



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**THE ROLE OF THE RUSSIAN NAVY  
IN RUSSIA'S EVOLVING APPROACH  
TO STRATEGIC DETERRENCE**

by

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December 2020

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**THE ROLE OF THE RUSSIAN NAVY IN RUSSIA'S EVOLVING APPROACH  
TO STRATEGIC DETERRENCE**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## **ABSTRACT**

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's assessment of the changes in the strategic security environment has prompted an evolving approach to, and definition of, strategic deterrence and comprehensive military modernization to compete in such a dynamic environment. This thesis will explore Russia's three distinct stages and approaches of strategic deterrence, starting in 1999 to the present day. It is from the influence of these approaches to strategic deterrence that Russia developed its corresponding security, defense, and military strategies, doctrines, and policies. This thesis focuses on the roles, utilization, and modernization efforts of the Russian Federation Navy (RFN) throughout each distinct stage. Russia currently regards the RFN as one of the most effective instruments of strategic deterrence. This thesis evaluates the effectiveness of the RFN across key Russian maritime domains: the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, and the Arctic and Atlantic oceans. Many challenges prevent Russia from achieving the global naval notoriety it desires, and, for the foreseeable future, it relies on high-end cruise missiles and will direct naval operations in the maritime domains contiguous to Russia.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

|            |                                                              |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| A2/AD      | Anti-Access/Area Denial                                      |
| ASCM       | Anti-Ship Cruise Missile                                     |
| ASROC      | Anti-Submarine Rocket                                        |
| ASW        | Anti-Submarine Warfare                                       |
| BSF        | Black Sea Fleet                                              |
| C2         | Command and Control                                          |
| CG         | Guided-Missile Cruiser                                       |
| CGN        | Nuclear-Powered Guided-Missile Cruiser                       |
| CNA        | Center for Naval Analysis                                    |
| CV         | Aircraft Carrier                                             |
| DIA        | Defense Intelligence Agency                                  |
| DDG        | Guided-Missile Destroyer                                     |
| DDGS       | Guided-Missile Destroyer / Large Anti-Submarine Warfare Ship |
| DWP        | Defense White Paper                                          |
| FF         | Frigate                                                      |
| FFC        | Frigate Corvette (Light Frigate)                             |
| FFG        | Guided-Missile Frigate                                       |
| FSS        | Small Anti-Submarine Ship                                    |
| GDP        | Gross Domestic Product                                       |
| GIUK       | Greenland, Iceland, and United Kingdom                       |
| GPV or SAP | State Armament Program                                       |
| ICBM       | Intercontinental Ballistic Missile                           |
| IPAP       | Individual Partnership Action Plan                           |
| ISR        | Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance               |
| LACM       | Land Attack Cruise Missile                                   |
| LST        | Landing Ship                                                 |
| MRO        | Modernization, Renovation, and Overhaul                      |
| NATO       | North Atlantic Treaty Organization                           |
| NCA        | National Control Authority                                   |
| NF         | Northern Fleet                                               |

|        |                                                  |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------|
| NSNW   | Non-strategic Nuclear Weapons                    |
| NOB    | Naval Order of Battle                            |
| NSC    | National Security Concept                        |
| NSS    | National Security Strategy                       |
| PGG    | Guided-Missile Patrol Boat                       |
| PGM    | Missile Patrol Boat                              |
| RF     | Russian Federation                               |
| RFN    | Russian Federation Navy                          |
| SS     | Attack Submarine                                 |
| SSA    | Special Purpose Submarine                        |
| SSBN   | Nuclear-Powered Ballistic-Missile Submarine      |
| SSGN   | Nuclear-Powered Guided-Missile Submarine         |
| SSN    | Nuclear-Powered Submarine                        |
| SIPRI  | Stockholm International Peace Research Institute |
| UNCLOS | United Nations Convention of the Law of Sea      |
| UNSC   | United Nations Security Council                  |
| VLS    | Vertical Launch System                           |
| WMD    | Weapon(s) of Mass Destruction                    |

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. RESEARCH QUESTION

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's assessment of the changes in the strategic security environment has prompted an evolving approach to and definition of strategic deterrence and comprehensive military modernization efforts to compete in such an environment.<sup>1</sup> Russia was left with 'hollow' conventional forces and had to rely on its nuclear deterrence to protect itself.<sup>2</sup> However, throughout the past decade, Russia has concentrated on military modernization efforts and developing strategies to achieve their goals of regaining global recognition and respect as a 'great power' or regional hegemon, securing influence or authority over former Soviet republics, and depict itself as a "key regional powerbroker and a successful mediator...able to gain economic, military, and political influence over nations worldwide."<sup>3</sup>

This thesis seeks to examine and evaluate the role of the Russian Federation Navy (henceforth referred to as RFN) in Russia's evolving policy and approach to strategic deterrence. Specifically, this thesis accepts the net assessment of the United States Intelligence Community that Russia's definition and approach to strategic deterrence has evolved from defensive posture relying on nuclear deterrence to a concept that is both offensive and defensive and includes elements that are nuclear, non-nuclear, and

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Flynn, "Russia's Evolving Approach to Strategic Deterrence" in *Russia's Strategic Intentions: A Strategic Multilayer Assessment White Paper* (Boston, MA: NSI, Inc., 2019), 37, <https://nsiteam.com/social/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SMA-TRADOC-Russian-Strategic-Intentions-White-Paper-PDF.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Mikhail Tsypkin, "Gorbachev and the Soviet Military – The Military in Crisis, 1987–89" (lecture, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, February 19, 2020). In 1988, Gorbachev announced a unilateral cut of 800,000 troops. Mikhail Tsypkin, "Formation of the Russian Armed Forces; Military Politics; Wars in Chechnya" (lecture, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, February 19, 2020). After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia's population was cut in half and 40 percent of the industrial base was gone. There was a subsequent decline in defense procurement and privatization of the defense industry which, in a permanent fiscal crisis, did not produce. Minister of Defense, Marshal Igor Sergeyev (1997–2001) begins to cut 500,000 billets.

<sup>3</sup> Nicole Peterson, "Executive Summary" in *Russia's Strategic Intentions: A Strategic Multilayer Assessment White Paper* (Boston, MA: NSI, Inc., 2019), vii, <https://nsiteam.com/social/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SMA-TRADOC-Russian-Strategic-Intentions-White-Paper-PDF.pdf>. This excerpt is the broad consensus of the goals of President Vladimir Putin's global grand strategy.

informational based.<sup>4</sup> This thesis will explore how Russian naval capabilities have altered in tandem with Russia's changing definition and mission of strategic deterrence, and to determine if Russia's codified deterrence strategy has actually influenced naval strategy and force modernization efforts.

This thesis will discuss the *National Security Strategy* (NSS) and Military and Maritime Doctrine and Naval Policies of the Russian Federation that have been published in the last decade in order to compare strategic deterrence intentions, as codified in the above mentioned documents, with observed RFN's modernization efforts and operations.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, this thesis will explore the coercive, cross-domain or "new generation warfare" strategies of the Russian Federation and the RFN platforms, tactics, and weapons intended to achieve deterrence of U.S./NATO forces in the maritime domain and to provide insight into Russian naval operations and outlook.<sup>6</sup>

## **B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

This research will accomplish three specific tasks. First, it will explore how Russia defines strategic deterrence. It compares Russia's past and current foreign policies and state armament programs to explain the Russian Federation's evolving definition of strategic deterrence and to clarify how the Russian understanding of strategic deterrence differs from

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<sup>4</sup> Flynn, "Russia's Approach to Strategic Deterrence," 37.

<sup>5</sup> Katri Pynnöniemi, "Russia's National Security Strategy: Analysis of Conceptual Evolution," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 31, no. 2 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2018.1451091>; *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*, (Moscow, Russia: The Kremlin, 2016), [http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/official\\_documents/-/asset\\_publisher/CptlCk6B6Z29/content/id/2542248](http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptlCk6B6Z29/content/id/2542248); Russian Federation, *Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, trans. Anna Davis (Newport, RI: Russia Maritime Studies Institute, U.S. Naval War College, 2015), [https://dnnlgwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/NWCDepartments/Russia%20Maritime%20Studies%20Institute/Maritime%20Doctrine%20TransENGrus\\_FINAL.pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=fqZgUUVRVRrKmSFNMOj%2FNaRNawUoRdhvFJj7%2FpAkM%3D](https://dnnlgwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/NWCDepartments/Russia%20Maritime%20Studies%20Institute/Maritime%20Doctrine%20TransENGrus_FINAL.pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=fqZgUUVRVRrKmSFNMOj%2FNaRNawUoRdhvFJj7%2FpAkM%3D); Russian Federation, *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, trans. Anna Davis (Newport, RI: Russia Maritime Studies Institute, Naval War College, 2018), [https://dnnlgwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/NWCDepartments/Russia%20Maritime%20Studies%20Institute/RMSI\\_RusNavyFundamentalsENG\\_FINAL%20\(1\).pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=fjFDEgWhpd1ING%2FnmGQXqaH5%2FDEujDU76EnksAB%2B1A0%3D](https://dnnlgwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/NWCDepartments/Russia%20Maritime%20Studies%20Institute/RMSI_RusNavyFundamentalsENG_FINAL%20(1).pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=fjFDEgWhpd1ING%2FnmGQXqaH5%2FDEujDU76EnksAB%2B1A0%3D).

<sup>6</sup> Dmitry (Dima) Adamsky, "From Moscow with Coercion: Russian Deterrence Theory and Strategic Culture," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 41, no. 1–2 (July 2017): 33–60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2017.1347872>.

the U.S. in theory and practice.<sup>7</sup> Global strategic deterrence remains the primary mission of the Russian Federation but is relatively limited in the traditional enforcement of power projection.<sup>8</sup>

Second, this thesis will analyze the role of strategic deterrence in the Russian military strategy in as far as it concerns the Russian navy. This thesis will also examine the effectiveness and implementation of deterrence strategies in Russia's constrained fiscal environment and reduction in fleet sizes (largely due to Soviet platforms aging out). Further, this thesis will evaluate how the Russian naval modernization efforts, to date, reflect Russia's approach to strategic deterrence. It will also explore the role of non-nuclear strategic weapons in deterrence and consider a possible outlook to for future RFN operations in support of strategic deterrence in specified operating areas.

Third, this thesis will examine RFN operations since its sweeping modernization efforts by focusing on operational case studies in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, and certain areas of the Arctic/Atlantic Oceans. In these specific cases, this thesis will evaluate the effectiveness of the RFN to meet strategic deterrence goals which then informs future United States naval strategy and operations. Russia is a growing threat to the United States and its partners and allies. As declared in the United States *National Security Strategy*,

Russia aims to weaken U.S. influence in the world and divide us from our allies and partners... is investing in new military capabilities, including

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<sup>7</sup> Julian Cooper, *Russia's State Armament Programme to 2020: A Quantitative Assessment of Implementation 2011–2015*, FOI-R—4239—SE (Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish Defence Research Agency, 2016), [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Julian\\_Cooper2/publication/299338379\\_Russia's\\_state\\_armament\\_programme\\_to\\_2020\\_a\\_quantitative\\_assessment\\_of\\_implementation\\_2011-2015\\_FOI\\_Report/links/56f11db508aead0f31f235d/Russias-state-armament-programme-to-2020-a-quantitative-assessment-of-implementation-2011-2015-FOI-Report.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Julian_Cooper2/publication/299338379_Russia's_state_armament_programme_to_2020_a_quantitative_assessment_of_implementation_2011-2015_FOI_Report/links/56f11db508aead0f31f235d/Russias-state-armament-programme-to-2020-a-quantitative-assessment-of-implementation-2011-2015-FOI-Report.pdf); Richard Connolly and Mathieu Boulègue, *Russia's New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027* (London, England: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2018), <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/russia-s-new-state-armament-programme-implications-russian-armed-forces-and-military/2018-05-10-russia-state-armament-programme-connolly-boulegue-final.pdf>; Kristin Ven Bruusgaard, "Russian Strategic Deterrence," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 58, no. 4 (July 2016): 7–26, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2016.1207945>.

<sup>8</sup> Dmitry Gorenburg, *Russia's Naval Strategy in the Mediterranean*, ISSN 1867–4119 (Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany: The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, 2019), [https://www.marshallcenter.org/MCPUBLICWEB/mcdocs/security\\_insights\\_35\\_-\\_dmitry\\_gorenburg\\_-\\_russias\\_naval\\_strategy-\\_july\\_2019.pdf](https://www.marshallcenter.org/MCPUBLICWEB/mcdocs/security_insights_35_-_dmitry_gorenburg_-_russias_naval_strategy-_july_2019.pdf).

nuclear systems that remain the most significant existential threat to the United States...combination of Russian ambition and growing military capabilities creates an unstable frontier in Eurasia, where the risk of conflict due to Russian miscalculation is growing...and continues to intimidate its neighbors with threatening behavior, such as nuclear posturing and the forward deployment of offensive capabilities.<sup>9</sup>

The significance of this research, therefore, is to examine the efficiency of the Russian navy in regard to its mission of strategic deterrence. This thesis aims to enable a better understanding of how effective the Russian navy is in implementing strategic deterrence and to highlight how the RFN best exercises its forces in a limited budget environment, to maximize lethality, and maintain the global competitive edge.

### C. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will discuss primary sources and academic literature on Russia's approach to strategic deterrence. Primary sources include the texts of the Russian military and maritime doctrines as well as pronouncements by President Putin and members of his military high command regarding their intentions for the use of the RFN including non-nuclear strategic weapons in deterrence. There is also a considerable body of Western academic and military professional literature discussing the Russian approach to strategic deterrence and operations of the Russian navy.

The concept of deterrence emerged during the Cold War in the United States and Western Europe. Deterrence, as defined by the United States Department of Defense, is "the prevention of action by the existence of a credible threat of unacceptable counteraction and/or a belief that the cost outweighs the perceived gains."<sup>10</sup> Thomas Schelling suggested in his classical work *Arms and Influence*, that the threat of force can be used to compel an adversary to change its behavior—"compelling involves the actual use of force, with the

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<sup>9</sup> White House, *National Security Strategy*, (Washington, DC: White House, 2017), 25 and 47, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations*, JP 3-0 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2018), xx, [https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3\\_0ch1.pdf?ver=2018-11-27-160457-910](https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_0ch1.pdf?ver=2018-11-27-160457-910).

implicit or explicit threat of more to come, until the adversary changes its behavior.”<sup>11</sup> To this effect, when explaining U.S. Naval deterrence operations, this thesis will use the combined strategies of deterrence and compellence as the running definition, as the two work in concert with and can supplement each other in practice.<sup>12</sup>

Strategic deterrence has been defined by Paul Nitze and J.H. McCall as “our will and ability to wield military power to prevent or inhibit the use of force by another state in a manner of which we disapprove.”<sup>13</sup> During the Cold War, strategic deterrence has been specifically associated with deterring nuclear threats in a bipolar world, with the United States and the Soviet Union being the two actors. This view also appears in the current National Security Strategy which calls for “deterrence to be extended across all of these domains and must address all possible strategic attacks.”<sup>14</sup> As testified by former Commander, United States Strategic Command, General John E. Hyten to the Senate Armed Services Committee, “strategic deterrence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is more than nuclear...the global security environment we operate in has changed; our adversaries are developing advanced nuclear and conventional weaponry that rivals our systems in capability and capacity.”<sup>15</sup> Just as contended by the great military strategist, Carl von Clausewitz, “many roads lead to success, and...they do not all involve the opponent’s outright defeat; they range from m the destruction of the enemy’s forces, the conquest of his territory, to temporary occupation or invasion, to projects with an immediate political purpose, and finally to passively awaiting the enemy’s attacks; anyone of these may be

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 72 and Michael Gerson and Daniel Whiteneck, *Deterrence and Influence: The Navy’s Role in Preventing War*, CRM D0019315.A4 (Arlington, VA: CNA, Corp, 2009), [https://www.cna.org/CNA\\_files/PDF/D0019315.A4.pdf](https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/D0019315.A4.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Gerson and Whiteneck, *Deterrence and Influence*, 23.

<sup>13</sup> Paul H. Nitze, and J.H. McCall, National Research Council, Division on Engineering and Physical Sciences, Mathematics Commission on Physical Sciences, and Naval Studies Board, “Appendix B: Contemporary Strategic Deterrence and Precision-Guided Munitions,” *Post-Cold War Conflict Deterrence*, (Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 1997), 76, <https://www.nap.edu/read/5464/chapter/7>.

<sup>14</sup> White House, National Security Strategy, 27.

<sup>15</sup> *Hearing to Receive Testimony on United States Strategic Command Programs, United States Senate*, 115<sup>th</sup> Cong (April 4, 2017), (statement of John E. Hyten, Commander, United States Strategic Command Before the Senate Committee on Armed Services) 9, [https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/17-31\\_04-04-17.pdf](https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/17-31_04-04-17.pdf).

used to overcome the enemy's will: the choice depends on circumstances," the United States must adapt its strategy to reflect current reality.<sup>16</sup>

Deterrence theory grew out of the realist school of thought regarding foreign policy and international relations and balance of power politics.<sup>17</sup> It is widely accepted that President Vladimir Putin is a fundamentally cautious, hard-headed realist and, therefore, approaches foreign policy and military strategy from a realist perspective.<sup>18</sup> The experts who discuss and evaluate Russian foreign policy tend to believe that realism is the most fruitful approach for understanding Russia's conduct in international relations.<sup>19</sup> This realist perspective, that has formed Russia's threat perceptions, provides the basis for the Kremlin's doctrines and policies (to be discussed below).<sup>20</sup>

According to Kristin Ven Bruusgaard, the Russian definition of deterrence since the Cold War and the Russian approach to deterrence was and is almost certainly tied to their military (conventional and nuclear) capabilities and/or shortcomings.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, she explains that since the end of the Cold War, the Russian approach to deterrence can be identified in distinct stages up to the present day:

1. First Stage: Theory of De-escalation (Emerged in 1999) – Russian response on how to deter U.S. airpower, precision-strike capability, and conventional weapons with Russian nuclear weapons.

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<sup>16</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 94.

<sup>17</sup> Frank C. Zagare, "Classical Deterrence Theory: A Critical Assessment," *International Interactions* 21, no. 4 (August 1995): 365–387, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629608434873>.

<sup>18</sup> John Schindler, "Russian Activities Across Europe (A Contrarian Assessment)" in *Russia's Strategic Intentions: A Strategic Multilayer Assessment White Paper* (Boston, MA: NSI, Inc., 2019), 46, <https://nsiteam.com/social/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SMA-TRADOC-Russian-Strategic-Intentions-White-Paper-PDF.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Alexander Sergunin, *Explaining Russian Foreign Policy Behavior: Theory and Practice* (Stuttgart, Germany: Ibidem-Verlag Press, 2016), 27, [https://pure.spbu.ru/ws/files/28351678/explaining\\_Russian\\_foreign\\_policy.pdf](https://pure.spbu.ru/ws/files/28351678/explaining_Russian_foreign_policy.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Segunin, *Explaining Russian Foreign Policy Behavior*, 205–210.

<sup>21</sup> Ven Bruusgaard, "Russian Strategic Deterrence," 7–10.

2. Second Stage: Russian “Strategic Deterrence” (Theory throughout the 2000s) – Using a combination of nuclear and conventional weapons to effectively deter U.S./western convention and nuclear threats.
3. Third Stage: Expanded Strategic Deterrence (2010s to Present Day) – Inclusion of non-nuclear and non-military to further conventional and non-traditional security threats.<sup>22</sup>

At present day, as stated by the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, Strategic Deterrence is defined as:

A coordinated system of military and non-military (political, diplomatic, legal, economic, ideological, scientific–technical and others) measures taken consecutively or simultaneously...with the goal of deterring military action entailing damage of a strategic character...Strategic deterrence is directed at the stabilization of the military–political situation...in order to influence an adversary within a predetermined framework, or for the de-escalation of military conflict...The objects to be influenced through strategic deterrence may be the military–political leadership and the population of the potential adversary state (or coalition of states)...Strategic-deterrent measures are carried out continuously, both in peacetime and in wartime.<sup>23</sup>

This thesis will use these definitions in order to analyze and evaluate Russia’s *National Security Strategy* and military strategies, rhetoric regarding RFN modernization and operations, as well as observed RFN operations.

The current *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*, approved by President Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016, explicitly indicates that Russia seeks to assert itself as a “center of influence” in what it characterizes as a multipolar international system.<sup>24</sup> Further assertions in the Russian *Foreign Policy Concept* also provide insight into Putin’s perspective of the global strategic environment, specifically alluding to an

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<sup>22</sup> Ven Bruusgaard, “Russian Strategic Deterrence,” 9.

<sup>23</sup> Ven Bruusgaard, “Russian Strategic Deterrence,” 10–11 and Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, Military Encyclopedic Dictionary “Strategic Deterrence,” accessed February 16, 2020, translation provided by Yandex Translate, <http://encyclopedia.mil.ru/encyclopedia/dictionary/details.htm?id=14206@morfDictionary>.

<sup>24</sup> *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*.

alleged global power disparity, and rising international tensions, these circumstances require Russia to play an instrumental role in eliminating such disparities and tensions and also provide strategic stability in the shifting political landscape.<sup>25</sup> These ever-present themes of *realpolitik* and Balance of Power are further obvious in associated strategies and will be discussed further as the theoretical approach to Russian strategies and naval operations.

Russia's *National Security Strategy* (NSS2015), approved in 2015 ahead of the Foreign Policy Concept, provides some insight into the capabilities and security perceptions that drive Russian strategic thinking. NSS2015, Article 6 defines Russia's Foreign Policy Concept which is Russia's contemporary understandings of "national security...national interests...threats to national security...strategic national priorities...measures aimed to counter threats...and a system safeguarding national security."<sup>26</sup> Experts differ regarding the importance of NSS2015. Vasiliy Zatsepin, a Russian specialist in national security and defense economics, argues that NSS2015 is a "declaratory document which poorly correlates with the reality" and should not necessarily be deemed reliable for guiding future military action.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, Katri Pynnöniemi contends that NSS2015 offers a rather realistic perspective to Russia's security and its defensive posture even though it follows the 2008 Russian incursion into Georgia and the 2014 annexation of Crimea.<sup>28</sup> NSS2015 asserts "an increase in the Russian Federation's role in resolving the most important international problems, settling military conflicts, and ensuring strategic stability and the supremacy of international law in interstate relations," lending claims to the Russian's key role.<sup>29</sup> This approach to National Security was

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<sup>25</sup> *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*.

<sup>26</sup> *Russian Federation's National Security Strategy* (Moscow, Russia: The Kremlin, 2015), 2–3, <http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/OtrasPublicaciones/Internacional/2016/Russian-National-Security-Strategy-31Dec2015.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> Vasiliy Zatsepin, "On a New Version of the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation," *Russian Economic Developments*, Gaidar Institute for Economic Policy, 2 (February 2016): 85, <https://www.iep.ru/files/RePEc/gai/recdev/682Zatsepin.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> Katri Pynnöniemi, "Russia's National Security Strategy: Analysis of Conceptual Evolution," 242.

<sup>29</sup> *Russian Federation National Security Strategy*, 3.

resonant in 2012 when then Prime Minister Putin exclaimed, “we should not tempt anyone by allowing ourselves to be weak...is for this reason that we will under no circumstances surrender our strategic deterrent capability, and indeed, will in fact strengthen it,” which was an obvious signal to both domestic and foreign audiences regarding Russia’s view of the strategic global environment and Russia’s strategic deterrence.<sup>30</sup>

The *Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, approved by President Putin on December 25, 2014, codifies the main tasks of the Russia military and “is aimed at deterring and preventing military conflicts, improving military organization and forms and methods of employment of the Armed Forces, other troops and bodies, and enhancing mobilization readiness in order to ensure defense and security of the Russian Federation, as well as interests of its allies” and implements the *National Security Strategy*.<sup>31</sup> The *Military Doctrine*, without naming the United States directly, identifies the external threats to the Russian Federation as:

Build-up of the power potential of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)... deployment (build-up) of military contingents of foreign states (groups of states) in the territories of the states contiguous with the Russian Federation and its allies, as well as in adjacent waters, including for exerting political and military pressure on the Russian Federation... establishment and deployment of strategic missile defense systems undermining global stability and violating the established balance of forces related to nuclear missiles, implementation of the global strike concept... as well as deployment of strategic non-nuclear systems of high-precision weapons.<sup>32</sup>

The RFN’s specific tasks are delineated in Articles 32–34 of the *Military Doctrine* as part of the larger directive to the Russian Armed Forces. In addition to the general tasks of defending and protecting sovereignty and Russian territory, the RFN is assigned with strategic deterrence, combatting piracy and safety of navigation, security of economic activity on the high seas, and the protection of Russian interests in the Arctic.<sup>33</sup> It is these

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<sup>30</sup> Vladimir Putin, “Being Strong: National Security Guarantees for Russia,” *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, February 20, 2012, <http://archive.premier.gov.ru/eng/events/news/18185/>.

<sup>31</sup> *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, (Moscow, Russia: The Kremlin, 2014), <https://rusemb.org.uk/press/2029>.

<sup>32</sup> *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, Article 2.

<sup>33</sup> *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, Articles 32–34.

tasks that are set forth in the *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, which underscores the use of the RFN in support of national interests.

In 2017, Vladimir Putin approved *The Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030* (hereinafter referred to as *Russian Naval Policy*) after the largest RFN modernization efforts were fielded and put to sea. The *Russian Naval Policy* provides direction for RFN operations of blue- and green-water platforms, including the new nuclear and non-nuclear weapons and capabilities and, most important, codifies that “the Russian Federation will not allow significant superiority of naval forces of other states over its Navy and will strive to secure its position as the second most combat capable Navy in the world.”<sup>34</sup> The *Russian Naval Policy* outlines general provisions for the RFN, which includes the identification of risks and threats to Russian national security, and codifies RFN goals, objectives, and priorities, as any naval policy typically does. Putin’s *Russian Naval Policy* also has specific guidance on the use of the RFN as an effective instrument of strategic deterrence.<sup>35</sup> For the purpose of analyzing and assessing the role of the RFN in Russia’s evolving approach to strategic deterrence, the literature review will focus on this particular section of the *Russian Naval Policy*.

According to *Russian Naval Policy*, the RFN is regarded as “one of the most effective instruments of strategic (nuclear and nonnuclear) deterrence, including preventing global strike.”<sup>36</sup> The alleged ability of the RFN to project a presence across the world’s oceans and its possession of an arsenal of strategic nuclear and conventional, high-precision weapons has afforded the RFN a “qualitatively new objective” to destroy vital enemy military and economic facilities and infrastructure from the sea.<sup>37</sup> The section

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<sup>34</sup> *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 13.

<sup>35</sup> *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 11.

<sup>36</sup> *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 11.

<sup>37</sup> *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 12.

regarding strategic deterrence implicitly identifies key maritime domains in which the RFN shall secure a permanent naval presence and “implement strategic deterrence”: the Black Sea (with special attention on maintaining control of the Crimean Peninsula), the Mediterranean Sea, the Arctic, and vital sea lines of communication.<sup>38</sup> Further, the *Russian Naval Policy* is explicit in alleging that the U.S. global strike capabilities are directly threatening Russian security.<sup>39</sup> It is through this lens that this thesis will evaluate, analyze, and gauge effectiveness of key RFN operations and weapons since modernization and policy efforts took effect.

