projects for the air force have been initiated.

The main element of the RuAF transport capability is the Ilyushin Il-76 (NATO code: "Candid"), about 100 of which are in service. About 15 Il-78 (NATO code: "Midas") tanker versions are in service, as well as nine Antonov An-124-200 heavy transport aircraft (NATO code: "Condor").

Development of the next generation variant of the Il-76, designated as Il-76MD-90A, began in 2010. Although it is largely the same as the Il-76 in terms of airframe design, its subsystem and engines have been completely renewed. Equipped with four PS-90A-76 turbofan engines, the Il-76MD-90A has a maximum take-off weight of 210 thousand kg and a maximum payload of 52 thousand kg. The RuAF took delivery of the first aircraft in early April 2019. A total of 30 Il-76MD-90A's are planned to be put into service within the scope of the State Defense Order (SDO) 2012, but the program has faced significant delays in production after 2015. Ilyushin is also working on the "Perspective Aviation Complex of the Military Transport Aviation" (PAK VTA;

[260] Boulègue and Connoly. "Russia's New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027."

[261] Boulègue and Connoly. "Russia's New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027."

Перспективный авиационный комплекс Военно-транспортной авиации) project to develop a new transport aircraft. PAK VTA. According to the information reflected in open sources, the first prototype of the PAK VTA, which is expected to carry loads between 80 and 120t, is planned to make its first flight in the mid-2020s.[262]

One of the prominent aspects of SAP 2027 in the air domain is the increased focus on UAVs. The experiences obtained from many different UAVs tested in Syria manifest themselves in the program. A wide variety of UAV design and procurement programs for reconnaissance and attack purposes have been started. One of them is the Okhotnik, which is an unmanned combat air vehicle (UCAV), which under development by the Sukhoi company under a contract signed with the Russian Ministry of Defense in 2011. It is planned to operate alongside the Su-57, as a "manned - unmanned team" in strike operations. The first flight was performed on August 3, 2019. Another major UAV project is the Orion, which is an armed surveillance and reconnaissance UAV. Having first flown in 2016, the Orion entered service in 2020.[263]

As the backbone of the air and missile defense network, S-400 (NATO code SA-21 "Growler") long-range air defense system and Pantsir-S (NATO code SA-22 "Greyhound") low altitude air defense systems are given top priority. The S-500 missile defense system started entering service in 2022. The newly developed S-350 Vityaz medium-range air defense system is also planned to be put into service during the SAP 2027 program.[264]

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[262] Mladenov, Alexander. “Russia Cracks the Whip on Sluggish Il-76MD-90A Production.” Shephard. www.shephardmedia.com, March 29, 2021. https://www.shephardmedia.com/news/mil-log/premium-russia-cracks-whip-sluggish-il-76md-90a-pr/. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[263] Boulègue and Connoly. "Russia’s New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027."

[264] Gorenburg, Dmitry. “Russia’s Military Modernization Plans: 2018–2027”. 2017. PONARS, Eurasia.” Policy Memo 495

5.4.3. Naval Forces

Russian Navy's (RuN; Военно-морской флот) modernization efforts received a boost with the SAP 2020, when the largest share was allocated for new shipbuilding and armament projects. About 25 per cent of the procurement budget was earmarked for the RuN and new ship programs aimed at increasing the blue-water capabilities. In contrast, the SAP 2027 allocated significantly less budget to the RuN and the procurement programs were mainly aimed at small surface combatants, as well as equipping many existing platforms with precision guided cruise missiles. Within this context, the SAP 2027 prioritized cruise missile carrying frigates and corvettes.[265]

In addition to the decrease in the budget allocated compared to the previous program, the cessation of the delivery of critical subsystems from Ukraine after 2014, especially gas turbines, and also the sanctions imposed by the West inflicted serious damage to shipbuilding projects. As a result, many critical ship projects were disrupted. Despite the ambitious projects announced to the public, it is seen that in reality priority is given to high maneuverable, small tonnage but well-armed frigate and corvette class ships.[266] One of the most important topics in the modernization of the navy is equipping surface and submarine platforms with Kalibr cruise missiles. These missiles, tested under real operating conditions in Syria, can be used against land and surface targets and provide a considerable strike range to Russian Navy.[267]

For the submarine fleet, apart from the SSBNs, the modernization of the submarine force included programs such as Project 885M Yasen class nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) and Project 636.3 Varshavyanka class diesel electric boats. The

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[265] Navy Recognition. "Analysis: The Russian State Armament Programme 2018 – 2027." www.navyrecognition.com, December 12, 2019. https://www.navyrecognition.com/index.php/focus-analysis/naval-technology/7791-analysis-the-russian-state-armament-programme-2018-2027.html. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

[266] Dick, Charles. "Russian Ground Forces Posture Towards the West", Chatham House. April 4, 2019. https://www.chathamhouse.org/2019/04/russian-ground-forces-posture-towards-west. (accessed on May 17, 2022) (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[267] Gorenburg, Dmitry. "Russia's Military Modernization Plans: 2018–2027". 2017. PONARS, Eurasia." Policy Memo 495

Project 885M class will be supplemented by upgraded Project 971M (NATO code: "Akula") class SSNs. At least two of the much-delayed Project 677 Lada class diesel electric submarines are expected to be commissioned during the SAP 2027, whereas six Project 636.3 submarines will be built for the Pacific Fleet, after the completion of the first batch of six boats for the Black Sea Fleet.[268]

As seen in Table 2, the backbone of the RuN surface fleet consists of frigate and corvette type of ships. Most of these ships have been built during the late-Soviet period. One of the most important new warship designs is the Project 22350 Admiral Gorshkov class frigate. The first two of the total eight ships entered service in 2018 and 2020, respectively.[269]

A major part of the modernization of the RuN has been the trend known as "Kalibrization," which defines equipping many different types of ships and submarines with the Kalibr cruise missile.

The Kalibr is a family of cruise missiles, consisting of four types, depending on the launch platform (surface ship or submarine) and target type (land targets or surface ships). [270] First entered service in 2010, Kalibr has become the primary strike weapon system of the RuN. The emphasis given to the Kalibr missile is seen on Table 3.

[268] Boulègue and Connoly. "Russia's New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027."

[269] The International Institute for Strategic Studies. "The Military Balance 2022". Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003294566

[270] Roblin, Sebastien. "Why Russia's Enemies Fear the Kalibr Cruise Missile | The National Interest." The National Interest. nationalinterest.org, January 23, 2017. https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/why-russias-enemies-fear-the-kalibr-cruise-missile-19129. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

Table 2. Russian Navy inventory as of 2022.

Class	Baltic Fleet	Black Sea Fleet	Northern Fleet	Pacific Fleet	Caspian Flotilla	TOTAL
Nuclear-powered Ballistic Missile Submarines (SSBN)			9	4		13
Nuclear-powered Guided Missile Submarines (SSGN)			5	6		11
Nuclear-powered Attack Submarines (SSN)			13	4		17
Nuclear-powered Special Mission Submarines (SSAN)			8			8
Special Purpose Submarines (SSA)			1			1
Diesel-electric Submarines (SS)	1	7	6	9		23
Aircraft Carriers			1			1
Cruisers			3	1		4
Destroyers	1		6	6		13
Frigates and Corvettes	21	21	9	15	5	71
Patrol Boats	6	5	1	11	9	32
Mine Warfare Ships	10	9	8	11	7	45
Amphibious Ships and Landing Craft	15	13	13	9	6	56

Source: The Military Balance 2022[271]

A particularly interesting aspect of the "Kalibrization" trend is that the missile is being used even on-board small surface combatants, such as corvettes.[272] The first cruise missile attacks against ISIL targets in Syria were conducted by Kalibr missiles fired from such ships in Caspian Sea.[273]

[271] The International Institute for Strategic Studies. "The Military Balance 2022". Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003294566.

[272] Evitts, J., 2019. Russian naval modernization and strategy. NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL MONTEREY CA MONTEREY United States.

[273] Thornton, Rod. "The Russian Military Commitment in Syria and the Eastern Mediterranean: Power, Prestige and Popularity." The RUSI Journal 163, no. 4 (2018): 30-38.

Table 3. Kalibr cruise missile equipped ships of the Russian Navy.

Class	Type	Total Ordered	Fleet	Year of Commissioning of First Ship
Project 885 Yasen	SSN	6	Northern	2013
Project 636.3 Varshavyanka	SS	12	Black Sea, Pacific	2014
Proje 677 Lada	SS	3	Northern	2010
Project 22350 Admiral Gorshkov	Destroyer	6	Northern	2016
Project 23550 Ivan Papanin		2	Northern	2020
Project 20385 Gremyashchy	Frigate	8	Pacific, Northern	2018
Project 1135.6 Admiral Grigorovich		6	Black Sea	2016
Project 22160 Vasily Bykov		6	Black Sea	2018
Project 2163.1 Buyan M	Corvette	12	Caspian, Black Sea	2013
Project 22800 Karakurt		22	Baltic, Northern, Black Sea, Pacific	2017

Source: The Military Balance 2022[274]

5.4.4. Ground Forces

Compared to the 2020 program, the share of the land forces from the budget has increased significantly in SAP 2027. The budget allocated for procurement rise from 14 per cent in SAP 2020 to around 25 per cent in SAP 2027. Experiences in Ukraine and Syria contributed significantly to this allocation choice. Expenditures for the T-90 and T-14 Armata main battle tanks, Kurganets-25 infantry fighting vehicle and Boomerang armored personnel carrier vehicles are another factor. In addition to these

[274] The International Institute for Strategic Studies. "The Military Balance 2022". Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003294566.

programs, focus has been given to C4ISR and electronic warfare systems, advanced equipment, and weapons for individual soldiers.[275]

The main battle tank force was planned to concentrate on upgrade programs for legacy tanks, namely T-72, T-80, and T-90 under T-72B3M, T-80BVM and T-90M projects, respectively. The emphasis on these upgrade projects implicitly means that the serial production and service entry of the next generation main battle tank, the T-14 Armata was not determined as a top priority.[276]

In SAP 2027 much emphasis is given to artillery, artillery rockets and tactical missiles forces. Production and deliveries of the Iskander (NATO code: SS-26 "Stone") tactical ballistic missile as well as deliveries of the newly developed Koalitsiya self-propelled howitzers are planned to be completed by the end of the program period.[277]

Despite these developments, problems are encountered in the processes of equipping land troops with modern command - control and communication systems. The goal of equipping 40 brigades with the modern command-control and communication networks by 2020 could not be achieved. However, in the light of the experiences in Syria, the production and commissioning of electronic warfare, unmanned aerial and land vehicles is accelerated.[278]

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[275] Dick, Charles. "Russian Ground Forces Posture Towards the West", Chatham House. April 4, 2019. https://www.chathamhouse.org/2019/04/russian-ground-forces-posture-towards-west. (accessed on May 17, 2022)

[276] Dick, Charles. "Russian Ground Forces Posture Towards the West", Chatham House. April 4, 2019. https://www.chathamhouse.org/2019/04/russian-ground-forces-posture-towards-west. (accessed on May 17, 2022)

[277] Gorenburg, Dmitry. "Russia's Military Modernization Plans: 2018–2027". 2017. PONARS, Eurasia." Policy Memo 495

[278] Gorenburg. "Russia's Military Modernization Plans: 2018–2027"

5.5. A Short Assessment of Russia’s Military Transformation

Russia's efforts in the doctrinal, organizational, and technological transformation of its armed forces from the behemoth it inherited in 1991 has been shaped by several internal and external factors. The most important of these is the desire to preserve the nuclear deterrence, which is seen as the guarantor of Russia's security. NATO's enlargement towards eastern Europe, accepting former Warsaw Pact and former Soviet states as member is another factor that has shaped Russia's threat perceptions. NATO's operations in Bosnia and Kosovo and the US deployment of missile defense bases in Poland and Romania have particularly contributed to this perception.

It can be said that until early 2000s, Russia maintained a moderate and balanced approach in its relations with the NATO. One reason for this can be claimed as the lack of adequate economic and military power. The overall status and readiness of Russian Armed Forces had significantly deteriorated after the dissolution of the USSR. The economic situation during 1990s until early 2000s had not permitted maintenance and upgrade of existing military equipment, let alone undertaking development or production activities. Funding for the personnel had also been low, resulting in with a sharp decline in morale, quality, and integrity of the manpower. The economic recovery in early 2000s enabled more resources being allocated to personnel, procurement, maintenance, and upgrades, leading to slight improvements in the overall capacity of the armed forces. The performance demonstrated during the war with Georgia in 2008, however, was taken as a signal to initiate extensive reforms in terms of organization, training, and equipment.

Within the reform efforts, the top priority was given to the nuclear forces. Many projects for development and upgrade of the air, sea and ground based nuclear weapons were started. The capabilities of the nuclear forces are perceived as a counterbalance to the US and the NATO missile defense systems. US ballistic missile defense shield program and advanced strike capabilities such as the Prompt Global Strike (PGS) are seen as direct threats and therefore much emphasis is given to development of hypersonic weapon systems, which increase the "first strike" capacity due to their enormous speed and destructive power.

