

”THE WEAK GET BEATEN”

A study of Russia’s Grand Strategy and Russia-West
relations during the Putin era (2000-2014)

Liva Karen Stang Rugsveen



Master’s Thesis in Peace and Conflict Studies
Department of Archeology, Conservation and History

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

30 October 2015

”The Weak Get Beaten”¹

A study of Russia’s Grand Strategy and Russia-West relations during the Putin era (2000-2014)

¹ Quote by Vladimir Putin after the Beslan hostage attack in 2004. See The Kremlin (President of Russia), “Address by President Vladimir Putin”, September 4, 2004. Retrieved from <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22589> (Accessed 26.09.15)

© Liva Karen Stang Rugsveen

2015

The Weak Get Beaten

A Study of Russia's Grand Strategy and Russia-West relations during the Putin era (2000-2014)

Author: Liva Karen Stang Rugsveen

<http://www.duo.uio.no>

Printed by: Reprosentralen, Universitetet i Oslo

IV

Abstract

This thesis is a study of Russia's grand strategy during the so-called "Putin era" (2000-2014) in the context of Russia-West relations. As relations between Russia and the West have deteriorated during the last year, it is timely and relevant to take a closer look at Russia's dealings with the West in a contemporary historical perspective. The thesis divides the "Putin era" into two periods: 2000-2008 and 2008-2014. By looking at the implemented grand strategy, the study is able to compare these two periods, and identify changes and continuities in the grand strategy.

Strategy is operationalized into 1) ends, 2) appraisal of the strategic environment, and 3) ways and means. After examining these three elements the thesis argues that Russia's grand strategy, after a short period of pragmatism that was perceived to be too submissive, has been implemented as strategies of assertiveness. Assertiveness is identified in Russia's growing confidence, a self-awareness of its own national interests and the importance of protecting and promoting them without dependence or weakness. Russia's ends are three-leveled, and include traditional, regional and global objectives. These show no explicit change during the periods of study. Neither has there been any severe change in Russia's appraisal of the strategic environment or principle perceptions of threats. However, we might identify changes in ways and means. The thesis primarily looks at the diplomatic-political and military instruments, and concludes that the military instrument has gained more importance in Russia's strategy from 2008 – from passive defense to forward defense – within its military strategy of strategic deterrence. Overall, we see continuity in assertiveness, but change in its character as the grand strategy has evolved from *reserved assertiveness* (2003/4-2008) to *active assertiveness* (2008-2014).

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Anders Kjøberg, who has helped, supported and guided me throughout the whole process. Thank you for your constant interest in my work, for your dedication and for always encouraging me. Thank you to my co-supervisor, Hilde Henriksen Waage, for always being helpful and interested in my work – and for being strict, but fair.

I would also like to thank Julie Wilhelmsen, Katarzyna Zysk, Tor Bukkvoll, Kristian Åtland and Una Hakvåg for taking the time to talk and share their knowledge with me. Thank you to Jakub Godzimirski who has made sources available to me. Irina Molberg deserves a huge thank you for translating and verifying Russian sources. I cannot overstate how much I appreciate it, and the thesis would not have been possible without your help. Thank you to Kjetil Enstad at the Military Academy for reading through my draft and for valuable comments. Thank you to Merete Ruud, also at the Military Academy, who proofread the final version of the thesis. Thank you to my employers at the Military Academy, especially Lene Bomann-Larsen, for always giving me time off when I needed it, and for being interested in my study and in my well-being.

A special thank goes to mum and dad for listening to all my complaints. Thank God my sister is a psychiatrist, or else no one would have survived my mood-swings. Especially not her. A huge thank you goes to my roommates for their constant patience and support. I know it has been hard at times. Finally, thank you to “Kick-Ass Kollokviegruppe” for two and half years of happiness at the Peace and Conflict Master’s Program. Without you these years would not have been kick ass at all.

Liva Stang Rugsveen
Blindern, October 26, 2015

Abbreviations

ABM Treaty – Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty

APEC – Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

BMD – Ballistic Missile Defense (System)

BRICS – Association of emerging economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

CFE – Treaty of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe

CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States

CST – Collective Security Treaty

CSTO – Collective Security Treaty Organization

EST – European Security Treaty

EU – European Union

EurAsEc – Eurasian Economic Community

FOI - Swedish Defense Research Agency

FPC – Foreign Policy Concept

G8 – Group of Eight

G20 – Group of Twenty

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GUUAM – Regional Organization including Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Moldova

ICBM – Inter Continental Ballistic Missile

IMF – International Monetary Fund

JTFE – Joint Task Force East

MD – Military Doctrine

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NRC – NATO-Russia Council

NSC – National Security Concept

NSS – National Security Strategy

OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PfP – Partnership for Peace Program
PGS – Prompt Global Strike
PJC – Permanent Joint Council
SCO – Shanghai Cooperation Organization
START – Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
U.S. – United States of America
UN – United Nations
UNSC – United Nations Security Council
USSR – The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WMD – Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO – World Trade Organization

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Overview of the argument: Assertiveness	4
1.2	Literature Review	6
1.3	Delimitations	9
1.4	Structure of the thesis	12
2	Methods and Concepts	13
2.1	Methods: Sources and Methodological Challenges	14
2.2	The Concept of Strategy	19
3	1992-1999: Background: In Search of a Strategy	24
3.1	Strategic Ends: Traditional, Regional and Global	24
3.2	Appraisal of the Strategic Environment	26
3.3	Ways and Means of Strategy: Considerations and Responses	28
3.4	Conclusion	33
4	2000-2008: From Pragmatism to Reserved Assertiveness	34
4.1	Strategic Ends: Traditional, Regional and Global	35
4.2	Appraisal of the Strategic Environment	40
4.3	Ways and Means of Strategy: Considerations and Responses	46
4.4	Conclusion	57
5	2008-2014: Active Assertiveness	59
5.1	Strategic Ends: Traditional, Regional and Global	60
5.2	Appraisal of the Strategic Environment	65
5.3	Ways and Means of Strategy: Considerations and Responses	71
5.4	Conclusion	83
6	Conclusion	85
6.1	Continuity in Strategic Ends and Appraisal of the Strategic Environment	85
6.2	Changes in Ways and Means of Strategy: Considerations and Responses	89
6.3	Assertiveness and what the West should know	91
6.4	Looking forward	92
7	Bibliography	94

1 Introduction

“I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma, but perhaps there is a key. That key is the Russian national interest”
Winston Churchill

Russia, the world’s largest country, a nuclear power, a permanent and veto member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and one of the leading energy producers in the world, plays an important role in international security and stability. Since the end of the Cold War and the devastating 1990s, Russia has recovered impressively and resurged as an independent and powerful actor in global affairs. Today, the relationship between Russia and the West is at its worse since the Cold War. Russia’s annexation of Crimea and the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine has resulted in Western sanctions and a halt in cooperation. Russia allocates more funds to its military than ever before; it has made a habit of provocative military exercises in the Arctic and the Baltic Sea area and increased its war-like rhetoric. Additionally, Russia’s military actions in Syria reflect Moscow’s attempts to expand Russia’s role in international affairs. Seen from the West, Russia has become a bully, who is breaking international rules and norms. Seen from Moscow, Russia is finally responding to threats posed by the West and stepping up after years of Western dominance and encirclement.

Seemingly, Russia’s actions tend to come as a surprise to the West. We did not predict the annexation of Crimea nor the intervention in Georgia in 2008, and we have underestimated the willingness of the Kremlin to oppose Western rules of the game. Arguably, there is a general lack of understanding in the West when it comes to Russia’s actions and choices, and also how our own actions are perceived. Instead, we have come to brush Russia aside as irrational or as a brutal revisionist and authoritarian state. However, in today’s world these approaches are counter-productive. We do not live in a vacuum, but rather in a world where a state’s policies are interactive. The fact that Russia is, and in the nearest future will continue to be, one of the most important players in world affairs, makes it highly necessary for the West to understand Russia’s thinking. Without such knowledge the West will be unable to prepare for or prevent unwanted events.

The point of departure for this thesis is Moscow's own strategic documents and official statements. However, we need to go beyond these documents and statements to also analyze action. What objectives drive Moscow's security and foreign policy? How does Moscow perceive external threats and challenges? How do they respond to threats, and what considerations do they have to make? Answering these questions might make us better equipped to comprehend Russia's logic, and further on what we might expect in the future. Accordingly, understanding the present situation requires knowledge of how it came to be. As Henry Kissinger wrote in his dissertation from 1957: "no significant conclusions are possible in the study of foreign affairs—the study of states acting as units—without an awareness of the historical context".² Thus, when analyzing Russia's security thinking and actions of today, we need to view it in a broader historical perspective. This thesis should have been drawing lines back to the Russian Empire or Soviet Union, but because of the limits of this study, the thesis has chosen a shorter historical time frame. Thus, the thesis will try to examine the Russian-West relationship in a contemporary historical perspective based on Russia's rationalizations and perceptions by answering the research question:

How has Russia's grand strategy been implemented between 2000 and 2014 in the context of Russia-West relations, and what have been the changes and continuities?

When attempting to understand Russia's approach and behavior in relations with the West, it is common to analyze the subject by looking at different aspects of international relations, such as diplomacy, economy, culture, energy and military. However, this thesis attempts to look at Russian behavior through the concept of *strategy*.³ Strategy, defined as the relationship between ends, ways, and means, links all these aspects together, but streamline their purpose. In this sense, it can be used as an analytical tool to detect the overarching theme of foreign and security policy. The conceptual framework applied in this thesis is inspired by John Lewis Gaddis's

² Henry Kissinger quoted in Niall Ferguson, "The Meaning of Kissinger. A Realist Reconsidered", *Foreign Affairs*, September/October Issue, 2015, p. 137

³ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment. A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War*. Revised and expanded edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. viii

analysis of American Cold War strategies, and of Ingrid Lundestad's version of the same framework in her Master's thesis about American post-Cold War strategies.⁴ This thesis will follow the same structure when analyzing Russia's strategy. The framework will be explained in the second chapter. The Russian leadership issues its own strategic document *National Security Strategy to 2020*, and former *National Security Concepts*, which clearly indicates Moscow's claim of a national security strategy. "National security strategy" is synonymous with the more widely applied "grand strategy".⁵ This thesis will mostly use "grand strategy", although it is also relevant to use the term "security strategy" since Russia's overarching strategy towards the international community, and especially the West, is focused on *security*. Yet, Russian understanding of security is broader than the traditional "protection of the population, state sovereignty and territorial integrity against external military threats".⁶ This will be elaborated on in the second chapter.

The thesis has some limitations. Firstly, the subject of study is the Russian state and the Russian leadership. The Russian leadership, meaning the president and his inner circle, is referred to in the text as Moscow, the Kremlin or Russia. The study reviews Russia's strategy in the context of Russia-West relations rather than Russia's global outreach. Whilst the study reviews Russia's general international objectives and sees actions in a broader perspective, it attempts to assess Russian responses in light of perceived threats from the West. Thus, the strategic implementation will be interpreted in a Russia-West prism, which is also appropriate, as the West constitutes Russia's "constituent other" and the most important aspect of Russia's foreign policy.⁷ However, the thesis will not deal with Russia's historical relations with the West, the Russian "idea" of the West or the role of the West in Russia's identity debate.

⁴ Gaddis, 2005; Ingrid Lundestad, *Strategies of Engagement. A Study of U.S. National Security Strategies from the end of the Cold War to the War on Terrorism and their Implications for the Role of NATO*, University of Oslo. Department of Archeology, Conservative and History. Master thesis, Spring 2008.

⁵ Grand strategy, national security strategy and national strategy are synonyms. Joseph R. Cerami, "Introduction" In Cerami, Joseph R. and Holcomb, James F. Jr. (ed), *U.S Army War College Guide to Strategy*, February 2001, p. 1

⁶ John Kristen Skogan, "Sikkerhetspolitiske mål og virkemidler", In Hovi, Jon and Raino Malnes (ed) *Anarki, Makt og Normer. Innføring i internasjonal politikk*. Abstrakt Forlag, Forlag 2, 2011, p. 102-103

⁷ Vera Tolz, *Russia: Inventing the nation*, Hodder Education, London, 2001, p. 69-70

Secondly, when reviewing Russia's grand strategy, the limitations of the thesis necessitate simplifying a more complex reality. Obviously, Russia's strategy includes more than what is analyzed here. The scope of the thesis limits the means of Russian security and foreign policy to mainly political-diplomatic and military instruments. The economic instrument is perceived merely indirectly. Russia's economic relations with the European Union (EU) or specific European countries are left out. Russia's domestic policies, such as crack-down on civil society to avoid internal interference, are also perceived to be outside the scope of this thesis. Thirdly, when analyzing Russia's policies towards the region, meaning the post-Soviet states minus the Baltics, it will also be viewed in a Russian-Western context. This is not always accurate, as Russia's relations with the region include issues isolated from Russia's relations with the West. However, the thesis attempts to include regional matters that seemingly are part of Russia's more overarching strategy.

The introduction chapter will give a short overview of the thesis argument and the concept of assertiveness before reviewing the literature on the subject. Then delimitations on time and actors are discussed, before giving an outline of the thesis.

1.1 Overview of the argument: Assertiveness

After reviewing the Russian leadership's strategic policies and responses the thesis argues that Russia's grand strategy has, after a short period of pragmatism, been implemented as strategies of assertiveness. The thesis analyzes Russia's grand strategy by dividing the years of study into two periods, 2000-2008 and 2008-2014. During the fourteen years of study, there have been continuities in strategic ends and appraisal of the strategic environment. However, we can clearly identify changes in ways and means. The period covered show continuity in assertiveness; but the thesis argues that there have been variations in its character. The assertiveness has gone from *reserved* with a focus on political-diplomatic instruments and regional attention, to *active* with an increased emphasis on the military instrument and a global outlook.

When reviewing the scholarly literature on Russian foreign policy, assertiveness is seldom used as a theoretical or analytical term. It is rather used to

describe a behavior, but without really explaining what it entails.⁸ In the media, the term assertiveness normally looms large when Russia applies military force. In this sense, assertiveness tends to be confused and equated with aggression. However, assertiveness is a behavior that displays independence and strength on behalf of its own interests, without being aggressive. Alastair Iain Johnston is one of the few scholars who have attempted to define assertiveness as a behavior in international relations. Johnston defines assertiveness as “a form of assertive diplomacy that explicitly threatens to impose costs on another actor that are clearly higher than before”.⁹ This definition focus on rhetoric and diplomacy, but in this thesis it is also important to detect assertiveness through actions. Assertiveness is also shown in e.g. military power projections. Additionally, assertiveness is not merely about imposing costs on another actor. Russian diplomatic opposition in the UNSC should not be viewed as directly imposing costs on the West, although the West might perceive it that way.

In this thesis assertiveness is characterized as a behavior towards the West that is self-assured and self-enhancing, confident, independent and determined. Assertiveness, which stems from behavioral psychology, does not refer to a behavior that is confrontational or aggressive, but neither is it passive or defensive.¹⁰ Rather, it is based on the awareness and importance of Russian interests, the ability and willingness to stand firm on demands, and reluctance to being subordinated to others. In this study, assertiveness is analyzed in rhetoric and actions. The factual element of assertiveness is primarily identified in political-diplomatic and military means. The political-diplomatic aspect of assertiveness includes opposition and resistance in political and diplomatic arenas, creations of anti-Western coalitions and flexible partnerships, and containment of the West in the “near abroad”. The military element of assertiveness is reflected in projection of power capabilities related to increased expenditure on defense and military build-up, show of force in new areas, provocative

⁸ See e.g. Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy. Change and Continuity in National Identity*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Third Edition, 2013; Jeffrey Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy. The Return of Great Power Politics*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009

⁹ Alastair Iain Johnston, “How New and Assertive Is China’s New Assertiveness?”, *International Security* 37:4, Spring 2013, p. 8

¹⁰ Behavioral psychology separates between passive – assertive – aggressive – passive aggressive behavior.

exercises, and a willingness to use force to obtain strategic objectives. Additionally, Moscow's assertive rhetoric, including official documents, speeches and articles, creates the framework for interpreting political and military activities. Through statements Moscow might profess power, legitimize strategic responses externally and internally, and signal strategic priorities to the West.

1.2 Literature Review

The literature on Russian foreign and security policy and Russia-West relations is vast and deals with several different aspects. One part of the literature gives an overview of Russia's relations to the outside world. More specific literature includes Russia's relations with specific actors and areas, in particular the West, as well as the former communist region. The majority of the literature deals with the sources of Russian foreign policy, such as history and identity, as well as internal political factors.¹¹ Although this is a major focus in the Western academia, the thesis will not focus on any constructivist analysis of Russian identity or deeper historic background. This is outside the scope of this thesis.

Relevant for this study is the overview literature on Russia's foreign policy from 1990s onwards.¹² These contributions deal with Russian foreign policy in relations with the West, as well as Russia's general international outlook, policies towards Asia and bilateral relationships in the region, etc. However, the majority of this literature tends to view Russia's foreign policy as mainly policies towards the West, as they argue that Russia's dealings with other parts of the world tend to be conditioned upon the state of relations with the Western community. The overview literature emphasizes shifts and continuities in Russian foreign policy approaches. Examples are Jeffrey Mankoff, who discusses Russia's great power ambitions and

¹¹ See an overview of the literature on Russia-West relation at Oxford Bibliographies: Dimitry Gorenburg, "Russia and the West", Oxford Bibliographies, <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756223/obo-9780199756223-0116.xml?rskkey=NhcRgt&result=106> (Accessed 17.10.15)

¹² Dimitri V. Trenin, *Getting Russia Right*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007; Tsygankov *Russia's Foreign Policy. Change and Continuity in National Identity*, 2013; Robert Legvold (ed), *Russian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century & the Shadow of the Past*, Columbia University Press, 2007; Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noguee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia. Changing systems, enduring interests*, M.E Sharpe, Inc. New York 2005; Bobo Lo, *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy*, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2003; Bobo Lo, *Russia's and the New World Disorder*, Chatham House, London, 2015; Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy. The Return of Great Power Politics*, 2009

argues that they are the driver of Moscow's conduct of affairs. Mankoff identifies a continuity in great power thinking and ambitions from Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov during the 1990s, up to 2008 when he claims Russia resurged as a great power. Thus, Mankoff argues that there is a clear continuity in Russia's thinking about the outside world, in particular towards the West. Andrei Tsygankov on the other hand, reviews changes in Russian foreign policy approaches and emphasizes pragmatism rather than rigidity. He divides Russian policies into periods constituting different approaches: great power balancing (1990s), pragmatic cooperation (2000-2004), great power assertiveness (2005-2009) and search for a new direction (2010-2012). What is lacking in the more general overview literature, are the more current Russian policies, such as the Ukrainian crisis. When the thesis attempts to analyze Russian strategic policies and the relations with the West, including the events of 2014 is vital.

Additionally, none of these above-mentioned contributions apply grand strategy or national security strategy as concrete concepts. One of the reasons is that Russian security and foreign policy is quite pragmatic and complex, and it is hard to concretely categorize it as it is difficult to know what Moscow is actually thinking. Additionally, Russia does not apply a specific concept on its own security strategy; such as NATO or the U.S. have tended to do. However, according to the political scientist Henrikki Heikka, grand strategy is scarcely studied because the term often is perceived to refer to a geostrategic grand plan. Accordingly, this might give associations to Cold War simplifications, such as "drive to the West" or "drive to the sea."¹³ Additionally, policy researchers are, according to Heikka, not used to studying how the elite perceives abstract structures, such as security dilemmas or the offense-defense balance, or how this is conditioned by historical context. Instead, analysts tend to study state-to-state relations, and mostly in a short time frame.¹⁴ But obviously, the analysis of specific events and Russian foreign policies is also part of Russia's grand strategy.

¹³ Henrikki Heikka, "The Evolution of Russian Grand Strategy – Implications for Europe's North", POLSIS, University of Birmingham, 2000, p. 4, <http://www.bits.de/EURA/heikka.pdf> (Accessed 07.05.15)

¹⁴ Heikka, 2000, p. 5

Some authors apply the term grand strategy. Within the strategy literature, there are those who argue that Russia does not even have a grand strategy. These scholars emphasize Russia's resources and argue that Russia is not capable or strong enough to have a long-term plan.¹⁵ In this sense, there is no clear logic behind Moscow's actions. Celeste Wallander, for instance, argues that Russia's grand strategy is "neither grand, nor strategic, nor sustainable."¹⁶ These authors tend to view Russia's domestic power, which is considered to be deteriorating in terms of economy and demography, as the prime weakness of the Russian state. On the other hand, there are those who clearly see a coherent Russian strategy. However, these authors view Russia's strategy as primarily antagonistic, neo-imperialist and anti-Western.¹⁷ Some of these scholars claim that Moscow's ambition is to restore the Soviet Union or the Russian Empire. One example is Edward Lucas, former *Economist* correspondent, who tends to warn of a new Cold War. Lucas regards Moscow's policies as dangerous and aggressive towards the West.

However, these scholars are too skeptical in their view of Russia. As for the first group, Russia has managed to consolidate its power and acts as an important player in world affairs. Although Russia's future prospects might seem bleak, they have managed to implement a real strategy, which will be discussed in this thesis. As for the scholars afraid of Russian neo-imperialism, they generally perceive Russia as an offensive actor. However, they totally ignore Russia's defensive behavior and that Russia's policies have not in general been anti-Western, or at least not until now (2014-2015). Additionally, these critics hardly try to view Russian rationalizations and actions from Russia's point of view. They clearly write with a Western agenda and as policy recommendations, which limits their objectivity.

Those who try to articulate an understanding of Russian strategy based on a more objective viewpoint normally refers to Russia's ambition of great power status

¹⁵ Alexander J. Motyl and Rajan Menon, "The Myth of Russian Resurgence", *The American Interest*, 2:4, 2007; Celeste A. Wallander, "Russia: The Domestic Sources of a Less-than-Grand Strategy", In Tellis, Ashley and Michael Wills (ed). *Strategic Asia 2007-08. Domestic Political and Grand Strategy*, The National Bureau of Asian Research, Washington, 2008, p. 139-176

¹⁶ Wallander, 2008, p. 140

¹⁷ Edward Lucas, *The New Cold War. How the Kremlin Menaces both Russia and the West*, Bloomsbury, London, 2008. Marcel H. Van Herpen *Putin's Wars. The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2014.

and rise in the international arena. Ingmar Oldberg characterizes Russia's grand strategy as a Great Power strategy. By analyzing different means and aims, he concludes that Russia's strategy is pragmatic and flexible.¹⁸ In a journal article, Andrei Tsygankov also applies grand strategy in his analysis of Russia's foreign policy. He argues that the core of the strategy is creating flexible international coalitions to rise as an influential player in world affairs.¹⁹ Similarly, Heikka argues that Russia's grand strategy stems from Russia's responses to its declining position in the international system. Heikka claims that the main components of Russia's grand strategy are a striving for regional hegemony and an increase in global influence by multipolar balancing.²⁰ These scholars mainly emphasize the overarching political element rather than the security element of grand strategy. As they do not include perceptions of threats or Moscow's responses to these threats, it makes their analysis more general.

This thesis aims to be a contribution to the overview literature about Russia's foreign, but in particular, security policy development, and to the less extensive strategy literature. This thesis will also rely on Russian sources, such as strategic documents and public statements when analyzing the implemented strategy, which is an attempt at analyzing Russian strategy based on Moscow's perceptions and rationalizations.

1.3 Delimitations

The time period selected is characterized as the "Putin era" between 2000-2014. These fourteen years include the two first presidential periods of Vladimir Putin (2000-2008) and the first and only presidential period of Dimitry Medvedev (2008-2012). Medvedev's presidential term is considered to be part of the "Putin era" as Putin continued as prime minister during Medvedev's presidency. Many scholars have characterized the Medvedev rule as a tandem rule, where Putin seemingly still

¹⁸ Ingmar Oldberg, *Russia's Great Power Strategy under Putin and Medvedev*, Swedish Institute of International Affairs, No. 1 Occasional Paper, 2010, <http://www.ui.se/upl/files/44240.pdf>

¹⁹ Andrei P. Tsygankov, "Preserving Influence in a Changing World: Russia's Grand Strategy", *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 58, No. 1, March-April, 2011, pp. 28-44.

²⁰ Heikka, 2000

remained in charge of Russia's decision-making.²¹ In 2012, Putin returned to the presidential seat for a third term, while Medvedev became prime minister. The end point for this study is 2014, although the "Putin era" continues in real life. Potentially, in the future, the period selected might be considered the *first* period of the "Putin era". After changing the length of the presidency from four to six years, Putin may be in office until 2024.

The Russian Federation is the subject of the study. By referring to the period of study as the "Putin era", this clearly implies a huge role and significance of one person, Vladimir Putin. The President is the prime actor in Russia's decision-making and plays a vital role in Russian strategy making, as he is head of state, supreme commander-in-chief and holder of the highest office within the Russian Federation. Russia has, according to many experts, a czarist and authoritarian political system where all major decisions are taken by one institution, the presidency.²² The presidency, known as the Kremlin, is the inner circle existing around the president and constitutes the Russian leadership. Thus, the president is not alone in strategic decision-making or in its implementation, although he holds the highest authority. In this thesis, the Kremlin or Moscow refers to the Russian leadership, and includes the prime ministers, the inner circle of ministers and advisors, in particular from the military and security establishment. The term the Kremlin/Moscow implies unity, which avoids the inner debate. Thus, this thesis will not deal with internal decision-making processes or the internal power battle. Moreover, it will not dwell on the different foreign policy approaches within the Russian leadership.²³

In this thesis, the *West* is the central object of Russia's strategy. The West is not a de facto actor or a real entity, but the thesis chooses to simplify for analytical purposes. The West is a collective term for like-minded countries gathered in the same institutions and based on the same norms, such as liberal democracy, human rights, and market economy. These states also constitute a security community, which means

²¹ Lukáš Tichý, "Security and Foreign Policy of Dimitry Medvedev in the Period of 2008-2012", *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 27:4, 2014, p. 534

²² Trenin, *Getting Russia Right*, 2007, p. 9

²³ Russian foreign policy directions towards the West or the East are widely discussed in the Western literature. The internal debate about Russia's foreign policy directions and identity is commonly divided into three groupings: Westernizers, Slavophiles, Eurasianists. See Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy. Change and Continuity in National Identity*, 2013

that they normally promote the same ideals in foreign and security policy and are unlikely to go to war against each other.²⁴ In this thesis, the focus is on the historical and traditional West, related to the Western bloc during the Cold War. The West characterizes Western Europe, North America and Australia. Although the West has included new member states in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EU, the term does not include the former Soviet Union states or states from the former Eastern bloc. In Russia's view, the main force of the Western community is the United States. When this thesis deals with traditional security, the West is considered to be NATO and the U.S. When it deals with values, such as democracy promotion and human rights, the term encapsulates the whole community, including the EU. The thesis will be specific when a country or institution is referred to, but use the West when referring to the whole community as a unit.

Although Russia and the West are the prime objects of the thesis, the "region" plays an important role as well. The main definition of the region is *the post-Soviet states minus the three Baltic States*. The region includes the Caucasus, Central Asia and three European states Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova, and has been viewed as Russia's near abroad or area of privileged interest. The term does not include former Warsaw Pact members in Central and Eastern Europe. The Russian leadership refers to the region as the CIS region, linked to the organization Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).²⁵ During the collapse of the Soviet Union (USSR), the regional organization CIS was formed as a successor to the USSR, without the Baltic States. Although the ambition was integration, it became a loose association between free and independent states with no specific authority or coherent policy. However, it remains a symbolic entity and a reference point for Moscow.

Additionally, the thesis will discuss Russian policies in relations with the Arctic region. The Arctic is included because it is a region of growing international importance and interest. This is also the region where all of Russia's neighbors are

²⁴ Tormod Heier, "Et innblikk i russisk tenking", In Heier, Tormod and Anders Kjølberg, *Norge og Russland. Sikkerhetspolitiske utfordringer i nordområdene*, Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 2015, p. 41-42

²⁵ The permanent members of CIS: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Turkmenistan is an associated member. Ukraine was a participating member until 2014, but legally not a member. Georgia withdrew its membership in 2009. See The Kremlin (President of Russia), "Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)", Directory and additional information, <http://en.kremlin.ru/catalog/glossary#letter-C> (Accessed 12.09.15)

Western states. For analytical purposes it is also important to include the Arctic, because it is an area where Russia's increased military activity is clearly demonstrated.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

Following the introduction, the second chapter will discuss methods, sources and the conceptual framework for the analysis of Russia's grand strategy towards the West. Then follows the background chapter, reviewing the first period after the collapse of the Soviet Union (1992-1999) when the new Russian leadership tried to consolidate the new state and a new foreign policy. The background chapter will constitute the point of departure and put the Putin period into a context of Russia's post-Cold War strategies. The main analysis of Russia's grand strategy towards the West will be divided into two periods, 2000-2008 and 2008-2014. The fourth chapter covers the first period, Putin's first two presidential terms (2000-2008). The fifth chapter and the second period include Medvedev's only term as president and Putin's third term (2008-2014). The second period has no natural end, as Putin's third term is still ongoing. Thus, the second period ends with the crisis in Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea and the growing conflict with the West. The thesis will not discuss Russia's military actions in Syria. The last chapter sums up and compares the two main chapters, and also includes the 1990s, in order to gain a better understanding of the strategy's continuity and change. Thus, the last chapter concludes the general development and tendencies of Russia's grand strategy in the context of Russia-West relations for the whole post-Cold War period.