Several academic evaluations of the *Russian Naval Policy* have identified constraints in the implementation and feasibility of the Russian government’s lofty declarations. It has been noted that the *Russian Naval Policy* was approved ahead of the finalization of the current State Armament Program (SAP). Evaluation of the *Naval Policy* has been characterized as “yet another salvo in the ongoing rearguard action by the Russian Navy to protect its procurement budget.”<sup>40</sup> SAP has projections through 2025 and calls for supplementing conventional Russian naval forces with hypersonic missiles and torpedoes, but internal production problems and a decline in economic prosperity make these aspirations mostly unattainable by 2025.<sup>41</sup> This sentiment is further echoed in late-2019 rhetoric from President Putin to senior officials in the Defense Ministry and defense industry executives. Putin said that RFN’s core fleet of ships carry the Kalibr high-precision long-range missiles, make up the strategic non-nuclear forces, and that fulfillment of the current SAP would double the Kalibr arsenal by 2023. Moreover, he emphasized the need to expand naval capabilities by upgrading surface combatants and subsurface units

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<sup>38</sup> *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 12.

<sup>39</sup> *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 11.

<sup>40</sup> Dmitry Gorenburg, “Russia’s New and Unrealistic Naval Doctrine,” War on the Rocks, last modified July 26, 2017, <https://warontherocks.com/2017/07/russias-new-and-unrealistic-naval-doctrine/>.

<sup>41</sup> Gorenburg, “Russia’s New and Unrealistic Naval Doctrine.”

with hypersonic weapons.<sup>42</sup> Yet, analysis of SAP-2020, in which the RFN received twenty-six percent of the ten-year budget, revealed RFN shipbuilding goals far behind schedule (ex.:12 of 24 submarines built; 16 of 54 surface ships built); with the new SAP-2027, the RFN is expected to receive a smaller share of a more constrained defense budget, forcing RFN leadership to combine blue- and green-water capabilities, which will limit where, when, and how effectively RFN units can operate.<sup>43</sup>

An examination of RFN operations, for this thesis, will encompass 2008–2019 (the time period in which SAP-2020 and current Russian strategies, doctrines, and policies were in place) and center on the maritime domains specifically listed in the current *Russian Naval Policy*: Black Sea, Arctic (to include northern and Eastern Atlantic), and Mediterranean Sea operations. For the purposes of this thesis, the Pacific and Baltic Sea regions will not be discussed as to focus on the primary U.S. and NATO maritime operating areas.

#### **D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

Russia undertook a massive naval modernization effort that was protracted by shipbuilding and declining budget. As the realities of unmet modernization goals and legacy Soviet platforms nearing de-commissioning combined with the changing global strategic environment, Russia's perceived threats to security, stability, and national interests seem more dire to Russian leaders. The desire to become a power player has continued to drive Russia's approach to strategic deterrence, but the desire is inhibited by budget constraints, poor shipbuilding, corrupt business practices, and shortcomings in innovation and military technology. It is likely Russia will refine strategy and/or operational doctrine to reflect current capabilities, use weapons in a broader manner to

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<sup>42</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Meeting with senior Defence Ministry officials and defence industry executives - The President held a meeting on the implementation of the state defence order for the Navy," President of Russia, last modified December 3, 2017, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62228> and Vladimir Putin, "Meeting with senior Defence Ministry officials and defence industry executives - The President opened a series of meetings on the current state and development prospects of the Russian Navy," President of Russia, last modified December 2, 2017, <http://en.special.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/62175>.

<sup>43</sup> Connolly and Boulègue, *Russia's New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027*.

achieve or maintain a perceived status quo, and strain U.S. and NATO maritime assets in a manner that befits Russia.

## **E. RESEARCH DESIGN**

This research will have four main components:

1. It will examine and define Russian strategic deterrence and how this has evolved to include offensive and defensive operations and various nuclear and non-nuclear weapons to achieve the intended deterrence.
2. It will explore the current Russian security strategy, military doctrine, and naval policy to assess how the RFN can flex hard power to achieve strategic deterrence as required by the Russian military strategy.
3. It will also analyze RFN operations in the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Arctic and western/northern Atlantic to determine if and how the RFN assets are achieving desired deterrence and, if so, how effectively.
4. It will attempt to assess what the future holds for the RFN as Soviet platforms are de-commissioned and Russia's military budget stagnates or declines. This thesis also seeks to provide an outlook for future Russian naval operations in order to support the Russian mission of strategic deterrence.

## **F. THESIS OVERVIEW**

In order to adequately address the questions and significance of this research the structure and use of a standard format will be crucial. The first and second chapters will trace Russia's definitions and approach to strategic deterrence since the collapse of the Soviet Union and define what Russian strategic deterrence is today. The third chapter will examine Russian security, military, and naval doctrines to assess how the RFN is to be utilized in strategic deterrence and the force modernization efforts to achieve deterrence goals. The fourth chapter will examine geographic area case studies to determine how and if RFN assets are effectively achieving strategic deterrence goals. The final chapter will

also include an analysis of the Russian navy as an instrument of strategic deterrence and provide an outlook for future naval operations.

## II. RUSSIA'S EVOLVING APPROACH TO STRATEGIC DETERRENCE

### A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the evolution of Russia's approach to, and definition of, strategic deterrence since the end of the Cold War. The main purpose of this chapter is to examine Russia's historic approaches to strategic deterrence since the collapse of the Soviet Union and how these approaches have contributed to the current definition of, and approach to, strategic deterrence. This chapter will work through three distinct stages of, and approaches to, strategic deterrence and subsequent key security and defense documents. For each stage, this thesis will examine Russian naval administration and activities throughout the first two stages (Chapter IV will cover the third stage). Further, this chapter will define Russia's current approach to strategic deterrence and will consider this definition throughout an examination of Russia's key national security and military documents.

The stages of strategic deterrence on which this thesis relies were researched and posited by political scientist Kristin Ven Bruusgaard; she identifies that the Russian definition of and approach to deterrence since the Cold War was and is almost certainly tied to their military (conventional and nuclear) capabilities and/or shortcomings.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, she explains that since the end of the Cold War, the Russian approach to deterrence can be identified in distinct stages up to the present day:

1. First Stage: Theory of De-escalation (Emerged in 1999) – Russian response on how to deter U.S. airpower, precision-strike capability, and conventional weapons with Russian nuclear weapons.
2. Second Stage: Russian strategic deterrence (Theory throughout the 2000s) – Using a combination of nuclear and conventional weapons to effectively deter U.S./western convention and nuclear threats.

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<sup>44</sup> Kristin Ven Bruusgaard, "Russian Strategic Deterrence," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 58, no. 4 (July 2016): 7–10, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2016.1207945>, 7–10.

3. Third Stage: Expanded strategic deterrence (2010s to Present Day) – Inclusion of non-nuclear and non-military components to further deter conventional and non-traditional security threats.<sup>45</sup>

## **B. THEORY OF DE-ESCALATION APPROACH TO STRATEGIC DETERRENCE (1999–2000)**

By 1999, six years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the post-Soviet Russia military doctrine was more or less a continuation of the Soviet perspective. Following the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was left with ‘hollow’ conventional forces that had to rely heavily on nuclear deterrence capabilities to protect itself and contain security threats.<sup>46</sup> This approach to strategic deterrence is rooted in a ‘Theory of De-escalation (of Conflict).’ The disrepair and abhorrent state of the military led to Russian military officers and analysts, in May 1999, suggesting the use of nuclear weapons on the battlefield and/or for use in deterring aggression and ensuring Russian security. In the article “On the Use of Nuclear Weapons to De-Escalate Hostilities” published in the Russian General Staff journal, *Voennaia Mysl* (translated to *Military Thought*), the authors argued that, due to Russia’s current weakened economic and military state, its nuclear

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<sup>45</sup> Ven Bruusgaard, “Russian Strategic Deterrence,” 9.

<sup>46</sup> Mikhail Tsypkin, “Gorbachev and the Soviet Military – The Military in Crisis, 1987–89” (lecture, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, February 19, 2020). In 1988, Gorbachev announced a unilateral cut of 800,000 troops. Mikhail Tsypkin, “Formation of the Russian Armed Forces; Military Politics; Wars in Chechnya (lecture, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, February 19, 2020). After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia’s population was cut in half and 40 percent of the industrial base was gone. There was a subsequent decline in defense procurement and privatization of the defense industry which, in a permanent fiscal crisis, did not produce. Minister of Defense, Marshal Igor Sergeev (1997–2001) begins to cut 500,000 billets. And Ven Bruusgaard, “Russian Strategic Deterrence,” 9.

weapons would serve in deterring conventional and nuclear attacks.<sup>47</sup> The Russian military officers and analysts described the concept of de-escalation of military operations as:

Fulfilling the de-escalation concept is understood to mean actually using nuclear weapons both for showing resolve as well as for the immediate delivery of nuclear strikes against the enemy....It seems to us that the cessation of military operations will be the most acceptable thing for the enemy in this case.<sup>48</sup>

This concept presumed that a “first-strike” or “demonstrative strikes” made by a few Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons (NSNW) against unpopulated and low-collateral targets in the enemy’s deep rear of the battlefield would cause the enemy to pause and consider increased hostilities and/or nuclear escalation.<sup>49</sup>

Essentially, this concept was meant to codify the use or threat of use of NSNW for deterring and/or de-escalating a conventional threat or conflict.<sup>50</sup> As this argument was made, President Boris Yeltsin’s “Main Provisions of the Military Doctrine” (adopted in November 1993), were still in effect. Yeltsin’s Main Provisions were henceforth described

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<sup>47</sup> V.I. Levshin, A.V. Nedinn, and M.E. Sosnovski, “On the Use of Nuclear Weapons to De-Escalate Hostilities,” *Military Thought* no. 3 (1999): 34–37, <http://militaryarticle.ru/zarubezhnoe-voennoe-obozenie/1999-zvo/8995-o-primenenii-jadernogo-oruzhija-dlja-dejeskalacii>. The *Voennaia Mysl* (*Military Thought*) journal is the official journal of the Russian General Staff. The main contributors to this journal are senior officers and military academics, as well as some key members of the country’s military leadership, including former chiefs of General Staff. (Information provided by Kristin Ven Bruusgaard’s “Russian Strategic Deterrence,” page 8.) “U.S. analysts widely accept *Military Thought* as a bellwether for Russia’s military-strategic discourse. The journal’s articles generally reliably reveal how Russia’s senior military strategists assess the strategic environment, evaluate military doctrinal and other options, and craft recommendations to advance their nation’s strategic interests. Importantly, the ideas found in *Military Thought* often inform final policy decisions in the Kremlin. But the journal is not itself a perfect predictor of changes to Russian military policy. The Russian uniformed military lacks the authority to unilaterally implement the doctrinal changes reviewed or even widely endorsed in *Military Thought*. That authority is left to the Russian Federation’s political leaders, many of whose views are not represented in the journal” (Alexander Velez-Green, *The Unsettling View from Moscow*, 6).

<sup>48</sup> Mark Schneider, *The Nuclear Forces and Doctrine of the Russian Federation* (Fairfax, VA: National Institute Press, 2006), 20, <https://www.nipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Russian-nuclear-doctrine-NSF-for-print.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> Yury E. Fedorov, *New Wine in Old Bottles? The New Salience of Nuclear Weapons*, Report Number ISBN: 978–2-86592-230-7 (Paris, France: Ifri Security Studies Center, Fall 2007), 18, [https://inis.iaea.org/collection/NCLCollectionStore/\\_Public/42/081/42081738.pdf](https://inis.iaea.org/collection/NCLCollectionStore/_Public/42/081/42081738.pdf).

<sup>50</sup> Mikhail Tsypkin, “Russian Strategic Deterrence” (lecture, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, February 26, 2020).

as the “first attempt in Soviet/Russian history to develop a military doctrine setting out current officially accepted viewpoints on how to prevent war, on the purposes and nature of war, and, if prevention fails, on how to prepare the military for war and how to conduct it.”<sup>51</sup> Therefore, the concept of de-escalation, as posited by Yeltsin, envisioned that use or threatening the use of nuclear weapons in a conventional conflict demonstrated resolve and credibility, and would be the appropriate mechanism to convince an adversary to stand down.<sup>52</sup> This proposal introduced in *Voennaia Mysl* then principally worked within the parameters of Yeltsin’s “Main Provisions” but suggested nuclear steps of de-escalation based on an adaptation of nuclear analyst Hermann Kahn’s ‘escalation ladder’.<sup>53</sup> Nikolai Sokov, in his presentation “Russian Nuclear Strategy: Background, Current Status, Future” characterized the transition of Russia’s 1993 military and nuclear doctrines to the 1999–2000 doctrines (Table 1).

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<sup>51</sup> Vladimir Belous, “Key Aspects of the Russian Nuclear Strategy,” *Security Dialogue* 28, no. 2 (June 1997): 159–160, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26296523>.

<sup>52</sup> Olga Oliker and Andrey Baklitskiy, “The Nuclear Posture Review and Russian ‘De-Escalation:’ A Dangerous Solution to a Nonexistent Problem,” *War on the Rocks*, last modified February 20, 2018, <https://warontherocks.com/2018/02/nuclear-posture-review-russian-de-escalation-dangerous-solution-nonexistent-problem/>.

<sup>53</sup> Sergey Brezkun, “Russia needs a “ladder” not of escalation but of de-escalation,” *Независимое военное обозрение* (translated: Independent Military Review), November 27, 2015, [http://nvo.ng.ru/concepts/2015-11-27/1\\_stairway.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/concepts/2015-11-27/1_stairway.html).

Table 1. Transition from Soviet to Russian Nuclear and Military Strategies<sup>54</sup>

| <b>Transition from Soviet to Russian Nuclear and Military Strategies</b> |                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                          | <b>Soviet Union/Russian<br/>1993 Doctrines</b>                                         | <b>Russian 2000<br/>and Later Doctrines</b>                                                                                                      |
| <b>Nature of<br/>Conflict</b>                                            | Global War                                                                             | <b>Regional War</b><br>Global War                                                                                                                |
| <b>Nuclear<br/>Missions</b>                                              | Deterrence of Global War                                                               | <b>De-Escalation of Regional War</b><br>Deterrence of Global War                                                                                 |
| <b>Employment</b>                                                        | No First Use<br>Massive Strike on Warning of<br>Attack; Transition to Second<br>Strike | <b>Regional Conflict: Limited Use,<br/>Military Targets<br/>First Use</b><br>Massive Strike on Warning of Attack;<br>Transition to Second Strike |
| <b>Scale of Use</b>                                                      | Unacceptable Damage                                                                    | <b>Tailored Damage for Limited Use</b><br>Unacceptable Damage for Global War                                                                     |

Furthermore, the authors of the 1999 “On the Use of Nuclear Weapons to De-Escalate Hostilities” married types of non-strategic nuclear strikes to targets that would ideally achieve de-escalation and deterrence (Table 2). However, as explained by Olga Oliker and Andrey Baklitskiy, this kind of de-escalation deterrence is only effective if the adversary understands they are the adversary and further understands what actions or rhetoric will trigger a nuclear response, which is not necessarily a guarantee.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Source: Nikolai Sokov, “Russian Nuclear Strategy: Background, Current Status, Future” (presentation, Center for Strategic and International Studies Headquarters, Washington, D.C., USA, June 27, 2016), <https://www.csis.org/events/russian-nuclear-strategy> and <https://www.nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Nikolai-Sokov-Russian-Nuclear-Strategy.pdf>.

<sup>55</sup> Oliker and Baklitskiy, “The Nuclear Posture Review and Russian ‘De-Escalation.’”

Table 2. Original De-Escalation of Armed Conflicts Concept<sup>56</sup>

| <b>Original De-Escalation of Armed Conflicts Concept<br/>By Levshin, Nedelin, and Sosnovsky (May 1999)</b> |                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>TYPE OF STRIKE</b>                                                                                      | <b>TARGET TYPE</b>                                                                                                                                             |
| Demonstration                                                                                              | Single strike in area with no or very few personnel                                                                                                            |
| Intimidation - Demonstration                                                                               | Single strike at logistics, engineering, reduction of invading force/enemy efficiency                                                                          |
| Intimidation                                                                                               | More than one strike aimed at a sector of the conflict to alter the balance and/or to eliminate breakthrough                                                   |
| Intimidation - Retaliation                                                                                 | Multiple strikes on enemy's theater of operation's force groups, to fundamentally or resolutely alter the balance and prevent breakthrough of a defensive line |
| Retaliation - Intimidation                                                                                 | Mass strikes on enemy armed forces to rout and destroy — a radical change is the goal                                                                          |

## 1. Non-strategic Nuclear Weapons

For the purposes of this thesis, I will be working with the accepted descriptions of non-strategic nuclear weapons (also referred to as tactical nuclear weapons) as provided from the United States Congressional Research Service (CRS) report *Nonstrategic Nuclear Weapons* (updated May 4, 2020).

**Tactical Use of Nuclear Weapons:** the use of nuclear weapons by land, sea, or air forces against opposing forces, supporting installations or facilities, in support of operations that contribute to the accomplishment of a military mission of limited scope, or in support of the military commander's scheme of maneuver, usually limited to the area of military operations.<sup>57</sup>

Therefore, the nuclear weapons not covered by strategic arms control treaties are to be consequently considered as nonstrategic nuclear weapons.<sup>58</sup> As argued in the CRS report,

<sup>56</sup> Source: Thomas C. Moore, "Tailor-Surgeon, Soviet and Silovik: Russian Nuclear Strategy," *Revue Défense Nationale*, no. 801 (June 2017), 47, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-defense-nationale-2017-6-page-42.htm>.

<sup>57</sup> Amy F. Woolf, *Nonstrategic Nuclear Weapons*, CRS Report No. RL32572 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, May 4, 2020), 8, <https://fas.org/srg/crs/nuke/RL32572.pdf>.

<sup>58</sup> Woolf, *Nonstrategic Nuclear Weapons*, 9.

defining what a NSNW based on specific weapon capabilities is not the most precise method to use when classifying a nuclear weapon to its intended use.<sup>59</sup> Ultimately, the distinction between a strategic and NSNW, therefore, indicates not the yield or delivery system of the nuclear warhead, but the nature of the target.<sup>60</sup>

## **2. Russian Federation Navy (1999–2000)**

Since the 1999 Russian de-escalation approach to strategic deterrence was designed more to rely on its nuclear rather than conventional military strength, the RFN was employed, or rather not employed, as such. To highlight the significant decline in RFN platforms and combat capability, in the ten years following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the RFN a decline in half of its bases and personnel, as well as 41 percent of its ships and submarines and 63 percent of its fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft; the total naval order of battle (NOB) was reduced by one-third, and 90 percent of RFN ships and submarines were in need of repair.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, the RFN was never designed to fulfill the NSNW strategic approach.<sup>62</sup>

Operationally, the RFN was grossly neglected between 1999 and 2000. “In 2000, the navy exercised even less than in 1999: 195 (in 1999–315) missile firings and 368 (1999–934) anti-submarine warfare (ASW)/minesweeping exercises” ... average at-sea time was 6.4 days per ship, and 156 of 584 naval aircrew were combat-ready, and 77 of the 156 were night flight qualified.<sup>63</sup> The General Staff’s de-escalation approach to strategic deterrence meant no demand for conventional naval forces. Regarding RFN’s nuclear-

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<sup>59</sup> Woolf, *Nonstrategic Nuclear Weapons*, 8–9.

<sup>60</sup> Woolf, 10.

<sup>61</sup> Mikhail Tsypkin, “Rudderless in a Storm: The Russian Navy, 1992–2002,” in *Russian Military Reform: 1992–2002*, ed. Anne C. Aldis and Roger N. McDermott (London, England: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003), 161.

<sup>62</sup> Michael Kofman, “The Role of Nuclear Forces in Russian Maritime Strategy,” in *The Future of the Undersea Deterrent: A Global Survey*, ed. Rory Medcalf, Katherine Mansted, Stephan Friling, and James Goldrick (Canberra, Australia: National Security College at The Australian National University, February 2020), 34, [https://nsc.crawford.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/publication/nsc\\_crawford\\_anu\\_edu\\_au/2020-02/the\\_future\\_of\\_the\\_undersea\\_deterrent.pdf](https://nsc.crawford.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/publication/nsc_crawford_anu_edu_au/2020-02/the_future_of_the_undersea_deterrent.pdf). Hermann Kahn’s book, *On Escalation: Metaphors and Scenarios*, set out to define the 44 “ladder rungs” of nuclear escalation; it was published in 1965.

<sup>63</sup> Mikhail Tsypkin, “Rudderless in a Storm,” 162.

power ballistic-missile submarines (SSBN), Russia's sea-based arm of its strategic nuclear triad, the force declined from 62 (1999) to 28 (2000) total platforms with only 15 percent operational.<sup>64</sup>

From June 21–29, 1999, Russia commenced the military-wide exercise, Zapad-99 (translated West-99) that involved 50,000 troops from all of Russia's military districts.<sup>65</sup> The exercise was designed around a notional invasion from the west by more superior forces (in terms of higher caliber technology and conventional capabilities) because of Moscow's alarm at how the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) exhibited the willingness and the ability to extend its reach beyond its own defined security boundaries in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>66</sup> Naval forces from Russia's Northern, Baltic Sea, and Black Sea Fleets and the Caspian Sea Flotilla participated in the exercise and staged nine tactical exercises including surface combatants, nuclear-powered submarines, and support vessels.<sup>67</sup> Zapad-99 occurred just months after the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia and was designed to demonstrate Russia's resolve and ability to wage substantial military operations in response to any potential eastward expansion by NATO.<sup>68</sup> The de-escalation approach was incorporated, to some extent, into Zapad-99 and further validated Russia's negative perception of NATO and, coupled with Russian Defense Minister Sergeev's disappointment in the operation and combat shortcomings in the exercise, highlighted Russian willingness to use nuclear weapons primarily in a deterrent capacity but at the tactical and regional levels.<sup>69</sup> The lessons learned from Zapad-99, the assessed

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<sup>64</sup> Tsypkin, 162.

<sup>65</sup> Konstantin George, "Russia resumes big military exercises," *Executive Intelligence Review* 26, no. 27 (July 2, 1999): 70, [https://larouchepub.com/eiw/public/1999/eirv26n27-19990702/eirv26n27-19990702\\_070-russia\\_resumes\\_big\\_military\\_exer.pdf](https://larouchepub.com/eiw/public/1999/eirv26n27-19990702/eirv26n27-19990702_070-russia_resumes_big_military_exer.pdf).

<sup>66</sup> Robert Brannon, *Russia Civil-Military Relations* (London, England: Routledge, 2009), 108, <https://doi-org.libproxy.nps.edu/10.4324/9781315607306>.

<sup>67</sup> Alexey Muraviev, "Russia Military Power at the Turn of the Millennium," in *Russia After Yeltsin*, ed. Vladimir Tikhomirov (Farnham, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing, 2001), 211.

<sup>68</sup> Muraviev, "Russia Military Power at the Turn of the Millennium," 212.

<sup>69</sup> Olga Oliker and Tanya Charlick-Paley, *Assessing Russia's Decline: Trends and Implications for the United States and the U.S. Air Force*, MR1442 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2002), 76–77, [https://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph\\_reports/MR1442.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1442.html).

shortcomings, and neglected forces of the military, especially the RFN, would form the basis for subsequent approaches to strategic deterrence and how the Kremlin would approach military modernization efforts.

### **C. RUSSIAN STRATEGIC DETERRENCE – THEORETICAL APPROACH FROM 2000–2010**

The 2000s ushered in a new era for Russia. Vladimir Putin had been elected president and assumed office with the intent to stabilize the military, develop conventional capabilities to compensate for their inferiority, and to re-define Russia's approach to deterrence doctrine. Deterrence would be expanded to become a combination of nuclear and conventional weapons designed to counter and more effectively deter U.S. and western threats. This would normalize the term strategic deterrence in Russian deterrence thinking.<sup>70</sup> The normalization of the term strategic deterrence from the Russian vantage is critical to understanding how Russia may seek to influence or coerce any potential adversary.<sup>71</sup> Kristin Ven Bruusgaard argues that the Russian use and application of strategic deterrence is broader than the Western understanding and, beginning in 2000, has become even more expansive to contain offensive and defensive, nuclear, non-nuclear, and non-military deterrent tools.<sup>72</sup>

The expansion of Russia's approach to strategic deterrence began as Putin entered into his first term in office; he and, eventually, his Minister of Defense, started first by signing new versions of Russia's primary security documents and decrees, as follows: <sup>73</sup>

***National Security Concept (NSC) – Approved by presidential decree on January 10, 2000:*** This document served to outline Russia's national interests during a "world situation characterized by a system of international

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<sup>70</sup> Kristin Ven Bruusgaard, "Russian Strategic Deterrence," 9.

<sup>71</sup> Ven Bruusgaard, 7.

<sup>72</sup> Ven Bruusgaard, 7–9.

<sup>73</sup> Marcel de Haas, "Russia's Military Doctrine Development (2000-2010)," in *Russia's Military Politics and Russia's 2010 Defense Doctrine*, ed. Stephen J. Blank (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2011), 7, [https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/20110300\\_haas\\_doctrine.pdf](https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/20110300_haas_doctrine.pdf).

relations undergoing dynamic transformation.”<sup>74</sup> The NSC is notable because its reproach of the West and the United States and for the revision, although subtle, of Russia’s nuclear posture.<sup>75</sup> Yeltsin’s 1993 security concept allowed for nuclear weapons first “in case of a threat to the existence to the Russian Federation,” (the basis of the Theory of De-escalation) whereas the 2000 NSC allowed “such use to repulse armed aggression, if all other means of resolving the crisis have been exhausted.”<sup>76</sup>

These notable changes highlight the perceived threat to Russia and also emphasize the underlying motivation and direction for Russia to pursue conventional capabilities to counter or match that perceived threat and actual or contrived military capabilities of the West and the United States. (For reference, the *National Security Concept* was renamed to the *National Security Strategy* in 2009.)

***Military Doctrine 2000 – Approved by presidential edict on April 21, 2000:*** As explained by political scientist, Dale R. Herspring, *Military Doctrine 2000* “made it clear that Moscow keep the right to use nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) against Russia or its allies, as well as in response to large-scale conventional aggression in critical situation for Russian national security.”<sup>77</sup>

This, as with the NSC, is also an indication of the status of the deteriorated state of Russia’s conventional weapons and forces.

The *Military Doctrine 2000* also identified the threats to the Russian Federation (RF) as “interference in RF internal affairs, attempts to ignore RF interests in resolving international security problems; attempts to oppose the increase of influence of the RF on a global level, the expansion of military blocs and alliances, the introduction of foreign

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<sup>74</sup> *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation* (Moscow, Russia: The Kremlin, January 10, 2000), [https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/official\\_documents/-/asset\\_publisher/CptICk6B6BZ29/content/id/589768](https://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICk6B6BZ29/content/id/589768).

<sup>75</sup> “Russia’s National Security Concept: Excerpts from the Text,” Arms Control Association, *Arms Control Today* 30 (January/February 2000), <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2000-01/features/russias-national-security-concept>.

<sup>76</sup> “Russia’s National Security Concept,” Arms Control Association.

