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What's Old Is New Again

A Strategy of Re-Containment of Russia

by Christopher D. Thuma

On February 24, 2022, after a months-long military buildup, Russia shattered peace in Europe by starting an aggressive war against Ukraine.¹ In announcing the invasion, Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed that Russia could not “feel safe, develop, and exist while facing a permanent threat from the territory of today’s Ukraine.”² Left without recourse, the Kremlin launched a so-called “special military operation” to defend Russia’s statelets, the Donetsk People’s Republic and Luhansk People’s Republic, at their staged request, and to achieve the “demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine.”³ As Sergei Naryshkin, head of the Russian foreign intelligence service, stated, “Russia’s future and its future place in the world are at stake.”⁴

When the Russian military failed to quickly decapitate the Ukrainian government, the Kremlin resorted “to tactics reminiscent of medieval siege warfare – encircling cities, cutting off escape routes and pounding the civilian population with heavy ordinance.”⁵ By early March, there were hundreds of casualties and Europe was facing a significant humanitarian crisis with over 4 million refugees seeking safety in neighboring countries.⁶ Russia clamped down on the

media and free speech at home to block information about the conflict from reaching ordinary Russians and arrested thousands of protestors demanding an end to the war.⁷

Putin’s brutal invasion sent shockwaves around the world.⁸ At a time when many proclaimed the decline of the United States and Western values, the courage of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and the Ukrainian people demonstrated that foundational principles, such as self-determination, were still powerful and able to unite a fragmented West.⁹ Inspired by “a nation and a leader willing to sacrifice so much for the principle of independence and the right to join the Western world,” the United States and its allies responded by taking numerous and often unprecedented steps to isolate Russia.¹⁰ Putin’s aggression against Ukraine “will end up costing Russia dearly” leaving the country “a pariah on the international stage.”¹¹

The United States and its allies are once again called back to defend the “rules-based order that has been violently uprooted” in Europe.¹² Ukraine, however, is only the latest, and bloodiest, battle in a perpetual “war” between Russia and the United States.

gees, as of April 4, 2022, 4,244,595 persons sought refuge outside of Ukraine, 2,469,647 of which were in Poland alone. The UN estimates that the numbers could rise to seven million internally displaced persons and five million refugees. Diana Roy, “How bad is Ukraine’s Humanitarian Crisis,” *PBS News Hour*, March 4, 2022, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/how-bad-is-ukraines-humanitarian-crisis>. “Ukraine Refugee Situation,” Operational Data Portal, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, accessed April 5, 2022, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.

7. The Kremlin blocked access to social media and major foreign news outlets. The Russian parliament enacted a law to punish anyone spreading “false information” about its Ukraine invasion with up to 15 years in prison. This law makes it a crime to call the war a “war” in the press or social media. As of March 7, 2022, an estimated 4,888 people were detained during protests in sixty-nine cities. In Moscow, at least 2,319 detained were detained. Anton Troianovski, “Russia Takes Censorship to New Extremes, Stifling War Coverage,” *New York Times*, March 4, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/04/world/europe/russia-censorship-media-crackdown.html>; “Thousands Detained at Anti-War Protests Across Russia,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, March 6, 2022, <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-1000-protesters-arrested-ukraine-invasion/31738786.html>.

8. Michael Beckley and Hal Brands, “The Return of Pax Americana: Putin’s War is Fortifying the Democratic Alliance,” *Foreign Affairs*, March 14, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2022-03-14/return-pax-americana>.

9. Tom McTague, “What Volodymyr Zelensky’s Courage Says About the West,” *The Atlantic*, February 28, 2022, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2022/02/volodymyr-zelensky-courage-ukraine-russia/622948/>.

10. Ibid.

11. Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Remarks by President Biden on Russia’s Unprovoked and Unjustified Attack on Ukraine, February 24, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/02/24/remarks-by-president-biden-on-russias-unprovoked-and-unjustified-attack-on-ukraine/>.

12. Ivo H. Daalder, “The Return of Containment: How the West Can Prevail Over the Kremlin,” *Foreign Affairs*, March 1, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-03-01/return-containment>.

1. Paul Kirby, “Why has Russia Invaded Ukraine and What Does Putin Want,” *BBC News*, April 13, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56720589.amp>.

2. Vladimir Putin, Address by the President of the Russian Federation, February 24, 2022, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843>

3. Ibid.

4. Kirby, “Why has Russia Invaded Ukraine.”

5. International Court of Justice, “Allegations of Genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,” (Ukraine v. Russian Federation), Verbatim Record, March 7, 2022, 51, <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/182/182-20220307-ORA-01-00-BI.pdf>; Mykhailo Minakov, “The War on Ukraine: The Beginning of the End of Putin’s Russia,” *The Woodrow Wilson Center*, February 28, 2022, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/war-ukraine-beginning-end-putins-russia>.

6. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refu-

While Russia's aggression in Ukraine is of immediate concern to Washington and its European allies, the United States must also think beyond this conflict for ways to comprehensively deal with Russia. This article proposes a strategy for the United States to meet the Russia challenge that builds upon what has worked in the past. As Ariel Durant noted, "[t]he present is the past rolled up for action, and the past is the present unrolled for understanding."¹³

IN RUSSIA'S WAR CONTEXT MATTERS

"To understand Russia's war in Ukraine requires understanding Russia's views on war. . . . Russia has conceptualized war as a continuation of politics, and politics as a continuation of war, thus rendering the binary 'peace or war' paradigm of the operational environment obsolete."¹⁴ Russia's view of war is what diplomat George Kennan in 1947 called a political war: "[t]he employment of all the means at a nation's command, short of war, to achieve its national objectives. Such operations are both overt and covert. They range from such overt actions as political alliances, economic measures [...] and 'white' propaganda to such covert operations as clandestine support of 'friendly' foreign elements, 'black' psychological warfare and even encouragement of underground resistance in hostile states."¹⁵ The war, partly conducted in the "gray zone," uses a variety of coercive tactics – economic coercion, election interference, clandestine sabotage, state sponsored assassinations, and information operations – to "distract, divide, and demoralize" the enemy.¹⁶ While Kennan's

"[t]he present is the past rolled up for action, and the past is the present unrolled for understanding."

— Ariel Durant

definition of political war suggests a divide between armed conflict and the gray zone, the Russian view is more expansive, and has evolved to include all actions to shape the governance of a target state, up to and including the use of conventional military forces.

Russia's perpetual war has its roots in its quest for security. A long border, exposed geography, and centuries of encroachment by hostile forces leaves Russia feeling perennially vulnerable.¹⁷ The fear of external attack drives Russia to create an ever-expanding buffer zone around its periphery.¹⁸ "In a dangerous world with few natural defenses, the thinking goes, the only guarantor of Russia's security is a powerful state willing and able to act aggressively in its own interests."¹⁹

Such a power can only be limited by other great powers and not by the West's concepts of international law, sovereignty, or territorial integrity.²⁰

Equally important is the conviction that history bestowed upon Russia a special status among nations, which is one of the most enduring aspects of its political identity.²¹ Russia is the defender of a thousand-year-old Russian Orthodox civilization, which benefitted its neighbors.

And Russia and its people have repeatedly endured suffering to defend others in the region.²² Whether it was from invaders from the East or Nazi Germany from the West, Russia believes that it saved Europe on multiple occasions and, as a result, is entitled to enduring deference and respect.²³ This perspective on history is both a source of pride for the Russian people

13. Ariel Durant and Will Durant, *The Lessons of History*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1968).

14. Oscar Jonsson, *The Russian Understanding of War: Blurring the Lines Between War and Peace*, (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2019).

15. George Kennan, "Policy Planning Staff Memorandum," May 4, 1948, Records of the Department of State, Policy Planning Staff Files 1944-47, Lot 64 D 563, Box 11, accessed March 28, 2022, <http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/johnson/65ciafounding3.htm>.

16. Mark Galeotti, "I'm Sorry for Creating the 'Gerasimov Doctrine,'" *Foreign Policy*, March 5, 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/05/im-sorry-for-creating-the-gerasimov-doctrine/>. The "gray zone" is generally considered to be the contested space between routine statecraft and conventional warfare. In other words, activities that fall short of armed conflict and that frequently provide the aggressor with some degree of plausible deniability. Jake Harrington and Riley McCabe, "Detect and Understand: Modernizing Intelligence for the Gray Zone," Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 2021, 2, https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/211207_Harrington_Detect_Understand.pdf?CXBQPSNhhUjec_inYLB7SFAaO_bk8nKrQ.

17. Bruce McClintock, Jeffery Hornung, and Katherine Constello, *Russia's Global Interests and Actions: Growing Reach to Match Rejuvenated Capabilities*, (Arlington, VA: RAND, June 2021), 4-5.

18. McClintock, Hornung, and Constello, "Russia's Global Interests and Actions," 4-5.

19. Michael McFaul, "Putin, Putinism, and the Domestic Determinants of Russian Foreign Policy," *International Security*, vol. 45, no. 2, Fall 2020, 4, <https://direct.mit.edu/isec/article/45/2/95/95260/Putin-Putinism-and-the-Domestic-Determinants-of>.