2 Methods and Concepts

This thesis is an in-depth analysis of and empirical enquiry into Russia's broader security policy towards the West during a period of 14 years. Because of the lack of sources and the proximity in time, the thesis combines contemporary history and political science in a cross-disciplinary study to be able to examine this complex subject. Historians tend to analyze particularities and small events of the past. However, as the historian Robert Legvold argues, it is also the task of historians to look at the broader lines in history and to simplify a more complex reality.²⁶ This thesis represents the latter approach; to be able to make sense of Russia's strategic rationalization and implementation of strategy, the thesis looks at the broader picture of tendencies and trends. Additionally, according to the historian Marc Trachtenberg, historical interpretation also needs a conceptual core.²⁷ This is not a substitute for the empirical analysis, but rather the "engine of the analysis".²⁸ Thus, the political science element, such as concepts and framework, is treated as an analytical toolbox to bring questions into focus, systematize and structure the study.

In political science terms, the thesis applies a case study research design. A case is a "spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time or over some period of time."²⁹ A case study, an intensive and in-depth study of one single case, is normally meant to shed light on similar cases to explain and understand similar phenomena.³⁰ As this thesis studies Russia's grand strategy, its findings might shed light on similar cases of a state's strategies e.g. towards the West or in general. However, this thesis does not focus on generalizations. It rather tries to explain the specific case of Russia's strategy towards the West during a certain period of time, which is more in line with historical approaches.

²⁶ Legvold, 2007, p. 12-13

²⁷ Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History. A Guide To Method*, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 30

²⁸ Ibid. p. 32

²⁹ John Gerring, *Case study research: principles and practices*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 37

³⁰ Ibid.

2.1. Methods: Sources and Methodological Challenges

The method of the thesis is document study, which is defined as «an integrated and conceptually informed method, procedure, and technique for locating, identifying, retrieving and analysing documents for their relevance, significance and meaning».³¹

The choice of relevant sources is based on the sources reliability and their relevance to the research question.³² As many of Moscow's decision-making and policy documents are classified, the study needs additional sources. Thus, the primary sources are supplemented with secondary literature.

The primary sources include Russia's basic official documents. It is a Russian tradition to express the basic principles of policies in programmatic and officially endorsed documents.³³ These documents express national consensus and are meant to provide guidance to Russian officials, and also signal the course of actions and priorities to international and domestic actors. These documents are publicly available and quite general in their content. This means that controversial elements are not included. The official strategic documents are interlinked. The National Security Concept/Strategy is the overarching security document of the Russian state. It sets the priorities, goals and measures for Russian security policies and assesses internal and external threats to Russian national security. The National Security Concept (NSC) was first issued in 1997.³⁴ The second Concept was published in 2000, and the third and current, now called National Security Strategy (NSS) to 2020, was issued in 2009.³⁵ Derived from the Concept/Strategy is the subordinated Foreign Policy Concept (FPC). The FPC expresses Russia's diplomatic tasks, and sets the agenda for

³¹ David L. Altheide, *Qualitative Media Analysis*, Sage Publications, 2013, p. 5

³² Sigmund Grønmo, *Samfunnsvitenskapelige metoder*. Fagbokforlaget, Bergen, 2004, p. 88

³³ Marcel De Haas, *Russia's Foreign Security Policy in the 21st Century. Putin, Medvedev and beyond*, Routledge, New York, 2010, p. 15

³⁴ Security Council of the Russian Federation, *Kontseptsia natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [National Security Concept of Russian Federation] December 17, 1997. Russian version: *Rossiskaya Gazeta*, December 26, 1997, p. 4-5. English available at the RIA Novosti's Daily Review on January 9, 1998. (Referred to as NSC 1997)

³⁵ Security Council of the Russian Federation, *Kontseptsia natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [National Security Concept of Russian Federation]. Moscow, January 10, 2000. English available at: <http://archive.mid.ru/bdomp/ns-osndoc.nsf/e2f289bea62097f9c325787a0034c255/b8d88f7503bc644fc325752e0047174b!OpenDocument> (Accessed 10.03.15) (Referred to as NSC 2000); Security Council of the Russian Federation, *Strategiya natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii na period do 2020 goda*. Moscow, May 12, 2009. Available in Russian: <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/99.html> (Accessed 02.03.15) (Referred to as NSS 2009)

Russian foreign policy and its relations with international actors. The Foreign Policy Concept has four versions, published first in 1992, 2000, 2008 and the latest in 2013.³⁶ Also derived from the Strategy is the Military Doctrine (MD), dealing with Russian military policy. The doctrine consists of views and measures concerning threats, the nature of modern warfare, military tasks and military planning. The Military Doctrine has been issued in 1993, 2000, and 2010.³⁷ The latest version was revised in 2014 after the Ukraine crisis.³⁸

The security documents are normative sources where the Russian leadership's claims, guidelines and intentions are stated.³⁹ These documents can also be considered as descriptive sources as they describe how the Russian leadership perceives the world and predicts the future. Moreover, these are also performative sources, which means that they are documents meant to be implemented and constitute a parallel to verbal statements.⁴⁰ However, these are not factual descriptions of events.

As I do not speak Russian, I have had to use English translations of the official documents. The FPC 2008 and 2013, and the NSC 2000, are all published in English

³⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Kontseptsia doktrina Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation], Moscow, 2000. Russian available at: <http://archive.mid.ru/B1.nsf/arh/19DCF61BEFED61134325699C003B5FA3> English translation found at: <http://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm> (Accessed 03.03.15); Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Kontseptsia doktrina Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation]. Moscow, 2008 English available at: <http://archive.mid.ru/bdomp/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/869c9d2b87ad8014c32575d9002b1c38!OpenDocument> (Accessed 04.03.15); Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Kontseptsia doktrina Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation]. Moscow, February 12, 2013 English available: <http://archive.mid.ru/bdomp/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/869c9d2b87ad8014c32575d9002b1c38!OpenDocument> (Accessed 03.03.15); (Referred to as FPC 2000, FPC 2008 and FPC 2013). The 1992 version of the FPC is not available in neither Russian or English online.

³⁷ Security Council of the Russian Federation, *Voennaya doktrina Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation], November 18, 1993 p 1, 2 in FBIS-SOV-93-222-S 19 November 1993, p. 1-11 Security Council of the Russian Federation, *Voennaya doktrina Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation], 2000 <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/15386> English available at: https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2000_05/dc3ma00 (Accessed 06.03.15); Security Council of the Russian Federation, *Voennaya doktrina Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation], February 5, 2010, <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/461> English available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf (Accessed 06.03.15) (The Military Doctrines are referred to as MD 1993, MD 2000 and MD 2010)

³⁸ Security Council of the Russian Federation, *Voennaya doktrina Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation], December 26, 2014, <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d527556bec8deb3530.pdf> (Accessed 06.03.15)

³⁹ Pål Repstad, *Mellom nærhet og distanse: Kvalitative metoder i samfunnsfag*, Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 2007, p. 106

⁴⁰ Knut Kjeldstadli, *Fortida er ikke hva den en gang var. En innføring i historiefaget*. Universitetsforlaget, Second Edition, 2013, p. 172

by the Kremlin. The other documents do not have official translations. Thus, I have had to use non-official translations in the thesis. These non-official translations are not a direct source from the Russian leadership, as they are not responsible for the translations. The non-official translation of the FPC 2000 was found at the website of the Federation of American scientists (fas.org), the MD 2000 on armscontrol.org and the MD 2010 on the Russian think tank Carnegie Endowment websites. The non-official English translations have been verified by Irina Molberg, Russian-born and master in English at Stange High School, to correspond with the Russian official sources.⁴¹ Jakub M. Godzimirski at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) made the English translation of the MD 1993 and NSC 1997 available to me. The English version of 1993 was retrieved from Rossiiskie Vesti November 19, 1993, and the English version of the NSC accessed from RIA Novosti's Daily Review on January 9, 1998.⁴² There is no reliable English translation of the Russian National Security Strategy from 2009, which is only published in Russian by the Kremlin. Irina Molberg translated the Russian Security Strategy 2020 into English.

An important point when using translated sources is that translations are never totally accurate, as Russian expressions and terms are different than in English. Thus, we have to be aware that meanings might get lost in the translation. When the Kremlin is not responsible for the chosen words, we have to be careful of words used in the non-official translations. However, as a Russian speaker has verified the English translations, I have decided to use the sources available. Obviously, an important element to strengthen the reliability of the sources is to supplement with other documents published by the Kremlin, such as speeches, transcripts from meetings, and articles from the Russian leadership. These are found in English on the official website of the president of Russia, kremlin.ru, or at the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, mid.ru.⁴³ This is an exhaustive category, but I have attempted to use

⁴¹ According to Princeton University translated original documents are accepted as primary sources. See Princeton University, "What is a Primary Source", <https://www.princeton.edu/~refdesk/primary2.html> (Accessed 16.10.15)

⁴² Godzimirski, Jakub M, Russian sources (mail correspondance). August 28, 2015. Available from liva.rugsveen@gmail.com. See also Godzimirski, Jakub M., "Russian National Security Concepts 1997 and 2000: A Comparative Analysis", *European Security*, 9:4, 2007, 73-91, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09662830008407473> (15.03.15)

⁴³ Mid.ru was upgraded in July 2015. Older MFA posts are found at archive.mid.ru. The thesis has used mostly

sources that deal with specific events, and sources that are relevant to broader strategic thinking and action. This category includes e.g. reports from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as speeches, e.g. the Annual Address to the Federal Assembly and statements on specific events. The Annual Address is mostly for the domestic audience and deals mainly with economy and domestic politics, but it also includes foreign policy aspects and often elaborates on the military capabilities and priorities. As for articles, especially from Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, interviews with news agencies and transcripts of meetings (all published on the websites) are considered valuable sources as they give a clear indication of Moscow's outlook and ambitions. However, a lot of these statements and articles also have a domestic agenda, and they may have been published in the year of election. Thus, we have to keep in mind that a lot of these statements are directed towards the domestic audience and might be exaggerations. Additionally, the Russian leadership never publishes sensitive information or real decision-making documents. What is published is what the leadership has allowed us to see, which leaves room for interpretations and speculations.

Although Russia tends to follow the logic of their documents, I also need to look at de facto action as well. As there are no official documents on Moscow's decision-making or internal political debate, the study needs to use secondary literature, such as books, academic articles, research reports and media articles to analyze Moscow's implemented policies. Within this category, there are Russian scholars and Russian journals, such as *Russia in Global Affairs*, that contribute to the Russian foreign policy discourse. Additionally, almost all sources on Russian military activities and expenditures are classified. Although the Russian leadership might elaborate on priorities and current reform through the Military Doctrine and in transcripts from meetings, the thesis needs to rely on reports from research institutes to get a more reliable source, such as the Swedish Defense Research Agency (FOI) and the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (FFI).

Apart from the Russian language barrier, which also prevents me from looking at the broader security debate and discourse within Russia, there are also other

challenges in the use of both Russian and Western literature alike, both primary and secondary sources. As the relationship between the West and Russia has been tense during a certain period of time, sources tend to be biased or clearly used as propaganda, especially in relation to the Ukrainian crisis. Sources might play a different role than being an assessment of the reality. Additionally, events that occurred a long time ago, and in a different context, are interpreted in the frames of conflict and hostility, making history a tool of today's politics. This is e.g. illustrated by Russia's constant references to the Cold War as the context for present events, such as Lavrov's statement "the past is getting clearer and clearer".⁴⁴ This is a problem in all history writing and interpretation, as Hayden White contended, "any historical object can sustain a number of equally plausible descriptions or narratives of its processes".⁴⁵ He also argued "we are free to conceive 'history' as we please, just as we are free to make it what we will".⁴⁶ Thus, as few sources are objective and neutral, the thesis needs critical evaluation of the sources when applying them to explain and interpret Russian thinking and actions. In this sense, when applying sources it is important to be aware of the time and place of the source.⁴⁷ Furthermore, as I lack Russian decision-making sources and need to rely on a lot of Western sources instead, it is not possible to view Russia's strategy from a Russian perspective as such. Although I am using a lot of Russian sources, there is clearly a Western bias involved when interpreting Russia's strategy. In this sense, the thesis is clearly part of the Western discourse on Russia.

Overall, because of the lack of decision-making sources and the methodological challenges, I have had to make certain reservations in my conclusion. Based on the sources available, I am able to interpret and conclude on the tendencies in Russia's implemented strategy, but we have to be aware that these conclusions are based on a limited number of sources, and that we clearly cannot establish the whole truth about Russian intentions and actions.

⁴⁴ Sergei Lavrov, "Remarks by the Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov at the XXII Assembly of the Council of Foreign and Defence Policy", *Russia in Global Affairs*, November 26, 2014. <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/book/Remarks-by-Foreign-Minister-Sergey-Lavrov-at-the-XXII-Assembly-of-the-Council-on-Foreign-and-Defence> (Accessed 15.04.15)

⁴⁵ Hayden White quoted in Trachtenberg, 2006, p. 8.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 9

⁴⁷ Kjelstadli, 2013, p. 175

2.2. The Concept of Strategy

This thesis applies *strategy* as the central concept when studying Russian security policies. However, strategy is a concept that is not easy to assess empirically. In the academic literature, the term strategy is often associated with *military* strategy.⁴⁸

Military strategy is defined as the art and science of applying force or the threat of force to secure national objectives.⁴⁹ However, the exclusive focus on force misses the broader political aspect of strategy. The term grand strategy or national security strategy deals with the overarching policies and plans of a state, which also comprises the more specific military strategy. The grand strategy expands the toolset of a state to include all tools available, both military and non-military, for the preservation, protection and enhancement of the state's national interests in the international system, in both wartime and peacetime.⁵⁰

In line with the concept of grand strategy, the Russian Federation applies the term national security strategy on its current overarching security document. *The National Security Strategy to 2020* clearly implies that *security* is the core of Russia's international outlook. As stated in the introduction chapter, Russia applies an extended definition of security, encapsulating a broader perspective than the traditional understanding of security. The extended definition includes protection of almost all aspects of the state and society, such as economy, culture, energy, science, healthcare, environment etc., as well as Russian citizens and compatriots abroad, from both military and non-military threats, external and internal threats, and from states and non-state actors.⁵¹ The fact that security politics seems to be the overarching priority in international relations is quite different from how the majority of European states view foreign policy. The European countries rather promote a political strategy with seemingly low focus on security and protection from external threats. The Russian

⁴⁸ See John Baylis, James J. Wirtz and Colin S. Gray, *Strategy in a Contemporary World*, Oxford University Press, fourth edition, 2013; Peter Paret (ed) *Makers of Modern Strategy. From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Oxford, 1986

⁴⁹ Joseph R. Cerami and James F. Jr, "Appendix I: Guidelines for Strategy", In Cerami, Joseph R. and James F. Jr. Holcomb (ed). *U.S Army War College Guide to Strategy*, February 2001, p. 225

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ See NSS, 2009

security focus is rather similar to the U.S. and its National Security Strategy documents, which builds more on great power thinking.⁵²

In an analytical perspective, Russia's official documents are broad and non-specific and do not map out a clear-cut or factual strategy. Instead, they set the framework for *future* priorities and give indications of strategic thinking, priorities and threat perceptions, but as stated above not de facto action. According to the political scientist, Alyson Bailes, a state might have two types of strategies: one declared and one deep. A state might declare a strategy to the outside world through security documents, but it does not necessarily need to correspond with the actual strategy. Rather, the deep strategy is what the state really thinks, wants and intends. Moreover, the deep strategy is not necessarily pre-planned. In this sense, putting forward a declared strategy might play an instrumental and tactical role, whereas the deep strategy – the actual grand strategy - might be detected through action.⁵³ In line with Bailes' arguments, for the thesis to actually identify Russian grand strategy empirically and analytically, the thesis needs to go beyond the strategic documents to evaluate Kremlin's implemented strategies. In order to do this, the thesis will apply the U.S. Army College Guide's conceptual framework of strategy as a way to analyze Russia's security policies. The College Guide to Strategy defines strategy as the relationship between *ends*, *ways* and *means*.⁵⁴ A strategy is also designed and implemented in a specific external environment, and there are constantly different actors, trends and events affecting Russia's interests and objectives. Consequently, external actors are also affected by Russia's policies and actions.⁵⁵ Thus, the framework also needs to include an assessment of the international environment where the strategy is implemented. The framework applied in this thesis includes three elements: (1) Ends, (2) Appraisal of the strategic environment, (3) Ways and Means.

⁵² Lyudmila Igumnova, "Russia's Strategic Culture Between American and European Worldviews", *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 24:4, p. 269-270

⁵³ Alyson J.K. Bailes, *Does Small States Need a Strategy*, Center for Small State Studies Publications Series, University of Iceland, Occasional Paper 2-2009, http://ams.hi.is/wp-content/uploads/old/Bailes_Final%20wh.pdf (Accessed 07.05.15)

⁵⁴ Robert H. Dorff, "A Primer in Strategy Development", In Cerami, Joseph R. and James F. Jr. Holcomb (ed). *U.S Army War College Guide to Strategy*, February 2001, p. 11

⁵⁵ Ibid.

This framework also corresponds with how Russia's Security Council has structured Russia's own strategy documents.⁵⁶

The framework opens up for a broader empirical analysis of Moscow's strategic policies by including strategic thinking, considerations and implications of responses. As mentioned in the introduction chapter, the structure of the analysis and the broader empirical discussions within each element of strategy are inspired by John Lewis Gaddis' analysis of American Cold War strategy, and Ingrid Lundestad's version of Gaddis' framework applied in her Master's thesis about American post-Cold War strategies.⁵⁷ However, as this thesis analyzes a different country with different resources, a strategy that is pinned towards a specific object (West), and implemented in an asymmetrical relationship, the framework is modified to fit the Russian case in particular. The framework and what each element entails will be explained in further detail below.

(1) *Strategic Ends* is derived from Russia's national interests. A state has some basic and fundamental interests that are perceived to be the vital needs of the state. A state pursues, promotes and protects these interests through specific objectives.⁵⁸ We might say that ends are the objectives sought.⁵⁹ The thesis divides Russian interests and objectives into 1) traditional, 2) regional and 3) global interests and objectives. Firstly, all states have some traditional interests based on the survival of the state and its population. Secondly, states might also have interests that go beyond their own borders, which is true in Russia's case, as it perceives itself to be one of the world's leading states. Global interests are e.g. linked to the pursuit of increased international power and a stronger international role, and regional interests to influence in important strategic areas vital to the state's security and international position.

⁵⁶ The NSC 2000 is structured: 1) Russia in the world community, 2) Russia's national interests, 3) Threats to the Russian Federation's national security and 4) Ensuring the national security of the Russian Federation. The NSS 2009 is structured 1) Russia and the modern world: current conditions and trends, 2) National Interests, 3) Ensuring national security.

⁵⁷ Gaddis asked four questions when analyzing American strategy: 1) What conception did the administration in question have of American interests in the world? 2) How did it perceive threats to those interests? 3) What responses did it choose to make, in light of those interests and threats? 4) How did it seek to justify those responses? As for Ingrid Lundestad, she operationalized strategy into four components when analyzing American post-Cold War strategies and NATO's role within them: 1) Interests and Objectives, 2) Perceptions of threats, 3) Strategic areas, allies and partners, 4) Strategic thinking and implementation.

⁵⁸ Lundestad, 2008, p. 21

⁵⁹ Dorff, "A Primer in Strategy Development", 2001, p. 11

(2) *Appraisal of the Strategic Environment*. A strategy is never designed or implemented in a vacuum; thus, the state has to make an assessment of the security environment and identify challenges and threats to its interests.⁶⁰ An important part of this element is perceptions of dangers and threats. In particular, the word *perception* is important, because it indicates a subjective view of threats based on the Russian leadership's perspective, rather than an objective assessment.⁶¹ In the *National Security Strategy to 2020*, a threat is defined as: "the direct and indirect possibility of damage to constitutional rights and freedom, quality of life, sovereignty/territorial integrity, stable development of the Russian Federation, defense and security of the state".⁶² Clearly, Moscow defines threats quite broadly. The direct possibility of damage is primarily military threats, while indirect possibility of damage is rather political threats, such as being ignored in international decision-making or interference in internal affairs. As this thesis deals with Russia's relations with the West, it is the West, or specific countries within the Western community, that is perceived to either pose the threat, or be the origin of the threatening trend or development.

(3) *Ways and Means of Strategy* particularly emphasize Moscow's considerations, responses and strategic thinking in light of ends and appraisal of the strategic environment. The *means* of strategy are the resources available to pursue objectives. Whereas the *ways* or the methods are how these resources are applied.⁶³ In general, a state has several resources or instruments of power that might be applied when pursuing objectives. In the National Security Strategy, Moscow lists instruments, such as political-diplomatic, military, economic and financial, energy, cultural and informational.⁶⁴ Although Russia constantly emphasizes the need for non-military measures in its strategic documents, according to the Russian political scientist, Dimitri Trenin, Russia's strategic thinking is traditional and centered on hard

⁶⁰ Dorff, "A Primer in Strategy Development", 2001, p. 15

⁶¹ Lundestad, 2008, p. 22

⁶² NSS, 2009, p. 2

⁶³ Dorff, "A Primer in Strategy Development", 2001, p. 11

⁶⁴ NSS, 2009, p. 5

power.⁶⁵ Thus, the thesis will primarily look at the military instrument and the political-diplomatic instrument of Russian strategy. The economic and energy instruments of Russian strategy have minor focus, but these are not omitted entirely. As Russia is one of the world's largest exporters of gas and oil, energy is an important instrument, especially towards states in the CIS region. However, the thesis will not include the energy instrument applied directly towards Western actors, such as oil and gas export to Europe.⁶⁶ Additionally, an important point that states need to address when implementing strategies, is that a state does not have unlimited resources. Thus, a state needs to make trade-offs in what to protect and promote.⁶⁷ Especially in an asymmetrical relationship, a state needs to consider how to apply the means and assess the risks, as external reactions might be substantial and have implications for other interests and objectives.

Hence, the following three chapters will make an assessment of Russia's grand strategy in the context of West-Russia relations by examining (1) ends, (2) appraisal of strategic environment, and (3) ways and means in each period. This framework will also identify and detect the changes and continuities in Russia's strategy between the different periods. In terms of sources, the official documents will form the basis for ends and appraisal of the strategic environment. The second category of primary sources, the speeches and statements etc. will also be used to analyze the two first elements of the framework, but will also shed light on the third element of ways and means. These primary sources are important because they create the frame for interpreting ways and means as verbal statements legitimize and explain actions. Arguably, the strong and often hostile rhetoric is an important part of Russia's strategy. The secondary literature will supplement the primary sources in the third element when describing Russia's action.

⁶⁵ Dimitri V. Trenin, "Russia's Threat Perception and Strategic Posture", Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College (SSI), Carlisle, United States, November 2007, p. 35.

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/PUB829.pdf> (Accessed 20.09.15)

⁶⁶ Russia holds the largest natural gas reserves in the world. Russia is the second largest producer in the world, and is the third largest producer of oil. Russia's export is its biggest economical leverage point. See U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Russia. International energy data and analysis", July 28, 2015,

<http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=RUS> (Accessed 10.09.15)

⁶⁷ Dorff, "A Primer in Strategy Development", 2001, p. 15

3 1992-1999:

Background: In Search of a Strategy

The collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 created a whole new reality for the world community, and particularly for its successor, the Russian Federation. The end of the Cold War completed a more than 50-year-long hostility between the Soviet Union and U.S. and their respective blocs of allies. The security environment changed as the U.S. became the only remaining superpower creating a unipolar moment for the West. The Soviet Union imploded, and its legal successor, the Russian Federation and its first president, Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, was left with its remains. The new leadership had to design a new grand strategy in a new geopolitical and international environment. One of the main issues was how to approach the former Soviet enemy, the U.S., and more broadly the West, in the pursuit of Russia's national interests. The thesis divides Russian grand strategy towards the West during the presidency of Boris Yeltsin into two periods. The first period is characterized as *attempted inclusion* (1992-1994) and the second as *cautious balancing* (1994-1999). This chapter will follow the three elements of strategy presented in the former chapter.

3.1 Strategic Ends: Traditional, Regional and Global

In the early 1990s the Russian Federation went through a transitional period aimed at consolidating a new state in the international system and finding a new strategic vision that would remove Russia from its predecessor.⁶⁸ However, Russia was still influenced by its past, which was clearly illustrated in its strategic thinking. Important documents issued during this period were the Military Doctrine in 1993 and the National Security Concept of 1997.⁶⁹ The following sections review traditional, regional, and global interests and objectives during the 1990s.

⁶⁸ "Transitional period" defined by the MD 1993 as the period of establishing Russian statehood, implementing democratic reforms and shaping a new system of international relations. See MD 1993, p. 1

⁶⁹ In addition to the Foreign Policy Concept of 1992. I have not gained access to the FCP neither in Russian nor English.

The traditional interests and objectives of ensuring territorial integrity, political sovereignty and protection of the Russian population, were early on the agenda as Moscow tried hard to consolidate and prevent the new state from breaking apart.⁷⁰ In the early 1990s, the regional objectives were primarily related to territorial security, as Russia's borders were open and dubious, and conflicts in the region could easily spill over to Russia's own territory. Additionally, after the collapse of the USSR, 25 million Russians remained in the 14 newly independent post-Soviet states. The new Military Doctrine of 1993 invoked Russia's right to protect Russian citizens abroad.⁷¹ In this sense, the traditional and the regional security interests were very much combined.

Russia's global interests were related to the consolidation of Russia's role in the international system, and finding the specific course towards modern economic and democratic development.⁷² Russian integration into Western economic and security institutions were considered both a means and an end in itself. During the first years of Yeltsin, inclusion and cooperation with the West were the most important objective of the Kremlin. Furthermore, Moscow perceived Russia to be a great power.⁷³ Although Moscow tried to remove the Soviet Union past, Russia was its legal successor and inherited the seat in the UNSC and its nuclear capabilities. Thus, Russia still perceived itself to be a fundamental player in world affairs and required influence and participation in global decision-making, as an equal partner to the leading powers. In this sense, Russia demanded a special status within Western institutions, regardless of its relatively weak material power, and would not accept a similar status as the other former USSR states.⁷⁴

As for the political interests in the region, the objective of Western integration and recognition reduced the Kremlin's focus on the former USSR states and Warsaw

⁷⁰ Kristian Åtland, Tor Bukkvoll Morten Jeppesen and Iver Johansen, *Hvor går Russland? Fem scenarier om Russland og norsk sikkerhet i 2030*, Abstrakt Forlag, Oslo, 2005, p. 38-39

⁷¹ MD 1993, p. 3

⁷² Andrei Kozyrev, "Russia: A Chance for Survival", *Foreign Affairs*, Spring Issue, 1992, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/1992-03-01/russia-chance-survival> (Accessed 01.03.15)

⁷³ A great power is a state that has the ability and capability of influencing or changing world affairs. Great powers normally possess exceptional military and economic strength, as well as soft power and diplomatic influence. Great powers status is normally recognized today by membership in Group of 8 or a seat in the United Security Council.

⁷⁴ J.L.Black, *Russia's Faces NATO Expansion. Bearing Gifts or Bearing Arms?* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Maryland, 2000, p. 10-11

Pact allies. In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, there had been half-hearted attempts at regional integration through the new established Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and a Collective Security Treaty (CST).⁷⁵ However, the centrifugal forces were too strong in the new, independent states and the integration was weak. Nevertheless, when the Western integration seemed to fail, the post Soviet region, referred to as the “near abroad”, gained more attention. Related to Russia’s great power thinking and in line with the historical tradition, Russia was entitled to have its own sphere of influence.⁷⁶ When Russia also identified continued containment policies by the West, and attempts at drawing former Warsaw Pact members into the Western sphere, integration within the post-Soviet region became a stated Russian objective, in military, economic and political terms.⁷⁷

In sum, during the Yeltsin period, protection of the state and population was of principle importance as Moscow tried to consolidate a new state in an unsafe region. The prime global end was inclusion into the Western system to modernize and democratize the new Russian state. However, Russia’s great power perceptions lingered on, and the objective of international influence and regional influence was strengthened during the 1990s.