<sup>77</sup> Dale R. Herspring, “Russian Nuclear and Conventional Weapons: The Broken Relationship,” in *Russian Nuclear Weapons: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Stephen J. Blank (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2011), 9, <https://publications.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/2160.pdf>.

troops (without United Nations Security Council sanction) to the territory of contiguous states friendly with the RF, and the suppression of the rights of RF citizens abroad.”<sup>78</sup>

***The priority tasks of the development of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation*** – published by the Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Ivanov on October 2, 2003 and approved by the Russian Council of National Security in June 2005: Also known as the Defense White Paper 2003 (DWP 2003), was published as a doctrine to explain RF military operations and military capabilities.<sup>79</sup>

The DWP also included possibly using armed forces for national defense and in various peacekeeping operations.<sup>80</sup> Regarding RF military capabilities, DWP 2003 has also been assessed to be a response to U.S. and West military modernizations and NATO enlargement and a directive for what the “military requirements for the development of the Russian military organization to 2015.”<sup>81</sup> Further, DWP 2003 emphasized the need for more modern conventional weapons and platforms and a need for reliance on advanced missile systems, precision-guided munitions, tactical air forces, and also established the necessity to keep conflicts as short as possible.<sup>82</sup>

Collectively, this decade of oscillating between nuclear de-escalation and strategic deterrence would result in a push toward military restructuring and modernization to compete with the actual and perceived threats to the RF. Strategic deterrence as it had been defined in this decade, especially with the incorporation of conventional capabilities to deter adversaries, set the course for the years following. As argued by former Russian Deputy Defense Minister Andrei Kokoshin in 2003, there were clear limits to the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence and it was therefore necessary for Russia to invest in

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<sup>78</sup> Marcel de Haas, “Russia’s Military Doctrine Development (2000-2010),” 10.

<sup>79</sup> de Haas, “Russia’s Military Doctrine Development (2000-2010),” 13.

<sup>80</sup> Japan Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2008, Chapter 2: National Defense Policies of Countries, Section 4: Russia* (Tokyo, Japan: Japan Ministry of Defense, 2008), 60, [https://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w\\_paper/pdf/2008/12Part1\\_Chapter2\\_Sec4.pdf](https://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2008/12Part1_Chapter2_Sec4.pdf).

<sup>81</sup> Yuri Krupnov, “Prospects for Defense Reform and NATO-Russia Partnership,” in *Reform and the Russian Navy* (Rome, Italy: NATO Defense College, 2006), 49, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep10334.7>.

<sup>82</sup> Frederic Labarre, “Sustainable Armor Capability for Small Powers: The Case of Georgia in the August War,” *Baltic Security and Defense Review* 11, no. 2 (2009): 99, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.469.4612&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

the development of conventional precision-strike weapons systems or, as they viewed it, a credible ‘pre-nuclear deterrence’.<sup>83</sup> These approaches to Russian national security and defense would be the doctrinal impetus for the future and direction of RFN modernization and employment, near and abroad.<sup>84</sup>

## **1. Russian Federation Navy (2000–2010)**

In 2000, with the economy stabilizing, the Russian Federation published and released *Foundations of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Activity Until 2010*, a policy written to reflect the key policy documents of the decade (*Foundations of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Activity Until 2010* was amended in 2012 for the period until 2020 and again in 2017 for the period until 2030). This document set forth strategic guidelines for the RFN, outlined basic principles for Russia’s maritime policy, and touched upon naval preservation and the future of Russian naval power—not only for modernization but also the role of the RFN in protecting Russian national interests and security.<sup>85</sup> Follow-up doctrines to the *Foundations of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Activity Until 2010* included the *Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation* approved in July 2001 and the *Strategy for the Development of the Shipbuilding Industry until the Year 2020 and Beyond* in 2007.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Roger N. McDermott and Tor Bukkvoll, *Russia in the Precision-Strike regime – military theory, procurement, and operational impact*, Report Number FFI-RAPPORT 17/00979 (Kjeller, Norway: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, August 1, 2017), 28, <https://publications.ffi.no/nb/item/asset/dspace:2671/17-00979.pdf>.

<sup>84</sup> Daniel Flynn of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence highlighted that “Russia’s 2010 Military Doctrine was the first to make an initial reference to use of precision weapons as part of Russia’s strategic deterrence.” Daniel Flynn, “Russia’s Evolving Approach to Strategic Deterrence” in *Russia’s Strategic Intentions: A Strategic Multilayer Assessment White Paper* (Boston, MA: NSI, Inc., 2019), 39, <https://nsiteam.com/social/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SMA-TRADOC-Russian-Strategic-Intentions-White-Paper-PDF.pdf>.

<sup>85</sup> Konstantin Bogdanov and Ilya Kramnik, *The Russian Navy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Legacy and the New Path*, IOP-2018-U-018268-Final (Arlington, VA: CNA, Corp., 2018), 11, [https://www.cna.org/CNA\\_files/PDF/IOP-2018-U-018268-Final.pdf](https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/IOP-2018-U-018268-Final.pdf) and Alexey Muraviev, “Russian Military Power at the Turn of the Millennium,” in *Russia After Yeltsin*, ed. Vladimir M. Tikhomirov (New York, NY: Routledge Publishing, 2001).

<sup>86</sup> Liv Karin Parnemo, “Russia’s Naval Development – Grand Ambitions and Tactical Pragmatism,” 47.

In the period of time between the approval of *Foundations of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Activity Until 2010* and *Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, the RFN faced a dilemma representing the larger strategic deterrence questions that Kremlin and the Ministry of Defense were working to resolve; the dilemma of the dual-fleet and of nuclear versus conventional capabilities.

The RFN had fallen into a serious state of disrepair and neglect by the end of the second millennium. On August 10, 2000, Russia's Northern Fleet commenced 'Summer-X,' its largest exercise in over a decade, designed to exhibit the strength of RFN units to the newly elected President Putin and to appeal for funding.<sup>87</sup> On August 12, 2000, two explosions not related to Summer-X were detected in the vicinity of the Northern Fleet exercise, later determined to be the *Kursk*, a six-year old Oscar-class nuclear-powered guided-missile submarine (SSGN) (NATO Name: Oscar II SSGN); the explosions killed the submarine's entire crew and were linked to faulty welding on its Type-65 torpedoes.<sup>88</sup>

The sinking of the *Kursk* was a physical representation of the broken relationship permeating Russian military leadership. There was tension between Defense Minister Marshall Igor Sergeev and Chief of the General Staff Anatolii Kvashnin, a power-struggle that represented relationship friction between nuclear and conventional weapons.<sup>89</sup> Sergeev, a carry-over from former President Boris Yeltsin's administration, preferred to focus spending on nuclear weapons, capabilities, and continuing the de-escalation approach to deterrence; whereas, Kvashnin championed investment in conventional weapons to protect Russia's interests and achieve the capability to wage war anywhere in

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<sup>87</sup> Zoltan Barany, "The Tragedy of the Kursk: Crisis Management in Putin's Russia," *Government and Opposition* 39, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 477–478, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44483081>.

<sup>88</sup> Zoltan Barany, "The Tragedy of the Kursk: Crisis Management in Putin's Russia," 479 and George Sviatov, "The Kursk's Loss Offers Lessons," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings* 129, no. 6 (June 2003): 71, <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2003/june/kursks-loss-offers-lessons>.

<sup>89</sup> Dale R. Herspring, "Russian Nuclear and Conventional Weapons: The Broken Relationship," 10.

the world.<sup>90</sup> From this tragedy, the RF military forces' budgets were substantially increased. In an effort to align the RFN with the decade's (2000–2010) geopolitical and doctrinal assertiveness, Putin gave the RFN increased political attention and funding (the surge of oil resulted in Russia's national budget increasing in this time period (Table 3).<sup>91</sup> Most importantly, this tragedy led presidential and other senior politicians to publicly declare the necessity for completely and drastically reforming the conventional military forces.<sup>92</sup>

Table 3. Russian Military Expenditures: Years 2001, 2005, 2008–2010<sup>93</sup>

| <b>Russian Military Expenditures: Years 2001, 2005, 2008–2010</b><br>(All Figures in Current Prices) |                                                  |                                                  |                                                            |                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| YEAR                                                                                                 | National Defense Spending<br>(Billions - Rubles) | National Defense Spending<br>as share of GDP (%) | SIPRI Estimate of Military Spending<br>(Billions - Rubles) | SIPRI Estimate of Military Spending<br>as a share of GDP (%) |
| 2001                                                                                                 | 248                                              | 2.8                                              | 365                                                        | 4.1                                                          |
| 2005                                                                                                 | 581                                              | 2.7                                              | 806                                                        | 3.7                                                          |
| 2008                                                                                                 | 1,041                                            | 2.5                                              | 1,448                                                      | 3.5                                                          |
| 2009                                                                                                 | 1,188                                            | 3.0                                              | 1,693                                                      | 4.3                                                          |
| 2010                                                                                                 | 1,517                                            | 2.8                                              | 1,782                                                      | 4.0                                                          |

<sup>90</sup> Barany, 478. “Ten days after the tragedy, former Prime Minister Yevgenii Primakov, leader of the Fatherland-All Russia faction in the Duma (the legislature's lower house), announced that the sinking of the submarine ‘illuminated the situation in the country, the state of our armed forces, and the situation in the navy’. According to Primakov, the military's decline could only be reversed by raising military expenditures, increasing the legislative control over the military budget, and re-establishing order in the MoD (Barany, 483).”

<sup>91</sup> Liv Karin Parnemo, “Russia's Naval Development – Grand Ambitions and Tactical Pragmatism,” *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 32, no. 1 (January 2019): 46, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2019.1552678>.

<sup>92</sup> Barany, 500.

<sup>93</sup> Adapted from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook 2011: Armaments, Disarmament, and International Security* (Stockholm, Sweden: SIPRI, 2011), 164, <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/SIPRIYB1104.pdf>. “Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) data for Russia's total military spending includes spending on military pensions and various paramilitary forces, an estimate of additional military research and development spending, and some military-related subsidies, in addition to ‘national defense’ spending.”

This decade was a pivotal, but still missed the mark effort at reforming the RFN. The decade's approach to strategic deterrence focused on effectively employing nuclear and conventional forces given that Russian conventional forces were considerably derelict. The key military and security documents, while identifying Russia's main adversaries and the need for modernized conventional forces, were a limited effort to codify RFN missions and delineate what type of, and how many, naval platforms would be required to protect and secure Russia.<sup>94</sup>

#### **D. EXPANDED STRATEGIC DETERRENCE – THEORETICAL APPROACH FROM 2010-PRESENT DAY**

Russian strategic deterrence, beginning in 2010, expanded to incorporate the inclusion of non-nuclear and non-military components in order to further deter conventional and non-traditional security threats.<sup>95</sup> According to the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, at present day, strategic deterrence is defined as:

A coordinated system of military and non-military (political, diplomatic, legal, economic, ideological, scientific–technical and others) measures taken consecutively or simultaneously...with the goal of deterring military action entailing damage of a strategic character...Strategic deterrence is directed at the stabilization of the military–political situation...in order to influence an adversary within a predetermined framework, or for the de-escalation of military conflict...The objects to be influenced through strategic deterrence may be the military–political leadership and/or the population of the potential adversary state (or coalition of states)...Strategic-deterrent measures are carried out continuously, both in peacetime and in wartime, not only to prevent any forceful actions that cause or could damage the strategic scale of the subject, but also to keep the object within a certain framework, as well as to de-escalate the military conflict.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Tsypkin, "Rudderless in a Storm: The Russian Navy, 1992–2002," 177.

<sup>95</sup> Ven Bruusgaard, "Russian Strategic Deterrence," 9.

<sup>96</sup> Ven Bruusgaard, "Russian Strategic Deterrence," 10–11 and Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, Military Encyclopedic Dictionary "Strategic Deterrence," accessed June 14, 2020, translation provided by Yandex Translate, <http://encyclopedia.mil.ru/encyclopedia/dictionary/details.htm?id=14206@morfDictionary>.

It is this current definition and understanding of strategic deterrence that is central to Russia's view of the strategic environment and their current approach to warfare, while not official, has become the unified definition for official Russian doctrine.<sup>97</sup> Daniel Flynn highlights that "Russian strategists view 'deterrence' operations as occurring both prior to and after the outbreak of hostilities."<sup>98</sup> That is to say, prior to hostilities, Moscow's goal is to dissuade U.S. or NATO intervention by shaping the strategic environment and during hostilities, Russia's goal is to induce de-escalation, prevent increased aggression, and end hostilities quickly and in terms favorable to Moscow.<sup>99</sup>

Comparable to the Theory of De-escalation approach, Russian strategists began to consider and accept that conventional weapons could provide the same deterrent, prevention, and/or control effects as nuclear weapons.<sup>100</sup> Moreover, those strategists are now adhering to this expanded view of expanded strategic deterrence but accepting a broader concept of 'pre-emption.'<sup>101</sup> This concept of pre-emption has been presented to serve one or more of these purposes:

- **Deterrence by cost imposition.** Pre-emptive attacks on countervalue targets could provide a "punch in the nose" that deters U.S. or NATO aggression by communicating to Western policymakers and publics alike that the costs of attacking or escalating a military confrontation with Russia will outweigh any plausible benefits. This would include pre-emptive attacks aiming for U.S. and NATO vital infrastructure, such as communication networks underpinning basic economic and other public functions.
- **Deterrence by denial.** Pre-emptive attacks on counterforce targets could degrade U.S. or NATO power projection capabilities, and change the "correlation of forces," such that Washington and other NATO capitals no longer believe that they can prevail in a major war, at acceptable levels of escalation, against Russia.

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<sup>97</sup> Ven Bruusgaard, "Russian Strategic Deterrence," 11.

<sup>98</sup> Daniel Flynn, "Russia's Evolving Approach to Strategic Deterrence," 40.

<sup>99</sup> Flynn, "Russia's Evolving Approach to Strategic Deterrence," 40.

<sup>100</sup> Flynn, 40.

<sup>101</sup> Alexander Velez-Green, *The Unsettling View from Moscow: Russia's Strategic Debate on the Doctrine of Pre-emption*, (Washington, D.C.: Center for a New American Security, April 2017), 8, <https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/documents/CNASReport-RussiaStrike-Finalb.pdf?mtime=20170428143631>.

- **Pre-emption as a defeat mechanism.** Pre-emptive attacks on key Western aerospace and other capabilities may allow the Russian armed forces to degrade or eliminate U.S. and NATO forces' comparative advantages, such as long-range strike, thereby improving Russia's relative military-operational position.<sup>102</sup>

It is the above current definition of strategic deterrence and the concept of pre-emption that has informed key Russian state, strategy, security, and military documents currently guiding Russian security and defense activities.

**a.      *The Current Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation and RFN Tasks***

The *Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, approved by President Putin on December 25, 2014, codifies the main tasks of the Russia military and “is aimed at deterring and preventing military conflicts, improving military organization and forms and methods of employment of the Armed Forces, other troops and bodies, and enhancing mobilization readiness in order to ensure defense and security of the Russian Federation, as well as interests of its allies” and implements the *National Security Strategy*.<sup>103</sup> The *Military Doctrine*, without naming the United States directly, identifies the external threats to the Russian Federation as:

Build-up of the power potential of the NATO...deployment (build-up) of military contingents of foreign states (groups of states) in the territories of the states contiguous with the Russian Federation and its allies, as well as in adjacent waters, including for exerting political and military pressure on the Russian Federation...establishment and deployment of strategic missile defense systems undermining global stability and violating the established balance of forces related to nuclear missiles, implementation of the global strike concept...as well as deployment of strategic non-nuclear systems of high-precision weapons.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Velez-Green, *The Unsettling View from Moscow: Russia's Strategic Debate on the Doctrine of Pre-emption*, 2.

<sup>103</sup> *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, (Moscow, Russia: The Kremlin, 2014), <https://rusemb.org.uk/press/2029>.

<sup>104</sup> *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, Article 2.

The 2014 *Military Doctrine*, like the 2010 doctrine, also emphasizes that deterrence should be achieved using nuclear and non-nuclear means.<sup>105</sup>

The RFN's specific tasks are delineated in Articles 32–34 of the Military Doctrine as part of the larger directive to the Russian Armed Forces. In addition to the general tasks of defending and protecting sovereignty and Russian territory, the RFN is assigned with 'strategic deterrence,' combatting piracy and safety of navigation, security of economic activity on the high seas, and the protection of Russian interests in the Arctic.<sup>106</sup> It is these tasks that are set forth in the *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, which underscores the use of the RFN in support of national interests.

**b. Russian Federation's National Security Strategy**

Russia's *National Security Strategy* (NSS2015) provides some insight into the capabilities and security perceptions that drive Russian strategic thinking. NSS2015, Article 6 defines Russia's *Foreign Policy Concept*, which is Russia's contemporary understandings of "national security...national interests...threats to national security...strategic national priorities...measures aimed to counter threats...and a system safeguarding national security."<sup>107</sup> Experts differ regarding the importance of NSS2015. Vasiliy Zatsepin, a Russian specialist in national security and defense economics, argues that NSS2015 is a "declaratory document which poorly correlates with the reality" and should not necessarily be deemed reliable for guiding future military action.<sup>108</sup> In contrast, Russian Security Specialist Katri Pynnöniemi contends that NSS2015 offers a rather realistic perspective to Russia's security and its defensive posture, even though it follows

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<sup>105</sup> Flynn, 39.

<sup>106</sup> *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, Articles 32–34.

<sup>107</sup> *Russian Federation's National Security Strategy* (Moscow, Russia: The Kremlin, 2015), 2–3, <http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/OtrasPublicaciones/Internacional/2016/Russian-National-Security-Strategy-31Dec2015.pdf>.

<sup>108</sup> Vasiliy Zatsepin, "On a New Version of the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation," *Russian Economic Developments*, Gaidar Institute for Economic Policy, 2 (February 2016): 85, <https://www.iep.ru/files/RePEc/gai/recdev/682Zatsepin.pdf>.

the 2008 Russian incursion into Georgia and the 2014 annexation of Crimea.<sup>109</sup> NSS2015 asserts “an increase in the Russian Federation’s role in resolving the most important international problems, settling military conflicts, and ensuring strategic stability and the supremacy of international law in interstate relations,” lending claims to the Russian’s key role and position among the ‘great powers.’<sup>110</sup> This approach to National Security was resonant also in 2012 when then Prime Minister Putin exclaimed, “we should not tempt anyone by allowing ourselves to be weak...[it] is for this reason that we will under no circumstances surrender our strategic deterrent capability, and indeed, will in fact strengthen it,” which was an obvious signal to both domestic and foreign audiences regarding Russia’s view of the strategic global environment and Russia’s strategic deterrence.<sup>111</sup>

**c. *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation***

The current *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*, approved by President Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016, explicitly indicates that Russia seeks to assert itself as a “center of influence” in what it characterizes as a multipolar international system.<sup>112</sup> Further assertions in the Russian Foreign Policy Concept also provide insight into Putin’s perspective of the global strategic environment. Specifically alluding to an alleged global power disparity and rising international tensions, these circumstances require Russia to play an instrumental role in eliminating such disparities and tensions and also provide strategic stability in the shifting political landscape.<sup>113</sup> These ever-present themes of *realpolitik* and Balance of Power are further obvious in the above associated strategy and doctrine.

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<sup>109</sup> Katri Pynnöniemi, “Russia’s National Security Strategy: Analysis of Conceptual Evolution,” *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 31, no. 2 (2018): 242, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2018.1451091>.

<sup>110</sup> Russian Federation National Security Strategy, 3.

<sup>111</sup> Vladimir Putin, “Being Strong: National Security Guarantees for Russia,” *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, February 20, 2012, <http://archive.premier.gov.ru/eng/events/news/18185/>.

<sup>112</sup> *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation* (Moscow, Russia: The Kremlin, 2016), [http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/official\\_documents/asset\\_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/2542248](http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/2542248).

<sup>113</sup> *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*.

***d. Potential Russian strategic deterrence Actions During Peacetime, Crisis, and Conflict***

As explained, the current and evolved Russian approach to strategic deterrence encompasses actions during peacetime, crisis, and conflict.<sup>114</sup> Those potential actions, as presented by David Flynn, will be used to examine RFN activities in the following chapter (Table 4). Additionally, the following chapter will examine the current and evolved approach to strategic deterrence to deduce the RFN's role in Russian 'strategic deterrence.' It will present modernization efforts designed to achieve the prescribed strategic deterrence goals and explore RFN missions and objectives.

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<sup>114</sup> Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, Military Encyclopedic Dictionary "Strategic Deterrence."

Table 4. Potential Coercive Actions during Peacetime, Crisis, and Conflict<sup>115</sup>

| Peacetime                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Increasing Tensions – Crisis                                                                                                                                | Initial Period of Conflict                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Goal: Shape the strategic environment to dissuade aggression against Russian interests.                                                                                                                         | Goal: Prevent crisis from evolving to military conflict by deterring aggression.                                                                            | Goal: Compel a de-escalation deter further aggression through actions taken pre-emptively or during the early stages of conflict.       |
| Use information, economic, diplomatic, and psychological means to shape perceptions through strategic messaging.                                                                                                | Conduct strategic messaging to foster divisions between Washington and allies.                                                                              | Conduct limited cyber and other information attacks on critical infrastructure, including non-destructive attacks on satellite systems. |
| Signal and demonstrate new military capabilities.                                                                                                                                                               | Manipulate export of energy supplies as part of economic coercion.                                                                                          | Conduct destructive attacks on space systems.                                                                                           |
| Conduct military exercises to demonstrate military strength.                                                                                                                                                    | Demonstrate preparedness for military actions by deploying forces and conducting snap exercises.                                                            | Employ conventional precision-strike systems in limited attacks against critical infrastructure in the initial period of conflict.      |
| Employ primarily non-military means, including cyber activities and covert support to proxies, to advance interests while staying below the threshold for open warfare to avoid prompting foreign intervention. | Signal capabilities to conduct specific deterrence actions by openly deploying key capabilities, such as counterspace weapons and Iskander missile systems. | Use nonstrategic nuclear weapons in a limited or demonstration mode.                                                                    |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Demonstrate cyber capabilities through manipulation of key adversary information systems.                                                                   | Employ strategic nuclear forces in a limited or demonstration mode.                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Conduct nuclear saber rattling through official statements about Russian nuclear forces.                                                                    |                                                                                                                                         |

<sup>115</sup> Source: Flynn, 41.

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### **III. RUSSIA’S EXPANDED STRATEGIC DETERRENCE AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION NAVY**

#### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will introduce the current security and military documents that apply to the RFN. It will examine Maritime and Naval Doctrines of the Russian Federation that have been issued in the last decade in order to compare strategic deterrence intentions, as discussed in Chapter II, with observed RFN’s modernization efforts (RFN operations will be discussed under the same criterion in Chapter IV). This chapter will also discuss RFN modernization efforts as they relate to publicized and projected needs and expanded strategic deterrence goals. This chapter seeks to explore how Russian naval capabilities have shifted in tandem with Russia’s changing definition and mission of strategic deterrence, and to determine if Russia’s codified deterrence strategy has actually influenced naval strategy and force modernization efforts. Furthermore, this chapter will explore the coercive, cross-domain or “new generation warfare” strategies of the Russian Federation and the RFN platforms, tactics, and weapons intended to achieve strategic deterrence of U.S./NATO forces in the maritime domain and to provide insight into Russian naval strategy and outlook.<sup>116</sup>

#### **B. RUSSIAN FEDERATION NAVY: MARITIME AND NAVAL DOCTRINES**

Since 2010, Russia’s focus for maritime and naval development has centered largely on the protection and security of its coastline and support of its land forces. As highlighted in Chapter II, the main tasks of the RFN (delineated in Articles 32–34 of *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*) emphasize naval missions as ‘strategic deterrence,’ combatting piracy and safety of navigation, security of economic activity on the high seas, and the protection of Russian interests in the Arctic.<sup>117</sup> It should be noted

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<sup>116</sup> Dmitry (Dima) Adamsky, “From Moscow with Coercion: Russian Deterrence Theory and Strategic Culture,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 41, no. 1–2 (July 2017): 33–60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2017.1347872>.

<sup>117</sup> *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, Articles 32–34.

that global military competition (also currently known as the Great Power Competition) is at the forefront of *The Military Doctrine*, a theme that repeats in the maritime and naval doctrines. However, *The Military Doctrine*, while acknowledging increasing military threats on Russia's periphery and to its sphere of influence, does not view large-scale war as likely.<sup>118</sup> Moreover, for the purposes of evaluating RFN doctrine and modernization, *The Military Doctrine* claims that U.S. and NATO actions such as NATO expansion, regional military buildup, deployment of strategic and high-precision weapons, and territorial claims against Russia to be the greatest external risk to Russia's security and stability.<sup>119</sup>

### 1. The 2015 Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation

Published in 2015, *The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation* highlighted Moscow's intention to develop its maritime and naval capabilities across multiple domains, including the use of the RFN. Michael Petersen, Director of Russia Maritime Studies, United States Naval War College, in his evaluation of *The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, argued that it is "one of the most important doctrinal statements to emerge from that country in recent years...the most important recent articulation of maritime interests and goals, and therefore provides insight into how Moscow envisions Russia's global role."<sup>120</sup> *The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation* identifies the roles and responsibilities of the RFN and also offers insight into how Moscow might approach a maritime conflict with the West and the regional goals from which to assess RFN operations.

The National Maritime Policy is defined by the state and society as:

The goals, principles, directions, objectives, and the methods of achieving national interests of the Russian Federation in the coastal, internal,

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<sup>118</sup> *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, Articles 2–4.

<sup>119</sup> *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, Article 12.

<sup>120</sup> *The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, trans. Anna Davis (Newport, RI: Russia Maritime Studies Institute, U.S. Naval War College, 2015), 2, [https://dnnlgwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/NWCDepartments/Russia%20Maritime%20Studies%20Institute/Maritime%20Doctrine%20TransENGrus\\_FINAL.pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=fqZgUUVRVrRkMSFNMOj%2FNaRNawUoRdhdpFJj7%2FpAkM%3D](https://dnnlgwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/NWCDepartments/Russia%20Maritime%20Studies%20Institute/Maritime%20Doctrine%20TransENGrus_FINAL.pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=fqZgUUVRVrRkMSFNMOj%2FNaRNawUoRdhdpFJj7%2FpAkM%3D).

territorial, and the exclusive economic zone, on the continental shelf of the Russian Federation and in the blue-water, as well as the implementation of maritime activities.<sup>121</sup>

This definition includes both civilian and military maritime activities. It is important to note that civilian maritime activities can include, but are not limited to, research, exploration, resource extraction, economic, and scientific activities, this will be a critical point when examining Russia's Arctic activities and operations.

Regarding the RFN, *The Maritime Doctrine* states that Russia prefers “political-diplomatic, legal, economic, informational, and other non-military means in conflict resolution” to eliminate “existing and recurring challenges and threats to the national security of the Russian Federation from the ocean and sea.”<sup>122</sup> However, Russia will maintain the “sufficient naval potential and its effective implementation when it is a necessity to apply force in support of maritime activities of the state, elimination of threats to national security of the Russian Federation from the ocean and the sea, and ensuring inviolability of the state borders of the Russian Federation.”<sup>123</sup>

Following the aforementioned security threats in Russia's expanded definition of ‘strategic deterrence,’ the doctrine also continues to highlight Russia's maritime security priorities, as follows:

**Atlantic Regional Priority Area:** The doctrine emphasizes that NATO is the highest security priority in the Atlantic Regional Area. This area, according to the doctrine includes the Atlantic Ocean, the Baltic, the Black, and Azov Seas, as well as the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>124</sup> Russia's main goal for the Atlantic is to ensure sufficient (no further information) naval presence and to develop and grow economic transportation and scientific exploration.<sup>125</sup> Russia's main goal for the Mediterranean Sea is to ensure a

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<sup>121</sup> The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation, 5.