20. Russia and the United States have vastly different concepts of sovereignty. As scholar Alina Polyakova explained: "[t]he Kremlin does not believe that countries, like Ukraine, other countries in its sphere of influence, [and] the people in those countries have the right to determine their own future and the direction And of course countries like the United States and other Western countries think that the people of Ukraine ... should have the right to determine their own path, wherever that may lead."

Keir Giles, *Moscow Rules: What Drives Russia to Confront the West*, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2019), 13.

21. *Ibid.*, 13-15.

22. Giles, *Moscow Rules*, 14.

23. "[A]ccording to Aleksandr Pushkin, 'the barbarians did not dare to leave an enslaved Rus behind their lines and returned to the Eastern steppes. The developing Enlightenment was saved by a ravaged and dying Russia.'" *Ibid.* 14-15.

and resentment toward the West for underappreciating Russia's importance.²⁴

Through these lenses of Russian identity and security, Putin sees a hostile United States that “embarked on a new phase of conflict as early as the end of the cold war.”²⁵ U.S. policy decisions, often having little to do with Russia, fostered a belief by the Kremlin that an aggressive United States intended to subordinate Russia and undermine the Putin regime.²⁶ The list of grievances is long. The United States pushed for the enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to include countries of the Russian near abroad. The United States went to war in Serbia, over Russian objections.²⁷ But it was U.S. support for the Arab Spring and the so-called “color revolutions” in Eastern Europe that crystalized the Kremlin's belief that the United States was at war with Russia.²⁸ The

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid. Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation's Armed Forces, General Valery Gerasimov, described the character of this new war as follows:

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

Anthony H. Cordesman, “Chronology of Possible Russian Gray Area and Hybrid Warfare Operations,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 8, 2020, 8, https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/200702_Burke_Chair_Russian_Chronology.pdf.

26. James Goldgeier, “U.S.-Russian Relations Will Only Get Worse: Even Good Diplomacy Can't Smooth a Clash of Interests,” *Foreign Affairs*, April 6, 2021, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2021-04-06/us-russian-relations-will-only-get-worse>.

27. Ibid. “Moscow repeatedly warned that the precedents set by Western military interventions in such places as Kosovo, Serbia, Iraq, and Libya would undermine the existing system of international law—including the principle of sovereignty as enshrined in the 1975 Helsinki Accords, in which the West formally acknowledged the national boundaries of the Soviet Union, the former Yugoslavia, and the Warsaw Pact states.” Alexander Lukin, “What the Kremlin is Thinking: Putin's Vision For Eurasia,” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2014, 88-89, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2014-06-16/what-kremlin-thinking>.

28. Personalist autocrats like Russian President Vladimir Putin face the dual threat of being removed by an elite coup or a popular revolt. Timothy Frye, *Weak Strongman the Limits of Power in Putin's Russia*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021), 11-12. “Russian leaders fear domestic unrest, recalling major past upheavals like the 1917 Communist revolution.” McClintock, Hornung, and Constello, “Russia's Global Interests and Actions,” 5. Putin's heavy-handed reaction to Alexei Navalny illustrative of this point. Navalny is “the first opposition politician since the collapse of the Soviet Union to [mobilize] a powerful opposition movement that draws together many strands of society, from working-class [neighborhoods] in the regions to the urban intelligentsia in Moscow.” “Why is Vladimir Putin so afraid of Alexei Navalny,” *The Economist*, June 10, 2021, <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2021/06/10/why-is-vladimir-putin-so-afraid-of-alexei-navalny>. As a former advisor to Putin put it in 2012: “In the Kremlin establishment ... there has been an absolute

Russians incorrectly, but honestly, believe that these organic uprisings were not genuine protests, but regime change orchestrated by Washington.²⁹ U.S. actions, in Putin's mind, provide ample justification for the position that “any actions [Moscow] can take which damage the West are fundamentally good for Russia.”³⁰

Washington, however, viewed its relations with Russia differently. For the U.S., the end of the Cold War, which marked the triumph of democracy and capitalism over communist tyranny, ushered in a time of peace. NATO enlargement was intended to provide security for all of Europe, which benefitted Russia and, therefore, should not be viewed as threatening.³¹ Russia's unwillingness to ultimately embrace liberal reforms and cooperate with the West were the result of a misplaced longing for a return to empire.³² In the words of former President Bill Clinton, the Russians were “lousy joiners.”³³

At the same time, the United States struggled to formulate an effective policy toward Russia.³⁴ Misguided assumptions about Moscow and an under-appreciation of the depth of Russia's recalcitrant views led U.S. policy makers to a series of overtures to the Kremlin, only to be disappointed.³⁵ “Resets” in the relationship have done little to change the trajectory in U.S.-Russian relations.³⁶ Putin has not been interested

conviction that as soon as the power center shifts, or if there is mass pressure, or the appearance of a popular leader, then everybody will be annihilated. It's a feeling of great vulnerability. As soon as someone is given the chance ... they will physically destroy the establishment, or we'll have to fight to destroy them instead.” Frye, *Weak Strongman*, 42; Alexander Cooley and Daniel Nixon, *Exit from Hegemony: The Unraveling of the American Global Order*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020), 92.

29. Galeotti, “I'm Sorry.”

30. Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament (United Kingdom), Russia, (London: Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament, 2020), 1, https://isc.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CCS207_CCS0221966010-001_Russia-Report-vo2-Web_Accessible.pdf.

31. Andrew T. Wolff, “The Future of NATO Enlargement After the Ukraine Crisis,” *International Affairs* 91, no. 5, (September 2015), 1103-4.

32. Thomas Graham, “Let Russia Be Russia: the Case for a More Pragmatic Approach to Moscow,” *Foreign Affairs*, (November/December 2019), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2019-10-15/let-russia-be-russia>.

33. Angela Stent, *Putin's World: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*, (New York, NY: Hachette Book Group, 2019), 137.

34. Eugene Rumer and Richard Sokolsky, “Thirty Years of U.S. Policy Toward Russia: Can the Vicious Circle Be Broken,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 20, 2019, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/06/20/thirty-years-of-u.s.-policy-toward-russia-can-vicious-circle-be-broken-pub-79323>.

35. Allen, et al., “Myths and Misconceptions.”

36. Rumer and Sokolsky, “Thirty Years of U.S. Policy.” For example, the U.S. attempt to reset in relations in 2009, a few months after Russian military operations in Georgia, did not prevent the Kremlin from annexing Crimea in 2014. Allen, et al., “Myths and Misconceptions.”

in cooperation. The Kremlin “equates respect and status with power, not with cooperation.”³⁷

RUSSIAN THREATS AND THE GOAL OF THE STRATEGY

According to Putin, at the end of the Cold War the West took advantage of Russia’s temporary weakness to set unjust terms of peace. The post-Cold War architecture has been viewed as detrimental to Russia’s interests and had to be altered. In Putin’s view, the West has tried to impose liberal restructuring inside Russia and its neighboring states with no regard for Russia’s privileged interests.³⁸ The greatest sin of the United States is that it divided the Slavic peoples of the Soviet Union into separate countries and systematically pushed Ukraine to forsake its security and economic cooperation with Russia.³⁹ As Putin noted in 2014, “Russia realized that it was not simply robbed, it was plundered.”⁴⁰

Putin is now openly on a destructive path. Russia’s war in Ukraine has direct and indirect consequences for European prosperity and security and carries the significant risk of escalation. Russia continues its gray zone operations in Ukraine and beyond through cyber attacks and the spread of disinformation.

The United States has major security, economic, and value interests in containing Russian aggressive and coercive behavior, maintaining European security and prosperity, and preserving democratic values and the rule-based international order.⁴¹ “The United States fought three wars – World Wars I, World War II, and the Cold War – to prevent hegemonic domina-

tion of Europe.”⁴² The European decision to abandon aggressive nationalism and drop territorial ambitions made Europe and the United States rich, powerful, and peaceful.⁴³ Casting off over 100 years of successful strategy and allowing Russia to go unchecked would severely damage the transatlantic security and prosperity alliance and undermine principles, such as sovereignty and territorial integrity, of the U.S.-led international system.⁴⁴ Other global competitors, such as China, view the conflict with Russia as a proxy for how the United States would respond to China’s own aggressive and coercive tactics.

The United States and its allies must recognize Russia’s position that it is in a state of perpetual conflict with the West. The Kremlin will perceive almost any action that the West undertakes as evidence that it seeks to deny and undermine Russia’s great power status.⁴⁵ The United States can change neither Russia’s interests nor deeply ingrained views. Washington, therefore, must focus on the strength of its alliances and its ideas to contain and diminish the impact of Russia’s disruptive actions. The aim of this proposed strategy, therefore, is a trans-Atlantic partnership that is more resilient to Russia’s use of aggressive military tactics and active measures, and capable of defending universal principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

DUSTING OFF THE PLAYBOOK AND ADDING SOME NEW PAGES

Kennan, the father of containment policy, famously argued that the paranoia and insecurities of Stalin’s regime – like fears of Putin’s Russia – represented a danger to the West and called for consistent and forceful counterpressure.⁴⁶ Kennan wrote that

37. Ibid.

38. Michael McFaul, “Vladimir Putin Does Not Think Like We Do,” *Washington Post*, January 26, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/01/26/vladimir-putin-does-not-think-like-we-do/>.

