

Putin' Russia Back on Top: An Analysis of Russia's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Space

A'ndre Gonawela, Ryan Rosenthal, Stephen Sakowicz

The objective of this study is to analyze and understand the motivations behind Russia's foreign policy in Eastern Europe since the year 2000, through the political, economic, and military lenses. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and especially since the rise of Vladimir Putin, Russia has sought to counter the Westernization of former states within the Soviet sphere of influence. Therefore, we focus on three case studies: Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. We track Russia's military, political, and economic maneuvering in these three countries to understand if Russia's foreign policy has become increasingly aggressive. However, through our research, we discover that Russia's policy has not become aggressive, per se, but rather more assertive, and the nature of this policy can be viewed through the window an offensive versus defensive strategy. We see that these three countries, through their movements towards the West, and in the context of the European Union and to some extent NATO, has catalyzed retaliatory measures will shape the Eastern European landscape in the 21st Century, and can be indicative of future Russian action towards other nations in the region and around the world.

Introduction

The dissolution of the Soviet Union on Christmas Day, 1991, appeared to be a gift to some who resided in the republics of the USSR. However, Russia in the 1990s, under President Boris Yeltsin, stagnated and was largely viewed as a shell of its former self. The economy deteriorated and Russian influence throughout the world was stymied. On December 31st, 1999, Boris Yeltsin resigned the presidency, apologizing for his failures, but also announcing the ascension of the young Prime Minister and former FSB Director, Vladimir Putin, to the presidency. Putin's rise at the turn of the century signaled a new policy orientation that focused on reestablishing Russia's lost dominance on the international stage. Having remained consistently popular with his constituents, Putin has maintained power over the past eighteen years and has gained flexibility in directing Russia's geopolitical strategy and broader foreign policy goals.

Beginning with the failure of the Kozak Memorandum, which pertained to the Transnistrian situation in 2003, and extending to the most recent military actions in Ukraine in 2014, scholars and officials view Russia's foreign policy as being overly aggressive. These military actions are supplemented by economic measures and political tactics targeted at certain countries in an effort to dissuade the growth of Westernization, and the expansion of what Russia views as an anti-Russian bloc. However, is Russia's foreign policy solely based on aggression, or is it merely defensive maneuvering amidst hostile encroachment? Over the course of this study, we will explore the hypothesis that Russian policy has become increasingly assertive politically, economically, and militarily in three nations: Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. All three nations have had prominent conflicts pertinent to all three of the above elements, and all are still involved in complex and fluid situations with Russia. We believe that analyzing and understanding these three case studies will enable the larger foreign policy

community to decipher Russia's broader strategic goals and actions as it pertains to Eastern Europe.

Review of the Literature

Dating back to the end of World War II, Russia has sought to position itself as a world superpower and strongly align itself against the West. The end of the Cold War signified the fall of the Soviet Union's geopolitical machine and a brief period of unchallenged supremacy by the West ensued. As a result, Russia felt compelled to reestablish itself. Therefore, Russia's foreign policy since the turn of the century, and under leader Vladimir Putin, has become increasingly more assertive, namely with the three nations that are the subject of this paper: Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. There has been a plethora of literature written and research conducted that have focused on Russia's foreign policy in the Putin years that aim to uncover the foundations of this "new" behavior. Our paper seeks to consolidate these sources and analyze Russia's foreign policy in these three cases through the lenses of several primary themes that we believe have contributed to Russia's "assertion": reclamation of Russian prestige, Vladimir Putin's leadership and governing style, Russian identity politics, and the expansion of Russian influence to act as a bulwark against the West.

Reclamation of Russian Prestige

Some scholars have argued that what can be termed as "reactionary imperialism" has been a driving force of Russian foreign policy over the past several centuries. This reactionary imperialism dates back to tsarist times and is a foundational aspect of Russian diplomatic behavior that has motivated the country to expand and strengthen itself in recent history. Scholar Agnia Grigas asserts that the Russian government has committed itself to an undeviating policy towards the former-Soviet nations that bares echoes of

imperialist policies¹. Grigas and other scholars claim that “reimperialization” has been used to great effect in the three nations that are the subject of this study: Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia². However, the notion of “reimperialization” has been disputed by various schools of thought, and we seek to determine that validity in the course of this study.

Marcel van Herpen, who refers instead to “neo-imperialism”, discusses the Russian justifications for the policy. Herpen cites the concept of an annexationist pan-Russianism as the primary driving factor of neo-imperialism as opposed to Pan-Slavism, economic liberation, or democratic principle, three themes which would do little to aid Russia’s justification. Moreover, Herpen asserts that the Russian Federation’s imperialist tendencies do not serve a national interest, but rather a state interest, with an ultimate goal of merely attaining power for the “sake of having power”³.

Herpen also draws on the work of Dmitri Trenin, who he cites as stating that Putin’s drive to advocated for a federal structure in Moldova in the early 2000s was complemented by the subtle diplomatic goal of making a potential secessionist movement in Transnistria easier⁴. These annexationist goals could be rooted in a potential regret for the collapse of the USSR; Trenin cites that “73% of Russians regretting its passing” in the early 2000s -- however, regret for the USSR’s collapse is also stymied as Trenin states that the general Russian public is not overly-concerned or advocative for the USSR’s potential resurrection. Instead, Trenin discusses “the economic and humanitarian factors” as opposed to strives for power, that have motivated public opinion against the foundations of the Russian Federation; as Trenin states, “they reject today’s Russia because it is not quite their own”⁵.

This “humanitarian” concern that Trenin discusses seems to have been employed by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s defense of Russian actions in Georgia. Stating that Russia’s military operations were well within the “Responsibility to Protect” boundaries that were structured by the United Nations, Lavrov further insisted that it was Russia’s responsibility to retaliate for actions perpetrated against its citizens⁶. Allison Roy uses Lavrov’s assertions to explore the likelihood that the 2008 Russo-Georgian War was premeditated and offensive in nature,

rather than the reactionary framing that Lavrov and the Russian government had portrayed it through. Therefore, while Trenin’s mention of the public’s “humanitarian” concern may have indeed factored into Lavrov’s justifications for the military operation, Allison’s assertion that the Russian action could have been premeditated ties into Herpen’s argument of Russian foreign policy being primarily centered around state interest, rather than national interest.

Allison’s work goes on to state that the demographic and identity struggle as central to the Georgian conflict, as they contribute to the ideal of Russian resurgence and Putin’s goal to reunifying those people considered to be Russian, but who live outside of Russia’s borders. Allison’s work highlighting the prevalence of demographic struggles in the Georgian conflict is complemented by a wide range of work by scholars who have sought to identify the potential role of demographics, identity, and nationalism in Russia’s recent diplomatic conflicts, stemming from the Soviet Union’s collapse. Scholars have noted the large amounts of Russian-language speakers who reside in former-Soviet states. For example, Ukraine, which has seen separatist movements in addition to Russia’s annexation of the Crimea, does have a large number of Russian speakers living primarily on its eastern border who have been prone to Russian aggravation.

Data provides insight into Ukraine’s demographic reality. It should be noted that in 2001, 58.5% of those living in Crimea identified themselves as Russian. While ethnic Ukrainians make up more than 60% of the population, certain cities in Eastern Ukraine, such as Odessa, are dominated by Russian-speakers⁷. Moreover, over eight million Ukrainians are self-identifying ethnic Russians, which in 2001, was over 17.3% of the population⁸. Although ethnic Russians serve as a small minority in most urban centers in Ukraine, around 13.1% of Kiev’s citizens identified themselves as ethnic Russians⁹. Thus, this demonstrates an important difference between ethnic Russians and the Russian-speaking Ukrainians, a vital piece in the demographic struggle that has contributed to conflicts in recent years. This, in turn, also contributes to the characterization of Russian identity. Likhachev et al. asserts that a sense of Russian identity in the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union has grown weaker, making what is perceived as true “Russian identity” easily malleable by the government to serve the purposes of foreign policy (Likhachev, et al., 2015)¹⁰.

Our study seeks to analyze Russia’s actions in Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova in terms of the perceived national and conflicting identities in those three countries.

¹ Grigas, A. (2016). *Beyond Crimea*: (p. 9). New York, NY: Yale University Press.

² Grigas, A. (2016). *Beyond Crimea*: (p. 9). New York, NY: Yale University Press.

³ Van Herpen, M. H. (n.d.). *Putin's Wars: The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism* (p. 56-57). Rowman & Littlefield.

⁴ Ibid., 61-62

⁵ Trenin, D. V. (2011). *Post-imperium: A Eurasian story* (p. 40). Brookings Institution Press.

⁶ Allison, Roy. “Russia Resurgent? Moscow's Campaign to 'Coerce Georgia to Peace' (p. 1152).” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Nov. 2008. Accessed 09 Nov. 2017.

⁷ Grigas, A. (2016). *Beyond Crimea*: (p. 101-103). New York, NY: Yale University Press.

⁸ Toal, G. (2017). *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest Over Ukraine and the Caucasus* (p. 202). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

⁹ Ibid., 204

¹⁰

Moreover, we want to determine whether Russia has been motivated, or has motivated, those conflicts. Understanding Russia's (and therefore the Soviet Union's) constant history of fractured national identity will allow us to juxtapose this pillar of influence against Putinism's role in Russia's geopolitical strategy.