<sup>122</sup> The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation, 7.

<sup>123</sup> The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation, 8.

<sup>124</sup> The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation, 19.

<sup>125</sup> The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation, 19.

permanent naval presence, pursue a policy to transform the region into a “zone of military-political stability and goodwill,” and expand travel cruise passage from Russian Black Sea ports to Mediterranean countries.<sup>126</sup> This thesis will examine the RFN platforms assigned and deployed to the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea, as well as its missions and operations in those areas.

**The Arctic Regional Priority Area:** Russia’s maritime priorities in this region are to reduce the level of national security threats to the RF and ensure Arctic strategic stability; strengthen the potential and develop the capabilities of the Northern Fleet; strengthen RF economic potential in the Arctic, Northern Sea Route, and North Atlantic by exploration, exploitation, and extraction of natural resources; develop the Russian Northern Sea Route; recognize Russia’s external borders of the continental shelf; establish search and rescue and Northern Fleet bases along the Arctic coast; develop Arctic monitoring systems (this list is not fully inclusive but highlights the central Arctic goals that may or do involve the RFN).<sup>127</sup>

The remaining areas of priority are, in order: The Pacific Regional Priority Area, The Caspian Regional Priority Area, The Indian Ocean Regional Priority Area, and The Antarctic Regional Priority Area. This thesis will not address these regional priority areas but does mention them to emphasize the order of Russia’s maritime priorities.

## **2. The Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations Until 2030**

In 2017, President Putin approved *The Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations Until 2030* (hereinafter referred to as *Russian Naval Policy*) after RFN modernization efforts and platforms were fielded and put to sea. The *Maritime Doctrine* provides a strong and articulate declaration of Russia’s interests in the maritime domain and the context for interpreting the *Naval Policy*. The *Naval Policy* subsequently “yields important insights into the role envisaged for naval forces in advancing both the interests

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<sup>126</sup> *The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, 22.

<sup>127</sup> *The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, 24–25.

and objectives” described in the *Maritime Doctrine*.<sup>128</sup> The *Russian Naval Policy* provides direction for RFN operations of blue- and green-water platforms, including the new nuclear and non-nuclear weapons and capabilities and, most importantly, codifies that “the Russian Federation will not allow significant superiority of naval forces of other states over its Navy and will strive to secure its position as the second most combat capable Navy in the world.”<sup>129</sup> This declaration is an obvious statement that Russia considers itself second to the United States Navy. It can be deduced, therefore, that in terms of future capabilities and aims, Russia is seeking to have nearly equal capabilities as the USN. Further, the *Russian Naval Policy* outlines general provisions for the RFN, which includes the identification of risks and threats to Russian national security, and codifies RFN goals, objectives, and priorities, as any naval policy typically does.

Significantly, the policy has specific guidance on the use of the RFN as an effective instrument of strategic deterrence:

1. Maintaining operational and combat capabilities of the Navy at a level that secures for it one of the leading positions in the world.
2. Development and maintenance of the naval capability to strike ground targets of a potential enemy with conventional as well as nuclear weapons.
3. Balanced development of the Navy to prevent exclusive superiority of the U.S. Navy and naval forces of other leading maritime powers over it.

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<sup>128</sup> Richard Connolly, Document Review: Fundamentals of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the field of naval operations for the period until 2030 (Rome, Italy: NATO Defense College, January 2019), <http://www.ndc.nato.int/research/research.php?icode=574>. “The naval policy restates these now familiar themes in a maritime context. The policy refers to ‘leading world powers, possessing significant naval capabilities and an extensive network of military installations, [continuing] to build up their naval presence in...vital areas of the World Ocean, including waters adjacent to the territory of the Russian Federation’...Many of the threats and objectives outlined in the naval policy are restatements of those found in previous documents. Thus, the naval policy reiterates the need for Russia to remain a ‘great sea power,’ because a strong navy is required to secure Russia’s position as a leading power in a multipolar order.” (Connolly).

<sup>129</sup> *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, trans. Anna Davis (Newport, RI: Russia Maritime Studies Institute, Naval War College, 2018), 13, [https://dnnlgwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/NWCDepartments/Russia%20Maritime%20Studies%20Institute/RMSI\\_RusNavyFundamentalsENG\\_FINAL%20\(1\).pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=fjFDEgWhpd1ING%2FnmGQXqaH5%2FDEujDU76EnksAB%2B1A0%3D](https://dnnlgwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/NWCDepartments/Russia%20Maritime%20Studies%20Institute/RMSI_RusNavyFundamentalsENG_FINAL%20(1).pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=fjFDEgWhpd1ING%2FnmGQXqaH5%2FDEujDU76EnksAB%2B1A0%3D).

4. Ensuring continued presence of naval forces (troops) in strategically important maritime regions of the world's ocean.
5. Establishing a modern border protection security system of the Russian Federation, ensuring a favorable environment in the maritime space and beyond.<sup>130</sup>

While these priority areas of the naval policy are largely aspirational, they do reflect the current understanding of expanded strategic deterrence.

Moreover, according to *Russian Naval Policy*, the RFN is regarded as “one of the most effective instruments of strategic (nuclear and nonnuclear) deterrence, including preventing global strike.”<sup>131</sup> The RFN is tasked to maintain naval capabilities to ensure deterrence of aggression and to bring to bear unacceptable damage on any potential adversary.<sup>132</sup> The alleged ability of the RFN to project a presence across the world's oceans and its possession of an arsenal of strategic nuclear and conventional, high-precision weapons has afforded the RFN a “qualitatively new objective to destroy vital enemy military and economic facilities and infrastructure from the sea;” a claim that the RFN cannot yet attain in its current state.<sup>133</sup> Specifically, the policy identifies key maritime domains in which the RFN shall secure a permanent naval presence and

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<sup>130</sup> *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 11.

<sup>131</sup> *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 11. It should be noted that the Kremlin does not have a standing definition for ‘Prompt Global Strike.’ However, the Kremlin has been readily concerned with the U.S. using a prompt global strike (using conventional weapons) against Russian Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) and ICBM associated command and control (C2) and national control authority (NCA). Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis, Prompt Global Strike is defined as the U.S. capability of “launching a devastating *non-nuclear* surprise attack on Russia. It is designed to work on the basis that 6,000 cruise missiles, all launched within one hour, would be aimed at operational and strategic targets (including nuclear weapons silos) within Russia.” Rod Thornton, “Countering Prompt Global Strike: The Russian Military Presence in Syria and the Eastern Mediterranean and Its Strategic Deterrence Role,” *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 32, no. 1 (January 2019): 15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2019.1552655> and James M. Acton, “Russia and Strategic Conventional Weapons: Concerns and Responses,” *The Nonproliferation Review* 22, no. 2 (2015) 141–142, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10736700.2015.1105434>.

<sup>132</sup> *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 6.

<sup>133</sup> *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 12.

implement its understanding of strategic deterrence: the Black Sea (with special attention on maintaining control of the Crimean Peninsula), the Mediterranean Sea, the Arctic, and vital sea lines of communication; a reflection of the aforementioned *Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation*.<sup>134</sup> Further, the *Russian Naval Policy* is explicit in alleging that the U.S. global strike capabilities are directly threatening Russian security.<sup>135</sup> It is through this lens that this thesis will evaluate, analyze, and gauge effectiveness of key RFN operations and weapons since modernization and policy efforts took effect.

## C. RFN FORCE MODERNIZATION EFFORTS

### 1. State Armament Program to 2020 (GPV-2020)

Following a period of relatively low levels of military confrontation, in 2010 President Medvedev signed and approved the State Armament Program 2020 (GPV-2020)—“a 10-year programme (sic) designed to support the large-scale procurement of a wide range of military equipment that would modernize the Russian armed forces.”<sup>136</sup> Per the naval policy, modernization objectives of the Navy are to:

1. Establish a balanced Navy structure.
2. Maintain the combat potential of the naval strategic nuclear forces at a high level.
3. Establish a qualitatively new conventional naval force, equipped with new and modernized weapons, and new and modernized military and special equipment.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 12.

<sup>135</sup> *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 11.

<sup>136</sup> Richard Connolly and Mathieu Boulègue, *Russia's New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027* (London, England: The Chatham House of The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2018), <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/russia-s-new-state-armament-programme-implications-russian-armed-forces-and-military>.

<sup>137</sup> *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 14.

The combined efforts of the *Russian Naval Policy* and the GPV-2020 codified RFN priorities which allocated 26% of defense funding to be spent to “finance the procurement of more than two dozen modern submarines, including SSBNs, more than 50 surface combat vessels and dozens of other types of naval vessels, including several French-built Mistral-class helicopter carriers.”<sup>138</sup> Totalling 20 trillion rubles (\$680 billion U.S.), GPV-2020 set out ambitious military equipment procurement and weapon system research and development plans.<sup>139</sup>

GPV-2020 funding, therefore, reflected the Russian Federation priorities of strategic deterrence and defending economic interests, but, as critiques of Russian naval policy highlight, provided no methods or means for resolving or accomplishing these goals.<sup>140</sup> Indeed, after a decade of modernization efforts, Russia was able to complete only 17 surface combatants and 3 SSBNs. The production disturbances can be attributed to underdeveloped production chains, unfinished development of new naval weapons and electronic systems, a declining economy, and economic sanctions following the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea.<sup>141</sup> As analysis by the European Union Institute for Security Studies highlighted, “GPV-2020 was drawn up on the assumption that the Russian economy would grow at 7% per annum over the course of the programme (sic). In fact, it

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<sup>138</sup> Connolly and Boulègue, *Russia’s New State Armament Programme*, 6.

<sup>139</sup> Julian Cooper, *Russia’s state armament programme to 2020: a quantitative assessment of implementation 2011–2015*, FOI-R-4239-SE (Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish Defense Research Agency, March 2016), 4, DOI: [10.13140/RG.2.1.3859.3685](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.3859.3685).

<sup>140</sup> Konstantin Bogdanov and Ilya Kramnik, *The Russian Navy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Legacy and the New Path*, IOP-2018-U-018268-Final (Arlington, VA: CNA, Corp., 2018), 11, [https://www.cna.org/CNA\\_files/PDF/IOP-2018-U-018268-Final.pdf](https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/IOP-2018-U-018268-Final.pdf). “Russian analysts argue that Russia’s United Shipbuilding Corporation is the least effective of all state corporations in Russia’s defense sector. This results from its excessive size, bloated management structures, and misguided efforts to combine military and civilian shipbuilding under a single corporate roof.” Dmitry Gorenburg, *Russian Naval Shipbuilding: Is it Possible to Fulfill the Kremlin’s Grand Expectations?*, PONARS Eurasia Memo No. 395 (Washington, D.C.: PONARS Eurasia at the George Washington University Elliot School of International Affairs, October 2015), 3, <https://www.ponarseurasia.org/node/8042>.

<sup>141</sup> Bogdanov and Kramnik, 12–13. “In 2013, Russian growth plummeted to 1.3 percent a year instead of the 2–3 percent forecast. The confidence crisis following Russia’s annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and its continuing aggression against Ukraine lowered growth expectations...Ongoing Western sanctions, Russian counter-sanctions and the dramatic fall in the oil price had added to the negative trend,” Susanne Oxenstierna, “Russia’s defense spending and the economic decline,” *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 7, no. 1 (January 2016), 66, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euras.2015.06.001>.

barely grew at all in 2014 and is forecast to contract by 3% to 5% in 2015” (Figure 1).<sup>142</sup> However, the RFN did experience a period of steady modernization that has resulted in a navy that has been able to accomplish or project Russia’s foreign policy, ‘strategic deterrence,’ and military initiatives.<sup>143</sup>

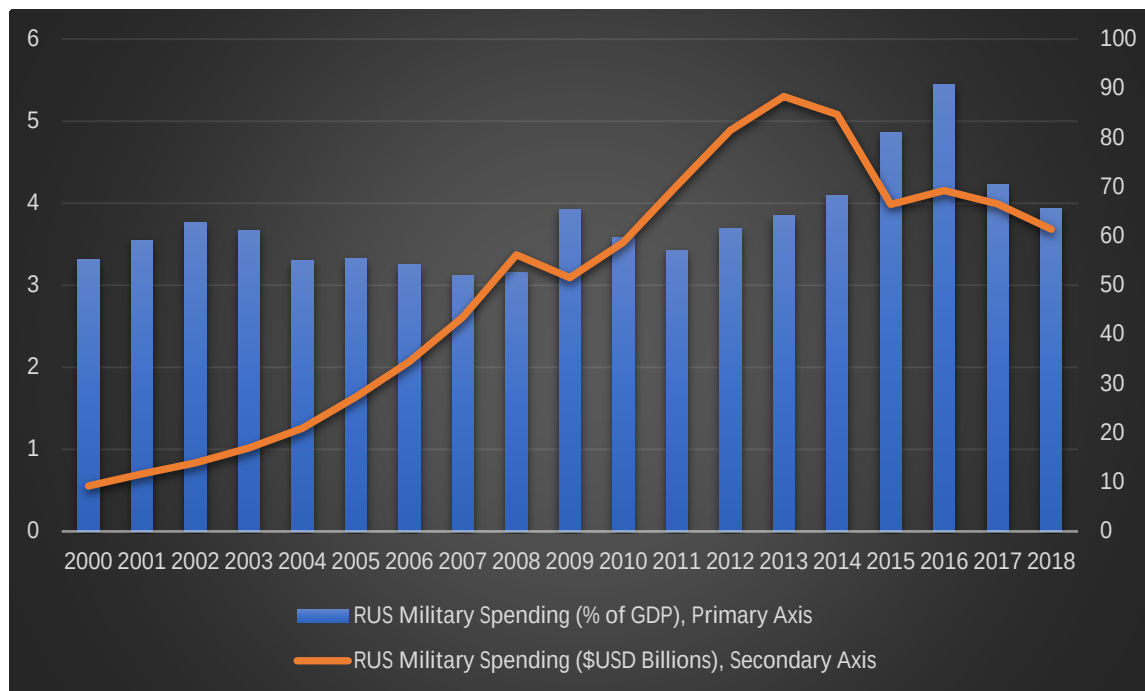


Figure 1. Russia Military Spending, % of GDP and \$USD Billions, 2000–2018<sup>144</sup>

GPV-2020, a defense spending plan designed to modernize the military and reflect Russia’s expanded approach to strategic deterrence, did not reach its prescribed production goals for the RFN, but it did achieve and field modernized platforms to re-establish the

<sup>142</sup> Cameron Johnston and Nicu Popescu, *Russia’s military: the weak links* (Paris, France: European Union Institute for Security Studies, February 2015), [https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Alert\\_12\\_Russia\\_military\\_spending.pdf](https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Alert_12_Russia_military_spending.pdf).

<sup>143</sup> Michael B. Petersen, “Introduction to Russian Federation,” *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, iii.

<sup>144</sup> Adapted from “Russia Military Spending/Defense Budget,” Macrotrends, Data provided by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2018, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/RUS/russia/military-spending-defense-budget>.

prominence of RFN operations in key strategic areas such as the Mediterranean, Black Sea, and Arctic (Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5. GPV-2020 Objectives and Deliveries, to End 2015: Submarines<sup>145</sup>

| <b>Russian Federation Navy: Submarines</b> |                  |                      |                                 |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>PLATFORM</b>                            | <b>Developed</b> | <b>GPV-2020 Goal</b> | <b>Delivered by End of 2015</b> |
| <b>SSBN</b>                                |                  |                      |                                 |
| Borei-Class (Project-955)                  | 1997-2013        | 8                    | 3                               |
| <b>Nuclear Multi-Role</b>                  |                  |                      |                                 |
| Yasen-Class (Project-885)                  | 1993-2015        | 7                    | 1                               |
| <b>Diesel-Electric</b>                     |                  |                      |                                 |
| Lada-Class (Project 677)                   | 1997-2010        | 3                    | 1 (Test Boat)                   |
| Varshavianka-Class (Project 636/636.3)     | 2010-2014        | 6 (10)               | 4                               |

<sup>145</sup> Source: Richard Connolly and Cecile Sendstad, "Russian Rearmament: An Assessment of Defense-Industrial Performance," *Problems of Post-Communism* 63, no. 3 (October 2016): 147, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2016.1236668>.

Table 6. GPV-2020 Objectives and Deliveries, to End 2015: Surface Vessels<sup>146</sup>

| <b>Russian Federation Navy: Surface Vessels</b> |                       |                      |                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>PLATFORM</b>                                 | <b>Developed</b>      | <b>GPV-2020 Goal</b> | <b>Delivered by End of 2015</b> |
| <b>Frigates</b>                                 |                       |                      |                                 |
| Gorshkov-Class (Project 22350)                  | 2006-2015             | 6                    | 0                               |
| Grigorovich-Class (Project 11356R)              | 2010-2015             | 6                    | 0                               |
| <b>Corvettes</b>                                |                       |                      |                                 |
| Gremiashchy-Class (Project 20385)               | 2011-No Date          | 16 (2)               | 0                               |
| Steregushchiy-Class (Project 20380)             | 2001-2007             | 12 (20)              | 3                               |
| <b>Small artillery ships</b>                    |                       |                      |                                 |
| Buyan-Class (Project 21630)                     | 2004-2006             | 0                    | 1                               |
| Buyan-M-Class (Project 21631)                   | 2008-2012             | 8-10                 | 5                               |
| <b>Guard ships</b>                              |                       |                      |                                 |
| Gepard-Class (Project 1166.1/K)                 | 1991-2002             | 1                    | 1                               |
| <b>Landing craft</b>                            |                       |                      |                                 |
| Serna-Class (Project 11770)                     | 1993-1994             | -                    | 2                               |
| Ivan Gren-Class (Project 11711)                 | 2004-2016             | 2                    | 0                               |
| Duigon-Class (Project 21820)                    | 2006-2010             | -                    | 5                               |
| Mistral-Class (LST from France)                 | Foreign Military Sale | 4                    | 0                               |

## 2. State Armament Program to 2027 (GPV-2027)

The GPV was originally designed to be reevaluated and reissued every five years. The plan to update GPV-2020 was intended to be released and executed in 2016. However, following significant delays tied to Russia's annexation of Crimea, warfare with Ukraine, resulting economic sanctions, dropping oil prices, and bureaucratic infighting, the updated state armament plan, GPV-2027 was not approved until December 2017; GPV-2027 will

<sup>146</sup> Source: Richard Connolly and Cecile Sendstad, "Russian Rearmament: An Assessment of Defense-Industrial Performance," 148.

run from 2018–2027.<sup>147</sup> The total budget for GPV-2027 is approximately 20 trillion rubles with 19 trillion rubles (U.S. \$260 billion) allocated for military equipment procurement, modernization, repair, and research and development.<sup>148</sup> It should be noted that the GPV-2027 budget is near that of GPV-2020 however, as highlighted by Richard Connolly and Mathieu Boulègue, the value of the ruble, since 2011, has been diminished by inflation—in 2018, one ruble buys approximately one-half of what it did seven years ago and therefore, GPV-2027 is expected to be less ambitious than GPV-2020.<sup>149</sup> GPV-2027, as outlined by Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, General Valeriy Gerasimov, emphasizes systems that enhance total force mobility and deployment, systems to improve logistics and joint force integration, strengthening command-and-control (C2) systems and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities to achieve network-centric warfare capabilities.<sup>150</sup> There is also an increased emphasis on the procurement of high-precision weapons for air, sea, and land battle, including hypersonic missiles.<sup>151</sup>

Under GPV-2027, the RFN is expected to receive a smaller share of the budget, in contrast to GPV-2020 under which the RFN received 26% of funding. Due to increased secrecy, the exact percentage of GPV-2027 funding is not known. Connolly and Boulègue observed that the Russian leadership, via GPV-2027, appears to have made the deliberate determination to focus on the formation of a ‘dual-fleet’:

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<sup>147</sup> Julian Cooper, *The Russian State Armament Programme, 2018–2027* (Rome, Italy: NATO Defense College, May 2018), 3, <http://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=1167>. “The troubled economic situation in 2014 made it impossible to draw up a reliable economic forecast on which to base the funding of the SAP, adding that it was the MOD’s initiative to postpone its start...(Russian) finance minister, Anton Siluanov, and defence minister, Sergei Shoigu, had been unable to agree an acceptable volume of funding for GPV-2025.” (Cooper, 3.)

<sup>148</sup> Richard Connolly and Mathieu Boulègue, *Russia’s New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027*, 10.

<sup>149</sup> Richard Connolly and Mathieu Boulègue, *Russia’s New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027*, 10.

<sup>150</sup> Richard Connolly and Mathieu Boulègue, *Russia’s New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027*, 15.

<sup>151</sup> Tomas Malmöf, *Russia’s New Armament Programme - Leaner and Meaner*, FOI Memo 6365, (Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish Defense Research Agency, March 2018), 1, <https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI%20Memo%206365>.

Combining potent new ‘green-water’ capabilities—i.e., new weapons systems focused on the protection of coastal areas and on preventing enemy forces from accessing Russian territory—with long-range blue-water capabilities based around the Soviet-era legacy fleet of modernized Kirov-class and Slava-class cruisers, Sovremennyi-class and Udaloy-class destroyers, and nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs and SSGNs).<sup>152</sup>

The first priority of GPV-2027 continues to be its strategic nuclear triad and that priority affects the RFN SSBN force.<sup>153</sup> Cumulatively, however, “by 2027, Russia’s navy will still concentrate on strategic deterrence and status projection” and, to expand and improve anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities, will prioritize the submarine force.<sup>154</sup>

**a. RFN Submarines (GPV-2027)**

GPV-2020 sought to commission eight Borei-class SSBNs (refer to Figure 4), but only three had entered service by the end of 2017. The completion of the full complement of Borei-class SSBNs from GPV-2020, therefore, will likely be the priority of GPV-2027.<sup>155</sup> It is also assessed that the six remaining Yasen-class SSGN (NATO name: Severodvinsk), a multi-role submarine intended by GPV-2020, will be delivered by 2025–2027 (each submarine is in a different stage of completion).<sup>156</sup>

GPV-2027 also emphasizes modernizing legacy submarine platforms, SSNs and SSGNs (the dual-fleet concept), with Kalibr high-precision weapons and producing modernized varieties of legacy diesel-electric submarines that will also be equipped with high-precision weapons.

About 10 modified Shchuka-B-class (Project 971M, NATO: Akula III) SSNs will have gone through modernization, renovation, and overhaul (MRO) by 2020, while the fleet of diesel-electric submarines will be

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<sup>152</sup> Richard Connolly and Mathieu Boulègue, *Russia’s New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027*, 20.

<sup>153</sup> Julian Cooper, *The Russian State Armament Programme, 2018–2027*, 8.

<sup>154</sup> Richard Connolly and Mathieu Boulègue, *Russia’s New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027*, 20.

<sup>155</sup> Julian Cooper, *The Russian State Armament Programme, 2018–2027*, 8.

<sup>156</sup> Richard Connolly and Mathieu Boulègue, *Russia’s New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027*, 22.

strengthened by the production of more Varshavyanka-class (improved Kilo-class from Project 636.3) vessels equipped with Kalibr missiles.<sup>157</sup>

Veiled in secrecy two special-purpose submarines, the ‘Belgorod’ and Khabarovsk’ are under construction. They are believed to be the potential carriers of the long-range, nuclear-armed, underwater drone mentioned by Putin in his state of the nation speech. Both are likely to enter service in the next few years, although the drone project is clearly a long way from completion.<sup>158</sup>

These modernization, reconstitution, and legacy production efforts support the assessment that Russia’s ambition to procure new and highly capable submarines, as envisioned in GPV-2020 is unattainable due to extreme cost and economic stagnation.

**b. RFN Surface Vessels (GPV-2027)**

As with the RFN submarine force, GPV-2027 for the RFN surface vessels will focus on MRO and service life extension of the larger legacy ships and procurement of new, smaller frigates, corvettes, and coastal ships to be equipped with the Kalibr weapon system. The two RFN Kirov-class cruisers and the Sovremenny-class destroyers have both received service-life extensions, but with the limitations of and corruption in Russia’s shipbuilding industry, large-scale projects to produce cruisers and destroyers are not likely to occur under GPV-2027.<sup>159</sup>

It is more likely that production of an augmented Gorshkov-class frigate—a ‘Super Gorshkov’—will begin as shipbuilders adapt existing designs.

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<sup>157</sup> Richard Connolly and Mathieu Boulègue, *Russia’s New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027*, 22.

<sup>158</sup> Julian Cooper, *The Russian State Armament Programme, 2018–2027*, 8.

<sup>159</sup> Richard Connolly and Mathieu Boulègue, *Russia’s New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027*, 21. “Corruption in the Russian military sector and defense industry is widespread, and imposes major costs on the operation of the Russian Ministry of Defense and the military...they are ‘unauthorized’ acts of corruption, typically by intermediate-level officials, officers and businessmen, that impair the development of Russian military capabilities, a core goal of the government.” Polina Beliakova and Sam Perlo-Freeman, *Corruption in the Russian Defense Sector*, (World Peace Foundation, May 11, 2018), 18, <https://sites.tufts.edu/wpf/files/2018/05/Russian-Defense-Corruption-Report-Beliakova-Perlo-Freeman-20180502-final.pdf>.

Larger vessels will be equipped with Poliment-Redut surface-to-air missiles, still in testing and experiencing integration issues.<sup>160</sup>

The RFN's only aircraft carrier, *Admiral Kuznetsov*, began its MRO in 2018 with a focus on non-critical systems (flight deck, arresting gear, and radar components) and is assessed to re-enter into operational service in 2021.<sup>161</sup> While the RFN would like to have at least one more carrier, the cost and shipbuilding limitations will preclude production until at least 2027 with earliest possible delivery to be in 2030.<sup>162</sup>

Under GPV-2027, the emphasis on smaller surface vessels has increased. The focus for the RFN's smaller surface vessels (frigates, corvettes, and coastal patrol ships) will be comprised of modernizing legacy ships and producing new ships with precision weapons systems. The new surface platforms, the Gremyashchiy-class and Steregushchiy-class corvettes and six Grigorovich-class frigates, will be equipped with the Kalibr weapon system. It should be noted, though, that the production of these vessels continues to suffer due to the breakdown of the Russian defense-industrial cooperation with Ukraine, sanctions that delayed and prohibited turbine imports, and problems associated with the anti-aircraft missile systems.<sup>163</sup>

Additionally, it is worth noting that the Kremlin has also advertised intentions to equip their Kirov-class cruisers (*Admiral Nakhimov* and *Pyotr Veliky*) and *Gremyashchiy* FFG guided-missile frigate (advanced Steregushchiy-class FFG) with the 3M-22 Tsirkon (pronounced: Zirkon) hypersonic missile system. The Tsirkon is designed to defeat defensive systems at an estimated range of 400 to 1,000km at speeds of Mach 5 to Mach 8

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<sup>160</sup> Richard Connolly and Mathieu Boulègue, *Russia's New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027*, 21.

<sup>161</sup> Richard Connolly and Mathieu Boulègue, *Russia's New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027*, 21.

<sup>162</sup> Julian Cooper, *The Russian State Armament Programme, 2018–2027*, 9. There is the desire that the future carrier be nuclear powered but the scale and size of such a carrier has yet to be determined.

<sup>163</sup> Richard Connolly and Mathieu Boulègue, *Russia's New State Armament Programme: Implications for the Russian Armed Forces and Military Capabilities to 2027*, 21.