39. Ukraine, as the purported cradle of Russian nationhood with “deep cultural, religious, and linguistic ties to Russia,” holds special significance to Russia’s collective identity. Ukraine, it is argued, is part of a thousand-year-old Russian Orthodox civilization with ties far deeper than any “artificial” construction of national identity. Eugene Rumer and Andrew S. Weiss, “Ukraine: Putin’s Unfinished Business,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, November 12, 2021, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/11/12/ukraine-putin-s-unfinished-business-pub-85771>; Tatiana Zhurzhenko, “A Divided Nation? Reconsidering the Role of Identity Politics in the Ukraine Crisis,” *Die Friedens-Warte* 89, no. ½ (2014), 259, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24868495?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

40. Vladimir Putin, Address by the President of the Russian Federation, March 18, 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>.

41. For purposes of this article, a “major” interest was one in which the state would be weakened if it did not act. By contrast, a “vital” interest was one in which the State would bear nearly any cost and take nearly any risk, including war, to address. Stephen Heffington *et al.*, ed., *A National Security Strategy Primer*, (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2021), 11-12.

42. Luke Coffey, “U.S. Leadership Needed in Defense of Ukraine and Transatlantic Security,” *The Heritage Foundation*, April 6, 2021, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/us-leadership-needed-defense-ukraine-and-transatlantic-security>.

43. “U.S. companies do billions of dollars of business in Europe; U.S. leaders have long been able to count on European support all over the world, in matters economic, political, scientific and more.” Anne Applebaum, “Yes, Rex Tillerson, U.S. Taxpayers Should Care About Ukraine: Here’s Why,” *Washington Post*, editorial, April 14, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/us-taxpayers-should-care-about-ukraine-heres-why/2017/04/14/7c628bfa-2082-11e7-ad74-3a742a6e93a7_story.html.

44. Andrew C. Kuchins, “U.S. Credibility at Stake in Ukraine,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, March 3, 2014, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/us-credibility-stake-ukraine>; Ulrich Speck, “Russia’s Challenge to the International Order,” *Carnegie Europe*, August 13, 2015, <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2015/08/13/russia-s-challenge-to-international-order-pub-61059>.

45. Allen, *et al.*, “Myths and Misconceptions.”

46. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/1947-07-01/sources-soviet-conduct>; Daalder, “The Return of Containment.”

Russia's hostility was born of insecurity but would respond to the "logic and rhetoric of power."⁴⁷ "[T]he pursuit of unlimited authority domestically, accompanied by the cultivation of the semi-myth of implacable foreign hostility," and the desire for recognition of great power status inevitably places Putin's Russia in conflict with the United States.⁴⁸ The United States must, therefore provide Russia with an "unalterable counterforce at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interest of a peaceful and stable world."⁴⁹

The policy of containment, as originally conceived by Kennan, was premised on the notion that the Soviet Union suffered from internal weaknesses and would ultimately collapse.⁵⁰ The Putin regime possesses its own weaknesses and the logic of today's strategy is the same: the United States and its allies can re-contain Russia through a combination of sustained international pressure in response to Russia's use of aggressive and coercive tactics, the capacity to withstand and blunt the effectiveness of the use of these tactics, and the existence of a more attractive model for the future.⁵¹

Adopting a policy of re-containment is not to suggest a wholesale return to the Cold War. The policy must apply aspects of the Cold War approach and adapt the strategy to the realities of today. Accordingly, this strategy is founded on the following three guiding principles:

Pragmatism. The Cold War theory of containment envisioned an ideological struggle—communism versus capitalism and authoritarianism versus democracy.⁵² Engaging in an ideological struggle with Russia

today risks wasting limited resources on illusory threats around the globe, undermining international cooperation on other issues of security concern to the United States, and alienating some partner nations.

Strength in numbers. The Biden Administration's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance is committed to reinvigorating and modernizing our alliances and partnerships.⁵³ Alliances were a staple of the Cold War. In recent years, however, the United States limited its ability to advance U.S. interests by pulling away from multilateral arrangements.⁵⁴ A broad range of partners is an advantage that Russia does not have. Partners are a force multiplier, help shoulder the burden, and increase the legitimacy of U.S. actions.

Counterterrorism Lessons Learned. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 are often portrayed as merely a failure of information sharing and, while this is partly true, the fundamental problem was government-wide integration.⁵⁵ Since that time, the government has made strides in interoperability, data aggregation, and making connections between disparate pieces of information to develop a common threat picture. The approach taken today by the United States to respond to gray zone threats is decentralized and without a single coordinating body with responsibility for overseeing and driving the overall effort.⁵⁶ Russian gray zone tactics are not new, but technology has dramatically changed the scope, speed, and scale of these activities.⁵⁷ This proposed strategy strives for

47. X (George F. Kennan), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/1947-07-01/sources-soviet-conduct>.

48. *Ibid.*

49. *Ibid.*

50. Daalder, "The Return of Containment."

51. "At the height of the Cold War, in the 1960s and '70s, the Soviet Union was a genuine global power, boasting the largest military in the world, a [Gross Domestic Product (GDP)] about half that of America's, and an empire stretching across Eastern Europe. ... [In 2018], Russia's \$1.58 trillion GDP [was] about the same as that of the greater New York City area, and less than one-twelfth that of the United States. Russia relies heavily on energy exports and faces falling birth rates." Dominic Tierney, "Russia's Strength Is Its Weakness: How Putin Sows Division in America," *The Atlantic*, July 21, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/07/russia-strength-in-weakness/565787/>.

52. This perspective arguably contributed to a failure of assumptions regarding post-Soviet Russia. When the Berlin Wall fell, many scholars heralded the triumph of democracy and assumed that it was inevitable that democracy would take hold in Russia. Unlike the countries of Eastern Europe, the Soviet system was not imposed upon Russia and did not block aspirations for national independence. However, the rejection of communism and the perceived imposition of a Western liberal model was for some is a repudiation of Russia's history and

national character. Alfred B. Evans, "The Failure of Democratization in Russia: A Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 2011, 41 and 47. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1016/j.euras.2010.10.001>.

53. Joseph R. Biden, Jr., "Interim National Security Strategic Guidance," (Washington, D.C.: The White House, March 2021), 10, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf>.

54. For example, the decision to unilaterally depart from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear program "subsequently made European multilateral cooperation to address Iran's broader threat profile, including its use of proxy forces, quite difficult." Dalton et al., "By Other Means Part II," 29.

55. Russel E. Travers, "A Strategic Framework for Addressing the Most Tactical of Problems: It's All About the Bad Guys," (Paper, National Counterterrorism Center, August 2015), 2, https://www.dni.gov/files/NCTC/documents/news_documents/Using_Counterterrorism_Lessons_Learned_to_Address_Other_Transnational_Threats.pdf.

56. Melissa Dalton et al., "By Other Means Part II: Adapting to Compete in the Gray Zone," Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 2019, xvii – xix, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/other-means-part-ii-adapting-compete-gray-zone>.

57. The Soviet Union, for example, had a long running program of "active measures," which used a variety of tactics, including disinformation and election meddling, to undermine perceived threats. In the 1960s, the Kremlin was concerned about the presidential campaign of Senator Barry Goldwater, who held anti-Soviet views. The intelligence services of the former Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union orchestrated a disinformation campaign against Goldwater by planting false articles in foreign newspapers. However, these types

a more integrated approach across the federal government analogous and, therefore, encourages faster decision-making.⁵⁸

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF STRATEGY

The objectives of a strategy, when completed, will achieve the strategy's desired political aim. This strategy of re-containment proposes three main objectives to achieve the aim a trans-Atlantic partnership that is more resilient to Russia's use of aggressive military tactics and active measures, and capable of defending universal principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. These objectives are mutually reinforcing and are as follows:

- detect Russian threats, provide warning, and counter Russian disinformation;
- bolster transatlantic resilience to Russian aggressive and coercive behavior and
- design and articulate a vision for a post-war world that includes Russia.

What follows are some recommended "objective instrument packages" that link the objectives to identified ways (how to proceed) and means (resources and capabilities) required to enact the strategy.⁵⁹ Russia, however, presents a complex challenge. The ways and means identified are not, therefore, exhaustive. Rather the packages are intended to highlight certain areas critical to the approach of this strategy and serve as a guide for future strategists.

1 Objective 1: Detect Russian Threats, Provide Warning, and Counter Russian Disinformation.

Light Up the Gray Zone. Russia has largely dominated the informational aspect of its war with

of operations were limited by the technology of the day. As John Sipher, former head of the Russia desk at the CIA, noted "[b]efore, the Soviets would plant information in Indian papers and hope it would get picked up by [U.S.] papers. Now, because of the technology, you can jump right in." Julia Ioffe, "The History of Russian Involvement in America's Race Wars: From Propaganda Posters to Facebook Ads, 80-Plus Years of Russian Meddling," *The Atlantic*, October 21, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/russia-facebook-race/542796/>; Seth G. Jones, "Russian Meddling in the United States: The Historical Context of the Mueller Report," Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 27, 2019, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/russian-meddling-united-states-historical-context-mueller-report>.