The Rise of Putinism

Much of the scholarship surrounding Russian foreign policy since the turn of the century can be drawn back to the sudden rise of Vladimir Putin, who took office as President of Russia on December 31st, 1999, and has had a clear grip on power in the years since. Ronald Suny attributes Putin's landslide victory in the election that shortly followed, as owing to how "the decade-long experience with democracy had soured most Russians" and Putin "promised security and a return to greatness," along with a return to much of the symbolism that had epitomized the USSR of old¹¹. Suny and Marcel van Herpen both state that the primary pillars of Putin's foreign policy are "economic imperialism" and "military power". The origins of Putinism and how it has shaped Russia since Putin's ascension to power is a popular topic in today's literature. Kari Roberts provides a holistic view of Russian foreign policy through the lense of Putin. We will expand on her findings by discussing the changes in policy from Putin's first term until present day, and simultaneously evaluate it against the other factors influencing foreign policy noted in this paper.

Chatham House researchers Keir Giles, Philip Hanson, Roderic Lyne, James Nixey, James Sherr and Andrew Wood describe the transition period between Yeltsin and Putin. They offer analysis on differences in foreign policy strategy in the period between the fall of the Soviet Union and 2003. They state that Putin's foreign policy strategy went from courteousness and relaxed towards the West to a new level of ambitiousness with the goal of seeking the restoration of Russian prestige once the factors that prevented Yeltsin from being aggressive were in his hands¹². This piece of scholarship provides a framework that will enable policy comparison during a pivotal change in leadership.

A significant amount of literature is solely focused on Russian actions under Putin. Scholars such as Dunn and Bobick provide excellent analyses of Russian influence in Eurasia, along with discussion about the future of Russian policy as it pertains to Vladimir Putin. Similarly, Stephen J.

Blank notes how Putin himself has overseen the Russian military's substantial advancements in technology, training, and weapons. Since 2008, the Russian government has also dramatically boosted defense spending, in an effort to propagate the military's presence in Russia's intended sphere of influence¹³. We will complement the work of these scholars by discussing the roots of such policies as it is necessary to provide a complete picture in order to understand how Russia's foreign policy has developed.

Russia's Expanding Sphere of Influence

New Russian ambitions under Putin have fueled directives by increasing the amount of aggression Russia displays towards not only the West, but states that it views as a threat because of their collaboration with Russia's political enemies. These ambitions started before Putin, during the Yeltsin era, where Russia became increasingly aggressive towards Georgia in order to limit the influence of the West near the Russian border. Putin has emphasized aggression towards Georgia as well because of its attempts to join NATO. A significant amount of scholarship surrounds Russia's relationship with NATO and the West, with the targeting of Ukraine and Moldova by Putin for their attempts to join NATO and limit the encroachment of the West towards Russia's border. Russia is taking a stand against the expansion of NATO to help aide the expansion of its own sphere of influence, as more NATO states near Russia would serve as a check on Moscow.

Honing in on states that bordered Russia was a primary focus of Yeltsin's administration, as Russia no longer possessed the economic capacity to aggressively threaten states like they did during the Cold War. Putin carried Yeltsin's directives over in his 2008 campaign, this time seeking to deny Georgia a bid from NATO and trying to deny NATO from expanding their sphere of influence to the Russian border. Post-Soviet politics expert Luke March stated that Russia's nationalist identity was a key force behind Moscow's provocative actions in the Georgia conflict, with the goal of improving their geopolitical hegemony¹⁴. Our research will add to March's findings by connecting cases of aggression in Georgia to other nations that have experienced similar Russia military directives, such as Ukraine. By linking the two cases of Putin's policy we hope to reveal how identity politics and reclaiming Russian prestige lead to increased Russian pressure politically, socially, and economically.

Gerard Toal views Russia's action in Ukraine as a response to the U.S. and NATO's expansion. Toal's research does not view imperialism and identity as a driving force,

¹¹ Suny, R. G. (2011). *The Soviet experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the successor states* (p. 543). New York: Oxford University Press.

¹² Giles, Keir., Hanson, Philip., Lyne, Roderic., Nixey, James., Sherr, James., & Wood, Andrew. "The Russian Challenge. (p. 2)" *Chatham House*, Jun. 2015, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/document/20150605RussianChallengeGilesHansonLyneNixeySherrWoodUpdate.pdf>. Accessed 02 Nov. 2017.

¹³ Blank, S. J. (2015). Imperial ambitions: Russia's military buildup. *World Affairs*, 178(1), 67-76.

¹⁴ March, Luke. "Is Nationalism Rising in Russian Foreign Policy?: The Case of Georgia. (p.188)" *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 2011, http://www.racheladamsediting.com/uploads/2/4/7/0/24703707/dem_ra.pdf. Accessed 20 Oct. 2017.

but rather that their policies were “shaped by the actions of terrorists... neighboring nationalizing state-political dynamics, and NATO expansionism”¹⁵. Toal does not go into detail or pay particular attention to the internal factors that have caused changes in Russian foreign policy; however, it does provide analysis that is useful in understanding Russia and the West. Other scholars, such as Listas, take a “Westernized” perspective that relatively ignores the centuries-long Russian struggle to come to terms with its identity, which is why this paper will fulfill a much needed bridging analysis that is absent in today’s scholarship.

The West sees the Annexation of Crimea as “neo-imperialist” and rooted in Putin’s personal ideology; Andreas Bock, et al. claims that this analysis is politically motivated and flawed. Instead, they assert that this is due to Stephen M. Walt’s “balance of threat theory,” which explains that a country’s behavior is determined by the perceived threats from other countries. Putin’s statement, “If you compress the spring all the way to its limit, it will snap back hard” is evidence of this theory -- the expansion of the West in the form of the military alliance NATO is a threat. Therefore, what Russia is doing is leveling the playing field. The authors state that “the image influences the perception, and the perception fosters the image,” which is complemented by a discussion of geopolitical aggression motivated by perceived security threats to Russia emanating from the West, which has in fact bolstered the West’s own power. There is also the notion of Gorbachev’s unifying notion of an all-Europe home, which has been completely turned on its head as many of the former Warsaw Pact members have instead turned to the West economically and politically¹⁶.

While Russia views NATO as a threat to its foreign policy in a military and political lens, Russia also views the European Union as a threat to its economic expansion. The EU has heavily sanctioned Russia over its intervention in Ukraine in conjunction with the United States, attempting to use economic leverage over Moscow to deter Russian militarial and political aggression. Stephen Wegren offers that “for Poland and other eastern EU countries, promoting political and economic reform in Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine is critical to stabilizing the EU’s eastern borders and extending the benefits of integration to neighboring countries”¹⁷. The expansion of the EU eastward is a clear threat to Russia’s economic ambitions and something that Moscow is intent to push back upon. Moldova was also

threatened with curtailed energy supplies by Russia against signing economic deals with the EU, and in 2013 the foreign minister of Russia called the potential of a move “a grave mistake” in September 2013. This led to the Russian ban on Moldovan wine “for health concerns” in October of that year. Moldova resisted Russia, and proceeded to sign an agreement with the EU in November. US Secretary of State John Kerry visited shortly thereafter, the first American diplomatic visit to the nation in decades and a clear sign of defiance on the part of the Moldovan government¹⁸.

By assessing Russia’s recent military, political and economic actions in the Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova, we can better understand how Russia is responding to their perception of what can be deemed as the West’s encroachment upon the former Soviet territories. Key to this assessment is the determination on whether or not Russia’s actions are ultimately offensive, or defensive, in strategy.

Methodology

Each of the three countries selected have been directly influenced and affected by the actions of Russia since 2000. Moreover, these three nations were formerly part of the Soviet Union before its dissolution in 1991. In contemplating the study, we knew that we wanted to analyze countries in Eastern Europe who had traditionally fallen within a Russian sphere of influence, which brought us to selecting Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova.

The majority of our research was collected from online scholarly databases. Additionally, we utilized ample electronic and physical publications from the University of Michigan. The thorough understanding of our literary sources helped us conclusively decide how exactly we wanted to frame our study, and what categories of actions we were looking at.

During the beginning phases of our research, we focused on whether or not Russia had increased what we perceived as aggression against these countries. However, through the course of our research, we concluded that in order to effectively analyze Russia’s actions, we had to view their foreign policy through the lens of assertiveness, rather than aggressiveness. Therefore, we decided to analyze whether Russia’s policies and actions were offensive or defensive, instead of merely aggressive. To supplement our analysis of each case study’s foreign relations with Russia, we researched the underlying background and domestic political situations that have befallen each, in order to achieve a broader and more complete picture.

Subsequently, we developed our primary independent variables, through which we believe will answer the aforementioned question, as outlined below:

¹⁵ Toal, G. (2017). *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest Over Ukraine and the Caucasus* (p. 298). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

¹⁶ Bock, A. M., Henneberg, I., & Plank, F. (2015). “If you compress the spring, it will snap back hard”: The Ukrainian crisis and the balance of threat theory. *International Journal*, 70(1), 101-109.

¹⁷ Wegren, S. K. (Ed.). (2013). *Return to Putin's Russia*(5th ed.). Rowman & Littlefield.