Modernization of the ground forces have mainly centered around the improvement of mobility and strike range. In line with the ambition to develop power projection and rapid deployment capabilities, many programs for the airborne troops were envisaged. The introduction of the T-14 Armata main battle tank and T-15 infantry fighting vehicle that is derived from it shows Russia's desire in maintaining its position in defense sector and keeping up with the technological competition with the West. The T-14 Armata incorporates many unique features such as crewless turret, advanced fire control system and sensors. It is also the very first major ground combat vehicle that is designed in the post-Soviet era. However financial problems, developmental and budgetary issues within the project caused significant delays and the tank is not expected to enter service, at least not in large numbers, during the SAP 2027. The entire tank and armored combat vehicle of the ground forces and airborne troops consist of Soviet era platforms, most of which have received upgrade in the post-Soviet era.

A similar situation can be observed in the RuAF, where virtually entire inventory is of Soviet era designed combat and support aircraft, and their upgraded variants. The Su-35, development of which started in the last years of the USSR is the newest addition to the RuAF and it is equipped with advanced sensors, weapons, and communication systems. The Su-57 program, similar to the T-14 Armata, is the first combat aircraft that is designed in the post-Soviet era. The project, again similar to the T-14 Armata, is plagued by financial and technological issues.

A closer look to the new production combat aircraft deliveries to the RuAF between 2008 and 2021 reveal more information about Russia’s armament trends. Table 4 shows that, with the exception of the Su-57, all combat aircraft delivered in this period are upgraded variants of legacy designs such as Su-27 and MiG-29. The majority of aircraft delivered in the period is the Su-34, a tactical bomber, and a heavily modified variant of the Su-27. The emphasis on the Su-34 is the result of experience in Georgia in 2008, when long range ground attack missions had to be flown with the Su-24

(NATO code: “Fencer”), a Soviet-era strike aircraft which entered service in 1970s.[279]

Table 4. Combat aircraft deliveries to Russian Air Force between 2008 and 2021.

Model	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	TOTAL
MiG-29SMT		28						3	11						**42**
MiG-29UB		6						2							**8**
MiG-29K						2	8	10							**20**
MiG-29KUB						2	2								**4**
MiG-35S												1	3	1	**5**
MiG-35UB												1	1	1	**3**
Su-27SM(3)			4	8											**12**
Su-30SM2			2	2		3	8	3	2						**20**
Su-30SM					2	14	21	27	21	17	14			4	**120**
Su-35S					2	8	24	12	12	10	10	10	10	5	**103**
Su-57													1	2	**3**
Su-34	1	2	4	6	10	14	18	18	16	16	12	8	4	6	**135**

Source: Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies[280]

As seen in Figure *3*, production and delivery activities sharply declined after 2014 as a result of sanctions, which in turn affected supply chain as well as financial problems, mainly resulting from the decline in oil prices.

[279] BMPD. “Поставки Боевых Самолетов в Вооруженные Силы России в 2021 Году.” bmpd.livejournal.com, January 28, 2022. https://bmpd.livejournal.com/4476065.html. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[280] BMPD. “Поставки Боевых Самолетов в Вооруженные Силы России в 2021 Году.” bmpd.livejournal.com, January 28, 2022. https://bmpd.livejournal.com/4476065.html. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

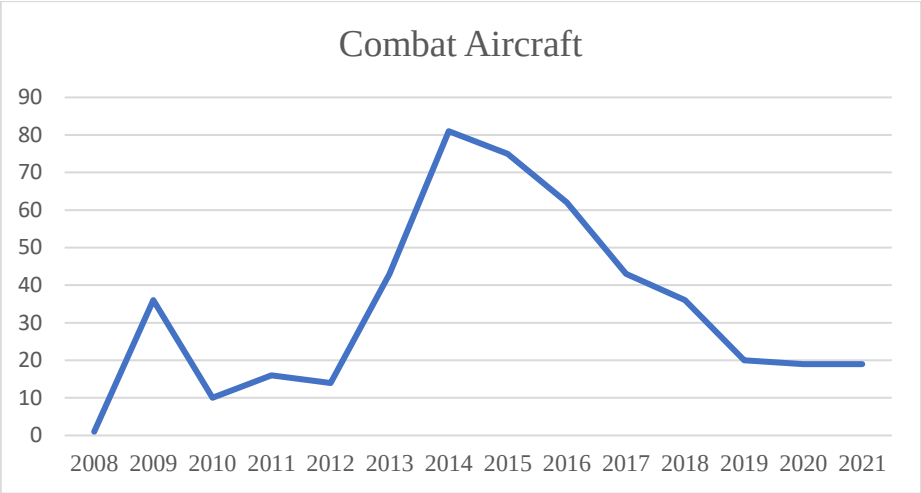


Figure 3. Number of combat aircraft delivered per year. Source: Author's own work based on CAST data

Naval shipbuilding and modernization programs have suffered significantly because of the sanctions and conflict with Ukraine. Until 2014, Russia had imported gas turbines for the propulsion system of warships from Ukraine, which inherited an extensive industrial base specialized in air, marine and ground powerplant technologies from the USSR. All new warship programs, such as the Project 1135.6 Admiral Grigorovich were designed around gas turbines that are of Ukrainian origin. Cutting off of this supply chain resulted in with significant delays and cost overruns in projects, because of development of local equivalent engines.

The Kalibrization of the surface and submarine fleet demonstrates Russia's aim to improve strike range and effectiveness. The large scale uses the Tomahawk cruise missile by the US in the 1991 Gulf War and virtually all conflicts thereafter provided an example of the importance and effect of such weapon systems in projecting power. From this perspective, Russia's firing of Kalibr cruise missiles from ships in the Caspian Sea towards targets in Syria can be taken as a show of capability and a message to the West that Russia has kept pace with the NATO and the US in technological competition.

As a result, the armament trends observed between 2008 and 2022 underline Russia's goals in maintaining its position as a nuclear power, that is able to deter threats, project power in a fast and effective manner in its periphery. The technology and capacity of the defense industrial base as well as dependence to foreign industries in terms of

critical components, sub systems and know-how have been the major risks in successful execution of the said transformation. Finally, all the programs depend on the economic performance of the country, which has had a spotty performance, especially due to the instabilities in oil and natural gas prices.

CHAPTER 6

RUSSIA'S MILITARY POWER IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

The dissolution of the USSR had profound effects on the Russian military. Because of the collapse of the economy and the overall structure of the state and armed forces, equipment serviceability and readiness declined rapidly as well as personnel quality and morale. The status of the armed forces, especially the navy was demonstrated by the words of Rear Admiral Valery Aleksin in 1997. Aleksin said that:

> "In 2000, our sea power in the Baltic will be one-half that of Sweden and one-third to one-fourth that of Germany. In the Black Sea, our sea power will be one-half of that of Turkey"[281]

Almost 20 years later, during a press conference on September 13, 2016, Chief of General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Valery Gerasimov presented a much more different picture regarding the status of Russian military in the Black Sea region:

> "Several years ago, the Russian fleet's combat capabilities were in stark contrast with that of the Turkish Navy. Some even said that Turkey was in full command of the Black Sea. Now it is different".[282]

[281] Lohovich, Vladimir and Hashim, Ahmed. "Issues for the U.S. Navy in the Black Sea Region: Country Profiles and Recommendations". CEnter Center for Naval Analyses. www.cna.org. June 2000. https://www.cna.org/archive/CNA_Files/pdf/d0000572.a2.pdf. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[282] TASS. "General Staff: Russia-Turkey Balance of Force in Black Sea Has Changed over Years". tass.com, September 13, 2016. https://tass.com/defense/899730. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

During his speech, Gerasimov made special reference to the Kalibr cruise missile, claiming that Kalibr-equipped submarines and warships will be able to destroy enemy forces' landing ships during preparation at ports.[283]

Gerasimov's words can be taken as clear demonstration of the context and aims Russia's modernization and armament of the forces in the Black Sea region, particularly the Black Sea Fleet. The strike range and capability of the fleet has increased through the introduction of precision guided land attack and anti-ship missiles, advanced submarines and small and agile surface ships equipped with cruise missiles. This force structure around the annexed Crimea is presented by Russia as a defensive measure, incorporating pre-emptive strike capabilities against the NATO. Therefore, Gerasimov's remarks on destroying enemy amphibious force while embarking at ports, suggesting those in Romania, Bulgaria or Türkiye reflect Russia's military posture and aims in the region.

6.1. Southern Military District

The Southern Military District (SMD; Южный военный округ) is one of the five administrative bodies under the Russian Ministry of Defense, based on geographic regions of the country. It was established after the 2008 reforms, on September 20, 2010. The headquarters of the SMD is in Rostov-on-Don. The area of responsibility of the SMD covers the North Caucasus region, military bases and deployments in the South Caucasus as well as the annexed Crimea.

[283] Kucera, Joshua. "Russia Claims ‘Mastery’ Over Turkey in Black Sea." EurasiaNet, September 25, 2016. https://eurasianet.org/russia-claims-mastery-over-turkey-black-sea. (accessed on June 14, 2022)



Figure 4. Military districts of Russian Federation. Source: Congressional Research Service, 2020

The ground forces component of the SMD is formed up by three army commands, which are the 58th Army, the 8th Army and the 49th Army. In addition to the three army-level units, several smaller units are under direct control of the district command, as well as the 7th Mountain Air Assault Division of the airborne troops.[284] The air force element is the 4th Air and Air Defense Forces Army from the RuAF. The SMD has two naval commands responsible from the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. These are the Black Sea Fleet and the Caspian Flotilla.[285]

6.2. Black Sea Fleet

The Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF; Черноморский флот) was founded on May 13, 1783, by Prince Grigory Potemkin of the Russian Empire. Potemkin also established a naval base in Sevastopol in the southwestern tip of Crimean Peninsula. The fleet played a crucial role in the Russo - Turkish War of 1787 - 1792 and the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Empire. The Russian Imperial Navy had enjoyed supremacy

[284] Harris, Catherine and Kagan, Frederick W. "Russia's Military Posture: Ground Forces Order of Battle". Institute for the Study of War. www.understandingwar.org. March 2018. https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Ground%20Forces%20OOB_ISW%20CTP_0.pdf. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

[285] Congressional Research Service. “Russian Armed Forces: Capabilities”. June 30, 2020. https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11589

over the Turkish Navy until the Crimean War between 1853 - 1856, through the BSF. Russia's defeat at the Crimean War, and subsequent Treaty of Paris in 1856 limited Russia's military presence in the region until 1870, when Russia denounced the treaty and restarted equipping the BSF.[286]

The Montreux Convention of 1936 can be considered as a major milestone for the security of the Black Sea as well as for the activities of the BSF. According to the Montreux Convention all commercial traffic was allowed at all times, except war. The convention allowed the Soviet Navy safe passage to the Mediterranean. This provision of the convention enabled Soviet Navy to display flag in the Mediterranean, challenging NATO navies in the region. During the Cold War, Soviet military estimated that Türkiye would likely block the Straits during a war. Such a measure would prevent supplies from reaching to the BSF. Therefore, the Soviet Navy received relatively smaller resources from armament and modernization budget during the period. It was especially smaller compared to the Pacific and Northern fleets.[287]

During the Soviet period, Sevastopol, Odesa and Novorossiisk had been the main bases of the BSF. The dissolution of the USSR had direct impact on the organization and equipment of the fleet, the ownership and use of the Sevastopol naval base being one of the most complicated issues between Russia and Ukraine.

Until the end of the Second World War, Crimea was an autonomous region. with the end of the war, this status was removed in 1945 and the peninsula was made a province of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. In 1954, Crimea was given to Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. After Ukraine’s independence from the USSR in 1991, the legal status of the BSF together with the ports, especially the Sevastopol

[286] Pike, John. “Black Sea Fleet (BSF) Morskoyo Flota (Naval Force).” Global Security. www.globalsecurity.org. Accessed August 9, 2022. https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/mf-black.htm. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[287] Allen, Keith. "The Black Sea Fleet and Mediterranean Naval Operations." In The Soviet Navy, pp. 216-227. Routledge, 2020.

became an important issue. The ownership of the ships of the BSF, bases and equipment became a topic of complex negotiations between Russia and Ukraine. [288]

The talks on the status and future of the BSF between Russia and Ukraine continued until 1997. After a lengthy negotiation phase, an agreement was signed on May 28, 1997. Under the agreement, Russia leased the Sevastopol naval base for twenty years. The agreement also had an option for an extension, to be exercised in 2017. The naval aviation base in Saki was also leased by Russia. The agreement also limited the number of Russian military personnel that are to be stationed in these bases to 25,000.[289]

For the Black Sea Fleet, the agreement signed in 1997 temporarily secured its deployment and operations in the region. The economic and political crisis during the 1990s, however, significantly deteriorated the status of the fleet, severely degrading the readiness of the ships and morale of the personnel. For example, one out of ten submarines was operational in late 1990s.[290]

In an article about the state of Russian Naval Forces, Rear Admiral Valery Aleksin states that Russia lost half of its active inventory between 1991 and 1997. One nuclear attack submarine and one ballistic missile carrying nuclear submarine was laid down until 1997, and no ship had entered service, or no modernization project had been completed. According to Aleksin's assessment, without any urgent measures, Russian Navy's active surface combatant force would include two or three guided missile cruisers, between 7 and 10 guided missile destroyers and up to 40 patrol craft. These ships would have to be divided between five independent fleets, some of which were responsible of operating in oceans. This status was deemed by Aleksin as a direct threat

[288] Kryukov, Nikolai Alexandrovich. "Evolution of Russian-Ukrainian relations: the legal status of the Black Sea Fleet." Military Thought 15.2 (2006): 120-133.