(as reported by TASS). This missile has not been fully tested and many of its operational characteristics are not yet known.<sup>164</sup>

### 3. Dual-Fleet Concept

The ‘dual-fleet’ concept was introduced by Connolly in his NATO Defense College publication, *Towards a Dual Fleet? The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation and the Modernisation (sic) of Russian Naval Capabilities*, in which he examined Russia’s Maritime Doctrine compared to the above described modernization efforts to determine how and to what extent the RFN can be expected to operate.<sup>165</sup> Connolly argues that the emerging RFN force structure is sufficient to achieve the objectives of Maritime Doctrine, as the doctrine does not explicitly identify ‘global power projection’ as a core objective but rather suggests that Russia’s main interests exist closer to home.<sup>166</sup> He explains that a dual-fleet concept has emerged, a dual-fleet “comprising larger Soviet-era legacy vessels and newer, smaller vessels equipped with long-range missiles to equip the Russian navy for its key strategic missions.”<sup>167</sup>

Moreover, regarding the expanded definition of strategic deterrence and the understanding that one of the RFN’s main mission is ‘strategic deterrence,’ Connolly argues that it is possible to expect the RFN ‘dual fleet’ to perform the functions of ensuring Russian territorial security and flying the flag abroad.<sup>168</sup> He concludes his argument by declaring that Russia’s *Maritime Doctrine* does not suggest that Russia is competing with the U.S. for control of the Atlantic Ocean, but rather that “Russian intentions are focused on seas much closer to its shores, and are directed towards not aiming for full control of

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<sup>164</sup> “3M-22 Tsirkon,” Jane’s, November 11, 2019, <https://customer.janes.com/>.

<sup>165</sup> Richard Connolly, *Towards a Dual Fleet? The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation and the Modernisation of Russian Naval Capabilities* (Rome, Italy: NATO Defense College, June 2017), 1, <http://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=1061>.

<sup>166</sup> Richard Connolly, *Towards a Dual Fleet? The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation and the Modernisation of Russian Naval Capabilities*, 2.

<sup>167</sup> Richard Connolly, *Towards a Dual Fleet? The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation and the Modernisation of Russian Naval Capabilities*, 2.

<sup>168</sup> Richard Connolly, *Towards a Dual Fleet? The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation and the Modernisation of Russian Naval Capabilities*, 3.

the seas in and around its borders, but instead on at least challenging or denying command of those areas considered to be of vital importance.”<sup>169</sup> Furthermore, this ‘dual-fleet’ concept accepts the effects of the economic and shipbuilding constraints that materialized under GPV-2020. For Russia to achieve its optimal strategic deterrence, it will employ Soviet legacy platforms with newer, modern platforms in its key areas of interest (as identified per the *Maritime Doctrine*). This dual-fleet concept will be explored in the examination of RFN operations in Chapter IV.

#### 4. RFN Kalibr High-Precision Weapon System

The Russian military planners have viewed conventional precision weapons as having the same combat effectiveness as nuclear weapons and are to be the first weapon to be used at the regional and global level for strategic deterrence.<sup>170</sup> Guided by Russia’s definition of ‘strategic deterrence,’ the naval policy provided a qualitative emphasis on modernized weapons and declared that the primary armament of the “undersea, surface, and coastal forces of the Navy through 2025 will be long-range high-precision cruise missiles...to destroy vital enemy military and economic facilities and infrastructure from the sea” (Figure 2).<sup>171</sup> This ambition, the ‘Kalibration of the Russian Navy,’ refers to wide deployment of the Kalibr family of missiles on surface and subsurface units (Table 7).<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Richard Connolly, *Towards a Dual Fleet? The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation and the Modernisation of Russian Naval Capabilities*, 11.

<sup>170</sup> Dave Johnson, *Russia’s Conventional Precision Strike Capabilities, Regional Crises, and Nuclear Thresholds* (Livermore, CA: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Center for Global Security Research, February 2018), 26, <https://cgsr.llnl.gov/content/assets/docs/Precision-Strike-Capabilities-report-v3-7.pdf>. The nuclear weapons referred to by the Dave Johnson are likely the SS-21 SCARAB and SS-26 ISKANDER, dual-capability tactical, short-range ballistic missiles systems, which were observed as a major element of exercise ZAPAD-17. Dave Johnson, *Zapad 2017 and Euro-Atlantic Security* (Rome, Italy: NATO Defense College, December 2017), <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2017/12/14/zapad-2017-and-euro-atlantic-security/index.html>.

<sup>171</sup> *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 14–15.

<sup>172</sup> Richard Connolly, *The Kalibration of the Russian Navy: Progress and Prospects* (Oxford, England: Changing Character of War Centre, Pembroke College, University of Oxford, 2019), 1, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55faab67e4b0914105347194/t/5c62ee054785d35b410281cf/1549987334234/Connolly+Kalibration.pdf>.



Figure 2. Russia's Kalibr-NK (SS-N-30A SAGARIS also known as 3M-14 Kalibr) Sea-Launched Cruise Missile Specifications<sup>173</sup>

<sup>173</sup> Duncan Mil, "Russia's Military Assets in Syria," GraphicNews, last modified April 19, 2018, <https://www.graphicnews.com/en/pages/36898/military-russias-new-cruise-missiles>.

Table 7. Kalibr-Capable Vessels in Service (Number of Kalibr-Capable Launchers Installed), End of 2018<sup>174</sup>

| Type | NATO Name            | Number In Service (# of VLS/Torpedo Tubes) per Fleet |                 |                  |               |                  |
|------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|
|      |                      | Northern Fleet                                       | Black Sea Fleet | Baltic Sea Fleet | Pacific Fleet | Caspian Flotilla |
| SSGN | Severodvinsk (Yasen) | 1 (40)                                               | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| SSGN | Yasen-M              | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| SSGN | Oscar II             | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| SSGN | Akula IV             | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| SS   | Kilo (Project 877M)  | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| SS   | Kilo (Project 636.6) | 0                                                    | 6 (36)          | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| SS   | Lada                 | 1 (6)                                                | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| CGN  | Kirov                | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| DDG  | Udaloy I             | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| DDG  | Udaloy II            | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| FFG  | Gorshkov             | 1 (16)                                               | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| FFG  | Krivak II            | 0                                                    | 3 (24)          | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| FFG  | Steregushchy I       | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| FFG  | Steregushchy II      | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| FFG  | Gepard               | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 0             | 2 (16)           |
| PGG  | Karakurt             | 0                                                    | 0               | 1 (8)            | 0             | 0                |
| PGG  | Sviyazhsk            | 0                                                    | 2 (16)          | 2 (16)           | 0             | 3 (24)           |

As with the delays experienced in ship and submarine construction, the ambition to have ‘Kaliberised’ navy has not come to fruition; the delays of building new Kalibr-capable platforms and modernizing existing platforms have severely impacted RFN ability to achieve naval policy goals. According to Russian media calculations and a subsequent assessment by Richard Connolly, if Russia’s existing shipbuilding program is successful, then by 2025, the RFN should achieve an “additional 1,000 Kalibr-capable launch cells, compared to the current 202 installed launch systems...Russia could have 85 Kalibr-capable platforms and over 1,200 launch cells deployed across its four fleets and flotilla” (Table 8).<sup>175</sup>

<sup>174</sup> Source: Richard Connolly, *The Kalibration of the Russian Navy: Progress and Prospects*, 3.

<sup>175</sup> Richard Connolly, *The Kalibration of the Russian Navy: Progress and Prospects*, 4–5.

Table 8. Kalibr-Capable Vessels Under Construction and Scheduled to be Built or Commissioned by 2024 (Number of Kalibr-Capable Launchers Installed), as of End of 2018<sup>176</sup>

| Type | NATO Name            | Number In Service (# of VLS/Torpedo Tubes) per Fleet |                 |                  |               |                  |
|------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|
|      |                      | Northern Fleet                                       | Black Sea Fleet | Baltic Sea Fleet | Pacific Fleet | Caspian Flotilla |
| SSGN | Severodvinsk (Yasen) | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| SSGN | Yasen-M              | 3 (96)                                               | 0               | 0                | 3 (96)        | 0                |
| SSGN | Oscar II             | 2 (64)                                               | 0               | 0                | 2 (64)        | 0                |
| SSGN | Akula IV             | 2 (64)                                               | 0               | 0                | 2 (64)        | 0                |
| SS   | Kilo (Project 877M)  | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| SS   | Kilo (Project 636.6) | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 6 (36)        | 0                |
| SS   | Lada                 | 0                                                    | 0               | 2 (12)           | 0             | 0                |
| CGN  | Kirov                | 1 (80)                                               | 0               | 0                | 1 (80)        | 0                |
| DDG  | Udaloy I             | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 1 (16)        | 0                |
| DDG  | Udaloy II            | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| FFG  | Gorshkov             | 3 (48)                                               | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| FFG  | Krivak II            | 0                                                    | 1 (8)           | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| FFG  | Steregushchy I       | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 2 (16)        | 0                |
| FFG  | Steregushchy II      | 1 (8)                                                | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| FFG  | Gepard               | 0                                                    | 0               | 0                | 0             | 0                |
| PGG  | Karakurt             | 0                                                    | 9 (72)          | 3 (24)           | 6 (48)        | 0                |
| PGG  | Sviyazhsk            | 0                                                    | 5 (40)          | 0                | 0             | 0                |

The Kalibr missile family currently consists of three variants, all of which launch from the same vertical launch systems (VLS): SS-N-27 (3M-54) SIZZLER anti-ship cruise missile (ASCM); SS-N-30 SAGARIS land-attack cruise missile (LACM); 91R anti-submarine rocket (ASROC).<sup>177</sup> There are two versions of the SS-N-27 ASCM: the 3M-54E has a subsonic cruise stage and supersonic terminal/kill stage with a 220 km (119 nm) range; the 3M-54E1 version has a 300 km (161nm) range and larger warhead.<sup>178</sup> The SS-

<sup>176</sup> Source: Richard Connolly, *The Kalibrisation of the Russian Navy: Progress and Prospects*, 4.

<sup>177</sup> “SS-N-30A (3M-14 Kalibr),” Missile Threat CSIS Missile Defense Project, accessed on October 1, 2020, <https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/ss-n-30a/>.

<sup>178</sup> Office of Naval Intelligence, *The Russian Navy: A Historic Transition* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Naval Intelligence, December 2015), 36, <https://www.oni.navy.mil/Portals/12/Intel%20agencies/russia/Russia%202015print.pdf?ver=2015-12-14-082038-923>.

N-30 LACM is capable of carrying conventional or nuclear warheads and can reach targets within 300 km to 1,500 km (161 nm to 810 nm).<sup>179</sup> There are two versions of the 91R ASROC, a weapon with a longer range and quicker speeds than conventional torpedoes: the 91RE1 is a submarine-launched ASROC with a range of up to 50 km (27 nm); the 91RTE2 is a ship-launched ASROC with a range of up to 40 km (22 nm).<sup>180</sup>

The Kalibr-M missile, currently in developmental stages, is the upgraded version of the Kalibr-NK SS-N-30A SAGARIS (3M-14 Kalibr) and does present a credible threat to the United States, its global interests, and the United States Navy if its purported capabilities are true. The Kalibr-M has been advertised to have a maximum firing range of 4,500 km (~2,430 nm), flying at 2.5 Mach (3,000 km/hour or 1,620 nm/hour) and is intended to compete with the U.S. Navy's Block IV TLAM-E cruise missile which has a maximum firing range of 1,700 km (~918 nm) at 880 km/hour (~475 nm/hour).<sup>181</sup>

The first operational use of the Kalibr-system was observed in October 2015 as a RFN frigate and two corvettes launched over 25 missiles into Syria from the Caspian Sea and follow-on launches into Syria from RFN Kilo (Project 636) nuclear-powered submarine (SSNs) in the eastern Mediterranean Sea (December 2015 and March 2017).<sup>182</sup>

The use of conventional precision weapons and their role in strategic deterrence is noteworthy due to their instrumentality. According to Dave Johnson's analysis of the role and use of conventional precision weapons, he concludes that conventional weapons have been assigned the same roles that nuclear weapons hold and have held in the evolving approaches to strategic deterrence.<sup>183</sup> Conventional precision weapons, such as the Kalibr

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<sup>179</sup> ONI, The Russian Navy, 35.

<sup>180</sup> ONI, The Russian Navy, 36.

<sup>181</sup> Mark Episkopos, "Russia's Dangerous 'Kalibr' Cruise Missile Could See Range Doubled: Report," *National Interest* (blog), January 12, 2019, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/russias-dangerous-%E2%80%9Ckalibr%E2%80%9D-cruise-missile-could-see-range-doubled-report-41427>.

<sup>182</sup> Richard Connolly, *The Kalibrisation of the Russian Navy: Progress and Prospects*, 1 and "Game Changer: Russian sub-launched missiles bring strategic effect," (London, England: Jane's IHS Markit, 2017), 1, [https://www.janes.com/images/assets/147/70147/Game\\_changer\\_Russian\\_sub-launched\\_cruise\\_missiles\\_bring\\_strategic\\_effect\\_edit.pdf](https://www.janes.com/images/assets/147/70147/Game_changer_Russian_sub-launched_cruise_missiles_bring_strategic_effect_edit.pdf).

<sup>183</sup> Dave Johnson, Russia's Conventional Precision Strike Capabilities, Regional Crises, and Nuclear Thresholds, 46.

family of missiles, have been assigned to “deter by the threat of infliction of deterrent, prescribed or ‘dosed’ levels, or unacceptable levels of damage on an adversary.”<sup>184</sup> Moreover, President Putin has said that conventional, high precision weapons will “take strategic nonnuclear forces to a qualitatively new level, enabling the neutralization of any military threat to Russia” (Figure 3).<sup>185</sup> Falling under the category of a non-nuclear strategic weapon, the Kalibr missile “remains an integral element in the evolving Russian military strategy, combining a set of cross-domain deterrence options, including strategic and nonstrategic nuclear, strategic conventional, and nonmilitary ways and means.”<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Dave Johnson, Russia’s Conventional Precision Strike Capabilities, Regional Crises, and Nuclear Thresholds, 46.

<sup>185</sup> Dave Johnson, Russia’s Conventional Precision Strike Capabilities, Regional Crises, and Nuclear Thresholds, 46.

<sup>186</sup> Katarzyna Zysk, “Nonstrategic nuclear weapons in Russia’s evolving military doctrine,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (2017), 1, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00963402.2017.1362908>.



1,000 nm range rings from fleet concentration areas.

Figure 3. Kalibr SS-N-30A SAGARIS LACM Ranges<sup>187</sup>

<sup>187</sup> Source: ONI, The Russian Navy, 35.

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## **IV. AN EXAMINATION OF RUSSIAN FEDERATION REGIONAL POLICIES AND NAVAL OPERATIONS**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will examine Russia's regional strategies and/or policies for the Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, and the Arctic Ocean while considering Russia's expanded approach and definition of 'strategic deterrence.' For the purposes of this chapter and to reiterate, *The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation* has outlined its maritime regional priority areas: The Atlantic Regional Priority Area (includes the Atlantic Ocean, the Baltic, the Black, the Mediterranean Sea and Sea of Azov) and The Arctic Regional Priority Area.<sup>188</sup> This chapter will then identify and analyze select RFN regional operations to determine if they have been executed as an extension of the aforementioned strategies, doctrines, and policies and also to identify their operational mission and/or goals. Further, this chapter will determine the effectiveness of the RFN at achieving its primary mission of strategic deterrence.

### **B. THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA**

This section will discuss the Mediterranean Sea and elements of the Black Sea Fleet, (BSF) as many of the RFN platforms deployed to the Mediterranean Sea are forward from the BSF and RFN operations are typically directed by Black Sea RFN commanders.

#### **1. Russia and the Mediterranean Sea: A Background**

To introduce the current Russian interest in the Mediterranean Sea, it is important to understand its past significance to the former Soviet Union and how that relevance has informed current Russian perceptions about, and interest in, the Mediterranean Sea. Dating back to Stalin's post-WWII policy, as noted by Carey Joynt and Oles Smolansky, strategic

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<sup>188</sup> *The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, trans. Anna Davis (Newport, RI: Russia Maritime Studies Institute, U.S. Naval War College, 2015), 19–25, [https://dnmngwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/NWCDepartments/Russia%20Maritime%20Studies%20Institute/Maritime%20Doctrine%20TransENGrus\\_FINAL.pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=fqZgUUVRVrRkmSFNMOj%2FNaRNawUoRdhvvpFJj7%2FpAkM%3D](https://dnmngwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/NWCDepartments/Russia%20Maritime%20Studies%20Institute/Maritime%20Doctrine%20TransENGrus_FINAL.pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=fqZgUUVRVrRkmSFNMOj%2FNaRNawUoRdhvvpFJj7%2FpAkM%3D).

considerations regarding the Mediterranean can be assumed by Soviet “attempts to improve Russia’s strategic position by acquiring or effectively controlling the Turkish Straits area and to strengthen that position through the acquisition of the Dodecanese Islands and Tripolitania.”<sup>189</sup> Stalin sought to establish the Soviet Union as a Mediterranean Power as NATO was being formed (1949) as a formal alliance. One of the United States’ responses to Soviet belligerence was establishing the Sixth Fleet and securing a permanent presence in the Mediterranean.<sup>190</sup> The Soviet Navy, however, was not able to respond in kind or ability to U.S. Navy Mediterranean forces until 1958, when the USSR naval forces completed their first extended (but logistically limited) deployment to the Mediterranean.<sup>191</sup> Yet, by 1964, the Soviet navy was able to maintain a continuous presence in the Mediterranean, and by 1969, owing largely to Soviet support to the Arabs’ natures during the 1967 Six-Day War, Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean markedly expanded.<sup>192</sup> Between 1966 and 1971, the Soviet naval presence in the Mediterranean expanded by over 300%, with an average daily strength between 50 to 54 support and combatant vessels.<sup>193</sup>

Throughout the 1970s, Soviet relationships and port access with Mediterranean countries shifted in strength from Egypt to Syria (via ports in Tartus and Latakia) and included naval visits to Libya and Algeria.<sup>194</sup> Soviet naval presence peaked in 1973 with an average daily strength of 56 vessels, but by 1977 and the years to follow, the average

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<sup>189</sup> Carey B. Joynt and Oles M. Smolansky, *Soviet Naval Policy in the Mediterranean* (Bethlehem, PA: Department of International Relations, Lehigh University, 1972), 3. The Dodecanese Islands and Tripolitania are now what comprises modern-day Libya.

<sup>190</sup> Joynt and Smolansky, *Soviet Naval Policy in the Mediterranean*, 3–4.

<sup>191</sup> Gordon McCormick, *The Soviet Presence in the Mediterranean*, P-7388 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1987), 1, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/papers/P7388.html>.

<sup>192</sup> “Moscow’s support for the Arabs during the 1967 War resulted in the first Soviet access to Egyptian and Syrian port facilities.”...by late-1970, the Soviet Naval Complex at Alexandria, Egypt “featured a command center, extensive ship repair works, storage facilities, and a permanent Soviet presence ashore.” McCormick, *The Soviet Presence in the Mediterranean*, 10–11 and David Frank Winkler, “Cold War at sea: The maritime confrontation on and over the high seas between the United States and the Soviet Union, 1945–1989” (PhD diss., American University, 1998), 30–74, <http://hdl.handle.net/1961/thesesdissertations:2266>.

<sup>193</sup> McCormick, *The Soviet Presence in the Mediterranean*, 11.

<sup>194</sup> McCormick, *The Soviet Presence in the Mediterranean*, 14–15.

daily strength fell to 45 vessels.<sup>195</sup> Soviet naval presence remained active throughout the 1980s and, according to American scholar Milan Vego, were primarily employed in gatekeeping operations and the surveillance of U.S. and NATO naval operations.<sup>196</sup> Additionally, Soviet forces were willing to assist in efforts for which they could plausibly deny presence and/or which could be executed with minimal degree of exposure. An example of such would be supporting Libya in 1985–1986 against U.S. naval and air operations, which established the Soviet position and willingness to undermine U.S. presence and operations throughout the Mediterranean.<sup>197</sup>

After 1985, however, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev relaxed the aforementioned stance against U.S. operations in the Mediterranean, a residual effect of his ‘new thinking’ approach to relations with the United States; he emphasized political accommodation over expansive military power as the answer to the ‘East-West’ military competition.<sup>198</sup> During the final years of Soviet Union, Moscow’s political and military approach toward the Middle East and the Mediterranean was to promote Soviet objectives without estranging the United States.<sup>199</sup> Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dire economic straits during President Yeltsin’s administration, the RFN did not deploy to the Mediterranean throughout the 1990s and would not resume Mediterranean operations until the 2000s.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Timothy S. Cole, II, “Russian Naval Activity in the Mediterranean: Responsive Shifts in French, Italian, and Spanish Perspectives and Policies” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2018), 25, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/61337>.

<sup>196</sup> Milan Vego, “Soviet and Russian Strategy in the Mediterranean since 1945,” in *Naval Policy and Strategy in the Mediterranean: Past, Present, and Future* ed. John B Hattendorf (London, England: Frank Cass, 1999), 180, <http://docshare01.docshare.tips/files/18231/182315246.pdf>.

<sup>197</sup> McCormick, *The Soviet Presence in the Mediterranean*, 20.

<sup>198</sup> Edward A. Corcoran, *Perestroika and the Soviet Military: Implications for U.S. Policy*, CATO Policy Analysis No. 133 (Washington, D.C.: CATO Institute, May 29, 1990), 7, <https://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa133.pdf>.

<sup>199</sup> Vego, “Soviet and Russian Strategy in the Mediterranean since 1945,” 181.

<sup>200</sup> “Following the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Navy suffered a steep decline in readiness and expeditionary capability. As a result, the Russian base at Tartus fell into a state of disrepair, and Russia simultaneously lost its core partnerships with its remaining Arab, North African, and Mediterranean client states other than Syria.” Christopher Harmer, *Background: Russian Naval Base Tartus* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of War, July 31, 2012), 2, [http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Background\\_Russian\\_NavalBaseTartus.pdf](http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Background_Russian_NavalBaseTartus.pdf).

## 2. The RFN in the Mediterranean Sea: Basing

The decision by Russia to re-establish a military presence and return to the Mediterranean was announced by then Prime Minister Vladimir Putin in November 1999.<sup>201</sup> As described in Chapter III, this goal was also codified in Russia's *Naval Policy* in which the primary objective of the RFN is to "deter military conflicts and implement strategic deterrence" by securing a permanent naval presence in the Mediterranean Sea, including the vital sea lines of communication.<sup>202</sup> Then, in 2006, the Russian newspaper *Kommersant* reported Kremlin's plans to upgrade the Syrian port of Tartus and transform it into a modern and fully-fledged naval base.<sup>203</sup> The Tartus port in Syria, as argued by Derek Lutterbeck and Georgij Engelbrecht, is viewed by Russian leadership as a "strategic gateway for Russia's Navy, ensuring its access, not only to the Mediterranean but also to other important maritime spaces such as the Atlantic (via the Strait of Gibraltar), the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa," a move that can be assessed as an effort to rebalance the Mediterranean against the United States.<sup>204</sup> Moreover, on December 29, 2017, President Putin ratified an agreement that expanded RFN operations at Tartus Naval Base in Syria. This agreement approves expansion of the Tartus Naval Base, but also allows Russia to have up to 11 warships (to include nuclear-powered vessels) at the base for a period for 49 years, rent-free.<sup>205</sup> Therefore, it can be expected that Russia will seek to maintain its naval presence in the Mediterranean and possibly work to solidify relationships with other

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<sup>201</sup> Richard F. Starr, "Russia Reenters World Politics," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (Fall 2000): 23, <https://doi.org/10.1215/10474552-11-4-23>.

<sup>202</sup> *Fundamental of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, , trans. Anna Davis (Newport, RI: Russia Maritime Studies Institute, Naval War College, 2018), 12, [https://dnnlgwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/NWCDepartments/Russia%20Maritime%20Studies%20Institute/RMSI\\_RusNavyFundamentalsENG\\_FINAL%20\(1\).pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=fjFDEgWhpd1ING%2FnmGQXqaH5%2FDEujDU76EnksAB%2B1A0%3D](https://dnnlgwick.blob.core.windows.net/portals/0/NWCDepartments/Russia%20Maritime%20Studies%20Institute/RMSI_RusNavyFundamentalsENG_FINAL%20(1).pdf?sr=b&si=DNNFileManagerPolicy&sig=fjFDEgWhpd1ING%2FnmGQXqaH5%2FDEujDU76EnksAB%2B1A0%3D).

<sup>203</sup> Mikhail Barabanov, "Russia in the Mediterranean" *Moscow Defense Brief* 2, no. 6 (2006): 5, [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/19392/issue\\_2\\_2006.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/19392/issue_2_2006.pdf).

<sup>204</sup> Derek Lutterbeck and Georgij Engelbrecht, "The West and Russia in the Mediterranean: Towards a Renewed Rivalry?," *Mediterranean Politics* 14, no. 3 (2009): 393, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629390903346905>.

<sup>205</sup> "Putin Signs Law Allowing Expansion Of Russian Naval Facility In Syria," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, December 29, 2017, <https://www.rferl.org/a/putin-signs-law-syria-tartus-naval-facility/28946167.html>.

nations in the Mediterranean and Levant regions, which further enable Russian strategic interests and goals.

### 3. The RFN in the Mediterranean Sea: Operations and Exercises

The RFN return to the Mediterranean Sea began in late-2007 in the form of the largest RFN deployment to the area since the fall of the Soviet Union. The 71-day deployment was led by the RFN's only aircraft carrier, *Admiral Kuznetsov*, with a battle group of 11 units from Russia's Northern, Baltic, and Black Sea Fleets.<sup>206</sup> This deployment, as declared by RFN Vice-Admiral Nikolai Maksimov, was a signal that Russia "will establish a permanent presence in the region."<sup>207</sup> The symbolic 'success' of this 2007–2008 deployment initiated a new era of RFN deployments, one in which the Tartus port would serve as the RFN's permanent Eastern Mediterranean base and become a primary operating area for the new, Kalibr-capable surface and submarine platforms homeported in Sevastopol, Ukraine (though Russia has since annexed and claimed the Crimean Peninsula naval base as its own.)

In 2013, the RFN executed its largest exercise in the Mediterranean since the 2007–2008 *Kuznetsov* deployment. According to Dmitry Gorenburg, senior research scientist at the Center for Naval Analysis, the deployment, which included over twenty ships from three RFN fleets (Northern, Baltic Sea, and Black Sea), signaled several goals of the Russian Federation. Gorenburg concludes that "The Russian military has long sought to restore its presence in the region and has in the last 5–6 years taken numerous opportunities to send ships to the region to engage in exercises and conduct port visits. This exercise, first and foremost, is simply an expansion of this effort."<sup>208</sup> Shortly after the conclusion

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<sup>206</sup> Mikhail Kashubsky, "Russian Navy Reclaims its blue-water force status," *Maritime Studies* no. 159 (March 2008): 33, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/docview/211302224?accountid=12702>.

<sup>207</sup> David Eshel, "Russian Mediterranean Naval Build-Up Challenges NATO Sixth Fleet Domination," *Defense Update*, last modified December 9, 2007, [https://defense-update.com/20071209\\_russian-naval-build-up.html](https://defense-update.com/20071209_russian-naval-build-up.html).