¹⁸ Donaldson, R. H., Noguee, J. L., & Nadkarni, V. (2015). *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*(5th ed.) (p. 186-191). London: Routledge.

Political: One independent variable this research is based upon is Russian political threats, rhetoric, support. For the purpose of this paper, they are considered as statements, both implicit and explicit, made by Russia or its leaders that may influence or reveal the country's intentions or those of others. This independent variable was applied across all three case studies in hopes of discovering a trend of increased Russian political assertion. Qualitative data was primarily used, and includes statements concerning the "Right to Protect" (R2P), the use of potential diplomatic recognition [of separatist territories] as a tool for negotiation, granting Russian citizenship to residents of proclaimed separatist territories, support of illegal referendums, and the dissemination of misinformation by Russian state and non-state actors. Therefore, the term "political" is intentionally broad, in order to cover Russia's political actions and intentions most accurately, as well as to analysis and understand Russia's political influence in these case studies.

Militarization: One independent variable focused upon is militarization. Militarization, for this purpose, refers to the buildup and increase in presence of the Russian military from the year 2000 to today. Our research specifically focuses on whether Russia's militarization indicates whether the country has become more assertive in the last few years or not. We analyzed militarization by looking at overt and covert military actions that constituted warfare (such as direct invasions and cyberattacks), the presence of the military/peacekeeping forces, and aid to pro-Russian, separatist factions, in the form of armaments and monetary support. Militarization is utilized both as a means to increase a nation's security and to threaten an opposing force, as well as increase influence over its neighbors. We analyze militarization using quantitative data and its impact on our case studies to reveal the levels of impact Russia's militarization has independently had on each country, through specific measures of each subcategory defined above.

Economic: Our final independent variable measured includes Russia's economic influence. Primarily using qualitative data, for each of our case studies, we looked at Russian state and non-state economic holdings in pertinent industries, their level of bilateral trade with Russia, and their import of Russian natural resources, such as natural gas. We further analyzed how Russia has utilized its economic position as a leveraging tool, in order to maintain a high level of economic hegemony over our case studies and retain them in Russia's economic orbit. Also addressed is the use of both economic incentives and punishments by Russia

towards our case studies in response to political decisions. Analyzing these factors and attempting to piece together Russia's economic overarching strategy would allow us to properly determine the level at which Russia has utilized its economic influence to expand and exert soft power.

Results and Findings

Georgia

Political

The future reestablishment of a pro-Russian government in Tbilisi is viewed as a key political goal for Russia, as responding to the encroachment of the West by using military force. This action sent a strong message to countries in similar circumstances. Putin has made clear through his invasion of Georgia "sending a strong signal to other post-Soviet states, first and foremost Ukraine, that the pursuit of NATO membership may result in dismemberment and a military invasion"¹⁹. 2003 marked the first pro-Western movements by Georgian citizens, led by future president Mikheil Saakashvili. The Rose Revolution sparked new elections in which Saakashvili gained power, to Putin's dismay. Saakashvili "made the restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity his top priority" and started to put pressure on the autonomous regions of South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Adjara²⁰. Putin countered Saakashvili by planning and executing the combined separatist-Russian invasion in 2008 with the aim of "solidifying control of the pro-Moscow separatist regimes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia"²¹.

National unification was the primary interest of the new Georgian government, but aligning more closely with Western powers was also a significant initiative undertaken first by Saakashvili, that has been carried to the current administration of Giorgi Margvelashvili. Forming a close alliance with the Bush Administration, Georgia, under Saakashvili, was granted a rather lofty promise concerning membership to NATO after a 2008 summit. Nearly a decade later, Georgian hopes of membership have declined and it is now seen more as a long-term project rather than an

¹⁹ Cohen, Ariel, & Hamilton, Robert E. "The Russian Military and the Georgia War: Lessons and Implications. (p.viii)" *Strategic Studies Institute*, Jun. 2011, <http://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pdffiles/pub1069.pdf>. Accessed 04 Nov. 2017.

²⁰ King, Charles. "Tbilisi Blues." *Foreign Affairs*, 30 Mar. 2015, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2004-08-25/tbilisi-blues>. Accessed 14 Nov. 2017.

²¹ Cohen, Ariel, & Hamilton, Robert E. "The Russian Military and the Georgia War: Lessons and Implications. (p.viii)" *Strategic Studies Institute*, Jun. 2011, Accessed 04 Nov. 2017.

immediate strategic advancement²². Georgia remains on the short-list of states that are being considered by NATO to receive a Membership Action Plan, or “MAP,” but NATO members Germany and France remain opposed to extending Georgia a MAP due to fears of fueling fire to tensions between Tbilisi and Moscow over Georgia’s Westernization²³. Collaborating with the West is “loathed at the Kremlin in part because he (Saakashvili) had positioned himself as a spokesman for democracy movements and alignment with the West”²⁴.

Putin’s initiative in Georgia, although condemned by the Bush administration (who vowed similar Russian actions would not happen again), “presaged what was to come in Ukraine”²⁵. Georgia has formally severed diplomatic relations with the Kremlin since Russia has fully recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states, although South Ossetia and Abkhazia receive little recognition as independent states on the international level.

Militarization

Georgia has been closely connected to the foreign policy of Russia since it declared independence in 1991 because of its geographic proximity to Russia and dueling claims over sovereignty of the Transcaucasian region. After formally losing sovereignty over South Ossetia in 1992, Russian, Georgian, and South Ossetian peacekeepers were deployed to the border region to prevent further escalation of the conflict.

Influence in Georgian affairs was prevalent during the Yeltsin era, but strong militarial aggression has become the strategy favored by Vladimir Putin in an attempt to prevent Georgia from associating itself with the West, in a period where the United States remained the lone hegemony of the world. South Ossetia became a contested area where Russians claimed its citizens to be a “protected” population that was being ruled against its will by a newly elected, pro-

Western Georgian government. In 2008, Russia invaded Georgia “for highly valued strategic and geopolitical objectives, which included de facto annexation of Abkhazia, weakening the Mikheil Saakashvili regime, and preventing North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) enlargement”²⁶. Russian troops, alongside separatist forces from Abkhazia and South Ossetia, swiftly defeated Georgia forces in a series of battles before Georgia and Russia agreed to a cease-fire, before more Georgian territory was overrun.

While Georgia and the West see Russian claims to South Ossetian citizens to be a disguise for Russian plans to assert direct influence over Tbilisi, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed “‘the life and dignity of our citizens, wherever they are, will be protected.’ Russia’s NATO envoy was even blunter: ‘the issue of using military force to protect our citizens is a matter of principle’, albeit ‘within the framework of the humanitarian aim of saving peoples’”²⁷. Justifying its invasion in their region based on R2P principles, Russia has faced scrutiny on the international stage for using militarial strength to protect people it claims as Russian citizens but live beyond its border. As a result of the 2008 war, South Ossetia and Abkhazia remain Russian occupied Georgian territories and serve as a buffer between the two states.

Economy

The Westernization of Georgia’s economic system has played a role in the tension between Georgia and Russia, as Georgia has expressed its wish to become a full member of the European Union and increased its trading output to Western nations. Since the 2008 war, Russia and Georgia have gradually restored economic relations and have developed to become important trading partners²⁸. However, each nation has dealt economic blows with one another in recent years. Following Russian aggression in Ukraine in 2014, Georgia stated that it supported the sanctions imposed on Russia by the European Union, causing friction in economic relations²⁹. Russia responded to this action by introducing a ban on imports of Georgian wine and mineral water, two significant Georgia exports to Russia³⁰. Also in 2014, Georgia signed on to association agreements with the

²² Fuller, Liz. “Georgia’s Hopes Of NATO Membership Recede.” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, 26 Apr. 2016, <https://www.rferl.org/a/27699636.html>. Accessed 18 Nov. 2017.

²³ Emmott, Robin, and Siebold, Sabine. “NATO split on message to send Georgia on membership hopes.” *Reuters*, 27 Nov. 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-georgia/nato-split-on-message-to-send-georgia-on-membership-hopes-idUSKBN0TG1HP20151127>. Accessed 10 Nov. 2017.

²⁴ Schwartz, Michael, and Barnard, Anne, and Chivers, C.J. “Russia and Georgia Clash Over Separatist Region.” *The New York Times*. 08 Aug. 2008. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/09/world/europe/09georgia.html>. Accessed 14 Nov. 2017.

²⁵ Paul, David. “Russia-Georgia War in 2008 Told the West -- and Putin -- What Was Coming.” *Huffington Post*, 03 Mar. 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-paul/russia-georgia-war-in-200_b_4891391.html. Accessed 04 Nov. 2017.

²⁶ Cohen, Ariel, & Hamilton, Robert E. “The Russian Military and the Georgia War: Lessons and Implications. (p.vii)” *Strategic Studies Institute*, Jun. 2011, Accessed 04 Nov. 2017.

²⁷ Allison, Roy. “The Russian case for military intervention in Georgia: international law, norms, and political calculation. (p.1154)” *European Security*, 22 Dec. 2009, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662830903468734>. Accessed 01 Nov. 2017.

²⁸ Karsaulidze, Eka. “Russia Hopes for Better Trade Relations with Georgia.” *Georgia Today*, 26 Jul. 2016, <http://georgiatoday.ge/news/4320/Russia-Hopes-for-Better-Trade-Relations-with-Georgia>. Accessed 14 Nov. 2017.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

European Union and expressed its desire to join the EU in full capacity in the near future³¹.