[289] Sherr, James. "Russia-Ukraine rapprochement?: The black sea fleet accords." Survival 39, no. 3 (1997): 33-50.

[290] Delance, Igor. Russia's Black Sea Fleet: Toward a Multiregional Force. Vol. 5. Center for Naval Analyses.www.cna.org. 2019. https://www.cna.org/archive/CNA_Files/pdf/iop-2019-u-020190-final.pdf. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

to Russian naval power as well as a risk for securing Russia's political and economic interests.[291]

The readiness and status of the BSF was displayed in August 2022. The deployment of a task group consisting of a cruiser, a frigate and a replenishment ship was cancelled. The reason for the cancelled deployment, which was planned months ago, was explained as "financial reasons". The task group was to deploy to Mediterranean, visiting France and Italy, therefore the task group had a diplomatic mission as well. The exact circumstances of the "financial reasons" were not elaborated, but it was later revealed that the Russian Navy simply could not afford the fuel necessary for the ships.[292]

The then Prime Minister Vladimir Putin stressed in 1999 that the state of naval forces was in the top of the priority list of Russian defense decision makers. A large-scale modernization program was activated, concentrating on preserving a blue-water naval capability by effectively decreasing in size while modernizing large surface and submarine ships, like the Admiral Ushakov, a Project 1144 Kirov class nuclear powered battle cruiser.[293]

The low performance of the BSF, especially the inability to provide adequate fire support and logistics support to troops during the war with Georgia 2008 prompted prioritization of the upgrade of the BSF. [294] Under the SAP 2020, shipbuilding programs for the BSF were given high priority. Several projects were commenced such as the construction of six Project 636.3 Varshavyanka class diesel electric submarines,

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[291] Pike, John. “Russian Navy Fleet Modernization.” Global Security. www.globalsecurity.org. Accessed August 9, 2022. https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/mf-intro-r.htm. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[292] Pike, John. “Russian Navy Fleet Modernization.” Global Security. www.globalsecurity.org. Accessed August 9, 2022. https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/mf-intro-r.htm. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[293] Pike, John. “Russian Navy Fleet Modernization.” Global Security. www.globalsecurity.org. Accessed August 9, 2022. https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/mf-intro-r.htm. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[294] Vendil Pallin, Carolina, and Fredrik Westerlund. "Russia's war in Georgia: lessons and consequences." Small wars & insurgencies 20, no. 2 (2009): 400-424.

six Project 1135.6 Admiral Grigorovich class frigates, six Project 2216.0 Vasily Bykov class corvettes and six Project 2163.1 Buyan M class corvettes. All of these ships are capable of firing anti-ship and land-attack versions of the Kalibr cruise missile.[295]

The priority given to the rapid upgrade of the BSF is evident in Table 5 and Table 6. The Table 5 shows ships commissioned into the BSF between 1991 and 2008, and the Table 6 shows the ships that have been commissioned between 2008 and 2022.

Table 5. Ships entered service with the Black Sea Fleet between 1991 and 2008.

Pennant Number	Name	Class	Type	Laid Down	Commissioned
955	R293	Project 1241.1M Tarantul III	Corvette	30.04.1991	23.03.1992
616	Samum	Project 1239 Dergach	Patrol Boat	September 1991	26.02.2000

Source: Jane's Fighting Ships 2022[296]

In April 2010, Ukraine President Viktor Yanukovych and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed an agreement for the extension of the lease of military bases in Crimea for a period of 25 years, starting from 2017. The agreement included an option for a further extension for five years and Russia's pledge to provide natural gas to Ukraine with low price.[297] The agreement became void by the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014.

[295] Delance, Igor. Russia's Black Sea Fleet: Toward a Multiregional Force. Vol. 5. Center for Naval Analyses.www.cna.org. 2019. https://www.cna.org/archive/CNA_Files/pdf/iop-2019-u-020190-final.pdf 2019.

[296] Saunders, Stephen. "Jane's Fighting Ships 2021–2022." Jane's, Virginia (2021).

[297] Watson, Ivan, and Maxim Tkachenko. "Russia, Ukraine Agree on Naval-Base-for-Gas Deal - CNN.Com." Russia, Ukraine agree on naval-base-for-gas deal - CNN.com. edition.cnn.com, April 21, 2010. http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/europe/04/21/russia.ukraine/index.html?hpt=T2. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

Table 6. Ships entered service with the Russian Black Sea Fleet between 2008 and 2022.

Pennant Number	Name	Class	Type	Laid Down	Commissioned
B261	Novorossysk	Project 636.3 Varshavyanka	Diesel Electric Submarine	20.08.2010	22.08.2014
B237	Rostov na Donu			21.11.2011	16.12.2014
B262	Stary Oskol			17.08.2012	25.06.2015
B265	Krasnodar			20.02.2014	05.11.2015
B268	Velikiy Novgorod			30.10.2014	26.10.2016
B271	Kolpino			30.10.2014	24.11.2016
745	Admiral Grigorovich	Project 1135.6M Admiral Grigorovich	Frigate	18.12.2010	11.03.2016
751	Admiral Essen			08.07.2011	31.05.2016
799	Admiral Makarov			29.02.2012	25.12.2017
368	Vasily Bykov	Project 2216.0 Vasily Bykov	Corvette	26.02.2014	20.12.2018
375	Dmitriy Rogachev			25.07.2014	11.06.2019
363	Pavel Derzhavin			18.02.2016	27.11.2020
651	Velikiy Ustyug	Project 2163.1 Buyan M		27.08.2011	15.11.2014
609	Vyshny Volochek			29.08.2013	01.06.2018
626	Orekhovo-Zuevo			29.05.2014	10.12.2018
630	Ingushetiya			29.08.2014	28.12.2019
600	Grayvoron			10.04.2015	30.01.2021
841	Suvorovets	Project 2198.0 Grachonok	Patrol Boat	06.05.2011	14.11.2012
842	Kursant Kirovets			05.05.2012	22.08.2013
930	Yunarmeets Kaspiya			27.07.2012	15.10.2013
836	Yunarmeets Kryma			07.05.2013	22.08.2014
	P275	Project 03160 Raptor			05.03.2015
	P276				05.03.2015
845	P345 Buyevlyanin			2015	29.12.2015
838	P352				25.12.2015
850	P413				08.05.2017
852	P425				08.05.2017

Source: Jane's Fighting Ships 2022[298]

Within efforts of the improvement of power projection capabilities of the BSF, Russia turned to France to acquire Mistral class large amphibious assault ships. An agreement

[298] Saunders, Stephen. "Jane's Fighting Ships 2021–2022." Jane's, Virginia (2021).

for two ships was signed in 2010.[299] The contract also covered an option for two more ships, to be built in Russia through transfer of technology. The Mistral deal is so far Russia's largest defense order from a foreign nation and because of this it is a very significant purchase, since Russia has relied on Soviet-era principle of manufacturing all arms and military platforms indigenously, with minimum foreign input. There were criticism towards this contract on the grounds that it was undermining Russian national security through increasing dependency to foreign states.[300] Despite criticism towards the necessity of the purchase based on the argument that future conflicts that Russia is likely to be involved would require air and land assets rather than amphibious vessels, Russian Navy supported the deal. For example, Russian Navy Admiral Vladimir Vysotskiy stated that a vessel like Mistral would provide the Black Sea Fleet a capability to undertake missions significantly faster, based on the experience during the war with Georgia. [301] After Crimea's annexation, France unilaterally terminated the contract for the two already built Mistral ships and paid compensation to Russia in 2015. The ships were eventually sold to Egypt.[302]

As of 2022, the BSF had 25,000 personnel, 67 surface combatant ships and 7 submarines. The inventory of the BSF as of 2022 is given in Table 7.

[299] BBC. "France to Sell Two Mistral-Class Warships to Russia1 www.bbc.com, July 23, 2010. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-10740291. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

[300] Servettaz, Elena. "Russia's Mistral Deal: Where the Wind Blows." Institute of Modern Russia. imrussia.org, July 18, 2014. https://imrussia.org/en/world/780-russia%E2%80%99s-mistral-deal-where-the-wind-blows. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[301] Council, Atlantic. "French Ship Sale to Russia Must Be Blown Off Course - Atlantic Council." Atlantic Council. www.atlanticcouncil.org, November 17, 2009. https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/french-ship-sale-to-russia-must-be-blown-off-course/. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[302] Tran, Pierre. "Mistral Dispute With Russia Settled, France Eyes Exports." Defense News. www.defensenews.com, August 9, 2015. https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2015/08/09/mistral-dispute-with-russia-settled-france-eyes-exports/. (accessed on August 10, 2022)

Table 7. Ships of the Russian Black Sea Fleet as of 2022.

Type	Class	Quantity
Submarine	Project 877V Kilo	1
	Project 636.3 Varshavyanka	6
Cruiser	Project 1164 Slava	1
Destroyer	Project 1134B Kara	1
Frigate / Corvette	Project 1135 Krivak I	1
	Project 1135M Krivak II	1
	Project 1135.6 Admiral Grigorovich	3 (+3 under construction)
	Project 1124 Grisha I	1
	Project 1124M Grisha III	1
	Project 1124MU Grisha V	4
	Project 2163.1 Buyan M	6
	Project 22800 Karakurt	1 (+4 under construction)
	Project 22160 Vasily Bykov	4 (+2 under construction)
Patrol Boat	Project 1239 Dergach	2
	Project 1241.1 Tarantul	5
	Project 21980 Grachonok	6
Mine Warfare	Project 12660 Gorya	1
	Project 266M Natya	4
	Project 266.8 Agat	1
	Project 1265 Sonya	1
	Project 1258 Yevgenya	1
Amphibious	Project 1171 Alligator	2
	Project 775/II Ropucha II	4
	Project 11770 Serna	2
	Project 1176 Ondatra	3
	Project 02510	1

Source: The Military Balance 2022[303]

6.3. Military Capabilities of Countries in the Region and Balance of Power

There are six Black Sea riparian states, which are Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Türkiye and Ukraine. Three of these states are members of the NATO (Bulgaria, Romania and Türkiye). On the other hand, two of the riparian states are former allies of the USSR and three of them are former republics of the USSR (Georgia, Russia,

[303] Source: The Military Balance 2022

and Ukraine). This makes the Black Sea background to a complex issue with regards to Russian - NATO and Russian - US relations.

Bulgaria became a member of the NATO in 2004 and the EU in 2007. Upon joining the NATO, Bulgaria initiated a large-scale modernization program for its armed forces, supervised under a strategic defense review published in 2008. A road map for the adoption of the training, doctrine, and equipment of the armed forces to NATO standards have been prepared. In line with the professionalization of the armed forces, conscription was abolished, and the number of personnel was reduced gradually. [304] As of 2022, the number of active personnel serving with the Bulgarian Armed Forces is 36,950 with a reserve force of 3,000.[305]

Under the modernization and acquisition plans, air force and navy has received the greatest share of budget. One of the most important programs of Bulgaria is the acquisition of F-16 combat aircraft from the US, to replace the legacy MiG-29 fighters from the Cold War era. The US administration approved sale of 8 F-16V combat aircraft in June 2019, with an approval for additional 8 granted in April 2022.[306] For the development of naval capability, a program for the acquisition of two modern corvettes was started. Under the program, a contract with German Lürssen Werft was signed in November 2021. The construction of the first boat started in Varna Shipyard of Bulgaria on June 17, 2022.[307]

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[304] Kuimova, Alexandra, and Simeon Wezeman. "SIPRI Background Paper – Bulgara and Black Sea Security." 2018. https://www.sipri.org/publications/2018/sipri-background-papers/bulgaria-and-black-sea-security. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[305] The International Institute for Strategic Studies. “The Military Balance 2022”. Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003294566

[306] Jennings, Gareth. “Bulgaria Approved for Additional F-16s.” Janes.com. www.janes.com, April 5, 2022. https://www.janes.com/defence-news/news-detail/bulgaria-approved-for-additional-f-16s. (accessed on August 18, 2022)

[307] Naval News. “NVL Group Lays Keel of 1st Corvette for the Bulgarian Navy ”. www.navalnews.com, June 21, 2022. https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/06/nvl-group-lays-keel-of-1st-corvette-for-the-bulgarian-navy/. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

Table 8. Naval forces of the Black Sea states as of 2022.

Type	Russia (Black Sea Fleet)	Bulgaria	Georgia	Romania	Türkiye	Ukraine
Submarine	7				12 (+6 under construction)	
Cruiser	1					
Destroyer	1					
Frigate / Corvette	22 (+9 under construction)	4 (+2 under construction)		7 (+4 under construction)	26 (+1 under construction)	2
Patrol Boat	13	3	24	20	35	11
Mine Warfare	8	9		11	15	1
Amphibious Assault Ship					(+1 under construction)	2
Landing Ship / Craft	12	1			35	

Source: The Military Balance 2022[308]

Georgia's war with Russia in 2008 had profound effects in the Black Sea Security. The war also caused Georgia to re-evaluate and adjust its position and defense policies. The country started large scale reform concerning its armed forces. The top priorities were determined as improving personnel quality, commissioning new training infrastructures, and modernizing equipment. Integration into NATO and EU have remained as priorities, as evident in active participation of the Georgian army to multinational exercises and deployments.[309]

The 2008 war inflicted significant damage to the inventory of the armed forces. Financial constraints limited the recovery phase and also cause many procurement programs to be delayed or cancelled. One result of the war was the merging of the navy and the coast guard into a command under the Ministry of Interior in 2009. The

[308] The International Institute for Strategic Studies. "The Military Balance 2022". Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003294566.