<sup>208</sup> Dmitry Gorenburg, "The Russian Navy's Role in the Mediterranean," *PONARS Eurasia*, last modified February 1, 2013, <http://www.ponarseurasia.org/article/russian-navy%E2%80%99s-role-mediterranean>.

of the deployment, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu stressed that the “Mediterranean region was the core of all essential dangers to Russia’s national interests and that continued fallout from the Arab Spring increased the importance of this region...he then showcased a new Russian naval policy by announcing the decision to establish a Russian Navy task force in the Mediterranean on a permanent basis.”<sup>209</sup>

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu’s declaration came to fruition with Russia’s 2014 reestablishment of the RFN Mediterranean squadron and the 2015 military intervention in Syria.<sup>210</sup> Once limited by legacy Soviet platforms, the RFN Mediterranean squadron was greatly impacted by Russia’s modernization efforts. As confirmed by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA):

Beginning in 2014 after the occupation of Crimea, new units began to enter the order of battle, including modern coastal missiles and naval infantry. Then in 2015, new submarines and surface combatants began to arrive to bolster the fleet. Now armed with the KALIBR missile system, the Black Sea Fleet is a significant force in the region and over the next few years could have as many as six new attack submarines and six new surface ships, which can not only exert control on the Black Sea, but can operate in the Mediterranean to counter NATO forces and support operations in Syria.<sup>211</sup>

The Mediterranean squadron is primarily comprised from the Black Sea Fleet (BSF)—of which are Kalibr-capable (refer to Appendix Tables 13 and 44).<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Thomas R. Fedyszyn, “The Russian Navy ‘REBALANCES’ to the Mediterranean,” *United States Naval Institute Proceedings* 139, no. 12 (December 2013): 22, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/docview/1625806978?accountid=12702>.

<sup>210</sup> Agnieszka Legucka, *Russia’s Eastern Mediterranean Policy*, Report Number PISM No. 111 (Warsaw, Poland: The Polish Institute of International Affairs, May 2020), [https://pism.pl/publications/Russias\\_Eastern\\_Mediterranean\\_Policy](https://pism.pl/publications/Russias_Eastern_Mediterranean_Policy).

<sup>211</sup> Defense Intelligence Agency, *Russia Military Power: Building a Military to Support Great Power Aspirations*, 2017, 68, [http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military\\_Power\\_Publications/Russia\\_Military\\_Power\\_Report\\_2017.pdf](http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military_Power_Publications/Russia_Military_Power_Report_2017.pdf). “The fact that the Kalibr can be launched from compact vertical tubes means that the system can be fitted to ships as small as corvettes, providing a quantum leap in the precision long-range land-attack fire power of the Russian Navy and giving it a capability hitherto only possessed by the U.S. Navy.” “3M-14/Klub-A/Kalibr-NK,” GlobalSecurity.org, accessed August 23, 2020, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/kalibr.htm#:~:text=The%20fact%20that%20the%20Kalibr,possessed%20by%20the%20US%20Navy.>

<sup>212</sup> Dmitry Gorenburg, “Russia’s Naval Strategy in the Mediterranean,” *Russian Military Reform* (blog), September 18, 2019, <https://russiamil.wordpress.com/2019/09/18/russias-naval-strategy-in-the-mediterranean/>. Kalibr missile capabilities described in Chapter 3, Figure 8.

The BSF, the most modernized, combined surface and subsurface fleet of the RFN, has changed the way the RFN operates in the Mediterranean Sea. As part of Russia's expanded definition of strategic deterrence and the application of strategic deterrence for the RFN in the Mediterranean is relegated to a coastal defense mission and the creation of an A2/AD bubble in the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>213</sup>

These A2/AD bubbles “form a set of layered defenses and multiple vectors of attack through the combination of long-range sea-, air-, and ground-launched missiles to deny access, with shorter-range coastal and air defense systems focused on area denial...the RFN will seek to establish credible maritime conventional deterrence against NATO through the combination of air defenses and cruise missile-equipped ships, which will work together to highlight that any use of NATO naval forces against Russian ships and adversaries would be highly costly for the adversary.”<sup>214</sup>

Since the re-establishment of the Mediterranean squadron, there has been a standing RFN presence and consistent exercises and operations in the Mediterranean, including Kalibr and other surface-to-surface missile launches into Syria from the Eastern Mediterranean.

#### **4. Conclusion**

While Russia has not articulated a specific policy to address its interests in the Mediterranean, through the RFN's objectives and missions we have ascertained Russia's intentions. As assessed by Dmitry Gorenburg, “Russia is expanding its naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean because it's easier than trying to compete with the United States on the world's oceans;” this sentiment is also a stated goal of expanded strategic deterrence and the codified security strategy, military doctrine, and the naval policy.<sup>215</sup> In his analysis

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<sup>213</sup> Dmitry Gorenburg, “Russia's Naval Strategy in the Mediterranean.” At the time this thesis was written, the BSF is the most modernized. The Northern Fleet (NF) submarines scheduled for upgrades are still in layup for modernization efforts or are new construction and their surface fleet is comprised of less-capable legacy platforms without a land-attack cruise missile (LACM) capability.

<sup>214</sup> Dmitry Gorenburg, “Russia's Naval Strategy in the Mediterranean” and Jonathan Altman, “Russian A2/AD in the Eastern Mediterranean A Growing Risk,” *Naval War College Review* 69, no. 1 (Winter 2016): 72, <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1119&context=nwc-review>.

<sup>215</sup> Michael Peck, “The Mediterranean: The Russian Navy's New Playground?” *The National Interest* (blog), October 2, 2019, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/mediterranean-russian-navy%E2%80%99s-new-playground-nato-worried-84966>.

of the new Russian naval policy, Richard Connolly observes that it “signaled the intentions of the Russian leadership to maintain a permanent naval presence in the eastern Mediterranean in support of wider Russian foreign and security objectives” which echoes Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu’s declaration. Connolly observes, however, that the exact intentions of Russia’s Mediterranean policy remain unclear. He notes, “Russia’s recent actions in the region suggest the eastern Mediterranean (i.e., the area near Syria), but it is possible that the region enjoys a broader meaning in Russian thinking.”<sup>216</sup>

Russia has been able to re-establish a permanent presence in the Mediterranean which is instrumental to supporting and achieving its foreign policy goals (as described in Chapter III). The RFN’s Mediterranean squadron has demonstrated Russia’s willingness to place RFN forces in combat and deterrence roles to support its strategic deterrence and national security interests. It can be expected, therefore, that Russia will continue its anti-U.S./NATO posturing and work to undermine the U.S./NATO presence in the Mediterranean, especially as more modern and updated RFN platforms are ushered into the area. Dave Johnson has opined that “Russia’s approach to conflict undeniably includes political, diplomatic, economic, non-linear, and hybrid means below the level of armed conflict which can be employed in a gradual campaign, exploiting ambiguity to achieve strategic objectives without military violence.”<sup>217</sup> Johnson’s assessment of Russia’s combat actions from the Mediterranean and basing and infrastructure developments in Syria indicate Russia’s effort and, to a degree, success in building its reputation to become a regional power player, counter to that of NATO and the U.S. However, the economic and political hurdles facing the Russian Federation are undoubtedly going to affect operations in the Mediterranean, although not to the extent that they will completely remove Russian influence in the coming decades. Furthermore, the growing utilization of RFN platforms, especially Kalibr-capable platforms, in the Mediterranean Sea signals implementation of

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<sup>216</sup> Richard Connolly, *Towards a Dual Fleet? The Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation and the Modernisation of Russian Naval Capabilities*, Research Paper no. 02/17 (Rome: NATO Defense College, June 2017), 1–4, <http://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=1061#>.

<sup>217</sup> Dave Johnson, *Russia’s Approach to Conflict—Implications for NATO’s Deterrence and Defence*, Research Paper no. 111 (Rome: NATO Defense College, April 2015), 10. <http://www.ndc.nato.int/download/downloads.php?icode=449>.

*Russian Naval Policy* goals in which the RFN shall secure a permanent naval presence and “implement strategic deterrence”: the Black Sea (special attention on maintaining control of the Crimean Peninsula), the Mediterranean Sea, the Arctic, and vital sea lines of communication.<sup>218</sup>

### C. RUSSIA AND THE BLACK SEA

The Turkish Straits (consisting of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus Straits), connecting the Black and Mediterranean Seas, are critical strategic access points for Russia’s economy, power projection, and security. The Soviet BSF was headquartered at Sevastopol, Ukraine, and when the Soviet Union collapsed, 82 percent of the BSF was purchased by Russia, but remained ported in Sevastopol.<sup>219</sup> Moreover, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the inclusion of post-Soviet and post-Warsaw pact countries into NATO compromised Russia’s perception of security on its shared borders with eastern Europe. Between 1999 and 2004, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia all became official members of NATO, essentially surrounding Russia’s western border.<sup>220</sup> NATO then began an enhanced relationship with Ukraine and Georgia. Georgia, in 2004, became the first country to execute the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP), a strategically important system of cooperation dealing with the reforms that took place in the country, and in 2006, NATO offered Intensified Dialogue with Georgia.<sup>221</sup> Then, in April 2008, NATO leaders agreed that Ukraine would become a NATO member in the future (Figure 4).<sup>222</sup> In 2009, wanting

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<sup>218</sup> *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 12.

<sup>219</sup> Steven Erlanger, “Russia and Ukraine Settle Dispute over Black Sea Fleet,” *New York Times*, June 10, 1995, <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/06/10/world/russia-and-ukraine-settle-dispute-over-black-seafleet.html>.

<sup>220</sup> “Member Countries,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, March 24, 2020, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_52044.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52044.htm).

<sup>221</sup> Georgia Embassy, *Georgia-NATO Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Georgia Embassy in the United States, 2011), <http://georgiaembassyusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/GEO-NATO.pdf> and “Relations with Georgia,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, March 26, 2019, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_38988.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_38988.htm).

<sup>222</sup> “Relations with Ukraine,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, June 12, 2020, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_37750.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_37750.htm).

stronger ties with the West and NATO, Ukraine said it would not extend Russia's lease of the naval base in Sevastopol, Ukraine (Crimean Peninsula), set to expire in 2017.<sup>223</sup> Russia, therefore, stood to lose its primary Black Sea naval base and was facing growing NATO presence on its southern flank.

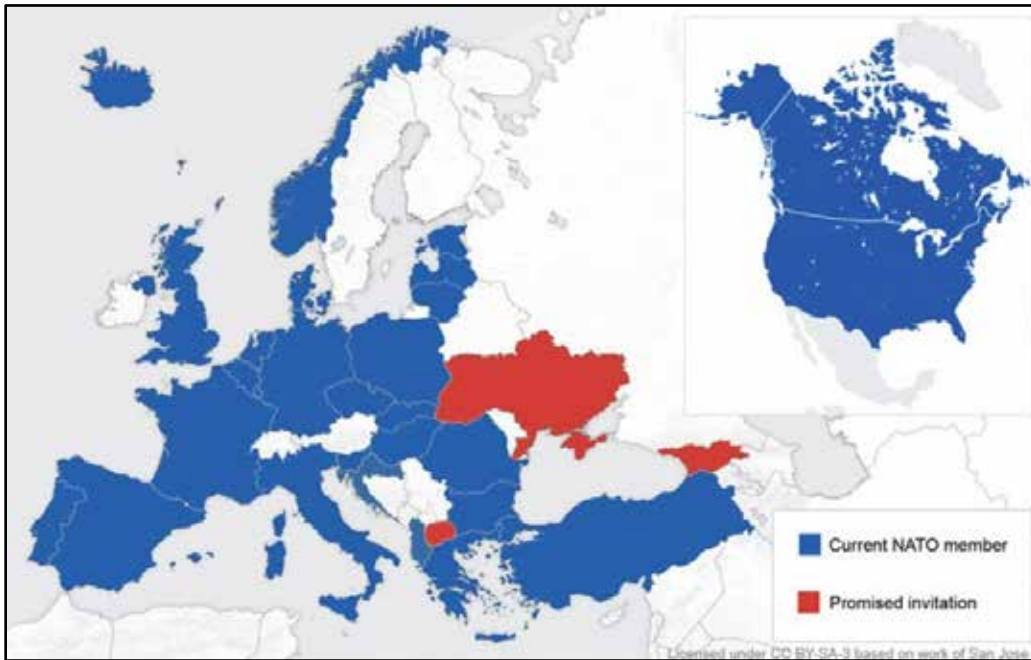


Figure 4. NATO Member Nations and Countries Promised Membership<sup>224</sup>

In August 2008, Russia invaded Georgia for a period of five days with the following objectives:

1. Expel Georgian troops and effectively terminating Georgian sovereignty in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.
2. Prevent Georgia from joining NATO.

<sup>223</sup> Denis Dyomkin, "Russia hopes to keep naval base in Ukraine," *Reuters*, July 14, 2009, <https://in.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-41034920090714?sp=true>.

<sup>224</sup> Source: *Countries with Promised Invitation to NATO*, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, accessed June 28, 2020, <https://geoawesomeness.com/top-14-maps-charts-explain-nato/>.

3. Increase its control of the Caucasus, especially over strategic energy pipelines.
4. Recreate a sphere of influence in the former Soviet Union and beyond.<sup>225</sup>

Then, in 2014, on the brink of losing its Sevastopol naval base following the collapse of the pro-Russian government regime in Ukraine, Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula.<sup>226</sup>

### 1. RFN and the Black Sea

Since the 2014 annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, the BSF has built-up quite substantially to include Russia's newest and most capable surface and subsurface vessels, particularly because they are equipped with the conventional weapons systems (such as the Kalibr system). That has, to a degree, achieved Russia's goal of strategic deterrence with the incorporation of conventional capabilities to deter adversaries and achieve *Military Doctrine* goals of countering NATO build-up in the region and adversarial deployments in the areas contiguous to Russia.<sup>227</sup> As mentioned previously, RFN modernization efforts brought the BSF six new surface vessels, six new submarines, and upgraded legacy platforms, making the BSF the largest and most capable force in the region.

As with the Mediterranean Sea, Russia created an A2/AD bubble in the Black Sea or, as argued in a study by the Center for Naval Analysis, created a southern strategic bastion, a duplicate to the existing Northern Strategic Bastion (discussed in following sections of this chapter).<sup>228</sup> While unlike the Northern Strategic Bastion, the BSF lacks nuclear weapons or nuclear submarines, it has expanded strategic deterrence via conventional weapons. In order to project power beyond Russia's coastlines and to "lock

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<sup>225</sup> Ariel Cohen and Robert E. Hamilton, *The Russian Military and the Georgian War: Lessons and Implications* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2011), 1–3, <https://publications.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/2143.pdf>.

<sup>226</sup> Cory Welt, *Ukraine: Background and U.S. Policy*, CRS Report No. R45008 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, November 1, 2017), 5–8, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R45008/6>.

<sup>227</sup> *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, Article 2.

<sup>228</sup> Igor Delanoe, *Russia's Black Sea Fleet: Toward a Multiregional Force*, IOP-2019-U-020190-Final (Arlington, VA: CNA, Corp., June 2019), 18, [https://www.cna.org/CNA\\_files/PDF/IOP-2019-U-020190-Final.pdf](https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/IOP-2019-U-020190-Final.pdf).

Russia's southern flank," the Southern Strategic Bastion implements conventional deterrence and would include the Mediterranean squadron in key roles of southern defense.<sup>229</sup>

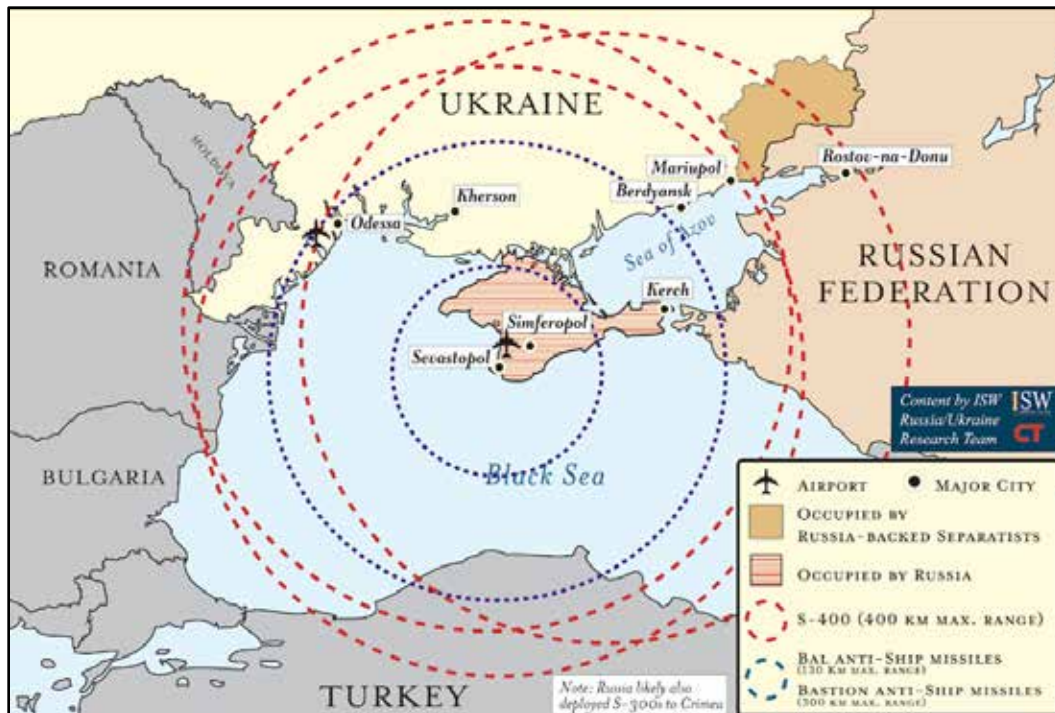
Igor Delanoe, the Deputy-Head of the French-Russian Analytical Center, believes that the BSF's aims and goals are to prevent further NATO and Western expansion in the Southern Strategic region, a direct correlation to Russia's current *Maritime Doctrine*, in which NATO expansion is considered one of the greatest external threats to Russian security and stability.<sup>230</sup> Moreover, the capabilities and capacities of the BSF are designed to be superior to any naval group that operates in the Black Sea—particularly NATO vessels which, from Moscow's view, are perceived as hostile.<sup>231</sup> The enhancement of the BSF with Kalibr-capable surface and submarine vessels allows Moscow to fulfill its regional superiority goals to achieve the A2/AD advantage in the Black Sea (Figure 5).

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<sup>229</sup> Igor Delanoe, Russia's Black Sea Fleet: Toward a Multiregional Force, 18.

<sup>230</sup> Igor Delanoe, Russia's Black Sea Fleet: Toward a Multiregional Force, 19 and *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, Article 12.

<sup>231</sup> Igor Delanoe, Russia's Black Sea Fleet: Toward a Multiregional Force, 19.



Deployed RFN vessels extend threat envelopes based on ship and submarine positions and deployed weapon systems

Figure 5. Russia's Black Sea Southern Strategic Bastion<sup>232</sup>

Regarding RFN and aviation order of battle, it should also be noted that with the 2014 annexation of Crimea, and more specifically Sevastopol, the balance of power within the maritime domain shifted in favor of Russia. Subsequent interactions of U.S., NATO, and Ukrainian vessels with Russian naval vessels and aircraft have been increasingly contentious, citing several United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS) violations.<sup>233</sup> Further, in a June 2017 commentary, Thomas Frear of the European Leadership Network identified a trend in which U.S. actions in Syria (specifically the June

<sup>232</sup> Source: Catherine Harris, Nicole Geis, and Mason Clark, "Targeting Ukraine to Test the West," *Institute for the Study of War: Russia in Review* (blog), November 30, 2018, <http://www.iswresearch.org/2018/11/russia-in-review-targeting-ukraine-to.html>.

<sup>233</sup> Thomas Frear, Lukasz Kulesa, and Ian Kearns, "Dangerous Brinkmanship: Close Military Encounters Between Russia and the West in 2014," European Leadership Network, last modified November 5, 2014, <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Dangerous-Brinkmanship.pdf>; Thomas Frear, "List of Close Military Encounters between Russia and the West, March 2014-March 2015," European Leadership Network, last modified March 11, 2015, <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ELN-Russia-West-Full-List-of-Incidents.pdf>.

18, 2017 shootdown of a Syrian fighter jet) were met by a Russian response in the Baltic Sea:

A Russian jet flew within 1.5 meters of a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft,” and concluded, in a 2018 policy brief that “the close passes of NATO, predominantly U.S., aircraft and ships operating in proximity to sensitive areas such as Kaliningrad or Crimea have been linked by the Russian Ministry of Defence (sic) to the defence (sic) of Russian airspace, indicating a desire to project this defence (sic) out over the high seas...and must be viewed as having been intended to signal a political or military message.<sup>234</sup>

This instance is not the first of its kind and may be indicative of future retaliatory and/or strategic messaging directed toward U.S., NATO, and/or Western states across Russia’s regions of interest (Table 9).

## **2. Conclusion**

Like in the Mediterranean Sea, Russia does not maintain a codified strategy or policy for RFN operations in the Black Sea. The BSF remains the most ‘Kalibrized’ fleets of the RFN, owing largely to *NSS2015* goals, expanded ‘strategic deterrence,’ and the geographic necessity of platforms to operate more in littoral waters than open ocean.<sup>235</sup> The BSF is considered quite agile and formidable enough to manage and counter U.S. and NATO naval vessels that may deploy to the Black Sea, especially as part of the Southern Strategic Bastion. The overwhelming RFN presence in the Black Sea provides Russia with a regional hegemony able to provide security and counter threats as they appear. The Black Sea provides the necessary gateway to the Mediterranean Sea and BSF build-up and power

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<sup>234</sup> Thomas Frear, “Russia-West Incidents on the Rise,” European Leadership Network, last modified on June 26, 2017, <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/russia-west-incidents-on-the-rise/> and Thomas Frear, “Lessons Learned? Success and Failure in Managing Russia-West Incidents 2014–2018 – Euro-Atlantic Security Policy Brief,” European Leadership Network, April 2018, <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/11042018-Incidents-Management-Review-Tom-Frear.pdf>.

<sup>235</sup> Igor Delanoe, *Russia’s Black Sea Fleet: Toward a Multiregional Force*, 22. *NSS2015* asserts “an increase in the Russian Federation’s role in resolving the most important international problems, settling military conflicts, and ensuring strategic stability and the supremacy of international law in interstate relations,” lending claims to the Russian’s key role and position among the ‘great powers’ (*Russian Federation National Security Strategy*, 3).

projection can be applied to the Mediterranean as Russia expands its reach beyond its on coastal regions.

Table 9. Russia-West Incidents in the Air and Sea, 2014–2017<sup>236</sup>

| <b>Russia - U.S. and/or NATO Military Encounters (2014-2017)</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>DATE</b>                                                      | <b>Interaction Description</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| April 13, 2014                                                   | In the Black Sea, a Russian Su-24 FENCER made 12 passes; flying within 1,000 yards at 500 feet ASL of the USS DONALD COOK (DDG 75). A breach of Article IV of the 1972 bilateral US-Russia INCSEA agreement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| July 18, 2014                                                    | An U.S. RC-135 reconnaissance plane operating near Kaliningrad had to take evasive action after being approached by Russian fighter aircraft.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| January 19, 2016                                                 | Fighters flying under the NATO Baltic air-policing mission intercepted a Russian Il-20 intelligence aircraft flying from Kaliningrad to mainland Russia over the Baltic Sea. The Russian aircraft had not filed flight plans, did not respond to communication attempts, and had disengaged its transponder.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| January 25, 2016                                                 | A Russian Su-27 military jet intercepted an American RC-135 reconnaissance aircraft in international airspace over the Black Sea, at one point coming within 5 meters of the other plane. The incident was described as unsafe and unprofessional by American officials.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| April 11, 2016                                                   | Russian Su-24s and a helicopter buzzed and conducted dangerous maneuvers in close proximity to USS DONALD COOK (DDG 75) while operating in the Baltic Sea. The Russian jet came within 30 feet of the DDG and the flight path was described as a “simulated attack.” A breach of Article III of the US-Russia INCSEA agreement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| April 12, 2016                                                   | Two Russian Ka-27 Helix helicopters made passes of the USS DONALD COOK in the Baltic Sea while apparently taking photographs. 40 minutes later, two unarmed Russian Su-24 jets made 11 close passes to the ship. Both incidents were described as unsafe and unprofessional by American officials. The U.S. embassy in Moscow issued a formal protest over the events.                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| April 29, 2016                                                   | A Russian Su-24 military jet barrel-rolled over an American RC-135 reconnaissance aircraft in an incident that was described as unsafe and unprofessional by American military officials, at one point coming within 8 meters of the other aircraft. Russian officials stated that their pilots behaved appropriately and that the United States was at fault                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| February 10, 2017                                                | The USS PORTER (DDG 78) was buzzed by four Russian aircraft while operating in international waters in the Black Sea in an incident described as “unsafe and unprofessional” by American officials. Two Su-24 fighter jets passed over the ship, followed at different points in the day by one Il-38, then another Su-24 jet, the closest within 200 yards of the ship.                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| March 24, 2017                                                   | Nine Russian bombers participated in what was described as simulated attacks against Norwegian radar arrays in Vardø that are used by NATO. They were described as “conducting offensive profiles” prior to turning away from Norwegian airspace.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| June 19, 2017                                                    | A Russian Su-27 fighter jet intercepted an American RC-135 reconnaissance aircraft in international airspace over the Baltic Sea, at one point flying within 1.5 meters of the other aircraft. The Russian jet was noted as being armed and accused of flying erratically by American officials. Russian officials accused the RC-135 pilot of behaving irresponsibly during the incident. One day prior, Russia declared that American planes flying in certain parts of Syria would be considered acceptable targets following the downing of a Syrian jet |

<sup>236</sup> Adapted from Thomas Frear, “Russia-West Incidents on the Rise,” and Paul W. Normolle, Sean T. Crowley, and Matt Lynn, “Russia-West Incidents in the Air and at Sea 2016–2017: Out of the Danger Zone?,” European Leadership Network, October 2018, <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Military-Incident-Report.pdf>.

| <b>Russia - U.S. and/or NATO Military Encounters (2014-2017)</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                  | by the USAF. This incident also coincided with NATO drills being held in Poland and Lithuania.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| November 25, 2017                                                | One Russian Su-30 fighter jet intercepted an U.S. P-8A reconnaissance aircraft flying in international airspace over the Black Sea. The Russian jet came within 15 meters of the American aircraft and flew in such a way to force the other aircraft to change course and experience turbulence. The American aircraft's transponder was engaged prior to the incident. A Pentagon spokesman described the Russian pilot's behavior as "unsafe." A statement by the Russian government claimed that the P-8A was approaching Russian airspace at high speed. |

Not a comprehensive list of all interactions

#### **D. RUSSIA AND THE ARCTIC ZONE**

The Arctic is the only region in which Russia maintains a regionally-defined policy. Outside of the importance for the RFN Northern Fleet, Russia's interests in the Arctic maritime domain are largely economic. As then Prime Minister Medvedev declared in 2018, Russia plans to continue Arctic navigation and developing North Sea routes as it will "create developmental support zones necessary for the industrialization of the region...to unlock great economic potential."<sup>237</sup> Russia relies on the Arctic for economic stability—specifically reliant on energy exports that are extracted in the Arctic. "Russia is the world's largest producer of crude oil and the second-largest producer of dry natural gas...Russia's economy is highly dependent on its hydrocarbons, and oil and natural , gas revenues account for more than one-third of the federal budget revenues."<sup>238</sup> Exploration and extraction of Arctic resources is critical to its gross domestic product (GDP) and its exports; the Arctic zone has only 1% of Russia's population, but touts 22% of its exports and 11% of its GDP.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Dmitry Medvedev, "Russia to Continue Developing the Northern Sea Route," *The Arctic*, August 31, 2018, <http://arctic.ru/infrastructure/20180831/789023.html>.