Georgian trading with the European Union and the United States have exploded since Saakashvili came to power. From 1992 to 2003, Georgia's trading balance with the United States averaged \$75.5 million/year³². From 2004 to 2016, the trading balance increased to \$231.4 million/year³³. Similarly, just since 2006 Georgia's trading balance with the EU has increased from 457 million euros/year in 2006 to 1,413 million euros/year in 2016³⁴.

Although Georgia is not an economic giant by any means, the pipeline running through Georgia from Azerbaijan to Turkey has depleted Russia of a major export of natural gas since Georgia declared independence in 1991. This pipeline now supplies many Western states with resources Russia considers to be stolen from them³⁵. Most of Russia's economic involvement in Georgian territory is directly related to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as "in recent years, Moscow granted the majority of Abkhaz and South Ossetians Russian citizenship and moved to establish close economic and bureaucratic ties with the two separatist republics, effectively enacting a creeping annexation of both territories"³⁶.

The depletion of a source of natural gas and threat of Georgia joining the ranks of the European Union are both concerning for the Kremlin, although we have found that neither of these factors played a significant role behind the strategic planning of the 2008 invasion.

Moldova

Political

The extent to which Russia has been involved in Moldova politically is complimented by the tumultuous situation within Moldova's own government and domestic

politics. In 2016, Moldova elected a pro-Russian president, Igor Dodon, despite having a pro-European coalition government in the Parliament. However, the President of Moldova's powers are not great, and the position is generally seen as that figurehead, with little power to advance real policy change. Instead, it is the government formed by the Prime Minister in the Parliament that has the real legislative power; yet, the election of Dodon has been seen by many as a repudiation to the European Union by the Moldovan populace³⁷.

Moreover, the incumbent Prime Minister of Moldova has proven to be unpopular, but even with the lack of popular support, the government is still able to wield a substantial amount of power than can currently determine the course of Moldova's geopolitical trajectory³⁸. An example of this arose in August 2017, as the Moldovan Government dismissed five Russian diplomats, leaving an angered President Dodon protesting the decision and citing it as detrimental to the country's relationship with "strategic partner Russia." Moreover, Dodon accused the expulsion as being part of a conspiracy concocted by the West³⁹.

However, it is important to understand the aspects that contributed heavily to Dodon's electoral win. The 2016 presidential election was not without controversy, as candidates preyed on the concerns that befell many regarding ethnic and geopolitical conflicts, and Dodon benefitted from financiers who were based in Moscow⁴⁰. A member of the State Duma in Russia aided Dodon's campaign by levying a veiled threat against Moldova should they choose Dodon's opponent, asserting that Transnistria would be compelled to join Russia as a result, due to Dodon's opponent not favoring Russia's pro-federalization plan for the Transnistria situation^{41 42}.

³¹ Gardner, Andrew. "Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova sign EU deals." *Politico*, 28 Jul. 2014, <http://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-georgia-and-moldova-sign-eu-deals/>. Accessed 15 Nov. 2017.

³² U.S. Census Bureau. "Trade in Goods with Georgia." 2017. <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c4633.html#2003>. Accessed 18 Nov. 2017.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ European Commission Directorate-General for Trade. "European Union, Trade in goods with Georgia." 03 May 2017, http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113383.pdf. Accessed 18 Nov. 2017.

³⁵ Cohen, Ariel, & Hamilton, Robert E. "The Russian Military and the Georgia War: Lessons and Implications." *Strategic Studies Institute*, Jun. 2011, Accessed 04 Nov. 2017.

³⁶ Cohen, Ariel, & Hamilton, Robert E. "The Russian Military and the Georgia War: Lessons and Implications." *Strategic Studies Institute*, Jun. 2011, Accessed 04 Nov. 2017.

³⁷ Ivan, Paul. "What to expect from the new president of Moldova." *European Policy Centre*, 14 Nov. 2016, www.epc.eu/pub_details.php?cat_id=4&pub_id=7169.

³⁸ Tabachnik, Alexander. *The Transnistrian challenge: Why tensions are escalating between Russia and Moldova*. 1 Sept. 2017, blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2017/08/22/the-transnistrian-challenge-why-tensions-are-escalating-between-russia-and-moldova/. Accessed 22 Nov. 2017.

³⁹ Tanas, Alexander. *Moldova government expels five Russian diplomats, president furious*. 29 May 2017, www.reuters.com/article/us-moldova-russia/moldova-government-expels-five-russian-diplomats-president-furious-idUSKBN18PIQP. Accessed 22 Nov. 2017.

⁴⁰ E-Notes. "Why Did a Pro-Russian Candidate Win the Presidency in Moldova?" *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 23 Nov. 2016, www.fpri.org/article/2016/11/pro-russian-candidate-win-presidency-moldova/.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Фото: Екатерина Чеснокова / РИА Новости. "В Госдуме объяснили планы Приднестровья присоединиться к России." *В Госдуме объяснили планы Приднестровья присоединиться к России: Политика: Россия: Lenta.Ru*, lenta.ru/news/2016/09/09/paholkovkomment/.

The role of the media in Dodon's election runs parallel to the media's overall swaying of public opinion in Moldova. Dodon benefitted greatly from the support of Vladimir Plahotniuc, who has control over a significant portion of the media market in Moldova, which includes, most prominently, "rebroadcasts of state-run Russian news programs." These served as an effective outlet in terms of disseminating the positions of the Russian government, which have included implicit support and biases favoring President Dodon during the 2016 presidential election⁴³.

Militarization

The lens of Russian militarization as it pertains to Moldova is largely confined to the long-simmering prevalence of the secessionist movement in Transnistria. In the 1990s, Russian President Boris Yeltsin was largely unsupportive of an independent Transnistria (due to political motivations), but since 2000, Russia's policy and attitudes towards the region's potential independence have changed. Following a brief conflict in the 1990s, Transnistria was given autonomy to a certain extent, although this autonomy was complemented by the introduction of peacekeeping forces; a primary part of which was composed of Russian soldiers⁴⁴.

The election of a new Communist government in Moldova in 2001 saw an unexpected pivot to the West by the Moldovan government, and the heightened possibility that Moldova might merge with Romania. However, there was a constitutional crisis regarding the Transnistrian situation, leading Russian President Vladimir Putin to advocate a federal system for the region's governance -- thereby giving Transnistria more autonomy. Moreover, Putin's proposal (otherwise known as the Kozak Memorandum) retained the presence of the Russian military in the region in their the capacity of "peacekeeping forces," which was rejected by the Moldovan Government. Today, Russia retains its peacekeepers in the Transnistrian region⁴⁵.

A key finding pertinent to Transnistria is the notion of what Popescu denotes as "security institutions" (such as a defense ministry), that are present in regions such as Transnistria and have increasingly been led by figures of Russian origin. Additionally, the Russian peacekeeping forces have helped to solidify the boundaries of Transnistria, essentially providing Transnistria with a defensive perimeter

while the government is able to focus on domestic policies and infrastructural construction⁴⁶.

The presence of these Russian troops (numbering around 2000) has caused a considerable amount of dissent within the Moldovan Government, and in July of 2017 the pro-EU government, despite the protests of the pro-Russian President Igor Dodon, passed a resolution calling upon the removal of those troops from Transnistria. Moreover, since the Russian actions that took place in Ukraine in 2014, the Moldovan Government has restricted Russia's armed forces from entering Moldovan territory in any way, shape, or form⁴⁷.

Economy

Since its independence, Moldova has struggled to emerge out of economic malaise, having shown consistent low performance and growth, and there are some who have asserted that Moldova is at the bottom of the economic rankings in the continent. As a result, Moldova has relied on the inputs and aid stemming from their economic relations with their neighbors, primarily Russia and the European Union. While Moldova's largest trading partner is the European Union, Russia has remained as the largest individual national market for Moldovan exports. Additionally, Russia is home to nearly half a million Moldovan migrant workers and has also garnered a position as Moldova's largest supplier of energy⁴⁸.

Moldova has sought to improve its energy situation through a new deal with a Ukrainian energy company, thus beginning to move away from the Russian owned energy source that is, interestingly, based in Transnistria. The Moldovan move dealt a significant economic blow to Transnistria, amounting to nearly \$100 million that will be subsequently lost. Political ramifications have resulted from the deal, as there has been anger from Transnistria and Russia, with accusations that the move is politically motivated and is an economic attack against Russian interests. Moldova has countered the allegations by asserting that the new deal is more economically feasible, with respect to their needs⁴⁹. Politically, however, Moldovan officials

⁴³ E-Notes. "Why Did a Pro-Russian Candidate Win the Presidency in Moldova?" *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 23 Nov. 2016, www.fpri.org/article/2016/11/pro-russian-candidate-win-presidency-moldova/.

⁴⁴ Donaldson, R. H., Noguee, J. L., & Nadkarni, V. (2015). *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests* (5th ed.) (p. 186-191). London: Routledge.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Popescu, N. (2006). Outsourcing de facto statehood: Russia and the secessionist entities in Georgia and Moldova. *CEPS Policy Brief*, 109.