[309] Kuimova, Alexandra, and Simeon Wezeman. "SIPRI Background Paper – Georgia and Black Sea Security." 2018. https://www.sipri.org/publications/2018/sipri-background-papers/georgia-and-black-sea-security. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

next year, the air force was put under the command of the ground forces.[310] As of 2022, a total of 20,650 personnel serve with the Georgian Armed Forces. The air force operates a modest fleet of Su-25 (NATO code: "Frogfoot") ground attack aircraft and UH-1H helicopters donated by the US and Türkiye as well as Soviet-era transport and attack helicopters. The naval component has a small number of patrol boats. 6 of these were purchased from Turkish shipyards and another one was donated by Turkish Navy.[311]

Romania, like Bulgaria, joined the NATO in 2004. Immediately after a large-scale modernization and integration process had begun with massive reorganization within the armed forces and initiation of procurement programs. Defense and security cooperation with the EU and the US have rapidly developed. One outcome and milestone of this close cooperation has been the establishment of the AEGIS Ashore missile defense site at Deveselu air base. The total manpower of the Romanian Armed Forces is 71,500, with a reserve force of 55,000 reservists.[312]

Within the modernization of the Romanian armed forces, several platforms were ordered from the US and European countries. One of the most important deals was the acquisition of second-hand F-16A/B fighters from Portugal. A total of 17 F-16A/B combat aircraft were delivered. Romania also announced plans to acquire 32 ex-Denmark Air Force F-16A/Bs in December 2021. In March 2021, Romanian Ministry of Defense launched a project to upgrade the strategic Mihail Kogălniceanu air force base with a 430 million Euro budget. One of the aims of the project is to make the base compatible for the operation of the F-35 fifth generation combat aircraft.[313] Romanian

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[310] Kuimova, Alexandra, and Simeon Wezeman. "SIPRI Background Paper – Georgia and Black Sea Security." 2018. https://www.sipri.org/publications/2018/sipri-background-papers/georgia-and-black-sea-security. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[311] The International Institute for Strategic Studies. “The Military Balance 2022”. Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003294566

[312] Kuimova, Alexandra, and Simeon Wezeman. "SIPRI Background Paper – Romania and Black Sea Security." 2018. https://www.sipri.org/publications/2018/sipri-background-papers/romania-and-black-sea-security. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[313] Albert, Denes. “Romania Prepares Multi-Billion Black Sea Air Base Program with an Eye on Russia.” RMX News. rmx.news, March 9, 2021. https://rmx.news/article/romania-prepares-multi-billion-black-sea-air-base-program-with-an-eye-on-russia/. (accessed on May 19, 2022)

President Klaus Iohannis announced in February 2022 that Romania was also planning to acquire the F-35.[314]

The Romanian Navy has a small surface combatant force with three frigates and four corvettes. Two of the frigates were acquired as second-hand from the UK. In July 2019, four Gowind class modern corvettes were ordered to Naval Group of France. The agreement also covers the establishment of maintenance facilities and a training center.[315]

Ukraine initiated a large-scale reorganization and modernization process for its armed forces after the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the outbreak of the conflict in the Donbas region. Starting from 2015, many radical steps have been taken in order to increase the efficiency of the armed forces as well as to improve the performance of the organization and personnel. The first step within the framework of the transformation was the preparation of the Strategic Defense Bulletin in 2016, which laid the roadmap for the measures and reforms for armed forces. The benchmark for all the measures and action plans has been the NATO standards. The subsequent State Program for the Development of the Armed Forces for the period of 2017 - 2020 defined the necessary activities to implement the transformation.[316]

As of early 2022, the Ukraine Armed Forces had 196,600 active personnel and around 900,000 reservists. The inventory of the army, air force and navy consist largely of the Soviet-era platforms and equipment, most of which have received local upgrades. The air force inherited large number of combat and comber aircraft from the USSR after its dissolution and for a brief period of time in early 1990s, Ukrainian Air Force had

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[314] Neagu, Bogdan. “Romania Still Committed to Get F-35s, but after 2030” Euractiv. www.euractiv.com, February 3, 2022. https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/romania-still-committed-to-get-f-35s-but-after-2030/. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

[315] The Defense Post. “Naval Group Awarded €1.2 Billion Contract for Romania Navy Corvettes.” www.thedefensepost.com, July 3, 2019. https://www.thedefensepost.com/2019/07/03/naval-group-romania-navy-corvette-contract/. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[316] Kuimova, Alexandra, and Simeon Wezeman. "SIPRI Background Paper – Ukraine and Black Sea Security." 2018. https://www.sipri.org/publications/2018/sipri-background-papers/ukraine-and-black-sea-security. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

the largest combat fleet in Europe. But this situation had changed quickly, with many aircraft being decommissioned and scrapped, and in the case nuclear capable strategic bombers, brought back to Russia. As of early 2022, Ukrainian air force operated around 120 combat aircraft.[317]

Within the armament program, ground forces received the greatest share from the budget. Priority was given to improve the artillery and missile forces in terms of equipment and training. One of the much-publicized acquisitions was the Javelin man-portable anti-tank guided missile from the US under a security assistance program. The US provided 2.7 billion dollars' worth of weapons, equipment, and training under this program between 2014 and early 2022. Another major acquisition program for the Ukraine Armed Forces was the purchase of Bayraktar TB2 armed UAVs from Türkiye. Ukraine ordered a first batch of 6 TB2s in 2019. This was followed by another batch for the navy next year. On February 3, 2022, Türkiye and Ukraine signed an agreement for the establishment of a facility to manufacture the TB2 armed drones through transfer of technology. Ukraine also ordered four MilGem class corvettes from Türkiye to upgrade its navy. On the other hand, based upon the experience from the conflict in 2014-2015 in the Donbas region, Ukraine decided to transform its navy into a force composed of large number of small, fast, and agile boats equipped with missiles. Referred to as the "Mosquito Doctrine", the small boats were designed for hit-and-run style attacks against Russian Navy, especially in the Sea of Azov.

Türkiye is the largest NATO power in the Black Sea region. A member of the Alliance since 1952, Türkiye is an active participant to many NATO operations and deployments, as well as conducting internal security and cross border operations against terrorism. The Turkish Armed Forces consist of 355,200 personnel with a reserve force of 378,700 as of 2022.

[317] The International Institute for Strategic Studies. "The Military Balance 2022". Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003294566

Table 9. Air force inventories of the Black Sea states as of 2022.

Type	Russia	Bulgaria	Georgia	Romania	Türkiye	Ukraine
Combat Aircraft	1,486 (+180 ordered)	21 (+16 ordered)	10	33	288	112
Special Mission	69			2	7 (+4 ordered)	3
Tanker	20 (+31 ordered)				7	
Transport	408 (+194 ordered)	7	2	1	68	30 (+3 ordered)

Source: The Military Balance 2022[318]

Türkiye has been undertaking an extensive modernization program through the development of national defense industry since 2000s. Many local development and manufacture projects have been materialized since early 2000s, primarily due to the requirements for counter-terrorism operations. Indigenous UAVs, armored vehicles, attack, and transport helicopters as well as various types of naval vessels have been taken into service. The development of the defense industry also reflected in the increase in exports, the UAV sales to more than 25 countries being an example of the trend.

The Turkish Navy has been undergoing an indigenization, with the help of the realization of the MilGem corvette project. The MilGem is the first locally designed and constructed warship, four of which have entered service. A modified, enlarged version of the MilGem corvette, designated the Istanbul class frigate is under construction. The Turkish Navy also plans to commission the TF-2000 class air warfare destroyer, the Reis class air independent propulsion system equipped submarines and the Anadolu multipurpose amphibious assault ship in 2020s.

Turkish Air Force modernization plans were centered around the acquisition of 100 F-35 fifth generation fighter aircraft. Türkiye was removed from the F-35 project and the 6 aircraft that were produced were hold by the US as a response to Türkiye's purchase

[318] The International Institute for Strategic Studies. “The Military Balance 2022”. Routledge, 2022. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003294566.

of the S-400 system from Russia. The S-400 deal became one of the major issues for the Turkish - US relations. As a result of the denial of the F-35s, Türkiye made a request for the F-16V fighter from the US, while focusing on local development programs such as the Milli Muharip Ucak combat aircraft project.

Turkish made armed UAVs have achieved significant successes in internal security operations and cross border operations in Syria and Iraq. The Anka and Bayraktar TB2 drones have proven to be essential in many different operations and conflicts. The performance of the Turkish made drones TB2 of Azerbaijani army during the war in Nagorno Karabakh War was essential in the outcome of the conflict. The performance of these UAVs resulted in with a rapid increase in the export sales. Türkiye has acquired more than 200 Anka and TB2 UAVs for all branches of the armed forces and security services. The country operates the largest UAV fleet in the Black Sea region.

6.4. Military Build-up in Crimea

After the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and following period of strained relations with the West, Russia has started rapidly developing its capabilities regarding Anti Access / Area Denial (A2/AD) in several strategic locations. Crimea, along with Kaliningrad is one of these strategic outposts.[319]

A2/AD can be described as the set of tactics and techniques used to prevent the enemy from accessing or operating in a certain geographic area. Modern A2/AD strategies focus on high-speed and precision guided missiles (ballistic missiles and cruise missiles), naval mines, air, and missile defense systems. Corvettes and fast patrol boats, submarines, air, and ship launched cruise missiles and electronic warfare systems are prominent instruments of A2/AD.[320]

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[319] Wade, Jonathan. "Russia's A2/AD in Crimea". Conflict Observer. http://conflictobserver.com/russias-a2ad-crimea/. (accessed on June 14, 2022)

[320] Mevlütoğlu, Arda. "Ateş Gücünün Dağıtılması – Distributed Lethality". Siyah Gri Beyaz. https://www.siyahgribeyaz.com/2017/02/ates-gucunun-dagtlmas-distributed.html. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

Immediately after the annexation, Russia deployed several types of long range surface to air and anti-ship missile systems in Crimea. Russia also commissioned submarines and warships capable of firing long-range anti-ship and land attack cruise missiles. S-400 long range air defense system, Bal and Bastion-P coastal anti-ship missiles, Iskander tactical ballistic missiles and Kalibr cruise missiles are several major strategic weapons systems that have been deployed to Crimea since 2014.

Russia's A2/AD build-up in Crimea consists of many interconnected weapon and sensor systems, but the three main pillars of this structure are the S-400 air defense systems, Kalibr cruise missiles and the Bastion land based anti-ship missile systems.

The S-400 (NATO code: SA-21 "Growler"), is a version of the legacy S-300 (NATO code: SA-10 "Grumble") long range air defense system. The main design mission of the S-400 is to provide long range defense of strategic installations against cruise missiles, airborne early warning, and control (AWACS) aircraft, strategic bombers, and cruise missiles. An S-400 battery consists of a command and control post, a search radar, a target acquisition radar, and missile launchers. All components of the system are vehicle based. The S-400 can use different types of Russian-built radars and missiles. The system entered service with the Russian Armed Forces in 2007 and was purchased by China, Türkiye and India.[321]

After the annexation, Russia deployed three S-400 battalions. The first S-400 battalion reached Feodosia in January 2017, the second to Sevastopol in January 2018 and the third to Yevpatoria in September 2018. Each S-400 battalion is equipped with 8 launcher vehicles with a total of 32 ready-to-fire missiles. Each battalion in Crimea are also reinforced with Pantsir (NATO code: SA-22 "Greyhound") and Buk (NATO code: SA-17 "Grizzly") low and medium altitude air defense systems, establishing a layered air defense network around Crimea.[322]

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[321] Frühling, Stephan, and Guillaume Lasconjarias. "NATO, A2/AD and the Kaliningrad Challenge." Survival 58, no. 2 (2016): 95-116.

[322] Reśkiewicz, Patryk. "Russian anti-access potential (A2/AD) on the Crimean Peninsula." Rocznik Bezpieczeństwa Morskiego 14 (2020).

The Kalibr forms the backbone of Russian conventional long range precision strike capability. It has four main versions, namely 3M14T (ship launched land attack), 3M14K (submarine launched land attack), 3M54T (ship launched anti-ship), and 3M54K (submarine launched anti-ship). The missile flies towards its target at very low altitude and using navigation signals from the GLONASS, the Russian analogue to the US GPS global positioning system. The Kalibr missile was first used in combat on October 7, 2015, when patrol boats from the Caspian Sea Flotilla fired missiles at the ISIL targets in Syria. Six submarines and many surface warships of the Black Sea Fleet carry the Kalibr missile, providing a land attack capability for most of the Black Sea region.[323]

The K-300P Bastion-P is a land-based version of the P-800 Oniks (NATO code: SS-N-26 "Strobile") anti-ship missile, which was developed to hit US aircraft carriers from long ranges. The Bastion-P system is carried by a heavy wheeled vehicle and each missile has a range of maximum 350 kilometers. It can carry 250 kg of warhead and flies to target at supersonic speeds, making it difficult to track and intercept.[324]

The production of the Bastion system started in 2010 and the first battery was deployed to the Kuril Islands in the Pacific. A version of the system was deployed to Crimea after the annexation. One of the land based anti-ship missile bases in southwestern Crimea, the Utyos missile base can cover most of the Black Sea with the Bastion-P system.[325]

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[323] Molenda, Jenevieve. “3M-14 Kalibr (SS-N-30A).” Missile Threat. missilethreat.csis.org, March 7, 2022. https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/ss-n-30a/. (accessed on July 5, 2022)

[324] Rosoboronexport. “Coastal Missile System Bastion.” roe.ru. Accessed August 9, 2022. https://roe.ru/eng/catalog/naval-systems/coastal-weapon-systems/bastion-old/. (accessed on May 16, 2022)

[325] Dobija, Konrad. "The Political and Military Aspects of Creating Anti-Access/Area-Denial Systems (A2/Ad): The Example of China and Russia." Safety & Defense 2 (2021).