3.2 Appraisal of the Strategic Environment

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian leadership stated in the Military Doctrine of 1993 that they saw no immediate threat from the West. The new post-Cold War environment was perceived as non-confrontational and benign as ideological confrontation disappeared and military threats was reduced.⁷⁸ In this new world, the West was seen as a partner. Rather, threats were now perceived to come from the near abroad or from within, such as separatism and conflict in Chechnya or from indirect factors, such as economic collapse.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ CIS established in 1991 and CST (Treaty on Collective Security) was signed in 1992, and came into effect in 1994.

⁷⁶ Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noguee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia. Changing systems, enduring interests*, M.E Sharpe, Inc. New York, 2005, p. 191-192

⁷⁷ NSC, 1997, p. 7, 10 and 13

⁷⁸ MD, 1993, p. 2

⁷⁹ NSC, 1997. p. 5 and 8

Initially, Moscow assumed that the structure of NATO would change after the fall of the Soviet Union. As the Soviet Union and communism had disappeared, the role of NATO, as the Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev argued, “was bound to change under these circumstances”.⁸⁰ The Russian expectation was that Russia would either join NATO, or more likely, NATO would reform and demilitarize. Instead, Moscow regarded the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as the adequate institution for securing peace in Europe.⁸¹ Thus, Moscow did not expect NATO to continue on the same path.

However, these expectations turned out to be an illusion. When NATO initiated its Partnership for Peace (PfP) program and the first eastward expansion⁸² in 1994, the Russian perception was that NATO and the West continued to demonstrate a Cold War mindset.⁸³ The bombing of Bosnian Serbs earlier that year during the civil war in Yugoslavia had shaken Russia as NATO bombed the traditional Russian ally Serbia without taking Russian interests or concerns into account. In 1994, NATO planned to include three former Warsaw Pact countries, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, into its organization. The decision of excluding Russia from the process created a perception that the West was breaking its promise of not expanding eastward and utilizing Russia’s temporary weakness.⁸⁴ NATO expansion was unacceptable to Moscow, and the National Security Concept of 1997 stated that “it represents a threat to [Russia’s] national security”.⁸⁵ Drawing former Soviet allies into the Cold War organization, but excluding Russia, only indicated that Russia was still perceived as a threat.⁸⁶

Related to this, the Russian great power interests and its desire for international influence and recognition made Moscow clearly sensitive of being ignored. In the NSC the Russian leadership not only listed direct threats targeting Russian territorial

⁸⁰ Kozyrev, 1992

⁸¹ Kozyrev, 1992

⁸² Russia refers to NATO enlargement as NATO expansion. As this thesis attempts analyze Russia’s thinking and perceptions, it will continue applying the term expansion throughout the thesis.

⁸³ The planning of inclusion started in 1994, invitations in 1997 and inclusion in 1999. Black, 2000, p. 11-12

⁸⁴ Michael Gordon, “Russia remains uneasy over NATO’s expansion”, *The New York Times*, March 14, 1999, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/03/14/world/russia-remains-uneasy-over-nato-s-expansion.html?pagewanted=1> (Accessed 10.09.15)

⁸⁵ NSC, 1997, p. 2. Also quoted in Godzimirski, 2000, p. 80

⁸⁶ Black, 2000, p.17-18

and political sovereignty. The document clearly stated that attempts at limiting Russia's influence and importance in global decision-making were perceived as direct threats to Russian national security.⁸⁷ Concretely, as NATO expanded its sphere, the potential weakening of Russia's position in Europe and its near abroad was seemingly a threat to Russia's great power interests.

However, it was not until 1999 that Russia directly felt endangered by the West. When NATO chose to bomb Yugoslavia in a "humanitarian intervention" to protect Kosovo without UNSC mandate, Russia saw a Western unilateral actor violating international law and norms for their own purpose.⁸⁸ The Western community ignored Russia's objections and veto in the UNSC,⁸⁹ and applied great firepower showing its military capabilities and supremacy to the world. Additionally, in April 1999 NATO adopted a new Strategic Concept at the Washington Summit endorsing new tasks for the alliance. The concept authorized the alliance to increase its responsibility of protecting international security beyond the Euro-Atlantic area. Thus, NATO acquired a global role.⁹⁰ To Moscow, NATO had now officially changed from being a defensive alliance protecting its members to becoming an aggressive actor imposing its unilateral will on others with overwhelming military power.

3.3 Ways and Means of Strategy: Considerations and Responses

During these seven years, the Russian leadership tried to adapt to new internal and external realities of the post-Cold War world. Initially, Moscow started out with a pro-Western outlook. However, the traditional objectives linked to Russian specificity made Russia sensitive to Western actions. The attempts at integration and the dependence on the West led to acceptance of what was perceived to violate Russian interests, leading again to a total mismatch between interests, threats and responses.

⁸⁷ NSC, 1997, p. 7

⁸⁸ United Nations "Security Council Rejects Demand for Cessation for Use of Force Against Federal Republic of Yugoslavia", Press Release SC/6659, 26. March 1999, <http://www.un.org/press/en/1999/19990326.sc6659.html> (Accessed 20.03.15)

⁸⁹ Russia threatened to impose a veto, backed by China. The campaign was not proposed in the UNSC. See United Nations, "NATO Action Against Serbian Military Targets Prompts Divergent Views as Security Council Holds Urgent Meeting on the Situation in Kosovo", Press Release SC/6657, 24. March 1999, <http://www.un.org/press/en/1999/19990324.sc6657.html> (Accessed 01.03.15)

⁹⁰ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "The Alliances Strategic Concepts", 24. April, 1999, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_27433.htm (Accessed 03.03.15)

Seen as a whole, the Russian strategic approach towards the West was somewhat ambiguous, as the objectives of great power recognition and integration did not correspond to the strategic reality.

The Russian strategy during the first period, between 1992 and 1994, is characterized as attempted inclusion into the Western system as the new leadership sought to consolidate a pro-Western vision of national identity and foreign policy. As the strategic objective was to integrate into the Western system, other strategic interests and traditional power instruments were subordinated. The prime focus, primarily promoted by the Foreign Minister, Andrei Kozyrev, was internal economic development. Marked economic reforms and “shock therapy” required Western investment, economic support and inclusion into Western economic institutions.⁹¹ Additionally, the Yeltsin leadership tried to be included into the Western security sphere as well. Russia wanted to take part in a new and common European security architecture, either by membership in NATO or by making the OSCE the prime organization on European security.⁹²

The Russian leadership supported the Western security agenda during the first period, and went out of its way to be recognized as a serious and reliable partner despite huge criticism at home. This included signing a new disarmament treaty, START II in 1993. The treaty required more cuts in Russia’s nuclear arsenal than in that of the U.S, which made the Kremlin abandon its traditional goal of nuclear parity with the U.S.⁹³ The period also included accepting, although Moscow opposed it, Western bombing of Bosnian Serbs, and joining Western sanctions on Libya, Iraq and Yugoslavia. These sanctions made Russia abandon lucrative arms deals.⁹⁴ Essentially, the reduced Russian focus on the former Soviet states was an effect of the Western outlook, as the region was, according to Andrei Tsygankov, considered a burden for the new Russian state and irrelevant when Westernization was the ultimate objective.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Andrei Kozyrev, “Partnership or Cold Peace?”, *Foreign Policy*, No 99, Summer 1995, p. 3-4

⁹² Black, 2000, p. 8

⁹³ However, not ratified before 2000. Donaldson and Noguee, 2005, p. 221-222

⁹⁴ Tsygankov, 2013, p. 74-75

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Accordingly, as Russia focused on economic reformation and regarded the international climate as benign, the military expenditure was considered too burdensome for the new state. The Russian military strategy was still strategic deterrence centered on nuclear weapons inherited from the Soviet Union. However, the lack of preservation and funding made capabilities decrease, particularly the conventional capabilities. The National Security Concept of 1997 also concluded that Russia had “less impressive potential of ensuring the Russian Federation’s security”.⁹⁶ In 1998, the Russian defense spending had been cut by 86% compared to 1988.⁹⁷ The lack of funding led to almost non-functional armed forces.⁹⁸ Seemingly, the military instrument was hardly playing a role in Russia’s grand strategy.⁹⁹

As a consequence of several internal factors, e.g. a political shift towards nationalists and communists in the Duma and economic problems, in addition to Western criticism of the war in Chechnya (1994-1996), the strategy of attempted inclusion was becoming highly unpopular. Within the Kremlin, the perception was that the strategic course had resulted in total submission and violation of Russian interests. When NATO expansion was suggested in 1994, the Russian strategy makers reevaluated the threat perception of the West.¹⁰⁰ In diplomatic organs, Russia opposed the expansion stating that it was unacceptable to Russia, but Moscow had no power to stop it. The inability to influence decisions, created perceptions of being thought weak and of a disrespect of its legitimate status. Although Russia gained official reassurances from NATO, signed the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security, and established the Permanent Joint Council (PJC), which formally included Russia into NATO discussions and decision-making, the perception of not being respected as an equal partner increased.¹⁰¹

From approximately 1994, the new threat perceptions initiated a strategy of cautious balancing¹⁰² slowly removing Moscow from the submissive approach from

⁹⁶ NSC, 1997, p. 9. Also quoted in Godzmirski, 2000, p. 87

⁹⁷ Åtland et al., 2005, p. 35

⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 41

⁹⁹ Trenin, “Russia’s Threat Perception and Strategic Posture”, 2007, p. 35-36

¹⁰⁰ Black, 2000, p. 18

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p. 11

¹⁰² The term balancing stems from balance of power theory in IR-theory. This theory assumes hegemony (in this thesis: the U.S. and the West) to be perceived as a threat to other states (Russia), which causes the threatened

the preceding years (1992-1994). During the second period (1994-1999) the Russian leadership was still dependent on Western economic support and continued its desire for integration into Western economic institutions. However, integration was now meant to be subordinated the prime objective of strengthening Russias great power status as “one of the influential centers of the multipolar world”.¹⁰³ Moscow began to promote Russia as a *Eurasian* great power with interests in all regions surrounding it, as a way to demonstrate independence, but also status. This new approach has been ascribed to the new Foreign Minister from 1996, Yevgeny Primakov who fronted a harder rhetoric towards the West. He emphasized the need of a multipolar world and Russia’s independent role by underscoring its seat in the UNSC and its strategic nuclear capabilities. With Primakov as foreign minister, Russia started a hardheaded advocacy of strategic interests and an unwillingness to accept the U.S. unipolar world and Western ignorance of Russia’s interests.¹⁰⁴ Russia tried to increase its power leverage, balance the West and shift strategic directions by building ties and flexible alliances with states in the Middle East and in Asia. In particular, Iran, China and India were valuable partners for weapons trade and economic and security cooperation.¹⁰⁵

As for the post-Soviet region, the security aspect had been important already in early 1990s. Russia saw an interest in securing regional stability and protect Russian citizens living abroad. Therefore, Russia had several military bases in the regional states, and also involved Russian peacekeeping forces in three regional conflicts.¹⁰⁶ Yet political and economic integration was not an important focus. Initially, the Russian leadership had not been particularly suspicious about Western cooperation with former Soviet countries, but as Russia constantly was left out, Moscow became vary of a zero-sum game in the region, in particular of the European parts of the CIS

state(s) to attempt to balance the hegemon; which means to equalize the odds of the hegemon. Normally, balancing is implemented through increasing military capabilities or alliances. Here, Russia is balancing through more soft means, that of diplomacy and flexible partnerships. See Joseph S. Nye and David A. Welch, *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation. An Introduction to Theory and History*, Pearson, Ninth Edition, 2013, p. 82-85

¹⁰³ NSC, 1997, p. 4

¹⁰⁴ Dimitri V. Trenin, *The End of EURASIA: Russia on the Border Between Geopolitics and Globalization*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002, p. 283-284

¹⁰⁵ Anders Kjøberg, *Russisk Utenriks- og Sikkerhetspolitikk: Forutsigbarhet og Betydning for Europeisk Stabilitet*, FFI/Rapport-98/05744, Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, 1998, p. 35-36

¹⁰⁶ Donaldson and Nogeese, 2005, p. 191-194

region.¹⁰⁷ As the U.S. supported anti-Russian organizations, such as GUAAM¹⁰⁸, and NATO was creeping closer to its borders with its Partnership for Peace Program (PfP), Russia seemingly identified these actions as targeting Russia.¹⁰⁹ The perception of Russia's legitimate great power status made the post-Soviet region reemerge as a priority, and Moscow started to increase the attempts at integration and closer relationships regionally. However, neither political nor economic integration was successful, as Russia mostly formed bilateral ties rather than multilateral ones.¹¹⁰ The fundamental problem within the USSR-region was the lack of Russian attraction and soft power compared to the West, especially in the eyes of former Central and East European allies.¹¹¹

In sum, the Yeltsin leadership started to talk hard and oppose the West with political-diplomatic balancing tactics, but the strategy was clearly ineffective. Reviewing Russia's outcomes reveals that Russia did not manage to efficiently integrate into Western institutions, nor to be recognized as a great power regionally or globally. In terms of threats and dangers, Moscow did not manage to create an equal partnership with the West, keep the West out of Eastern and Central Europe or stop unwanted developments, such as the bombing of Bosnian Serbs, NATO expansion or Kosovo intervention. In 1998, Russia also experienced economic collapse and ruble devaluation as consequence of budget deficits and foreign debt. In 1999, Russia was the largest loaner of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with \$20 billions in loans.¹¹² The fact that Russia was in decline and totally dependent on Western economic assistance, but still wanted a position as a great power, made the cautious balancing approach futile.

¹⁰⁷ Tsygankov, 2013, p. 79-81

¹⁰⁸ GUUAM; regional organization including Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan (in 1997, out 2005), Azerbaijan and Moldova. Established in 1997.

¹⁰⁹ Trenin, 2002, p. 282

¹¹⁰ Kjølberg, 1998, p. 28

¹¹¹ Trenin, 2002, p. 292

¹¹² BBC, "Russia: IMF's biggest failure", September 23, 1999, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/455673.stm> (Accessed 10.05.15)

3.4 Conclusion

As we have seen from this, during the first years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia never managed to find its role in the international arena or a clear and realistic strategy towards West. Neither interests and objectives nor the acknowledged dangers or threats were clear-cut, as Moscow balanced between a total submission to the West and an attempted oppositional stand. In general, Moscow's problem was the lack of resources, economically and militarily, which meant that Russia never managed to actively promote, pursue or protect security interests that ran counter to Western interests. The total reliance on Western economic support made responses to threats ambiguous and weak. Thus, the lack of corresponding objectives and resources resulted in insufficient strategies of both attempted inclusion and cautious balancing.

At the turn of the millennium Russia's assessment of the West was at its worst since the Cold War. Moscow had made huge concessions during its attempted inclusion, but the West was perceived not interested in reciprocating in an equal manner and rather ignored Russia's legitimate status and role.¹¹³ Russian standards of living had decreased severely during the period of "shock therapy", and the assistance from the West was perceived as too weak, resulting in public resentment of Western "democracy". The growing threat perception of NATO, the loss of influence in the region, and a new war in Chechnya consolidated a growing internal and external weakness and isolation. When Putin became prime minister in 1999, Russia appeared to be finished as a leading actor in international affairs.

¹¹³ Yegor von Schubert. "Vladimir Lukin: I Am a Bit Wary of a "Popular" Foreign Policy", *Russia in Global Affairs*, March 19, 2015, <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/Vladimir-Lukin-I-Am-a-Bit-Wary-of-a-Popular-Foreign-Policy-17363> (Accessed 04.08.15)

4 2000-2008:

From Pragmatism to Reserved Assertiveness

”I think that our ultimate goal should be to return Russia to its place among the prosperous, developed, strong and respected nations (...) Russia can live and develop within its existing borders only if it is a strong nation.”
Vladimir Putin, 2003¹¹⁴

When President Boris Yeltsin resigned on New Years Eve, 1999, the newly inaugurated Russian Prime Minister, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, became acting president. After winning the elections Putin officially became the second elected president of the Russian Federation on May 7th 2000. Putin had inherited a state in economic collapse and a weak and deteriorated military. Internationally, Russia was in a position of isolation and strategic weakness. It was no longer a superpower or a global great power, and as it had lost much of its influence in the post-Soviet region during the 1990s, it could hardly be considered a regional great power either. Russia’s grand strategy was after the turn of the millennium formed mostly as reactions to occurring events. Between 2000 and 2008 the Russian leadership was confronted with a Western-centric security regime and an external environment dominated by unilateral force. The war on terror in Afghanistan, the American-led Iraqi invasion, NATO expansion, color revolutions in neighboring states and Western influence in Russia’s near abroad were the most important issues and events influencing the Kremlin’s strategic policies towards the West.

This chapter argues that the interdependence between economy and security in Russia’s relations with the West during 2000-2008 required a balanced approach, as Russia searched for the best ways to obtain strategic objectives and prevent unwanted developments. In the early 2000s the room for maneuver was small, and the Kremlin chose a pragmatic approach towards the West with a prime focus on economic development. However, backed by high oil and gas prices and a growing economy,

¹¹⁴ Vladimir Putin, ”Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation”, May 16, 2003, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21998> (Accessed 20.04.15)

Moscow started to oppose the West from 2004 onwards, based on the objective of regaining Russia's role as an independent great power in world affairs. Combined, Russian strategic objectives and growing perceptions of regional and global threats created the basis for an assertive strategy, as Russia was unwilling to be pushed aside and see its interests ignored. The character of Moscow's assertive strategy was primarily presented through harsh rhetoric and diplomatic-political means. The military feature of the strategy was founded on strategic nuclear deterrence, but the role and use of force was passive as alliance partners were weak, capabilities were few and the costs of applying force were considered too severe. Seen as a whole, the Russian assertiveness during this period should be characterized as *reserved*, as Moscow acted cautiously towards a more powerful West.

Chapter four will start with a review of Russia's strategic ends by examining the prime interests and objectives, and go on to elaborate on the strategic environment and perceived dangers and threats. Lastly, it will discuss Moscow's strategic ways and means towards the West.

4.1 Strategic Ends: Traditional, Regional and Global

Russia's ends are as discussed in the introduction, based on Russia's specific interests and objectives. During this period protecting Russia's national security required global influence and participation, as well as regional hegemony and control. However, traditional security issues, such as avoiding external interference in internal affairs, and stability of borders, were still highly relevant during these eight years. As the former chapter, this section will examine traditional, regional, and global interests and objectives.

The traditional interests were the most stable and constant interests of the Kremlin, and did not differ from the stated interests of the Yeltsin leadership. These traditional interests were listed in new strategic documents published in early 2000. The most important documents were the National Security Concept (NSC), the Foreign Policy Concept (FPC), and the Military Doctrine (MD). Additionally, in 2003, the Ministry of Defense also published a report, *The Priority Tasks of the Development of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation*, which was relevant in

regards to security policy and military planning. The preservation of the state's territorial sovereignty and integrity, the well-being of the population and the stability of the political system were emphasized in all official documents.¹¹⁵ One of the most important Russian traditional security objectives was to not expose its borders and keep foreign actors far away from Russia's proximity and internal affairs.¹¹⁶

The objective of protecting Russian security interests was linked to issues outside Russia's own territory. As mentioned in the background chapter, the region continued as an important component in Russian strategic thinking. In several public speeches and strategy documents Putin emphasized the post-Soviet area and the CIS as Russia's major priority in foreign policy.¹¹⁷ As Putin stated in the Annual Address of 2003: "to put it directly, we see the CIS area as the sphere of our strategic interests."¹¹⁸ Seemingly, in Russian strategic thinking the region constituted a direct security interest, in addition to a more indirect one.

Directly, the post-Soviet region was important strategically as a buffer zone around Russian territory. As Russia has no natural borders and a vast territory to protect, Moscow saw a huge interest in having strategic partners and allies along its borders and in the adjacent region.¹¹⁹ Throughout Russia's history, already from the time of the Russian Empire and during the Soviet Union, Russia experienced several invasions of its vast territory.¹²⁰ Arguably, the reality of no clear borders has led to a constant desire for security. In this sense, the region constituted a buffer zone towards the West, protecting against both strategic siege and encirclement. This obviously required peace within the region, and the Russian leadership saw it as a clear interest to avoid destabilization and regional threats. Interlinked with the security aspect in the

¹¹⁵ NSC, 2000, FPC 2000, MD 2000,

Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, *The Priority Tasks of the Development of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation*, 2003, <http://red-stars.org/doctrine.pdf> (Accessed 20.03.15)

¹¹⁶ MD, 2000, p. 3 and NSC 2000, p. 1

¹¹⁷ E.g. see Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation" April 18, 2002, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/7583> (Accessed 20.04.15); Putin, "Annual Address(...)", 2003, and FPC, p. 11. Commonwealth of Independent States included former Soviet Union states. During this period (2000-2007), members were: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan. Additionally, Ukraine was a participating state and Turkmenistan was an associated state (these two have not ratified the agreement of CIS).

¹¹⁸ Putin, "Annual Address (...)", 2003

¹¹⁹ FPC, 2000, p. 2

¹²⁰ Russia has been invaded several times: by the Mongol Empire (Golden Horde, 1200s), Poland (1600s), Sweden (during Great Northern War 1708), France and Napoleon (1812), Hitler-Germany (Operation Barbarossa 1941).

region was the Russian minority living in former USSR states. As mentioned in the background chapter, millions of Russian citizens were living in the region. In all security documents, Moscow continued to emphasize the motherland's right to protect their interest and rights.¹²¹

The indirect security interests involved political influence as a regional great power. As is argued by many scholars, Moscow's objective during the first two periods of Vladimir Putin was to *regain* what Russia lost of power and influence in the region during the 1990s. The prime objective was to restore and manifest its role as the dominant leader with an area of privileged interests.¹²² However, the fear of isolation from the region stemmed from the perception that others would fill the gap at Russia's expense. The experience of the 1990s where Russia had lost influence in former Warsaw Pact areas, exemplified by NATO's PfP and NATO expansion in 1999, made the Putin leadership increase its focus in the region. As for the remaining CIS states in the post Soviet area, the Kremlin seemingly accepted neutrality, but it was in Moscow's interests that these states built even closer ties with Russia. The FPC and NSC documents emphasized the importance of bilateral strategic partnerships and alliances within the CIS area, but they also stated the objective of a broader multilateral integration within the CIS framework.¹²³ Accordingly, this would increase Russia's geostrategic leverage and security guarantee, especially if Western actors kept out.

Russia's interests in the region need to be viewed in a broader perspective linked to Russia's global interests and objectives. Russia could hardly become a global great power if it were not a regional hegemon with its own area of special interests. In reality, Moscow's global objectives focused on achieving a "firm and prestigious position in the world community"¹²⁴ and regain its positions "as a great power and as one of the influential centers of a multipolar world."¹²⁵ Throughout the period, Russian officials emphasized Russia's global interests and vital role in

¹²¹ FPC, 2000, p. 2 and 11

¹²² See e.g. Mankoff, 2009, p. 241-242; Dimitri V. Trenin, "Russia Leaves the West", *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2006 Issue, 2006, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2006-07-01/russia-leaves-west> (Accessed 10.09.15)

¹²³ NSC, 2000, p. 2 and FPC, 2000, p. 11

¹²⁴ FPC, 2000, p. 1

¹²⁵ NSC, 2000, p. 1

international affairs.¹²⁶ Thus, the Russian leadership continued the strategic vision of its predecessors. As stated in the background chapter, although the Yeltsin administration had emphasized Russia's great power status, it was during their rule that Russia lost the remnant of its superpower past. However, the reality of losing influence was not in line with the perception of Russia's legitimate role in the world. Historically, Russia has played a central role in European and international relations. Based on the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, Russian identity is centered on its historical great power and superpower status.¹²⁷ Vladimir Putin proclaimed this fact in his millennium speech when he stated that Russia was and will remain a great power as Russia is preconditioned and predestined to this status because of its "historical legacy, its geopolitical position and economic and cultural characteristics."¹²⁸

Global interests of great power recognition and influence in global affairs required inclusion and participation in all spheres of international decision-making. One of the prime Russian interests, during the first two terms of Putin's presidency, was to underline equality and multipolarity¹²⁹ as the guiding principles in the international system.¹³⁰ It was only by removing the old unipolar structure of the world inherited from the 1990s and the continued Cold War security regime, explicitly illustrated by NATO in Kosovo, that Russia could enhance its role globally and be considered as an equal partner.¹³¹

Additionally, the assessment of great power status was not based on hard power alone. In fact, the emphasis on economic growth was one of the most important interests of the Russian state and a prerequisite for achieving other national

¹²⁶ E.g. Vladimir Putin, "Russia at the turn of the millennium", December 31, 1999, www.uio.no/studier/emner/hf/.../russia-at-the-turn-of-the-millennium.doc (Accessed 02.03.15), Sergei Lavrov, "The Present and the Future of Global Politics", *Russia in Global Affairs*, May 13, 2007, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_8554 (Accessed 06.08.15); Sergei Ivanov, "Russia's Geopolitical Priorities and Armed Forces", *Russia in Global Affairs*, February 17, 2004, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_2571 (Accessed 04.04.15)

¹²⁷ The Russian Empire (1721-1917) and Soviet Union (1917-1991)

¹²⁸ Putin, "Russia at the turn of the millennium", 1999

¹²⁹ Multipolarity, as well as unipolarity, bipolarity and tripolarity, is a term characterizing how power is distributed in the international system. Multipolarity describes power distributed among four or more centers of power.

¹³⁰ Stated in NSC 2000, p. 1 and FPC 2000, p. 3, and continued as an argument in speeches and articles, especially by Lavrov.

¹³¹ FPC, 2000, p. 2 and Lavrov, "The Present and the Future of Global Politics", 2007.

objectives.¹³² In the Annual Address in 2000, Putin argued that Russia would not become a great power without having a strong and prosperous economy.¹³³ During Putin's first years in office, internal stability and economic development, which also required cooperation with West, were presented as the key interests and objectives of the Russian leadership.¹³⁴ The foreign debt, the low international investments in Russia and the low growth rates of GDP inherited from the 1990s, made Putin characterize Russia as a third world country.¹³⁵ In this sense, the Russian leadership acknowledged the link between its domestic economic interests and broader strategic outlook. Thus, much of Russian grand strategy was centered on the objective of creating benevolent international conditions for stable economic growth.¹³⁶ Although Russia also prioritized military power and constantly talked about the need for reforming the army, the economic development was arguably the main priority during Putin's first two terms.¹³⁷

Thus, the Putin leadership strategic ends focused on expanding Russia's role in world affairs and re-establish Russia as an international great power after the devastating 1990s. In particular, Moscow emphasized the need to increase Russia's economic power. Accordingly, these objectives were interlinked with Moscow's regional objectives. Moscow saw an interest in restoring and manifesting its leadership in the post-Soviet region, in both security and political terms, and accordingly, in avoiding Western influence there. These objectives were directly linked to the Russia's traditional interests of protecting territorial and political sovereignty.

¹³² NSC, 2000, p. 1

¹³³ Vladimir Putin "Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation", 8 July 2000, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/7581> (Accessed 20.04.15)

¹³⁴ Discussed in FPC, NSC and Vladimir Putin's Annual Addresses 2000-2003; See also Vladimir Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation", May 26, 2004, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/7584> (Accessed 20.04.15); Vladimir Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation", April 25, 2005, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22931> (Accessed 20.04.15)

¹³⁵ Putin, "Annual Address (...)", 2000.

¹³⁶ FPC 2000, p. 9

¹³⁷ Ministry of Defense, 2003, p. 1-5

4.2 Appraisal of the Strategic Environment

Russia's traditional, regional and global interests and objectives were pursued in a changing security environment dominated by the West, and particularly the U.S. The objective of reemerging as a great and influential power meant that Moscow feared continued Western containment policies, as well as Western unilateralism and circumvention of international institutions and rules. The regional interests also made Russia extremely sensitive to Western involvement in its near abroad. The traditional security objectives opposed NATO expansion and military installations close to Russian borders. During this period, the Russian threat perceptions of the West were somewhat ambiguous and not really consistent in practice. However, the perception of an anti-Russian West grew during the eight-year period.