⁴⁷ Touma, Ana Maria. "Moldova Asks Russian Troops to Quit Transnistria." *Balkan Insight*, 21 July 2017, www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/moldovan-parliament-asks-russian-troops-to-leave-transnistria-07-21-2017.

⁴⁸ Rumer, Eugene. "Moldova Between Russia and the West: A Delicate Balance." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 23 May 2017, carnegieendowment.org/2017/05/23/moldova-between-russia-and-west-delicate-balance-pub-70056.

⁴⁹ Touma, Ana Maria. "Moldovan Power Deal with Ukraine Angers Transnistria." *Balkan Insight*, 5 Apr. 2017, www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/moldova-signs-electricity-deal-with-ukraine-angers-tiraspol-04-05-2017-1.

have implied that the continued exports of Transnistrian energy could contribute to a de facto recognition of Transnistria's increased autonomy, despite the very real concerns over how the Ukrainian company (known as DTEK) has attained the deal with Moldova, and their capacity to follow through on the implementation⁵⁰.

Moreover, the energy deal with DTEK is symbolic of Moldova's increased economic focus towards the European Union. In 2014, Moldova (in addition to Ukraine and Georgia) signed an association agreement with the European Union, asserting that its desire to become an official member state within the organization. However, the Russian Government has implicitly threatened to impose an economic punishment on Moldova, as Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister at the time, Grigory Karasin, was quoted as saying that Moldova would face "grave consequences" as a result of the signing. Additionally, Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov warned of potential economic retaliation through new tariffs⁵¹. These retaliatory measures ended up being new limitations on agricultural exports from Moldova⁵².

The 2014 association agreement is not the first or only example of economic retaliation towards Moldova by Russia for the former's pro-European shifts. In 2013, while Moldova was in contract with the Russian-owned energy company, it faced threats of retaliatory cuts in energy supplies due to prospective economic deals with the European Union. Moldova proceeded to sign the accords despite the threats, which some have asserted is what led the Russian Government to impose a ban on Moldovan wine for what it deemed "health concerns" in October 2013⁵³.

Ukraine

Political

Ukraine has been a focal point of Russian foreign policy since the fall of the Soviet Union. Russia's influence is seen throughout the Ukrainian political landscape from the support of pro-Russian leaders to propaganda. Russia's

rhetoric regarding Ukraine is particularly significant. In 2014, President Vladimir Putin said, "I think that the Russian and Ukrainian peoples are practically one single people, no matter what others might say...People living in what is Ukraine today all called themselves Russian"⁵⁴. This is a broad characterization, but there is some truth to this statement. In 2001, 58.5% of people living in Crimea identified themselves as Russia⁵⁵. However, the overwhelming majority of Ukraine does not characterize itself as ethnically Russian.

What today is known as modern Russia can be traced back through time as having partly originated in Ukraine. Though lacking any semblance of an organized state, the Kievan Rus was the precursor to Russian empire, which has led Russia to proclaim its right to absorb Ukraine and unite Slavic people. Moreover, as a former Soviet republic, Russian political influence in Ukraine is still prevalent. The 2004 Ukrainian election saw significant fraud and concern over pro-Russian candidate Viktor Yanukovich receiving the Kremlin's blessing, thus catalyzing the Orange Revolution; however, in 2010, Yanukovich was elected President, again with support of Vladimir Putin⁵⁶. The strong relationship between these two leaders was later seen in 2014 when Yanukovich was removed from power and subsequently fled to Russia⁵⁷. After Yanukovich fled Ukraine, Russia immediately backed a referendum that would bring Crimea and Sevastopol into Russia. Though this referendum was illegal, Russia annexed these Ukrainian territories and appointed a Mayor in Sevastopol⁵⁸.

Russia has continued to spread misinformation in Ukraine in order to further its agenda. The Kremlin broadcasted that the post-Yanukovich Ukrainian government, "resorted to terror, murder and riots" and that nationalists, neo-Nazis, Russophobes and anti-Semites executed the coup"⁵⁹. Russia's "information warfare" seeks to discredit the Ukrainian government and push narratives

⁵⁰ Popșoi, Mihai. "Moldova-Ukraine Energy Deal Upsets Russia by Cutting Transnistria Out." *Jamestown*, 3 Apr. 2017, jamestown.org/program/moldova-ukraine-energy-deal-upsets-russia-cutting-transnistria/.

⁵¹ Gardner, Andrew. "Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova sign EU deals." *Politico*, edited by John F. Harris, 27 June 2014, <https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-georgia-and-moldova-sign-eu-deals/>. Accessed 21 Oct. 2017.

⁵² Dyomkin, D. (2017, January 17). "In Russia, Moldovan president says he may scrap EU trade pact." *Reuters*. Retrieved November 22, 2017, from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-moldova-eu/in-russia-moldovan-president-says-he-may-scrap-eu-trade-pact-idUSKBN151290>

⁵³ Donaldson, R. H., Noguee, J. L., & Nadkarni, V. (2015). *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests* (5th ed.) (p. 186-191). London: Routledge.

⁵⁴ Grigas, A. (2016). *Beyond Crimea*: (p. 108). New York, NY: Yale University Press.

⁵⁵ Grigas, A. (2016). *Beyond Crimea*: (p. 101). New York, NY: Yale University Press.

⁵⁶ Bates, Theunis. "Ukraine's fraught relationship with Russia: A brief history." *The Week*, 8 Mar. 2014, theweek.com/articles/449691/ukraines-fraught-relationship-russia-brief-history. Accessed 20 Oct. 2017.

⁵⁷ "Profile: Ukraine's ousted President Viktor Yanukovich." *BBC News Online*, BBC, 28 Feb. 2014, www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25182830. Accessed 21 Oct. 2017.

⁵⁸ Grigas, A. (2016). *Beyond Crimea*: (p. 127). New York, NY: Yale University Press.

⁵⁹ Peterson, Nolan. "How Putin Uses Fake News to Wage War on Ukraine." *Newsweek*, edited by Bob Roe, 3 Apr. 2017, www.newsweek.com/how-putin-uses-fake-news-wage-war-ukraine-577430. Accessed 21 Nov. 2017.

surrounding regional autonomy that favors pro-Russian separatists⁶⁰.

The internet age has brought new weapons into Russia's arsenal and cyberspace has become an inroad for influence and action. It was reported that Russia conducted cyber attacks on Ukraine's central election commission during the 2004 and 2014 elections⁶¹. In 2016, Ukrainian hackers obtained emails from Vladislav Surkov, Russia's policy tsar for Ukraine. These emails show that Russia has funded the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic in the Donbas region. They also show that Surkov is actively working with pro-Russian separatists in coordinated efforts to destabilize Ukraine⁶².

Militarization

Since 2014, Russia has increasingly militarized Eastern Ukraine by both amassing its forces in the Donbas Region and supplying pro-Russian separatists with armaments. According to Toal, Russia justified their troop movements by claiming they were "responding to a perceived fascist coup in Kyiv [in which] unmarked Russian military personnel seized control of the Ukrainian province of Crimea⁶³. Yanukovich's departure created a vacuum in which violence and uncertainty persisted thus leading to seizure of the Crimean Parliament building by "armed men"⁶⁴. NATO and the OSCE have stated that unmarked soldiers and military equipment entered Ukraine from Russia following these events⁶⁵. Although Moscow largely denied militarization allegations at first, President Putin later openly

admitted that military personnel were operating inside of Ukraine, but did not acknowledge the allegations of supplying separatists⁶⁶. In 2015, Reuters obtained the logbook of a 9K38 Igla Man-Portable Air Defense Missile System that originated in Russia. It is important to mention that on July 17, 2014, a BUK surface-to-air missile system took down Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 which is reported to have also originated from Russia's Soviet-era armament stockpiles⁶⁷.

The "success" of Russian separatist movements can be attributed to Moscow's financial support. Former separatist leader Alexander Khodakovsky told Reuters that the Russian government finances pensions and public sector salaries in pro-Russian regions. Khodakovsky said, "Without outside help, it's impossible to sustain the territory even if you have the most effective tax-raising system. The level of help from Russia exceeds the amounts that we collect within the territory"⁶⁸.

In 2015 and 2016, Kiev went dark after a cyber attack shut down the city's power grid. Ukraine has accused Russia of perpetrating the hacks and has since discovered over 6,500 instances that have wreaked havoc on Ukrainian state institutions⁶⁹.

Economy

Russia and Ukraine depend on each other economically. Russia exports billions of dollars worth of natural resources to Ukraine and two of its most important pipelines run through the country⁷⁰. In 2004, Russia exerted economic influence over Ukraine in response to the Orange Revolution. The "cutoff of natural gas flow to Ukraine due to tensions over debts, pricing, and politics have been the most prominent and consistent instrument of Russia's political and economic coercion of and influence over

⁶⁰ Grigas, A. (2016). *Beyond Crimea*: (p. 123). New York, NY: Yale University Press.

⁶¹ Simmons, Ann M. "Russia's meddling in other nations' elections is nothing new. Just ask the Europeans." *Los Angeles Times*, edited by Jim Kirk, Ross Levinsohn, 30 Mar. 2017, beta.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-russia-election-meddling-20170330-story.html. Accessed 3 Nov. 2017.