6.5. Overall Assessment of Russia's Black Sea Military Presence and Activities

The speeches by Admiral Valery Aleksin and General Valery Gerasimov are 20-years apart but when taken together, they present some similarities. The evident competitive tone in the rhetoric represents Russia's post-Soviet efforts to maintain its status as a military superpower, exert influence in its close periphery and achieve military superiority against peer regional competitors. It is also noteworthy that Türkiye and Türkiye's military capabilities are taken as benchmarks for the Russian military in the Black Sea region, particularly for the Black Sea Fleet.

Russia's military posture and operations in the region gained pace after 2008. This has two main reasons: First, the Russian economy has largely recovered from the collapse of the dissolution of the USSR and managed to create enough resources for the armament and sustainment of the armed forces. This enabled Russia to follow a more active, aggressive policy in the region. Until mid-2000s, Russia preferred regional cooperation and close communication with the NATO, because of lack of strength in economy and military. The BLACKSEAFOR experience is a good example of this preference.

The other reason for Russia's more active stance is the enlargement of NATO towards the east, the color revolutions and consequent threat perception by Russia. The revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine and their commitment to join the NATO were assessed as direct national security threats. Furthermore, establishment of missile defense bases in Poland and Romania, both very close locations to Russia further increased concerns of an encirclement by the US. Therefore, the war with Georgia, annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Donbas and even the involvement to the civil war in Syria can be assessed as Russia's countermoves against NATO.

Russia's implementation of upgrade of military capacity in the Black Sea region supports this argument. The introduction of the Kalibr long range cruise missile and installation of the missile to most of the warships of the Black Sea Fleet, deployment of a large number of air defense and anti-ship missiles to Crimea to form a large

defensive "bubble" which covers most of the Black Sea against air and sea threats are reflections of this approach. Meanwhile, the economic and industrial potential of Russia has not permitted undertaking costly development programs for new generation platforms, and as a result, upgrade of many existing systems and equipment was preferred.

It is noteworthy that the period between 2008 and until 2022 saw very close cooperation between Russia and the West, in terms of procurement, transfer of technology and industrial partnership. Russian defense industry had purchased many design and production software and hardware as well as products from European countries, to modernize its capabilities. Russian army inducted many European manufactured systems and components. This cooperation enabled rapid modernization of the Russian armed forces in terms of communications, computers, sensors, and mobility.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

Russia has clearly shaken off the trauma of the dissolution of the USSR and following economic, social, and military depression, which left huge scars in the collective memory of Russian people as well as decision makers. The period until early 2000's spent with trying to hold together what was left from the USSR, and those leftovers were rapidly decaying, especially those belonging to Russian Armed Forces.

In this period of reorganization (or attempts for it) was aimed to keep the armed forces operational at all costs while keeping relations with the West (or NATO) through dialogue and cooperation. Russia's willingness and ambition towards BLACKSEAFOR initiative by Türkiye is a good example for this enthusiasm towards regional security cooperation. It was imperative, because Russia simply lacked adequate hard power to assert its priorities to the West or to regional power.

This stance started to chance in early 2000's, especially when Putin initiated series of modernization programs for the armed forces. The 2008 war with Georgia is therefore a critical turning point, following which a large-scale reformation was started. It was in this period that Russia started defense industry cooperation with the West, and even started importing large amounts of weapon systems from NATO countries such as France, Italy, and Germany.

The aim of this thesis was to provide a comprehensive overview on the military modernization of the Russian Federation over a course of time and the correlation between this modernization effort and Black Sea security. Starting from early 2000s, Russia has shaken off the trauma of the dissolution of the USSR and following economic, social, and military collapse, which left huge scars in the collective memory

of Russian people as well as decision makers. The period until early 2000's spent with trying to hold together what was left from the USSR, and those leftovers were rapidly decaying, especially the equipment inherited by the Russian Armed Forces.

In the second chapter, it is shown that Russia had been skeptical towards the NATO during early 1990s, because of an assessment that after the end of the Cold War, NATO had lost its raisons d'être. However, mainly because of lack of economic and military power, Russia had not directly confronted NATO but opted for developing communication and cooperation channels. The Open Skies Treaty, BLACKSEAFOR are examples to this position. NATO's operations in Bosnia in 1995 and especially the Kosovo operation in 1999, however, are important turning points for Russia's perception about the NATO. The growing concerns about NATO's intentions reached peak during the color revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine in 2003 - 2004. Russia assessed these developments as direct threats to its national security and integrity. Vladimir Putin's speech in Munich Security Conference in 2007 is a manifestation of this deep concern and a challenge to the US led world order.

As seen in the third chapter, developments in the Black Sea region after 2008 are marked with increasing tensions between Russia and the NATO. Russia in this period annexed Crimea and actively supported separatist in the eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas, actively involved in the Syrian civil war and invested in developing new types of advanced weapon systems, such as hypersonic missiles. It can be claimed that Russia is trying to secure its hinterland by establishing military presence and long-range strike capability (i.e., long reach) in its periphery. In other words, Russia can be said to be pursuing an "active defense" against NATO. It is in this tense geopolitical environment that Türkiye is keeping a delicate balance between Ukraine and Russia, while rapidly developing strategic relations with the former through defense sector transactions and keeping good relations with the latter. Türkiye clearly sides with Ukraine on the Crimea issue, but also purchases strategic air defense systems from Russia. This situation is a stark reminder of multiple fault lines in the region, which are further threatened by developments of Russian military.

As described in the fifth chapter, the 2008 war with Georgia is a critical turning point, following which a large-scale military reformation was started to increase the effectiveness, power projection and rapid deployment capabilities of the armed forces. It was in this period that Russia started defense industry cooperation with the West, and even started importing large amounts of weapon systems from NATO countries such as France, Italy, and Germany.

But this cooperation abruptly stopped in 2014, after Ukraine crisis and annexation of Crimea. Fueled by serious concerns about NATO's expansion in the Soviet hinterland, including potential memberships of Georgia and Ukraine, and also feared by the risk of spreading popular movement influenced by the Arab Spring, Russia started following more assertive, active policies in the Black Sea region, reaching out to Eastern Mediterranean through Syria and eventually Libya.

During the reform process, Russia put great emphasis on maintaining a nuclear power status, since nuclear weapons are seen as the guarantor of national security. Until 2020, naval programs received large budgets and several new types of shipbuilding programs were commenced, an indication of the desire to achieve a "blue water" navy, having increased power projection capabilities. This aim had not been fully materialized, partly because of financial and industrial constraints and partly because of the cut-off of supply chains after 2014. Many projects regarding ground forces and the air force were of upgrade of existing, legacy platforms. New development programs have seen significant delays and budget overruns, another chronic issue with the Russian defense industrial base.

As seen in the sixth chapter, Russia's upgrade of the Black Sea Fleet and military assets in the region aim to neutralize the NATO assets in the region and prevent reinforcements to respond. In order to develop such a capability, Russia has deployed large number of missile systems to the annexed Crimea, rapidly increased the number of submarines and warships capable of firing long range cruise missiles and increased the percentage of modern equipment in the inventory of the Southern Military District formations. A closer look on the military capabilities of other riparian states reveal that

it is only Türkiye that can maintain some level of balance with Russia in terms of quality and quantity of conventional forces in the region.

As seen in the second chapter, Russia's stance against the West between early 1990's until early 2000's can be defined as cooperative, but cautionary. During this period, Russia preferred cooperation with the US, EU, and the NATO on various regional and global issues and problems. Russian foreign policy had been mostly devised around collaboration. The main reason for this approach was the situation of the economy and hence, the military. The status of Russian Armed Forces simply unable to support an assertive foreign policy. On the other hand, it should be noted that Russia had not been fully in line with NATO or devoid of any doubts or concerns regarding its activities. The end of the Cold War, according to the rhetoric of Moscow, negated the necessity of a security organization like NATO. Furthermore, NATO's operations in Europe, particularly in Kosovo in 1999 were perceived as intrusions to Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.

From this perspective, it can be claimed that Russian foreign relations had demonstrated an example to the defensive realist scheme. The country had mobilized all available means to sustain the capability and deterrence of the armed forces, while seeking to maintain a balance with other actors, mostly NATO in global and regional issues. Particularly in the Black Sea region, Russia had put special emphasis on maintaining a balance in its relations with Türkiye, as seen in the BLACKSEAFOR experience. While Russian political and military decision makers accepted Türkiye as a regional power and competitor, no actions had been taken to disturb the balance in relations.

It is noteworthy that Vladimir Putin's statements and rhetoric in the early years in office emphasize on international cooperation and partnership. Putin even goes further to prioritize foreign investment as key to economic development. This position, however, started to change shortly after in early 2000's. A number of factors have contributed to the change in Russian perception and assessment regarding the international system and global security, as well as regional stability. These factors can be collected under four topics:

Firstly, the most obvious factor that contributed to the shift of Russia's security paradigm was NATO's expansion towards the East. Accepting former Soviet states in the Baltic and former Warsaw Pact states as members was perceived as a threat to Russia's natural hinterland in Europe. The political and social change in these countries, coupled with EU membership significantly decreased Russian political and military influence, while simultaneously increasing US presence and influence. In the absence of a bi-polar ideological world system, such a realignment and restructuring was seen by Moscow as a move by NATO to encircle Russia.

Secondly, as a subtopic of the first factor, the establishment of missile defense system in Europe was assessed as an initiative by the US to disrupt strategic stability through negating Russia's nuclear deterrence. Despite official statements by the NATO on the purpose of the defense system as an asset to counter Iran's ballistic missile threat, the systems that were set up in Poland and Romania were deemed as critical threats, because of their technical capabilities to enable launching long range land attack cruise missiles, which were forbidden under the INF Treaty. The US withdrawal from the INF in 2019 further fueled these concerns.

Thirdly, as Monaghan explains, Russia had made an assessment in early 2000's that the nature of the international systems was changing and developments and crises in certain parts of the world might trigger similar events in other regions. These concerns were further deepened by the color revolutions in 2003 and 2004, and by the Arab Spring in 2011 and the following civil wars in Libya and Syria. Based on mostly the Chechen experience during 1990's, Russia was concerned that the popular movements and revolts could spread to its regions in the Caucasus in terms of separatism or an uprising against the central government.[326]

Fourthly, the degradation of the armed forces in terms of capacity and technology limited Russia's capabilities in foreign relations, in terms of exerting influence or

[326] Monaghan, Andrew (Ed.). Russian Grand Strategy in the Era of Global Power Competition. Manchester University Press. (2022)

projecting power. Russia had not been able to provide military support to its allies in terms of equipment, training and financing and this inability caused a vacuum of influence, which could be filled in with other states. In order to improve and sustain its relations with its allies and expand its sphere of influence, Russia needed to improve its military capacity. Any insufficiency in supporting allies would result in further shrinkage, thereby putting Russia in an even more defensive position.

As a result of the above mentioned factors, Russian foreign policy started to change in early 2000's, following a more security oriented approach. With the help of improving economy and thereby increasing defense spending, more resources were diverted to armament and military modernization. Especially after the 2008 Serdyukov reforms, Russia had put the improvement of armed forces capabilities as top priority. As seen in the fifth chapter, special emphasis was given to improving long range strike and power projection capabilities, as well as electronic warfare systems. These capabilities were put to test in conflicts in Donbas and in Syria. After the annexation of Crimea, Russia had spent great effort in increasing its strike range and potential in the Black Sea region, making Crimea as a large base for many different types of advanced missiles.

The period between 2008 and 2022 saw three conflicts that Russia had been involved: The war with Georgia in 2008, the conflict in Donbas, involvement in the Syrian Civil War and finally the invasion of Ukraine in 2022. These wars and operations saw extensive use of armed forces' new capabilities. Combined with the official rhetoric regarding NATO's activities in the Eastern Europe and the Black Sea, Russia demonstrated a more assertive and active policy through active use of military capacity. Therefore, Russian activities and policies are in line with offensive realism, focusing on maximizing power, neglecting international cooperation with the exception of conjectural, pragmatic relationships that contribute to comparative gains. Russia's relations with Türkiye in this period is a good example to this approach, where the two countries have managed to compartmentalize their relations. On the other hand, Russia has openly stated its regional ambitions and improved its military capacity, challenging explicitly the NATO and implicitly its most important regional member, Türkiye.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 has profoundly changed regional geopolitics and global system. Some scholars, like Gideon Rachman argue that the Russo – Ukrainian War is the start of a new type of Cold War.[327] Based on the official rhetoric of Russian government, the invasion, which is designated as a "special military operation" is a defensive measure, taken against Ukraine's threats and activities and NATO's expansionism. The operation is presented as a last measure to ensure the security of Russia and its close periphery. From this perspective, the operation can be described as a major act of "offensive defense". When Russia's shift in security and threat assessments and change in foreign and security policies, it can be claimed that the "special military operation" is only the latest part of a chain of offensive defense measures, the others being Georgia, Crimea and Syria.