<sup>238</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Country Analysis Brief: Russia* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, October 31, 2017), <https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/RUS>.

<sup>239</sup> Marlène Laruelle, "Russia's Arctic Policy: A Power Strategy and Its Limits," *Russie.Nei.Visions*, no. 117 (Paris, France: French Institute of International Relations, March 2, 2020), 6, [https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/laruelle\\_russia\\_arctic\\_policy\\_2020.pdf](https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/laruelle_russia_arctic_policy_2020.pdf).

However, the global recession, lower energy prices, and imposed western sanctions on Russia resulting from its 2014 annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, dramatically impacted Russia's economy and ability to extract and develop its offshore Arctic energy projects.<sup>240</sup> In 2015, 43% of Russia's state revenues came from oil and gas sales, and following the crash in energy prices, revenue was down to 36% in 2016.<sup>241</sup> The combined economic crash and imposed sanctions have put Russia into a position for which its economy may be in more dire straits.<sup>242</sup> The culminating effects may therefore force Russia to potentially take a more aggressive posture to salvage and protect its economic interests in the Arctic. While there have not been any dramatic showings of force and, for the most part, all states with equity in Arctic claims have used prescribed United Nations procedural mechanisms to assert such claims, the strategic environment deserves increased attention and strategic planning from the United States and its NATO partners.

Russia, in its 2008 *Russian Federation's Policy for the Arctic to 2020*, has defined its objectives and strategy in the Arctic:

1. **Internationally:** Russia regards the Arctic region as a location to reassert its power and prestige—preferring dialogue and cooperation to armed conflict—but takes a more defensive posture in the area.
2. **Security:** Russia wants to assert territorial sovereignty along its borders of the Arctic Zone. Russia desires to secure transport and shipping routes and prepare for potential threats to their sovereignty.
3. **Economically/Domestically:** As mentioned above, Russia would like to explore and also revive economic and resource development in the Arctic.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Country Analysis Brief: Russia*.

<sup>241</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Country Analysis Brief: Russia*.

<sup>242</sup> Jørgen Staun, *Russia's Strategy in the Arctic* (Copenhagen: Royal Danish Defence College, 2015), 22, [https://pure.fak.dk/ws/files/7120599/Russias\\_Strategy\\_in\\_the\\_Arctic.pdf](https://pure.fak.dk/ws/files/7120599/Russias_Strategy_in_the_Arctic.pdf) and Stephen J. Blank, *Russia in the Arctic* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, July 2011), 83–84, <https://icefloe.net/files/RussiaInTheArctic-SBlank-pub1073.pdf>.

<sup>243</sup> Laruelle, "Russia's Arctic Policy," 5–6.

The United States Office of Naval Intelligence has assessed the situation and expects to observe an increased Russian emphasis on its periphery in the Arctic as an extension of its alleged continental shelf rights and economic protectionary measures (Figure 6).<sup>244</sup>

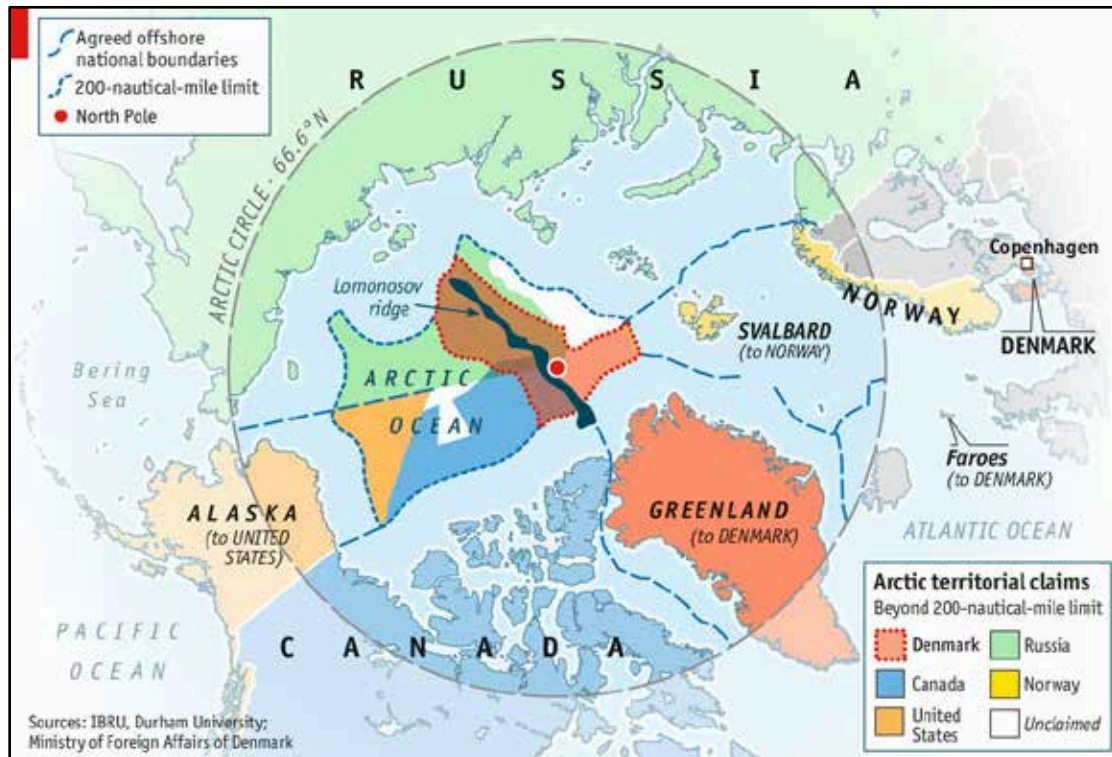


Figure 6. Arctic Territorial Claims<sup>245</sup>

## 1. The RFN and the Arctic Zone

The Arctic is especially significant when discussing the RFN. The Arctic is the home to Russia's strategic nuclear naval forces. Russian military presence and strategy in the Arctic can be summed up in three main goals: asserting Russian sovereignty in the region; protecting Russia's economic interests in the High North; and demonstrating that Russia remains a great power with world-class military capabilities. The RFN's role in this

<sup>244</sup> Office of Naval Intelligence, *The Russian Navy: A Historic Transition* (Washington, DC: Office of Naval Intelligence, December 2015), 5.

<sup>245</sup> Source: "The Arctic Is Now a Frozen Conflict," *The Economist*, December 17, 2014, <https://www.economist.com/international/2014/12/17/frozen-conflict>.

demonstrative power is with its strategic nuclear submarines and naval patrols and exercises.<sup>246</sup> In 2008, the RFN expanded their operations in the Arctic by resuming surface combatant presence and increasing the operational radius of the Northern Fleet submarines.<sup>247</sup> The Northern Fleet is responsible for defending the Arctic region and is the primary strategic deterrence fleet with four SSGNs and eight SSBNs; the Northern Fleet is the heart of Russian bastion layered defense.<sup>248</sup> James Lacey, writing in *War on the Rocks*, contends that Russian bastions are now being employed for operational/strategic offensive objectives, under the protection of long-range precision weapons. The “anti-access/area denial capabilities are increasingly employed to support wider operational and strategic thinking...to tilt regional balances of power and extend their global influence.”<sup>249</sup> Russia also has growing fears of encirclement and containment and their strategy in the Arctic links to Russia’s overall national security. The Russian military’s primary goals are to protect and defend Russia’s national frontiers in the Arctic zone and to maintain the lethality of the Russian Federation’s armed forces in the region.<sup>250</sup> This warning, while not a declaration of conflict, does indicate a Russian willingness to use military intimidation or threat of force which, inherently, increases tension and the risk of miscalculation.

Yet, in contrast with the Soviet-era confrontational posture in the Arctic, the current guiding documents seem to favor cooperation and coordination, at least in documentation, but not necessarily practice. The *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation* states that the Arctic is a region where Russia must “promote peace, stability and constructive international cooperation” but will also “be firm in countering any attempts to introduce

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<sup>246</sup> Lassi Heininen, Alexander Sergunin, and Gleb Yarovoy, *Russian Strategies in the Arctic: Avoiding a New Cold War* (Moscow, Russia: Valdai Discussion Club, September 2014), 79, <https://valdaiclub.com/files/11482/>.

<sup>247</sup> Heininen, et. al., *Russian Strategies in the Arctic*, 81.

<sup>248</sup> “Russian Navy to Get Seven Advanced Nuclear Submarines by 2021,” TASS, last updated May 24, 2017, <http://tass.com/defense/947326>.

<sup>249</sup> James Lacey, “Battle of the Bastions,” *War on the Rocks*, last updated January 9, 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/01/battle-of-the-bastions/>.

<sup>250</sup> Jørgen Staun, *Russia’s Strategy in the Arctic*, 18–21.

elements of political or military confrontation in the Arctic.”<sup>251</sup> Russia’s recent actions in the Arctic demonstrate their intended goals, but regarding cooperation, “Moscow is acting defensively during a time of heightened tensions with neighboring countries and as a result, is building its security in the region.”<sup>252</sup>

Further supporting this contradiction in policy versus military activity is the 2014 Russian Military of Defense, proclamation stating that Russia intends on stationing forces, on a permanent basis, along its entire Arctic coast.<sup>253</sup> Katarzyna Zysk of the Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies highlighted that, contrary to a rather cooperation-focused Arctic policy, Russia has expanded its Arctic military infrastructure, added modernized weapons systems, and used Arctic military exercises and military capabilities displays to further communicate their power and determination to influence any potential adversarial forces or nations and to strengthen Russian deterrence.<sup>254</sup> While the BSF is currently the most modernized RFN fleet, the Northern Fleet, based in the Arctic, is from where Russia’s strategic nuclear submarine forces operate and deploy, and great efforts have been made to modernize and develop the Northern Fleet platforms, infrastructure, and command and control to an ensure expedient retaliatory capability. The Arctic must remain absolutely safe to ensure Russian survivability of its nuclear deterrence forces.<sup>255</sup> Russia’s efforts in the Arctic have galvanized in a zero-sum threat perception of the area. Russia has a perception that they could face regional symmetric and asymmetric security challenges due to the international and economic interest in the Arctic.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*, (Moscow, Russia: The Kremlin, 2016), [http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign\\_policy/official\\_documents/-/asset\\_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/2542248](http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/2542248).

<sup>252</sup> Pavel Devyatkin, “Russia and the Arctic,” in *Russian Strategic Intentions: A Strategic Multilayer Assessment White Paper*, ed. Nicole Peterson (Boston, MA: NSI, Inc., May 2019), 85, <https://nsiteam.com/sma-white-paper-russian-strategic-intentions/>.

<sup>253</sup> Katarzyna Zysk, *Russia’s Military Build-Up in the Arctic: to What End?* IOP-2020-U-027998-Final (Arlington, VA: CAN, Corp., September 2020), 2, [https://www.cna.org/CNA\\_files/PDF/IOP-2020-U-027998-Final.pdf](https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/IOP-2020-U-027998-Final.pdf).

<sup>254</sup> Zysk, 2–4.

<sup>255</sup> Zysk, 4–5.

<sup>256</sup> Zysk, 6.

## 2. RFN Northern Fleet Bastion Defense

Russia has been observed to be returning to its Cold War tactics across its fleets, specifically the concept of Bastion Defense (also referred to as A2/AD bubble in previous sections), in which Russia secures its defined strategic territory and ensures its own freedom of operation.<sup>257</sup> The concept of the Bastion Defense was re-introduced in the 1990s with the aim of ensuring submarine survivability so they (the submarines) could provide strategic operations; this concept also concentrated the large part of the sea-based force with the Northern Fleet and centers on defending sea-based nuclear assets.<sup>258</sup>

The Bastion concept seeks to ensure both the security of the Kola Peninsula and access of the Northern Fleet to the North Atlantic and beyond. It makes the distinction between ‘inner defence’ (sic), which relates to ambition of control, and ‘outer defence’ (sic), for ambition of denial. The concept also involves creating space for sea control and sea denial activities.”<sup>259</sup> “The ‘bastion’ concept—strategic submarines equipped with ballistic nuclear missiles stationed in northern waters, protected by a defensive perimeter stretching to the Greenland, Iceland and United Kingdom (GIUK) gap [Figures 7 and 8].<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> Matthew Melino and Heather A. Conley, *The Ice Curtain: Russia’s Arctic Military Presence* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2020), <https://www.csis.org/features/ice-curtain-russias-arctic-military-presence>.

<sup>258</sup> Mathieu Boulègue, *Russia’s Military Posture in the Arctic: Managing Hard Power in a ‘Low Tension’ Environment* (London, England: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, The Chatham House, June 2019), 5–6, [https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2019-06-28-Russia-Military-Arctic\\_0.pdf](https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2019-06-28-Russia-Military-Arctic_0.pdf).

<sup>259</sup> Mathieu Boulègue, *Russia’s Military Posture in the Arctic*, 7.

<sup>260</sup> Rolf Tamnes, “The Significance of the North Atlantic and the Norwegian Distribution,” in *NATO and the North Atlantic: Revitalising Collective Defence*, ed. John Andreas Olsen (London, England: Routledge Publishing, 2017), 9, <https://doi-org.libproxy.nps.edu/10.4324/9781351025027>.



Figure 7. The Reach of Russia's Bastion Defense Concept<sup>261</sup>

<sup>261</sup> Source: Rolf Tamnes, "The Significance of the North Atlantic and the Norwegian Distribution," 22.

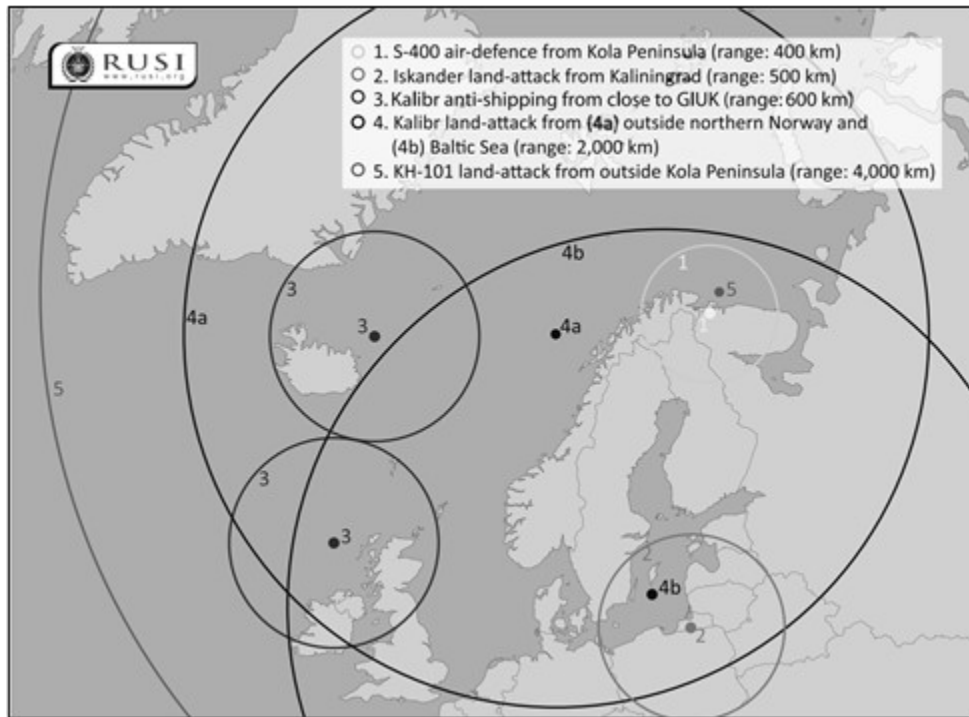


Figure 8. The Reach of Russia's Bastion Defense Concept: Missiles Systems – Position and Range<sup>262</sup>

As highlighted by Michael Melino and Heather A. Conley, Russia's military posture in the Arctic emphasizes early warning and defense for its air and maritime forces to the extent that Russia has established a new strategic command for the Arctic zone underneath the Northern Fleet, refurbished and/or reopened fifty previously closed Soviet military ports in the Arctic, and deployed to the region for exercises and training, as follows:<sup>263</sup>

- **Vostok-18 (September 2018):** Conducted in eastern Russia and parts of the Bering Sea. It involved 300,000 troops; the largest military exercise conducted by Russia since 1981.

<sup>262</sup> Source: Rolf Tamnes, "The Significance of the North Atlantic and the Norwegian Distribution," 23.

<sup>263</sup> Melino and Conley, The Ice Curtain: Russia's Arctic Military Presence.

- **Ocean Shield Exercise (August 2019):** Russia exercised its Bastion Defense capabilities—the Northern Fleet entered the Northern Sea and engaged in live-fire demonstrations in the Norwegian Sea. These efforts demonstrate a clear forward line of defense to secure the GIUK-N gap and block the English Channel. The purpose of these exercises is to display Russia’s ability to project power beyond its Arctic waters and assert maritime control.
- **Tsentr-19 (September 2019):** The Northern Fleet conducted several exercises in the Arctic which incorporated newly designed Arctic military equipment. Significant military drills also took place between the Arctic archipelagos of Novaya Zemlya and the New Siberian Islands.
- **Grom-19 (October 2019):** Tested Russia’s strategic nuclear triad—including ten Russian submarines (8x were nuclear-powered) patrolling the GIUK gap—involved the launching of two nuclear warheads in the Barents Sea and several other ballistic missiles.<sup>264</sup>

## E. RUSSIA AND THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

Regarding Russian naval activity in the Atlantic Ocean, the U.S. Department of Defense recently released information depicting an increase in Russian naval operations in the vicinity of the United States (Figure 9).<sup>265</sup> Commander, United States Second Fleet, Vice Admiral Andrew Lewis, during a February 4, 2020 presentation at the U.S. Naval Institute and Center for Strategic and International Studies, stated that the United States Navy “no longer considers the East Coast of the United States as an uncontested area or an automatic safe haven for its ships and submarines...we have seen an ever-increasing number of Russian submarines deployed in the Atlantic, and these submarines are more capable than ever, deploying for longer periods of time, with more lethal weapons

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<sup>264</sup> Melino and Conley, *The Ice Curtain: Russia’s Arctic Military Presence*.

<sup>265</sup> Joseph Trevithick, “New Pentagon Map Shows Huge Scale of Worrisome Russian and Chinese Naval Operations,” *The War Zone*, last updated February 10, 2020, <https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/32145/new-pentagon-map-shows-huge-scale-of-worrisome-russian-and-chinese-naval-operations>.

systems.”<sup>266</sup> The deployments of advanced Russian submarines and intelligence collection ships from Russia’s Northern Fleet point to Russian subversive efforts aim to weaken transatlantic unity and emphasize the scope (and not necessarily the scale) of RFN operations.<sup>267</sup> That is to say, the nature of these operations—such as RFN underwater activity near undersea cables—is more alarming than the increase in the number of deployed platforms and patrols. As part of the naval component of strategic deterrence, the plan is to increase patrols of Kalibr-capable platforms in support of the Kremlin’s interests or the defense of its foreign partners. As argued by Joseph Trevithick, an extension of the model Russia as applied in Syria could be extended to other strategically important areas.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> The observed RFN submarine activity is more than the U.S. has seen in 25 years, matching or exceeding Cold War level. Joseph Trevithick, “Admiral Warns East Coast Is No Longer A ‘Safe Haven’ Thanks to Russian Subs,” The War Zone, last updated February 4, 2020, <https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/32087/admiral-warns-americas-east-coast-is-no-longer-a-safe-haven-thanks-to-russian-subs>.

<sup>267</sup> Joseph Trevithick, “The Scope, Not the Scale of Russian and Chinese Naval Ops in the Atlantic is Worrisome,” The War Zone, last updated August 10, 2018, <https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/22794/the-scope-not-the-scale-of-russian-and-chinese-naval-ops-in-the-atlantic-is-worrisome>.

<sup>268</sup> Joseph, Trevithick, “The Scope, Not the Scale of Russian and Chinese Naval Ops in the Atlantic is Worrisome.”

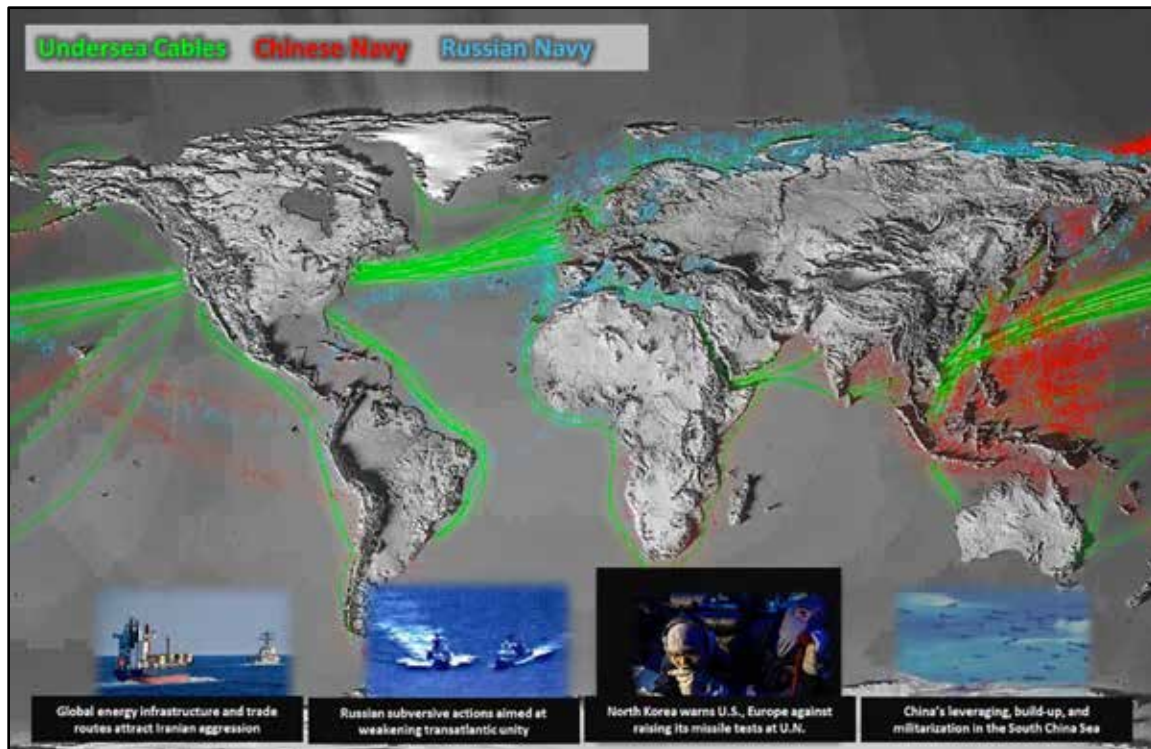


Figure 9. Russian and Chinese Naval Activity (with Locations of Major Undersea Cables)<sup>269</sup>

For the prospect of future operations, according to *The Russian Way of Warfare*, the blue-water capable submarines and surface vessels, which regularly conduct out-of-area operations, are limited in number, and therefore focus their operations on strategically valuable areas in the Arctic, parts of the Atlantic, the eastern Mediterranean, and the Black Sea, but currently are assessed to serve in a supporting role in a conventional conflict (Figure 10).<sup>270</sup> While influenced by Soviet military ancestry, Russia can no longer rely on the massive manpower advantages it previously enjoyed. Yet, as contended, Russia's leaders have demonstrated increasingly conventional options, that even though delayed in

<sup>269</sup> Source: Joseph Trevithick, "New Pentagon Map Shows Huge Scale of Worrisome Russian and Chinese Naval Operations."

<sup>270</sup> Scott Boston and Dara Massicot, *The Russian Way of Warfare: A Primer*, RAND\_PE231 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017), 8, [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE200/PE231/RAND\\_PE231.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE200/PE231/RAND_PE231.pdf).

construction, evidence the challenges for potential adversaries in an evolving and dynamic operational environment.<sup>271</sup>



Figure 10. Russian KALIBR (SS-N-30A SAGARIS) Cruise Missile Threat to U.S. East Coast<sup>272</sup>

<sup>271</sup> Boston and Massicot, *The Russian Way of Warfare*, 12.

<sup>272</sup> Source: “SS-N-30A (3M-14 Kalibr),” Missile Threat CSIS Missile Defense Project, accessed on October 1, 2020, <https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/ss-n-30a/>.

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## **V. CONCLUSION: ANALYSIS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION NAVY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF STRATEGIC DETERRENCE AND AN OUTLOOK ON FUTURE RUSSIAN NAVAL OPERATIONS AND ADVANCEMENT**

This study has discussed the evolution of Russia's approach to and definition of strategic deterrence and how the current definition has shaped Russia's principal security, military, maritime, and naval policies and doctrines. This thesis has also identified how Russia's current approach to strategic deterrence has directed naval modernization efforts and operations. This chapter, therefore, will focus on analyzing the effectiveness of the RFN as an instrument of strategic deterrence based on the standards set forth by the *Russian Naval Policy* and offer an outlook for the RFN.

The *Russian Naval Policy* has specific guidance on the use of the RFN as an effective instrument of strategic deterrence, including preventing global strike:

1. Maintaining operational and combat capabilities of the Navy at a level that secures for it one of the leading positions in the world.
2. Development and maintenance of the naval capability to strike ground targets of a potential enemy with conventional as well as nuclear weapons.
3. Balanced development of the Navy to prevent exclusive superiority of the U.S. Navy and naval forces of other leading maritime powers over it.
4. Ensuring continued presence of naval forces (troops) in strategically important maritime regions of the world's ocean.

5. Establishing a modern border protection security system of the Russian Federation, ensuring a favorable environment in the maritime space and beyond.<sup>273</sup>

It is these standards from which this thesis will evaluate the effectiveness of the RFN in its primary mission of strategic deterrence. This thesis offers the following conclusions regarding the RFN: (1) The RFN is unable to maintain the operational and combat capabilities to secure it a position as a naval leader in the world; (2) while the RFN has progressed in the development of naval weapons to strike ground targets, Russia does not have the necessary precision-strike (conventional and nuclear) capabilities to counter the full range of U.S./Western targets; (3) Russia has been unable to balance RFN development to prevent U.S. naval superiority; however, the RFN has been able to quickly field new and/or modernized naval platforms and weapons to strategic areas in which the United States has maintain historic naval superiority; (4) without quantifying a “continued presence of naval forces in strategically important maritime regions,” the RFN has been able to have a minimal but persistent presence in strategic (to Russia) maritime regions, but not so in the world’s oceans; (5) while Russian leaders have not qualified precisely what kind of modern border protection security system is necessary to ensure a favorable environment in the maritime space and beyond, analysis of RF political directives and RFN

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<sup>273</sup> The Kremlin, *Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 11. When using the RFN as an instrument of strategic deterrence, the primary objectives of how the RFN will achieve strategic deterrence are: “(1) continuous assessment and forecasting of the military-political situation on the World Ocean at the global and regional levels; (2) maintaining strategic stability on the World Ocean; (3) maintaining mission readiness of naval capabilities (forces) to deploy to strategically important areas of the World Ocean; (4) assurance of the capability of Navy ships to employ weapons, including long-range high-precision weapons, against any potential adversary; (5) execution of inter-theater maneuvers, as well as regular under-ice navigation of Navy nuclear submarines; (6) improvement of operational and combat capabilities of the Black Sea Fleet by expanding concentration of joint capabilities (troops) on the territory of the Crimean Peninsula; (7) securing the permanent naval presence of the Russian Federation in the Mediterranean Sea and other strategically important areas of the World Ocean, including in the areas of vital sea lines of communication; (8) development of and support for operation of the unified state information system covering underwater and surface situations; (9) strengthening cooperation with foreign states in the field of international safety and security on the World Ocean; as well as development of military cooperation with them on the basis of common interests of strengthening international security according to the norms of international law; (10) conclusion and implementation of international treaties of the Russian Federation aimed at strengthening mutual trust in the field of naval operations; (11) participation as a branch of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in international peacekeeping operations, including under the auspices of the United Nations and in cooperation with international organizations” (*Fundamentals of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of Naval Operations for the Period Until 2030*, 12–13).

activities in certain maritime areas confirm that Russia has not been able to establish the necessary border protection system favorable to Russia.