⁶² Toler, Aric, and Melinda Haring. "Russia Funds and Manages Conflict in Ukraine, Leaks Show." *Atlantic Council*, 24 Apr. 2017, www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/russia-funds-and-manages-conflict-in-ukraine-leaks-show. Accessed 28 Oct. 2017.

⁶³ Toal, G. (2017). *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest Over Ukraine and the Caucasus* (p. 17-18). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

⁶⁴ Beese, Evan, and Tzvi Kahn. "FPI FACT SHEET: TIMELINE OF RUSSIAN AGGRESSION IN UKRAINE AND THE WESTERN RESPONSE." *The Foreign Policy Initiative*, 18 Sept. 2014, www.foreignpolicy.org/content/fpi-fact-sheet-timeline-russian-aggression-ukraine-and-western-response. Accessed 3 Nov. 2017.

⁶⁵ Herszenhorn, David M. "Fears Rise as Russian Military Units Pour Into Ukraine." *The New York Times*, edited by Dean Baquet, 12 Nov. 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/13/world/europe/ukraine-russia-military-border-nato.html. Accessed 14 Oct. 2017.

⁶⁶ Walker, Shaun. "Putin admits Russian military presence in Ukraine for first time." *The Guardian*, edited by Lee Glendinning, 17 Dec. 2015. Accessed 10 Oct. 2017.

⁶⁷ Grove, Thomas, and Warren Strobel. "Special Report: Where Ukraine's separatists get their weapons." *Reuters*, edited by Stephen J. Adler, 29 July 2014, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-arms-specialreport/special-report-where-ukraines-separatists-get-their-weapons-idUSKBN0FY0UA20140729. Accessed 15 Oct. 2017.

⁶⁸ Zverev, Anton. "Moscow is bankrolling Ukraine rebels: ex-separatist official." *Reuters*, edited by Stephen J. Adler, 5 Oct. 2016, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-separatists/moscow-is-bankrolling-ukraine-rebels-ex-separatist-official-idUSKCN1251UQ. Accessed 22 Oct. 2017.

⁶⁹ "Ukraine power cut 'was cyber-attack'." *BBC News Online*, BBC, 11 Jan. 2017, www.bbc.com/news/technology-38573074. Accessed 7 Nov. 2017.

⁷⁰ Grigas, A. (2016). *Beyond Crimea*: (p. 109). New York, NY: Yale University Press.

Ukraine"⁷¹. To counter Russian actions, Ukraine, along with Moldova and Georgia, signed "association agreements" with the European Union⁷². This move positions Ukraine to develop its economy and also reduce its dependency on Russia, though this has heightened Moscow's intervention as the "Europeanization" of Ukraine is prevailing⁷³.

The Russian government has and continue to be heavily involved in financing pro-Russian leaders, organizations, and actions in Ukraine. Broadly speaking, Russians have significant influence over Ukraine's economy and "own 10 percent of Ukraine's two hundred largest strategic companies"⁷⁴. The conflict with Russia has had a devastating effect on Ukraine's economy. It is estimated that 70-80% of the 6.9% drop in GDP in 2014 was from the war⁷⁵. Though it is also important to note the impact on Russia. The "trade war" with Ukraine, "reduced Ukrainian exports to Russia by half...[and] further cuts would damage the interests of Russian oligarchs"⁷⁶. Although Russia is successfully constraining Ukraine's economy, such actions are creating adverse effects on Russia's economy, which is already under pressure from international sanctions because of its actions in Ukraine.

Discussion

Overall, we have observed that Russian foreign policy has not necessarily become more aggressive, but rather more assertive, which we can view through the lenses of an offensive versus defensive strategy, in response to varying geopolitical circumstances that have taken place. Through its policies and actions, Russia has emphasized a new level of responsiveness since Vladimir Putin's rise to power in 2000. Primarily, this responsiveness has manifested itself politically, economically, and militarily in which three broad conclusions have been drawn regarding the methods

in which Russia's strategic motions have been undertaken. First, Russia has sought to counter increased westernization in former Soviet states and has attempted to construct a bulwark against the expansion of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Second, Russia has promoted federalization as a means of propagating potential breakaway territories, that tend to be pro-Russian. Third, Russia has used and contributed to identity politics in each of three counters, which has served as a medium through which Russia can advance political goals.

The European Union has served as a massive economic and political entity since its official founding in 1993. Moreover, the EU has continuously expanded throughout the continent, in recent years advancing through former Warsaw Pact member states, and getting ever closer to Russia's borders. On the other hand, the Warsaw Pact's militarial antithesis, NATO, has also grown in terms of power and influence, also attempting to approach Russia's immediate borders. Both of these predominantly pro-Western international organizations are viewed by Russia as a threat to Russia's security, as well as its economic and political spheres of influence. This increasingly perceived encroachment can be directly tied into Walt's "balance of threat" theory, and how Walt asserted that "the image influences the perception, and the perception fosters the image." Therefore, Russia's actions that are deemed "retaliatory" in nature must be viewed through the lens of the "balance of threat" theory.

Economically, all three nations have taken steps to align themselves with the West and primarily the European Union, in an effort to decrease their dependency on Russia and grow their own stagnating economies. Specifically, Moldova and Ukraine have relied on Russia for various natural resources; up until recently Moldova was wholly dependent on Russia for energy, and Ukraine has heavily imported Russian natural gas. Moreover, in 2014, all three nations signed association agreements with the European Union, which took concrete steps towards the nations becoming fully fledged European Union members. Immediately after these agreements were signed, Russia undertook economic retaliatory measures against the nations. We view this finding through the lens of Russia's broad strategy in countering increased Westernization throughout Europe, as the EU's expansion threatens to undercut Russia's own economic influence and stature. Should these nations (particularly Moldova and Ukraine) break away and diversify their economic dependencies and trading partners, Russia would therefore stand to lose its dominance in these countries' markets, thus catalyzing Russia's own potential dependence on the West, lest it risk being isolated.

Russia also risks being isolated militarily through the continued growth of NATO, whose original intent was to counter the former Soviet Union -- the purpose of NATO itself is viewed as perhaps the largest security threat to Russia. The threat of membership and/or alliances between the three countries and NATO has led to more forceful actions by Russia, primarily in Ukraine and Georgia, and to an extent in Moldova.

⁷¹ Ibid., 111

⁷² Gardner, Andrew. "Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova sign EU deals." *Politico*, edited by John F. Harris, 27 June 2014, <https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-georgia-and-moldova-sign-eu-deals/>. Accessed 21 Oct. 2017.

⁷³ Pifer, Steven. "Poroshenko Signs EU-Ukraine Association Agreement." *Brookings*, The Brookings Institution, 27 June 2014, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2014/06/27/poroshenko-signs-eu-ukraine-association-agreement/>. Accessed 29 Oct. 2017.

⁷⁴ Grigas, A. (2016). *Beyond Crimea*: (p. 112). New York, NY: Yale University Press.

⁷⁵ Wilson, Andrew. "Ukraine's economic pressures." *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 27 Apr. 2015, www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_ukraines_economic_pressures3008. Accessed 15 Nov. 2017.

⁷⁶ Wilson, Andrew. "Ukraine's economic pressures." *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 27 Apr. 2015, www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_ukraines_economic_pressures3008. Accessed 15 Nov. 2017.

In 2003, Vladimir Putin attempted to elevate the status of Russian peacekeeping forces in the country through the Kozak Memorandum; this proposal was rejected by the Moldovans, yet Russia still retains peacekeeping forces in Transnistria -- much to the chagrin of the Moldovan government who have declared their political intentions for the Russians to leave. The rejection of the Kozak Memorandum severely damaged bilateral relations between the two countries for a long period of time -- and the issue of Transnistrian independence has served as a geopolitical chip that Russia seeks to employ against Moldova. What's especially meaningful in this scenario is the implicit potential of a Russian military ally on Moldova's borders. An independent Transnistria would provide Russia a potential military center in a region in which Russian troop movements and their mere presence has been limited by the nearby governments. Moreover, Russia's goal with the previously mentioned Kozak Memorandum was the federalization of Moldova which would help solve the Transnistrian situation, which Herpen asserts would contribute further to an independent Transnistria -- federalization would permit Transnistria more autonomy, and make secession easier. Geopolitically, this would permit an expansion of Russia's military presence and would open up a range of new options, most notably on Ukraine's borders as well.

The ouster of Ukrainian President Yanukovich in 2014, who was ostensibly pro-Russian, justified Russia's political and military campaign in Crimea and the Donbas region as an effort to combat what the Kremlin called a "fascist coup". Russian separatists gained significant influence over these regions with the support of the Kremlin resulting in a vicious civil war that continues to this day. The arming of separatists and presence of Russian military personnel signals Russia's broad military strategy of countering Westernization. Russia's military and financial assistance to separatists has led to the unregulated movement of armaments and continued tenure of proto-states within Ukraine. Russia's actions have furthered this conflict, which has resulted in the deaths of over 10,000 people, according to the United Nations. Militarily, Ukraine is vital as it stands as a "buffer zone" between Russia and Western Europe. Moreover, the Black Sea provides significant strategic naval advantages, with Sevastopol being home to Russia's Black Sea Fleet. Overall, Russia's militarization in and around Ukraine has exacerbated this conflict and serves as a model of Russian military tactics.