The Russian leadership observed great changes in the strategic environment after the end of the Cold War. Following the end of the bipolar confrontational era, according to the Kremlin, two mutually exclusive tendencies seemed to prevail. The first tendency was that the environment was becoming more benign, especially in the economic sphere.¹³⁸ The Foreign Policy Concept of Russia stated that the former confrontations and competition had eased, international cooperation had broadened and nuclear conflict had been reduced to a minimum.¹³⁹ Accordingly, Moscow did not experience any imminent threats to Russia's security, and the fear of a global nuclear and large-scale conventional war with NATO had "been excluded from the list of probable armed conflicts for which the RF Armed Forces prepared".¹⁴⁰

However, the other global tendency was that the international system was becoming increasingly anarchic as international rules were circumvented, exemplified in the Kosovo campaign in 1999, and later Iraq in 2003. This tendency was accompanied by increased international competition and confrontation. The use of force was perceived to be growing, both from states and non-state actors, and as Russia was weak militarily, it could easily be threatened.¹⁴¹ In this post-Cold War security environment, non-traditional global threats were recognized, such as

¹³⁸ NSC, 2000, p. 1

¹³⁹ FPC, 2000, p. 2-3

¹⁴⁰ Ministry of Defense, 2003, p. 26

¹⁴¹ NSC, 2000, p. 1

terrorism, spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and ethnic and religious separatism and violence.¹⁴² In particular, Islamic terrorism and extremism in Caucasus and Central Asia, including Afghanistan, had been threats concerning the Russian leadership for a long time.¹⁴³ Upheavals in Chechnya, where Russian forces were involved in a war for the second time (1999-2000),¹⁴⁴ had become one of the most urgent internal threats as the republic continued its fight for independence from the Russian Federation.¹⁴⁵

Overall, although Russian security strategy had been adjusted to “modern global realities”, such as terrorism and non-state actors, Moscow maintained much of its traditional threat perceptions and general distrust of the West throughout the period. In general, the strategic documents listed principle external threats such as a) the danger of weakening Russia’s political, economic and military influence in the world, b) the strengthening of military-blocs and alliances at Russia’s expense; “above all NATO’s eastward expansion”, and c) the creation of “group of troops” leading to the violation of the existing balance of forces, close to Russian or its allies borders, on land or at sea.¹⁴⁶ Other threats to Russian security were c) the existence of foreign military bases and major military presences in the immediate proximity of Russian borders or the borders of allies, as well as d) the demonstration of military power close to Russia’s borders.¹⁴⁷ Additionally, the Ministry of Defense report from 2003 also regarded “interference in internal affairs of Russia by foreign states or organizations supported by foreign states” as one of the main external threats.¹⁴⁸ Although Russia did not see any impending Western attack on Russian territory, the fact that the West was capable of inflicting damage on Russian national interests was according to the Russian political scientist, Dimitri Trenin, a general concern.¹⁴⁹ The asymmetrical relationship in particular illustrated by the huge security and

¹⁴² Ministry of Defense, 2003, p. 7-8

¹⁴³ Morten Jeppesen, “Russland og USA i Sentral-Asia: Samarbeid eller rivalisering?” Norwegian Defense Research Institute, FFI-report-00644, 2004, p.16, <http://www.ffi.no/no/Rapporter/04-00644.pdf> (Accessed 25.09.15)

¹⁴⁴ The first war: 1994-1996. Second war: 1999-2000 the operation time. Peacekeeping time 2000-2009.

¹⁴⁵ MD, 2000, p. 4

¹⁴⁶ NSC, 2000, p. 2 and MD, 2000, p. 4

¹⁴⁷ MD, 2000, p. 3-4 and Ministry of Defense, 2003, p. 45

¹⁴⁸ Ministry of Defense, 2003, p. 45

¹⁴⁹ Trenin, “Russia’s Threat Perception and Strategic Posture”, 2007

conventional military deficit, made Russia vulnerable. As the Russian leadership stated in its FPC of 2000, the limited resource support for Russian foreign policy, aggravated potential threats as Russia's domestic situation made it difficult to protect security interests.¹⁵⁰

In practice, the threat perception of the West, and the U.S. in particular, was quite ambiguous in Putin's policies. The image of a Western enemy and the feelings of mutual distrust were inherited from the Cold War. The somewhat hostile tone of the security documents was also influenced by the events of 1999. But in reality, the West was not perceived to be a real threat to Russian interests, possibly because Russia needed Western assistance to obtain economic objectives and because other threats were perceived to be more severe. As a consequence of Russia's internal focus, especially on the short-term problem of separatism within its own region, Moscow downgraded the de facto focus on Western dangers. The war on terror in Afghanistan also led to shared perception of threats and common interests.

However, after 2003 the Russian leadership seemingly began to view the West as more of a danger as Western actors again disregarded Russia's global interest in influence and participation. Especially the U.S., with President George W. Bush and his administration (2000-2008), was perceived to pursue a unilateral and messianic policy with the prime aim of endorsing American supremacy at the expense of others. These tendencies were identified in the use of unilateral and preemptive/preventive force and as political attempts of meddling in other's internal affairs.¹⁵¹ Examples of Western unilateralism and American imperialistic mission were the U.S.-led operation in Iraq and American threats of preventive or preemptive strikes against "rogue" states that attempted to procure WMD, such as North Korea and Iran.¹⁵² Additionally, the

¹⁵⁰ FPC, 2000, p. 4

¹⁵¹ Arguments such as these were expressed in Sergei Lavrov, "Democracy, International Governance, and the Future of the World Order", *Russia in Global Affairs*, February 9, 2005, no. 1 http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_4422 (Accessed 04.06.15); Vladimir Putin, Speech of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, Germany, February 10, 2007, http://archive.mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/284B878CA1370C27C32572800033694A?OpenDocument (Accessed 02.03.15); Sergei Lavrov, "The Foreign Policy of Russia: A New Phase", December 18, 2007, http://archive.mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/969279EE85A9B046C32573B60048C175?OpenDocument (Accessed 04.06.15)

¹⁵² Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *A Survey of Russian Federation Foreign Policy*. Moscow, 2007. http://archive.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b4325699005bcbb3/89a30b3a6b65b4f2c32572d700292f74?OpenDocument (Accessed 20.08.15)

way NATO and the U.S unilaterally utilized military force and circumvented the UNSC, especially in the Iraq campaign, was an illustration that common international rules and norms did not count when it did not suit Western interests.¹⁵³ This Western practice could eventually constitute a threat to Russian traditional interests as well. As Putin stated, with clear reference to the U.S, in his Annual Address in 2006:

But this means that we also need to build our home and make it strong and well protected. We see, after all, what is going on in the world. The wolf knows who to eat, as the saying goes. It knows who to eat and is not about to listen to anyone, it seems.¹⁵⁴

Accordingly, in line with the growing suspicion of Western intentions, Russia also identified a regional competition affecting Russia's regional and traditional interests. In relation to the war in Afghanistan, the American military bases in some Central Asian countries seemed to constitute a growing concern about greater Western foothold in the region.¹⁵⁵ Additionally, the American military cooperation with Georgia and growing ties with Ukraine spurred wariness within the Kremlin.¹⁵⁶ In addition to military presence, Moscow also saw soft and covert threats posed by Western actors in the region. First of all, through energy cooperation with Central Asian and Caucasus countries, the West was perceived to circumvent Russia in the energy trade.¹⁵⁷ Secondly, according to Foreign Minister Lavrov, the West seemed to weaken and target Russia's interests in the region by hiding under the banner of "democratization" as a way to increase Western influence.¹⁵⁸ Concretely, Moscow saw Western attempts of imposing democracy and pro-Western governments in Russia's neighborhood in a covert manner.¹⁵⁹ In 2004, Putin accused foreign funded NGOs of working for foreign interests, inside the post-Soviet region and within Russia itself.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵³ Sergei Lavrov, 2005

¹⁵⁴ Vladimir Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly", May 10, 2006, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/8231> (Accessed 20.04.15)

¹⁵⁵ Lionel Beehner "Asia: U.S. Military Bases in Central Asia", Council of Foreign Relations, July 26, 2005, <http://www.cfr.org/russia-and-central-asia/asia-us-military-bases-central-asia/p8440#p5%20%20and> (Accessed 05.05.15)

¹⁵⁶ Ingmar Oldberg, "Foreign policy priorities under Putin", in Hedenskog, Jakob et.al (ed) *Russia as a Great Power*, Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 41

¹⁵⁷ Leonid Grigoriev, "Russia, Gazprom and the CAC: Interest and relations", in Dellecker, Adrian and Thomas Gomart, *Russian Energy Security and Foreign Policy*, Routledge, New York, 2011, p. 166

¹⁵⁸ Sergei Lavrov, "The Foreign Policy of Russia: A New Phase", 2007

¹⁵⁹ Nick Paton Walsh, "Russia says "spies" work in foreign NGOs", *The Guardian*, Moscow, May 13, 2005, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/may/13/russia.nickpatonwalsh> . (Accessed 10.08.15)

¹⁶⁰ Putin, "Annual Address (...)", 2004

The prime examples of perceived Western interference were the involvement in color revolutions in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004) and Kyrgyzstan (2005). These color revolutions occurred as political uprisings, protests and demonstrations leading to changes in the regime, and in Georgia and Ukraine western-oriented governments were inaugurated. As Russia perceived Western involvement in all these uprisings, the Western attempts at political infiltration were perceived as interference in Russia's internal affairs, and thus a threat to Russian political sovereignty.¹⁶¹ As Lavrov wrote in his article "Containing Russia: Back to the future" from 2007, Moscow saw Western attempts at pushing Russia out of the region through old-fashioned geopolitical thinking and containment policies.¹⁶² In general, the perception of a zero-sum game in the region seemingly increased.

Related to these indirect and political threats in the region, more direct threats were identified touching upon Russia's perceptions of territorial encirclement. First of all, deployment of American forces in Romania and Bulgaria was announced in 2005 when the Joint Task Force East (JTFE) agreement was signed. This agreement allowed American troops to come closer to Russian borders, as well as the Black Sea area.¹⁶³ Moreover, the American withdrawal of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty) in 2002 and the possible establishment of U.S. anti-missile defense shield in Poland and the Czech Republic were even more serious.¹⁶⁴ The American ballistic missile defense (BMD) system had been on the agenda since the 1980s, but the European sites were presented in 2007 as the U.S. affirmed formal negotiations with

¹⁶¹ See such argument in Lavrov, "Democracy, International Governance, and the Future of the World Order", 2005

¹⁶² Sergei Lavrov, "Containing Russia: Back to the Future", *Russia in Global Affairs*, November 18, 2007, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_9792 (Accessed 05.07.15)

Lavrov uses the term containment to describe an offensive method of encircling Russia, grab its allies and partners, and continue the dividing lines in Europe. In sum, containment is policies implemented to prevent Russia from becoming strong and prosperous. Containment is not perceived to be defensive, such as the U.S. characterized their strategy of containment during the Cold War.

¹⁶³ Dominec Modlovan, Plamen Pantev and Matthew Rhodes, "Joint Task Force East and Shared Military Basing in Romania and Bulgaria", The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Occasional Paper Series, No. 21, August 2009 http://www.marshallcenter.org/mcpublicweb/MCDocs/files/College/F_Publications/occPapers/occ-paper_21-en.pdf (Accessed 05.02.14). Joint Task Force East (JTFE): framework for shared use of select military bases in Romania and Bulgaria.

¹⁶⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *A Survey of Russian Federation Foreign Policy*, 2007.

Poland and the Czech Republic concerning missile shield installations.¹⁶⁵ According to U.S. officials, the BMD was meant to protect American allies from attacks from rogue states, such as Iran and North Korea. Thus, it was not targeting Russia in any way. However, seen from Moscow, the Western defense systems would weaken Russia's security, as it would affect Russia's retaliatory nuclear capabilities and disturb the nuclear parity with the U.S.¹⁶⁶ Moscow was unable to see why these military installations would be placed in Eastern Europe if Russia was not perceived as the essential threat.¹⁶⁷ In sum, the Western planned BMD was a clear threat to Moscow's traditional interests, and hit right on Moscow's worries about encirclement and the weakening of Russia's strategic deterrence capabilities.

In addition to the BMD, the clearest example of continued bloc based and containment policies was expansion of NATO.¹⁶⁸ NATO expansion had been the crucial issue of Russian security since the end of the Cold War. However, as several of the post Soviet states had been eager to join NATO and the European security system, it was hard for Russia to prevent it. As described in the background chapter, the first expansion occurred in 1999 after being initiated in 1994, and the second in 2004, initiated in 2002. The second expansion for the first time included former Soviet states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In addition to Slovenia, former Warsaw Pact members Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia also joined in 2004. A potential third expansion of NATO was discussed in 2006, and in 2008 the Bush administration supported NATO membership to Georgia and Ukraine.¹⁶⁹ However, this potential third expansion to Russian bordering and traditional partner countries was more serious. As a reaction to the potential third expansion, Putin stated that membership to

¹⁶⁵ Ida Nygaard and Una Hakvåg, "Why Russia opposes a NATO missile defence in Europe – a survey of common explanations", Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, FFI-report 2013/00111, 3. January 2013, <http://www.ffi.no/no/Rapporter/13-00111.pdf> (Accessed 05.03.14)

¹⁶⁶ Luke Harding, "Russia threatening new cold war over missile defence", Moscow, April 11, 2007, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/apr/11/usa.topstories3> (Accessed 27.09.15)

¹⁶⁷ Vladimir Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly", April 26, 2007, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/8595> (Accessed 20.04.15)

¹⁶⁸ Lavrov, "The Present and the Future of Global Politics", 2007

¹⁶⁹ Luke Harding "Bush Backs Ukraine and Georgia for NATO membership", *The Guardian*, Moscow April 1, 2008, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/apr/01/nato.georgia> (Accessed 27.09.15)

these states would be unacceptable to Russia, as it was “a direct threat to the security of our country”.¹⁷⁰

Thus, Russian assessment of the new security environment included threats to its traditional security interests, as well as more indirect threats affecting its global and regional interests. The West, NATO and the U.S. in particular, was still the main concern of the Russian leadership in security matters, although internal focus decreased the threat perceptions until 2003-4. The general deterioration of the global order and Western unilateral actions, in addition to the color revolutions and Western infiltration in the region was conflicting with Russia’s global and regional interests. Overall, Western containment and encirclement strategies, promoted by political and military means, were perceived to constitute increased dangers to Russian security.

4.3 Ways and Means of Strategy: Considerations and Responses

Within this complex strategic and asymmetrical environment, Moscow implemented its strategy globally and regionally, and directly and indirectly towards the West. When analyzing Russia’s grand strategy, the 2000-2008-period might be divided into two. The first period deals with Moscow’s attempted pragmatic, but de facto submissive strategy between 2000 and 2003, when Russia emphasized strategic partnership with the West. The strategy of the second period, between 2004 and 2008, is characterized as reserved assertiveness, as Russia began to oppose the West as a result of growing distrust.

During the first period between 2000 and 2003, Moscow’s strategic behavior reflected a careful and pragmatic approach within an asymmetrical relationship. The awareness of Russia’s own weak power, especially in terms of economic power, meant that Russia had to be dynamic in responses to obtain objectives and avoid unwanted developments. Putin initiated his presidential period by emphasizing the importance of great power status, mostly based on prioritizing steady development of the economy rather than military force.¹⁷¹ These objectives required stability and a

¹⁷⁰ The Kremlin (President of Russia), “Press Statement and Answers to Journalists’ Questions Following a Meeting of the Russian-NATO Council”, April 4, 2008. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24903> (Accessed 10.09.15)

¹⁷¹ Putin, “Russia at the turn of the Millennium”, 1999 and Putin, “Annual Address (...)”, 2000

good relationship with the Western community, as Moscow still wanted integration into the Western centric system of market economies and global institutions, such as the OECD and the WTO. Additionally, Russia's war in Chechnya required a more internal focus. Although the Kosovo intervention and its new out-of-area concept had been a game-changer for Russia's perceptions of Western intentions, the new Russian leadership approached the West more cautiously than the security documents asserted.¹⁷²

The ambiguity in Moscow's stand on the U.S. and NATO changed after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center September 11, 2001. Putin offered the U.S. full support for their war on terror in Afghanistan, which initiated a strategic partnership between the two countries.¹⁷³ As Russia had recognized the threat of radical Islam for a long time, especially in Afghanistan and in Russia's proximity, American sudden interest was seemingly beneficial.¹⁷⁴ Putin also requested Russian allies in the Central Asian region to cooperate with the U.S. during the American-led war in Afghanistan.¹⁷⁵ The former rhetoric about Western unilateralism and hazardous way of using force in relation to Kosovo was switched to talk about common interests and cooperation as Moscow also saw a way to gain support for its own war against separatists in Chechnya.

In this strategic partnership the Kremlin accepted several issues that ran counter to Russia's stated interests. As an element in the war in Afghanistan, the U.S. established bases in several Central Asian states, and in Georgia in 2002. Related to Russian official threat perceptions, foreign bases close to Russia's borders should constitute a real threat to Russian national security. Yet, Russia seemingly considered terrorism a more vital threat to Russian short-term traditional security interests, and thus downgraded the regional threat of U.S. military presence and influence in the region. Seemingly, Russia's only strategic response was to increase the numbers of

¹⁷² E.g. Putin stated that he did not rule out NATO membership. See BBC, "Analysis: Putin wants respect", March 5, 2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/666768.stm> (Accessed 04.04.15)

¹⁷³ The Kremlin (President of Russia), "Russian President Statement", September 24, 2001, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/statements/21338> (Accessed 05.06.15)

¹⁷⁴ Jeppesen, 2004, p. 14

¹⁷⁵ The Kremlin (President of Russia), 2001

soldiers at the Russian base in Tajikistan, and establish its own base in Kyrgyzstan in 2003 as a balancer to American troops in the region.¹⁷⁶

Additionally, Moscow also had to accept the expansion of NATO. The second expansion included the former Warsaw Pact countries and the Baltic States. After the first expansion in 1999, the Russian leadership had responded with drawing “red lines” around the Baltics.¹⁷⁷ However, in 2002-2004 the situation was perceived to be different. The Russian leadership criticized NATO for creating disunity, mistrust and destabilization, in addition to again breaking their promise of not expanding eastward, but Moscow refrained from using force or officially threatening with it.¹⁷⁸ The global reactions to a more powerful response would have damaged the highly valued strategic partnership with the West.

The choice of partnership and cooperation between 2000 and 2003 was seemingly a pragmatic use of the window of opportunities. As the political scientist, Iver Neuman argues, the terrorist attacks led to a huge diplomatic opening for Russia, and a possibility of being recognized as a major security actor.¹⁷⁹ In this regard, Moscow managed to increase its role and influence in the world compared to the degraded standing after 1990. In his Annual Address in 2002, Putin emphasized the vital role of Russia played in international security:

Today, Russia is one of the most reliable guarantors of international stability. It is Russia's principled position that has made it possible to form a strong anti-terrorist coalition.¹⁸⁰

As a token of increased importance, NATO expanded its cooperation with Russia by replacing the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) established in the 1990s with the NATO-Russia Council (NRC).¹⁸¹ NRC was established as a forum for consultation and cooperation between the two actors. Russia was now a *member* of the NRC, and not

¹⁷⁶ Jeppesen, 2004, p. 24; The Kremlin (President of Russia), "President Putin and Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev took part in the inauguration of the Russian airbase near the city of Kant, Kyrgyzstan", October 23, 2003. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/29600>. (Accessed 20.09.15)

¹⁷⁷ Black, 2000, p. 220

¹⁷⁸ Andrei Kelin, "A Calmy Negative Attitude to NATO Expansion", December 31, 2003, http://archive.mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/3A327B4646BB8865C3256E130035029B?OpenDocument (Accessed 05.05.15)

¹⁷⁹ Iver Neumann, "Russia as a Great Power", in Hedenskog, Jakob et.al (ed) *Russia as a Great Power. Dimensions of security under Putin*, Routledge, London/New York, 2005 p. 15

¹⁸⁰ Putin, "Annual Address (...)", 2002

¹⁸¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO-Russia Council", http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50091.htm (Accessed 27.09.15)

just a *partner* in the PJC. As Russia would meet all the 26 NATO countries as an equal (NATO “at 27”), the perception was that Moscow role in NATO’s security decisions would grow. Russia was also the only country with such a status and influence.¹⁸²

However, the American-led Iraqi invasion in 2003 without a UN Security Council mandate, where the U.S. and the United Kingdom disregarded international law and use of force, was part of the turning point in Russia’s attitude and strategic response to the West. Russia strongly opposed the intervention, and together with France threatened to use their vetoes in the UNSC.¹⁸³ The subsequent Western internal interference, especially in color revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan,¹⁸⁴ and the criticism of the internal Russian political system, proved to Moscow that the West did not respect Russia’s interests. The West was perceived to still think and act in a Cold War mind-set, and the strategic partnership had not removed the West’s wish to impose its will on Russia nor accepting Russia as an equal partner.¹⁸⁵ A case in point was the NRC that turned out to be a hollow shell. Important issues were already decided before they were taken to the council. Instead, cases of technical and “low-politics” were discussed in the NRC, which basically made Russia feel sidelined on important issues.¹⁸⁶ Additionally, the Russian approval of Western involvement and military presence in the CIS area, now also perceived as motivated by Western energy ambitions had resulted in more competition and loss of influence within the region.¹⁸⁷

In short, the pragmatic strategy of utilizing common interests and cooperation to obtain Russian objectives, turned out as more submissive than pragmatic. The strategic partnership had been, according to political scientist Tor Bukkvoll, on shaky grounds already from the start, as the majority of the Russian elite had disagreed with Putin’s choice of partnering up with the West, and viewed pragmatism as obedience

¹⁸² Hannes Adomei, “Inside or Outside? Russia’s Policies Towards NATO”, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Working Paper, January 1, 2007, p. 2

¹⁸³ CNN, “France, Russia threaten war veto”, March 11, 2003.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/europe/03/10/sprj.irq.france.chirac/> (Accessed 27.09.15)

¹⁸⁴ In which Russia mainly responded with bilateral sanctions, mostly in terms of energy sanctions.

¹⁸⁵ See arguments such as this in Lavrov, 2005; Lavrov, “Containing Russia: Back to the Future”, 2007

¹⁸⁶ Adomei, 2007, p. 3

¹⁸⁷ De Haas, 2010, p. 73-75

leading to more costs than gains.¹⁸⁸ The prime objectives of economic development and international status led to an approach perceived to be based on Russian weakness and dependence.

The perception of being ignored and encircled globally, pushed out regionally and undermined and challenged internally required a change in strategy to defend Russia against these developments, and to independently promote Russia's own strategic objectives. Backed by a domestic economic recovery due to high oil prices and an annual 7% growth in GDP from 2003 onwards, Moscow turned towards an assertive approach based on increased self-awareness and independent trajectory.¹⁸⁹ This change in strategic posture was, from a Russian point of view, primarily defensive, as Moscow needed to protect its security interests. However, seen from the outside this approach was also partly offensive as Moscow also sought international recognition as an independent center of power and influence. However, although Russia started to oppose the West and show more confidence in strategic responses, Moscow was still aware of the asymmetrical relationship and needed Western economic cooperation for continued economic growth.¹⁹⁰ In this way, Moscow started out with a restrained and reserved assertive strategy promoted by low-cost and soft balancing approaches.

As a way to enhance Russia's global influence and constrain Western unilateralism, Russia mostly applied cautious political-diplomatic means. The Russian leadership continued Primakov's emphasis on multilateralism by relying on diversity to establish a fairer distribution of power globally. The heavy promotion of multilateral organizations, such as the Group of 8 (G8), the Group of 20 (G20), the UNSC, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), were part of the strategy of increasing Russia's influence.¹⁹¹ Russian global interests required multilateral decision-making between world's leading countries, as Russia regarded itself as one of them, and not unilateral action without the support of major powers.

¹⁸⁸ Tor Bukkvoll, "Putins Strategic Partnership with the West, The Domestic Politics of Russian Foreign Policy", *Comparative Strategy*, 22:3, 2003, p. 223-242

¹⁸⁹ In 2006 Russia also paid its foreign debt from 1990s period and in 2007 Russia's GDP reached 1990 level. See World Bank, Data on GDP growth,

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG/countries?display=default> (Accessed 27.09.15)

¹⁹⁰ E.g. emphasizing investments and WTO-membership. See Putin, "Annual Address (...)", 2006

¹⁹¹ The emphasis on multipolarity is seen in the FPC, and in Latorv's articles especially.

Concretely, Moscow promoted the indispensable role of the United Nations, and its UNSC, as the sole decision mechanism on international security issues and use of force.¹⁹² As Russia still was the weak party in the asymmetrical relationship with the West, in particular when it came to hard power, international law and norms were the only true mechanisms safeguarding Russian interests in its relations with the West.

Another method was to form flexible and pragmatic partnerships around the world. In line with Primakov's strategic thinking, the Russian diplomatic efforts of opposing Western primacy, but also enhance its own role, was sought through coalition building with states openly critical to the West, such as Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Libya and Syria.¹⁹³ These coalitions included growing arms sales and military hardware. Moscow strengthened its ties with India, and particularly China, which was the largest buyer of Russian arms.¹⁹⁴ Especially, as a diplomatic coalition e.g. in the UN, pairing up with China created an opposing bloc against the West. The China-Russia relationship was based on shared values and norms, such as the respect for sovereignty and non-interference.¹⁹⁵ Although Russia-China also cooperated militarily in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which will be discussed below, the Russia-China partnership was mostly part of a diplomatic-political balancing approach. In this sense, Russia-China cooperation was more an ad hoc coalition attempting to constrain, delay and undermine Western unilateral power in international relations.¹⁹⁶ However, in general, any attempts at creating an anti-U.S/Western bloc were futile because some of Russia's strategic partners were at odds with each other. Additionally, many of these states would also rather cooperate with the West than with Russia. According to Ingmar Olderg, it was hardly in Russia's interests either because of the lack economic alternative to the West.¹⁹⁷

On a regional level, the new strategy clearly shifted Russia's focus towards obtaining regional objectives. In the aftermath of the color revolutions, Russia sought

¹⁹² Ministry of Defense, 2003, p. 39 and Lavrov, "The Present and the Future of Global Politics", 2007

¹⁹³ Oldberg, 2005, p. 48

¹⁹⁴ India and China biggest arms importers between 2000-2008. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), The SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, <http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers> (Accessed 11.08.15)

¹⁹⁵ Robert A. Pape, "Soft Balancing against the United States", *International Security*, 30: 1 2005, p. 8

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 10

¹⁹⁷ Oldberg, 2005, p. 51

to limit Western influence and consolidate its own role as a regional leader.¹⁹⁸ By putting pressure on the states in the near abroad as a way to contain Western influence, Moscow seemingly avoided confronting the West directly. As a response to the threat of losing influence in its traditional sphere, Moscow increased its presence through political and economic cooperation, in particular with the use of energy export and control of pipelines as bilateral sticks and carrots. One of the main stated objectives was integration into regional organizations, such as strengthening the ties to the CIS, the CSTO, and promoting cooperation through the initiative Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEc) and a Common Economic Space.¹⁹⁹ As Russia was by far the most powerful state in the region, these regional organizations would ensure Russian influence, control and stability. However, the multilateral integration in the region was still at a low level. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs survey of 2007 stated that “real integration in the CIS space is proceeding in small formats”.²⁰⁰ In this sense, Russia primarily managed to establish cooperation on a bilateral level, and rather issue-specific multilateral cooperation, which made it harder to contain Western involvement. However, overall Moscow managed to increase Russia’s political and economic influence in the region compared to the 1990s.

Traditionally, Russian strategic thinking has been dominated by hard power and military capabilities, although it was clearly not prioritized during the Yeltsin period. Although the Kremlin talked about the importance of decreasing the role of force in the world, and emphasized economic growth as its prime objective, the defense minister Sergei Ivanov stated that military power was the prerequisite for Russia’s smooth and successful integration into the international system.²⁰¹ According to Dimitri Trenin, the tendency towards unilateralism and force in global affairs, and Russia’s seemingly constant desire for security made hard power increasingly

¹⁹⁸ Trenin, “Russia Leaves the West”, 2006

¹⁹⁹ Vladimir Putin, Speech at the Plenary Session of the Russian Federation Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives Meeting, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 12, 2004, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22545> (Accessed 26.09.15)

²⁰⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *A Survey of Russian Federation Foreign Policy*. Moscow, 2007

²⁰¹ Ivanov, 2004

important Russia's strategic thinking during the 2000s.²⁰² However, clearly it did not play a significant role in its strategic implementation towards the West.