58. Ibid, 40; Sue Gordon and Eric Rosenbach, "America's Cyber-Reckoning: How to Fix a Failing Strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-12-14/america-cyber-reckoning>.

59. Heffington et al., ed., *A National Security Strategy Primer*, 19.

the United States. However, this dominance is not assured. Ukraine was able to effectively wield information in its own defense. The United States confronted the Soviet disinformation. This instrument package suggests five lines of effort to re-contain Russia in the information space: 1) coordinate and synchronize the U.S. approach to gray zone; 2) develop a common information environment; 3) proactive use of information; 4) counter Russian disinformation; and 5) promote truthful information to the Russian people.

Coordinate and Synchronize Approach to Gray Zone. To date, the United States has not formulated a coherent approach to counter gray zone operations. As a former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff lamented, adversaries such as Russia, "unlike us, are able to integrate the full range of capabilities their states possess to advance their interests."⁶⁰ The traditional U.S. mindset in which "we are either at peace or at war is insufficient to deal with that dynamic."⁶¹ For example, regarding cyber activities alone, responsibility is divided among multiple departments and agencies.⁶² The first step in remedying this deficiency is to create a senior director and supporting office at the National Security Council (NSC) with responsibility for overseeing and driving gray zone initiatives.⁶³

In addition, the United States and its allies must move beyond a case-by-case reactive response to gray zone operations.⁶⁴ In coordination with its allies, the United States needs to identify thresholds for actions that will not be tolerated in the gray zone and develop a framework for an appropriate response. Once established this framework must be clearly communicated to Russia and other adversary nations. Not only will this approach speed the decision-making process, but the framework will bolster norm creation in the gray zone and have a deterrent effect.

Develop a Common Information Environment. The fluidity of gray zone threats challenges the intelligence and warning system.⁶⁵ Based on lessons

60. Lyle J. Morris et al., "Gaining Competitive Advantage in the Gray Zone: Response Options for Coercive Aggression Below the Threshold of Major War," RAND, 2019, 2, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2942.html citing Colin Clark, "CJCS Dunford Calls for Strategic Shifts; 'At Peace or at War Is Insufficient,'" *Breaking Defense*, September 21, 2016, <https://breakingdefense.com/2016/09/cjcs-dunford-calls-for-strategic-shifts-at-peace-or-at-war-is-insufficient/>.

61. Morris et al., "Gaining Competitive Advantage."

62. Melissa Dalton et al., "By Other Means Part II," 20. The Department of Homeland Security leads domestic cybersecurity and the Department of State focuses on cybersecurity overseas. Law enforcement and the Intelligence Community and the Departments of Defense, Energy, Treasury, and Commerce also play supporting roles.

63. Ibid, xvii.

64. Morris et al., "Gaining Competitive Advantage in the Gray Zone."

65. Dalton et al., "By Other Means Part II," 43.

learned from the U.S. counterterrorism experience, information integration tools can help analysts “connect the dots” and make sense of seemingly disparate data points.⁶⁶ In the short term, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) can begin by establishing a collaborative gray zone data repository as a resource for identifying and countering Russian malicious activity.⁶⁷ The creation of such a “multi-int” data repository is critical for gray zone awareness and understanding. The repository could serve as a centralized warehouse of intelligence obtained across regional and functional domains, to include information on competitor disinformation, use of social media, and other gray zone activities, as well as analysis of foreign broadcast media outlets and other relevant contextual information. Such a repository is not without precedent in the Intelligence Community (IC). The National Counterterrorism Center serves a similar purpose as the central knowledge bank on known and suspected terrorists and international terror groups, their goals, strategies, capabilities, and networks of contacts and support. The ODNI can also leverage the existing information and expertise of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center and the Cyber Threat Intelligence and Integration Center to aid in identifying Russian malign activities.

A common information environment is also necessary for all actors, including multiple government agencies and our partners and allies, to align and integrate offensive and defensive measures.⁶⁸ Ensuring that our partners understand the threat posed by Russia also builds multilateral cohesion. To this end, the ODNI can lay the foundation of this process by negotiating intelligence sharing arrangements with U.S. partners and allies.

Use Information Proactively. The use of transparency as a tool to combat Russian gray zone activities is underutilized.⁶⁹ In an authoritarian regime transparency is non-existent, while transparency

reflects U.S. values and adds credibility to the U.S. narrative.⁷⁰ The Department of State (DoS), through the Global Engagement Center (GEC), needs to lead a more robust U.S. public messaging campaign to expose disinformation and other Russian gray zone activities. This information can also be used to “name and shame” coercive behavior in multilateral fora such as the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.⁷¹

When possible, public messaging will start prior to Russia’s initiation of the identified malicious activity. The United States has used this tactic to great effect in Ukraine, where the U.S. intelligence was released in detail and in advance of Russian actions.⁷² Intelligence sharing in this manner aides in building coalitions opposed to Russian activity and keeping the Kremlin off balance. Additionally, proactive U.S. action inoculates the world against Russian disinformation by getting the truth out first.⁷³ Research suggests that the first mover with information tends to have the advantage, once lies are believed they are harder to debunk.⁷⁴ However, the benefits of this tactic in a particular case, must be weighed carefully against the costs. Revealing intelligence potentially jeopardizes the source or method of the collection. In addition, intelligence successes can be misconstrued as failures.⁷⁵ For instance, had Russian leadership decided not to invade following the intelligence disclosures, many would have assumed the intelligence was wrong and not that the disclosure altered Putin’s plans, potentially undermining U.S. credibility in the future.⁷⁶

Counter Disinformation. The hallmark of Putin’s tenure has been an increase in the sophisticated use

...proactive U.S. action inoculates the world against Russian disinformation by getting the truth out first. Research suggests that the first mover with information tends to have the advantage; once lies are believed they are harder to debunk.

66. Ibid.

67. For purposes of this strategy, the short term equates to six months to a year; the medium term to a year to five years; and the long greater than five years.

68. Dalton et al., “By Other Means Part II,” 42.

69. Ibid, 34.

70. Ibid.

71. Dalton et al., “By Other Means Part II,” 13.

72. Amy Zegart, “The Weapon the West Used Against Putin,” *The Atlantic*, March 5, 2022, https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/03/russia-ukraine-invasion-classified-intelligence/626557/?utm_term=.social&utm_source=facebook&utm_content=edit-promo&fbclid=IwAR31hfdgEdULiiCcpjmqDk4FmJSuzwJbHljwcizKKpJRjZFXR7dKAfY3k; Douglas London, “To Reveal, or Not to Reveal: The Calculous Behind U.S. Intelligence Disclosures,” *Foreign Affairs*, February 15, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-02-15/reveal-or-not-reveal>.

73. Zegart, “The Weapon the West Used.”

74. Ibid

75. Ibid; London, “To Reveal, or Not to Reveal.”

76. Zegart, “The Weapon the West Used.”

and control of information and disinformation as a means of achieving his objective of destabilizing the West and controlling the Russian population.⁷⁷ For Russia, information operations are all-encompassing, and calculated to gain the support of the target populations at home and abroad.⁷⁸ Information warfare, according to Russian doctrine, “must be conducted constantly, in peacetime, in the period of threats... and in wartime” and it must be done “by committing all available forces” and technologies.⁷⁹

In recent years, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) developed capabilities to combat disinformation and election interference.⁸⁰ Building on these gains, CISA must develop a more comprehensive U.S. government approach to Russian disinformation based on successful models implemented by countries like Estonia and Finland.⁸¹ Estonia is on the cutting edge of technology, has similar free speech concerns as the United States, and has been the subject of significant Russian online interference and cyber-attacks.⁸² In 2016, the Estonian State Electoral Office created an interagency task force to combat the influence of false messaging on its democratic process.⁸³ With a relatively small staff and budget, Estonia adopted a coalition approach by engaging partners from other government agencies, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, social media companies, and the press to identify and monitor disinformation and to work with the press to correct false statements.⁸⁴ Finland developed a comprehensive curriculum throughout its education system that helps students improve internet literacy and critical thinking skills.⁸⁵ As President Biden noted in his Interim National Security Strategic Guidance,

77. Deborah Yarsike Ball, “Protecting Falsehoods with a Bodyguard of Lies: Putin’s use of Information Warfare,” NATO Defense College, February 2017, 11-12, <https://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=1017>.

78. Ball, “Protecting Falsehoods,” 10-11, citing Kh. I. Sayfedinov, “Information Operations on the Battlefield,” *Military Thought*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2014, 72.

79. *Ibid.*

80. Gordon and Rosenbach, “America’s Cyber-Reckoning.” For example, CISA’s Mis-, Dis-, and Malinformation (MDM) team is charged with building national resilience to MDM and foreign influence activities. “Mis, Dis, Malinformation,” Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, accessed March 30, 2022, <https://www.cisa.gov/mdm>.

81. Tyler McBrien, “Defending the Vote: Estonia Creates a Network to Combat Disinformation 2016-2020,” *Innovations for Successful Societies*, 2020, https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/sites/successfulsocieties/files/TM_Estonia_Election_FINAL%20edited_JG.pdf.

82. *Ibid.*

83. *Ibid.*

84. *Ibid.*

85. Nada Zohdy, “Inoculating Against Misinformation: Finland’s Efforts to Bring Media Literacy to the Classroom,” *Defending Democracy: Lessons From Around the World*, accessed April 17, 2022, <https://www.defendingdemocracyopengovhub.org/allcasestudies/2015/12/18/finland>.