The political movement inspired by Mikheil Saakashvili, which culminated in his election to the Georgian presidency in 2003, was the beginning of a new era of Georgian policymaking that was centered around national unification and forging closer relationships with the West. In stern opposition to the Kremlin, Saakashvili ramped up military spending and used this to put pressure on South Ossetia and Abkhazia, two regions that Georgia considers to be its sovereign territory but which declared independence from Tbilisi in 1991 and are now partially recognized republics. We observed the Russo-Georgian war

of 2008 in two contrasting viewpoints. According to Roy Allison, responsibility to protect ("R2P") principles prompted the 2008 Russian invasion, as the Kremlin views the people of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as Russian citizens. Meanwhile, it seemed that Georgia and the West viewed the invasion as an attempt to undermine the pro-Western Georgian government and forcefully push back against the Georgia movement to join NATO. Quickly seizing their objectives with overwhelming military strength, Russian-led forces moved beyond South Ossetia and Abkhazia, penetrating Georgian territory and forcing Tbilisi into a ceasefire agreement that kept the two regions autonomous from Georgian control and essentially as Russian puppet states.

As mentioned throughout this paper, Crimea and the Donbas have a significant population of ethnic Russians, which supports Putin's goal of uniting and protecting all Russians under their interpretation of the Responsibility to Protect. The annexation of Crimea and the continued efforts to prop up self-proclaimed regimes in Donetsk and Luhansk are a part of Russia's broader political strategy that is rooted in pan-Russianism. However, the victory of Petro Poroshenko demonstrates that the majority of Ukraine seeks to break away from Russian control. The Kremlin, in an effort to influence pro-Russian regions of Ukraine, has sought to federalize Ukraine, which, as previously mentioned, is a political strategy that would allow greater autonomy for pro-Russian regions, with the ultimate goal of joining Russia. An interesting development in Ukraine has been Russia's use of misinformation and cyber warfare. It seems that Ukraine has become a "testing ground" for Russia's political maneuvering. The revelations that Russia may have had significant influence in the 2016 presidential election in the United States has brought to light the role of "fake news" that has plagued Ukraine throughout this conflict.

Identity politics in Moldova has been a significant factor in how Russia has been perceived. The Russian media has had a firm grasp on a large proportion of Moldova's overall media landscape, which has included the rebroadcast rights of Russian news channels (which are largely state-run) -- a proxy through which propaganda can be conveyed. Moreover, Moldova's domestic politics has been shaped in large part by a Russian versus Romanian identity crisis. Local politicians have seized upon this conflict to advance their own political agendas -- the prime example being President Igor Dodon, who has been upfront regarding his pro-Russian, anti-Western political positions. However, due to the President's own lack of power and his largely figurehead status has rendered him ineffectual in advancing his pro-Russian agenda -- for now. Yet, the presence of a pro-Russian figure of that stature is particularly useful to the Russian government, as an allied Moldova would enable Russia to more easily expand its sphere of influence and enable a broader strategy -- especially against neighboring countries like Ukraine. Therefore, we can observe how the Russian Government, through propaganda from Russian-language media, and its implicit support of political

candidates, is able to propagate the ongoing identity crisis within Moldova and even strive to shape public opinion through these methods. In many cases, public opinion is often key when attempting to gain influence, and Moldova is no different.

Limitations

Throughout the course of this paper, the most significant limiting factor has been time; the three nations have incredibly intricate and complex political situations and histories that have all played a significant role in manufacturing their current relations with Russia. Therefore, to complete a truly in-depth study focusing on a series of specific actions and events, we would require more than our allotted time frame.

We've also been limited by a lack of reliable information regarding Russia's military movements and broader strategies. We have relied upon histories, studies, and news sources that have documented those military conflicts. However, it is important to note that many of these sources are subjective in nature, and are beholden to their own set of biases. Moreover, due to Russia's control of the media and our own difficulty in parsing pro-Russian outlets (especially if they were in the Russian language), representing non-Western scholarship remains an essential challenge, that could be built upon by future studies. However, we have striven to eliminate biases throughout the paper, and have sought to obtain what scholarship we could that presents a Russian political point of view.

The absence of a great deal of quantitative data, particularly in terms of financing and demographics, has also served as a limiting factor in our understanding. Analyzing the proportions of Russian financing in the three case studies would provide a clear window through which we can attempt to identify the actual prioritization of respective Russian goals. Quantitative data on the military, specifically in troop movements and armaments would allow us to observe if there has been an increase in those sectors since 2000. It is incumbent on future studies to attempt to incorporate such data.

Conclusion

Throughout the course of this study, our results and findings have led us to conclude with reasonable confidence that Russia's overarching assertive foreign policy in Eastern Europe is a result of a preemptive strategy rooted in defensiveness, that is spurred by perceived Western encroachment upon the former Soviet Union's sphere of influence. This strategy is directly linked to Vladimir Putin's administration, which has employed pan-Russian as a tactic to more effectively garner influence and power in the region, and ultimately expand a neo-Soviet agenda.

Especially key to our findings is Russia's interference and/or influence in the domestic affairs of Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Through our case studies,

Moldova and Ukraine, in particular, demonstrate the spread of Russian-sourced propaganda, and in some cases, direct interference and implicit threats. This discussion is increasingly pertinent to the course of events that have unfolded in Montenegro in recent months. Montenegro's acceptance into NATO, just a few years after its rejection of a Russian naval base within its borders, has fueled animosity between the two nations (McCain). It has been widely speculated that Russian intelligence operatives were behind a plot to assassinate and overthrow the pro-Western Prime Minister of Montenegro. These events are principally concerning due to the broader trend of undeterred Russian political, economic, and military incursion across Europe that we have observed and outlined throughout the course of this study. Russia's actions threaten to upend the fabric of post-Soviet westernization and democratization, and will likely lead to more intervention both in Eastern Europe and around the world.

- Allison, Roy. "Russia Resurgent? Moscow's Campaign to 'Coerce Georgia to Peace'." *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Nov. 2008. Accessed 09 Nov. 2017.
- Allison, Roy. "The Russian case for military intervention in Georgia: international law, norms, and political calculation." *European Security*, 22 Dec. 2009, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662830903468734>. Accessed 01 Nov. 2017.
- Baar, V., & Jakubek, D. (2017). Divided National Identity in Moldova. *Journal of Nationalism, Memory & Language Politics*, 11(1), 58-92.
- Bates, Theunis. "Ukraine's fraught relationship with Russia: A brief history." *The Week*, 8 Mar. 2014, theweek.com/articles/449691/ukraines-fraught-relationship-russia-brief-history. Accessed 20 Oct. 2017.

- Beese, Evan, and Tzvi Kahn. "FPI FACT SHEET: TIMELINE OF RUSSIAN AGGRESSION IN UKRAINE AND THE WESTERN RESPONSE." *The Foreign Policy Initiative*, 18 Sept. 2014, www.foreignpolicyi.org/content/fpi-fact-sheet-timeline-russian-aggression-ukraine-and-western-response. Accessed 3 Nov. 2017.
- Blank, S. J. (2015). Imperial ambitions: Russia's military buildup. *World Affairs*, 178(1), 67-76.
- Bock, A. M., Henneberg, I., & Plank, F. (2015). "If you compress the spring, it will snap back hard": The Ukrainian crisis and the balance of threat theory. *International Journal*, 70(1), 101-109.
- Cohen, Ariel, & Hamilton, Robert E. "The Russian Military and the Georgia War: Lessons and Implications." *Strategic Studies Institute*, Jun. 2011, <http://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pdffiles/pub1069.pdf>. Accessed 04 Nov. 2017.
- Colăcel, O. (2017). Within the media earshot: national ideas in the Republic of Moldova prior to the 2016 election. *Eastern Journal of European Studies*, 8(1).
- Donaldson, R. H., Noguee, J. L., & Nadkarni, V. (2015). *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*(5th ed.). London: Routledge.
- Dunn, E. C., & Bobick, M. S. (2014). The empire strikes back: War without war and occupation without occupation in the Russian sphere of influence. *American Ethnologist*, 41(3), 405-413.
- Dyomkin, D. (2017, January 17). "In Russia, Moldovan president says he may scrap EU trade pact." *Reuters*. Retrieved November 22, 2017, from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-moldova-eu/in-russia-moldovan-president-says-he-may-scrap-eu-trade-pact-idUSKBN151290>
- Emmott, Robin, and Siebold, Sabine. "NATO split on message to send Georgia on membership hopes." *Reuters*, 27 Nov. 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-georgia/nato-split-on-message-to-send-georgia-on-membership-hopes-idUSKBN0TG1HP20151127>. Accessed 10 Nov. 2017.
- E-Notes. "Why Did a Pro-Russian Candidate Win the Presidency in Moldova?" *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 23 Nov. 2016, www.fpri.org/article/2016/11/pro-russian-candidate-win-presidency-moldova/.
- European Commission Directorate-General for Trade. "European Union, Trade in goods with Georgia." 03 May 2017, http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113383.pdf. Accessed 18 Nov. 2017.
- Fuller, Liz. "Georgia's Hopes Of NATO Membership Recede." *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, 26 Apr. 2016, <https://www.rferl.org/a/27699636.html>. Accessed 18 Nov. 2017.
- Gardner, Andrew. "Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova sign EU deals." *Politico*, edited by John F. Harris, 27 June 2014, <https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-georgia-and-moldova-sign-eu-deals/>. Accessed 21 Oct. 2017.
- Giles, Keir., Hanson, Philip., Lyne, Roderic., Nixey, James., Sherr, James., & Wood, Andrew. "The Russian Challenge." *Chatham House*, Jun. 2015, https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/field/field_document/20150605RussianChallengeGilesHansonLyneNixeySherrWoodUpdate.pdf. Accessed 02 Nov. 2017.
- Grigas, A. (2016). *Beyond Crimea*: New York, NY: Yale University Press.
- Grove, Thomas, and Warren Strobel. "Special Report: Where Ukraine's separatists get their weapons." *Reuters*, edited by Stephen J. Adler, 29 July 2014, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-arms-specialreport/special-report-where-ukraines-separatists-get-their-weapons-idUSKBN0FY0UA20140729>. Accessed 15 Oct. 2017.
- Herszenhorn, David M. "Fears Rise as Russian Military Units Pour Into Ukraine." *The New York Times*, edited by Dean Baquet, 12 Nov. 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/13/world/europe/ukraine-russia-military-border-nato.html>. Accessed 14 Oct. 2017.
- Istomin, I., & Bolgova, I. (2016). Transnistrian strategy in the context of Russian–Ukrainian relations: the rise and failure of 'dual alignment'. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 16(1), 169-194.