The military instrument of Russia's grand strategy was based on strategic deterrence. As the conventional military capabilities had been downgraded during the 1990s, and Russia was not able to initiate costly reforms, the nuclear weapons remained the core of its national defense, similar to the Soviet years.²⁰³ These weapons stood as a symbol of Russia's superpower past, and played a political role in giving Russia important international leverage and in obtaining parity with the U.S.²⁰⁴ On an operational level, although the nuclear weapons were superior in Russian military strategy and could inflict damage on the West if applied, the devastating consequences of their use made the factual strategy purely defensive. Nuclear weapons were neither weapons used to obtain strategic objectives nor weapons applied when needing to react rapidly. Thus, as Russia neither prioritized exercises or show of force, Russian deterrence strategy was seemingly inactive.

Moreover, the conventional capabilities and the Soviet-style Armed Forces showed their futility during the 2000s. In particular, the asymmetrical war in Chechnya showed the incapability of the Armed Forces of conducting modern warfare. Additionally, the analysis of Western interventions in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq, made Moscow realize that Russia needed a modern and rapid reaction military.²⁰⁵ From 2000 the military budget grew steadily, and most significantly from 2005.²⁰⁶ However, although the military budget grew about 25 % each year and reforms were proposed, it did not result in significant

²⁰² Trenin, 2007, p. 35

²⁰³ Marcel De Haas, "Russias Military Reforms. Victory after Twenty Years of Failure?", Clingendal Paper No. 5, November 2011, p. 17.,
http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20111129_clingendaelpaper_mdehaas.pdf (Accessed 05.03.15)

²⁰⁴ De Haas, 2010, p. 61-63

²⁰⁵ Ministry of Defense, 2003, p. 51-61

²⁰⁶ Military Expenditure according to SIPRI: 2003: 568 billion rubles, 2004: 656 billion rubles, 2005: 806 billion rubles, 2006: 967 billion rubles, 2007: 1,144 billion rubles. 2008: 1,448 billion rubles. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), The SIPRI Military Expenditure,
http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database (Accessed 05.08.15)

transformations.²⁰⁷ Instead, Russia continued its Soviet Union style military centered on a mobilization army and nuclear weapons.²⁰⁸

On a regional level, the military element played a more visible role and thus worked as an indirect tool against the West in the region. The National Security Concept stated that the interest of ensuring national security necessitated Russian military presence in the adjacent region.²⁰⁹ Thus, similar to the Yeltsin period, Russia maintained its military presence through bases in many of the CIS states.²¹⁰ Furthermore, one method of containing and balancing the West in the region was creating military alliance and strategic partnerships regionally. The main priority of the Kremlin was to create a strong alliance with the CIS countries through the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and by partnering up with China through the organization Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)²¹¹ founded in 2001. These organizations could also protect the regimes in Central Asia from Western democracy interference.²¹² The military treaty, CST, was expanded into a military alliance, CSTO, in 2002 including Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan. The intention with the CSTO was to gain equal status as NATO, and be the key mechanism for maintaining stability and ensuring security in the CIS space.²¹³ However, CSTO partners were militarily weak, which made the organization a tool for and by Russia. Thus, the CSTO could hardly be viewed as an efficient alliance in an international perspective.

Within the framework of the SCO, China and Russia conducted several military exercises in Central Asia in 2005 and 2007. In 2005 the SCO also demanded

²⁰⁷ Ian Leijonhielm et.al (2008) *Russian Military Capabilities in a Ten Year Perspective. Ambitions and Challenges in 2008*, Defense Research Agency, FOI Report, Stockholm, s. 21

²⁰⁸ De Haas, 2011, p. 17

²⁰⁹ NSC 2000, p. 5

²¹⁰ Leijonhielm, 2008, p. 16. Between 2000-2008: Russian bases in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia (and Abkhazia and South Ossetia), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova (Transnistria), Tajikistan, Ukraine (Crimea) Russia also had bases in Syria, Vietnam (closed 2002), Cuba (closed 2002), Uzbekistan (from 2006-2012)

²¹¹ The SCO is a Eurasian political, economic/energy and military organization founded by China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. All of them, except Uzbekistan, had been former members of Shanghai Five – renamed the organization after the inclusion of Uzbekistan in 2001. Includes several observer states, dialogue partners and guest attendances. Prime aim of the military cooperation is fight terrorism and separatism in Central Asia.

²¹² Ingmar Oldberg, "Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Powerhouse or paper tiger?", Swedish Defence Research Agency, Report FOI-R-2301- SE, June 2007, p. 16

²¹³ The Kremlin (President of Russia), "Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)", Directory and additional information, <http://en.kremlin.ru/catalog/glossary/30> (Accessed 12.09.15)

a plan for Western withdrawal from Afghanistan, and from its bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.²¹⁴ Although Russia-China military cooperation was to some extent a show of force against the U.S. in the region, the general military cooperation and integration was low with a sole focus on countering regional issues.²¹⁵ Although China and Russia found common ground in keeping NATO and the U.S. out of the region, the military cooperation was primarily ad-hoc as neither would give up sovereignty to the organization.²¹⁶ As Russia was generally concerned about China's growing capabilities and influence in the region, the potential of military integration seemed low.

The American BMD plans in Europe seemingly changed Russia's attitude. Accordingly, Russia's responses from 2007 onwards focused on the West openly instead of regionally or indirectly, mostly because the threats were seemingly perceived to be more direct as well. The perceived military threats of the BMD and a potential NATO third expansion required Russia to defend its interests more actively. Particularly, many Western experts regarded Putin's speech at the Munich Conference on Security Policy in 2007 as the prime expression of the shift in Russian strategy towards increased assertiveness. In Munich, Putin attacked almost all elements of American foreign policy when he accused the U.S. of attempting to create a unipolar world, of meddling in the internal affairs of others, of circumventing the UN and international law:

The U.S has overstepped its borders in all spheres – economic, political and humanitarian – and has imposed itself on other states (...) And of course this is extremely dangerous. It results in the fact that no one feels safe. I want to emphasize this -- no one feels safe! Because no one can feel that international law is like a stone-wall that will protect them.²¹⁷

However, the Munich speech was seemingly an expression of the long-term Russian strategic thinking and attitudinal change since 2003-4. These assertive tendencies were also in line with the strategic documents of 2000 and also identified in Putin's Annual Addresses between 2005-2007. According to Lavrov, the Munich speech

²¹⁴ Beehner, 2005

²¹⁵ Oldberg 2007, p. 26

²¹⁶ Oldberg, 2007, p. 25

²¹⁷ Putin, Speech of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, Germany, 2007

raised the awareness in the West of Russia's opposition. Before Munich the West had not taken Russia's opposition seriously as Russia mainly focused on the region and diplomatic-political means.²¹⁸

Additionally, the increased rhetorical assertiveness from 2007 was combined with a growing emphasis on hard power. In line with the threat of the American BMD, Russia stated that it would be "forced to take measures to protect its security" if U.S. continued these objectives.²¹⁹ Putin chose to suspend the treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) in 2007, as he argued that the treaty had outlived its relevance.²²⁰ The suspension of the CFE led to massive criticism from the West, but it seemed to have little impact as Russia continued its firm stand towards the BMD by threatening with military action. The defense minister, Sergei Ivanov, and Putin threatened to point Russian ICBM's at Europe if the BMD plans were executed.²²² Additionally, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, Russia resumed military exercises and activity in the Arctic, Pacific and Mediterranean.²²³ From 2007 it is reasonable to argue that Russia increased the focus on force; in demonstrations of force and as reactions to Western activities. Although these actions were mostly a resumption of former activities of the Soviet Union, which could be viewed as natural activities by a powerful state that has been inactive for a long time, it correlated with an increased anti-Western discourse and more serious threat perceptions. Seemingly, from a Russian point of view, the increased focus on force was defensive.

²¹⁸ Lavrov, "The present and the future of global politics", 2007

²¹⁹ The Kremlin (President of Russia), "The effectiveness of cooperation between Russia and NATO will depend on the extent to which the countries of the Atlantic Alliance respect Russian interests and on the Alliance's willingness to compromise on issues shaping the strategic environment in Europe and the world", April 4, 2008, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/44084> (Accessed 11.09.15)

²²⁰ Vladimir Putin "Annual Address (...)", 2007

²²¹ Signed in 1990. The CFE was an agreement that secured a balance of conventional forces in Europe by establishing limits on conventional military equipment. In Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly", 2007 Putin argued that the BMD and Western military bases along Russian borders would violate the treaty. The balance of forces in Europe would be switched to Western advantage, as Russia was not allowed under the treaty to move its forces within its own country.

²²² Luke Harding, "Russia issues new missile defence threat", *The Guardian*, Moscow, July 4, 2007, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/jul/04/russia.usa> (Accessed 27.09.15); De Haas, 2010, p. 62-63

²²³ Katarzyna Zysk, "Managing military change in Russia", In Bekkevold, Jo Inge, Ian Bowers and Michael Raska (ed), *Security, Strategy and Military Change in the 21st Century. Cross-regional perspectives*, Routledge, 2015, p. 161

4.4 Conclusion

During the first two periods of Putin's presidency Russia's interests and strategic ends focused on achieving great power status and influence globally, regaining regional hegemony and protecting Russia's territorial and political sovereignty. Specifically, as Russia needed to rise from the collapse of the 1990s, economic growth was the main priority. The assessment of the strategic environment and threat perceptions was somewhat ambiguous, as the internal focus during the first period (2000-2003) and the emphasis on economic development decreased the traditional threat perceptions of the West. Russia was also too weak to oppose the West in any serious way. However, after the Iraqi intervention and color revolutions, and later the BMD plans, the perceptions of being pushed out regionally, encircled and ignored globally and challenged internally increased within the Kremlin. Although Russia attempted to pragmatically cooperate with the West to obtain strategic ends, the pragmatic strategy was perceived as too dependent and based on Russia's weakness, rather than on its own specific national interests.

As a consequence of growing economic power and perceived dangers from the West, Russia's responses reflected a stronger strategy. The strategy was dominated by political-diplomatic means, such as flexible and strategic partnerships, regional consolidation and attempted containment of the West, and harsher and more opposing rhetoric. These methods showed a cautious maneuvering in a rapidly changing strategic environment, and the Russian leadership never tried to aggressively confront the West or spur countermeasures that could hurt Russian economic or global interests. In this sense, as Russia was weak in both economic and military terms, Moscow emphasized the link between economic growth and strategic choices. The military instrument was mostly passive and thus did not play a dominant role in Russia's strategic planning or implementation. Although Moscow showed more military presence in the region, hard balancing against the West was futile as alliance partners were weak or ad hoc, and capabilities few or in decay. In general, Russia was unable to really pose a threat to the West in military terms during this period and Moscow seemingly relied on a more passive strategic deterrence, at least until 2007.

In sum, the grand strategy during President Putin's first two terms was first implemented as a pragmatic and cooperative strategy, but changed to a strategy of assertiveness displaying Russian autonomy and self-awareness of its own interests. From 2004 onwards Moscow essentially exposed Russia's unwillingness to accept a position of weakness or dependence on the West. However, the strategy was primarily centered on soft and defensive means, and as the military element was downgraded, the assertive strategy should be regarded as *reserved*.

5 2008-2014:

Active Assertiveness

“We should not tempt anyone by allowing ourselves to be weak.”
Vladimir Putin, 2012²²⁴

The Russian constitution prevents the president from running for a third consecutive term. Thus, on May 7th 2008 Vladimir Putin stepped down and was replaced by former Prime Minister, Dmitry Anatolyevich Medvedev. Medvedev became the third president of the Russian Federation. Medvedev’s strategic thinking towards the West did not diverge significantly from his predecessor’s, although his approach has been regarded as more liberal and cooperative.²²⁵ One explanation of the perceived strategic continuity is that Putin was still deeply involved in Russia’s foreign and security decision-making, as he became prime minister. Another is that the Russian security policy thinking and perceptions were very much grounded in a consensus-based strategic vision centered on a common recognition of objectives, threats and strategic policies. After only one term, Medvedev and Putin swapped seats, and in 2012 Putin initiated his third period as President of the Russian Federation.

During the former period, Russia reemerged as a major player in international affairs as a consequence of increased economic and internal strength. More importantly, Russia had managed to re-establish its position as the dominant actor in most of the post-Soviet region. During the second period, 2008-2014, Russia’s grand strategy towards the West was still founded on the objectives of global influence and strong international status, but now implemented with more confidence and independence. Twice threats were perceived as so vital to Russian national security that it required the use of force, in Georgia 2008 and in Ukraine 2014. Concretely, the increased international focus on the Arctic, NATO expansion, the U.S. and NATO BMD plans, the American “reset”, NATO’s intervention in Libya and the subsequent

²²⁴ Vladimir Putin, “Being Strong: National Security guarantees for Russia”, *Russia Today*, February 19, 2012, <http://www.rt.com/politics/official-word/strong-putin-military-russia-711/> (Accessed 04.03.15)

²²⁵ Tsygankov, 2011, p. 32

civil war in Syria, in addition to the Ukraine crisis were the most influential issues forming Russia's policies towards the West during the second period.

The following chapter argues that as a result of a stronger economic base and subsequent build-up of military capabilities, Russia regained confidence and influence in the international arena. The eight-year period also saw an increase in perceived threats to Russian national interests, and a growing distrust related to Western intentions of unilateralism and new attempts at encirclement and containment of Russia. Combined, these factors supported an implemented strategy of *active assertiveness* towards the West as Moscow seemingly protected and promoted its interests more strongly than during the former period.

Contrary to the former period, the military element became more prominent. The combination of increased defense spending, more show of force and new forms of warfare revealed a more proactive Russia, who exposed a willingness to apply force when perceived threatened and as a tool to obtain strategic objectives. In the former period Moscow pursued a military strategy of strategic deterrence that was mostly passive until 2007. The current period witnessed a more offensive military strategy. More concretely, the overarching deterrence strategy was based on *forward defense*²²⁶, recognized by increased presence and sabre rattling in strategic areas. In short, the emphasis on military force grew.

In line with the former chapters, chapter five will examine the implemented grand strategy of 2008-2014 by first reviewing strategic ends looking at traditional, regional and global interests and objectives. Secondly, it will discuss Russia's appraisal of the strategic environment and perceived threats. Lastly, the chapter will analyze Russia's ways and means.

5.1 Strategic Ends: Traditional, Regional and Global

There is a clear stability in Russia's strategic ends as they continued into the second period with few real changes. Similar to the former period, the traditional and regional interests and objectives prevailed. As the Arctic gained focus internationally, energy resources in the north came to the fore in Russian strategic thinking. The importance

²²⁶ Term applied by Katarzyna Zysk, Interview with author, March 18, 2015

of areas of “vital interest” and the protection of compatriots abroad gained more de facto attention. Additionally, Russian great power status and influence in world affairs became even more prominent as the objective of military build up was prioritized. In line with the former chapters, Russian strategic ends are divided into traditional, regional and global interests and objectives.

The strategic interests of the Russian Federation were again listed in updated official security documents. A new version of the Foreign Policy Concept (FPC) was issued in 2008, while a more comprehensive National Security Strategy to 2020 (NSS) was published in 2009. The Military Doctrine (MD) was updated in 2010. In 2013 a new Foreign Policy Concept was published as a consequence of international developments related to the Middle East uprisings, and in 2014 the Russian leadership approved a new Military Doctrine. These documents put forward Kremlin’s priorities and strategic outlook in international affairs for the coming years.

Russia’s official traditional interests and objectives barely changed from the former period. Again the leadership listed interests of priority, such as ensuring the national security of the people, preserving and strengthening Russia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, avoiding interference in internal affairs and protecting political sovereignty.²²⁷ In practical terms, this meant keeping foreign actors and military installations far away from Russian borders, i.e. the BMD and NATO expansion. Additionally, protection of energy and natural resources, which constituted the basis for Russia’s long-term development, gained more focus in strategic documents after 2008. As Moscow saw an increased competition between international actors over natural resources, areas vital to Russian energy production became one of the most important national interests to protect.²²⁸

Consequently, the Arctic region gained more attention as formerly unreachable areas became accessible as a result of ice melting. As the region has been recognized to constitute 80% of Russian gas reserves and 90% of Russian oil reserves, the area

²²⁷ NSS, 2009, p. 5 and FPC, 2008, p. 1

²²⁸ NSS, 2009, p. 3

was perceived as vital to Russia's economy and development.²²⁹ In Moscow's first public Arctic Strategy of 2008, the Kremlin's declared objective was to turn the Russian parts of the region into "a strategic resource base for the Russian Federation" and preserve Russia's role as the "leading Arctic power".²³⁰ Compared to the former period, Moscow increased its interest base and policy priorities by emphasizing the Arctic as an area of strategic interest. In 2013, Moscow published the second Arctic Strategy. Moreover, the High North and the Arctic region also constituted an important part of Russia's defense, given that Russia's shoreline covers almost half of the latitudinal circle and as most of its maritime nuclear capabilities were stationed in the region. Thus, for both military strategic and economic reasons Moscow opposed competition and any countries contesting its right to the region.²³¹

The post-Soviet region continued to dominate the regional interests of Moscow, in security, political and economic terms. Thus, the objective of strengthening Russia's regional leadership and hegemony in the CIS region continued. In 2008, president Medvedev stated that the region was Russia's area of "privileged interests".²³² During the former period, Moscow managed to restore itself as the regional great power by using military and political instruments, and especially energy instrument. In speeches and strategic documents the Russian leadership underlined the CIS region as a priority area for integration and cooperation, particularly in relation to the stated importance of strengthening regional levels of global governance.²³³ In 2012 Putin stated that Moscow's strategic objective was to integrate the former Soviet countries into more sophisticated institutions.²³⁴ Additionally, the region constituted the area of short-term threats, such as Islamic terrorism and inter-ethnic conflicts. Thus, Russian military presence in the region continued to be a regional security interest.

²²⁹ Katarzyna Zysk, "Mellom fredsretorikk og militær opprustning: Russlands sikkerhetspolitiske og militære adferd i nordområdene", In Heier, Tormod and Anders Kjølberg, *Norge og Russland. Sikkerhetspolitiske utfordringer i nordområdene*, Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 2015, p. 77

²³⁰ Arctic Strategy quoted in Kristian Åtland, "Interstate Relations in the Arctic. An Emerging Security Dilemma", *Comparative Strategy*, 33:2, 2014, p.152

²³¹ Zysk, 2014, p. 71-72

²³² Paul Reynolds, "New Russian World Order: the five principles", *BBC News*, September 1, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7591610.stm> (Accessed 10.05.15)

²³³ FPC, 2008, p. 8

²³⁴ Vladimir Putin, Speech at meeting with the Russian ambassadors and permanent representatives in international organizations, July 9, 2012, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/15902> (Accessed 10.05.15)

The combined regional-traditional interest of “protection of rights and legitimate interests of Russian citizens and compatriots abroad” gained utmost importance during this period.²³⁵ This general objective had been stated in all strategic documents since the end of the Cold War, but now it became imminent as Moscow argued that Russian citizens were targeted Georgia in 2008, and Russian minority in Ukraine in 2014.²³⁶ The need for military protection of their life and security became an important de facto objective. Additionally, Moscow’s assessment of areas of “vital interest” - areas with historical, cultural and traditional ties to Russia, such as Ukraine - gained more and more focus throughout the period as Russia saw increased threats to Russia’s influence.

As for global interests, the Russian leadership presented these in a totally different context compared to the former period. In the new strategic documents, Moscow showed more confidence and self-assurance indicating that the role and power of Russia had improved in a major way in global affairs. The NSS stated that the former period had returned Russia to the international arena in the role of one of the world’s leading states²³⁷ – a position that was “fully in line with the age-old traditions of the country”.²³⁸ During this period it became important to *strengthen* Russia’s role in international affairs and influence in global decision-making rather than to *regain* such a role as in the former period.²³⁹ Though the Russian leadership did not apply the term “great power” in the documents, they used the term “one of the world’s leading states” in the NSS 2020.²⁴⁰ We might argue that the Russian objectives in fact increased, as Russia seemingly has a tendency to perceive itself as equal to the U.S. and China, and not the G8 states or the other UNSC states. However, “one of the world’s leading states” does not necessarily mean “superpower”. As Moscow, especially Lavrov, constantly talked about a polycentric world and multipolarity, this thesis argues that Russia’s great power ambitions continued,

²³⁵ FPC 2008, p. 1

²³⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Activities of the Russian Federation in 2008*, A survey by the MFA of Russia, Moscow, March 2009, p. 5; Vladimir Putin, “Address by the President of the Russian Federation”, March 18, 2014 <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603> (Accessed 28.09.15)

²³⁷ NSS 2009, p. 1

²³⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Activities of the Russian Federation in 2008*, 2009, p. 3-4

²³⁹ FPC, 2008, p. 1

²⁴⁰ NSS, 2009, p. 1

although Moscow acted more as a self-perceived superpower after Putin returned in 2012.²⁴¹

Thus, the interest of multipolarity, the only system that could create international stability and assure Russian international influence, persisted. In line with Putin's Munich Speech, Medvedev continued to state that unipolarity was unacceptable to Russia, and world domination was impermissible.²⁴² Lavrov also stated that "Russia cannot exist as a subordinate country of a world leader".²⁴³ During this period, Moscow also emphasized the division between Russia and the West. Lavrov underlined the increased global competition over values, and promoted Russia as a counterweight to the West's worldview.²⁴⁴ Accordingly, the former objective of integrating into the West became clearly unrealistic: "We view ourselves as – and really are – one of the centers of the new polycentric world."²⁴⁵ Consequently, Russia sought an independent foreign policy course, according to Putin in 2012, one that proceeded "from our own interests and goals rather than decisions dictated by someone else."²⁴⁶

Internal development and economic interests continued to be linked to Russia's ambitions of increased status in world affairs. During the last period Russia experienced high economic growth, and the NSS from 2009 declared that "priority issues in the economic sphere have been resolved".²⁴⁷ However, the Russian economy was hit hard by the financial crisis in late 2009,²⁴⁸ and made the Kremlin again emphasize the role of economy and domestic modernization as a strategic priority.²⁴⁹ However, Russia was more confident in its economic situation compared to the former period as it had managed to pay its foreign debt and establish a steady economic

²⁴¹ Sergei Lavrov, "Russia and the World in the 21st Century", *Russia in Global Affairs*, August 9, 2008, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_11291 (Accessed 04.04.15)

²⁴² Reynolds, 2008

²⁴³ Sergei Lavrov, "Russia in the 21st-Century World of Power", *Russia in Global Affairs*, December 27, No 4, 2012, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_11291 (Accessed 12.03.15)

²⁴⁴ Lavrov, 2008

²⁴⁵ Lavrov, 2012

²⁴⁶ Vladimir Putin, "Russia and the Changing World", *Valdai Discussion Club*, 27. February 2012, <http://valdaiclub.com/politics/39300.html> (Accessed 04.03.15)

²⁴⁷ NSS, 2009, p. 1

²⁴⁸ In 2009 Russian GDP fell 7,8%. See World Bank, Data on GDP growth. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG/countries?display=default> (Accessed 27.09.15)

²⁴⁹ See Dimitry Medvedev, "Go Russia!", September 10, 2009, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/5413> (Accessed 17.08.15)

growth primarily based on energy exports.²⁵⁰ Accordingly, the Russian leadership increasingly focused on the importance of military power. Even during the financial crisis, Moscow continued to allocate resources to the new military reforms of 2008. Military power was seemingly the ultimate requirement for great power status, as Putin stated: “we will not strengthen the international position or develop Russian economy if we are not able to protect Russia”.²⁵¹ Thus, being strong was a mean to ensure national security, but clearly also an end in itself.

In sum, a review of the different strategic interests and objectives of the Russian Federation during this period shows that Russia stated and promoted these from a position of perceived strength. Russia’s strategic ends focused on maintaining and *strengthening* the re-established position as a prominent player both in global and regional affairs. The global ambitions increased and military power gained priority, although the economic objectives continued. The CIS region was still important, but areas of “vital” interests and compatriots abroad gained the strongest focus. Combined, these were linked to the traditional interests of keeping the West far away from Russian territory, internal affairs and area of privileged interests, including the Arctic region.

5.2. Appraisal of the Strategic Environment

The strategic ends of the Russian Federation show stability in strategic ideas. As for threat perceptions and the evaluation of the strategic environment, these tend to change as a result of occurring events. However, Moscow’s assessment of the West seemingly continued on the same path as the former period, but the Kremlin also identified new and more direct threats posed by Western actors. Western unilateralism reappeared on the agenda, in addition to the Western practice of meddling in internal affairs of sovereign states. This led to increased distrust within Moscow, which culminated in 2014, as the relationship between Russia and the West developed into confrontation as a result of the Ukraine crisis.

²⁵⁰ See Sputnik International, “Russia’s economy under Vladimir Putin: achievements and failures”, March 1, 2008, <http://www.sputniknews.com/analysis/20080301/100381963.html> (Accessed 28.09.15)

²⁵¹ Putin, “Being Strong: National Security guarantees for Russia”, 2012

As in the former period, Moscow did not see any likelihood of a large-scale war against the West.²⁵² However, Moscow still regarded the international system as insecure and unstable as it was dominated by force and military means. Moscow still perceived the international legal system of mechanisms and instruments to be imperfect.²⁵³ As for the terrorist threat, which had dominated the threat perceptions during the former period, it was seemingly downgraded in the strategic documents of this period.

In line with Russia's growing confidence, the role of the West was perceived as being weakened during this period. Firstly, the new American President Barack Obama and his administration in Washington were more cautious and diplomatic than the hawkish Bush administration.²⁵⁴ The new policies of Washington decreased the Russian perception of NATO as a threat and of an American messianic mission. Although the threat perceptions ran deep, according to the Russian analyst, Sergey Karaganov, Moscow initially saw a better partner in Obama with his proposed "reset"²⁵⁵ than in the former President George W. Bush.²⁵⁶ Secondly, according to Moscow, the world witnessed an imminent cessation of the Western dominance in the international system. Particularly, this was a consequence of the global financial and economic crisis.²⁵⁷ The "historical" West was losing its monopoly on the globalization process, and according to the Foreign Policy Concept of 2008, the Western values were not as attractive as they had been during the early post-Cold War period.²⁵⁸ However, according to Moscow, instead of facing up to the changes in the international system, the Western reactions to the prospects of the loss of monopoly were to resist it, which included a "continued political and psychological policy of

²⁵² MD, 2010, p. 3

²⁵³ NSS, p. 3

²⁵⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Activities of the Russian Federation in 2008, 2009*, p. 5

²⁵⁵ The "reset" was a proposed new policy of the new U.S. administration. It was meant as a "fresh start" in the Russia-U.S. relationship based on mutual interests, and more dialogue and cooperation. Obama emphasized the need to remove the old antagonisms from the Cold War and the mutual distrust. See Luke Harding and Matthew Weaver, "Barack Obama calls for 'reset' in US-Russia relations", Moscow, July 7, 2009, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jul/07/barack-obama-russia-moscow-speech> (Accessed 27.09.15)

²⁵⁶ Sergey Karaganov, "After the reset", *Russia in Global Affairs*, October 26, 2010.

<http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/pubcol/After-the-Reset-15027> (Accessed 28.09.15)

²⁵⁷ FPC 2013, p. 1

²⁵⁸ FPC 2008, p.2

containing Russia”.²⁵⁹ The continued bloc-based security architecture in Europe, promoted by NATO, created dividing lines and a perception of Russia as the enemy.²⁶⁰ Although the “reset” was welcomed, the perception of Western unilateralism and the inability to change the security architecture were still perceived as threats to Russian global influence.²⁶¹

In military terms, the overall military force asymmetry between Russia and the West was still of great concern for the Kremlin, and the perceived danger of the BMD continued into this period as well. The NSS stated that there were “a number of leading foreign countries directed at achieving predominant superiority in the military sphere, primarily in terms of strategic forces.”²⁶² At the Lisbon Summit in 2010 NATO leaders adopted missile defense as a principal alliance objective, and approved the integration of U.S. and NATO BMD plans.²⁶³ Moscow still perceived the BMD as upsetting the nuclear balance, as the BMD could disrupt Russia’s retaliatory strike capability, the core of its national defense.²⁶⁴ Moreover, the Russian leadership saw “most of the world’s leading countries actively upgrading their military arsenals and investing huge sums in developing advanced weapons systems”.²⁶⁵ With this development, nuclear forces would play a diminishing role deterring weapons of modern warfare, i.e. conventional high-precision weapons, such as the American Prompt Global Strike,²⁶⁶ cyber weapons or weapons in space.²⁶⁷

As the Arctic gradually entered Russia’s agenda, Moscow feared competition in the area linked to the broader battle of energy resources.²⁶⁸ As the Arctic region was identified as the hub for future energy resources in a world with generally dwindling energy reserves, Moscow was concerned about the possibility of other actors applying

²⁵⁹ FPC 2008, p.2

²⁶⁰ Lavrov, 2012

²⁶¹ Vladimir Putin, “The Syrian Alternative”, September 12, 2013, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19205> (Accessed 01.08.15)

²⁶² NSS, 2009, p.