Based on the course or the outcome of this war, the thesis can be developed to provide a better understanding on the impact and the performance of Russia's military modernization. The thesis can also be expanded through more detailed study of the militaries, security policies and threat perceptions of other Black Sea riparian states.

[327] Rachman, Gideon. "Ukraine and the start of a second cold war", Financial Times, June 6, 2022. https://www.ft.com/content/34481fbd-4ca7-4bb3-bef5-e68fefed7438 (accessed on August 22, 2022)

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A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tez çalışmasının amacı, Rusya Federasyonu'nun (RF) askeri modernizasyon ve yeniden yapılanma faaliyetlerinin, Karadeniz bölgesindeki güvenlik ortamına etkisini incelemektir. Bu kapsamda, 2008 Rusya - Gürcistan Savaşı'ndan kısa süre yürürlüğe konan ve dönemin savunma bakanı Anatoli Serdyukov'un adı ile bilinen savunma reformlarından, 24 Şubat 2022 tarihinde Rusya'nın Ukrayna'ya yönelik başlattığı işgal harekâtına kadarki süreç ele alınmıştır. Bu süreç içinde RF'nin savunma ve güvenlik politikalarının ana hatları, tehdit algılamaları ve öncelikleri incelenmiş; bunlar ışığında RF'nin Karadeniz'deki askeri unsurlarına yaptığı yatırımlar, tedarik ve geliştirme projeleri ile silahlı kuvvetlerindeki teşkilat ve doktrin değişimleri tespit edilerek bu süreci etkileyen faktörler ve sürecin Karadeniz güvenliğine etkisi incelenmiştir. Tezin yanıt aradığı araştırma sorusu, RF'nin özellikle 2008'den itibaren yürüttüğü askeri modernizasyon ve yeniden yapılanma faaliyetlerinin Karadeniz güvenliğine bir tehdit teşkil edip etmediğidir. Neorealist bir perspektiften ele alınan bu soruya ilaveten, RF'nin silahlanma ve askeri yapılanma faaliyetlerinin saldırgan mı yoksa savunmacı mı nitelikte olduğuna açıklık getirilmeye çalışılmıştır.

Neorealist kuramın en temel unsurlarından biri, uluslararası sistemin anarşik yapısıdır. Bu yapı, uluslararası sistemin herhangi bir üst otorite ya da yasal hiyerarşiye sahip olmamasının sonucudur. Neorealizm, bu sistem içindeki ana aktörler olan devletlerin, kendi güvenliklerini sağlamak için güçlerini artırmaya çalıştıklarını, bu doğrultuda da silahlandıkları ve ulusal güçlerini artırdıklarını ifade eder. Bu güç artırma çabası, güvenlik ikilemini doğurur: Her bir devletin kendi gücünü artırmak için izlediği politika ve yaptığı hamleler, diğer devletler tarafından tehdit olarak algılanarak kendi güçlerini artırmak için çaba içine girmelerini tetikler. Devletlerin sergiledikleri savunma ve saldırı refleksleri, savunmacı realizm ve saldırgan realizm olarak adlandırılan sistemik denge bileşenleri olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

Saldırgan realizm, yalnızca en güçlü devletin ayakta kalabileceği varsayımından hareketle devletlerin güçlerini maksimize etmeyi önceledığini belirtir. Buna göre

devletlerin saldırgan ya da yayılmacı politika izlemelerinin önündeki tek engel, rakiplerine göre mukayeseli güç dengesindeki zafiyetleridir. Devletler, rakiplerine göre güç üstünlüğünü ele geçirdiklerinde saldırgan politikalar izlemeye başlayacaklardır. Uluslararası herhangi bir üst otorite, hiyerarşik yapı gibi aktörlerin bulunmaması nedeniyle devletleri bu tür saldırgan politikalar izlemekten caydıracak ya da dengeyi koruyacak bir mekanizma da bulunmamaktadır.

Savunmacı realizm ise, rasyonel aktörler olarak devletlerin, belirsizlik ve riskle bezeli anarşik uluslararası sisteme istikrar ve güvenlik getirebilmek için kendi ulusal güçlerini artırırken diğer devletler ile bir dengeyi gözetirler. Diğer devletler ile mukayeseli güç dengesinde bir bozulma olduğunda, dengenin tekrar sağlanması için güçlerini artırırlar ya da diğer devletlerle birlikte hareket ederler. Bu bakımdan savunmacı realizm, devletlerin, uluslararası sistemin güvenlik ve istikrarının sürdürülebilmesi için dengeli siyaset izlemelerini öngörür. Dolayısıyla devletler arasındaki sorunların çözümünde birlikte hareket edilmesi, bölgesel işbirliği gibi hususlar ön plandadır.

Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesinden sonra Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyetler Birliği'nin (SSCB) halefi olan RF 1990'lar boyunca çok ağır bir siyasi, ekonomik ve sosyal buhran dönemi geçirmiştir. Ağır bir ekonomik krize sahne olan bu süreçte devlet, tüm bürokratik aygıtları ile neredeyse tamamen işlevsiz hale gelmiş, bunun sonucu olarak da siyasi ve toplumsal hayatın tüm aşamalarında yolsuzluk ve organize suç yaygınlaşmıştır. Devletin gelirlerinin büyük oranda düştüğü bu dönemde silahlı kuvvetlerin harbe hazırlık kabiliyeti gerilemiştir. Bakım, onarım ve modernizasyondan personel iaşesine kadar tüm kalemlerde sıkıntılar yaşanmıştır. Bu olumsuz durumun kısmen tek istisnası, ülkenin caydırıcılığının ana unsuru olan nükleer kuvvetler olmuştur.

Tezin ikinci bölümünde, SSCB'nin 1991 yılı sonunda dağılmasından sonra Karadeniz bölgesindeki jeopolitik ortamı şekillendiren başlıca olay ve gelişmeler incelenmiştir. RF, ağır siyasi ve ekonomik sorunlarla yüz yüze olduğu 1990'lı yıllar boyunca Batı ile ilişkilerinde görece ılımlı bir seviye takip etmiştir. Batı ile ilişkilerin ve diyaloğun artma eğilimi gösterdiği bu yıllarda Açık Semalar Antlaşması (ASA) ve Budapeşte

Memorandumu gibi, uluslararası güvenliğe katkı sağlayacak işbirliği adımları atılmıştır. ASA ile, antlaşmaya taraf olan ülkelerin üs ve tesisleri üzerinde denetleme ve gözetim uçuşları yapılarak silahlanma ve birlik konuş - kuruluş yapıları takip edilmiştir. RF ASA kapsamında topraklarını denetim açmış, kendisi de diğer üye ülkeler üzerinde denetim uçuşları yapmıştır. Belarus, Kazakistan ve Ukrayna'nın SSCB'den devraldığı nükleer silahların teslim alınması ve bazılarının imhası sürecinde de ABD ile işbirliği ve diyalog mekanizmaları işletilmiş, 1994 yılında imzalanan Budapeşte Memorandumu ile Ukrayna'daki nükleer silahlar ve stratejik bombardıman uçakları devralınmıştır. Bu memorandumla RF, diğer taraf ülkelerle birlikte Ukrayna'nın toprak bütünlüğü ve egemenliğine yönelik taahhütlerde bulunmuş, bu ülkeye yönelik pozitif ve negatif güvenlik garantileri vaat etmiştir.

Ancak 1990'ların ikinci yarısından itibaren önce Bosna ardından Kosova'daki NATO harekâtları ile eski Doğu Bloku ülkelerinin NATO'ya üye olarak kabul edilmeleri, Moskova'ya tedirginlik yaratmıştır. NATO'nun bu faaliyetleri, Rusya'nın doğal hinterlandına yönelik nüfuz alanı artırma girişimleri olarak yorumlanmıştır. Bu kapsamda özellikle 1999 Kosova harekâtının RF tarafından sert tepkiyle karşılanmış olduğunu vurgulamak gerekir.

Dönemin Rus Dışişleri Bakanı İgor İvanov'un bu konudaki açıklamaları, Moskova'nın endişelerini yansıtır niteliktedir. İvanov, NATO'nun insani krizleri tetikleyerek işgale bahane yarattığını, bu şekilde de Avrupa'nın jeopolitik dengeleriyle oynadığını iddia etmiştir. NATO'nun Kosova harekâtını, Birleşmiş Milletler (BM) Güvenlik Konseyi kararı olmadan, tek taraflı şekilde gerçekleştirmiş olmasından dolayı Rusya, benzer yöntemlerle Karadeniz, Kafkaslar ve Hazar Denizi havzası bölgelerinin de sonraki hedefler arasında olmasından endişe duymaya başlamıştır.

Vladimir Putin'in 2000 yılında devlet başkanı olmasından kısa süre sonra, 2003'ten başlayarak enerji gelirlerinin artmasının yardımıyla RF'nin ekonomisinde iyileşme emareleri gözlenmeye başlamıştır. Bu dönemde ayrıca Batı ile işbirliği ve diyalog mekanizmalarının yoğun şekilde kullanıldığı görülmüştür. Karadeniz, bu bağlamda özellikle işbirliğinin öne çıktığı bir bölge olarak dikkat çekmiştir. 1992 yılında kurulmuş Karadeniz Ekonomik İşbirliği Örgütü ve 2001 yılında Türkiye'nin

öncülüğünde hayata geçen BLACKSEAFOR girişimleri ile bölgede güvenlik bakımından dengeli ve sakin bir ortam hasıl olmuştur. Ancak Gürcistan ve Ukrayna'da sırasıyla 2003 ve 2004 yıllarında gerçekleşen ve "renkli devrimler" olarak adlandırılan iktidar değişimleri, bu ülkelerin Avrupa Birliği (AB) ve NATO ile ilişkilerini yakınlaştırmaları ve NATO üyeliği yolunda adımlar atmaları, RF tarafından doğrudan kendisine yönelik tehditler olarak algılanmıştır. NATO'nun doğuya doğru genişlemesine ilaveten Doğu Avrupa'da füze savunma sistemleri kurma planlarını uygulamaya başlaması Moskova tarafından, yalnızca askeri - politik nüfuz alanını değil aynı zamanda RF için yaşamsal öneme sahip stratejik caydırıcılığı da bozucu hamleler olarak algılanmıştır. Bu rahatsızlık, Devlet Başkanı Vladimir Putin tarafından 2007 yılındaki Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'ndaki konuşmasında dile getirilmiştir.

Putin konuşmasında tek taraflı dünya düzeninin pek çok insanlık trajedilerine neden olduğunu ve yeni gerilim noktaları doğurduğunu belirtmiş, uluslararası ilişkilerde askeri gücün herhangi bir ölçü ya da norm gözetilmeksizin kullanıldığına tanık olunduğunu kaydetmiştir. Bu şekilde, asla bitmeyecek bir çatışma sürecine girildiği ve siyasi çözüm üretmenin de olanaksız olduğunu iddia etmiştir. Uluslararası hukukun temel ilke ve normlarının giderek daha yoğun şekilde göz ardı edildiğini vurgulayan Putin, hiçbir ülkenin kendini güvende hissetmemesinden dolayı askeri güce ve saldırgan politikalara daha fazla yöneldiğini ifade etmiştir. Putin'e göre ekonomik ve teknolojik gelişmelerin etkisiyle dünyada yeni bölgesel güç odakları oluşmaya başlamıştır. Bu ülkelerin yarattıkları siyasi, ekonomik ve teknolojik değerler, dayatılan tek kutuplu dünya sistemini zorlamakta ve çok kutuplu bir sistemi öne çıkarmaktadır. Vladimir Putin'in bu konuşması, RF'nin ABD ve NATO'ya karşı bir meydan okuması bakımından önem taşımaktadır.

2007 Münih Güvenlik Konferansı ile başlayan kırılma sürecinin bir başka dönüm noktasını, 2 - 4 Nisan 2008 tarihleri arasında Bükreş'te düzenlenen NATO zirvesi teşkil etmiştir. NATO üyeliğine adaylıkları gündemde olan Arnavutluk, Hırvatistan, Makedonya, Ukrayna ve Gürcistan'ın durumlarının görüşüldüğü bu zirveden, Arnavutluk ve Hırvatistan için üyelik sürecinin başlatılması kararı çıkmıştır. Ukrayna ve Gürcistan için ise aynı süreç başlatılmamış ancak NATO Genel Sekreteri Jaap de

Hoop Scheffer tarafından iki ülkenin de en nihayetinde NATO üyesi olacağı deklare edilmiştir. Bükreş Zirvesi'nde alınan bir diğer önemli karar da Avrupa'ya yönelik bir füze savunma şemsiyesinin kurulması ile ilgilidir. Bu kapsamda ABD'nin halihazırda mevcut füze savunma imkân ve kabiliyetlerinin NATO ile entegrasyonu bu kapsamda Avrupa'nın çeşitli noktalarında füze savunma erken uyarı ve önleme tesislerinin kuruluşu karara bağlanmıştır. Müteakiben Çek Cumhuriyeti ve Polonya ile ABD arasında söz konusu tesislerin kurulmasına yönelik anlaşmalar imzalanmıştır.