United States security requires “hard work at home – to fortify the founding pillars of our democracy.”⁸⁶

In monitoring for disinformation, CISA can also leverage the existing resources of the ODNI’s Open Source Enterprise. Open source intelligence (OSINT) has advantages, particularly with regard to information operations.⁸⁷ Increasingly analysts recognize OSINT is not only valuable in augmenting traditional intelligence collection sources, but that OSINT can itself provide valuable insight.⁸⁸ OSINT is also not generally derived from sensitive intelligence collection sources and methods. Consequently, it is not constrained by classification and may be distributed more broadly.

Promote Truthful Information to the Russian People. The Russian government sees itself as increasingly vulnerable to domestic unrest and has shielded Russian citizens from outside voices. Prior to the war in Ukraine, the internet was largely uncensored and provided an outlet for Russians to express dissent and an alternative to state-controlled media.⁸⁹ Following recent protests across the country and an outpouring of opposition from Russians online, the Kremlin has cracked down on independent media.⁹⁰

Nonetheless, the Russians are still seeking alternatives to state-controlled news. In the first three weeks after the invasion, viewership in Russia to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty websites increased to 26 million views, fifty percent more than an earlier corresponding period.⁹¹ These increases were happening despite the sites being blocked within Russia.⁹² Investigations like Alexei Navalny’s “Putin’s Palace” exposé also demonstrate the appetite in Russia for an understanding of the extent of the corruption in Russia.⁹³ Many viewers are getting around Russia’s media censorship through the use of virtual private networks (VPNs) and “mirror sites” that duplicate content but use a different internet address.

Washington must ensure that, in contrast to the Kremlin, Russians are informed of their country’s

86. Biden, “Interim National Security Strategic Guidance.”

87. Harrington and McCabe, “Detect and Understand,” 3.

88. *Ibid.*, 3-4.

89. Troianovski, “Russia Takes Censorship to New Extremes.”

90. *Ibid.*

91. Margaret Sullivan, “The Kremlin Tries to Stifle Radio Free Europe and its Audience Surges,” *Washington Post*, March 27, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/media/2022/03/27/radio-free-europe-russia-ukraine/>.

92. *Ibid.*

93. Anders Åslund et al., “Global Strategy 2022: Thwarting Kremlin Aggression Today for Constructive Relations Tomorrow,” Atlantic Council, February 2022, 27, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/atlantic-council-strategy-paper-series/thwarting-kremlin-aggression-today-for-constructive-relations-tomorrow/>.

actions.⁹⁴ The United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM) through its Office of Internet Freedom and its Open Technology Fund needs to prioritize identifying and funding options for delivering truthful information to Russian audiences.⁹⁵ An example of one such method is an application developed by a team of Polish programmers known as Squad303, which enables anyone to text, email, or phone large numbers of Russian citizens at random.⁹⁶ Digital activists also have had some success getting factual reporting into Russia using ads on social media and other internet applications.⁹⁷

Additionally, “[s]ince 1992, [the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)] has supported the development of professional relationships between Russian and American journalists, publishers, electronic media managers, designers, content developers, advertising specialists and new media practitioners.”⁹⁸ Today, however, most Russian independent journalists have fled Russia.⁹⁹ USAID and DoS, through U.S. embassies abroad, need to leverage and cultivate relationships developed and refocus existing Russia media programs toward the identification and provision of technical support to Russian independent media in exile, which is interested in restarting activities outside of Russia. To the extent necessary, DoS must work with USAID, to ensure that journalists in exile obtain appropriate visas in the United States or partner countries to restart

94. Thomas Kent, “How to Reach Russian Ears,” Center for European Policy Analysis, March 8, 2022, <https://cepa.org/how-to-reach-russian-ears/>.

95. The USAGM’s internet freedom program supports global internet freedom for the expansion of unrestricted access to information on the internet. Over the past seven years, USAGM has invested more than \$100 million in projects to promote internet freedom in the world’s most restricted environments. These programs support the tools and systems necessary for USAGM networks to report and disseminate content in information-restrictive markets, and for USAGM audiences to receive and share content safely online. “Office of Internet Freedom,” U.S. Agency for Global Media, accessed April 6, 2022, <https://www.usagm.gov/office-internet-freedom/>.

96. Yasmeen Serhan, “How Western News is Getting Around Putin’s Digital Iron Curtain,” *The Atlantic*, March 22, 2022, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2022/03/international-news-russia-kremlin-media-censorship/627120/>. Also demand for VPNs in Russia is increasing dramatically since the invasion of Ukraine.

97. For example, in a page out of the Kremlin’s playbook, activists sent push notifications through the Russian pharmacy chain Ozerki’s app. Activists have also been placing reviews of major locations in Russia on Yandex, the Russian equivalent of Google, that provide truthful information related to the invasion of Ukraine. Chris Stokel-Walker, “Activists are Using Ads to Sneak Real News to Russians About Ukraine,” *MIT Technology Review*, March 4, 2022, <https://www.technologyreview.com/2022/03/04/1046794/the-activists-using-ads-to-sneak-real-news-to-russians-about-ukraine/>.

98. “Fact Sheet: USAID in Russia,” USAID, accessed April 6, 2022, <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/usaid-russia>.

99. Maxim Trudolyubov, “Russia’s Journalism is in Exile and Needs Support,” *Wilson Center*, March 17, 2022, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/russias-journalism-exile-and-needs-support>.

operations. Congress should prioritize maintaining, or possibly increasing, the funding existing programs for funding and equipping foreign journalists.

Similarly, since the invasion of Ukraine many highly educated Russians, particularly in the high technology and information technology fields, have fled Russia. Due to restrictions on air travel and visa requirements, Russian émigrés are primarily ending up in Turkey and the countries of the former Soviet Union.¹⁰⁰ Welcoming a portion of these high-skilled immigrants into the United States would help counter the Russian narrative of Western “Russophobia,” encourage brain drain from Russia’s technology and defense industries, and bring additional high-tech skills to the United States. For example, DoS could designate Russians with at least secondary or vocational degrees as a “group of special concern” to grant them Priority 2 designation to access the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, allowing for quicker and more streamlined admission, and the right to look for work in the country.¹⁰¹

2 Objective 2: Bolster Transatlantic Resilience to Russian Coercion

Build Back Better. Re-containment will take time and Russia will continue to wage its war against the United States using all the tools available to it. The United States and its allies must prepare for an extended conflict. This instrument package proposes four lines of effort to build transatlantic resilience: 1) preserve the U.S. partnership advantage over Russia; 2) lawfare; 3) synchronize sanctions and their outcomes; and 4) increase military defensive capability in Europe.

Preserve the U.S. Partnership Advantage. Following the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008, the United States condemned Russia’s actions and

100. RAEK, a Russian technology trade group, estimates that seventy thousand technology workers have fled Russia and it is expected that one hundred thousand more could leave in April 2022. Gian M. Volpicelli, “Russia is Facing a Tech Worker Exodus,” *Wired*, March 23, 2022, <https://www.wired.com/story/russian-techies-exodus-ukraine/>.

101. “Last year, the Biden administration authorized the admission of 125,000 refugees in Fiscal Year 2022, including a ceiling of 10,000 refugees from Europe and Central Asia. On Thursday, the White House said it will now admit up to 100,000 Ukrainian refugees, but it should amend this number to accommodate both Ukrainian and Russian refugees—Ukrainians, of course, because of the grave humanitarian situation, and Russians because of their potential contribution to national interests.” Irina Plaks, “Want to Hurt Putin: Back a Brain Drain From Russia,” *The Atlantic Council*, March 24, 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/want-to-hurt-putin-back-a-brain-drain-from-russia/>.

imposed economic sanctions on Moscow, but little changed.¹⁰² With little resistance from a divided West, Russia continued to pursue an agenda inimical to U.S. interests, including the “the creation of an exclusive sphere of influence in the former Soviet space and opposition to a unified transatlantic community, as well as American efforts to maintain a liberal international order.”¹⁰³ Putin perceived that the West was weak and divided.¹⁰⁴ The United States and its allies simply did not present a sufficiently unified counterforce to blunt Putin’s actions.

While it comes at a considerable human cost, Putin’s invasion of Ukraine led the United States and its allies regroup and begin “to rebuild an international order that just recently looked to be headed for collapse.”¹⁰⁵ The United States, Canada, Australia, the European Union, the United Kingdom, Japan, South Korea, and even Switzerland have worked swiftly and mostly seamlessly to isolate Russia.¹⁰⁶ U.S. allies have proven to be a significant force multiplier to U.S. efforts in support of Ukraine, providing assistance and sharing costs.

While the transatlantic alliance has shown remarkable solidarity in confronting Moscow, there are no guarantees that it will last over the long term.¹⁰⁷ The fallout from the Ukraine crisis will be felt most acutely in Europe and Washington must be cognizant of the concerns of its partners. Close coordination on sanctions, broadening of intelligence sharing, and volunteering to receive more Ukrainian refugees are all ways, in the short term, the United States can demonstrate that it values these partnerships.