²⁶³ Jonathan Masters, “Ballistic Missile Defense”, Council of Foreign Relations, CFR Backgrounder, August 15, 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/missile-defense/ballistic-missile-defense/p30607#p4> (Accessed 05.04.15)

²⁶⁴ Putin, “Being Strong: National Security guarantees for Russia”, 2012

²⁶⁵ Vladimir Putin, Speech at the Expanded Meeting of the Defence Ministry Board, December 10, 2013 <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19816> (Accessed 10.05.15)

²⁶⁶ The Prompt Global Strike: American effort to develop a system of precision-guided conventional weapon that can airstrike anywhere in the world within one hour.

²⁶⁷ See MD 2010, p. 4; Putin, “Being Strong: National Security guarantees for Russia”, 2012

²⁶⁸ NSS, 2009, p. 4

military force in a resource rivalry.²⁶⁹ The other Arctic countries bordering the High North were four Western NATO members. Thus, increased military presence and competition over resources was perceived likely. The U.S., Canada and Norway regularly conducted military exercises in their northern areas, and Denmark planned on developing special Arctic military units.²⁷⁰ The fear of NATO countries barring Russia from its legal territorial and resource rights in the Arctic underlined the perception of Western containment and threats from NATO also in the High North.²⁷¹ According to Katarzyna Zysk, the Russian perception was that the military threat towards Russian interests in the region would only increase in the future.²⁷²

More generally, the Western messianic mission and unilateral use of force was illustrated during this period as well. The NATO campaign in Libya in 2011 revealed anew the Western covert egocentric intentions as the given UNSC mandate of a no-fly zone turned into a campaign of regime change.²⁷³ In 2012, the West, in particular the U.S., intensively discussed intervening in Syria to stop the civil war. From Russia's point of view, the Western promotion of democracy with "blood and iron" violated international law and norms of non-interference and sovereignty.²⁷⁴ Such actions were perceived to be attempts at safeguarding a Western-centric world order, but as Moscow argued, such action created a threat of total destabilization of the international system.²⁷⁵

The traditional threat of NATO expansion into Russia's near abroad was one of the most prominent threats identified during this period. Concretely, Georgia's and Ukraine's bid for NATO membership during the former period became relevant at the start of Medvedev's presidential term. The Western influence in and support for the anti-Russian Georgian regime, and the American military support and geostrategic and economic interests in the Caucasus seemingly spurred feelings of interference and

²⁶⁹ Putin, Speech at the Expanded Meeting of the Defence Ministry Board, February 27, 2013, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17588> (Accessed 10.05.15)

²⁷⁰ Åtland, "Interstate Relations in the Arctic", 2014, p. 153.

²⁷¹ Marlene Laurelle, *Russia's Arctic Strategies and the Future of the Far North*, M.E. Sharpe, New York, 2014, p. 11

²⁷² Zysk, "Managing military change in Russia", 2015, p. 161

²⁷³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov Interview with Profil Magazine", October 10, 2011, (Accessed 10.08.15) http://archive.mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/C4F7C92A4246C22AC3257926003B642F?OpenDocument

²⁷⁴ Lavrov, 2012

²⁷⁵ FPC 2013, p. 3

encirclement.²⁷⁶ After the Russia-Georgia war in 2008, NATO toned down its attempts at new memberships in the region. However, the NATO issue regained attention in 2013-2014 in relation to Ukraine.

Although NATO backed down after 2008 and Russia seemingly lowered the threat perception of American presence in Central Asia, Russian regional interests were still affected by attempted Western non-military infiltration. The continued containment policies of the West, exemplified in the region by energy cooperation or by economic and political partnerships through the EU, were recognized as potential dangers.²⁷⁷ According to Sergey Karaganov, these factors were perceived to limit Russia's freedom, push it out of the region and isolate it from markets vital to Russian development and economy.²⁷⁸ Thus, Russia viewed soft threats of economic integration and EU democracy promotion as elements in the zero-sum game of the region. Compared to the former period, the EU was perceived as a growing threat to Russian interests.

As for Western democracy promotion, Russia identified new covert threats in the region similar to the former period's color revolutions. Moscow saw the West promoting and funding political forces and social movements as a way to spur disturbances within the region. These actions were perceived as targeting the Russian regime as well.²⁷⁹ Specifically, this threat perception materialized in the Ukrainian crisis as Russia witnessed riots and a Western engineered coup in March 2014.²⁸⁰ The whole process was initiated by the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine. Russia had constantly been wary of Ukrainian-Western cooperation, as Ukraine was perceived to be part of Russia's historical land and identity. During the former period, Russia regarded NATO membership to Ukraine as a prominent threat. Now, Russia also saw a threat in Ukraine's cooperation with the EU, which was

²⁷⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009, p. 6

²⁷⁷ Valentina Pop, "EU expanding its "sphere of influence, Russia says", *Euobserver*, Brussels, March 21, 2009. <https://euobserver.com/foreign/27827> (Accessed 22.09.15)

²⁷⁸ Sergey Karaganov, "Eurasian way out of the European Crisis", *Russia in Global Affairs*, June 8, 2015. <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/pubcol/Eurasian-Way-Out-of-the-European-Crisis-17505> (Accessed 20.09.15)

²⁷⁹ Lavrov, 2014. See also "Zysk, Managing military change in Russia", 2015, p. 162

²⁸⁰ The Kremlin, "News conference of Vladimir Putin", Moscow, 18. December 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47250> (Accessed 28.09.15)

seemingly perceived to be a trojan horse into the greater Western integration process, and potentially leading to NATO membership.²⁸¹

The Ukrainian crisis, and its consequences for the relationship between Russia and the West, was a striking example of all the Russian threat perceptions coming to the fore all together targeting traditional, regional and global interests. Again Lavrov accused the West of continued Cold War encirclement and containment policies.²⁸² Russia saw the West attempting to meddle in its internal affairs, influence its relations with its neighbors, and indeed push Russia out of the region, as well as degrade its role globally. The fact that the West responded to Russian annexation of Crimea, and to Russia's involvement in Ukraine, by applying sanctions on Russia, stationing NATO forces in the Baltics and exercising near Russian borders, increased the feelings of Western threats to Russia's national security.²⁸³

In sum, seen from Moscow, the West constituted a multifaceted danger to Russian interests during the second period. The West's, in particular the American and NATO's, attempts at creating disturbance in the military balance were perceived to directly target Russia's traditional interests. The Western continued presence in the region, now also the EU, targeted Russian regional objectives of control and influence. The more indirect threats to Russian global interests were Western continued emphasis on its bloc-based security regime, Western unilateralism in the Middle East and democracy promotion. The most important event was the Ukrainian crisis, which affected almost all Russian security interests and increased the perception of a Western enemy.

²⁸¹ Sergey Karaganov, "Russia needs to defend its interests with an iron fist", *Russia in Global Affairs*, March 6, 2014, <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/pubcol/Russia-needs-to-defend-its-interests-with-an-iron-fist-16457> (Accessed 20.09.15)

²⁸² Lavrov, 2014

²⁸³ Vladimir Putin, "Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly", December 4, 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47173> (Accessed 28.09.15)

5.3 Ways and Means of Strategy: Considerations and Responses

During the period of 2008-2014, Russia's strategic considerations and responses reflected more ambitious interests and increased strength, but also insecurity and increased threat perceptions. Moscow was more consistent in its strategic implementation as decisions seemed to relate more to its official line. During this period Russia responded to threats with more capabilities than the former period, in addition to acting more independently and proactively. However, the period also included Russian-Western cooperation, but now more on Russia's terms compared to the former period. In sum, Russian considerations and responses displayed a strategy of active assertiveness. The following section will particularly discuss the growing military element in Russian grand strategy, in regards to the Georgian war, military build-up and presence, as well as the Ukraine crisis.

Contrary to the former period, it is not relevant to divide these seven years into two distinct periods. The Russian strategic approach towards the West was not straight-lined, but rather shifting as a consequence of different priorities and events occurring. Thus, if we attempt to look more closely into the overall picture of Russian strategic policies, 2008-2009 might be considered a continuation of the harsher approach starting approximately during Putin's second presidential term, in particular in military terms from 2007. From 2009-2010/11, Russian policies were dominated by constructive cooperation with the West, as a consequence of global financial crisis and proposed "reset" in the U.S., focusing on common interests. From 2011 to 2014, Russian frustration over Western unilateralism and its own increased focus on traditional interests, led to a firmer strategic approach culminating in the crisis of 2014.

As stated above, Moscow was more confident in its strategic outlook and self-perception than during the previous period. As it had gained stability within and experienced a huge economic growth, Moscow assessed that it had managed to establish Russia as an independent player in world affairs. According to the National Security Strategy to 2020:

Russia has overcome the consequences of the systemic political and socio-economic crisis of the end of the 20th Century (...) preserved its sovereignty and territorial integrity; and restored

the country's potential to enhance its competitiveness and defend its national interests as a key player within evolving multipolar international relations.²⁸⁴

Additionally, the Foreign Policy Concept of 2008 stated, "Anew Russia (...) has now acquired a full-fledged role in global affairs".²⁸⁵ The perceived evolving multipolar international system had created a potential for Russia to "reinforce its influence on the world stage" and to become one of the influential centers in the modern world.²⁸⁶

Already in August 2008, Russia showed signs of increased determination in its strategy to the outside world. When Georgia "barbaric[ally] attack[ed]" the break-away republic South Ossetia and its population, killing Russian peacekeepers and people with Russian passports, Moscow insisted that it saw no other choice than to intervene as it needed to "force Georgia to peace".²⁸⁷ During the military intervention, Russia did not only intervene in South Ossetia, but also established a second front in the other breakaway republic Abkhazia, in addition to invade Georgia proper. The Russia-Georgia five-day war was the first time Moscow intervened militarily into another country since the Cold War, and the first time it applied military force within the region to obtain strategic objectives.

The relationship between Russia and Georgia had been bad since the breakup of the Soviet Union, and thus the war had bilateral and historical causes.²⁸⁸ However, the military response of Russia needs to be seen in a broader perspective. Since the early 2000s, Georgia built strong ties with the U.S. cooperating especially on military and energy issues. Viewed in a Russia-Western context, the Russian intervention occurred in the context of NATO's discussions in April 2008 about Georgian and Ukrainian future memberships. In this sense, Moscow's actions towards Georgia involved a huge risk. A military campaign against an American strategic partner could spur counter-measures, but seemingly the benefits of the intervention were worth the potential costs. According to the Swedish Defense Research Agency (FOI) report of

²⁸⁴ NSS, 2009, p. 1

²⁸⁵ FPC, 2008, p. 2

²⁸⁶ NSS, 2009, p. 3

²⁸⁷ Dimitry Medvedev, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly", November 8, 2008, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/messages/1968> (Accessed 15.08.15); Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Activities of the Russian Federation in 2008*, 2009, p. 129

²⁸⁸ De Haas, 2010, p. 135-138

2008, Moscow asserted its interests with the use of force, and signaled to the West that Russia refused to let NATO come closer to its borders and penetrate its area of privileged interests.²⁸⁹ For the first time since the Cold War, Russia showed actual military opposition to potential Western development; although applied by proxy. The FOI report argues that the Russian military operation also illustrated Russia's power in the region and its capability of defending its interests. The unchallenged operation subsequently revealed the weakness and reluctance of NATO and the U.S. to confront Russia in its backyard.²⁹⁰ Although Russia never referred to NATO as a reason for the war, according to Reuters, Medvedev stated in 2011:

If [we] (...) had faltered in 2008, the geopolitical arrangement would be different now (...) and number of countries which (NATO) tried to deliberately drag into the alliance, would have mostly been part of it now.²⁹¹

The fact that NATO sent naval vessels into the Black Sea and froze cooperation with Russia afterwards, also showed to Moscow that the conflict went far beyond a bilateral issue between Georgia and Russia.²⁹² Moreover, Russia also demonstrated the potential of frozen conflicts between breakaway regions and sovereign states in the region. The capability to turn these hot if NATO or the EU attempted further expansion was clearly a powerful tool. An internal conflict within aspiring NATO members, including Moldova, Ukraine and Azerbaijan, would most likely prevent membership.²⁹³

The decision to apply force against Georgia was seen by many as Russia's break with the past post-Cold War policy; a return to neo-imperialism and resurgence of Russia as a great power.²⁹⁴ However, arguably it can also be interpreted as a culmination of the frustration within the Kremlin since 2004 over Western influence and infiltration into its regional interest sphere. Nevertheless, it might be regarded as a break, as it was the first real example of Russian de facto military assertiveness. This

²⁸⁹ Leijonhielm, 2008, p. 17

²⁹⁰ Leijonhielm, 2008, p. 17

²⁹¹ Denis Dyomkin, "Russia says Georgia war stopped NATO expansion", *Reuters.*, November 21, 2011. <http://in.reuters.com/article/2011/11/21/idINIndia-60645720111121> (Accessed 04.04.2015)

²⁹² Dimitry Medvedev, "Annual Address (...)", 2008

²⁹³ Goes for Georgia (Abkhazia and South-Ossetia), Moldova (Transnistria), Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh) and Ukraine (Donbass: Donetsk and Luhansk).

²⁹⁴ See i.e. Mankoff, 2009; Lucas, 2008; De Haas, 2010

action seemed to show that the former restraints caused by the fear of costs and confrontation with the West had been removed.

Although the Russian intervention had been successful, the Russian operation revealed serious weaknesses and inadequacy in the Russian Armed Forces. Thus, in 2008 Moscow initiated a huge reform of the Russian military. The objective of the reform was to change from Soviet-style mobilization defense to smaller mobile units based on rapid reaction capacity suitable for fighting local and regional wars.²⁹⁵ In addition, Moscow identified a huge need for modern materiel and equipment, declaring that 70% of weapons would be modernized within 2020.²⁹⁶ During the period, Russia increased the defense budgets every year. In 2008 Moscow spent 61,483 billion dollars and 3,3% of GDP on defense. These numbers steadily rose to 91,64 billion dollars in 2014, constituting 4,5% of Russian GDP.²⁹⁷ Today Moscow spends more money on defense than on health.²⁹⁸

The reforms were also a necessary response to the new threatening tendencies from the West, such as the BMD and new technical equipment changing the nature of modern conflicts. These issues were also identified in the former period, but Moscow never managed to implement the reforms until 2008. New capabilities were clearly needed to prevent the disruption of the balance of power. In an environment where force dominated, Russia's global objectives demanded highly skilled, rapid-reaction military forces with modern equipment who could be deployed anywhere in the world.²⁹⁹ Additionally, military capability played a political role as well. The perception was that the lack of hard power – no capability, no credibility – was the main reason why Russia had been ignored during the 1990s. Medvedev emphasized the importance of military capability in 2008, legitimizing Russian rearmament by summing up Western violations of Russian interests:

²⁹⁵ De Haas, 2011, p. 5

²⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 21

²⁹⁷ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), The SIPRI Military Expenditure. Constant 2011 US dollars.

²⁹⁸ Russia spends less than China and US if we compare total amount of money spent on military. However, Russia spends more if we look at % of GDP (in 2014). See SIPRI, The SIPRI Military Expenditure.

²⁹⁹ Putin, Speech at the Expanded Meeting of the Defence Ministry Board, February 27, 2013

I would add something about what we have had to face in recent years: what is it? It is the construction of a global missile defence system, the installation of military bases around Russia, the unbridled expansion of NATO and other similar ‘presents’ for Russia – we therefore have every reason to believe that they are simply testing our strength.³⁰⁰

Accordingly, although Moscow wanted to remove the Soviet-style defense, the importance of nuclear capability was never abandoned. As Putin wrote in an article in 2012: “As long as the ‘powder’ of our strategic nuclear forces (...) remains dry, nobody will dare launch a large-scale aggression against us.”³⁰¹ Hence, the strategic and nuclear forces were still the center of Russia’s military strategy, and in the new reforms, the strategic deterrence capabilities gained first priority. According to Tor Bukkvoll, Moscow’s ambition was 100% modern nuclear weapons within 2020.³⁰² In fact, as the U.S. developed even more high-tech global strike capabilities, the conventional force asymmetry and the weakness of Russian conventional forces compared to the West underscored the importance of the nuclear weapons. Russia was incapable of deterring the West with conventional weapons, although this is an ambition for the future.³⁰³ Similar to the former period and the 1990s, while nuclear forces played an important political role, they most certainly played the key role in Russian defense.³⁰⁴

Moscow’s more active assertiveness was identified in increased military presence. As the Kremlin’s objectives gained a broader agenda, Russia’s strategic military approach became seemingly more offensive. Especially, Russia’s increased activities in the Arctic region, and also in the Pacific and Mediterranean, illustrated the importance of the military instrument in promoting and safeguarding interests in a potentially unsafe environment.³⁰⁵ In the Arctic, although never realized, the awareness of a potential competition made Russia rebuild its capabilities in the north, among other things establishing an Arctic brigade, opening production on old

³⁰⁰ Medvedev, “Annual Address (...)”, 2008

³⁰¹ Putin, “Being Strong: National Security guarantees for Russia”, 2012

³⁰² Tor Bukkvoll, “Ambitions and Resources in Russian Military Policy”, Lecture at Leankollen Conference, Den Norske Atlanterhavskomite, February 3. 2015. Video available at: <http://www.atlanterhavskomiteen.no/nettsider/dnak/arrangementer/leankollen/2015> (Accessed 30.09.15)

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ McDermott, 2011, p. 4

³⁰⁵ Etterretningen, *Fokus 2014. Etterretningens vurdering*. Report of the Norwegian Intelligence Service, 2014, p. 17

shipyards, and increasing presence and exercises.³⁰⁶ Clearly, Moscow's ambitions and policies in the Arctic were an illustration of Russia's great power ambitions. Although Russia signaled and projected power in the region, the Kremlin argued it was purely a defensive necessity.³⁰⁷ However, it is important to underscore that diplomatic and political means dominated Russia's strategic approach towards the other actors in the Arctic, as Moscow's prime objective was to keep the area peaceful and stable.³⁰⁸

As stated earlier, Russia still regarded the European security architecture as a total violation of Russia's traditional and global interests. In diplomatic and political terms, Russia attempted to increase Russia's participation in the European security system. Early in his presidential period, Medvedev proposed a new European Security Treaty (EST), with the objective of excluding the Cold War relics of bloc-based security architecture in Europe.³⁰⁹ According to Moscow, this old system, promoted by NATO, denied the reality of the multipolar world.³¹⁰ The EST endorsed an indivisible security space for all its members based on common rules of conduct. Highly centered on non-interference, respect for sovereignty and joint decision-making, the treaty was supposed to encompass all the states from Vladivostok to Vancouver.³¹¹ Arguably, with this proposal Russia acted upon its displeasure by diplomatically proposing changes, showing a more proactive strategic approach. However, this proposed treaty was perceived by many European states as increasing Russia's role in European security, and subsequently weakening the role of NATO. Accordingly Western states largely ignored the proposal, as the EST was perceived to give Russia a veto over European security.³¹² Thus, the attempt at creating a new system of security in Europe failed quickly.

³⁰⁶ Etterretningen, *Fokus 2013. Etterretningens vurdering*, Report of the Norwegian Intelligence Service, 2013, p. 11

³⁰⁷ Vladimir Putin, Speech at the Expanded Meeting of the Defence Ministry Board, December 19, 2014 <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47257> (Accessed 28.09.15)

³⁰⁸ Etterretningen, *Fokus 2014*, p. 6

³⁰⁹ See The Kremlin (President of Russia), "The Draft of the European Security Treaty", November 29, 2009, Kremlin <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/6152> (Accessed 10.08.15)

³¹⁰ Sergei Lavrov, "The Euro-Atlantic Region: Equal Security for All", *Russia in Global Affairs*, July 7, 2010, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/The_Euro-Atlantic_Region:_Equal_Security_for_All-14888 (Accessed 15.04.15)

³¹¹ The Kremlin, "The Draft of the European Security Treaty", 2009

³¹² Tichý, 2014, p.542

On a more global scale, Russia continued its soft balancing approach through strategic and flexible partnerships as a way to counter Western unilateralism. During this period, Russia continued emphasizing and promoting the fact that the world was *polycentric* and that the West needed to take this new reality into account, especially as the West was getting weaker.³¹³ Russia participated and clearly highlighted the importance of multilateral fora, such as the UNSC, G20, G8, APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) and the SCO; all arenas perceived to be important for global decision-making.³¹⁴ During this period, Moscow clearly emphasized the role of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) as a new and important international forum for like-minded states. BRICS, initiated as BRIC in 2006, was especially highlighted as a partnership that “best symbolizes the transition from a unipolar system to a fairer world order”.³¹⁵ BRICS did not only create an economic partnership outside the West, but also constituted a group of countries emphasizing the importance of sovereignty and non-interference, which was seen as a contrast to Western unilateralism and values. However, the BRICS cooperation was merely an ambition, and did not play a strong role internationally during the period.³¹⁶ Rather, bilaterally Russia continued its cooperation with China, as a diplomatic coalition in the UNSC, and also regionally in the SCO, but Russia became seemingly more wary of China’s growing power in Central Asia. According to the SIPRI database, the former period’s arms exports were reduced with 75%, and India became the biggest buyer of Russian arms.³¹⁷

³¹³ See e.g. Lavrov, 2012

³¹⁴ Constant emphasis on Russia’s activities in multilateral and regional fora. See e.g. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Main Foreign Policy Events of 2009*, December 10, 2009 http://archive.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/itogi/AF772ECC95D5C804C325768C0037B88D (Accessed 21.08.15); Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *The Main Foreign Policy Events of 2011*, December 28, 2011 http://archive.mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/0D0C8D53B935139F44257976001EB0DA?OpenDocument (Accessed 21.08.15)

³¹⁵ Vladimir Putin, “Russia and the Changing World”, *Valdai Discussion Club*, 27. February 2012, <http://valdaiclub.com/politics/39300.html> (Accessed 04.03.15)

³¹⁶ Pang Xun, “Is the BRICS irrelevant?”, Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy, April 8, 2014, <http://carnegietsinghua.org/2014/04/08/are-brics-irrelevant/h7i1> (Accessed 30.09.15)

³¹⁷ India biggest importer of Russian arms. Vietnam increased a lot, as well as Syria compared to 2000-2008. See Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), The SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, Export-RUS-2008-2014.csv.

In all elements of foreign and security policy, the CIS region, characterized by Medvedev as the area of privileged interest, continued to be viewed as first priority.³¹⁸ Russia continued its military dominance, but during this period Moscow also initiated more multilateral integration within the region. Indirectly, this would also have the potential effect of preventing Western interference, as the attraction of the West would fall. During this period, the Eurasian Economic Community (2000-2014) implemented a number of economic policies aimed at unifying the community, such as the Custom Union and Eurasian Economic Space. Moscow also tried to strengthen the CSTO, but it was still a weak alliance. In 2014, after being proposed in 2011, the Eurasian Economic Union replaced EurAsEc.³¹⁹ The Eurasian Economic Union encompassed all its former economic institutions, including the CSTO. The Eurasian Union is considered Putin's big project and builds on the model of the European Union.³²⁰ An all-encompassing union for the post-Soviet region could potentially stop EU moving further into the former Soviet space. The Union would also raise the prestige of the region, making it an equal partner to the EU, and increase Russia's role as the natural leader of the region. The establishment of the union also formally revealed the division between Russia and Europe, as Russia clearly attempted to establish its own independent hub.³²¹

The NSS stated that Moscow would not rule out cooperation with the West on mutual interests as long as the West respected Russia as an equal partner.³²² The emphasis on common interests, based on a more cooperative Western "reset" approach, in addition to a global economic crisis, seemingly led to constructive cooperation and less anti-Western rhetoric between 2009-2011. In this period, as Russia was hit hard by the financial crisis, the Russian leadership saw a need for Western economic cooperation. As Medvedev stated in his "Go Russia!" article,

³¹⁸ Reynolds, 2008

³¹⁹ See Vladimir Putin, "A new integration project of Eurasia: The future in the making", October 10, 2011, <http://www.russianmission.eu/en/news/article-prime-minister-vladimir-putin-new-integration-project-eurasia-future-making-izvestia-3-> (Accessed 10.10.15)

³²⁰ Miriam Elder "Putin's grand vision: a new Eurasian bloc with old Soviet neighbours", *The Guardian*, October 4, 2011. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/04/putin-grand-vision-eurasian-bloc> (Accessed 10.08.15)

³²¹ Dimitri V. Trenin, "Russia's breakout from the post-Cold War System. The Drivers of Putin's Course", Carnegie Moscow Center, December 2014,

http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_Trenin_Putin2014_web_Eng_1.pdf (Accessed 30.10.15)

³²² NSS, 2009, p. 5

Russia needed Western investments and modernization of economy and technology.³²³ The finalizing of Russian WTO-membership also required Western support. During 2009-2011, Russia and the U.S. finalized a New START deal, and cooperated on withdrawal from Afghanistan, in addition to the Iran nuclear issue.³²⁴ In 2011 Russia also chose to abstain from voting in the UNSC on the 1973 resolution on Libya. By abstaining Russia de facto accepted the campaign of imposing a no-fly zone over Libya as a response to the civil war.³²⁵ In March 2011, NATO conducted the military campaign to protect Libyan civilians.

Although some experts regard this period as a new rapprochement and new Russian attempt of Western integration, Moscow's approach was not submissive as in 2000-2003. This new pragmatism and cooperation was based on common interests rather than Russian compliance. The American withdrawal from Afghanistan also constituted a leverage point for Russia as the U.S. needed Moscow's good will.³²⁶ Again Russia made trade-offs, and prioritized Western economic cooperation rather than opposing NATO interference in a sovereign state. But the reset of the relationship did not change Russian security outlook or perceptions of threats. Moscow continued to resent Western critique of its internal affairs and be distrustful of BMD plans although Russia welcomed the halt in America's BMD plans in Poland and the Czech Republic.³²⁷ Arguably, the fact that Russia was present in new areas, reformed its military and promoted its interests more strongly than before, indicated a continued assertive approach. However, the period of 2009-2011 should be regarded as a period of ease and cooperation, where Russia and the West, particularly the U.S., approached each other more pragmatically.