Bükreş Zirvesi'nden Ukrayna ve Gürcistan'a yönelik üyelik kararının çıkmamış olması Moskova tarafından memnuniyetle karşılanmış olsa da bu iki ülkenin tam üyelik hedeflerinin sürmesi ve bunun NATO tarafından da tasdik edilmesi, RF'nin tepkisine neden olmuştur. Öte yandan Avrupa'da füze savunma sistemi tesislerinin kurulmasına yönelik karar, Moskova'nın NATO'dan algıladığı tehdidin artmasına neden olmuştur. Rus Dışişleri Bakanı Sergey Lavrov, söz konusu füze savunma sisteminin Avrupa'nın güvenlik ve istikrarına yönelik tehdit teşkil ettiğini ve RF'yi karşı hamleler almaya zorlayacağını söylemiştir.

Tezin üçüncü bölümü, 2008 Bükreş Zirvesi'nden yaklaşık bir ay sonra patlak veren Rusya - Gürcistan Savaşı ve sonrasındaki süreci, Karadeniz bölgesi özelinde ele almaktadır. Güney Osetya ve Abhazya'da, SSCB'nin dağılma sürecinden beri devam eden ve zaman zaman çatışmalara dönüşen gerilim, Gürcistan'ın bu bölgelerdeki hakimiyetini büyük ölçüde kaybetmesiyle sonuçlanmış, 1990'lardan 2000'lerin başlarına çeşitli diplomatik çabalara sahne olmuştur. 2003'ten itibaren Gürcistan güvenlik güçleriyle Güney Osetya ve Abhazya'daki silahlı unsurlar arasındaki yerel ölçekli çatışmalar artış göstermiştir. 2008 başında RF'nin, Gürcistan'dan tek taraflı bağımsızlık ilan eden bu iki bölgeyi resmen tanıma yönünde adım atmasından sonra gerilim tırmanmış, yaz aylarında çatışmalar yayılmıştır. 1 Ağustos 2008 günü Gürcü güvenlik güçlerinin başlattığı operasyona cevaben 8 Ağustos günü bölgedeki Rus askeri unsurları Gürcistan'a yönelik bir harekât başlatmıştır. 5 gün süren savaş sonunda 15 Ağustos günü bir ateşkes anlaşması imzalanmıştır. Savaş sonunda Gürcistan, Güney Osetya ve Abhazya'daki kontrolü fiilen kaybetmiştir. RF ise bölgedeki askeri varlığı ile Güney Osetya ve Abhazya'ya desteğini artırmıştır.

Savaşta kaydedilen başarıya rağmen Rus ordusunun harekât sırasında sevk ve idare, lojistik, istihbarat, muhabere gibi konularda büyük zafiyet göstermesi, bir süredir gündemde olan askeri reform ve yeniden yapılanma çalışmasının yeniden başlamasına neden olmuştur. Savaş sırasında hava ve deniz unsurlarının harbe hazırlık oranlarının düşük olması; modern güdümlü silah sistemlerinin yetersiz sayıda ve düşük performansa sahip olması gibi faktörler nedeniyle silahlanma programında da kapsamlı bir değişim ihtiyacı ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu ihtiyaçlara yanıt vermek amacıyla, dönemin Savunma Bakanı Anatoli Serdyukov tarafından kapsamlı bir savunma reform programı hazırlanmış ve yürürlüğe konmuştur.

2013 Kasım ayında, Ukrayna'da Devlet Başkanı Viktor Yanukoviç'in, AB ile entegrasyonu içeren bir anlaşmayı onaylamaktan son anda vazgeçmesi, ülke çapında protestolara neden olmuştur. AB yanlısı kesimlerin, başkent Kiev'de düzenledikleri gösteriler hızla etkisini artırarak, Yanukoviç yönetimi üzerinde büyük baskı oluşturmuştur. Artan baskılar neticesinde Yanukoviç, 2014 Şubat ayında istifa ederek ülkeyi terk etmiş ve Rusya'ya sığınmıştır. Yanukoviç ile çok sayıda devlet görevlisi de Rusya'ya kaçmıştır. Bu süreç Rusya tarafından, Batı'nın Ukrayna'ya yönelik bir müdahalesi ve Rusya'nın yakın çeperindeki nüfuzunu artırma girişimi olarak yorumlanmıştır. Nitekim Devlet Başkanı Putin, "Euromaydan" olarak adlandırılan bu hareketi bir darbe olarak nitelemiştir.

Ukrayna'da yönetim değişikliği ve devlet kademelerinde kaos sürerken, özerk bir idareye sahip olan Kırım'da bağımsızlık ve Rusya'yla birleşme yanlılarının başlattıkları gösteriler kısa süre içinde tüm yarımadaya yayılmıştır. 11 Mart 2014'te Kırım meclisinin bağımsızlık ve hemen ardından tartışmalı bir referandum ile Rusya'ya katılma kararı alması ile yarımada RF tarafından ilhak edilmiştir. Buna ABD ve AB'nin tepkisi sert olmuş, bir dizi ekonomik yaptırım uygulanmaya başlanmıştır.

Öte yandan 2014 Mart ayında, Donetsk ve Luhansk eyaletlerinin oluşturduğu Donbas bölgesinde, Rusya'nın desteklediği ayrılıkçılar ile Ukrayna güvenlik güçleri arasında çatışmalar başlamıştır. Mayıs ayında her iki bölgenin "halk cumhuriyeti" olarak Ukrayna'dan tek taraflı bağımsızlıklarını ilan etmeleriyle birlikte çatışmalar şiddetlenmiştir. 2015 başlarına kadar devam eden çatışmalar, 12 Şubat 2015'te

Minsk'te imzalanan ateşkes anlaşmasıyla kısmen kesilmiştir. Bundan sonra sık sık ateşkes ihlal iddiaları ve küçük ölçekli çatışmalar sürmüş, Ukrayna, Donbas bölgesinin büyük kısmında denetimi kaybetmiştir.

Her ne kadar Karadeniz bölgesinde yer almasa da Suriye'de 2011 yılında başlayan iç savaşa Rusya'nın müdahil olması ve bu kapsamda Doğu Akdeniz'deki askeri varlığını artırması, Karadeniz'deki jeopolitik çerçeve içinde ele alınması gereken bir süreçtir. 2011 ilkbaharında protesto gösterilerinin kanlı bir şekilde bastırılmasıyla kısa süre içinde ülke çapında iç savaşa dönüşen çatışmalarda Suriye rejim kuvvetleri, 2014 – 2015 arasında önemli kayıplar vermiştir. Bunun sonucu olarak da Suriye rejimi ülkenin önemli kısmında kontrolü kaybetmiştir. Devlet Başkanı Hafız Esad'ın davet etmesiyle, RF 2015 Eylül ayından itibaren ülkeye yoğun askeri yığınak yapmaya ve Suriye rejim güçleriyle birlikte müşterek operasyonlar düzenlemeye başlamıştır. Paralel olarak Rus Deniz Kuvvetleri Doğu Akdeniz'de daimî bir deniz görev gücü bulundurmaya başlamıştır. Suriye yönetimi, Lazkiye'deki Tartus deniz üssü ile Hımeymim hava üssünü Rusya'ya devretmiş, buralar Rus ordusu için bölgedeki stratejik kuvvet aktarım merkezleri haline gelmiştir. Rus ordusunun desteği ile Suriye rejim güçleri, kaybedilen bölgelerin neredeyse tamamını geri almış ve silahlı isyancılara büyük kayıplar verdirmiştir. Suriye İç Savaşı vesilesiyle RF'nin, Doğu Avrupa ve Karadeniz bölgesinde NATO'nun artan faaliyetleri ve nüfuzuna cevaben Doğu Akdeniz'de bir karşı hamle yapmış olduğu değerlendirmesini yapmak mümkündür.

2008 yılındaki NATO Bükreş Zirvesi'nde karara bağlanan füze savunma sistemi, RF tarafından stratejik caydırıcılığı bozucu bir girişim olarak algılanmıştır. European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) adı verilen, kademeli bir plan dahilinde uygulamaya konan füze savunma sistemi kapsamında ABD, Polonya, Çek Cumhuriyeti ve Romanya ile üs kurulması yönünde görüşmelere başlamıştır. Bu kapsamda Romanya ve Polonya'ya AEGIS Ashore adı verilen erken ihbar ve önleme tesisleri kurulması için 2010 yılında anlaşmalar imzalanmıştır. Sistemin bir erken ihbar unsuru da 2011 yılında imzalanan anlaşmayla Türkiye'ye, Malatya Kürecik'e kurulmuştur. Polonya ve Romanya'daki AEGIS Ashore'ların bir bileşeni de Mk41 adı verilen füze fırlatıcı sistemlerdir. RF, bu sistemlerin aynı zamanda Orta Menzilli

Nükleer Kuvvetler (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces; INF) antlaşması hükümlerini ihlal ettiğini belirterek sert şekilde itiraz etmiştir. ABD ve SSCB tarafından 1987 yılında imzalanan INF antlaşması uyarınca taraflar, 500 ile 5500km arası menzildeki füze sistemlerini bulundurmama ve geliştirmeme kararı almıştır. Tomahawk tipi seyir füzelerini ateşleyebilen Mk41 fırlatıcıların Doğu Avrupa'ya konuşlandırılması bu nedenle Moskova tarafından stratejik bir tehdit olarak nitelendirilmiştir. Tarafların karşılıklı olarak INF'i ihlal suçlamaları sürerken, ABD 2018 Ekim ayında INF antlaşmasından çekileceğini duyurmuştur. Her iki tarafın da resmen çekilmesiyle antlaşma 2019'da yürürlükten kalkmıştır. NATO ve Rusya arasındaki güç dengesinin önemli bileşenlerinden biri olan INF'in ortadan kalkmasıyla birlikte uzun menzilli seyir füzeleri ve hipersonik silah sistemleri gibi yeni nesil taarruzi silah sistemlerinin geliştirilme ve Avrupa'da konuşlandırılmasına engel bir unsur kalmamıştır. Bu bakımdan Soğuk Savaş sonrası süreçte Avrupa güvenliği açısından önemli bir dönüm noktası aşılmıştır.

Rusya ile Ukrayna arasındaki gerilim, 2021 yılından itibaren hızla tırmanmıştır. RF Ukrayna'yı, Minsk Protokolü'nü ve ateşkes hükümlerini ihlal etmekle suçlamış ve Donbas bölgesiyle Kırım'daki askeri varlığını takviye etmeye başlamıştır. 2021 boyunca süren askeri yığınak, Ukrayna sınırı boyunca ve Belarus'taki birliklerin sayısının artmasıyla sürmüştür. 2021 Temmuz ayında Rusya Devlet Başkanı Vladimir Putin tarafından kalem alınan bir makalede, Rus, Belarus ve Ukrayna milletlerinin tek bir kavim olduğu, Ukrayna'nın bir devlet olarak meşruluğunun tartışmalı olduğu ve Rusya'ya karşı bir proje olarak dış güçler tarafından oluşturulup desteklendiği iddia edilmiştir. Bu arada 2021 sonunda hız kazanan birlik intikali ve yığınak, bölgedeki gerilimin artmasına neden olmuştur. Gerilimin düşürülmesi için çeşitli devletlerin arabuluculuk girişimleri sonuçsuz kalmıştır. Bu arada 21 Şubat 2022 tarihinde devlet televizyonunda yaptığı konuşmasında Putin, Ukrayna'nın Minsk Protokolü'nü ihlalleri, NATO'nun doğuya doğru genişlemesi ve doğrudan Rusya'nın varlığına yönelik bir tehdit oluşturması argümanlarını yinelemiş; Donetsk ve Luhansk bölgelerinin bağımsızlıklarını tanıma kararını açıklamıştır. Bu konuşmadan üç gün sonra, 24 Şubat 2022 tarihinde RF tarafından Ukrayna'ya askerî harekât başlatılmıştır.

Tezin dördüncü bölümünde, RF'nin ulusal güvenlik ve savunma politikalarına esas teşkil eden dokümanlar ve bunların kapsam ve içerikleri incelenmiştir. RF'nin ulusal güvenlik politikası, uluslararası ilişkiler, ordu, ekonomi / ticaret ve hukuk başta olmak üzere çok boyutlu bir şekilde tasarlayıp icra eden bir mekanizmanın ürünüdür. Bu temel ilke üzerine inşa edilen ulusal güvenlik politikası iki ana belge üzerinden yürütülür. Bunlar Ulusal Güvenlik Konsepti ile Askeri Doktrin belgeleridir. Bunlara ilaveten askeri doktrin doğrultusunda hazırlanan Devlet Silahlanma Programı da silahlı kuvvetlerin teçhizat tedarik ve modernizasyonunun çerçevesini belirler. RF Ulusal Güvenlik Konsepti (UGK; Концепция национальной безопасности Российской Федерации - Konsepsiya Natsionalnoy Bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii) belgesi, uluslararası sisteme dair tahlil ve tespitler, iç ve dış kaynaklı tehdit analizleri, RF'nin ulusal çıkarlarıyla bu çıkarları korumak için atılması gereken adım ve takip edilecek politikaları tanımlar. RF Güvenlik Konseyi (RFGK; Совет безопасности Российской Федерации - Sovet Bezopasnosti Rossiiyskoiy Federatsii) tarafından hazırlanır.

RF tarafından bugüne kadar dört UGK belgesi hazırlanmıştır. Bu belgelerden en sonuncusu 2 Temmuz 2021 tarihinde yürürlüğe girmiştir. 2021 UGK'sında uluslararası sistemde pek çok ekonomik ve askeri ağırlık merkezinin oluştuğu tespitinden hareketle Batı'nın hegemonyasına karşı meydan okuyan bir sürecin başladığı belirtilmiştir. Bir önceki UGK'da Batı ile işbirliği ve diyalog vurgusu varken bu sefer işbirliği ortamının tamamen ortadan kalktığı ifade edilmektedir. Askeri boyutta ise ABD'nin Avrupa'ya yerleştirdiği füze sistemlerinin doğrudan bir tehdit teşkil ettiği belirtilmektedir.