- Ivan, Paul. "What to expect from the new president of Moldova." *European Policy Centre*, 14 Nov. 2016, www.epc.eu/pub_details.php?cat_id=4&pub_id=7169.
- Karsaulidze, Eka. "Russia Hopes for Better Trade Relations with Georgia." *Georgia Today*, 26 Jul. 2016, <http://georgiatoday.ge/news/4320/Russia-Hopes-for-Better-Trade-Relations-with-Georgia>. Accessed 14 Nov. 2017.
- King, Charles. "Tbilisi Blues." *Foreign Affairs*, 30 Mar. 2015, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2004-08-25/tbilisi-blues>. Accessed 14 Nov. 2017.
- Laqueur, W. (2015). *Putinism: Russia and its Future with the West*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martins Press.
- Litsas, S. N. (2017). Russia in the Eastern Mediterranean: Intervention, Deterrence, Containment. *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 26(1), 56-73.
- March, Luke. "Is Nationalism Rising in Russian Foreign Policy?: The Case of Georgia." *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 2011, http://www.racheladamsediting.com/uploads/2/4/7/0/24703707/dem_ra.pdf. Accessed 20 Oct. 2017.
- "Moldova Looks Into Possible Russian Money Laundering Scheme." *Sputnik International*, 11 Feb. 2013, sputniknews.com/news/20130211179409447-Moldova-Looks-Into-Possible-Russian-Money-Laundering-Scheme/.
- "Moldova-Russia diplomatic row escalates over ban." *BBC News*, BBC, 3 Aug. 2017, www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40809706.
- Paul, David. "Russia-Georgia War in 2008 Told the West -- and Putin -- What Was Coming." *Huffington Post*, 03 Mar. 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-paul/russia-georgia-war-in-200_b_4891391.html. Accessed 04 Nov. 2017.
- Peterson, Nolan. "How Putin Uses Fake News to Wage War on Ukraine." *Newsweek*, edited by Bob Roe, 3 Apr. 2017, www.newsweek.com/how-putin-uses-fake-news-wage-war-ukraine-577430. Accessed 21 Nov. 2017.
- Pifer, Steven. "Poroshenko Signs EU-Ukraine Association Agreement." *Brookings*, The Brookings Institution, 27 June 2014, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2014/06/27/poroshenko-signs-eu-ukraine-association-agreement/>. Accessed 29 Oct. 2017.
- Pomorska, K., & Noutcheva, G. (2017). Europe as a Regional Actor: Waning Influence in an Unstable and Authoritarian Neighbourhood. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 55(S1), 165-176.
- Popescu, N. (2006). Outsourcing de facto statehood: Russia and the secessionist entities in Georgia and Moldova. *CEPS Policy Brief*, 109.
- Popșoi, Mihai. "Moldova-Ukraine Energy Deal Upsets Russia by Cutting Transnistria Out." *Jamestown*, 3 Apr. 2017, jamestown.org/program/moldova-ukraine-energy-deal-upsets-russia-cutting-transnistria/.
- "Profile: Ukraine's ousted President Viktor Yanukovich." *BBC News Online*, BBC, 28 Feb. 2014, www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25182830. Accessed 21 Oct. 2017.
- REGNUM, ИА. "'Меморандум Козака': Российский план объединения Молдовы и Приднестровья." ИА REGNUM, 13 Oct. 2006, regnum.ru/news/458547.html.
- Roberts, K. (2017). Understanding Putin: The politics of identity and geopolitics in Russian foreign policy discourse. *International Journal*, 72(1), 28-55.
- Roxburgh, A. (2012). *The Strongman: Vladimir Putin and the Struggle for Russia*. I.B. Tauris.
- Rumer, Eugene. "Moldova Between Russia and the West: A Delicate Balance." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 23 May 2017, carnegieendowment.org/2017/05/23/moldova-between-russia-and-west-delicate-balance-pub-70056.

- Rutland, P. (2016). Geopolitics and the Roots of Putin's Foreign Policy. *Russian History*, 43(3-4), 425-436.
- Schwartz, Michael, and Barnard, Anne, and Chivers, C.J. "Russia and Georgia Clash Over Separatist Region." *The New York Times*. 08 Aug. 2008. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/09/world/europe/09georgia.html>. Accessed 14 Nov. 2017.
- Simmons, Ann M. "Russia's meddling in other nations' elections is nothing new. Just ask the Europeans." *Los Angeles Times*, edited by Jim Kirk, Ross Levinsohn, 30 Mar. 2017, beta.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-russia-election-meddling-20170330-story.html. Accessed 3 Nov. 2017.
- Suny, R. G. (2011). *The Soviet experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the successor states*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tabachnik, Alexander. *The Transnistrian challenge: Why tensions are escalating between Russia and Moldova*. 1 Sept. 2017, blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2017/08/22/the-transnistrian-challenge-why-tensions-are-escalating-between-russia-and-moldova/. Accessed 22 Nov. 2017.
- Tanas, Alexander, and Alessandra Prentice. "Pro-Russian candidate triumphs in Moldova presidential race." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 14 Nov. 2016, www.reuters.com/article/us-moldova-election/pro-russian-candidate-triumphs-in-moldova-presidential-race-idUSKBN1380TN.
- Tanas, Alexander. *Moldova government expels five Russian diplomats, president furious*. 29 May 2017, www.reuters.com/article/us-moldova-russia/moldova-government-expels-five-russian-diplomats-president-furious-idUSKBN18P1QP. Accessed 22 Nov. 2017.
- Toal, G. (2017). *Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest Over Ukraine and the Caucasus*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Toler, Aric, and Melinda Haring. "Russia Funds and Manages Conflict in Ukraine, Leaks Show." *Atlantic Council*, 24 Apr. 2017, www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/russia-funds-and-manages-conflict-in-ukraine-leaks-show. Accessed 28 Oct. 2017.
- Touma, Ana Maria. "Moldova Asks Russian Troops to Quit Transnistria." *Balkan Insight*, 21 July 2017, www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/moldovan-parliament-asks-russian-troops-to-leave-transnistria-07-21-2017.
- Touma, Ana Maria. "Moldovan Power Deal with Ukraine Angers Transnistria." *Balkan Insight*, 5 Apr. 2017, www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/moldova-signs-electricity-deal-with-ukraine-angers-tiraspol-04-05-2017-1.
- Trenin, D. V. (2011). *Post-imperium: A Eurasian story*. Brookings Institution Press.
- "Ukraine power cut 'was cyber-attack'." *BBC News Online*, BBC, 11 Jan. 2017, www.bbc.com/news/technology-38573074. Accessed 7 Nov. 2017.
- U.S. Census Bureau. "Trade in Goods with Georgia." 2017. <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c4633.html#2003>. Accessed 18 Nov. 2017.
- Van Herpen, M. H. (n.d.). *Putin's Wars: The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Walker, Shaun. "Putin admits Russian military presence in Ukraine for first time." *The Guardian*, edited by Lee Glendinning, 17 Dec. 2015. Accessed 10 Oct. 2017.
- Wegren, S. K. (Ed.). (2013). *Return to Putin's Russia*(5th ed.). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Wilson, Andrew. "Ukraine's economic pressures." *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 27 Apr. 2015, www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_ukraines_economic_pressures3008. Accessed 15 Nov. 2017.

Zverev, Anton. "Moscow is bankrolling Ukraine rebels: ex-separatist official." *Reuters*, edited by Stephen J. Adler, 5 Oct. 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-separatists/moscow-is-bankrolling-ukraine-rebels-ex-separatist-official-idUSKCN1251UQ>. Accessed 22 Oct. 2017.

Фото: Екатерина Чеснокова / РИА Новости. "В Госдуме объяснили планы Приднестровья присоединиться к России." *В Госдуме объяснили планы Приднестровья присоединиться к России: Политика: Россия: Lenta.Ru*, lenta.ru/news/2016/09/09/paholkovkomment/.