³²³ Medvedev, "Go Russia!", 2009

³²⁴ Samuel Charap and Sam Greene, "A year after the Reset: Achievements and Outlook in U.S-Russia Relations", Carnegie Moscow Center, April 21.2010. <http://carnegie.ru/2010/04/21/year-after-reset-achievements-and-outlook-in-u.s.-russia-relations/cr8h> (Accessed 05.05.15)

³²⁵ United Nation, "Security Council Approves 'no fly zone' over Libya, Authorizing 'All Necessary Measures' to Protect Civilians, by Vote of 10 in favor with 5 Abstentions", Security Council, SC-10200, March 17, 2011, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2011/sc10200.doc.htm> (Accessed 30.09.15)

³²⁶ John Walcott and Henry Meyer, "UN Syria Vote Reflects More Assertive Russia Under Putin", *Bloomberg*, April 22, 2012, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-04-21/un-syria-vote-reflects-more-assertive-russia-under-putin> (Accessed 07.07.15)

³²⁷ Luke Harding and Ian Traynor, "Obama abandons missile defense shield in Europe", *The Guardian*, Moscow and Brussels, September 17, 2009, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/17/missile-defence-shield-barack-obama> (Accessed 23.09.15)

Nevertheless, the constructive cooperation halted as the no-fly zone campaign over Libya turned out to be a “Western crusade” of regime change.³²⁸ The Libyan operation was condemned by Moscow as a violation of the given mandate and a total betrayal of its authorization. Consequently, when the West was perceived to impose the “Libyan model” on Syria, Moscow diplomatically blocked every proposal.³²⁹ Backed by China, Moscow took a hard stance in the UNSC and vetoed four drafted resolutions on Syria.³³⁰ Syria was one of Russia’s most important partners in the Middle East, housing the only Russian naval base in the Mediterranean. But according to the Russian scholar Dimtri Trenin, it was not Russia’s partnership with Syria that made Moscow oppose Western involvement. Rather, it was the practice of Western use of force and interventions in sovereign states that Russia could not allow anymore.³³¹ Again, Moscow saw Western-engineered regime change legitimized as a hypocritical protection of “human rights”, similar to Yugoslavia, Iraq, (almost) Iran and North Korea, and Libya.³³² In a sense, the diplomatic disagreements became a competition over global order and which norms and values to respect: a world order based on international law, sovereignty and non-interference or, in the words of Putin, an egocentric and double standard Western world order based on the “export of missile-and-bomb democracy”.³³³

The West condemned Russia for its stance, but Moscow’s willingness to stand firm, reflected an increased self-assurance and confidence. Accordingly, Russia continued arms exports to the Syrian regime and Moscow also sent its navy to the Mediterranean. The Russian Navy initiated a permanent presence as a political demonstration and to monitor Western activities.³³⁴ At the same time, when the U.S. announced plans for military intervention as a response to the Syrian regime’s chemical attack on its population, Russia advocated negotiations and cooperation on

³²⁸ Gleb Bryanski “Putin likens U.N. Libya resolution to crusades”, *Reuters*, March 21, 2011,

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/03/21/us-libya-russia-idUSTRE72K3JR20110321> (Accessed 05.09.15)

³²⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov Interview with Profil Magazine”, 2011

³³⁰ United Nations, United Nations Security Council Veto List, <http://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick> (Accessed 10.09.15)

³³¹ Dimitri V. Trenin, “The Mythical Alliance: Russia’s Syria Policy”, Carnegie Endowment Paper, February 12, 2013, <http://carnegie.ru/2013/02/12/mythical-alliance-russia-s-syria-policy/hnx1#> (Accessed 08.08.15)

³³² Putin, “Russia and the Changing World”, 2012

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Etterretningen, *Fokus 2014*, p. 17

conflict resolution.³³⁵ Moscow managed to initiate a chemical weapons deal with the Syrian regime and the UN in 2013. As American diplomats stated, Russian diplomatic endeavors on Syria changed from simply vetoing resolutions, to drafting them based on their own interests and objectives.³³⁶ Russia's role in the Syria process clearly reflected Russia's global objectives of playing a leading role in international decision-making, as well as actual opposition against unwanted Western actions. In relation to the uprisings in the Middle East, Russia renewed its Foreign Policy Concept in 2013. In the new concept Moscow asserted its "increased responsibility for setting the international agenda and shaping the system of international relations."³³⁷

In Syria, Russia diplomatically opposed Western regime change attempts. In Ukraine, Russia responded with force. Ukraine is perceived as vitally important to Russian security. It plays a role strategically, as it holds Russia's Black Sea fleet and creates a buffer between Russia and Europe. Most importantly, though, it plays a role culturally and emotionally, as it is perceived to be part of Russian identity and history. Additionally, Ukraine holds a big Russian-speaking population, especially on the Crimean peninsula and in Eastern Ukraine. First of all, the Russia pressure on Ukraine not to sign the EU agreement obviously showed the Russian objective of keeping Ukraine away from the Western sphere. However, Russia's response after the riots on Maidan Square and the subsequent regime change, which was perceived by Putin as a coup by U.S masterminds, was more aggressive.³³⁸ Through a swift military campaign, Russia occupied the Crimean peninsula with the justification of protecting the Crimean population from "bloodshed and humanitarian disaster".³³⁹ After a referendum on the peninsula's status, Moscow incorporated Crimea into the Russian Federation in March 2014. Thus, in March, Russia annexed a part of Ukraine. According to Moscow, the choice of using force to seize Crimea was a defensive response to Western-led regime change and aggression. The support of separatists in Eastern Ukraine, though not admitted, should be viewed in the same context. As Putin

³³⁵ The White House, "Statement by the President on Syria", August 31, 2013, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/08/31/statement-president-syria> (Accessed 10.09.15)

³³⁶ Walcott and Meyer, 2012

³³⁷ FPC, 2013, p. 1

³³⁸ Russia Today, "Putin in film on Crimea: US masterminds behind Ukraine coup, helped train radicals", March 15, 2014, <http://www.rt.com/news/240921-us-masterminds-ukraine-putin/> (Accessed 25.09.15)

³³⁹ Putin, Speech at the Expanded Meeting of the Defence Ministry Board, 2014

stated several times, Russia had no choice but to act in self-defense to safeguard its national interests and the Crimean population.³⁴⁰ However, Russia's reaction was not only about Crimea or Western attempts to grab Ukraine. The Russian leadership legitimized and justified their actions by claiming it to be an existential matter. As Putin articulated, it was about "protecting our independence, our sovereignty and our right to exist".³⁴¹

Existential or not, redrawing Europe's map was a total break with the international rules and norms of the game. The West responded with heavy sanctions and NATO increased its support to Eastern European members. The deteriorating and confrontational climate between the West and Russia evolved out of the Ukraine crisis, but according to Moscow, Ukraine was not its primary cause. With a Cold War mentality, the West had constantly attempted to hold Russia down in the fear of competition, and Ukraine was just a pretext.³⁴² As Putin put it in his Annual Address in 2014:

I'm sure that if these events had never happened [Crimea and Ukraine] (...) – if none of that had ever happened, they would have come up with some other excuse to try to contain Russia's growing capabilities, affect our country in some way, or even take advantage of it. (...) The policy of containment was not invented yesterday (...) In short, whenever someone thinks that Russia has become too strong or independent, these tools are quickly put into use.³⁴³

The subsequent military activities by NATO, illustrated by troops in the Baltics, exercises near Russia's border and renewed focus on the European homeland, spurred resentment within Russia. During 2014, Moscow increased its military activity in the north and in the Baltic Sea area with increased show of force and more complex and comprehensive military exercises.³⁴⁴ On the operational level, Russia's military campaign on Crimea spurred fears in the West of Russia's hybrid warfare. The rapid use of Special Forces, "little green men" without insignia, and major

³⁴⁰ The Kremlin (President of Russia), "News conference of Vladimir Putin", 2014

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Putin, "Annual Address (...)", 2014

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ See Thomas Frear, Lukasz Kulesa and Ian Kearns, *Dangerous Brinkmanship: Close Military Encounters Between Russia and the West in 2014*, Policy Brief, November 2014, <http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/medialibrary/2014/11/09/6375e3da/Dangerous%20Brinkmanship.pdf> (Accessed 01.10.15)

information and propaganda campaigns illustrated Russia's adaptation to new modern conflicts and asymmetrical warfare. Russian hybrid warfare illustrated a better coordination of state instruments (military, informational, economic, cyber) and a balance between covert and overt warfare. In the West, some feared that this form of warfare could hide away from counter-moves from the West, and potentially avoid the NATO's Article 5.³⁴⁵

When reviewing Russia's ways and means during 2008 and 2014 it is clear that the military instrument became more important. The core of Russia's military strategy during 2008-2014 was still strategic deterrence, but the military activities became more proactive showing a shift from defense to offense in line with threats and capabilities. Compared to the passivity of its military activities during the former period, now Russia seemingly applied a tactic of *forward defense* towards the West, which included being more preemptive in defense to avoid unwanted developments, and being present in areas if the need for defense should arise.³⁴⁶ This tactic could be regarded as defense by offense. It is especially these tendencies in Russia's military policies that underscore the argument that Russia's assertiveness turned more active. Additionally, the diplomatic and political opposition continued from the former period, but especially the opposition on the Syrian issue also revealed Kremlin's willingness to challenge Western rules and implement more direct policies than before.

5.4 Conclusion

In sum, during the years 2008-2014, Russia's strategic ends became more ambitious. Firstly, Russia promoted its international role and influence more vigorously, and also more globally. In line with the former period, the region was still the area of interest. Additionally, there was more de facto focus on areas of vital interests and compatriots abroad. As for the appraisal of the strategic environment, the Russian leadership recognized more direct threats to its traditional interests than before. Moscow

³⁴⁵ Kristian Åtland and Una Hakvåg "Russlands intervensjon på Krim – gjennomføring og konsekvenser", *Norsk Militært Tidsskrift*, 18:4, 2014; see also House of Commons Defense Committee, *Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two – NATO*. Third Report of Session 2014-2015,

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmdfence/358/358.pdf> (Accessed 06.10.15)

³⁴⁶ Term used by Katarzyna Zysk in interview, March 18, 2014

identified Western attempts at encirclement, through NATO and the EU, and continued attempts at upsetting the strategic balance, through the BMD and new high-tech capabilities. In particular, the perceived Western attempts at a coup in Ukraine were considered the most dangerous event of the whole period. As for ways and means, the focus on the military instrument increased in Russia's general strategic approach. The military-build up also created an increased focus on force as the most important element in obtaining influence in international affairs. Force was also applied twice, and 2008 was the first time Russia intervened in another country since the Cold War. As for political and diplomatic means Russia pursued a stronger regional integration policy and attempted to create a stricter division between Europe and Russia. Globally, Moscow continued coalition-building and flexible partnerships diplomatically, politically and economically with like-minded states. These partnerships showed a clear attempt at creating a de facto multipolar system that would strengthen Russia's role as one of the world's leading states and weaken Western domination.

The combination of broader objectives, more direct dangers and threats, and more determined responses displayed a strategy of active assertiveness. Russia's approach reflected confidence centered on a stronger domestic, economic and military base, which seemingly removed some of the former period's restraints. Russian security policies showed an increased role of hard power; illustrated by military-build up, show of force in new areas and willingness to use force to obtain strategic objectives. However, this period is complex because it includes periods of both ease and tension. A review of Russia's multifaceted objectives and the shifting strategic environment clearly shows the need for pragmatism also in this period. However, what seemed to be preeminent during this period was Russia's willingness to assert its interests and challenge the Western order more strongly than before.

6 Conclusion

“And Russia feels more assertive — not aggressive, but assertive.”
Lavrov 2013³⁴⁷

Russia’s approach to the West between 2000 and 2014 has been multifaceted and diverse, and shown continuity, but also change. There have been periods of tension and confrontation, as well as periods of ease and cooperation. Overall, the tendencies in Russian strategic implementation and the basic foundations of strategic ideas arguably reflect an assertive behavior. Arguably, from a short period of pragmatism during the early 2000s, Russia’s grand strategies have been implemented as strategies of assertiveness. However, the character of assertiveness has changed from *reserved* to *active*. The last chapter will sum up and discuss the continuity and change in Russia’s grand strategy in the context of Russia-West relations. It will give a short summary of each element from each period, including the 1990s, and conclude on the main findings.

6.1 Continuity in Strategic Ends and Appraisal of the Strategic Environment

Divided into traditional, regional and global interests and objectives, the three periods show a clear continuity in Russia’s strategic ends. Despite variations, Russia’s global interest in great power status has created the basis for Russia’s strategic vision and ambitions. Great power status is not only an end in itself, but also perceived to be a necessity for security and prosperity of the Russian state. In all periods, Russia’s national security required recognition as an influential player in world’s decision-making. During the 1990s, this was clearly an unattained objective. It was mainly during 2008-2014 that Russia started to really perceive itself as a de facto great power. During this period Moscow wanted to *strengthen* its role and influence rather than to *regain* it, which was the prime aim of the 2000-2008.

³⁴⁷ Lavrov quoted in Susan B. Glasser, “The Law of Politics” According to Sergei Lavrov. An exclusive interview with Russia’s top diplomat”, April 29, 2013, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/04/29/the-law-of-politics-according-to-sergei-lavrov/> (Accessed 09.09.15)

The table below lists the main elements of Russia's strategies since the end of the Cold War.³⁴⁸

	1992-1999	2000-2008	2008-2014
Strategic Ends	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consolidate and modernize the state 2. Regional security – later gain regional control. 3. Global inclusion and recognition as great power 4. Protection of Russian citizens abroad (peacekeeping) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Achieve</i> firm and prestigious position in the world community as a great power. 2. Security of borders 3. <i>Regain</i> influence in the region 4. Domestic rise: economic power 5. Protection of Russian citizens abroad (not acted upon) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Strengthen</i> Russia's position as one of the world's leading states 2. Security of borders, avoid encirclement and containment 3. Increase involvement in new areas 4. <i>Strengthen</i> influence and integration in the region 5. Domestic rise: military power 6. Protection of Russian citizens abroad (acted upon)
Appraisal of the Strategic Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Internal threats 2. Destabilized region 3. NATO expansion 4. Western unilateralism: Bosnia, Yugoslavia etc. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Western unilateralism: Iraq, rogue states. 2. Western involvement in the region 3. Color revolutions 4. Interference in internal affairs 5. NATO expansion 6. Bases and BMD 7. Terrorism 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Western unilateralism: Libya, Syria. 2. Western involvement in the region (also EU), especially vital areas 3. Interference in internal affairs 4. NATO expansion 5. BMD and high-tech weapons
Ways and Means	<p>From cooperation on all levels to diplomatic opposition, attempted political alliances, and attempted regional integration</p> <p>Military instrument: Strategic deterrence. Conventional degradation</p>	<p>From (submissive) partnership and cooperation to cautious diplomatic opposition, flexible partnerships and attempted alliances. Regional pressure and consolidation (bilaterally)</p> <p>Military instrument: Strategic deterrence, but passive defense. Focus on the region</p>	<p>Proactive diplomacy and political opposition</p> <p>Flexible partnerships, and more multipolarity. Regional pressure and multilateral integration</p> <p>Military instrument: Deterrence through forward defense, military build-up and willingness to use force. Strategic deterrence still overarching strategy. More global focus</p>
Grand strategy	Attempted inclusion to cautious balancing	Pragmatism to reserved assertiveness	Active assertiveness

³⁴⁸ Ingrid Lundestad applies a similar table.

However, although Russia seemed to experience a growing strength and apparently aimed for equality with the U.S. and China, the ambition was and is clearly a reflection of past greatness. Russia cannot compete with China and the U.S., and also lags behind other rising powers, especially in economic development.

Additionally, Russia's regional interests and objectives have been persistent. The objectives of being the regional hegemon and having an area of privileged interests are identified in all three periods. The region is important for strategic reasons, as an element in Russia's broader great power ambition, and as an economic market, but also for Russian stability. Through the 1990s, the focus was primarily traditional security, as the centrifugal forces within the new states were too strong. However, during the 2000s Moscow saw an interest in political, economic and military integration, but mainly bilaterally. Between 2008-2014 Moscow increased its focus on economic multilateral integration.

The traditional interests have been constant. Territorial integrity and political sovereignty required protection of borders and avoiding encirclement and interference in internal affairs. The combined traditional and regional interest of protection of citizens abroad has also been Moscow's main traditional task in the region, but was only acted upon during 2008-2014. Internally, as Russia had to consolidate a new state after the collapse of the USSR, domestic objectives, such as economic rise and modern development of the state, have played an important part in Russian strategic outlook. As the 1990s ended in internal collapse, 2000-2008 saw a great emphasis on economic objectives. During 2008-2014, although economic power was still prioritized, modernizing the military and gaining hard power became clear objectives. Additionally, Russia also gained broader objectives during the last period, when it saw a growing competition for the resources in the Arctic.

As for the appraisal of strategic environment we clearly see continuity in Russia's perceptions of dangers and threats. Threat perceptions are always related to specific tendencies and events, and in this sense they were not constant. However, when threats were identified they mainly touched upon the same traditional principles and recognizable fears within Moscow. Thus, we might argue that there have been continuities in the assessments of the West. After the breakup of the USSR, Russia

removed the existential threat perception of the West. However, during the periods of study, the West rather constituted a more multifaceted and often indirect threat to Russian interests.

During the 1990s, Russia's security concerns were very much focused on conflicts within the region. The uprisings in Chechnya and threats from terrorism also continued into 2000-2008, which seemingly eased the focus on the West. However, in strategic thinking the Russian perception of the West has seemingly been constant. It has included the fear of being ignored, lack of respect, and isolation from global decision-making. Especially Western unilateralism and American supremacy has underlined these fears, which increased from 2003 onwards. The perceived disrespect of the de facto multipolar world system and the inability to change the European security regime has spurred Russian feelings of containment policies from Cold War-times.

Russia's regional interests have been threatened by Western increased interference. Western involvement has included military bases, energy cooperation and democracy promotion, in addition to attempted revolutions to insert Western-minded regimes. These color revolutions and covert interferences have also been perceived as targeting Russia's own political regime and traditional interests. NATO expansion has been the prime example of seizing states from Russia's sphere, and during the second period (2008-2014) Moscow also became increasingly wary of EU involvement. These perceptions clearly reveal Moscow's zero-sum thinking. Pushing Russia out of the region has touched upon its feeling of isolation and encirclement, which also affects its traditional interests of territorial integrity and Russian citizens abroad. The perceived threats against citizens abroad clearly increased during 2008-2014. Additionally, since 2007, Russia also identified more military threats, such as the Ballistic Missile Defense system and subsequent high-technological weapon systems. Overall, Moscow saw Western multifaceted policies as attempts to contain and weaken its power by encirclement, isolation and interference in internal affairs.

6.2 Changes in Ways and Means of Strategy: Considerations and Responses

Responses and considerations in regards to strategic ends are often reactive to events and trends in the international environment, as well as affected by domestic issues. Reviewing the three periods, both interests and threat perceptions are seemingly constant, but responses have tended to be based on considerations of how responses gain and affect. Considerations have been related to Russia's multifaceted interests and lack of power domestically and externally. Additionally, Russia has needed to see the link between domestic issues, such as economy, internal/regional terrorism and a weak military capacity, and external security policies, which has required prioritizations and trade-offs. The tendency is that when Russia pursues economic objectives, cooperation with the West is pursued and Moscow minimizes its official opposition. However, when traditional security is on the agenda, Russia returns to power politics. Importantly, the ability to respond has changed during the three periods. Russia chose a more independent trajectory from 2004 onwards most importantly because Russia gained capabilities to pursue its own objectives. Arguably, there is a tendency that more assertive behavior correlates with the evolving domestic consolidation and economic growth.

During the 1990s, Russia's attempts at inclusion relied on economic and political cooperation. The military element was downgraded. The room for maneuver was small and Russia was dependent on Western cooperation to obtain objectives of development and inclusion. However, with Foreign Minister Primakov Moscow changed course, relying more on integration within the region to contain the West, partnerships with anti-Western regimes, and a stronger diplomatic stance in international institutions. However, neither attempted inclusion nor cautious balancing was efficient as Russia lacked instruments of power. Thus, the 1990s showed Russia's total inability to gain influence; hardly any objectives were achieved, as unwanted developments were not prevented.

During the second period 2000-2008, Moscow initiated a cooperative approach towards the West after 9/11. This was a pragmatic choice, but Russia had to make trade-offs for global influence and increased status. However, again Russia felt

ignored by American unilateralism and Western interference in the region. As a consequence of increased confidence based on high economic growth and perceived danger from the West, Russia turned more assertive. Moscow increased the regional focus as a way to contain Western involvement and consolidate its own control. This included military, economic and energy cooperation, but turned more into bilateral relationships. During this period, Russia utilized diplomatic and political measures globally, especially through flexible partnerships and participation in global decision-making. From 2004 onwards, Russia was able to respond more in accordance with interests reflecting a strategy of reserved assertiveness. The strategic approach was cautious as Russia still made considerations on economic cooperation and influence. The military instrument was restrained, as Russia's attempts at hard power balancing were futile. The military element mostly centered on passive strategic deterrence and inefficient alliances, although 2007 seemed to be a shift towards more military activity.

The military element became prominent and offensive during 2008-2014, and the perception of the need to be strong became evident. During this period, Moscow in 2008 applied force for the first time since the Cold War, and this was also the first time Russia used force to prevent unwanted developments of NATO encirclement. Then, the military element was evident in the reforms of the Armed Forces and subsequent increased activity. Again, during the Ukraine crisis, Moscow utilized force to obtain strategic objectives. From a Russian point of view, the military element was purely defensive, as the Western threats were perceived to become more direct; but it was also an illustration of Russia's increased strength. Overall, we might identify a tactic of forward defense within the broader strategic deterrence strategy.

Additionally, during this period Moscow was also seemingly more proactive and pursued a stronger diplomatic approach, explicitly shown in the process around Syria. Moscow also continued its flexible partnerships and coalitions outside the Western community. In the region, Moscow pursued more economic consolidation and multilateral integration, rather than bilateral cooperation as the former period. There is no doubt that Moscow's confidence grew, and when cooperating with the West, Russia seemingly felt more equal than during the 2000-2008 period. This last

period shows Moscow for the first time overtly and directly opposing the West. In sum, compared to the first two terms of Putin (2000-2008), strategic thinking related to strategic ends and appraisal of the strategic environment were mainly constant, but the strategic responses and policies became stronger and more independent with an increased focus on the military instrument. The strategy clearly shifted from *reserved* to *active* assertiveness.

6.3 Assertiveness and what the West should know

Overall, strategies of neither attempted inclusion nor cautious balancing were efficient in acquiring strategic objectives. Moreover, the pragmatic strategy of the early 2000s, did not sufficiently increase Russia's international role or prevent unwanted developments. These strategies were perceived as being based on Russia's weakness and dependence. Seemingly, these failed strategic attempts spurred the perception that the West will never respect Russia as an equal partner when Russia is weak. Thus, the change towards assertiveness was seemingly a necessity for protecting and defending Russia's legitimate interest.

The assertive strategy stems from a position of self-perceived strength, and demonstrates a Russian leadership that has become more confident and self-aware in its security relations with the West. This is a consequence of increased economic power, internal political consolidation and military strength. However, from Moscow's point of view, Russia has also become more defensive as a result of increased threats to its interests and objectives. Although the assertive strategy reflects growing capabilities and strength, it also stems from feelings of uncertainty, distrust and power asymmetry. In this sense, Russia's assertive strategy reflects opportunity, but also vulnerability and defensiveness. Overall, the need to be strong and independent is seemingly the foundation of Russian security thinking. The title of this thesis underscores this fact. Although this was a statement related to terrorism, the fact that Putin has a perception that "the weak get beaten" shows that strength is the only thing that counts. Illustrative, Putin titles his article from 2012 in similar connotations:

“Being strong: National security guarantees for Russia”.³⁴⁹ The assertive strategy is clearly a reflection of these ideas.

Seeing the continuity in strategic thinking based on specific interests and the appraisal of the world, we should hardly be surprised when Moscow publicly opposes the West or protects what they perceive to be their legitimate interests. Although we have been surprised by the intensity of conflict between Russia and the West today, the crisis in Russian-Western relations is seemingly a deterioration of a relationship that has seen constant ups and downs. In fact, probably more downs. We have to be aware of Russian perceptions of its great power history and its strong regional ties, as well as Russia’s insatiable desire for security. These objectives make Moscow sensitive to isolation, encirclement and perceived weakness. Arguably, being aware of Moscow’s logic should increase our knowledge about how Western actions affect. Although we may not agree with their thinking and rationalizations, the reality of today’s international system requires us to take Russia into account. As Trenin stated in his article “Russia leaves the West” in 2006, the West needs to “take Russia for what it is: a major outside player that is neither an eternal foe nor an automatic friend”.³⁵⁰

6.4 Looking forward

Unfortunately, this thesis ends when Russia’s relations with the West are at their worst. It is the future choices of Russia, but also the West that will decide whether the crisis we witness today will “go back to normal” or be Russia’s “break” with the West. The current break-off of almost all contact, Russia’s “pivot” to China and the increased show of force, now also applied in Syria almost as a proxy war, seem to indicate the latter. We might see a new Russia, where 2014 is considered a change towards what we in the West would characterize as aggression rather than assertiveness. The assertive strategy has been a strategy where Russia has managed to obtain much of its national objectives and gain respect as an important player in world affairs. However, when Russia tips towards confrontation, removes itself from what

³⁴⁹ Putin, “Being Strong: National Security guarantees for Russia”, 2012

³⁵⁰ Trenin, 2006

the West has perceived as common rules of the game, and makes unpredictable and hostile moves – although subjectively defensive – it might eventually cause huge damage to other strategic objectives, such as economy and modern development, as well as regional cooperation. Although Russia has regained confidence and a perception of increased international status, the reality is that Russia is not strong enough to act as a superpower or remove itself from the West. In the end, an increased confrontational approach might not be a productive strategy of obtaining important objectives after all.

At last, a further and more comprehensive analysis of Russian strategy and security policies should include more domestic and historical aspects. Understanding Russia's rationalization requires insight into their mentality and identity. Russia's perceptions and actions are also grounded in their historical experiences. As Henry Kissinger argued "all states consider themselves as expressions of historical forces. It is not the equilibrium as an end that concerns them (...) but as a means towards realizing their historical aspirations."³⁵¹ Arguably, ignoring history will decrease our understanding of the present. On a last note, a more realistic and valid study should use actual decision-making documents or sources from Russia's internal debate to get a better grasp on Moscow's thinking. To get more reliable conclusions in the future, we need access to more primary sources and include more elements in the analysis.

³⁵¹ Kissinger quoted in Ferguson, 2015, p. 137

7 Bibliography

Official Documents of the Russian Federation

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Kontseptsia doktrina Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation]. Moscow, 2000. Russian available at:

<http://archive.mid.ru//B1.nsf/arh/19DCF61BEFED61134325699C003B5FA3> English translation available at: <http://fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm> (Accessed 03.03.15)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Kontseptsia doktrina Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation]. Moscow, 2008.

English available at: <http://archive.mid.ru//bdomp/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/869c9d2b87ad8014c32575d9002b1c38!OpenDocument> (Accessed 04.03.15)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Kontseptsia doktrina Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation]. Moscow, February 12, 2013. Russian available at: <http://archive.mid.ru//bdomp/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/869c9d2b87ad8014c32575d9002b1c38!OpenDocument>

(Accessed 03.03.15)

Security Council of the Russian Federation. *Kontseptsia natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [National Security Concept of Russian Federation]. December 17, 1997. Russian available at: Rossiiskaya Gazeta, December 26, 1997, p. 4-5. English available at the RIA Novosti's *Daily Review*, January 9, 1998

Security Council of the Russian Federation. *Kontseptsia natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [National Security Concept of Russian Federation]. Moscow, January 10, 2000.