Askeri Doktrin (AD; Военная доктрина Российской Федерации - Voennaya Doktrina Rossiyskoy Federatsiy) belgeleri ise, RF'ye dışarıdan yönelen tehditleri, bu tehditleri önlemek için geliştirilmesi gereken savunma önlemlerini belirler. Belge, tanımlanmış tehditlere ve tehdit ortamına uygun şekilde silahlı kuvvetlerin eğitim, donatım ve doktrin yapısının nasıl şekillenmesi gerektiği ve bu yönde izlenecek savunma politikalarını tarif etmektedir. Askeri Doktrin dokümanları, RF'nin herhangi bir silahlı çatışma, askerî harekât ya da savaş durumunda nasıl tepki vereceğini, nasıl bir hareket tarzı izleyeceğini tarif etmesi nedeniyle RF'nin savunma politikalarının

tahlili bakımından büyük değer taşımaktadır. 25 Aralık 2014'te yürürlüğe giren en güncel AD'de, küresel rekabetin, yerel ve bölgesel kriz ve çatışmaların artması ile ekonomik sisteme dair krizlerin dünya çapında istikrarı ve güvenliği tehdit eder boyuta ulaşmış olduğu tespiti yapılmaktadır. Güvenlik ve istikrara yönelik tehditlerin, RF'yi doğrudan tehdit eder hale geldiği belirtilmektedir. Belge, devletler arası bir savaş veya nükleer silah kullanımı riskini düşük olarak tespit etmektedir. Ancak, RF'nin yakın çeperindeki kriz ve çatışmaların savaş ülkeye yönelik askeri tehdit ve riskleri artırdığı belirtilmektedir.

RF'nin silahlanma politikası ve faaliyetleri, on yıllık silahlanma programları ile yürütülmektedir. Devlet Silahlanma Programı (DSP; государственной программы вооружения - Gozudarstvennoy Program Vorujenya) adı verilen bu programların en sonuncusu, Vladimir Putin tarafından 2017'de imzalanarak yürürlüğe giren DSP2027'dir. 2018 - 2027 yılları arasına dair silah alımları, bütçe yapısı ve tedarik projelerini tanımlayan DSP2027, bu periyoda dair RF'nin silahlanma ve savunma sanayii politikalarını belirlemektedir. DSP2027'de, Ukrayna ve Suriye deneyimlerinin tedarik ve proje planlarına doğrudan yansımış olduğu görülmektedir. Ayrıca, uluslararası ambargoların etkilerinden dolayı tedarik edilemeyen teknoloji ve parçaların muadillerinin yurt içinde üretilmesine özel önem verilmiştir.

Tezin beşinci bölümünde RF'nin 2008 yılından itibaren geçirdiği askeri dönüşüm ve modernizasyon süreci incelenmiştir. 2008 Rusya – Gürcistan Savaşı'nda ordunun gösterdiği zayıf performans, harbe hazırlık seviyesinin, Stratejik Füze Kuvvetleri haricinde son derece düşük olması, ABD ve NATO ülkelerinin silahlı kuvvetlerinin imkân ve kabiliyetler bazında büyük sıçramalar gerçekleştirmesi ve giderek artan asimetrik harp tehdidi karşısında, silahlı kuvvetlerin yeniden yapılandırılması için dönemin Savunma Bakanı Anatoli Serdyukov tarafından 2008 Ekim ayında açıklanan ayrıntılı bir reform planı hazırlanmıştır. Bu plan kapsamında silahlı kuvvetlerin personel mevcudunda indirime gidilmiş, profesyonel orduya geçiş için önemli adımlar atılmış, müşterek stratejik komutanlıklar kurulmuş ve modern silah sistemlerinin temini için araştırma – geliştirme projelerine hız verilmiştir. Ayrıca ordunun ihtiyacı olan modern araç gereç ve bunların üretimi için gerekli teknolojilerin temini için Avrupa'dan yoğun alımlar yapılmıştır.

Modernizasyon sürecinin teçhizat bacağında, hava ve deniz kuvvetleri ile uzun menzilli vuruş imkân ve kabiliyetlerinin geliştirilmesine özel önem verildiği görülmektedir. Bu kapsamda yeni nesil denizaltı ve firkateyn platformlarının inşasına ve Su-57 yeni nesil savaş uçağı geliştirme projeleri başlatılmıştır. Envanterdeki neredeyse tüm suüstü ve denizaltı platformlarına, Kalibr seyir füzesi atış yeteneği kazandırılarak, kara hedeflerine uzun menzillerden taarruz kabiliyeti eklenmiştir. Bir yandan da SSCB döneminden devralınmış muharip uçaklara modernizasyon uygulanarak hizmete devam etmeleri sağlanmıştır. Nükleer kuvvetlerin envanterindeki füzelerin yeni nesil türevlerinin geliştirilmesine büyük kaynak ayırıldığı görülmüştür. Son olarak da hipersonik silah sistemlerine yönelik pek çok geliştirme projesi başlatılmıştır.

Tezin altıncı bölümünde, RF'nin Karadeniz bölgesindeki askeri gücü ve faaliyetleri incelenmiştir. RF Silahlı Kuvvetleri teşkilat yapısında Karadeniz bölgesinden sorumlu komutanlık, Güney Askeri Bölge Komutanlığıdır. Bu komutanlık bünyesindeki Karadeniz Filosu, Karadeniz'deki Rus askeri varlığının en önemli unsurudur. Rus Çarı 1. Petro tarafından 1696 yılında kurulmuş Karadeniz Filosu, SSCB'nin yıkılmasından sonra 2000'lerin başlarına kadar bütçe darboğazı ve ikmal – idame sorunları nedeniyle muharip kabiliyetini büyük oranda kaybetmiştir. 2008 Gürcistan Savaşı'ndan sonra başlatılan reform sürecinde, savaşta kötü bir performans sergilemiş Karadeniz Filosunun modernizasyonuna büyük önem verilmiştir. Bu kapsamda 10 yıllık bir süre içinde çok sayıda Kalibr seyir füzesi kabiliyetli denizaltı, firkateyn ve korvet gemisi filoya kazandırılmıştır. Öte yandan 2014 yılında ilhak edilen Kırım'a büyük bir askeri yığınak yapılmış; S-400 hava savunma ve Bastion gemisavar füzelerinin yarımadaya konuşlandırılmasıyla, Karadeniz'in büyük kısmı kapsama alanına alınmıştır. RF böylece, Karadeniz'deki askeri güç dengesini büyük oranda lehine çevirmiştir. Nitekim RF Genelkurmay Başkanı Valeri Gerasimov, 2016 Eylül ayında yaptığı bir konuşmasında Karadeniz'in hâkim gücünün artık Türkiye değil RF olduğunu; envanterdeki yeni füze sistemlerinin Boğazlar'a kadar erişebildiğini söyleyerek RF'nin Karadeniz'e dair askeri politikalarının özü hakkında ipucu vermiştir.

Sonuç olarak bu tez, RF'nin 2008 - 2022 yılları arasındaki askeri reform ve modernizasyon sürecinin, Karadeniz güvenliğine etkisi ile RF'nin bu modernizasyondaki amaç ve motivasyonlarını irdelemiştir. RF'nin SSCB'nin dağılmasının neden olduğu ve büyük yaralar bırakan ekonomik, sosyal ve askeri buhranın travmasını, 2000'lerin başlarından itibaren geride bıraktığı görülmüştür. 1990'lar boyunca yaşanan ekonomik, siyasi ve toplumsal sorunlar, devleti hem siyasi hem de askeri bakımdan zayıf düşürmüştür. Özellikle RF Silahlı Kuvvetlerinin caydırıcı gücünün hızla eridiği 1990'lı yıllar boyunca Batı (veya NATO) ile diyalog ve işbirliği yoluyla ilişkiler sürdürülmüştür. RF'nin Türkiye'nin BLACKSEAFOR girişimine yönelik verdiği destek, bu işbirliği motivasyonuna bir örnek olarak verilebilir. RF'nin politika ve tercihlerini dayatmak ya da bölgesel aktörleri kendi isteklerine boyun eğdirmek için yeterli askeri güce sahip olmadığı; NATO'ya karşı mukayeseli güç dengesinde büyük ölçüde geriye düştüğü bu dönemde bölgesel ve küresel ölçekte işbirliği ve diyaloğu ön plana koyan bir politika izlemesi bu bakımdan doğal bir sonuç olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır.

RF'nin NATO'ya karşı 1990'lar boyunca diyalog ve işbirliğini sürdürmekle birlikte, belli bir ihtiyatı da koruduğu gözlenmiştir. Bu temkinli yaklaşımda NATO'nun eski Doğu Bloku ülkelerini üye olarak kabul etmesi ve 1995 yılında Bosna, 1999 yılında da Kosova'daki krizlere müdahalesi büyük rol oynamıştır. Özellikle 1999 yılında BM kararı olmaksızın müdahale yapılmış olması, RF tarafından doğrudan bir tehdit olarak algılanmıştır.

Bu dönemde RF'nin içinde bulunduğu derin ekonomik krizin sonucu olarak silahlı kuvvetlerin harbe hazırlığı, personelin iaşesi ve modernizasyon programları büyük sekteye uğramıştır. Bunun neticesinde de pek çok silah, araç – gereç ve platform bakımsızlıktan hurdaya ayrılmıştır. Bu durum, RF'nin bölgesel konulardaki tutumunu ve güvenlik politikalarını doğrudan etkilemiştir. Eldeki tüm imkânlar, nükleer kuvvetlerin modern ve güncel tutulmasına harcanmış; konvansiyonel güçlerdeki erozyon 2000'lerin başlarına kadar devam etmiştir. 2000'lerin başlarında enerji gelirlerinin artması ve Vladimir Putin'in devlet yönetiminde yaptığı değişiklikler, kademeli bir toparlanmayı mümkün kılmış; ekonomi ve sanayide belirgin iyileşmeler gözlenmiştir. Putin'in devlet başkanlığı görevine gelmeden kısa süre önce kaleme

aldığı makalede dış yatırımı ve uluslararası işbirliğini ön plana koyması ve liberal bir ekonomi yönetimi perspektifi sunması bu bakımdan dikkat çekicidir.

Ekonomideki toparlanma eğilimi, doğrudan askeri modernizasyona da yansımıştır. 2008'e kadar mevcut sistem ve platformların bakım – idame durumlarının iyileştirilmesine odaklanan silahlanma ve modernizasyon faaliyetleri, 2008 Gürcistan Savaşı'nda göz önün serilen yetersizliklerin sonucunda başlatılan reform süreci ile teşkilat ve tedarik kalemlerine de yayılmıştır. Bu süreçte RF, sadece yeni platform geliştirme ve modernizasyona değil, aynı zamanda silahlı kuvvetlerin teşkilat, doktrin ve eğitim alanlarında da kapsamlı yeniden yapılandırma adımları atmıştır. 2014'te Kırım'ın ilhakı, 2015'ten itibaren de Suriye İç Savaşı'na müdahil olunması, bu reform faaliyetlerinin test sahaları olarak kullanılmıştır.

2008'den itibaren RF askeri kapasitesinin hızla gelişmesi, RF'nin dış politikadaki söylem ve eylemleriyle paralellik arz etmektedir. 2007 yılındaki Münih Güvenlik Konferansı'nda Vladimir Putin'in yapmış olduğu konuşma, bu bakımdan bir dönüm noktası veya başka bir tabirle yeni dönemin bir manifestosu niteliğindedir.

RF'nin güvenlik odaklı ve askeri kapasiteyi ön plana koyan bu politika dönüşümünde, NATO'dan kendisine yönelik algıladığı tehdit ana belirleyici unsur olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Güvenlik ikilemi kavramının tipik bir örneği olarak nitelendirilebilecek bir şekilde, NATO'nun doğuya doğru genişlemesi ve bu kapsamda Ukrayna ve Gürcistan ile üyelik hedefli görüşmeler yürütmesi, Ukrayna'nın AB ile yakın entegrasyon faaliyetleri, ABD'nin Doğu Avrupa'da füze savunma sistemi kurma çalışmaları ve Arap Baharı'nın uzantısı olarak Suriye'deki iç savaş, Moskova tarafından doğrudan tehdit ve en üst seviyede ulusal güvenlik riskleri olarak algılanmıştır. Bu güvenlik tehditlerine karşı da askeri kapasitesini uzun menzilli vurucu gücünü ve kuvvet aktarım kabiliyetini artıracak şekilde geliştirmeye, Gürcistan, Ukrayna ve Suriye'de askeri operasyonlar yürütmeye yönelmiştir. En son 2021 yılında başlayan süreçte, Bir devlet olarak Ukrayna'nın ve Ukrayna milletinin varlığını reddedip, Rusya'nın ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak nitelendirerek, bu ülkenin NATO ile ilişkilerini doğrudan kendi varlığına tehdit olarak nitelendirmiştir. Bu

argüman doğrultusunda 2022 Şubat ayında başlattığı askerî harekâtı, “taarruzi savunma” olarak nitelendirmek mümkündür.

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