The biggest potential source of tension between the United States and its European allies will likely be over energy dependence on Russia. Many European policy makers are rethinking the source of their energy supplies, but more than forty percent of all gas imports to Europe come from Russia.¹⁰⁸ To assist its partners, the United States has increased gas exports to Europe and attempted to find other sources of alter-

native supply from countries such as Qatar.¹⁰⁹ These efforts must continue. Over the long term, additional investment in the infrastructure necessary to receive liquefied natural gas may need to be made.

Conversely, the United States must also look for opportunities to separate Russia from its strongest remaining ally, China or, at least, to continue to put diplomatic pressure on China to prevent it from active assistance to Russia. The two countries are united in pushing back against the U.S.-led international order, as evidenced by a recent joint statement.¹¹⁰ Russia is also assisting China’s rise as formidable power by granting China access to natural resources and military technology.¹¹¹ However, Russian aggression in Ukraine exposed some tension in the relationship. Not only do the two countries have a complicated past, but the countries are also heading in different directions.¹¹² China benefits greatly from participation in the global economy and, as a result, cannot afford substantial disruption or risk sanctions that Russia is experiencing.

Lawfare. The enforcement of principles of international law are an important aspect of containing Russia and maintaining partnerships in opposition to Russian violations. Real restraints in international law are generally weak, but the compliance with international law is important to establishing legitimacy of a state’s actions and maintaining coalitions.¹¹³ The fact that Russia sought to cloak its invasion of Ukraine in legal justifications is evidence of the law’s significance.

While international law was unable to prevent the invasion, international legal institutions are making it difficult for Putin to “muddy the legal waters and keep any remaining allies standing by him.”¹¹⁴ In sharp contrast to Russia’s violation of the rule-of-law, Ukraine sought assistance by taking legal action in various international venues, and there are discussions about establishing war crimes tribunals. Indeed, two of the lawyers that had been defending Russia in cases

102. Rumer and Sokolsky, “Thirty Years of U.S. Policy.”

103. Ibid.

104. Daalder, “The Return of Containment.”

105. Beckley and Brands, “The Return of Pax Americana.”

106. Edward Allen, “Putin’s War Could Save the Global Economic Order,” *Foreign Policy*, March 10, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/10/putin-war-russia-ukraine-economy-trade-effects-sanctions/>.

107. William H. McRaven, Peter Orszag, and Theodore Bunzel, “Made in the Alliance: How to shore up the Foundations of Transatlantic Solidarity,” *Foreign Affairs*, April 20, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/print/node/1128845>.

108. Robbie Gramer, “Europe Isn’t Prepared if Russia Turns the Gas Taps Off,” *Foreign Policy*, January 27, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/01/27/russia-europe-energy-natural-gas-ukraine/>.

109. McRaven, Orszag, and Bunzel, “Made in the Alliance.”

110. Eva Dou, “What is – and isn’t – in the Joint Statement From Putin and Xi,” *Washington Post*, February 4, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/02/04/russia-china-xi-putin-summit-statement-beijing/>.

111. Graham, “Let Russia Be Russia.”

112. Michael Schuman, “China’s Russia Risk,” *The Atlantic*, March 9, 2022, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2022/03/xi-putin-friendship-russia-ukraine/626973/>.

113. Ingrid Wuerth, “International Law and the Russian Invasion of Ukraine,” *Lawfare*, February 25, 2022, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/international-law-and-russian-invasion-ukraine>.

114. Oona A. Hathaway, “International Law Goes to War in Ukraine: the Legal Pushback to Russia’s Invasion,” *Foreign Affairs*, March 15, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-03-15/international-law-goes-war-ukraine>.

before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) related to Crimea resigned, stating that “it has become impossible to represent in forums dedicated to the application of law a country that so cynically despises it.”¹¹⁵

The IC and law enforcement can provide intelligence and forensic support to Ukraine in investigating and documenting war crimes.¹¹⁶ Putin may not ever face trial, but even indirect support for these efforts, highlights the defends the principle that relations between states will be governed by law and not by the balance of power.¹¹⁷ The justification for sanctions is also founded upon Russia’s breach of international law.¹¹⁸

Law is not an obvious instrument of national power, and it has not been traditionally considered an instrument in its own right.¹¹⁹ However, the law can realize objectives that would have been traditionally achieved through military power – without the bloodshed or expense.¹²⁰ In recognition the law’s utility, former U.S. Air Force Judge Advocate General, Major Gen. Charles Dunlap introduced the term “lawfare,” which he defines as a strategy of “using – or misusing – law as a substitute for traditional military means to achieve an operational objective.”¹²¹ Given that Putin seeks to damage international norms and that the West needs to develop and maintain an understanding of how are adversaries are using lawfare, the Department of Justice (DoJ), DoS and DoD need to work with NATO to establish a Lawfare Center for Excellence.¹²²

Similar centers already exist for strategic communications (Riga, Latvia), cyber defense (Tallin Estonia), and energy security (Vilnius, Lithuania).

Additionally, international cooperation for developing cyber norms also has been proceeding for more than two decades.¹²³ A number of working groups have created a framework that was later endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly. These groups strengthened the consensus that international law applies to cyberspace and is essential for maintaining peace and stability.¹²⁴ As two former senior Pentagon officials noted “[i]f U.S. allies and partners support cyber norms, they are more likely to be more willing to support imposing costs on violators, thus substantially improving the credibility, severity, and sustainability of U.S. threats to impose costs in response to violations.”¹²⁵ DoS needs to prioritize creating norms related to gray zone activities, starting with activities cyberspace, with the near term goal of establishing bilateral and multilateral understandings among U.S. allies.

Synchronize Sanctions and Their Outcomes. It is difficult to imagine additional economic pressure that could be levied on Russia.¹²⁶ The United States, Canada, Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, the European Union (EU) and others unleashed an unprecedented series of economic sanctions against Russia, including banning select Russian banks from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT) international payment messaging system. To date over 300 Western companies withdrew from Russia and thirty-six countries closed their airspace to Russian aircraft.¹²⁷ Coordinated export controls cut Russia off from imports of semiconductors, oil extraction equipment, aircraft

115. Ibid. On March 17, 2022, the ICJ released an order that did not find credible Russian claims of genocide in Ukraine and ordered that “[t]he Russian Federation must suspend the military operations that it commenced on 24 February in the territory of Ukraine.” International Court of Justice, “Allegations of Genocide,” (Ukraine v. Russian Federation).

116. The United States provided intelligence support the International the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Allison Carnegie and Austin Carson, “Incriminating Intelligence: The Strategic Provision of Evidence in War Crimes Tribunals” (October 24, 2018), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3272493. Support to the International Criminal Court, however, presents challenges for the United States due in part to certain jurisdictional concerns.

117. Anthony Dworkin, “International Law and the Invasion of Ukraine,” European Council on Foreign Relations, February 22, 2022, <https://ecfr.eu/article/international-law-and-the-invasion-of-ukraine/>.

118. Ibid.

119. Tami Davis Biddle, “Strategy and Grand Strategy: What Students and Practitioners Need to Know,” (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, December 2015), 35, <https://publications.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/2374.pdf>; Jeremy S. Weber, “Playing the MIDFIELD: It’s High Time to Recognize Law as an Instrument of National Power,” *JAG Reporter*, November 4, 2019, <https://www.jagreporter.af.mil/Post/Article-View-Post/Article/2548732/playing-the-midfield/>.

120. Orde F. Kittrie, *Lawfare: Law as a Weapon of War*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 2-3.

121. Ibid.

122. Mark Voyger, “Waging Lawfare: Russia’s Weaponization of International and Domestic Law,” Marshall Center, January 2020, <https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/concordiam/perspectives-hybrid>

-warfare/waging-lawfare.

123. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “The End of Cyber-Anarchy: How to Build a New Digital Order,” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2021-12-14/end-cyber-anarchy>.

124. Ibid.

125. Ibid.

126. See Chad P. Brown, “Russia’s war on Ukraine: A sanctions timeline,” Peterson Institute for International Economics, March 14, 2022, <https://www.pie.com/blogs/realtime-economic-issues-watch/russias-war-ukraine-sanctions-timeline>. As of March 8, 2022, Russia was subject to a total of 5,532 sanctions, in contrast to 2,754 prior to the February 22 invasion.