English available at: <http://archive.mid.ru//bdomp/ns-osndoc.nsf/e2f289bea62097f9c325787a0034c255/b8d88f7503bc644fc325752e0047174b!OpenDocument> (Accessed 10.03.15)

Security Council of the Russian Federation. *Strategiya natsional'noi bezopasnosti Rossiiskoi Federatsii na period do 2020 goda* [National Security Strategy of Russian Federation]. May 12, 2009. Russian available at: <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/99.html> (Accessed 02.03.15)

Security Council of the Russian Federation. *Voennaya doktrina Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation]. November 18, 1993 p 1-2 in FBIS-SOV-93-222-S, 19 November 1993, p. 1-11

Security Council of the Russian Federation. *Voennaya doktrina Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation]. Moscow, 2000. Russian available at: <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/15386>

English available at: https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2000_05/dc3ma00 (Accessed 06.03.15)

Security Council of the Russian Federation. *Voennaya doktrina Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation]. February 5, 2010. Russian available at: <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/461>

English available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_military_doctrine.pdf (Accessed 06.03.15)

Security Council of the Russian Federation. *Voennaya doktrina Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation]. December 26, 2014. Russian available at:

<http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d527556bec8deb3530.pdf> (Accessed 06.03.15)

Annual Addresses, Speeches, Articles and Reports of the Russian Federation

Ivanov, Sergei. "Russia's Geopolitical Priorities and Armed Forces". February 17, 2004, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_2571 (Accessed 04.04.15)

Kelin, Andrei. "A Calmy Negative Attitude to NATO Expansion". December 31, 2003, http://archive.mid.ru//BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/3A327B4646BB8865C3256E130035029B?OpenDocument (Accessed 05.05.15)

- Kozyrev, Andrei. "Russia: A Chance for Survival". *Foreign Affairs*, Spring Issue, 1992. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/1992-03-01/russia-chance-survival> (Accessed 01.03.15)
- Kozyrev, Andrei. "The Lagging Partnership". *Foreign Affairs*, May/June Issue, 1994. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/1994-05-01/lagging-partnership> (Accessed 05.06.15)
- Kozyrev, Andrei. "Partnership or Cold Peace?". *Foreign Policy*, No 99, Summer 1995, p. 3-14
- Lavrov, Sergei. "Democracy, International Governance, and the Future of the World Order". *Russia in Global Affairs*, February 9, 2005, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_4422 (Accessed 04.06.15)
- Lavrov, Sergei. "The Present and the Future of Global Politics". *Russia in Global Affairs*, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_8554, May 13, 2007 (Accessed 06.08.15)
- Lavrov, Sergei. "Containing Russia: Back to the Future". *Russia in Global Affairs*, November 18, 2007, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_9792 (Accessed 05.07.15)
- Lavrov, Sergei. "The Foreign Policy of Russia: A New Phase". December 18, 2007, http://archive.mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/969279EE85A9B046C32573B60048C175?OpenDocument (Accessed 04.06.15)
- Lavrov, Sergei. "Russia and the World in the 21st Century". *Russia in Global Affairs*, August 9, 2008, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_11291 (Accessed 04.04.15)
- Lavrov, Sergei. "Russian Diplomacy in a Changing World", April 30, 2010 http://archive.mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/4E37152B4A140C1EC325771C004C7DBB?OpenDocument (Accessed 15.04.15)
- Lavrov, Sergei. "The Euro-Atlantic Region: Equal Security for All". *Russia in Global Affairs*, July 7, 2010, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/The_Euro-Atlantic_Region:_Equal_Security_for_All-14888 (Accessed 15.04.15)
- Lavrov, Sergei. "Russia in the 21st-Century World of Power". *Russia in Global Affairs*, December 27, 2012. http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_11291 (Accessed 12.03.15)
- Lavrov, Sergei. "Remarks by the Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov at the XXII Assembly of the Council of Foreign and Defence Policy". *Russia in Global Affairs*, November 26, 2014. <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/book/Remarks-by-Foreign-Minister-Sergey-Lavrov-at-the-XXII-Assembly-of-the-Council-on-Foreign-and-Defence>(Accessed 20.08.15)
- Medvedev, Dimitry. "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly". November 8, 2008, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/messages/1968> (Accessed 15.08.15)
- Medvedev, Dimitry. "Go Russia!". September 10, 2009, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/5413> (Accessed 17.08.15)
- Medvedev, Dimitry. "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation". November 12, 2009, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/messages/5979> (Accessed 20.08/15)
- Ministry of Defense. *The Priority Tasks of the Development of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation*. 2003, <http://red-stars.org/doctrine.pdf> (Accessed 20.03.15)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *A Survey of Russian Federation Foreign Policy*. Moscow, 2007. http://archive.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/e78a48070f128a7b43256999005bcb3/89a30b3a6b65b4f2c32572d700292f74?OpenDocument (Accessed 20.08.15)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *The Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Activities of the Russian Federation in 2008, A survey by the MFA of Russia*. Moscow, March 2009. [http://archive.mid.ru/bdomp/Brp_4.nsf/0/c77fbfe0819669b9c32575e100338b95/\\$FILE/THE%20FOREIGN%2](http://archive.mid.ru/bdomp/Brp_4.nsf/0/c77fbfe0819669b9c32575e100338b95/$FILE/THE%20FOREIGN%2)

[OPOLICY%20AND%20DIPLOMATIC%20ACTIVITIES%20OF%20THE%20RUSSIAN%20FEDERATION%20IN%202008.pdf](#) (Accessed 15.08.15)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *The Main Foreign Policy Events of 2009*. December 10, 2009
http://archive.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/itogi/AF772ECC95D5C804C325768C0037B88D (Accessed 21.08.15)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *The Main Foreign Policy Events of 2011*. December 28, 2011
http://archive.mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/0D0C8D53B935139F44257976001EB0DA?OpenDocument
(Accessed 21.08.15)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov Interview with Profil Magazine". October 10, 2011,
http://archive.mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/C4F7C92A4246C22AC3257926003B642F?OpenDocument
(Accessed 10.08.15)

Putin, Vladimir. "Russia at the turn of the millennium". December 30, 1999,
www.uio.no/studier/emner/hf/.../russia-at-the-turn-of-the-millennium.doc (Accessed 02.03.15)

Putin, Vladimir. "Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation". July 8, 2000,
<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21480> (Accessed 21.04.15)

Putin, Vladimir. "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation". April 3, 2001,
<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21216> (Accessed 20.04.15)

Putin, Vladimir. "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation". April 18, 2002,
<http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/7583> (Accessed 20.04.15)

Putin, Vladimir. "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation". May 16, 2003,
<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21998> (Accessed 20.04.15)

Putin, Vladimir. Statement on Iraq at a Kremlin Meeting. March 20, 2003,
<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/statements/21942> (Accessed 20.04.15)

Putin, Vladimir. "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation". May 26, 2004,
<http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/7584> (Accessed 20.04.15)

Putin, Vladimir. Speech at the Plenary Session of the Russian Federation Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives Meeting. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 12, 2004,
<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22545> (Accessed 05.09.15)

Putin, Vladimir. "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation". April 25, 2005,
<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22931> (Accessed 20.04.15)

Putin, Vladimir. "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly". May 10, 2006,
<http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/8231> (Accessed 20.04.15)

Putin, Vladimir. Speech of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, Germany. February 10, 2007,
http://archive.mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/284B878CA1370C27C32572800033694A?OpenDocument
(Accessed 02.03.15)

Putin, Vladimir. "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly". April 26, 2007,
<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24203> (Accessed 20.04.15)

Putin, Vladimir. "A new integration project of Eurasia: The future in the making". October 10, 2011,
<http://www.russianmission.eu/en/news/article-prime-minister-vladimir-putin-new-integration-project-eurasia-future-making-izvestia-3-> (Accessed 10.10.15)

Putin, Vladimir. "Being Strong: National Security guarantees for Russia". *Russia Today*, February 19, 2012,
<http://www.rt.com/politics/official-word/strong-putin-military-russia-711/> (Accessed 04.03.15)

Putin, Vladimir. "Russia and the Changing World", *Valdai Discussion Club*, 27. February 2012, <http://valdaiclub.com/politics/39300.html> (Accessed 04.03.15)

Putin, Vladimir. Meeting with the Russian ambassadors and permanent representatives in international organizations. July 9, 2012. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/15902> (Accessed 10.05.15)

Putin, Vladimir. Speech at the Expanded Meeting of the Defence Ministry Board. February 27, 2013, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17588> (Accessed 10.05.15)

Putin, Vladimir. "The Syrian Alternative". September 12, 2013, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19205> (Accessed 01.08.15)

Putin, Vladimir. Speech at the Expanded Meeting of the Defence Ministry Board. December 10, 2013 <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19816> (Accessed 10.05.15)

Putin, Vladimir. "Address by the President of the Russian Federation". March 18, 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603> (Accessed 28.09.15)

Putin, Vladimir. "Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly". December 4, 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47173> (Accessed 28.09.15)

Putin, Vladimir. Transcript of speech at Valdai Discussion Club in Sochi, October 25, 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46860> (Accessed 28.09.15)

Putin, Vladimir. Speech at the Expanded Meeting of the Defence Ministry Board. December 19, 2014 <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47257> (Accessed 28.09.15)

The Kremlin (President of Russia). "Russian President Statement". September 24, 2001. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/statements/21338> (Accessed 05.06.15)

The Kremlin (President of Russia). "President Putin and Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev took part in the inauguration of the Russian airbase near the city of Kant, Kyrgyzstan". October 23, 2003, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/29600> (Accessed 20.09.15)

The Kremlin (President of Russia). "Address by President Vladimir Putin". September 4, 2004, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22589> (Accessed 26.09.15)

The Kremlin (President of Russia). "Press Statement and Answers to Journalists' Questions Following a Meeting of the Russian-NATO Council". April 4, 2008, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24903> (Accessed 10.09.15)

The Kremlin (President of Russia). "The effectiveness of cooperation between Russia and NATO will depend on the extent to which the countries of the Atlantic Alliance respect Russian interests and on the Alliance's willingness to compromise on issues shaping the strategic environment in Europe and the world". April 4, 2008, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/44084> (Accessed 11.09.15)

The Kremlin (President of Russia). *The Draft of the European Security Treaty*. November 29, 2009, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/6152> (Accessed 10.08.15)

The Kremlin (President of Russia). "News conference of Vladimir Putin". Moscow, 18. December 2014, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47250> (Accessed 28.09.15)

Books

- Altheide, David. L. *Qualitative Media Analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 2013
- Baylis, John, James J. Wirtz, and Colin S. Gray. *Strategy in a Contemporary World*. Oxford University Press. Fourth Edition, 2013
- Black, J.L. *Russia's Faces NATO Expansion. Bearing Gifts or Bearing Arms?* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Maryland, 2000
- Donaldson, Robert H. and Joseph L. Noguee. *The Foreign Policy of Russia. Changing systems, enduring interests*. M.E Sharpe, Inc. New York, 2005
- Gaddis, John Lewis. *Strategies of Containment. A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War*. Revised and expanded edition, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005
- Gerring, John. *Case study research: principles and practices*. Cambridge University Press, 2007
- Grønmo, Sigmund. *Samfunnsvitenskapelige metoder*. Fagbokforlaget, Bergen, 2004
- Grigoriev, Leonid. "Russia, Gazprom and the CAC: Interest and relations". In Dellecker, Adrian and Thomas Gomart, *Russian Energy Security and Foreign Policy*, Routledge, New York, 2011, p. 147-169
- Haas, Marcel De, *Russia's Foreign Security Policy in the 21st Century. Putin, Medvedev and beyond*, Routledge, New York, 2010
- Heier, Tormod. "Et innblikk i russisk tenking". In Heier, Tormod and Anders Kjølberg, *Norge og Russland. Sikkerhetspolitiske utfordringer i nordområdene*. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 2015, p. 41-56
- Herpen, Marcel H. Van. *Putin's Wars. The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2014
- Kjeldstadli, Knut., *Fortida er ikke hva den en gang var. En innføring i historiefaget*. Universitetsforlaget, Second Edition, 2013
- Laurelle, Marlene. *Russia's Arctic Strategies and the Future of the Far North*. M.E. Sharpe, New York, 2014
- Legvold, Robert (ed). *Russian Foreign Policy in the 21th Century & the Shadow of the Past*. Columbia University Press, 2007
- Lo, Bobo. *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy*. The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2003
- Lo, Bobo. *Russia's and the New World Disorder*. Chatham House, London, 2015
- Lucas, Edward. *The New Cold War. How the Kremlin Menaces both Russia and the West*. Bloomsbury, London, 2008
- Mankoff, Jeffrey. *Russian Foreign Policy. The Return of Great Power Politics*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009
- Neumann, Iver. "Russia as a great power". In Hedenskog, Jakob et.al (ed) *Russia as a Great Power*, Routledge, New York, 2005
- Nye, Joseph S. and David A. Welch. *Understanding Global Conflict and Cooperation. An Introduction to Theory and History*. Pearson, Ninth Edition, 2013
- Oldberg, Ingmar. "Foreign policy priorities under Putin". In Hedenskog, Jakob et.al (red) *Russia as a Great Power*, Routledge, New York, 2005

- Paret, Peter (ed). *Makers of Modern Strategy. From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Oxford, 1986
- Repstad, Pål. *Mellom nærhet og distanse: Kvalitative metoder i samfunnsfag*. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 2007
- Skogan, John Kristen. "Sikkerhetspolitiske mål og virkemidler". In Hovi, Jon and Raino Malnes (ed) *Anarki, Makt og Normer. Innføring i internasjonal politikk*. Abstrakt Forlag, Forlag 2, 2011, p. 102-149
- Tolz, Vera. *Russia: Inventing the nation*. Hodder Education, London 2001
- Trachtenberg, Marc. *The Craft of International History. A Guide To Method*. Princeton University Press, 2006
- Trenin, Dimitri V. *The End of EURASIA: Russia on the Border Between Geopolitics and Globalization*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002
- Trenin, Dimitri V. *Getting Russia Right*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007
- Tsysgankov, Andrei P. *Russia's Foreign Policy. Change and Continuity in National Identity*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Third Edition, 2013
- Wallander, Celeste A. "Russia: The Domestic Sources of a Less-than-Grand Strategy". In Tellis, Ashley and Michael Wills (ed). *Strategic Asia 2007-08. Domestic Political and Grand Strategy*, The National Bureau of Asian Research, Washington, 2008, p. 139-176
- Zysk, Katarzyna. "Managing military change in Russia". In Bekkevold, Jo Inge, Ian Bowers and Michael Raska (ed), *Security, Strategy and Military Change in the 21st Century. Cross-regional perspectives*, Routledge, 2014, p. 155-177
- Zysk, Katarzyna. "Mellom fredsretorikk og militær opprustning: Russlands sikkerhetspolitiske og militære adferd i nordområdene", In Heier, Tormod and Anders Kjølberg, *Norge og Russland. Sikkerhetspolitiske utfordringer i nordområdene*, Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 2015, p. 71-84
- Åtland, Kristian, Bukkvoll, Tor, Jeppesen, Morten and Johansen, Iver. *Hvor går Russland? Fem scenarier om Russland og norsk sikkerhet i 2030*. Abstrakt Forlag, Oslo, 2005

Master's thesis

- Lundestad, Ingrid. *Strategies of Engagement. A Study of U.S. National Security Strategies from the end of the Cold War to the War on Terrorism and their Implications for the Role of NATO*. University of Oslo. Department of Archeology, Conservation and History. Master thesis. Spring 2008.

Journal Articles and Reports

- Adomei, Hannes. "Inside or Outside? Russia's Policies Towards NATO". German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Working Paper, January 1, 2007
- Bailes, Alyson JK. *Does Small States Need a Strategy*. Center for Small State Studies Publications Series, University of Iceland, Occasional Paper 2-2009, http://ams.hi.is/wp-content/uploads/old/Bailes_Final%20wh.pdf (Accessed 07.05.15)
- Beehner, Lionel. "Asia: U.S. Military Bases in Central Asia". Council of Foreign Relations, July 26, 2005, <http://www.cfr.org/russia-and-central-asia/asia-us-military-bases-central-asia/p8440#p5%20%20and> (Accessed 05.05.15)
- Bukkvoll, Tor. "Putin's Strategic Partnership with the West, The Domestic Politics of Russian Foreign Policy". *Comparative Strategy*, 22:3, 2003, p. 223-242
- Cerami, Joseph R. "Introduction" In Cerami, Joseph R. and James F. Jr. Holcomb (ed). *U.S Army War College Guide to Strategy*, February 2001, p. 1-10

Cerami, Joseph R. and James F. Jr. Holcomb. "Appendix I: Guidelines for Strategy", In Cerami, Joseph R. and James F. Jr. Holcomb (ed). *U.S Army War College Guide to Strategy*, February 2001, p. 221-228

Charap, Samuel and Sam Greene. "A year after the Reset: Achievements and Outlook in U.S-Russia Relations", Carnegie Moscow Center. April 21, 2010. <http://carnegie.ru/2010/04/21/year-after-reset-achievements-and-outlook-in-u.s.-russia-relations/cr8h> (Accessed 05.05.15)

Dorff, Robert H. "A Primer in Strategy Development", In Cerami, Joseph R. and James F. Jr. Holcomb (ed). *U.S Army War College Guide to Strategy*. February 2001, p. 11-18

Dorff, Robert H. "Some Basic Concepts and Approaches to the Study of International Politics" In Cerami, Joseph R. And James F. Jr. Holcomb (ed). *U.S Army War College Guide to Strategy*. February 2001, p. 31-41

Etterretningen. *Fokus 2013. Etterretningens vurdering*. Report of the Norwegian Intelligence Service, 2013

Etterretningen. *Fokus 2014. Etterretningens vurdering*. Report of the Norwegian Intelligence Service, 2014.

Ferguson, Niall. "The Meaning of Kissinger. A Realist Reconsidered". *Foreign Affairs*, September/October Issue, 2015, p. 134-143

Frear, Thomas, Lukasz Kulesa and Ian Kearns. *Dangerous Brinkmanship: Close Military Encounters Between Russia and the West in 2014*. Policy Brief, November 2014, <http://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/medialibrary/2014/11/09/6375e3da/Dangerous%20Brinkmanship.pdf> (Accessed 01.10.15)

Godzimirski, Jakub M. "Russian National Security Concepts 1997 and 2000: A Comparative Analysis" *European Security*, 9:4, 2000, p. 73-91, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09662830008407473> (Accessed 05.03.15)

Haas, Marcel De. "Russia's Military Reforms. Victory after Twenty Years of Failure?" Clingendael Paper No. 5, November 2011, http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20111129_clingendaelpaper_mdehaas.pdf (Accessed 05.03.15)

Heikka, Henrikki. "The Evolution of Russian Grand Strategy – Implications for Europe's North". POLSIS, University of Birmingham, 2000, <http://www.bits.de/EURA/heikka.pdf> (Accessed 07.05.15)

House of Commons Defense Committee. *Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two – NATO*. Third Report of Session 2014-2015, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmdfence/358/358.pdf> (Accessed 06.10.15)

Igumnova, Lyudmila, "Russia's Strategic Culture Between American and European Worldviews", *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 24:4, p. 253-273

Jeppesen, Morten. "Russland og USA i Sentral-Asia: Samarbeid eller rivalisering?". Norwegian Defense Research Institute, FFI-report-00644, 2004, <http://www.ffi.no/no/Rapporter/04-00644.pdf> (Accessed 25.09.15)

Johnston, Alastair Iain. "How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness?". *International Security* 37:4, Spring 2013, p. 7-48

Karaganov, Sergey. "After the reset". *Russia in Global Affairs*, October 26, 2011 <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/pubcol/After-the-Reset-15027> (Accessed 28.09.15)

Karaganov, Sergey. "Russia needs to defend its interests with an iron fist". *Russia in Global Affairs*, March 6, 2014. <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/pubcol/Russia-needs-to-defend-its-interests-with-an-iron-fist-16457> (Accessed 20.09.15)

Karaganov, Sergey. "The Watershed Year: Interim Results". *Russia in Global Affairs*, December 18, 2014. <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/The-Watershed-Year-Interim-Results-17210> (Accessed 05.05.15)

Karaganov, Sergey. "Eurasian way out of the European Crisis". *Russia in Global Affairs*, June 8, 2015. <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/pubcol/Eurasian-Way-Out-of-the-European-Crisis-17505> (Accessed 20.09.15)

Kjølberg, Anders. *Russisk Utenriks- og Sikkerhetspolitikk: Forutsigbarhet og Betydning for Europeisk Stabilitet*. FFI/Rapport-98/05744, Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, 1998

Leijonhielm, Jan et.al *Rysk Militär Förmåga I Ett Tiorsperspektiv*. FOA Report, Defense Research Agency, Stockholm, 1999

Leijonhielm, Jan et.al. *Russian Military Capabilities in a Ten Year Perspective. Ambitions and Challenges in 2008*. FOI Report, Defense Research Agency, Stockholm

Masters, Jonathan. "Ballistic Missile Defense". Council of Foreign Relations, CFR Backgrounder, August 15, 2014. <http://www.cfr.org/missile-defense/ballistic-missile-defense/p30607#p4> (Accessed 05.04.15)

McDermott, Roger N. "Russia's Conventional Military Weakness and Strategic Nuclear Policy". The Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO), 2011, <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/Collaboration/international/McDermott/Russia-NuclearPolicy.pdf> (Accessed 06.05.15)

Modlovan, Dominec, Plamen Pantev and Matthew Rhodes. "Joint Task Force East and Shared Military Basing in Romania and Bulgaria". The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Occasional Paper Series, No. 21, August 2009 http://www.marshallcenter.org/mcpublicweb/MCDocs/files/College/F_Publications/occPapers/occ-paper_21-en.pdf (Accessed 05.02.14)

Motyl, Alexander J. and Rajan Menon. "The Myth of Russian Resurgence". *The American Interest*, 2:4, March 1, 2007

Nyaard, Ida and Una Hakvåg. "Why Russia opposes a NATO missile defence in Europe – a survey of common explanations". Norwegian Defense Research Institute, FFI-report 2013/00111, 3. January 2013, <http://www.ffi.no/no/Rapporter/13-00111.pdf> (Accessed 05.03.14)

Oldberg, Ingmar. *Russia's Great Power Strategy under Putin and Medvedev*. Swedish Institute of International Affairs, No. 1 Occasional Paper, 2010 <http://www.ui.se/upl/files/44240.pdf> (Accessed 05.04.15)

Oldberg, Ingmar. "Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Powerhouse or paper tiger?". Swedish Defence Research Agency, Report FOI-R-2301- SE, June 2007

Pape, Robert A., "Soft Balancing against the United States", *International Security*, 30: 1 2005, p. 7-45

Schubert, Yegor von. "Vladimir Lukin: I Am a Bit Wary of a "Popular" Foreign Policy". *Russia in Global Affairs*, March 19, 2015 <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/Vladimir-Lukin-I-Am-a-Bit-Wary-of-a-Popular-Foreign-Policy-17363> (Accessed 04.08.15)

Tichý, Lukáš. "Security and Foreign Policy of Dimitry Medvedev in the Period of 2008-2012". *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 27:4, 2014

Trenin, Dimitri V. "Russia Leaves the West". *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2006 Issue, 2006, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2006-07-01/russia-leaves-west> (Accessed 10.09.15)

Trenin, Dimitri V. "Russia's Threat Perception and Strategic Posture". Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College (SSI), Carlisle, United States, November 2007, p. 35-49. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/PUB829.pdf> (Accessed 20.09.15)

Trenin, Dimitri V. "The Mythical Alliance: Russia's Syria Policy". Carnegie Endowment Paper, February 12, 2013, <http://carnegie.ru/2013/02/12/mythical-alliance-russia-s-syria-policy/hnx1#> (Accessed 08.08.15)

Trenin, Dimitri V. "Russia's breakout from the post-Cold War System. The Drivers of Putin's Course". Carnegie Moscow Center, December 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_Trenin_Putin2014_web_Eng_1.pdf (Accessed 30.10.15)

Tsygankov, Andrei P. "Preserving Influence in a Changing World: Russia's Grand Strategy". *Problems of Post-Communism*, 58:1, March-April, 2011, pp. 28-44.

Xun, Pang. "Is the BRICS irrelevant?". Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy, April 8, 2014. <http://carnegietsinghua.org/2014/04/08/are-brics-irrelevant/h711> (Accessed 30.09.15)

Zysk, Katarzyna. "Mot et moderne russisk forsvar? Utviklingstrender i militær modernisering og strategisk tenkning". *Norsk Militært Tidsskrift*, 183:3, 2013, p. 3-13

Åtland, Kristian. "Interstate Relations in the Arctic. An Emerging Security Dilemma". *Comparative Strategy*, 33:2, 2014, p. 145-166

Åtland, Kristian and Una Hakvåg. "Russlands intervensjon på Krim – gjennomføring og konsekvenser". *Norsk Militært Tidsskrift*, 184:4, 2014, p. 16-29

Media Sources and other Online Sources

BBC. "Russia: IMF's biggest failure". September 23, 1999. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/455673.stm> (Accessed 10.05.15)

BBC. "Analysis: Putin wants respect". March 5, 2000. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/666768.stm> (Accessed 04.04.15)

Bryanski, Gleb. "Putin likens U.N. Libya resolution to crusades". *Reuters*, March 21, 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/03/21/us-libya-russia-idUSTRE72K3JR20110321> (Accessed 05.09.15)

CNN. "France, Russia threaten war veto", March 11, 2003, <http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/europe/03/10/sprj.iqr.france.chirac/> (Accessed 27.09.15)

Dyomkin, Denis. "Russia says Georgia war stopped NATO expansion". *Reuters*, November 21, 2011, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2011/11/21/idINIndia-60645720111121> (Accessed 04.04.2015)

Elder, Miriam. "Putin's grand vision: a new Eurasian bloc with old Soviet neighbours". *The Guardian*, October 4, 2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/04/putin-grand-vision- Eurasian-bloc> (Accessed 10.08.15)

Glasser, Susan B. "The Law of Politics" According to Sergei Lavrov. An exclusive interview with Russia's top diplomat". *Foreign Policy*, April 29, 2013, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/04/29/the-law-of-politics-according-to-sergei-lavrov/> (Accessed 09.09.15)

Gordon, Michael. "Russia remains uneasy over NATO's expansion". *The New York Times*, March 14, 1999, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/03/14/world/russia-remains-uneasy-over-nato-s-expansion.html?pagewanted=1> (Accessed 10.09.15)

Gorenburg, Dimitry, "Russia and the West", Oxford Bibliographies, <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756223/obo-9780199756223-0116.xml?rskey=NhcRgt&result=106> (Accessed 17.10.15)

Harding, Luke. "Russia threatening new cold war over missile defence". *The Guardian* Moscow, April 11, 2007, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/apr/11/usa.topstories3> (Accessed 27.09.15)

Harding, Luke. "Russia issues new missile defence threat". *The Guardian*, Moscow, July 4, 2007, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/jul/04/russia.usa> (Accessed 27.09.15)

Harding, Luke. "Bush Backs Ukraine and Georgia for NATO membership". *The Guardian*, Moscow April 1, 2008, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/apr/01/nato.georgia> (Accessed 27.09.15)

Harding, Luke and Matthew Weaver. "Barack Obama calls for 'reset' in US-Russia relations". *The Guardian*, Moscow, July 7, 2009, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jul/07/barack-obama-russia-moscow-speech> (Accessed 27.09.15)

Harding, Luke and Ian Traynor. "Obama abandons missile defense shield in Europe". *The Guardian*, Moscow and Brussels, September 17, 2009, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/sep/17/missile-defence-shield-barack-obama> (Accessed 23.09.15)

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "The Alliance's Strategic Concepts". 24.April, 1999, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_27433.htm (Accessed 03.03.15)

North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "NATO-Russia Council". http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50091.htm (Accessed 27.09.15)

Pop, Valentina. "EU expanding its 'sphere of influence, Russia says". *Euobserver*, Brussels, March 21, 2009. <https://euobserver.com/foreign/27827> (Accessed 22.09.15)

Princeton University. "What is a Primary Source". <https://www.princeton.edu/~refdesk/primary2.html> (Accessed 16.10.15)

Reynolds, Paul. "New Russian world order: the five principles". *BBC*, September 1, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7591610.stm> (Accessed 10.05.15)

Russia Today. "Putin in film on Crimea: US masterminds behind Ukraine coup, helped train radicals". March 15, 2014, <http://www.rt.com/news/240921-us-masterminds-ukraine-putin/> (Accessed 25.09.15)

Sputnik International. "Russia's economy under Vladimir Putin: achievements and failures". March 1, 2008, <http://www.sputniknews.com/analysis/20080301/100381963.html> (Accessed 28.09.15)

Steele, Jonathan. "Putin still bitter over orange revolution". *The Guardian*, Moscow, September 6, 2005. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/sep/06/russia.jonathansteele> (Accessed 11.09.15)

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). The SIPRI Military Expenditure. http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex_database (Accessed 05.08.15)

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). The SIPRI Arms Transfers Database. <http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers> (Accessed 11.08.15)

The Kremlin (President of Russia). "Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)". Directory and additional information, <http://en.kremlin.ru/catalog/glossary#letter-C> (Accessed 12.09.15)

The Kremlin (President of Russia). "Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)". Directory and additional information, <http://en.kremlin.ru/catalog/glossary/30> (Accessed 12.09.15)

The White House. "Statement by the President on Syria". August 31, 2013, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/08/31/statement-president-syria> (Accessed 10.09.15)

United Nations. "NATO Action Against Serbian Military Targets Prompts Divergent Views as Security Council Holds Urgent Meeting on the Situation in Kosovo". Press Release SC/6657, 24.March 1999, <http://www.un.org/press/en/1999/19990324.sc6657.html> (Accessed 01.03.15)

United Nations. "Security Council Rejects Demand for Cessation for Use of Force Against Federal Republic of Yugoslavia". Press Release SC/6659, 26. March 1999, <http://www.un.org/press/en/1999/19990326.sc6659.html> (Accessed 20.03.15)

United Nations. United Nations Security Council Veto List. <http://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick> (Accessed 10.09.15)

United Nations. "Security Council Approves 'no fly zone' over Libya, Authorizing 'All Necessary Measures' to Protect Civilians, by Vote of 10 in favor with 5 Abstentions". Security Council, SC-10200, March 17, 2011, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2011/sc10200.doc.htm> (Accessed 30.09.15)

U.S. Energy Information Administration. "Russia. International energy data and analysis". July 28, 2015. <http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=RUS> (Accessed 10.09.15)

Walsh, Nick Paton. "Russia says "spies" work in foreign NGOs". *The Guardian*, Moscow, May 13, 2005. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/may/13/russia.nickpatonwalsh> (Accessed 10.08.15)

Walcott, John and Henry Meyer. "UN Syria Vote Reflects More Assertive Russia Under Putin". *Bloomberg*, April 22, 2012, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-04-21/un-syria-vote-reflects-more-assertive-russia-under-putin> (Accessed 07.07.15)

World Bank. Data on GDP growth. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG/countries?display=default> (Accessed 27.09.15)

Oral Sources

Bukkvoll, Tor. "Ambitions and Resources in Russian Military Policy". Lecture at Leankollen Conference, Den Norske Atlanterhavskomite, February 3, 2015. Video available at:

<http://www.atlanterhavskomiteen.no/nettsider/dnak/arrangementer/leankollen/2015> (Accessed 30.09.15)

Zysk, Katarzyna. Interview with author at the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, Oslo, March 18, 2015