The RFN is unable to maintain the operational and combat capabilities to secure it a position naval leader in the world and has not been able to balance RFN development to prevent U.S. naval superiority. Liv Karin Parnemo, a senior advisor to the Norwegian Ministry of Defense, argued in 2019 that Moscow's grand naval ambitions exist only in doctrine and policies, and the reality is that the RFN has been developed predominantly as a coastal defense force.<sup>274</sup> This characterization is taking into account and recognizing that the RFN has indeed increased its presence and operations in areas formerly dominated by the U.S. and NATO naval forces (i.e., Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea) but, regardless of increase in and expansion of naval activity, Russia is still far from achieving its desired naval superiority. According to Parnemo and further emphasized by Richard Connolly, the primary security documents/doctrines/policies discussed in this thesis serve the vital function of communicating the Russian narrative of emphasizing and identifying the central threat to Russia (U.S. and NATO) while also signaling Russia's strength to domestic and international audiences.<sup>275</sup> The best way to analyze RFN effectiveness, therefore, is to evaluate the official documents against observed operations and allocation of naval assets and resources.<sup>276</sup>

Based on both GPV-2020 production and assessed projections of GPV-2027, Russian leadership has shown favor to the 'dual-fleet' concept for the RFN and are prioritizing vessels for coastal-defense/green water operations. This prioritization, however, was not the ambition of Russian leaders. The maritime and naval policies imply, and the Russian definition of strategic deterrence asserts, that all RFN fleets should possess blue-water/open-ocean capabilities, but these are not the types of fleets the RFN is putting

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<sup>274</sup> Liv Karen Parnemo, "Russia's Naval Development – Grand Ambitions and Tactical Pragmatism," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 32, no. 1 (January 2019): 41, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2019.1552678> and Richard Connolly, *Towards a Dual Fleet*, 7–8.

<sup>275</sup> Parnemo, 49.

<sup>276</sup> Parnemo, 49.

to sea.<sup>277</sup> The Russian leadership had aspirations, by 2020, to fulfill its maritime strategy by having a mix of *Borei*- and *Yasen*-class SSNs and *Lada*-class SSs to be deployed alongside *Buyan-M*- and *Steregushchy*-class FFCs, *Admiral Gorshkov*- and *Admiral Grigorovich*-class FFGs, and *Lider*-class destroyers.<sup>278</sup> However, as of April 2020, Russia has abandoned the *Lider*-class destroyer (Project 23560) and the expanded *Admiral Gorshkov*-class (Project 22350) production.<sup>279</sup> This serves as an example that supports the scholarly consensus that Russia's economic slowdown and enforced fiscal constraints have impacted, and will continue to impact, the ability of Russia to build quality platforms on time and within budget.<sup>280</sup> Russia's shipbuilding infrastructure is better suited to constructing smaller ships, and as Russian leaders are forced to focus on smaller ships with universal weapons systems (Kalibr), RFN operations will remain tailored to green-water and littoral operations.<sup>281</sup>

A critical part of Putin's domestic success is dependence on a narrative of military strength, including being a great naval power to counter the USN and NATO naval forces.<sup>282</sup> To off-set the imbalance of blue-water capabilities against the United States, the RFN will continue to rely on its Northern Fleet-based SSBN and SSGN submarines equipped with their most advanced missiles in the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans. This is especially true considering that Russia's newest Kalibr missiles are purported to have longer ranges, and therefore, enable the RFN to target and threaten USN surface vessels. Parnemo also highlights that RFN submarines and their long-range missiles accomplish the

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<sup>277</sup> Richard Connolly, *Economic and Technological Constraints on Russia's Naval Ambitions*, FOI Memo 5851 (Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish Defense Research Agency, November 2016), 1, [https://www.foi.se/download/18.7fd35d7f166c56ebe0bad3c/1542369056226/RUFS-36\\_Economic-and-technological-constraints-on-Russias-naval-ambitions\\_FOI-Memo-5851.pdf](https://www.foi.se/download/18.7fd35d7f166c56ebe0bad3c/1542369056226/RUFS-36_Economic-and-technological-constraints-on-Russias-naval-ambitions_FOI-Memo-5851.pdf).

<sup>278</sup> Connolly, *Economic and Technological Constraints of Russia's Naval Ambitions*, 1.

<sup>279</sup> Joseph Trevithick, "Russia Has Abandoned Its Massive Nuclear Destroyer and Supersized Frigate Programs," *The War Zone*, last updated April 21, 2020, <https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/33099/russia-has-abandoned-its-massive-nuclear-destroyer-and-supersized-frigate-programs>.

<sup>280</sup> Connolly, *Economic and Technological Constraints of Russia's Naval Ambitions*, 2 and Connolly, *Towards a Dual Fleet*, 7–11.

<sup>281</sup> Connolly, *Economic and Technological Constraints of Russia's Naval Ambitions*, 2.

<sup>282</sup> Parnemo, 52.

layered-defense, A2/AD, deterrence, and power projection capabilities that minimize Russia's actual need for a blue-water navy while providing, to a degree, the domestic message of the RFN as a naval power.<sup>283</sup> Yet, the economic constraints and corrupt shipbuilding industry will continue to plague Russia, which means that sustained naval operations beyond Russia's shores and contiguous water spaces, will not be something the RFN can achieve or even aspire to.<sup>284</sup>

Regarding weapons system development and advanced weapons inventory, Russia does not have the necessary precision-strike (conventional and nuclear) capabilities to counter the full range of U.S./Western targets.<sup>285</sup> However, as highlighted by Center for Naval Analysis (CNA) senior researcher, Michael Kofman and research analyst Anya Loukianova Fink, Russia's current understanding of strategic deterrence is crafted first on "coercive power of military measures (forceful in character)."<sup>286</sup> They further elaborate that Russia conducts strategic deterrence measures continuously, from periods of peace and in wartime, and will use designated strikes to deter direct aggression or military threats to Russian interests, using conventional weapons up to the level of regional warfare, but relying on NNSW in large-scale wars.<sup>287</sup> To this measure then, the RFN has been able to establish naval capability to strike ground targets of a potential enemy with conventional as well as nuclear weapons, as intended, but only regionally. It is important to note that

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<sup>283</sup> Parnemo, 52.

<sup>284</sup> Connolly, Economic and Technological Constraints of Russia's Naval Ambitions, 2.

<sup>285</sup> Anya Luukianova Fink, "The Evolving Russian Concept of Strategic Deterrence: Risks and Responses," *Arms Control Today* 47, no. 6 (July/August 2017): 17, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/90011081>.

<sup>286</sup> Michael Kofman and Anya Loukianova Fink, "Escalation Management and Nuclear Employment in Russian Military Strategy," War on the Rocks, last modified June 23, 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/06/escalation-management-and-nuclear-employment-in-russian-military-strategy/> and Dave Johnson, *Russia's Conventional Precision Strike Capabilities, Regional Crises, and Nuclear Thresholds*, (Livermore, CA: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Center for Global Security Research, February 2018), 39, <https://cgsr.llnl.gov/content/assets/docs/Precision-Strike-Capabilities-report-v3-7.pdf>.

<sup>287</sup> Kofman and Fink, "Escalation Management and Nuclear Employment in Russian Military Strategy." A 2019 arsenal assessment of RFN non-strategic warheads estimates that Russia's inventory of non-strategic LACM and ASCM warheads to be approximately 820 (Jacob Cohn, Adam Lemon, and Evan Braden Montgomery, *Assessing the Arsenal: Past, Present, and Future Capabilities* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2019), 19, [https://csbaonline.org/uploads/documents/Assessing\\_Web\\_FINAL.pdf](https://csbaonline.org/uploads/documents/Assessing_Web_FINAL.pdf).)

Russia's primary naval weapons compliment the fleet they are putting to sea; smaller vessels tailored for regional, green water operations equipped with weapons intended for regional conflicts (Table 10). The prioritization and proliferation of small platforms equipped with Kalibr missiles, while capable, have decreased the range of actions available for the RFN.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Igor Delanoe, *Russia's Black Sea Fleet: Toward a Multiregional Force*, IOP-2019-U-020190-Final (Arlington, VA: CNA, Corp., June 2019), 22, [https://www.cna.org/CNA\\_files/PDF/IOP-2019-U-020190-Final.pdf](https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/IOP-2019-U-020190-Final.pdf).

Table 10. A Threshold Model of the Deterrence Ladder<sup>289</sup>

| Phase of Deterrence              | Deterrent Activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Scale of Armed Conflict |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Demonstration Phase              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Increase of combat readiness of the armed forces</li> <li>* Threat to inflict damage on vitally important targets with nonnuclear means</li> <li>* Conduct of demonstration tests of newest weapons systems</li> <li>* Increase of non-forceful measures of political, economic, information nature</li> <li>* Monitoring of the global military-political environment</li> </ul> | Military Threat         |
|                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Single use of precision strike on certain types of targets</li> <li>* Threats to inflict damage on vitally important objects with nonnuclear means and nuclear weapons</li> <li>* Demonstration actions by the armed forces</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                            | Threatened Period       |
| Adequate Damage Infliction Phase | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Grouped use of precision strike to inflict damage on targets on adversary territory</li> <li>* Actions by general purpose forces</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Local War               |
|                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Mass use of precision strike</li> <li>* Single and/or grouped use of NSNW on adversary forces</li> <li>* Demonstration use of nuclear weapons by SNF or NSNW</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Regional War            |
|                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Mass use of NSNW on adversary forces</li> <li>* Single and/or grouped use of nuclear weapons of Strategic Nuclear Forces and/or NSNW on military-economic targets of the adversary</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                     | Large-Scale War         |
| Retaliation Phase                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Mass use of SNF and NSNW on military-economic targets of the adversary</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Nuclear War             |

<sup>289</sup> Source: Michael Kofman, Anya Fink, and Jeffrey Edmonds, *Russian Strategy for Escalation Management: Evolution of Key Concepts*, DRM-2019-U-022455-1Rev (Arlington, VA: CNA, Corp., April 2020), 22, [https://www.cna.org/CNA\\_files/PDF/DRM-2019-U-022455-1Rev.pdf](https://www.cna.org/CNA_files/PDF/DRM-2019-U-022455-1Rev.pdf). “A translation of a Russian perspective around 2010 on an intrawar “deterrence ladder,” which aligns the ways and means envisioned for managing escalation within the scale of armed conflict where they are likely to be employed.

In conclusion, the RFN is not currently in a position, nor are they expected to be in the position, to fully implement its prescribed *Naval Policy*. Given the recent cancellations of the RFN's large surface combatant projects and growing fiscal uncertainty, RFN will prioritize small vessel construction, modernize its older platforms, and ensure strategic survivability of its crucial submarine force. While the RFN has been unable to attain the blue-water surface vessels it desires and that are needed for open ocean conflict, the RFN submarine force still remains a credible threat to USN operations and the U.S. homeland. The RFN will continue to leverage its advanced missile capabilities to deter adversary forces and balance U.S./NATO naval forces in key regional areas. The RFN can be expected to continue to train and develop tactical proficiency in contested areas which Russia views strategically important. Moreover, fleet and military district level exercises will continue to test RFN responses and reactions to a credible adversary navy, such as the U.S., NATO naval groups, and even China. The RFN will not achieve the naval superiority it desires, but it should be considered an able and determined threat in areas formerly dominated by USN forces and areas for which Russia lays strategic, military, and economic claim.

## APPENDIX. RUSSIAN NAVAL FLEET/FLOTILLA COMPOSITION<sup>290</sup>

Table 11. Northern Fleet Surface Vessels

| Type | Name                  | NATO Name         | Year Commissioned |
|------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| CV   | Admiral Kuznetzov***  | Admiral Kuznetzov | 1990              |
| CGN  | Admiral Nakhimov***   | Kirov             | 1988              |
| CGN  | Pyotr Velikiy         | Kirov             | 1998              |
| CG   | Marshal Ustinov       | Slava             | 1986              |
| DDGS | Admiral Kulakov       | Udaloy I          | 1981 (2010*)      |
| DDGS | Sevmorsk              | Udaloy I          | 1987              |
| DDGS | Admiral Levchenko     | Udaloy I          | 1988              |
| DDGS | Admiral Kharlamov***  | Udaloy I          | 1989              |
| DDGS | Admiral Chabanenko*** | Udaloy II         | 1999              |
| DDG  | Admiral Ushakov       | Sovremennyy       | 1993              |
| FFG  | Gorshkov**            | Gorshkov          | 2018              |
| PGG  | Aysberg               | Nanuchka III      | 1979              |
| PGG  | Rassvet               | Nanuchka III      | 1988              |
| FSS  | Brest                 | Grisha III        | 1988              |
| FSS  | Yunga                 | Grisha III        | 1989              |
| FSS  | Nar`yan-Mar           | Grisha III        | 1990              |
| FSS  | Onega                 | Grisha III        | 1990              |
| FSS  | Monchegorsk           | Grisha III        | 1993              |
| FSS  | Snezhnogorsk          | Grisha III        | 1994              |
| LST  | Iven Gren             | Iven Gren         | 2018              |
| LST  | Olenegorskiy gornyyak | Ropucha           | 1976              |
| LST  | Kondopoga             | Ropucha           | 1976              |
| LST  | Alexandr Otrakovsky   | Ropucha           | 1978              |
| LST  | Gerogiy Pobedonosets  | Ropucha II        | 1985              |

\*Year Upgraded

\*\*Kalibr-Missile Capable

\*\*\*Vessel in modification layup or awaiting decommission

<sup>290</sup> Tables in this appendix are adapted from ais.org; russianships.info (updated May 21, 2020), and nti.org.

Table 12. Northern Fleet Submarines

| Type | Name                 | NATO Name  | Year Commissioned |
|------|----------------------|------------|-------------------|
| SSBN | Dmitriy Donskoy      | Typhoon    | 1981              |
| SSBN | Dolgorukiy (Borei)   | Dolgorukiy | 2012              |
| SSBN | Verkhoturye          | Delta IV   | 1984              |
| SSBN | Ekaterinburg         | Delta IV   | 1985              |
| SSBN | Tula                 | Delta IV   | 1987              |
| SSBN | Bryansk***           | Delta IV   | 1988              |
| SSBN | Kareliya             | Delta IV   | 1989              |
| SSBN | Novomoskovsk         | Delta IV   | 1990              |
| SSGN | Voronezh             | Oscar II   | 1989              |
| SSGN | Smolensk             | Oscar II   | 1990              |
| SSGN | Orel                 | Oscar II   | 1992              |
| SSGN | Severodvinsk (Yasen) | Graney     | 2013              |
| SSN  | Pantera              | Akula I    | 1990              |
| SSN  | Volk                 | Akula I    | 1991 (2017*)      |
| SSN  | Leopard***           | Akula I    | 1992 (2018*)      |
| SSN  | Tigr**               | Akula I    | 1993 (~2023*)     |
| SSN  | Vepr**/***           | Akula II   | 1995 (~2020*)     |
| SSN  | Gepard               | Akula II   | 2001              |
| SSN  | Karp***              | Sierra I   | 1984              |
| SSN  | Kostroma             | Sierra I   | 1987              |
| SSN  | Nizhniy Novgorod     | Sierra II  | 1990              |
| SSN  | Pskov                | Sierra II  | 1993              |
| SSN  | Obninsk              | Victor III | 1990              |
| SSN  | Daniil Moskovskiy    | Victor III | 1990              |
| SSN  | Tambov***            | Victor III | 1992              |
| SSA  | Sarov                | Sarov      | 2008              |
| SS   | St. Petersburg       | Lada       | 2010              |
| SS   | Yaroslavl'***        | Kilo       | 1988              |
| SS   | Vladikavkaz          | Kilo       | 1990              |
| SS   | Magnitogorsk         | Kilo       | 1990              |
| SS   | Lipetsk              | Kilo       | 1991              |
| SS   | Kaluga               | Kilo       | 1989              |

\*Year Upgraded

\*\*Kalibr-Missile Capable

\*\*\*Vessel in modification layup or awaiting decommission

Table 13. Black Sea Fleet Surface Vessels

| Type | Name                  | NATO Name       | Year Commissioned |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| CG   | Moskva                | Slava           | 1982              |
| FFG  | Smetlivy              | Kashin          | 1969              |
| FFG  | Ladny                 | Krivak I        | 1980              |
| FFG  | Pytlivy               | Krivak II       | 1981              |
| FFG  | Admiral Grigorovich** | Grigorovich     | 2016              |
| FFG  | Admiral Essen**       | Grigorovich     | 2016              |
| FFG  | Admiral Makarov**     | Grigorovich     | 2017              |
| FSS  | Alexandrovets         | Grisha I        | 1982              |
| FSS  | Muromets              | Grisha III      | 1982              |
| FSS  | Suzdalets             | Grisha III      | 1983              |
| FSS  | Kasimov               | Grisha III      | 1986              |
| FSS  | Eysk                  | Grisha III      | 1989              |
| FSS  | Povorino              | Grisha III      | 1989              |
| LST  | Saratov               | Alligator       | 1966              |
| LST  | Orsk                  | Alligator       | 1968              |
| LST  | Nikolay Filchenkov    | Alligator       | 1975              |
| LST  | Novocherkassk         | Ropucha I       | 1987              |
| LST  | Yamal***              | Ropucha I       | 1988              |
| LST  | Tsezar Kunikov        | Ropucha I       | 1986              |
| LST  | Azov                  | Ropucha II      | 1990              |
| PGG  | Burya                 | Tarantul III    | 1987              |
| PGG  | Shuya                 | Tarantul II Mod | 1985              |
| PGG  | Veter                 | Tarantul III    | 1990              |
| PGG  | Naberezhnye Chelny    | Tarantul III    | 1989              |
| PGG  | Ivanovets             | Tarantul III    | 1989              |
| PGG  | Ingushetiya**         | Sviyazhsk       | 2019              |
| PGG  | Vyshniy Volochek**    | Sviyazhsk       | 2018              |
| PGG  | Orehovo-Zuevo**       | Sviyazhsk       | 2018              |
| PGG  | Mirazh                | Nanuchka III    | 1986              |

\*Year Upgraded

\*\*Kalibr-Missile Capable

\*\*\*Vessel in modification layup or awaiting decommission

Table 14. Black Sea Fleet Submarines

| Type | Name               | NATO Name     | Year Commissioned |
|------|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| SS   | Alrosa***          | Kilo          | 1990              |
| SS   | Novorossiysk**     | Improved Kilo | 2014              |
| SS   | Rostov-on-Don**    | Improved Kilo | 2014              |
| SS   | Stary Oskol**      | Improved Kilo | 2015              |
| SS   | Krasnodar**        | Improved Kilo | 2015              |
| SS   | Velikiy Novgorod** | Improved Kilo | 2016              |
| SS   | Kolpino**          | Improved Kilo | 2016              |

\*Year Upgraded

\*\*Kalibr-Missile Capable

\*\*\*Vessel in modification layup or awaiting decommission

Table 15. Baltic Sea Fleet Surface Vessels

| Type | Name               | NATO Name    | Year Commissioned |
|------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| DDG  | Nastoychivyy       | Sovremenny   | 1992              |
| FFC  | Steregushchy       | Steregushchy | 2007              |
| FFC  | Soobrazitelnyy     | Steregushchy | 2011              |
| FFC  | Boykiy             | Steregushchy | 2013              |
| FFC  | Stoykiy            | Steregushchy | 2014              |
| FFG  | Neustrashimy       | Neustrashimy | 1990              |
| FFG  | Yaroslav Mudry***  | Neustrashimy | 2009              |
| FFS  | MPK-192            | Parchim      | 1986              |
| FFS  | Kazanets           | Parchim      | 1987              |
| FFS  | Zelenodolsk        | Parchim      | 1987              |
| FFS  | Aleksin***         | Parchim      | 1989              |
| FFS  | Kabardino-Balkaria | Parchim      | 1989              |
| FFS  | Kalmykiya          | Parchim      | 1990              |
| PGG  | Sovetsk**          | Karakut      | 2018              |
| PGG  | Mytishi**          | Karakut      | 2018              |
| PGG  | Zyb`               | Nanuchka III | 1989              |
| PGG  | Geyzer             | Nanuchka III | 1989              |
| PGG  | Passat             | Nanuchka III | 1990              |
| PGG  | Liven`             | Nanuchka III | 1991              |
| PGG  | Zeleny Dol         | Buyan-M      | 2015              |
| PGG  | Serpukhov          | Buyan-M      | 2015              |
| PGM  | Kuznetsk           | Tarantul     | 1985              |
| PGM  | R-257              | Tarantul     | 1986              |
| PGM  | Zarechny           | Tarantul     | 1989              |
| PGM  | Dimitrovograd      | Tarantul     | 1991              |
| PGM  | Morshansk          | Tarantul     | 1992              |
| PGM  | Chuvashiya         | Tarantul     | 2000              |
| LST  | Minsk              | Ropucha II   | 1983              |
| LST  | Kaliningrad        | Ropucha II   | 1984              |
| LST  | Alexandr Shabalin  | Ropucha II   | 1985              |
| LST  | Korolev            | Ropucha II   | 1991              |

\*Year Upgraded

\*\*Kalibr-Missile Capable

\*\*\*Vessel in modification layup or awaiting decommission

Table 16. Baltic Sea Fleet Submarines

| Type | Name    | NATO Name | Year Commissioned |
|------|---------|-----------|-------------------|
| SS   | Dmitrov | Kilo      | 1986              |

Table 17. Caspian Sea Flotilla Surface Vessels

| Type | Name             | NATO Name | Year Commissioned |
|------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| FFG  | Tatarstan**      | Gepard    | 2003              |
| FFG  | Dagestan**       | Gepard    | 2012              |
| PGG  | Grad Sviyazhsk** | Sviyazhsk | 2013              |
| PGG  | Uglich**         | Sviyazhsk | 2013              |
| PGG  | Velikiy Ustyug** | Sviyazhsk | 2014              |
| FS   | Astrakhan        | Buyan     | 2006              |
| FS   | Volgodonsk       | Buyan     | 2011              |
| FS   | Makhachkala      | Buyan     | 2012              |
| PGM  | Stupinets        | Tarantul  | 1985              |

\*Year Upgraded

\*\*Kalibr-Missile Capable

\*\*\*Vessel in modification layup or awaiting decommission

Table 18. Pacific Fleet Surface Vessels

| Type | Name               | NATO Name    | Year Commissioned |
|------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| CG   | Varyag             | Slava        | 1989              |
| DDGS | Shaposhnikov***    | Udaloy I     | 1985              |
| DDGS | Admiral Tributs    | Udaloy I     | 1986              |
| DDGS | Admiral Vinogradiv | Udaloy I     | 1988              |
| DDGS | Admiral Panteleev  | Udaloy I     | 1991              |
| DDG  | Burnyy***          | Sovremenny   | 1988              |
| DDG  | Bystryy            | Sovremenny   | 1989              |
| FFC  | Gromkyy            | Steregushchy | 2018              |
| FFC  | Sovershennyy       | Steregushchy | 2017              |
| PGG  | Smerch             | Nanuchka IV  | 1984              |
| PGG  | Iney               | Nanuchka IV  | 1987              |
| PGG  | Moroz              | Nanuchka IV  | 1989              |
| PGG  | Razliv             | Nanuchka IV  | 1991              |
| FSS  | Kholmsk            | Grisha II    | 1985              |
| FSS  | MPK-221            | Grisha II    | 1987              |
| FSS  | Koreets            | Grisha II    | 1989              |
| FSS  | Sovetskaya Gavan`  | Grisha II    | 1990              |
| FSS  | MPK-107            | Grisha II    | 1990              |
| FSS  | Metel`             | Grisha II    | 1990              |
| FSS  | MPK-82             | Grisha II    | 1991              |
| FSS  | Ust`-Ilimsk        | Grisha II    | 1991              |
| PGM  | R-79               | Tarantul     | 1984              |
| PGM  | R-261              | Tarantul     | 1988              |
| PGM  | R-297              | Tarantul     | 1990              |
| PGM  | R-298              | Tarantul     | 1990              |
| PGM  | R-11               | Tarantul     | 1991              |
| PGM  | R-14               | Tarantul     | 1991              |
| PGM  | R-18               | Tarantul     | 1992              |
| PGM  | R-19               | Tarantul     | 1992              |
| PGM  | R-20               | Tarantul     | 1993              |
| PGM  | R-24               | Tarantul     | 1994              |
| PGM  | R-29               | Tarantul     | 2003              |
| LST  | Oslyabya           | Ropucha      | 1981              |
| LST  | Admiral Nevelskoy  | Ropucha      | 1982              |
| LST  | Peresvet           | Ropucha      | 1991              |
| LST  | Nikolay Vilkov     | Ropucha      | 1974              |

\*Year Upgraded

\*\*Kalibr-Missile Capable

\*\*\*Vessel in modification layup or awaiting decommission

Table 19. Pacific Fleet Submarines

| Type | Name               | NATO Name  | Year Commissioned |
|------|--------------------|------------|-------------------|
| SSBN | Ryazan`            | Delta III  | 1982              |
| SSBN | Alexandr Nevskiy   | Dolgorukiy | 2013              |
| SSBN | Vladimir Monomakh  | Dolgorukiy | 2014              |
| SSGN | Irkutsk***         | Oscar II   | 1988              |
| SSGN | Chelyabinsk***     | Oscar II   | 1990              |
| SSGN | Tver               | Oscar II   | 1992              |
| SSGN | Omsk               | Oscar II   | 1993              |
| SSGN | Tomsk              | Oscar II   | 1996              |
| SSN  | Bratsk***          | Akula      | 1989              |
| SSN  | Magadan            | Akula      | 1990              |
| SSN  | Kuzbass            | Akula      | 1992              |
| SSN  | Samara             | Akula      | 1995              |
| SS   | Chita              | Kilo       | 1981              |
| SS   | Chudotvorets       | Kilo       | 1988              |
| SS   | Nurlat***          | Kilo       | 1988              |
| SS   | Ust-Kamchatsk      | Kilo       | 1990              |
| SS   | Ust-Bolsheretsk    | Kilo       | 1990              |
| SS   | Komsomolsk-on-Amur | Kilo       | 1991              |
| SS   | Krasnokamensk      | Kilo       | 1992              |
| SS   | Mogocha            | Kilo       | 1994              |
| SS   | Kamchatsky         | Kilo       | 2019              |

\*Year Upgraded

\*\*Kalibr-Missile Capable

\*\*\*Vessel in modification layup or awaiting decommission

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