127. Jeffrey Sonnenfeld et al., “Over 450 Companies Have Withdrawn from Russia – But Some Remain,” Yale School of Management, March 29, 2022, <https://som.yale.edu/story/2022/over-300-companies-have-withdrawn-russia-some-remain>; Jennifer Trock, “U.S. Government Blocks Russian Aircraft from Using U.S. Airspace,” Baker McKenzie, March 2, 2022, <https://sanctionsnews.bakermckenzie.com/u-s-government-blocks-russian-aircraft-from-using-u-s-airspace/>.

parts, and telecommunications and other high-tech products.¹²⁸

Sanctions, however, are a means, not an end, and to be effective require calibration – an area in which the United States does not have a particularly good track record. An individual sanction or category of sanctions must be tied to a specific misbehavior; Moscow must understand what is required to have that sanction lifted, and, we must lift the sanction if the behavior changes.¹²⁹ If the Kremlin believes that sanctions will remain in place no matter what action it takes, there is no incentive to change behavior and the power of any future sanction is reduced and becomes merely punishment.¹³⁰

The Department of the Treasury (DoT), in coordination with DoS, needs to tie existing sanctions to specific outcomes and work to create a standing committee with our allies to coordinate and, where possible, reach consensus on the application and removal of sanctions. As the Ukraine crisis demonstrates, coordination with our allies dramatically enhances the effectiveness of sanctions, both in terms of the message sent and the economic impact.¹³¹

Finally, the U.S. Congress must be a partner in the executive branch sanction strategy.¹³² The Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act allows Congress to block the lifting of sanctions.¹³³ Despite the politically polarized environment, Congress is remarkably united and consistent in its bipartisan support for Ukraine.¹³⁴ The Administration should take

advantage of this focused bipartisanship to increase support for the overall strategy toward Russia, particularly with regard to sanctions policy.¹³⁵

Increase Military Defensive Capability in Europe. Ukraine is on the frontlines in the struggle for self-determination, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. Since Putin's invasion, arms transfers to assist the Ukrainians have been pouring in. More than 20 countries are sending weapons and equipment to Ukraine, including Germany, in a stunning reversal of a longtime policy.¹³⁶ As of early March 2022, the United States alone committed \$1 billion in arms to Ukraine.¹³⁷ These arms transfers serve two important purposes: 1) they increase the cost of Russian aggression without the United States or NATO risking direct escalation between nuclear armed powers; and 2) they give the Ukrainians a chance to repel the Russian advance, or if unsuccessful, carry out an insurgency in an occupied Ukraine.¹³⁸

As the conflict persists, the pressure on the United States and its allies to do more increases. On March 11, 1941, when faced with similar circumstances, the U.S. Congress enacted the Lend-Lease bill. Under this legislation, the United States, as the "arsenal of democracy," provided the United Kingdom with the means to continue the fight for its very existence.¹³⁹ The Administration can explore with Congress a revived lend-lease program for the provision of the weaponry and supplies, such as food, fuel, and medicine, that Ukraine needs.¹⁴⁰ In the interim, the Department of Defense (DoD) and USAID must continue to work with our NATO allies to establish a logistics system to provide consistent security and humanitarian aid flows into Ukraine.

128. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/10/putin-war-russia-ukraine-economy-trade-effects-sanctions/>

129. Steven Pifer, "Managing U.S. Sanctions Toward Russia," Brookings, December 11, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/12/11/managing-us-sanctions-toward-russia/>.

130. *Ibid.*

131. *Ibid.*

132. *Ibid.*

133. Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, Public Law 115-44, 115th Cong., 2d sess. (August 2, 2017), <https://www.congress.gov/115/plaws/publ44/PLAW-115publ44.pdf>.

134. U.S. Library of Congress, CRS, Ukraine: Background, Conflict with Russia, and U.S. Policy, by Cory Welt, CRS Report R45008 (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, October 5, 2021), 32-33, https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/2021-10-05_R45008_d24c3f94064fd96b1a1b4728a81e0a73fbfdacdb.pdf; "America is Uniting Against Vladimir Putin," *The Economist*, February 5, 2022, <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2022/02/05/america-is-uniting-against-vladimir-putin>. See also the Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014 Public Law 272, 113th Cong., 2d sess. (December 18, 2014), codified at U.S. Code 22, § 8922 et. seq.; the Support for the Sovereignty, Integrity, Democracy, and Economic Stability of Ukraine Act of 2014, as amended (US Code 22, § 8901 et seq.); the Countering Russian Influence in Europe and Eurasia Act of 2017, as amended (P.L. 115-44, Title II, Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act; U.S. Code 22, § 9501 et seq.); and the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act of 2019, as amended (P.L. 116-92, Title LXXV; U.S. Code 22, § 9526 note). Ukraine-related legislative initiatives in this Congress includes a resolution in the Senate affirms the United States' "unwavering commitment" to support the Ukrainian government's efforts to restore

Ukraine's territorial integrity (S. Res. 360); the Crimea Annexation Non-Recognition Act (H.R.922), the Ukraine Security Partnership Act of 2021 (S. 814); the Ukraine Religious Freedom Support Act (H.R.496, S.1310), and the Restraining Russian Imperialism Act (H.R.3144).

135. It is expected that, given the high level of congressional interest in this area, the synchronization of sanctions will need to be negotiated with Congress. Some categories of sanctions, at least the medium term, may need to be reattained, regardless of Russian actions, to accommodate differing positions amongst Members.

136. Stephen Biddle, "Arming Ukraine is Worth the Risk: the West Can Raise the Cost of Russian Aggression," *The Economist*, March 11, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-03-11/arming-ukraine-worth-risk>.

137. *Ibid.*

138. *Ibid.*

139. Alan Riley, "Ukraine: The Case for a New Lend-Lease," Center for European Policy Analysis, March 8, 2022, <https://cepa.org/ukraine-the-case-for-a-new-lend-lease/>.

140. *Ibid.* Legislation has already been introduced. Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act of 2022, S.3522, 117th Cong., 1st sess., (January 19, 2022), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/3522/all-info#:~:text=Official%20Titles%20as%20Introduced,invasion%2C%20and%20of%20other%20purposes.>

The Ukraine crisis also initiated a renaissance for NATO and a reaffirmation of the alliances greatest responsibility: “to protect and defend territories and populations against attacks and emerging threats and address all challenges that affect Euro-Atlantic security.”¹⁴¹ NATO’s deployment of forces from the NATO Response Force (NRF) to ensure the security of NATO allies was the first time the NRF was used in a defensive manner since its creation in 2002. The United States, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom bolstered troop presence in Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and the Baltics.¹⁴² These deployments are necessary to ensure that NATO can contain the conflict. NATO’s inability to stop Russian expansion would damage its credibility to deter aggression elsewhere, leaving NATO countries where Russia has cultural reach vulnerable to intimidation and attack by the Kremlin.¹⁴³

DoD must work with NATO to reinforce the Suwalki Gap, the sixty miles separating Kaliningrad and Belarus.¹⁴⁴ If Russian and Belarussian forces seized this territory, the Baltic states would be cut off from the rest of NATO.¹⁴⁵ Over the long term, NATO must reassess its current force posture. Decades of sagging investment and long-term engagements such as Afghanistan, have left NATO unprepared for a sustained deterrent presence in the East.¹⁴⁶ NATO members must also consider upgrades to critical infrastructure, e.g. railroads, airfields, roads, to improve NATO’s capacity to rapidly reinforce its troops.¹⁴⁷

3 Objective 3: Develop and Articulate a Vision

Start Small, Think Big. Containment brought the Cold War to an end, only Russia reassert itself as a disruptive power. A re-containment strategy, to break the cycle of conflict, must plan for a future that

141. Rosa Balfour et al., “Russia’s Invasion Changes Everything,” Carnegie Europe, February 25, 2022 <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/86525>.

142. Daalder, “The Return of Containment.”

143. John Raine, “Time for NATO to Find a Way Out of the Escalation Trap in Ukraine,” *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, March 11, 2022, <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2022/03/time-for-nato-to-find-a-way-out-of-the-escalation-trap-in-ukraine>

144. Daalder, “The Return of Containment.”

145. Ibid.

146. Ibid.

147. Ibid. The United States will support independent investment in defense by NATO allies and the European Union, provided that there is coordination with NATO in regard to interoperability and availability for NATO operations. These investments have the potential to allow the United States to use resources elsewhere.

includes Russia. This final instrument package proposes two lines of effort in this regard: 1) articulate an agenda for closer relations with Russia; and 2) open channels of communication and engagement.

Articulate an Agenda for Closer Relations with Russia. In this low point of U.S. – Russia relations, any engagement with Russia and conceiving its place in a new security order in Europe appears distant. However, a Russia that is an economically crippled rogue state with nuclear weapons could pose a significant threat for transatlantic and global security in the long-term. Even as the war in Ukraine wages on, the United States and its allies should allow space for engaging the Russian people where possible, while planning for a time when Russian integration into Europe is a possibility. The President, in coordination with U.S. allies, will articulate an agenda to promote a significant improvement in relations with Russia when Moscow makes peace with Ukraine and turns away from a disruptive foreign policy.¹⁴⁸ A positive agenda will provide a sharp contrast to Putinism.

President Biden has taken an important first step in framing his Russia policy by emphasizing that the conflict is with Putin and not the Russian people.¹⁴⁹ This step plants the seed for changing the widely held perception of the United States as the Russians’ enemy. Washington needs to build on this narrative. The United States must advance measures designed to “condition the Russian government, elites, and people that U.S. intentions toward Russia are not hostile and that good relations with the United States and the West and an opening of the political and economic system would lead to both prosperity and security.”¹⁵⁰ These measures would include, in the short-term, engagement with Russian diaspora and civil society and promoting Russian opposition voices. Over the long term, DoS can develop a plan for sequencing U.S.-Russian people-to-people exchanges.¹⁵¹

148. John E. Herbst et al., “Global Strategy 2022: Thwarting Kremlin Aggression Today for Constructive Relation Tomorrow,” Atlantic Council, February 8, 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/atlantic-council-strategy-paper-series/thwarting-kremlin-aggression-today-for-constructive-relations-tomorrow/>.

149. David J. Kramer, John Herbst, and William Taylor, “Making Putin Pay: How the West Can Push Back Against Russia,” *Foreign Affairs*, February 26, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-02-26/making-putin-pay>.

150. Ibid.

151. This effort will need to overcome significant Russian opposition, as well as potential negative consequences for the participants. Exchanges, therefore, must start small and build progressively. For example, following the invasion of Ukraine, numerous international sporting organizations banned Russian athletes from competing. (See Matias Grez, Patrick Sung, and Wayne Sterling, “These are the Sports That Russia Has Been Suspended From,” CNN, March 7, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/07/sport/sports-russia-banned-from>

Open Channels of Communication and Engagement. With allegations of war crimes in Ukraine mounting, there are significant barriers, both domestically and internationally, to significant dialogue with Russia.¹⁵² A policy of re-containment, however, gives the United States and its allies time to focus on small and incremental steps. Indeed, in the history of U.S.-Soviet relations, periods of confrontation often unexpectedly led to agreements on matters of mutual interest that were key to restoring trust and furthered U.S. interests.¹⁵³ As a starting point, given the proximity of NATO and Russian forces in Eastern Europe, DoS, DoD, and the IC can, work to strengthen and reestablish channels of communication to mitigate against unintended miscalculation. Over the time, DoS needs to seek for opportunities for engagement on issues of national interest to the United States, such as arms control.¹⁵⁴

COSTS AND RISKS OF NEO-CONTAINMENT

While requiring patience, focus, and considerable financial and human resources, the strategy of re-containment comports with U.S. interests and commensurate to threat posed by Russia to transatlantic security and prosperity. It is important to note that re-containment will not immediately end the war in Ukraine.¹⁵⁵ For the time being, the United States has committed to providing Ukraine with the means to defend itself and resist occupation for the foreseeable future, as well as significant economic and humanitarian assistance.¹⁵⁶ The strategy can be implemented concurrently to the pivot to Asia, because

of burden sharing with European allies. Moreover, by investing in developing U.S. capacity to combat Russia in the gray zone, for example, the United States is better prepared to achieve U.S. aims related to other adversaries, such as China.¹⁵⁷

The greatest risk from the strategy is the risk of a military confrontation between the United States or NATO and Russia due miscalculation or perceived provocation. Conflict with Russia also risks escalation to the use of nuclear weapons. According to the Russian military doctrine approved in 2014, “[t]he Russian Federation reserves the right to use nuclear weapons in response to the use of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction against it and/or its allies, as well as in the event of aggression against the Russian Federation with the use of conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is threatened.”¹⁵⁸ An increasingly paranoid Kremlin may feel particularly vulnerable with much of the Russian military bogged down in the conflict with Ukraine, the possibility economic collapse, and domestic unrest.¹⁵⁹ Putin has already threatened the use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine.¹⁶⁰ However, moving to a nuclear exchange with United States, in the absence of a direct military engagement between the two states, “fits neither Putin’s plan to restore the Russian dominion as his legacy, nor the West’s to contain him, nor both sides’ desire to survive.”¹⁶¹ It is likely that Putin used the threat, in this case, to create space to wage a conventional war without a military response from the West.¹⁶² But, while the risk may be low, it is not zero.

Any outcome of the war in Ukraine, in which Ukraine does not maintain its sovereignty, presents

-football-rugby-spt-intl/index.html). Following a resolution to the conflict in Ukraine, U.S. support for lifting this ban could be a potential first step toward further engagement. Arctic visits or scientific exchanges may provide similar opportunities to build upon.

152. The collapse of the brutal Putin regime is a desirable, but not a necessary result of, this strategy. The United States, however, must be prepared for an opportunity engage with Russia at such a time when Putin departs office, regardless of whether Putinism lives on. When Putin leaves office, “the country is unlikely to emerge as a pro-Western democracy.” The circle of Russian leadership close to Putin “cling[s] to the conviction that to survive, their country must be a great power . . . and they are prepared to endure great ordeals in pursuit of that status.” The United States should, therefore, presume that Putinism will likely survive in some form. In the Cold War, containment was directed at the Soviet Union not the leadership. When Stalin died, the United States refused to consider a détente, even though Winston Churchill supported it. This may have been a missed opportunity for productive engagement. Fix and Kimmage, “What if Russia Looses”; Thomas Wright, “How to Contain Russia Without a New Cold War,” Brookings, February 24, 2015, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2015/02/24/how-to-contain-russia-without-a-new-cold-war/>.

153. Wright, “How to Contain Russia.”

154. Ibid.

155. Daalder, “The Return of Containment.”

156. Ibid.

157. China, like Russia, recognizes that war against the West would no longer be defined as “using armed force to compel the enemy to submit to one’s will,” but would use “all means, including armed force or non-armed force, military and non-military, and lethal and non-lethal means to compel the enemy to accept one’s interests.” Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, (Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, February 1999).

158. Azriel Bermant, “We Need to Talk About Nuclear Weapons Again,” *Foreign Policy*, March 7, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/07/putin-russia-war-ukraine-nuclear-weapons-deterrence/>.

159. Max Fisher, “As Russia Digs In, What’s the Risk of Nuclear War: It’s Not Zero,” *New York Times*, March 16, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/16/world/europe/ukraine-russia-nuclear-war.html>.

160. Ibid.

161. Raine, “Time for NATO to Find a Way Out.” Indeed, Putin may be looking for a way to deescalate in Ukraine. On March 29, 2022, the Russian Ministry of Defense announced that “the goals of the ‘first stage of the operation’ had been ‘mainly accomplished,’ with Ukraine’s combat capabilities ‘significantly reduced,’ and that it would now focus on securing Ukraine’s eastern Donbas region, where Russia-backed separatists have been fighting for eight years.” Anton Troianovski, Michael D. Shear, and Michael Levenson, “Russia Signals Redefined Goals in Ukraine War as Its Advances Stall,” *New York Times*, March 25, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/25/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-goals.html>.

162. Ibid.

risk to the strategy. Russian aggression against Ukraine constitutes a fundamental challenge to the post-Cold War security order.¹⁶³ A victory in Ukraine would embolden Russia, and provide Putin with a new platform to sow further destabilize nations at NATO's doorstep.¹⁶⁴ The Russian definition of sovereignty would prevail at least on Russia's periphery. Countries from Azerbaijan to Estonia, shaken in their faith in United States and NATO, could conclude that they must reach an accommodation with Russia.¹⁶⁵ The corresponding increase in the Kremlin's power would open the door to the spread Russian influence across Europe.¹⁶⁶ Fortunately, however, the unanimity of the international community and the efforts to isolate and impose significant costs on Russia, mitigate against the possibility of a decisive victory for Putin.

Finally, this strategy of containment will likely take time. The Soviet Union took decades to collapse. As the war in Ukraine and the campaign against Russia grinds on, oil prices and inflation will test international and domestic unity. However, Russia is more fragile than the Soviet Union and current efforts to curtail Putin's aggression enjoy wide bipartisan support in Congress, with our allies, and with the American people. The strategy maintains this support through robust diplomatic and public engagement concerning the Russia threat.

CONCLUSION

Putin's invasion of Ukraine is an inflection point for the United States and the West. A deeply polarized United States, the resurgence of nationalist politics, and fractured alliances heralded the decline of the U.S. led international order.¹⁶⁷ Putin sensed weakness, but he was wrong. In response to the most significant act of aggression seen on the European Continent since World War II, the United States rallied its partners – both democratic and non-democratic – in defense of

163. Steven Pifer, "Why Should the United States be Interested in Ukraine," Brookings, April 12, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/04/12/why-should-the-united-states-be-interested-in-ukraine/>.

164. Liana Fix and Michael Kimmage, "What If Russia Wins: A Kremlin Controlled Ukraine Would Transform Europe," *Foreign Affairs*, February 18, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-02-18/what-if-russia-wins>.

165. George Friedman, "From Estonia to Azerbaijan: American Strategy After Ukraine," *Forbes*, March 25, 2014, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stratfor/2014/03/26/from-estonia-to-azerbaijan-american-strategy-after-ukraine/?sh=5aeb9f4b6c94>.

166. Ibid.

167. Alexander Cooley and Daniel H. Nexon, "How Hegemony Ends: The Unraveling of American Power," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2020, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-06-09/how-hegemony-ends>.

a simple principle – self-determination. As President Zelensky stated:

Russia has attacked not just us, not just our land, not just our cities. It went on a brutal offensive against our values, basic human values. It threw tanks and planes against our freedom, against our right to live freely in our own country, choosing our own future, against our desire for happiness, against our national dreams.¹⁶⁸

It is imperative that the United States not squander this moment and work together to with its allies to ensure that the Kremlin's aggressive and coercive tendencies are restrained. "The stakes go well beyond the borders of Ukraine."¹⁶⁹

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168. Catie Edmondson, "Annotated Transcript: Zelensky's Speech to Congress," *New York Times*, March 16, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/16/us/politics/transcript-zelensky-speech.html?smid=url-share>.

169. Charles A. Kupchan, "Why Putin's War with Ukraine is a Miscalculation," Council on Foreign Relations, February 24, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/why-putins-war-ukraine-miscalculation>.